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'STAUNCH CHUMS!'

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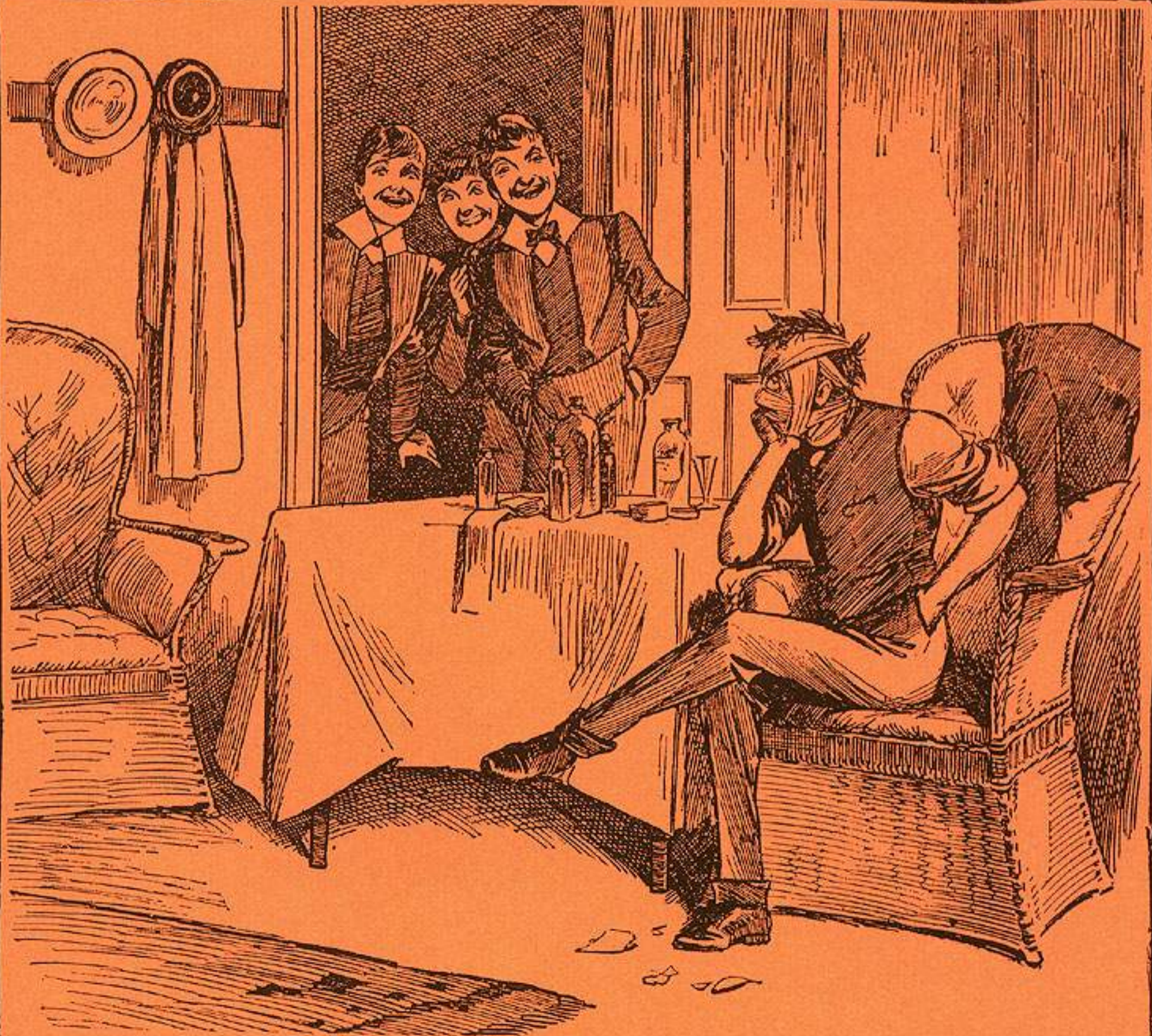
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By
Frank
Richards.



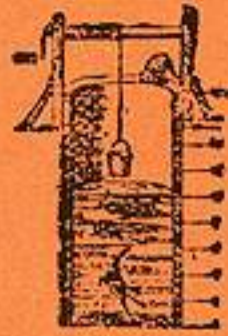
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THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Licked!

MARK LINLEY stood leaning on the chapel railings, under the shade of the ancient elms of Greyfriars.

There was a cloud upon his face, and his lips were tight set. In that quiet spot the Lancashire lad had fought out a battle with himself. And in spite of the black cloud of suspicion that hung over him, in spite of the troubles that were thickening on all sides, the "scholarship boy" had determined to remain at Greyfriars, and to face the music to the bitter end.

"I'll fight it out!"

That was Mark Linley's resolve.

Let the Remove condemn him on suspicion—let the whole Form make up its mind that he was guilty of the thefts in the dormitory.

Let even Harry Wharton and Co., his firmest friends, fall away from him! Still he would not flinch.

In the pale, set face of the boy was a determination beyond his years: the resolve of one who dared to do or die!

He started suddenly from the gloomy reverie into which he had fallen.

A shout from the distance rang in his ears.

"There he is!"

Mark Linley looked up quickly.

There was a rush of feet.

**Staunch
Chums**

A Splendid, Long, Complete
School Tale
of the
Boys of Greyfriars.

— BY —

FRANK RICHARDS.

A crowd of Removites, with Bulstrode, the bully of the Form at their head, rushed up and surrounded him.

He did not flinch.

"So this is where you have been hiding yourself!" said Bulstrode, insolently.

"I have not been hiding myself," said Mark, contemptuously. "You know that well enough, Bulstrode."

"Well, I've found you. You've got to make good your words in the dormitory."

Mark looked at him quietly.

Bulstrode mistook his quietness, and he went on in the same insolent tone, and in a more blustering manner.

"A lot of us have had things stolen in the dorm. You go out early with a yarn about going for an early swim, and hide the things. You lash out at a word on the subject. I've got the mark of your knuckles on my face now."

"You'll have another mark there soon, if you don't leave me alone."

Bulstrode laughed.

"Well, I'm not going to leave you alone, my pippin. You remember what you have said to me—are you ready to make it good?"

"Quite ready."

"Blessed if I know whether I ought to fight with a rotten thief," said Bulstrode. "It's a beastly disgrace—oh!"

He reeled under a fist that crashed on his mouth.

Mark Linley's blood was up, and he had struck out fiercely.

his eyes blazing. He had warned the Remove that a blow would be his answer to every taunt on that subject, and he was keeping his word.

He tore off his jacket, and pushed back his cuffs, and faced the bully of the Remove.

"Now come on," he said, between his teeth.

And Bulstrode came on quickly enough.

Bully as he might be, and sometimes cad, Bulstrode had plenty of courage, and he was in too great a rage at the present moment to care if he was hurt.

He attacked Linley savagely, but he was met with a defence that baffled him all along the line.

His blows, heavy enough to have felled the Lancashire lad if they had reached home, were guarded, and time and again the fists of Mark Linley crashed upon his face.

And the Lancashire lad, not content with defence, attacked in his turn, as Bulstrode receded, dealing forceful blow after blow.

"My hat!" said Skinner, "I never thought Linley had form like this."

"Nor I," said Stott, "Bulstrode's in for it."

"Go it Bulstrode!"

Bulstrode was doing his best.

But the Lancashire lad, inspired by a fierce anger that seemed to give him double his usual strength, was twice a match for him.

His heavy blows knocked Bulstrode right and left, and at last the burly Remove lost his footing and rolled on the ground.

He lay there blinking for a full minute.

Mark Linley stood over him with blazing eyes.

"Oh!" gasped Bulstrode.

On a previous occasion he had fallen foul of the lad from Lancashire, and had had the worst of the combat.

But that experience had been nothing like this.

The lad from the North seemed to have the strength of two men, from the angry indignation that filled his breast.

Skinner lent a hand to his friend, and Bulstrode was dragged to his feet. He rubbed his nose, from which the red was flowing, and felt over his eye, already closing and purple.

"Done?" asked Skinner.

Bulstrode ground his teeth savagely.

"No, hang you."

"You'd better——"

"Shut up."

Skinner shrugged his shoulders, and gave it up. It was no business of his if Bulstrode chose to go on after he was plainly knocked out.

"I am satisfied if you are!" said Mark Linley, quietly.

Bulstrode faced him with a savage sneer on his bruised face.

"But I am not satisfied," he said, "I am going to lick you, you—you thief!"

Linley's eyes glinted.

"Come on, then."

And again they went at it, hammer and tongs.

Linley's guard was a little less careful now, but his attack was terrible.

Bulstrode got in a few blows that left their mark, but the punishment he received was incomparably more serious than that he inflicted.

His face was battered and blue—his nose bleeding—his eyes half-closed—and he was reeling with weakness as he continued the fight.

Yet with savage obstinacy he held out to the very end.

Blow after blow crashed upon him, but still he faced it, till at last a terrible right-hander sent him fairly flying.

He crashed on the ground, with a groan, and lay there, unable to move.

Skinner ran to him.

"How do you feel, Bulstrode?"

"Oh, hang him—hang you."

"Are you going on?"

"No!"

"He's done," said Skinner. "My hat! what a whack that was! It would have knocked over a cart-horse."

"Faith, and Bulstrode looks as if he'd had enough," said Micky Desmond. "Sure, he'll want helping home."

Mark Linley looked round on the crowd of juniors.

He had defeated the bully of the Remove, whose overbearing ways had made him obnoxious to many of the fellows there present.

But not a single cordial look met his glance.

He was condemned.

The defeat of Bulstrode might save him from open interference, but that was all! In the eyes of the Remove he was a thief.

Bulstrode staggered to his feet, leaning heavily on Skinner's arm.

His half-closed eyes turned venomously towards the lad from Lancashire.

"You've licked me," he muttered, thickly, "but I don't take back a word—you're a thief—a rotten thief."

Mark compressed his lips.

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NEXT
WEEK:

"WITH FLYING COLOURS."

"It's safe for you to say that now," he said, "Let any fellow who is able to fight say that word, and I shall know how to answer it."

His glance flashed over the crowd.

But no one spoke.

The lad from Lancashire slowly put on his jacket, without a helping hand, and turned away from the spot. As he walked away, a loud and prolonged hiss followed him. His pale cheeks flushed crimson, but he did not look back.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

An Unwelcome Arrival.

"MR. CHESHAM!"

Bob Cherry uttered the words.

The Famous Four were looking out of the window of the junior common room at Greyfriars.

A gentleman had alighted from the station cab, and was about to enter the house, and the juniors had a full view of him.

It was Mr. Chesham.

Once before, on a never-to-be-forgotten occasion, Mr. Chesham had taken the Remove in the absence of Mr. Quelch, their own Form-master.

There had been trouble; much trouble. For Mr. Chesham was a faddist of the faddists, and the Remove had a strong objection to patent medicines of all sorts. They hated to be considered ill, and hated still more to be doctored for their supposed illnesses.

Mr. Chesham was a kind-hearted, considerate gentleman in all matters not appertaining to the health. When he began to look after a fellow's health, that fellow began to find life a weary burden.

"Yes, there he is!" said Frank Nugent. "It's the old original Chesham-bird, and no mistake."

Harry Wharten nodded.

There was something of a cloud on his face. He knew that, as captain of the Remove, he was expected to take the lead in asserting the rights of the Form, and keeping the faddist master within limits.

Yet Mr. Quelch, before leaving the school, had exacted a promise from the young Remove captain to keep order as much as he could, and do his best to make things go smoothly in the Form-room. Mr. Quelch had had his misgivings when he went.

"There'll be trouble," said Bob Cherry, watching Mr. Chesham from the window. "Look at that black bag in his hand! I'll bet it contains medicines."

"Fills and powders, most likely," said Nugent.

"The likeness is terrific," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur. "The esteemed rotten Chesham is bringing his honourable rubbish back with him to dose us medicinefully."

"We're not going to stand it."

"Not much."

"The not-much-fulness is terrific."

"What do you say, Wharten?" demanded Bob Cherry, excitedly. "Are we going to take this lying down?"

Wharten looked troubled, and did not immediately answer.

"Look here," said Bob, growing more excited still. "We've been divided a lot lately. It's been No. 13 Study against No. 1, but so long as the Chesham ass worries us, we're going to stick together and make it hot for him."

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent, heartily.

"The hear-hearfulness is great."

"Now Wharten, what do you say?"

"I don't quite know," said Wharten, doubtfully. "Of course it's a good idea to stick together for the rights of the Form."

"I should say so."

"I also am of that esteemed opinion."

"But we don't want a row if we can help it. Quelch made me promise to do my best, before he left."

"That's all very well——"

"Well, we don't want to look for trouble," said Wharten, mildly. "Let's wait till Chesham kicks over the traces before we jump on him."

Bob Cherry laughed.

"Well, I suppose we can agree to that much."

And that was settled; but no one had any faith that Mr. Chesham would have tact enough to keep within the traces. And if there was trouble, Study No. 1 would be expected to take the lead.

Of late the Famous Four had been somewhat divided. Bob Cherry had been shifted along to the end study in the Remove passage—No. 13. But an "accident" in that study had rendered it uninhabitable for a time, and Bob was back in his own quarters again for the past week.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob suddenly. "What's this?"

He stared at Bulstrode, who had just entered the room.

Bulstrode had bathed his face after the encounter with Mark Linley behind the chapel, but he had not been able to remove the terrible traces of the Lancashire lad's heavy blows.

The chums of the Remove looked at him
 "What's happened?" exclaimed Nugent.
 Bulstrode gave a growl.
 "Mind your own business."
 And he swung savagely away.
 "I say, you fellows——"
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter! Do you know all about it, as usual, Bunter?"
 "I saw the fight," said Bunter. "Linley gave Bulstrode an awful licking."
 "Mark Linley, eh?"
 "Yes. Bulstrode called him a thief, and they had it out behind the chapel. It was a fearful licking."
 "Must have been, to judge by Bulstrode's chivvy. Serve him jolly well right too, if that's what Linley licked him for!"
 "Oh, I suppose you're not going to stand up for Linley!" exclaimed Skinner, entering the room. "He's a thief!"
 "Better tell him so; not me," said Bob Cherry drily. "He'll give you some of what Bulstrode's had."
 "Well, you know very well——"
 "I know he isn't a thief."
 "Are you fellows sticking to him?"
 "We are," said Harry angrily. "We stick to him through thick and thin. We know jolly well he isn't a thief."
 "You'll be standing out against the whole Form, then. There's not another fellow in the Remove, outside your study, who stands by him."
 "That doesn't make any difference to us," said Nugent. "We know what we're doing. You chaps with your poor little brains ought to be glad to follow our lead."
 "I say, you fellows——"
 "Oh, shut up, Bunter!"
 "I say, what about the grub for to-morrow?" said Billy Bunter, catching Harry Wharton by the sleeve as he turned away.

Harry stared at him.
 "What grub?"
 "For the picnic you know."
 "What picnic?"
 "You know jolly well! The picnic that Marjorie and Clara are coming to to-morrow afternoon from Cliff House," said Billy Bunter, exasperated.
 "Don't you worry about that, my son."
 "But I must worry about it, Wharton! You chaps don't realise how important it is to have the grub ready in time," said Bunter. "I want to make sure——"
 "You mean you want to begin on it now?"
 "Oh, really, Wharton——"
 "Don't you bother about the grub. The grub will be all right."
 "But really, you fellows——"
 "Ahem!"
 "My hat! Chesham!" muttered Nugent.
 Mr. Chesham had entered the common-room.
 There were a good many boys present, a shower of rain having driven them in from the Close, and they saluted the new Form-master respectfully enough.

But there were gleams in many eyes that boded no good to Mr. Chesham when he took the Remove in the Form-room that afternoon.

The new master greeted the boys with a kindly smile.
 "I am glad to be back among you, my boys," he said genially. He paused, as if expecting a reply; and Harry Wharton coloured uncomfortably. He could not possibly feel glad that Mr. Chesham was back among them, and so it would be hypocritical to say that he did. Yet he was far from wishing to be discourteous to the new Form-master.

There was an uncomfortable silence.
 Mr. Chesham reddened a little.
 "Ahem! I trust that any little friction there may have been in the past has been quite forgotten," he said, looking round.

It was Wharton's place, as captain of the Remove, to reply, and he did so.

"I hope so, sir," he said.
 "Very good. I shall take the class in the Remove-room this afternoon, and I trust you will give me cause to make a good report to Mr. Quelch on his return."
 "I—I trust so, sir."

"That is the right spirit, my boy. I am sure we shall pull together very well," said Mr. Chesham. "By the way, I consider it my duty as your Form-master to look after any little personal ailments you may be afflicted with. I have a great deal of experience in that line. If any of you feel ill or at all indisposed, I shall be only too glad to place my experience at your service."

Wharton's heart sank.
 It was very kindly put, but it meant only one thing—that Mr. Chesham was beginning again. There was a faint murmur in the room.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Chesham suddenly. "Dear me! Who—what is that?"
 He had caught sight of the battered face of Bulstrode. The bully of the Remove scowled, and did not reply. Mr. Chesham advanced hastily towards him.

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NEXT WEEK: "WITH FLYING COLOURS."

"Boy! Goodness gracious, what has happened to your face?"

Bulstrode grunted.
 "Nothing, sir."
 "Nothing! But it is battered—absolutely battered! One of your eyes is closed; the other nearly so. Your nose is bleeding!"

"Is it?"
 "Certainly. Your mouth is also cut. What has happened to you?"

A gentleman of a more practical turn of mind than Mr. Chesham would have known at once that Bulstrode had been fighting. But Mr. Chesham was of a dreamy turn of mind, and practical considerations very seldom entered his head.

"Nothing," mumbled Bulstrode savagely.
 The Removites were all grinning, and wondering how Mr. Chesham's investigation into Bulstrode's injuries would turn out.

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Chesham sharply. "Your face is seriously injured."

"I—I knocked it, sir."
 "You knocked it against something?"
 "Yes, sir."

Bulstrode did not add that it was a clenched fist he had knocked his face against. Mr. Chesham ought really to have seen that for himself.

"Dear me! You must have knocked it very hard."
 "Ye-o-es, sir."

"Something must be done for it at once."
 "It's—it's all right, sir."

"Nonsense—absolute nonsense! What have you done for it so far?"

"I—I've bathed it, sir."
 "Very good for a beginning. You must, however, rub it carefully with an ointment I will give you, and then bathe it in a decoction of herbs. I will provide you with all that is necessary. Follow me."

"If you please, sir——"
 "Follow me, Bulstrode!"

And Bulstrode, gritting his teeth, followed Mr. Chesham from the room. The Removites looked at one another. Some were grinning; some were looking annoyed and angry, some apprehensive.

"He's beginning," said Russell.
 "He's begun!" said Ogilvy.

"Bulstrode's catching it first," growled Bob Cherry. "Serve him right, for that matter; he's no right to go round with a chivvy like that, spoiling the view. But who's turn will it be next?"

"Might be anybody's."
 "We're not going to stand it."
 "Hear, hear!"

"Faith, and let's rag the baste in class this afternoon, and show him that we're not going to stand anything, anyhow," proposed Micky Desmond excitedly.

"Hurray!"
 "Hold on!" said Wharton. "Keep the peace as long as you can. Quelch has sort of put us on our honour."

"Rats! He had no right to do anything of the sort."
 "Bosh!"
 "Rubbish!"

"I say, you fellows, he may start cutting down the grub. You remember what he did last time. And now we're having all our tin stolen in the dormitory of a night we can't afford to buy things at the tuck-shop. It will be serious."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. It's jolly bad to have to swallow patent medicines, I know, but it's a jolly lot worse to have one's grub cut down, especially if you're a chap like me—of a delicate constitution, and can only keep your strength up by taking constant nourishment."

"Shut up, Bunter."
 "I shan't shut up! I say, you fellows, I think we ought to begin on Chesham at once, and make him understand that—— Oh, you horrid bounders, to walk away while I'm talking to you!"

And Billy Bunter, finding that he was standing alone, and that his sweetness was being wasted on the desert air, took the advice often tendered him, and "shut up." But there were a good many juniors in the Form of Bunter's opinion. Most of the Remove were ready to "go for" the obnoxious Form-master without waiting for him to show the cloven hoof.

It looked as if there was to be trouble in the Remove-room!

ANSWERS

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

In Class.

MR. CHESHAM was in the Remove-room when the Form came in to afternoon school. There was an agreeable smile upon his face, which with any other master would have meant an easy time for the boys; but with Mr. Chesham probably meant mischief.

Bulstrode did not enter with the Form. He had not been seen since the new master marched him off from the common-room.

Doubtless he was still carrying out the master's instructions with regard to his face, which had been so sadly damaged by that "accident."

Mr. Chesham glanced at Mark Linley as the boys went to their places. The signs of battle on Mark's face were not so evident as in Bulstrode's case, but they were plain enough to be seen.

The Form-master signed to Linley to come out before the class.

Mark obeyed.

"Have you met with an accident?" asked Mr. Chesham.

"No, sir."

"Your face looks like it."

Mark was silent.

"What is your name? You are a new boy, I think, since I was here?"

"Yes, sir. My name is Linley."

"Well, Linley, what is the matter with your face?"

"I have been fighting, sir."

Mr. Chesham started. That simple explanation had not occurred to his mind.

"Dear me; it is very wrong to fight," he exclaimed, shaking his head. "If this had occurred after my coming here, Linley, I should have punished you; but I shall take no notice of it, under the circumstances. But I cannot have your face in that state. Have you done anything for it?"

"Only bathed it, sir."

"Quite insufficient. Go to my room, and bring me the large red bottle with a white label you will find on my dressing-table."

"Yes, sir."

And Mark left the Form-room.

"My hat, Linley's in for it!" murmured Bob Cherry. "I suppose Bulstrode's still smudging his chivvy with ointment. Serve him jolly well right; but I'm sorry for Linley."

"I say, you fellows—"

"You are talking in class," said Mr. Chesham, in a tone of mild reproof; "that is not permitted. Let me see, I think the first lesson is English history?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very good; we will—ah, you have not been long, Linley. Give me the bottle."

Mark handed over the red bottle with the white label, and turned to go back to his place. The Form-master called to him.

"Stay a moment, Linley. You are not fit to attend classes with your face in that dreadful state."

"I feel fit, sir."

"That is nothing to do with it. You must allow me to be the judge," said Mr. Chesham severely. "You will miss lessons this afternoon, and spend the time in attending to these facial injuries."

"If you please, sir—"

"You will take a tablespoonful and a half of this liquid, and mix it with a quantity of water equal to ten parts of the liquid. You will stir this carefully in a basin for ten minutes, until the admixture is thoroughly completed."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"Then you will dip a fragment of cloth or sponge into the decoction, and rub your face with it."

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"You will keep up a gentle but continuous rubbing for two hours. At the end of that time you will report to me."

Mark Linley was silent. He might make the mixture as directed, and he might rub his face with it; but he was extremely unlikely to keep up a gentle and continuous rubbing for two hours.

"You may go, Linley," said Mr. Chesham, handing the bottle back to Mark. "If you cannot find a tablespoon, you can calculate the amount by the divisions on the bottle. Each division is equal to a tablespoon. I trust that the worst of your injuries will be quite cured by this evening. You may go." And Linley went.

Then lessons began. Mr. Chesham was a very able master so far as mental attainments went, but he did not seem to have the gift of handling boys. There was a great deal of "rotting" in the Remove, and Mr. Chesham never seemed to catch on to it.

Skinner was the worst offender. He never affected to have heard of King John, much to Mr. Chesham's astonishment. Mr. Chesham took everything with the most deadly seriousness, and Skinner's ignorance astounded him.

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NEXT WEEK:

"WITH FLYING COLOURS."

"Skinner! You—you have never heard of King John?" he gasped.

Skinner wagged his head slowly.

"The name seems familiar, sir," he said. "Was he a relation of John o' Groats, sir?"

The Remove chuckled.

Mr. Chesham cast a severe glance round the class.

"Really, my boys, this is not a subject for amusement," he said. "Skinner's ignorance is astounding—positively and absolutely astounding. I am shocked—amazed."

"I've heard the name before, sir," said Skinner brightly. "Now I come to think of it, wasn't he the chap who said, 'Hony swarkey mally pong'?"

"Who said—what—what?"

"Hony swarkey mally pong."

"I—I do not understand, Skinner. That sounds to me like—like Esperanto or Hindustanee. What does it mean?"

"Evil to him who evil thinks, sir."

"What—what?"

"It's French, sir."

"French?"

"Yes, sir."

"Say—say it again."

"Hony swarkey mally pong," said Skinner proudly.

Mr. Chesham gasped.

"Oh, I think I understand! You mean 'Honi soit qui mal y pense'?"

"Yes, sir; Hony swarkey mally pong."

"It was not King John who said that, Skinner, as you ought to know very well."

"Was he the chap who let the cakes burn, sir?"

"That was King Alfred, Skinner."

"So it was; I remember now. Oh, I know, sir; King John was the chap who had his head cut off by Cromwell after the battle of Waterloo."

This was too much for Mr. Chesham.

"Skinner, you will take a hundred lines!"

"Yes, sir."

"You will write 'King John succeeded his brother Richard in 1199,' one hundred times."

"Yes, sir."

Then Mr. Chesham let Skinner alone. Ogilvy was called sharply to order for talking to Russell, and was questioned severely. Ogilvy's eyes glimmered, and though he was one of the keenest boys in the Form, he showed an ignorance of English history that was as surprising as Skinner's.

Asked about King John, he pronounced that that sovereign had had a successful reign, and was taken to task.

"Ogilvy, I am surprised at this ignorance from you!" said Mr. Chesham. "You must know that King John was forced by the barons to sign Magna Charta against his will?"

"Yes, sir."

"That he was defeated by Philip Augustus?"

"Yes, sir."

"That he was engaged in an unsuccessful war when he died?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then what do you mean, Ogilvy, by asserting that King John had a successful reign?"

"You said so, sir."

Mr. Chesham was taken aback.

"I—I said so?"

"Yes, sir; you told Skinner that King John succeeded in 1199," said Ogilvy with a look of the most perfect innocence.

Mr. Chesham breathed hard through his nose. The Remove could hardly restrain themselves from bursting into a roar.

"Ogilvy! I meant that John succeeded to the throne—that he became the next king after Richard I."

"Oh, sir; I see, sir! You did not say so before, sir."

"Do you understand now, Ogilvy?"

"Yes, sir. Thank you so much, sir."

Mr. Chesham left Ogilvy to digest the interesting information he had received. As a matter of fact, Ogilvy knew very nearly as much about the reign of King John as Mr. Chesham did.

The new master was no more successful in other directions. He found the Remove a remarkably stupid class, and before the end of the afternoon he grew extremely irritated, and told them so.

The Remove received his censures with great outward meekness, but with glittering eyes. They had not done with Mr. Chesham yet.

"How's that for a beginning?" grinned Skinner as the class went out. "If we keep it up, we shall turn his hair grey in a few days. He was tapping his forehead all the afternoon, as if he were getting a screw loose already."

"It's hardly fair to start first, you know," said Wharton.

"Rats! We didn't start first. Hasn't he started on Bulstrode—and on Linley, too, for that matter? Though it doesn't matter about Linley."

And Wharton was silent. Mr. Chesham had indeed "begun it," though he had not gone very far as yet. But there was more to come!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Wun Lung Means Mischief.

"LET'S go and have a look at Bulstrode," suggested somebody; and a number of the Removites, curious to see what had become of the bully of the Form, hurried away to Bulstrode's study.

The bully of the Remove was there.

Skinner opened the door, and there was a general stare and a giggle from the juniors as they looked in.

The study had a smell like a chemist's shop. There were half a dozen bottles on the table, some of them uncorked. Bulstrode was sitting in the arm-chair, with oily bandages over his face, and only one of his eyes could be seen—and that eye was only half-open.

He blinked with his single eye at the visitors.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Stott. "Is that Bulstrode?"

"What do you want?" growled Bulstrode through the bandages.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My only hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "What are you bandaged up like that for, Bulstrode? What's the little game?"

"It's Chesham's orders," grunted Bulstrode. "He says it will cure the injury to my face. These bandages are smeared with ointment."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I'd stand it," said Snoop.

"How can I help it?" snarled Bulstrode. "I kicked at first, and he threatened to report me to the Head. If we had a Form-captain with the spirit of a worm, we shouldn't have to stand this dangerous lunatic."

"Oh, let Wharton alone," said Bob Cherry. "What can he do?"

Bulstrode grunted.

"Well, you look a pretty picture," said Ogilvy. "How long are you going to keep those bandages on?"

"They are not to be taken off till tea-time."

"Coming down to tea in them?"

"No, ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, get out of my study, you cackling asses!"

"Here, I'm not going to stand this fearful niff," exclaimed Hazeldene, coming in through the crowd—he shared that study with Bulstrode—"if you want to start a drug-store, Bulstrode, you can do it in one of the box-rooms!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up."

Hazeldene threw open the window violently.

The draught of fresh-air that came in was really very welcome. Hazeldene looked over the bottles on the table.

"My hat! Here's ammoniated quinine among the rest," he exclaimed. "What on earth is that for?"

"I'm to take it in doses three times a day. Blessed if I know what for!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Are you going to take it?"

"Of course not, dummy. I don't like it."

"Me takes it," said a soft voice.

And Wun Lung, the Chinese junior, wriggled into the study.

"You're going to take it?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in astonishment. "Don't, you young ass! What do you want to take it for?"

"Me takes in pocketee."

"Oh, I see. What do you want it for?"

"P'laps givee dosee Mr. Chesham in tea. What you tinkee?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bulstrode. "Good for the heathen! If you do that, Wun Lung, I'll—I'll stand you a feed."

"Me tly. What you tinkee?"

And the little Chinese disappeared with the bottle. In his own study he emptied about two tablespoonfuls of it into a small phial, which he slipped into his pocket. Then he looked for Billy Bunter.

Bunter was talking to the Famous Four. The fat junior was in a discontented mood. The chums of the Remove had refused to give him any information about the picnic on the morrow, except that it would be all right, and that he would know all about the provisions in good time. Bunter, who wanted to find out where those provisions were, in order to get a "snack" or two, was dissatisfied.

"It's just as if you couldn't trust me with the grub," he said, in a very injured tone.

"Well, as a matter of fact, we can't," said Harry Wharton, with his usual bluntness.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Give us a rest, Billy," said Bob Cherry. "Who's coming out to the looter before tea?"

"I say, you fellows, hold on a minute. What about tea?"

"Nothing."

"Ain't we going to have tea in the study?"

"No: we'll tea in Hall to-night, Billy," said Bob Cherry. "There's a joke on, and we're not going to miss it."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

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"Nuff said. You can go and fetch my ball from the study."

"I'm not going to fetch your ball. I—"

"Then I will."

And Bob Cherry walked away whistling. Bunter blinked at the others.

"I say, you fellows, you know jolly well that I've got a delicate constitution, that has to be kept up by constant nourishment," he said, persuasively. "That Chesham beast will start starving me soon, too, I expect. Hadn't we better have tea in the study to-night?"

"No," said Wharton, walking away.

"Oh, really, don't go—I say, Nugent, don't you think—"

"Sometimes," said Nugent cheerfully, and he followed Wharton.

"I—I say, Inky, we'd better have something to eat in the study. You see, you wouldn't like me to expire in agonies at your feet, would you, just for want of a little nourishment?"

"I should have no great objectfulness to the esteemed agonies of my worthy chum," said the nabob gently.

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"But I trust the expiriffulness will not be carried out in No. 1 Study. If the honourable Bunter is determined to expire I should recommend a box-room."

And Hurree Singh strolled away.

"You—you black beast!" muttered Billy Bunter, blinking after him. "That's the kind of chap I have to associate with. I'm wasted at this school. Nobody here understands me. With a brain like mine I ought to be head of the Form, but there's so much jealousy and favouritism. Pah!"

And Bunter sniffed contemptuously.

"I say, Trevor," he exclaimed, swinging round as a junior passed him, "I say—"

"Do you want to speak to me?" asked Mark Linley quietly.

"Oh, is it you, Linley? Yes—I—er—want to speak to you. Come into the window here, so that the other chaps won't see us."

Mark Linley did not move.

"Why should they not see us?"

"Well, they're sending you to Coventry, you know, over those thefts of yours—ow—ow—wow! Leggo my ear!"

Linley released him scornfully.

"You're not worth licking," he muttered.

"Of course not," said Bunter cheerfully. He didn't care whether he was worth licking or not, so long as he wasn't licked. "Of course not. The fact is, Linley, I rather like you, you know. Of course, I'm a gentleman, and you're only a factory lad, but there's nothing snobbish about me. Don't go, Linley, while I'm talking to you. Blessed if I know why chaps keep on walking off before I'm finished. I say, you know, I was thinking that you wouldn't like to be cut by the Form, you know, as you were last time, and I would be perfectly willing to speak to you, sometimes, just to cheer you up."

"You are too generous," said Linley quietly.

There is an Eastern proverb which says that contempt will pierce even the shell of the tortoise. If that is so, Billy Bunter must have had a thicker shell than even a tortoise, for he did not perceive the contempt in the Lancashire lad's tone.

"The fact is, Linley, I intend to be generous," he blinked.

"There's nothing mean about me, I assure you. Come and talk it over in the tuck-shop."

"No thanks."

"Here, don't go. Don't be bashful, Linley. There's no reason for you to be bashful because a gentleman is taking notice of you. I mean it, every word. Let's have a chat in the tuck-shop. I'd stand a feed, only I've been disappointed about a postal order. If you have some tin—why, blessed if the chap isn't stalking away! I say, Linley—Linley!" But Mark did not even turn his head.

"Well, of all the pigs," grunted Billy Bunter, "this is what comes of taking notice of one's social inferiors. Treat one of the lower classes with civility, and he immediately presumes upon it. I intended to be really kind to that chap Linley. Fancy his daring to pull the ear of his social superior! Blessed if I know what this country is coming to. This is the effect of Socialism, and all that sort of thing."

"Buntel!"

"Hallo, you heathen! I—I mean, hallo, Wun Lung, old chap. Can you lend me a couple of bob? I've been disappointed about a postal order—"

"No lendee."

"Then cut along, you confounded heathen."

"No savvy."

"Buzz off! Bunk!"

"Me speakee to Buntel. Havee tea in Hall to-night—me takee in pottee jamee, nicee taltee, cakee."

Bunter's little round eyes glistened behind his spectacles.

"Good! You want me to join you?"

"Me wantee Buntel, if Buntel helpee me."

"Oh, I'll help you," said Bunter. "I'll help myself, too."

"Buntel no savvy. Me playee japee on Mr. Chesham. Me

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wanted him looked over his shoulder before he drank his tea, Savvy?"

"What on earth for?"

Wun Lung showed a small phial. Bunter's fat face went pale.

"You—you horrid heathen! You're not going to poison him!"

Wun Lung chuckled.

"Bunter silly ass! Bottle hold quinine, that's all."

"Oh, I see. Well, I daresay I could manage it."

"Allee light. Bunter ventiloquist—make voice come from nowhere—make Mr. Chesham tuck head, and tuck donee."

"I'll manage it. And the feed—"

"Feed aftel."

"Oh, all right."

And Wun Lung glided away.

When the Remove went in to tea, the table was crowded. As a rule, more than half the juniors had tea in their studies. But the intended jape had been whispered up and down and most of the Removites knew that it was coming off, and all were eager to be witnesses of it.

The other masters glanced towards the Remove table. It was very unusual to see it so crowded. But Mr. Chesham, new to the place, noticed nothing amiss.

Wun Lung was allowed to take the seat nearest to Mr. Chesham. Bunter was a little lower down the table, on the other side, but within easy reach of Wun Lung's comestibles. The boys who had tea in Hall were allowed to bring any little delicacies they cared for, to enrich the somewhat spare tea-table; and on this occasion Wun Lung had done well. The sight of the jam, the cake, and the table jellies made Billy Bunter's mouth water.

But there was nothing for him till he had done his work, and the amateur ventriloquist of Greyfriars cleared his throat and prepared for business.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Chesham does not feel well.

MR. CHESHAM glanced along the table. All the boys had their teacups filled. The tea was very hot, and Mr. Chesham had been very particular that all the cups should be filled at the same time. Mr. Chesham was a faddist in small matters as well as large. He regulated his own diet with a hundred-and-one painful restrictions, and he would gladly have regulated everybody else's in the same way. His theory about tea was that it should never be sipped, and should not be drunk either hot or cold. It was allowed to stand until a certain lukewarmness had set in, and then it was to be drunk completely. The boys of the Remove remembered that custom of Mr. Chesham's, from his previous stay at the school.

Those who liked their tea hot, and those who liked it in small doses, grumbled under their breath. The Form-master's eye was keen. No other Form-master at Greyfriars would have thought of interfering in such a matter. But Mr. Chesham had his own manners and customs.

"Skinner!"

He rapped out the name, and Skinner, who was taking a sly sip of hot tea, started and choked, and spilled half the cupful over his chest.

"Ow—wow!" gasped Skinner.

Mr. Chesham eyed him sternly.

"Skinner!"

"Ow! yow! I'm scalded."

"It is not more than you deserve, Skinner, for having surreptitiously sipped your tea against my specific directions," said Mr. Chesham sternly. "I have explained to all of you that hot tea is bad for the interior organs."

Skinner grunted. Hot tea might be bad for his interior organs, but he would rather have had it inside than outside, and chanced it.

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir."

"You were sipping your tea."

"Was I, sir, really?"

"Yes, Bunter."

"I—I—I'm sorry, sir. I—I—I—my doctor ordered me hot tea, sir, for—for—somnambulism, sir," stammered Billy Bunter. "I—I used to walk in my sleep when I was a kid, sir, and—and ever since then I've had to have hot tea, and—and plenty to eat, sir."

There was a giggle along the Remove table.

"Bunter!" rapped out Mr. Chesham.

"Ye-es, sir."

"If you tell me such barefaced fabrications I shall cane you."

"Oh, sir!"

"Silence! Leave your tea until it is lukewarm, and then empty the cup with a steady drink," said Mr. Chesham severely.

"Ye-e-es, sir."

And the Remove began to eat, but not to drink. Wun Lung winked at Bunter. Mr. Chesham took a careful bite from a

thin piece of bread-and-butter. He made it a rule, as strict as the laws of the Medes and Persians, to take in an amount of bread and butter equal to one square inch at a bite, and to take thirty-three chews at each mouthful before replenishing it.

"Now, my boys—"

"Oh, give us a rest!"

Mr. Chesham jumped nearly clear of his chair.

The words were addressed to him evidently; but they did not appear to have been spoken by anyone at the Remove table. So far as he could judge, the voice proceeded from under the table.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Chesham, utterly aghast.

"Ring off, like a good chap," said the voice.

Mr. Chesham gasped.

"Bless my soul! I have never been addressed so in my life before!"

The whole table was grinning.

The juniors suspected the handiwork of the Greyfriars ventriloquist; but Mr. Chesham hadn't the faintest suspicion.

"Come out from under that table immediately!" he exclaimed.

"Rats!"

The Form-master raised the edge of the table-cloth.

"Come out, you young rascal!"

"No fear."

"I order you to step forth!"

"Oh, get your hair cut."

Mr. Chesham's hair was standing almost on end. Such language to a Form-master was unheard, undreamed-of.

He stooped down to look under the table, amazed, astounded, and very angry. It was likely to go hard with the speaker when Mr. Chesham saw him. But he did not see him. It was not very light under the table; but he could see that there was nothing there beside a collection of boots and trouser-legs.

"Dear me!"

Wun Lung had not lost his opportunity.

While the master was peering under the table, the little Chinese's hand had hovered for a moment over the tea-cup.

The contents of the phial disappeared into the tea in a second, and the phial was again hidden in the recesses of the heathen's loose clothing.

When Mr. Chesham raised a red and bewildered face, Wun Lung was sitting with a perfectly calm and innocent face.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Chesham. "This is astounding—incomprehensible! I heard a voice that seemed to proceed from under the table; yet there is certainly no one there. It is amazing!"

"Extraordinary, sir," said Billy Bunter. "Perhaps it was somebody playing a trick, sir."

"Indeed, I do not see how."

"Somebody may have hidden a gramophone or something under the table, sir."

"Nonsense, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, sir—"

Mr. Chesham was looking very puzzled. He stirred his tea slowly, and the Removites, who were in the secret, watched him with almost painful intensesness.

They were almost breathless when the Form-master raised the cup to his lips.

What would happen when Mr. Chesham swallowed that inadvertent dose of ammoniated quinine they did not know.

But they could guess that it would be exciting.

Mr. Chesham did not, of course, sip the tea. He put the cup to his lips, and drank the whole down steadily. It went down so quickly that the Form-master had no time to notice that it had a peculiar taste. But as the last of it disappeared, it dawned upon Mr. Chesham that there was something wrong with his tea.

He set the cup down, and a curious change came over his face.

His features seemed to be trying to tie themselves up into sailor's knots, and his under jaw dropped.

"Oh!"

The Remove waited.

They were too excited even to giggle.

"Oh! Ow! Ah! Pah! Gr-r-oooh!"

Mr. Chesham rose to his feet.

"Bless my soul! I—I— That tea was very—very curious to the taste! Do you notice anything wrong with your tea, Cherry?"

"No, sir."

"Do you notice anything wrong, Elliott?"

"Nothing, sir."

"I—I—I—it is most extraordinary. I—I feel as if I had been poisoned. I—I feel as if it were the effects that sometimes follow eating Chicago tinned meat. Yet I have eaten only bread and butter. Extraordinary."

"Are you ill, sir?" asked Nugent.

"I—I—I feel a little ill. Ow!"

"What is the matter, Mr. Chesham?" asked Mr. Capper, from the Upper Fourth table, looking round in surprise.

"I—I have a strangely bitter taste in my mouth, Mr. Capper. I feel ill—I feel very strangely indeed."

"Dear me! I am sorry."

"It is most extraordinary. Ah! I think I can guess the cause. I took only three instead of four of the terra-cotta tabloids after lunch. Undoubtedly that is the reason. My throat is out of order, and the tea tastes bitter. That is the explanation."

Mr. Capper turned back to his tea with a grin.

"I—I think I will retire," said Mr. Chesham, faintly. "Wingate, will you kindly take the head of the Remove table?"

"Certainly, sir," said the captain of Greyfriars.

And Mr. Chesham, with his handkerchief pressed to his mouth, made his way rather rapidly to the door.

Wingate looked suspiciously at the Removites.

They could not disguise their merriment.

The discomfiture of the faddist Form-master was not all; it was the remarkable explanation he had found for the bitter taste of the tea that amused them most.

Wun Lung was chuckling, Bunter was cackling away like an alarm clock, and few of the others could restrain the outward and visible signs of the inward mirth.

"You young sweeps!" said Wingate. "What are you grinning at?"

"Nothing, Wingate," said Bunter. "We're not grinning. Pass the ham pies, Wun Lung, and the cold sausage and beef, and the veal patties."

"Me passee, alles lightee."

"There's an unusual lot of you to tea in Hall," grunted Wingate. "I suppose this is some jape amongst you. You'd better mind your p's and q's, you young sweeps."

But Wingate did not inquire further. Perhaps he admitted that the juniors suffered considerably at the hands of their over-careful Form-master, and were justified in "getting their own back" a little. After tea, the Remove learned with satisfaction that Mr. Chesham had paid a visit to the medical man in Friarale, and immediately on his return had gone to bed.

They did not see anything more of him that evening, and they went to bed without any instructions, warnings, or cautions from the Form-master—and, for that relief the Remove owed thanks to Wun Lung the Chinese.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

More Mystery.

THERE was much uneasy talking and whispering among the Removites when they went to bed that night.

The thefts in the dormitory, the author of which was still undiscovered, weighed upon every mind.

Most of the Remove had made up their minds that Mark Linley was guilty. The evidence against him was practically nil—yet in the absence of anything like evidence against anybody else, it carried weight.

Anyway, the Remove seemed to have made up its mind.

Mark Linley was very quiet.

His face showed still very plainly the signs of the fight with Bulstrode; though not to so great an extent as in Bulstrode's case.

The Remove bully, in fact, was a shocking sight. The ministrations of Mr. Chesham seemed to have made matters worse instead of better.

Bulstrode, smarting under his injuries, and under the sense of humiliation left by his defeat, was in the worst of tempers.

He would willingly have taken the lead in a general ragging of Mark Linley; but the other fellows held back. Without any direct proof to act upon, they generally thought that it was enough to send the Lancashire lad to Coventry. There was another reason for letting him alone. The Famous Four had announced their intention of standing by him, through thick and thin.

Wharton and Co. firmly believed him innocent; and they said so, and they were ready to stand by him, even to the extent of fighting the whole Form if need were.

And those of the juniors who would have joined in a ragging, did not feel inclined to take part in an attack on the five best fighting-men in the Form.

And so Bulstrode's idea of a ragging was not carried out.

The more keen-eyed of the boys, too, thought that Linley, even if guilty, was being punished severely enough. In spite of his quietness, it was easy to see that he suffered keenly from the contemptuous glances or averted looks of his Form-fellows. But he said no word.

Someone proposed keeping watch that night, in case the thief should try his tricks again, but no one felt inclined to stay awake, as the thief was there, hearing the plans made—whoever he was—it was of little use to make plans for catching him.

The Remove went to bed, and to sleep.

Two or three of them made an attempt to remain awake, with the idea of secretly watching, but it was not easy for sleepy lads to remain awake and silent in the dead stillness of the night.

Before eleven o'clock slumber and silence reigned in the dormitory.

Midnight tolled out from the clock tower.

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Had the juniors been awake then, they might have heard the sound of someone leaving his bed.

There was the faint creaking of a bed, the rustle of blankets, and a slight sound of bare feet on the floor.

Then a rustling, and a moving—slight, and inexplicable.

Then silence!

Clang! clang! clang!

The rising-bell clanging through the morning air awoke the juniors.

Harry Wharton started up in bed, and was the first to jump out.

The thought of the thief was in his mind at once, and he glanced at his clothes to ascertain whether anything had been disturbed.

Nothing, apparently, was moved.

The thief had evidently taken warning, and had ceased his depredations, at least for a time, Wharton said to himself.

There was a sudden exclamation from Bob Cherry, who was the second fellow out of bed. Harry looked towards him quickly and anxiously.

"Nothing gone, Bob?"

"Hallo! hallo! hallo! Where's my trousers?"

"Your what?"

"Trousers—trucks—bags!" howled Bob Cherry wrathfully. "If some silly jesser has been playing hide-and-seek with my trousers, the sooner he produces them the better."

"Where did you leave them?"

"On the chair—now they're gone."

Frank Nugent gave a shout.

"Where's my boots?"

"Boots!"

"Yes, boots!"

"Hang it all, Frank, you don't mean to say that your boots are gone!"

"They are gone."

The whole Remove was up now, and the boys were excited. Some of them were laughing. It seemed impossible that the dormitory thief could have descended to trousers and boots in his depredations.

"It's some silly japer," said Bob Cherry. "Who's taken my trousers?"

"Who's taken my boots?"

"Trousers!"

"Boots!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Shut up, Bunter! Where are my trousers?"

"I say, you fellows, you know——"

"Trousers!"

"Boots!"

"Oh, really, Cherry, I say, you know, somebody's taken away my socks!"

"Your socks?" gasped Wharton.

"Yes; I can't find them anywhere," said Bunter, blinking round him through his spectacles. "I really think the silly ass who's playing this jape might own up, and give me my socks."

"And my trousers!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"And my boots!"

"Socks——"

"Trousers——"

"Boots!"

"Come, this has gone far enough!" exclaimed Wharton. "The chap who took those things may as well show them up."

But no one offered to do so.

"It can't be the thief," said Skinner, in amazement. "He wouldn't take Bunter's socks, anyway. They're not worth any more than their wearer, and that's nil."

"Oh, really, Skinner——"

"It's a rotten jape! I'll give the japer a thick ear if he doesn't bring me my trousers!" shouted Bob Cherry.

But the trousers were not forthcoming. Neither were the socks, nor the boots. If a japist in the Remove had taken them he kept his own counsel. Skinner suddenly suggested that a joker from another Form had stolen into the dormitory to play off a joke on the Remove, and the idea was adopted at once.

"Of course, it was the Upper Fourth!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Temple, Dabney & Co., for a dead cert," said Nugent. "I wonder we didn't think of it before."

"We'll settle with them presently."

"The settlefulness will be terrific."

"But, hang it all—I want my trousers!"

"You'll have to put on your Sunday bags," grinned Nugent. "I'll borrow a pair of Wharton's boots. They fit me."

"I say, you fellows, what price my socks?"

"Twopence a pair, new, I should think, by the look of them!" said Ogilvy.

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"Oh, really, Ogilvy! Can you lend me a pair of socks; Cherry? Wharton's and Nugent's are too small for me."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Do you mean to insinuate that I've got larger feet than Wharton or Nugent?"

"Certainly not—they're smaller! I mean Wharton's and Nugent's are too large for me," said Bunter promptly.

"You fat worm!" said Bob Cherry. "You sha'n't have the socks, if it's only for telling crammers."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Here, catch, you fat rotter!"

Bob Cherry pitched over a rolled-up pair of socks; and as Bunter was not in time to catch, they smote him on his fat little nose, and he went over backwards on his bed. He gave a howl of wrath.

"Ow! Beast! What was that you chucked at me?"

"Socks, ass!"

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

And Bunter donned the socks. And the Remove went out, very much excited, and breathing wrath and vengeance against the Upper Fourth, the supposed authors of the jape.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Little Hasty.

HARRY WHARTON & Co. halted in the passage outside the Remove dormitory.

"We're early," said Harry.

"Yes. What about it?"

"The Upper Fourth are not down yet."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter! Look here, we've been raided by the Upper Fourth."

"I suppose it was the Upper Fourth."

"Of course it was. Who else?"

"Oh, it wasn't the dorm thief this time!" said Bulstrode, with a venomous glance at Mark Linley. "Socks and trousers and boots wouldn't be any good to him."

"Certain?"

"The dormitory thief sticks to cash and watches," said Skinner. "Temple, Dabney & Co. have collared our trucks."

"They've been chipping us lately about having burglars in the Remove," Nugent remarked. "I've suspected once or twice that they were going to get up a jape on the strength of it."

"That's the idea," said Harry. "They're chuckling up their sleeves at us now, of course. They're in the middle of their washing now."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"I catch on! Come on, kids!"

"What's the idea?" asked Ogilvy.

"We'll give the Upper Fourth a rouser in their own quarters, that's all."

"Ha, ha, ha! Good!"

"Come on!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter, and come on!"

And the Removites rushed away on the warpath. But the fat junior did not accompany them. He blinked after the excited juniors with great disdain.

"The silly asses!" he murmured. "They can go and eat coke! Fancy going for the Upper Fourth when they might go down to brekkor. Ugh!"

And William George Bunter went on downstairs.

The Remove, greatly excited and extremely vengeful, reached the door of the Upper Fourth Form dormitory, and Harry Wharton threw it open.

Temple, Dabney & Co., and the rest of the Upper Fourth, were out of bed, and were in various stages of deshabelle in the dormitory.

Temple was sitting on his bed, lacing his boots, and Dabney was towelling himself. Fry was still washing, and Scott was just out of bed. The rest were busy, and for a moment did not see the door open.

"There they are!" roared Bob Cherry. "Sock it to them!"

"Hurrah!"

"Come on!"

"Down with the rotters!"

And the Removites rushed to the attack. The Upper Fourth were taken utterly by surprise.

Half-dressed, washing and dressing, or just tumbling out of bed, they had no chance against the rush of the Removites.

Temple was rolled off his bed, and Dabney and Fry went rolling over him, and in a second the whole dormitory was in confusion.

Right and left the Upper Fourth fellows went down under the Remove attack; and the Removites caught pillows and bolsters from the beds, and smote them hip and thigh.

Yells and cries arose, till the Upper Fourth dormitory was like a babel and a pandemonium combined.

Never had the Upper Fourth been so swiftly and so completely knocked out.

They were simply nowhere.

Rolling on the floor, amid many a swipe and spank, they soon yelled for quarter, even Temple giving in at discretion when he found Bob Cherry sitting on his chest, playfully squeezing a sponge over his neck.

"Ow!" gasped Temple. "We give in."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is where we grin!" yelled Bob Cherry.

And the Remove grinned—with a roar that shook the dormitory.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Gerroff!"

"Lemme gerrup!"

"Chuck it!"

"Hold on!"

"Ow! Yow!"

"Let them alone, kids!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"They surrender. That's all right."

"Where are my trousers?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Where are my boots?"

"And my braces?"

"And my necktie?"

"They're mad!" gasped Temple, as he staggered to his feet. "Stark, staring, raving mad!"

"Oh, rather!" gasped Dabney.

"Mad as hatters," groaned Fry, caressing a terribly swollen nose. "Ow!"

"Where's my trousers?"

"Blow your trousers!"

"Look here—"

"Get out!"

"Order!" shouted Harry Wharton. "Look here, you Upper Fourth bounders, we've let you off with a light licking; but you've got to restore what you've taken away."

"Oh, you're dotty!"

"What have we taken?"

"You've raided the Remove dormitory—"

"We haven't," grunted Temple.

Wharton started.

"You haven't raided our dorm, Temple?"

"No," howled Temple. "No, you ass, of course we haven't!"

"Honest Injun?"

"Yes, dummy!"

Wharton gave an expressive whistle.

"My hat! Then we've made a mistake."

"Yes, you've made a mistake, and you'll jolly well get scragged for it presently!" yelled Fry.

"Look here, if you didn't raid the dorm, we're sorry."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "We're very sorry."

"The sorrowfulness is terrific."

"Somebody's raided our dorm," said Wharton. "Whoever it is, he's collared a lot of our trucks, and socks, and braces, and things."

"Well, we didn't! Do you think the Upper Fourth would touch Remove clothes, except with a barge-pole?"

"Look here—"

"Oh, get out!"

"Well, we may as well get out—we seem to be on the wrong track," grinned Nugent. "Come on, you chaps, we shall have to look further for the raider."

And the chuckling Removites crowded out of the dormitory.

It was growing clear to them that they had jumped to rather too sudden a conclusion, and that the Upper Fourth had been innocent of the raid. Still, it had been fun, and they had made the rival form "hop," and that was all to the good. They went down to breakfast quite satisfied with themselves, but in a puzzled frame of mind. Who had raided the Remove dormitory?

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In his search for Billy Bunter's ventriloquial voice, the angry master whirled and hurled all the rubbish out of the way, and through the clouds of dust he was coughing and peering into the dark cupboard.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. Bunter Misses his Breakfast!

MR. CHESHAM glanced at his pupils as they took their places at the breakfast table. Many of the Removites were flushed in the face, and still simmoring with suppressed excitement. The Form-master knew nothing of the row in the Upper Fourth dormitory, and he was anxious at once about the health of his charges.

"You look a little feverish this morning, Cherry," he observed. Bob Cherry groaned inwardly.

"Do I, sir?"

"Yes, and there is quite a dark mark under your eye."

There was nothing surprising in that, as Temple's knuckles had rapped there with considerable force. But Bob naturally did not enlighten Mr. Chesham about that.

"Your face is flushed," went on the Remove-master.

"I'm sorry, sir."

"You need not be sorry, Cherry—it is only a little feverishness, due probably to the late change in the weather."

"I'm glad of that, sir."

"A couple of Dr. Winkle's White Wafers for Peaky Patients will set you quite right. I notice that many others are looking feverish, too. I will distribute a number of the White Wafers after morning school, and you may take them into the Close with you and consume them at your leisure."

"Thank you, sir."

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"Whenever any of you require medicine, or medical attention of any sort, be sure to come to me at once. In the case of indigestion I have an infallible cure," said Mr. Chesham. "Do you suffer from indigestion, Cherry?"

"Oh no, sir. Not in the least, sir."

"Do you suffer from indigestion, Bunter?"

"Not in the slightest, sir."

"Is there any boy present who suffers from indigestion?"

There was a general chorus of disclaimers. The digestion of the Remove seemed to be remarkably good.

"Ah! Perhaps some of you will suffer from it another time," said Dr. Chesham. "In that case, pray let me know at once."

"Certainly, sir."

"This medicine that I speak of is my own invention. I tried it with every success upon my favourite dog. I first gave him a large amount of mixed items of food, to cause him a severe attack of indigestion, and then administered the medicine," said Mr. Chesham. "The effect was wonderful."

"Indeed, sir!"

"Yes. He took the medicine quite willingly, and it cured him at once."

"How splendid, sir. Have you brought him to Greyfriars, sir?"

"No; he died shortly afterwards. Bunter, you are drinking your tea hot."

"A-a-a-a-am I, sir?"

"You are!"

"I'm—I'm sincerely sorry, sir."

Mr. Chesham felt in his waistcoat pocket. "Take this pilule, Bunter," he said. "Swallow it immediately. It will correct the effect of the hot tea upon the system."

Bunter took the pill in his hand, with a very dubious expression upon his fat face. He didn't like pills.

"Take it," said Mr. Chesham encouragingly.

"If—if you please, sir—"

"Come, take it. Swallow it at once."

"D-d-d-does it taste nasty, sir?"

"Not at all—nothing to speak of."

"I—I'd rather not take it, sir, if you don't mind."

"But I do mind, Bunter. It is for your own good. If it were for my good, it would be a different matter. You must take it. I insist."

Bunter put the pill into his mouth. He would have done wisely to make an effort to swallow it at once—always the safest course when taking pills. But Bunter never had any nerve.

He let it rest in his mouth, and licked it with his tongue, all the time wearing a decidedly unhappy expression.

The full flavour of that pill made itself perceptible in about a minute; and Bunter's expression became poignant.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Ow! I'm being poisoned! Yow!"

"Silence, Bunter."

"I'm being poisoned! Ow! Ow!"

"Nonsense! You should have swallowed the pill whole. The taste is a little bitter, but in the course of time you would come actually to like it."

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"I forbid you to make that absurd noise at the breakfast-table, Bunter."

"Yow, yow!"

Billy Bunter jumped up, and regardless of the presence of the Form-master, and the amazed stares from the other tables, he commenced to eject the remains of the pill.

Mr. Chesham started to his feet in wrath.

"Bunter!"

"Groo—yaroooh—ow!"

"Leave the room at once, Bunter. Do you hear me?"

"Yow-wow-w-wow!"

"Leave the room instantly. You shall not finish your breakfast after this disgusting exhibition. Go, sir!"

And Bunter tottered from the room, to wash his mouth out under the nearest bath tap.

Mr. Chesham sat down again, looking very annoyed and indignant. The Removites were looking indignant too. Nobody cared very much for Bunter, but the whole Form thought it rough that he should be done out of his breakfast in this manner.

The meal finished in silence. But the Removites were making up their minds that Mr. Chesham wanted ragging a little more, and even Harry Wharton was roused now. He had promised Mr. Quelch to do his best, and he had done his best. But the faddist Form-master was going altogether too far, and Harry had to think of his duty to the Form, as well as to the Form-master.

When the Remove left the table and gathered in the Hall, there were dark looks among them.

"I think that about caps the stack," said Bulstrode.

"Of course it doesn't matter about Bunter," said Skinner, "but it might have happened to any one of us. That's the point you've got to remember."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter! How do you feel?"

"Rotten," said Billy Bunter. "If there's much more of this I shall run away from the school. I've been nearly poisoned, and I've had to miss half my breakfast. Can flesh and blood be expected to stand it?"

"Hardly!" said Bob Cherry, sympathetically. "Not your flesh and blood, anyway."

"Oh, really, Cherry! You see, it's specially unfortunate just now," said Bunter pathetically. "I was expecting a postal order this morning, but there's been some delay in the post, and I'm actually stony. Otherwise I could stand myself a feed in the tuck-shop, and make up for my lost meal. I say, you fellows, could one of you lend me a couple of bob until my postal order comes?"

"It may be for years, it may be for ever," sang Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

Harry Wharton felt in his pockets.

"It's a time for all true friends of liberty to rally," grinned Bob Cherry. "Here you are, Bunter, a boblet."

"Thank you, Cherry. I think you were feeling in your pockets, Wharton?"

"Yes, but it's all right now."

"Oh, hand over what you were going to lend me. You needn't let Cherry's bob interfere with your loan. Be businesslike, you know. The matters are quite distinct, and I shall enter them on separate leaves of my pocket-book."

Harry Wharton laughed, and tossed over a shilling.

"Thank you very much, Wharton. Will you have this out

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of my next postal order, or out of the first cheque I get for doing photographic work for the Press?"

"It doesn't matter which, Bunter."

"I'd rather you'd say! Anyway, I'll put it down to the account."

"Certainly; that's important," said Harry, laughing.

"Did you say you wanted to lend me a shilling, Nugent?"

"No, I didn't."

"Ah! It was you, then, Ogilvy?"

"No, it wasn't," said Ogilvy, walking away.

And Bunter grunted, and took his way to the tuck-shop, where Mrs. Mumble supplied him with tuck to the exact value of two shillings. But there was a considerable quantity to be obtained for that sum, with judicious management; and when Bunter came out of the tuck-shop his face was full of satisfaction.

THE NINTH CHAPTER

A Merry Morning.

THE Removites were very quiet and grim as they came into the Form-room for morning lessons.

Mr. Chesham was at his desk, his face beaming.

He was pretty well satisfied with himself and his management of the Form so far, and he was planning new schemes for bringing the juniors into a state of bounding health.

His cordial smile showed that he meant mischief, and the Removites hardened their hearts against him.

Had Mr. Chesham been a little more observant, he might have noted that the juniors were unusually quiet, and that there was a businesslike gleam behind the big spectacles of William George Bunter.

Billy Bunter was naturally incensed by the happening at the breakfast-table. It had been quite easy for some of the Removites to get him to undertake reprisals on Mr. Chesham.

Billy's gift of ventriloquism was invaluable under the circumstances. He was quite ready to exercise it; and Bob Cherry had solemnly promised him a feed before dinner if he made the faddist Form-master "skip."

And Billy Bunter sat down at his desk that morning fully resolved to make the obnoxious master "skip."

Mr. Chesham was unfortunate from the beginning. The quietness of the Remove encouraged him. His previous experience with them had not led him to expect them to be so quiet under his rule, and he flattered himself that by patience and the force of reason he had overcome them. He deceived himself!

But, encouraged by the submissive manners of the Remove, he proceeded to take up a considerable portion of the time supposed to be devoted to geography by a lecture on the subject of the earliest symptoms of a cold, and the best method of treatment.

The Remove had no love for geography; but still less love had they for anything in the way of illnesses or talk thereof; and they soon showed their restiveness.

"And if these preliminary measures fail to arrest the progress of the cold," went on Mr. Chesham, "the only recourse is to go immediately to bed, and take four grains of the Pink Powder for Cantankerous Colds, and—"

"Cheese it!"

Mr. Chesham did "cheese it." So utterly amazed was he by that demand in his own class-room.

The class almost held their breath. They knew, of course, that it was the Owl of the Remove at work; but Mr. Chesham had no suspicion of anything of the sort.

The Form-master gazed about him. He glared at the class, and the class kept their eyes fixed upon their desks. It was some moments before Mr. Chesham found his voice.

"Who was that?"

He gasped out the words.

There was no reply.

The voice had been like anybody's but Bunter's, and there was no chance of the amateur ventriloquist being discovered unless he were given away, which was not likely to happen.

"Who spoke?"

Silence.

"Very well," said Mr. Chesham. "Some boy has been impertinent. I shall discover that boy. When I discover him he will be sent in to the head-master to be caned. We will now proceed."

"Ring off!"

Mr. Chesham jumped.

"What?"

The Removites grinned.

The voice had come from a different direction, but exactly what direction the new master of the Remove did not know.

"I—I cannot understand this!" he gasped. "Who made that most insolent remark to me?"

No one enlightened him.

The Form-master breathed hard through his nose. He looked up and down the class, vainly seeking someone upon whom he could wreak his wrath with any show of justice.

But there was no one! He simply could not guess who had spoken, and the tones of the voice gave him no clue.

"Boys, you are laughing."

The grins faded away.

"There is nothing comic in this impertinence to a Form-master."

Bob Cherry chuckled softly.

"That's all you know," he murmured.

"We will now resume——"

"Rats!"

"What?"

"More rats!"

"Eh?"

"And many of 'em!"

"Dear me! Upon my word!"

Mr. Chesham simply gaped round him.

"Skinner! You are laughing!"

"W-w-w-was I, sir?"

"Yes, you were. Take fifty lines!"

"Oh!"

"You were laughing. Hurree Jameet Ram Singh."

"I confessfully acknowledge, august teacher sahib, that the laughfulness was terrific," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Take a hundred lines!"

"The linefulness is terrific."

"Any boy that laughs again will be caned."

"Silly jossar!"

"What?"

"Frabjous ass!"

Mr. Chesham swung round.

He thought he had caught the direction of the voice that time, and he was almost certain that it proceeded from a large cupboard in the corner of the Remove-room. In that cupboard were kept easels and books and other paraphernalia sometimes required in the instruction of the Remove.

It flashed into Mr. Chesham's mind at once that some practical joker had hidden himself in the cupboard, with the intention of ragging the master during afternoon lessons.

"Ah, I think I have found the insolent young rascal!" he ejaculated.

And he ran across the class-room towards the cupboard.

The Removites grinned at one another.

Mr. Chesham was welcome to come to his heart's content any practical joker whom he should find in that cupboard.

The Remove-master pulled at the handle.

The door remained fast. Mr. Chesham turned an angry face towards the grinning class, and the grinning faces immediately assumed expressions of almost preternatural solemnity.

"Is this door locked, Wharton?"

"I think so, sir."

"Is it usually kept locked?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is the key?"

"Mr. Quelch always keeps it in his desk, sir."

"There is a boy hidden in this cupboard," said Mr. Chesham angrily. "If the key is in the desk here, he must have been locked in from outside."

"Yes, sir."

"In that case he must have a confederate here, I shall find him, and punish him severely."

"Keep your wool on, old Whiskers!"

Mr. Chesham let go the handle of the cupboard door, and almost danced with rage.

"I—I will make an example of that boy!" he stuttered.

He rushed towards the desk, and sought through it for the key. He was not many minutes in finding it, and then he rushed back towards the cupboard.

The key grated into the lock, and there was a click, and Mr. Chesham threw the door wide open. Then he gave a jump.

Within was a collection of rolled-up maps, easels, blackboards, and boxes. There was no sign of a human being.

Mr. Chesham gazed into the cupboard open-mouthed. But he saw nothing but lumber there. Merely that, and nothing more.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Up the Chimney!

MR. CHESHAM gazed into the cupboard, and the Remove gazed at Mr. Chesham. The expression upon the Form-master's face was too funny, and the Removites could not resist it. There was a yell of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Chesham was so astounded that he did not even notice it. He stood staring into the cupboard. He rubbed his forehead in a thoughtful way.

"Upon my soul!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence, boys!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Chesham turned round furiously, and the juniors fell into silence. The look upon Mr. Chesham's face showed that he was becoming seriously angry.

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"Will you be silent?"

The laughter died away. But in the silence that followed came a still, small voice from the cupboard,

"Yah!"

Mr. Chesham jumped.

"Yah!"

"Upon my word!"

The Form-master stared into the cupboard again in blank astonishment.

"Someone is hidden in here," he said savagely. "He must be a—a diminutive person to be hidden among these things. Come out at once, boy."

"Yah!"

"Will you obey me?"

"Rats!"

Mr. Chesham turned crimson with rage, and, without wasting more time in words, he began to drag the things out of the cupboard.

In a minute or less there was a disorderly heap on the floor and the cupboard was almost clear; but the owner of the still, small voice had not come to light.

Mr. Chesham pressed his hand to his brow.

What did it mean? Was it a dream or were his senses wandering?

"Yah!"

He started violently.

There was a shelf along the top of the cupboard inside, which could only be reached by means of a pair of steps which were kept in the cupboard. The shelf was crammed with boxes, atlases, and disused books and other impedimenta. Mr. Chesham stared at the mass.

"Yah!"

Yes, there was no mistake, the impertinent exclamation came from amid the lumber on that shelf.

Mr. Chesham dragged the steps into position, and mounted upon them. The Remove fairly gasped.

They had hardly ventured to hope that the Form-master could be fooled to such an extent as this.

When that lumber, some of which had not been disturbed for whole terms, was dragged out into the light they could imagine what the state of the vicinity of the cupboard would be like.

Was it possible that the exasperated Form-master was going so far?

Their doubts upon that point were soon resolved. Mr. Chesham peered into the mass of lumber on the shelf.

"Boy!" he almost hooted.

"Yah!"

"Boy! Come out!"

"Yah!"

"I know you are hidden there! Come out at once!"

"Yah!"

The reiteration of that absurd monosyllable exasperated the already angry master almost beyond bounds.

He laid violent hands upon the packed-up lumber, and dragged it out from its dusty resting-place. Books and maps and boxes and instruments came down in a dusty shower upon the floor of the room.

In a few moments the angry master had whirled and hurled all the rubbish out of the way, and through the clouds of dust he was coughing and peering at the shelf.

It was unoccupied. No one was there!

Mr. Chesham almost fell off the steps in his astonishment. He had distinctly heard a human voice, and yet no one was there. Either his eyes or his ears had deceived him.

He descended to the floor, and sneezed the dust from his nose, and rubbed it from his eyelids, and stared.

What did it all mean?

"I am the subject of a delusion, the victim of a fearful hallucination," he murmured. "I remember now that I only took three instead of four of the terra-cotta tabloids after breakfast."

"Yah!"

Mr. Chesham whirled round.

The voice came from the fireplace, and as there was no fire, the suspicion naturally crossed his mind that the troublesome practical joker was hidden in the recesses of the huge, wide chimney.

There was plenty of room there for anyone to hide, as a matter of fact, if anyone had wished to do so.

Mr. Chesham drew a deep breath of relief.

It was not a hallucination after all—it was not a fearful delusion resulting from having missed one of his usual allowance of tabloids.

The joker was hidden in the chimney, and he had been deceived as to the direction of the voice; instead of proceeding from the corner cupboard, as he had imagined, it had proceeded from the chimney.

Mr. Chesham rushed to the grate.

He put his head over the grate, and blinked up the chimney, and shouted to the supposed delinquent there.

"Boy! Come down!"

"Yah!"

There was no doubt this time. The voice proceeded from the chimney. Mr. Chesham's eyes glinted.

He meant to exact a severe penalty for all this ridiculous fooling. The Remove, no longer able to restrain themselves, were roaring with laughter. But Mr. Chesham paid them no attention now. He was on the track of vengeance.

"Boy," he said, in an almost choking voice, "will you descend?"

"My only hat!" murmured Tom Brown to Harry Wharton. "He's going to rake out the chimney!"

"Phew!"

"Has it been swept lately?"

"Not since last term, I believe."

The New Zealander chuckled.

"My Aunt Selina! Then there will be fun!"

The chum from New Zealand was quite right.

There was fun.

Mr. Chesham grabbed a very long pointer, used for pointing on the large maps, from the cupboard, and ran to the chimney again. He was in so great a rage that he hardly stopped to think what he was doing.

He put his head under the chimney again.

"Boy!" he shouted.

"Yah!"

"Will you come down?"

"Yah!"

"Come down this instant!"

Several flecks of soot, dislodged by the Form-master's thundering voice, came down, and Mr. Chesham sneezed. But the supposed boy did not come down.

Mr. Chesham reached up the chimney with the pointer, and poked.

But apparently it did not reach the practical joker, for nothing was heard from him but a repetition of that irritating monosyllable.

"Yah!"

Mr. Chesham throw prudence to the winds. He leaned under the grate, so as to reach as high as possible with the pointer, thrust his arm up the chimney to its full extent, and thrashed the brickwork.

If a boy had been there, he would certainly have been brought down by those drastic measures. Unfortunately for the new Form-master, there was no boy there; but there was plenty of soot.

And the soot came down with a rush.

There was a sudden and formidable yell from the chimney-place, and Mr. Chesham withdrew his head.

A roar went up from the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They could not help it.

Even Mark Linley's troubled face was convulsed with merriment like the rest.

For a dozen pounds of soot or more had descended like an avalanche upon the head and shoulders of the Form-master.

Mr. Chesham was smothered from head to foot.

His face was black, his eyes rolled and blinked through blackness, his mouth was black and choked, his nose was sneezing away as if worked by steam.

His aspect was so utterly absurd that the juniors could not have restrained their mirth if their very lives had depended upon it.

The whole Form-room rang with their laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Victory.

"HA, ha, ha!"

Mr. Chesham staggered away from the fireplace. He was blinded, choked, smothered, infuriated.

He waved his hands, and wagged his head, and tried to speak, but his words came forth only in a confused mumble.

The Remove simply roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"My only hat! Hold me!"

"The funnifunness is terrific!"

"I say, you fellows, how's that for high?"

Bob Cherry gave the Greyfriars ventriloquist a slap on the back that hurled him forward upon his desk. Bunter gave a yell.

"Ow! Oh, really, Cherry——"

"You deserve it!"

"Yow! What have I done?"

"Ass! That was appreciation, not punishment."

"You—you ass! You've fractured my backbone."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Boys!" Mr. Chesham's voice came mumbled as from

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the depths of caverns of soot. "Boys! I command this brutal merriment to cease!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The author of this outrage shall be terribly punished. I will report the whole matter to the Head!" almost shrieked Mr. Chesham.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is a class of ruffians—of hooligans—of pigs——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Chesham glared furiously at the Remove. When he was allowed to have his own way, and his curious little manners and customs were not objected to, he was a good-tempered man. But just now he looked the reverse of good-tempered. He looked as if it needed but little more to drive him to homicide.

"Boys! I command you——"

"Yes, sir—ha, ha, ha—all right!"

"This is outrageous—disgraceful!"

"Sorry, sir—ha, ha, ha!"

"The wretched boy who has hurled this soot down upon me shall suffer for his unexampled insolence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I go to the Head-master now, to report this unparalleled outrage. A prefect will be sent to take charge of you for the rest of the morning. I am not in a fit state to do so. I gladly leave an unruly class."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Chesham ground his teeth, and rushed from the room.

He left the Remove in a roar.

They roared, and roared, till the Form-room rang again. Their merriment was unrestrained. In the exuberance of his spirits, Bob Cherry sprang into the middle of the room, and executed a war dance.

The rest, infected by his jubilation, speedily joined him, and in a few minutes the Remove, with only two or three exceptions, were celebrating their victory over the faddist Form-master in terpsichorean wise.

"Come to my arms, my Bunter of many charms!" sobbed Bob Cherry, dragging the fat junior from his place, in spite of his resistance.

"Ow! Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Come on! Trip the light fantastic toe——"

"Ow! I'm short of breath——"

"Rats! Stick it out!"

"Ow, ow! Yow!"

But Bunter's expostulations were of no avail. Bob Cherry meant to waltz with him, and waltz he did, in spite of the fat junior's objections.

Meanwhile, the Form-master, too excited to reflect what a sensation his peculiar state was likely to make in the school, rushed down the passage.

The outrage to which he had been subjected was amazing, unparalleled. Mr. Chesham firmly believed that a boy hidden in the chimney had hurled an avalanche of soot down upon him.

He rushed away to report his wrongs and to demand redress of the Head.

Wingate of the Sixth met him in the passage, early out from classes. Wingate gave a jump as he saw him.

"M-m-m-m-y only hat! W-w-what's that?"

The Form-master rushed on, and Wingate, recovering from his first startled surprise, caught him by the shoulder.

"Who are you? What does this mean?"

"Let me go!"

"Mr. Chesham?"

"Yes, yes."

"Great Scott! What has happened?"

"An outrage! An unparalleled outrage!" gasped and spluttered the Form-master. "Let me see—you are a prefect—will you take the Remove temporarily?"

"Take the Remove?"

"Yes; till I have seen the Head."

And Mr. Chesham rushed on in a whirlwind of soot, leaving Wingate staring after him in blank amazement for some moments. Then the captain of Greyfriars turned and slowly made his way to the Remove-room.

Mr. Chesham rushed on to the Head's presence, which happened then to be the Sixth Form-room, where the Head was taking that Form in Greek. Wingate was out early, but the others were there, busy with the doctor.

Mr. Chesham hurled open the door, and hurled himself in, with a cloud and a strong smell of soot.

There was a general exclaiming.

"Hallo!"

"What's that?"

"A lunatic!"

"My hat!"

Dr. Locke turned round, and stared at the strange and awe-inspiring figure in amazement and dismay.

"Bless my soul! What—what——"

"It's a lunatic!" exclaimed Loder, jumping up. "We'll protect you, sir!"

A Splendid Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Boy, I am not a lunatic! I——"
"Mr. Chesham!" ejaculated the amazed Head, recognising the voice of the new Form-master. "Mr. Chesham! What does this mean?"

"An outrage, sir—a terrible outrage——"
"Dear me! It is soot!"
"Yea, sir! Soot! I——"
"This is a very curious state in which to come into the Sixth Form class-room, Mr. Chesham."
"I—I—do you think I am like this from choice?" yelled Mr. Chesham.

"I think you had better go and clean yourself before the matter is discussed," said the Head drily. "I wonder that did not occur to you."

Mr. Chesham gurgled. This was the sympathy he had to expect. He glared at Dr. Locke with his blackened face, and without another word turned and rushed from the room. He made a straight line for the nearest bath-room.

Meanwhile, Wingate had entered the Remove-room. He found the Remove celebrating their victory over the obnoxious Form-master more like a tribe of Red Indians than a Form of English schoolboys.

"Stop that row!"
Wingate's sharp voice cut like a knife into the din, and the celebration ceased on the instant.

The juniors went back to their places, and the Greyfriars captain eyed them grimly. He did not fully understand, of course, what was the matter; but he knew pretty well that the Remove had, somehow, been making matters hot for the faddist Form-master—of course, with the utmost possible innocence on their part.

"Well, you young rascals," he said, "what have you been doing?"

"Nothing," said Wharton promptly.
"How did Mr. Chesham become so sooty?"

"He put his head under the chimney, and raked it with a pointer."

"Why?"
"Hadn't you better ask him, Wingate?"
Wingate could not help laughing.

"Very well," he said. "it's no business of mine, I suppose."
And till the morning classes were dismissed the Remove broke out every few minutes into bursts of chuckling, which the captain of Greyfriars could not suppress.

When they went out into the Close, half of them hugged Bunter, and the fat ventriloquist felt that he was a great man. He proposed a feed, and in spite of the picnic that was to come off that afternoon, it was agreed that he should have it, and he did.

The Head inquired into the affair: but it was proved to his satisfaction that no boy had any trace of soot on his clothes, and that it was extremely improbable that anybody had been in the chimney. He attributed the whole matter to a strange fancy on the part of Mr. Chesham, and nobody was punished.

The Remove were hopeful that the affair might even end in ridding them of the faddist. It did not come to that; but they had scored a victory, and they confidently predicted that the faddist would lie lower after that—and but for the dark shadow that hung upon the name of Mark Linley, there would have been no care in the hearts of his staunch chums.

THE END.

(Another long, complete tale of Harry Wharton and Co. next Tuesday, entitled: "With Flying Colours," by Frank Richards. Please order your copy of "The Magnet Library" in advance. Price One Halfpenny.)



A Splendid Tale of Life in the British Army.

A BRIEF RESUMÉ OF THE EARLIER CHAPTERS.

Ronald Chenys is forced to leave Sandhurst through the treachery of his step-brother, Ian, and enlists in the Wessex Regiment under the name of Chester. Unfortunately for Ronald, Ian joins the Wessex as a subaltern, and, assisted by Sergeant Bagot and Private Foxey Williams, does his best to further disgrace Ronald. The unscrupulous Bagot, however, gets caught in his own toils, and is publicly degraded to the ranks. Foxey Williams obtains a great hold over Ian Chenys, and drives him to desperation. One day Foxey follows Ian to a barn, and mockingly offers to read out to him one of his own letters, which Foxey had opened and read. "Read then!" said Ian, hoarsely, holding an Indian club behind his back.

(Now go on with the story.)

Ronald to the Rescue.

The Cockney struck a match, screening it with his coat, so that the light should not be visible from the window. Then he fished a letter from his pocket, and cleared his throat.

Ian took one stealthy stride forward, and struck him down with a stunning blow upon the head.

Foxy uttered not a sound, but reeled, tripped, and fell with a crash to the floor. Simultaneously there was a crash and a shivering of glass. The oil-stove had been capsized.

The wax vesta which Foxey had struck fluttered to the ground, and lay burning steadily, casting weird and ghostly shadows on wall and ceiling.

ground, and lay burning steadily, casting weird and ghostly shadows on wall and ceiling.

Ian stood for a moment stupefied at the violence of his own act. The clatter of the wooden club as it dropped from his trembling fingers startled him back to his senses. Even then he did not see the dark stream of oil slowly spreading outwards over the boards, stealing towards the white flame of the match.

The man was not killed; the blow had not been hard enough for that. But Ian had not noticed that as Foxey fell his head had struck against an iron bar-bell which lay upon the floor.

Shaking his wits together, Ian took a stride towards his insensible foe. The letter lay in the blackmailer's hand outstretched towards the light.

The young officer stooped down to clutch it, when a wave of flame leapt up about his knees, scorching his fingers. The paraffin, welling from the overturned stove had caught fire, and the oil-soaked boards hissed and crackled furiously.

Still, he must have that letter, at all costs. He had fallen back before the furious blaze, but he shielded his eyes with his sleeve, and, darting forward, seized it.

Now that it was safe within his grasp, the danger of the situation swept in upon him, filling him with panic.

Foxy lay almost lapped by the pool of fire. Ian seized him by his coat and tried to drag him from its clutches; but the man lay like a log, and he, sapped by drugs and dissipation, had scarcely the strength to move him.

Faster and faster the flames were leaping, licking up the wooden walls, catching hold of splinter and crevice. Dense clouds of smoke rolled up from a smouldering wrestling-mattress, and the air was acrid and stifling with the reek of burning wood.

By one frenzied effort Ian managed to drag Foxey from the immediate zone of fire. Then, his brain reeling, he stumbled blindly towards the staircase and down into the stableyard, intending to cry for help.

In the fresh night air, however, the instinct of self-preservation was the first to revive. Already he could hear shouts of dismay from the inn, and the clatter of feet as men turned out, alarmed by the ruddy glare from the windows of the blazing loft.

Why should he wait to be found there? Why should he not make his escape, unobserved, the way he had come? Foxey's rescue would not be hastened by five seconds by anything he could do. They would discover and save him, for a certainty. No, he must not wait. That would mean a thousand explanations.

Foxey must be left to wriggle out of the mess as best he could. The mishap was his own fault entirely.

Moreover, Ian had got the fatal letter safe. That was everything.

As the host of the Bunch of Grapes came flying out of the inn, a dozen tap-room toppers and stablemen at his heels, Ian dodged away between the waggon-wheels, and, gaining the lane, ran for his life.

Every eye was upturned to the windows of the blazing loft, and none marked his flight.

"Tarnation seize the furrin fool!" yelled the host of the Grapes. "What's he been doin' now? Where is he?"

"Ain't seed him since early mornin'," answered the stable-boy. "He do be out still, I think."

"Then run to the fire-station, you dunderheaded jackass, can't 'ee?" shouted the landlord.

"Garge's gorn a'ready, soon's he seen the blaze," answered the lad.

"Then cut across to the barracks. Ask them to lend a hand."

But already the chattering, panicky notes of the fire-bugle were sounding from the barrack square. The flare of light, which looked as if it might be coming from the barracks itself, had been seen by the gate sentry, and Bugler Midge was giving tongue for all he was worth.

As yet none of the gaping crowd had volunteered to fight his way up the staircase through the clouds of smoke, to see if any fellow-creature was in need of aid. It was assumed that the loft was empty, for not a light had been seen in it all that winter evening.

The landlord and his men devoted their attention to getting the horses out of the stable adjoining. A few of the toppers hurried for buckets, and there were a dozen volunteers fighting round the pump, but the general opinion was that nothing could be done until the engines arrived.

The Woolchester Barracks manual would be along in a few seconds, for it had only a matter of fifty yards to come.

A cheer from the street, now thronged with people trying to fight their way through the archway into the yard, announced the first coming of help.

It was the Wessex fire-picket, under arms, which turned out smartly at the double. It is their work to act as police; and they soon swept the crowd back into the street again. Now came the manual engine with a rush and rattle, and a strong fatigue-party behind, under Lieutenant Bob Fairly.

Ronald was one of the corporals in charge. It did not take Lieutenant Bob five seconds to grasp the situation.

"Where's the landlord? Is everyone out of the burning building?" he shouted.

"Dunno that anyone was ever in!" panted the host, struggling with a frantic horse which he was trying to coax out of the stable.

"Great Scott! Haven't you made sure? Here, someone, get a couple of horse-rugs, and follow me! Steady that man! Who the deuce is that man bolting up the stair?"

"Lance-corporal Chester, sir!" answered Colour-sergeant Jones.

"Confound his impudence! I told him to follow, not dash on ahead like that!" growled the lieutenant, stamping with impatience. "It's madness to face that smoke without some sort of protection."

Ronald, however, was already at the top of the staircase. Here the smoke hung in a dense pall; for there was no outlet. An oblong of murky light was just visible. It was the open door. From beyond came the roar and crackle of flames.

Dropping on hands and knees, and getting his face as

close to the boards as he could manage, he scrambled forward. After a few paces, he began to regret his impetuous haste. As Lieutenant Bob had said, without a wet blanket or handkerchief to filter the rooking air, no man could keep his senses many minutes.

Besides, there might be no one there after all. Why should there be?

He felt like turning tail. There was already a buzzing in his ears, and his brain was beginning to reel. The hot breath of the flames was scorching face and hands, and the pall of smoke seemed to be bearing down upon him with resistless weight, crushing him to the floor.

He crouched there stupefied, his errand of mercy forgotten. It flashed upon him that if he went back now even, he might never find the door in that fearful smother.

The thought filled him with frenzied panic, and he started to drag himself back across the boards, away from the advancing flames.

Then an eerie sound fell on his ears—half sigh, half groan. In an instant Ronald was on the alert, his own danger forgotten. There was someone to be saved, after all.

He scrambled forward on his knees with fresh strength, heading now towards the heart of the fire; for it was from this direction that the cry had come.

Then his hand closed on a man's fingers, stretched out towards him from the death fog, in dumb appeal. He reached out and found the head, then fumbled for the collar, not noticing that his fingers were sticky with blood.

Some papers were lying half spilt from a pocket. He pushed them into his own tunic, scarcely thinking what he did, and then, gripping his unconscious burden, began to drag him foot by foot along the burning floor.

The flames were his only guide. Little by little he backed towards the door. A thousand drums were beating in his ears; a million lights danced before his eyes; his temples seemed as if they were being slowly crushed inwards by thumb-screws.

He could hear shouting and the thud of feet on the planks; yet all seemed to him to be miles away.

Then there was more shivering of glass, and a welcome cascade of water splashed upon him, partly reviving his senses.

At last someone clutched hold of him, and shouted: "Right, lads! We've got him! Haul away! Hallo, here's another one, too! Steady! One of you come forward and bear a hand."

Ronald only waited to satisfy himself that all was well, and then he promptly fainted.

Lieutenant Bob, after one effort to penetrate the smoke alone, to follow to Ronald's aid, had had to fall back defeated.

Then, no answer coming to his shouts, he imagined that his impetuous lance-corporal had succumbed. Again he darted forward to the rescue.

He had only gone a yard or two when he stumbled upon Ronald.

As quickly as possible rescuer and rescued were carried out into the stable-yard.

"Why, blow me, if it ain't Foxey he's found!" said Mouldy Mills to Spud Murphy, as they laid the two down by the pump for the doctor to take charge of them.

"Bedad, you're right," answered Spud. "And it's more than fire and smoke that's the matter wid him! Just look at his head."

By the time the stretchers had arrived, Ronald had recovered sufficiently to stand up, and though the medical officer was for sending him straight into hospital, he let him go at last on condition that he returned to barracks.

Foxey was in much worse case. There was not a flutter of pulse or flicker of eyelid to show that breath was still in his miserable body.

When by first aid they had done all that could be done, they lifted the stretcher and carried it through the silent crowd.

Only one face in that watching anxious throng bore no traces of pity for this fellow-creature snatched from the flames. That was Ian's. As the ambulance-party pushed their way through with their burden, he crushed forward to stop them.

"Where is this man's jacket?" he demanded, for Foxey lay with a soldier's coat covering him. "Who has it? Why isn't it here?"

"They're bringing it along, sir," answered the ambulance corporal, considerably astonished at the inquiry.

"Then send back for it at once. You go"—turning to Ronald; then, as he realised whom he was addressing, he added: "No, curse it; not you!"

He dived back into the crowd at this, as suddenly as he

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had come, and elbowed his way through to the scene of the fire.

There was good reason for Ian wishing to possess himself of Foxey's jacket. The letter he had plucked from his senseless hands, after he had struck him down, was not Pushoffsky's at all. Foxey, anticipating some such attempt to rob him of his prize, had laid a trap into which both had fallen.

The wrestler's note revealing, in clumsy phrases, the plot against Ronald's life, was at that very moment in the possession of the intended victim, lying forgotten inside the breast-pocket of his tunic, where he had thrust it.

A Terrible Dilemma—Gussy decides to Tell his Story.

Ronald, beginning now to feel the reaction after the excitement of his gallant rescue of Foxey, made his way quietly to the barrack-room, and stretched himself on his cot.

As he undid the buttons of his serge, his fingers touched the wad of letters which he had thrust there. Still dazed somewhat with the effects of the smoke, he could not recollect quite how they had come into his possession.

It was only after he had read a page of the topmost letter of all that he realised that it did not belong to him.

But that it concerned him there was no doubt. His eyes grew dark and his mouth hardened as he realised the treachery which these sprawling, ill-written lines revealed.

He had no need to turn to the beginning of the letter. He could guess only too well to whom it was addressed. The foreign handwriting, and a reference in one of the lines, made it equally unnecessary to look at the signature. The page, as it lay before him, read as follows:

"I am not afraid of der job for which you paid me, but I do not put my neck into der noose to see it hung, not for yourself or no man. Das ist why I haf cleared out for a time at present. The pig-dog of a soldier spy was hidden on the top stair when you come, and heard all tings. I know it, because I know the top stair vas empty two minutes before, and after I found der bundle of his garments."

"That must have been Gussy," said Ronald to himself. "I wonder whether he overheard this precious conversation? I must pump him."

Then he read on:

"Until der clouds blow away, and all again is quiet, I shall disappear, but not for all times. No; I owe your enemy too much myself for that. That night, when he threw me at the Paragon hier, in Woolchester, by a fluke, as you call it, he ruin all my career as the champion wrestler of the world. The managers they larf at me, and throw my contracts in der fire. After that I was starving until you came and give me money."

"No, I shall not forget, but later shall come back and take my revenge. Rest assured, it shall be complete, and that you also shall be satisfied. He will trouble you no more."

Ronald recalled how, when he stumbled upon Foxey lying insensible in the blazing loft, the flare of the flames showed this same packet of letters half spilled from his pocket.

Mechanically he had gathered them up and thrust them into his breast-pocket. Fortune had thus betrayed a dastardly plot to the very victim against whom it was levelled.

Yet Ronald's sense of honour was so overmastering that he was in doubt as to how far he might take advantage of this act of Providence.

The letter in his hands was the property of another, and never intended for his eyes.

Who this other was, Ronald

could not doubt, yet he hesitated to turn the page and verify his suspicions. Pushoffsky had sworn vengeance against him, and there was only one enemy besides who would be likely to take advantage of the man's hate, and foster it to his own.

That man was his stepbrother, Lieutenant Ian Chenys.

Yet how had this letter, so utterly condemning to writer and receiver, come into the hands of so unmitigated a scoundrel as Private Foxey Williams? Was he in the dark conspiracy, or had he stolen the letter, and was in the act of using it as still another weapon for the extortion of blackmail, when his victim turned suddenly and lashed out at him?

That might account for his presence in Pushoffsky's School of Physical Culture, but which of his victims had he come to see? Not the Pole. Foxey was always too careful of his skin to be likely to beard that hulking giant in his own den. Besides, someone at the fire had said that Pushoffsky had not been seen all that day.

This was likely enough. If he really believed that betrayal was inevitable, he would surely have fled during the night to have escaped arrest.

He turned the page of the letter. Yes, it was dated the day before. Ronald's face grew sterner still.

Only one other man now could know of the existence of that condemning letter, and would dare what had been dared to get it back into his own hands. That was Ian.

His stepbrother and the Cockney must have met in the wrestlers' loft. Foxey had shown the new trump-card in his hand, and, goaded by his taunts and threats, Ian had struck him down.

In some way or another the loft had caught fire, and he had fled, leaving Foxey to his fate.

"Left him to perish in the flames," repeated Ronald, in a husky whisper. "Good heavens! Surely a Chenys—a son of my old dad—could never be guilty of such white-livered treachery! It can't be true! Ian may be a cur, but I don't think he is coward enough for that!"

At that moment the door-latch clicked, and Gussy came in, looking white and scared. Except for Ronald, the barrack-room was empty, the rest of No 4 Section, now that the fire was out, being engaged in rinsing the smoke out of their mouths in the canteen.

"I say, Chester," commenced Gussy, "have you heard that Foxey's dead?"

"Dead!" exclaimed Ronald, in horror. "When? How?"

"Just now, in the hospital," continued Gussy, in a hoarse whisper. "Never recovered consciousness. Just died as he lay. What's more, they say it wasn't smoke only that killed him. Someone had clumped him over the head—bang on the temple. That cut behind, the doctor says, was done when he fell, but the welt in front was a deliberate blow, and most likely would have proved fatal, anyway. They're getting a warrant out now for the man."

"A warrant?" echoed Ronald huskily.

He dared not ask for whom. "Yes, for that Polish brute. They say he must have done it; how they know I can't imagine."

Gussy was trembling like a leaf, and might have been the murderer himself, from his agitated manner.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Ronald, getting a firmer grip of himself.

"Why, I'll tell you. I've been going to tell you ever since I was collared last night, only I haven't had a chance. I thought it was you they were after!"

"Me?" exclaimed Ronald.

"Yes, only I was wrong. Good heavens! If only I had spoken before I might have stopped it all!"

(Another instalment of this fine serial next Tuesday.)

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As an advertisement we send Dark Tweed or Navy Blue Serge, Stylishly Cut, and Made-to-Measure Suit or Overcoat to any address on receipt of 1/- Deposit and upon payment of the last of 14 weekly instalments of 1/- per week, making a total of 15/- in all. A Handsome present is given

FREE

When ordering please state the following particulars:—

1. Your full height with boots on.
2. Whether erect or stooping.
3. Shoulders square or sloping.
4. Slender, corpulent, or medium.
5. Chest measure over top of vest.
6. Trousers length outside seam.
7. Trousers length inside seam.
8. Inches round trousers waist.

If you have any other special instructions to give, by all means do so. If not, just leave the other detail measures to our discretion, and we will take all responsibility, and if suit is not the largest advertising bargain you have ever received, return it to us and we will refund you 1/- more than you have paid.

SEND 1/- TO-DAY to

CRAIG, CRAIG & CO.

(Dept. 5),

Head Office: 81, DUNLOP ST., GLASGOW.

Patterns sent FREE on receipt of Postcard
BOOTS, 1/- per week. Send size



18 PENNY CARDS WIN A PRIZE

£1,400 CASH PRIZES.
 Xmas and New Year Cards.
£15,000 XMAS GIFTS.

18 PENNY CARDS WIN A PRIZE

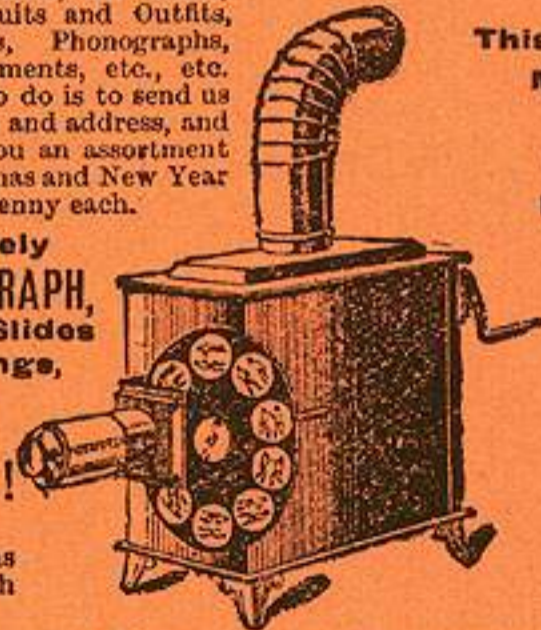
Grand Birthday Contest

SEND NO MONEY. WE TRUST YOU.

We give each person a **Free Prize** for selling or using 18 Penny Xmas and New Year Cards; besides, you can enter the grand Birthday **£1,400 Cash Competitions.** We also give, absolutely free, real Watches, Air Rifles, Boys' Scout Suits and Outfits, Roller Skates, Phonographs, Musical Instruments, etc., etc. All you need to do is to send us your full name and address, and we will send you an assortment of Beautiful Xmas and New Year Cards at One Penny each.

This Lovely **CINEMATOGRAPH,** with Film, Slides and Fittings, **FREE! FREE!**

Full instructions sent with each machine.



This Grand Machine with moving pictures Given Away Free for selling or using our Penny Cards.

We trust you with the Cards. Sell or use what you can within 28 days at One Penny each, and we will reward you according to Xmas List we send you. With the Cards you will receive full particulars of our **£1,400 Cash Birthday Contest.** Write at once (postcard will do).

NEW CARD CO.

6, "Byron House," Fleet Street, LONDON, E.C.



FREE for SELLING 36 XMAS & NEW YEAR CARDS SEND NO MONEY. WE TRUST YOU.



To advertise our New Series of lovely Xmas and New Year Cards we offer every reader of this paper Absolutely Free a Real Diamond Ring (Lady's or Gent's), a Lady's Brilliant 5-stone Orient Diamond Ring (exactly as illustrated), a genuine Scout's Pocket Knife, a beautiful Necklet with gem-set Pendant, or a Fashionable Bracelet or Long Guard, for selling 36 Xmas and New Year Cards at 1d. each. Our special Free Prize List also comprises Ladies' and Gent's Watches, Air Rifles, Real Furs, Phonographs, Roller Skates, Sewing Machines, Clocks, Cutlery, Musical Instruments, Umbrellas, Toys, etc., etc. All you need do is to send us your name and address and we will send you per return 36 Xmas and New Year Cards to sell or use at 1d. each. When sold send us the money obtained, and we will immediately forward you the gift chosen according to the list we send you.



NEED NOT COST YOU A PENNY OF YOUR OWN MONEY.



Send Name & Full Address NOW (a postcard will do) to **ROYAL CARD CO.** (Dept. 22), Royal Parade, Kew, LONDON.

SUITS ON EASY TERMS

5/- A MONTH

Good Suits for 5/- monthly. Don't delay buying the clothes you need because you lack the ready cash. Take advantage of our liberal credit terms and have your Suit now. Every Suit made to your own measure. Good Cloth Lining, Buttons, &c. Everything good. Write for patterns and self-measure form, free. We guarantee fit, style, and finish. Prices 34/6, 36/6, &c.; 5/- monthly. Write for Patterns N.O.W. Boots 13/6; Tan Willow, 17/6; or 2/6 monthly. Boot Booklet FREE.

MASTERS', Ltd., 97, Hope Stores, RYE.



SPECIAL BOOKS.—"Boxing," 4d.; "Conjuring," 4d.; "Thought-Reading," 4d.; "Riddle Book" (containing 2,000), 4d.; "Handcuff & Gaol-Breaking Mystery," 4d.; "Book of Tricks," 4d.; "Ventriloquism," 4d. Lot, 1/8, post free.—**WONDER CO., ILKESTON.**

STAMP OUTFIT—FREE!

For a short time only we are offering to readers of this paper one of our **SPLENDID STAMP OUTFITS** absolutely free. It includes a **Packet of Genuine Foreign Stamps** (every one different), containing: **Japanese Empire, U.S.A. Columbus, Victoria, South Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand** view, &c., &c.; **Splendid Perforation Gauge**, Packet of the very best quality mounts, and our **New Illustrated Bargain List**. Do not miss this splendid offer, but send at once two penny stamps for postage, &c.—**ARTHUR LENNARD & CO., SMETHWICK.**

THE BUFFALO AIR RIFLE.

Shoots death-dealing bullets with terrific force, killing Birds and Rabbits easily at long range. Round shot, darts, or slugs used. Send for list. **LARGEST STOCK IN THE WORLD.** Crown Gun Co., 66, Great Charles Street, Birmingham. 4/6 each, post free.

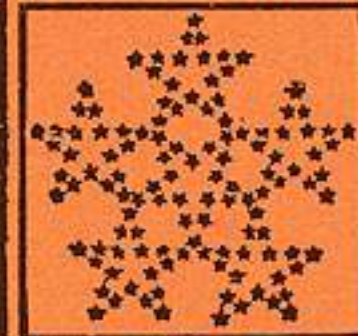
£100
TO BE **GIVEN AWAY**
IN CASH—NO ENTRANCE FEE.



Here is a chance for clever readers of this paper to win cash and other prizes with a little effort. Count the hairs upon the head in illustration, and to those who send us **THE CORRECT NUMBER** (or nearest correct) we will give £100 cash. Do not reckon the eyebrows, but **ONLY** the hair you can see upon the head. It is not so easy, but try carefully. If more than one correct solution be received the prize will be awarded *pro rata*, so every correct count wins. We also offer other handsome prizes, but about these we will write when we receive your solution. The cash and other prizes are absolutely **GIVEN AWAY** on the most straightforward, genuine conditions. It is **FREE TO TRY**. Write your count on a postcard. We tell you at once whether you win. If you send a stamp we will tell you even if you lose, so you can try again. **TRY AT ONCE. THIS OFFER MAY NOT BE REPEATED.—CONTEST JUDGE** (Dept. 7), 42, Junction Road, London, N.

MONEY FREE

Cash & Watches Given Away.



You can win £10 outright by finding all the stars in this square, or a beautiful watch if you come within seven of the correct number. There is no quibble. Each spot is a star, but it will take sharp eyes to find all. Note every star you see, and send result on a postcard with your name and address. We cannot give full list of prizes, rules, and conditions in this small advertisement, but we send them to you on receipt of your postcard. **You try free. Don't send a penny.** We tell you at once what you have won. **PUZZLE JUDGE**, 2, Chapel Street, W.C. Dept. 4

Applications with regard to advertisement spaces in this paper should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, 'Magnet,' Carmelite House, Carmelite St., E.C.

Now on Sale!

No. 97.

"THE ROPE OF RUBIES,"
A NEW Tale of Nigel Dorn, Detective,
and Brooks of Ravenscar.

"THE BOYS' FRIEND"

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A Tale of the Great Winter Game,
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