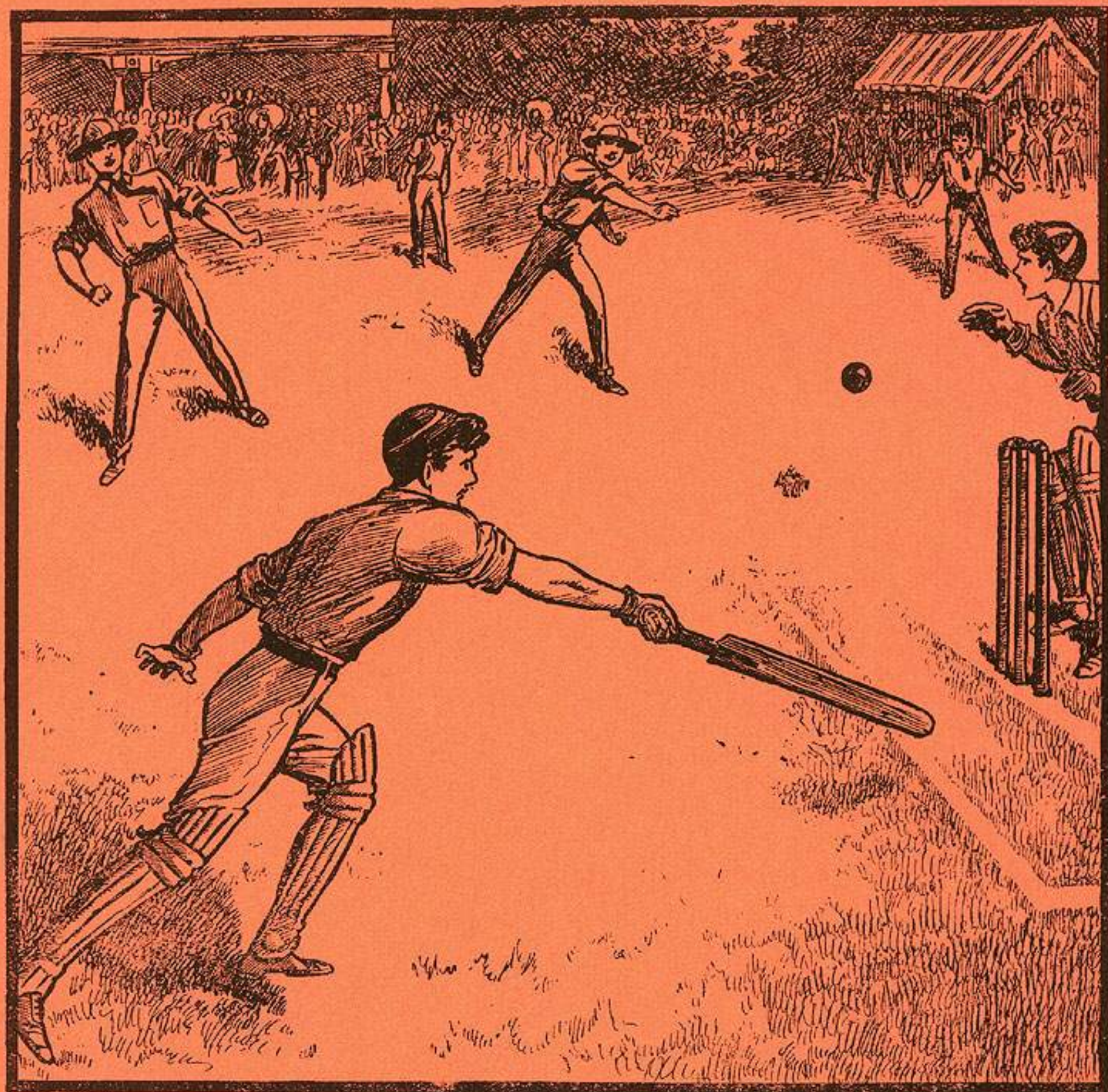


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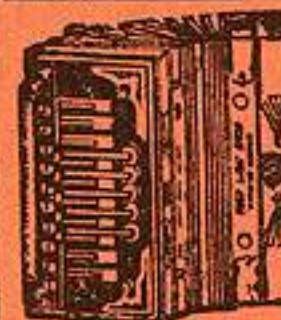
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THE FIRST CHAPTER.

On His Neck!

"TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN!
"NOTICE!"

"Any fellow talking cricket in this study will be forthwith ejected ON HIS NECK!"

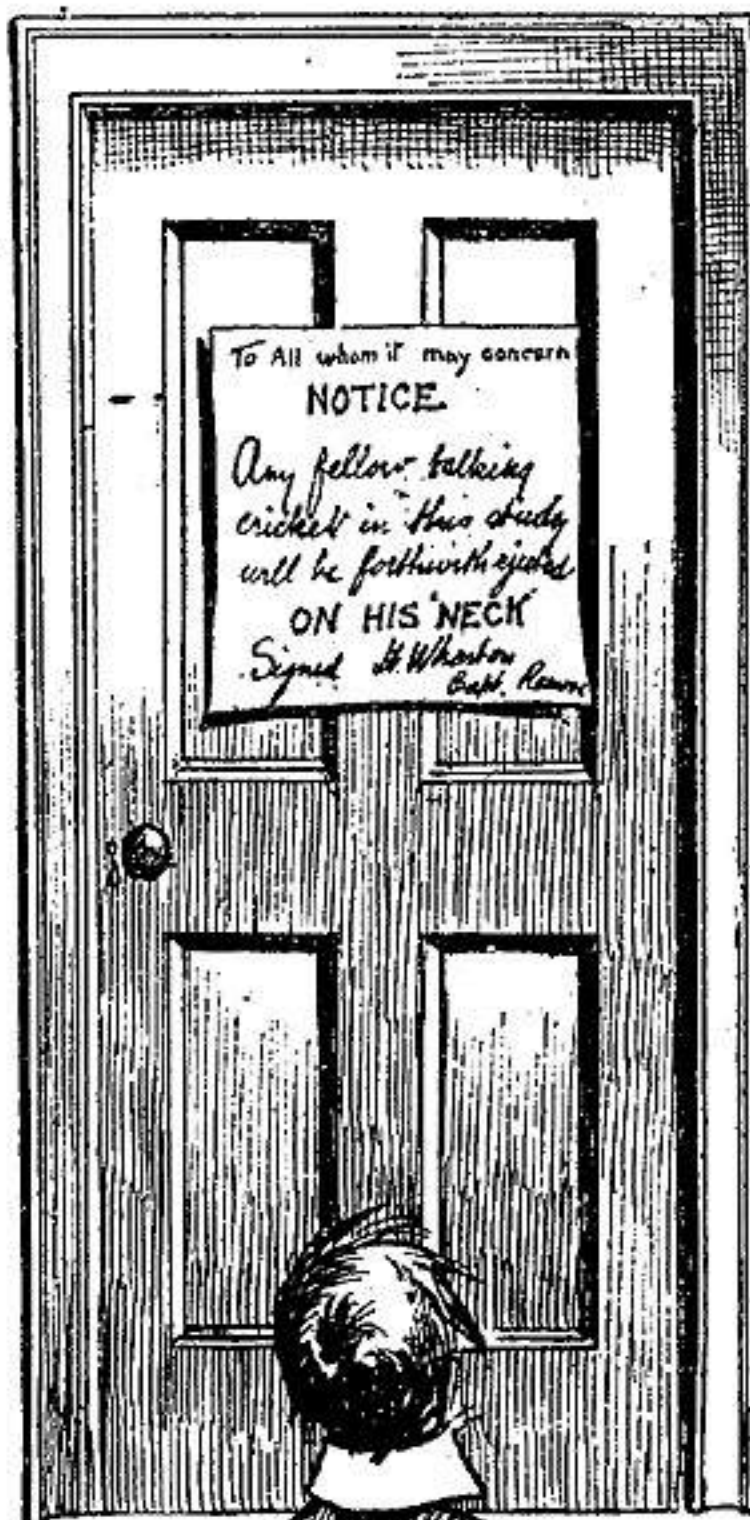
"Signed, H. WHARTON (Capt. Remove)."

That notice, in big letters on a big sheet of cardboard, was pinned in a prominent position on the door of No. 1 Study, in the Remove at Greyfriars.

Fellows who passed up and down the Remove passage read it, and stared at it, and chuckled.

Some of them frowned; some were indignant; some sniffed; but the majority of them only chuckled. They understood the feelings of Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove—the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars School. They knew, too, that Harry Wharton meant business; and that any fellow who started the forbidden topic in No. 1 Study would be in imminent danger of leaving that study suddenly "on his neck."

The case was simple. Footballs having been put away for another season, and cricket reigning supreme at Greyfriars, the Remove fellows were talking cricket, and thinking cricket, and almost eating and drinking cricket. And in the cricket world—so far as the juniors of Greyfriars were con-



A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, and Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's

By
FRANK RICHARDS

cerned—there was one forthcoming event of the first importance—one event that cast all others into the shadow—and that was the fixture between Greyfriars Remove and the juniors of St. Jim's.

Other matters might occupy other heads. Fellows could talk of county matches—of the crisis in county cricket. Sixth Form chaps could discuss first-eleven matches seriously and solemnly—but the Remove, like Gallio in the judgment-seat, were careless of such things. The Remove fellows knew that the great event of the cricket season was the junior match between the Remove and the St. Jim's juniors.

It was really an important match. The Remove were a cricketing Form, as they proudly announced on all occasions. There was a Junior Eleven at Greyfriars, formed from the Upper Fourth and the Shell. But the Remove, the Lower Fourth, had beaten them hollow many a time and oft; and the Remove pardonably considered themselves as the champions of the junior portion of Greyfriars—the regular Junior Eleven was nowhere in comparison.

The Remove had fixtures which the Junior Eleven could not have undertaken—and they brought them off with success. It was chiefly due to Harry Wharton, the captain of the Form, who had

worked like a horse in the good cause, and made the other fellows work like a team of horses.

But there were certain drawbacks in being captain of the cricket eleven in a lower Form—or in any Form—for that matter.

Every fellow who knew just enough about cricket to take hold of the right end of a bat, was firmly convinced that he was fully entitled to play in the eleven; and that he was only excluded therefrom by crass ignorance or personal jealousy on the part of the skipper.

As the date of the St. Jim's match came round, Harry Wharton and his committee were simply besieged by fellows who knew perfectly well that they were specially fitted by nature to keep afloat the colours of Greyfriars.

The St. Jim's match was a specially important one. St. Jim's juniors were known to be very "hot stuff"; and the match was certain to be a hardly-contested one. Then, as St. Jim's was at a good distance, and a visit there necessitated a long railway journey, the members of the eleven were granted a whole holiday for the occasion, instead of the usual half. And a whole holiday, a long journey, and entertainment at a school famous for its hospitality, naturally appealed to the fellows. The whole Remove, as one man, wanted to go; and Wharton received many flattering offers from members of the Upper Fourth and the Shell to back him up in that important match.

All of which Wharton politely but firmly declined.

It was a Remove match—he had made the fixture himself—and he meant to keep it to the Remove. Besides, as he explained with great courtesy to Hobson of the Shell and Temple of the Fourth, they were going over to St. Jim's to play cricket—a game which, he gently hinted, was imperfectly understood in the Shell and the Fourth, where marbles or hop-scotch would be more the thing.

Wharton was much exercised in his mind about the composition of the Remove eleven for that great match. He had plenty of good material, and the difficulty was to choose. And as the list of the eleven was not posted up, the hopes of the outsiders were kept alive.

Hence a constant stream of ambitious cricketers going to and from Wharton's study, till the captain of the Remove was almost talked and argued to extinction.

Hence, again, the notice pinned up on Wharton's door; that any fellow who talked cricket again in his study would leave that famous apartment "on his neck."

After school on Tuesday—the day before the great match—Harry Wharton and his chums had met in the study in solemn conclave.

They were going to make up the final list of the eleven. Of course, some places were assured from the start; there could not be any question about them. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, for instance, was a demon bowler, and the team could not be complete without the dusky nabob. Bob Cherry was a great bat; Johnny Bull was a stonewaller of unfailing reliability; Frank Nugent was unequalled in the field. Harry Wharton himself was a splendid bat; Mark Linley, the Lancashire lad, was a good all-round cricketer, and Tom Brown, the New Zealander, was one of the best. Bulstrode, too, was wanted for his batting, and Micky Desmond for his bowling. There were two more places that Wharton had not quite decided about.

And the name of the candidates was legion.

Vernon-Smith, the boulder of Greyfriars, was a brilliant cricketer—when he liked. But he did not always like—and he was unreliable. Bolsover major fancied himself very much; but Wharton did not share his fancy. Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, "guessed" that he could show the Britishers what cricket was really like, and was surprised to learn that they did not want to be shown. Billy Bunter, the fattest junior at Greyfriars, was firmly persuaded that he was kept out of the Form eleven by a conspiracy of jealous rivals.

They all talked to Wharton; they all besieged him with arguments—hence the notice on the door of the study!

"We've got to settle it now," said Harry Wharton, as he

tossed his bat on the study table. He had just come in from practice. "We sha'n't have any peace till the list is up!"

"Peter Todd's just been jawing to me about it," said Bob Cherry. "He thinks he ought to be in the eleven!"

"Cheek!" said Wharton. "He hasn't been three weeks at the school. Likely to put a new kid into a match like this!"

"Bolsover major tackled me in the passage ten minutes ago," grinned Nugent. "He says there will be some thick ears if he's not in the team."

"They'll be his own, then?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And Bunter wants to go——"

There was a roar of laughter in the study. Billy Bunter the Owl of the Remove, knew about as much of cricket as he did of aeroplanes. He was too short-sighted to see the length of the pitch; and he had never been known to stop a ball with anything but his legs. And when he bowled, fellows behind him and around him were in greater danger than the wicket. As a matter of fact, Billy Bunter was thinking much more of a feed at St. Jim's than of the match there; though he was firmly convinced that the Remove eleven only needed him in order to cover itself with glory.

"Young Penfold would be all right, and Ogilvy," said Wharton. "Ogilvy especially has a late cut that I've noticed, that is a daisy. I think we can't do better than shove them in. I'd play Smithy like a shot, but he's such a rotter——"

"No good thinking of Smithy," said Bob Cherry. "It would be like him to leave us in the lurch at the last minute."

"And you need a good wind to play a good game, and smoking isn't good for the wind," said Wharton, with a shrug of the shoulders. "Smithy's out of it. What do you fellows say to Penfold and Ogilvy?"

"Agreed!"

"The agreedfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, in his weird and wonderful English. "Especially the esteemed Scotchful Ogilvy."

Tap!

It was a knock at the door of the study.

The cricket committee exchanged glances.

"On his neck, remember!" murmured Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The study door opened, and Peter Todd came in. Peter Todd, the cousin of Alonzo Todd, was a new boy—but he had as much assurance as if he had been at Greyfriars for a couple of decades at least. He nodded cheerfully to the juniors.

"I hear you're in want of a good man to make up the——"

he began. Wharton held up his hand.

"Did you see the notice on the door?"

"Yes."

"Then look out!"

"Oh, rats!" said Peter Todd, cheerfully. "That's all rot, you know. I can't let you kids go to St. Jim's and leave behind the best cricketer in the Remove. Now, I want to play for the Form— Oh—ow—leggo—yah!"

The committee had risen as one man, and laid violent hands upon Peter Todd. There was a brief struggle, and a form went whizzing through the doorway, and the door was slammed. There was a chuckle in the study, and a gasp in the passage.

Peter Todd sat up ruefully on the linoleum. The warning on the notice had been made good; Peter Todd had talked cricket in No. 1 Study; and Peter Todd had left No. 1 Study "on his neck"!

"Ow!" groaned Peter Todd. "Ow! The rotters! Oh!"

"Hallo, what are you doing down there?" asked Bolsover major. The bully of the Remove stared at Peter Todd as he came along the passage.

"Ow! I've been chucked out!"

Bolsover major snorted.

"And are you going to take it lying down?" he demanded.

"No; I'm sitting up!" said Peter.

Bolsover Major snorted again, more emphatically.

"Well, I'm going in!" he said.

"You see the giddy notice on the door?"

"Blow the notice on the door!" grunted the bully of the Remove. "If they try to chuck me out, my neck won't be the only neck to get hurt, I can tell you. I'm going in, and I'm going to tell 'em what I think of 'em!"

And Bolsover major, without wasting time upon the polite preliminary of knocking, threw open the door of No. 1 Study, and strode in. Peter Todd grinned. He did not expect that the Remove bully, big and powerful as he was, would fare any better than himself. And he was right. One minute elapsed—and the voice of Bolsover major was heard in loud tones; and then there was the sound of a tussle—and then a heavy body came whirling through the doorway, and the door was slammed again.

"Yow-ow!"

Bolsover major rolled on the linoleum. He sat up dazedly and blinked at Peter Todd, who blinked back again.

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"Stand back there!" The guard swung himself into the train, and it started. Micky Desmond remained on the platform, struggling wildly in the grasp of the porter. "Faith, and I've got to go!" he roared. "Ye spalpeen, leggo! I shall miss the match! I—yah—let me go—yarrooh!" (See Chapter 7.)

"Ow!" groaned Bolsover. "Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Peter. "Are you going to take it lying down?"

"Ow! Ow!"

And Bolsover major, without replying to Peter's question, limped away down the passage.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. Bunter Means Business!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

Billy Bunter blinked round No. 7 Study as he spoke. There were four fellows in the study; Peter Todd, Bunter himself, Alonzo Todd, and Dutton. They had just had tea; and Billy Bunter had carefully cleared the table of the last fragment that was eatable before he spoke.

The four were variously engaged. Tom Dutton, the deaf junior, was working with a book on his knees; Alonzo Todd was perusing a great volume which gave the natural history of that useful vegetable, the potato. Peter Todd was oiling a cricket-bat, and wrinkling his brows in thought over it. Peter's summary ejection from No. 1 Study had not finished the matter for him. He was still thinking of the match at St. Jim's; and the ways and means of getting into the eleven. Peter, like the rest of the Remove, was quite convinced that

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NEXT
MONDAY:

"STANDING BY SKINNER!"

he would do the Form eleven credit, or more than credit. As a matter of fact, he was a good cricketer; but he was new at Greyfriars, and had had no opportunity of showing what he could do yet. And the Form-captain could hardly be blamed for not putting untried talent into the team on such a very important occasion.

"I say, you fellows!" repeated Bunter. "Look here, what I want to know is, are we going to stand this?"

"My dear Bunter," said Alonzo Todd, looking up from "The Story of a Potato, from the Seed to the Saucepan!" "My dear Bunter—"

"I tell you, I'm not going to stand it!" said Bunter.

"But you have not stood it, my dear Bunter. Cousin Peter stood it!"

"Eh? What are you talking about?" demanded Bunter.

"Were you not alluding to the tea?" asked Alonzo, innocently. "You cannot fail to be aware, my dear Bunter, that you never stand the tea—"

"Fathead! I wasn't talking about the tea!" howled Bunter. "I'm talking about those rotters in No. 1 Study. They're keeping the cricket entirely in their own hands, and not letting other fellows have a look in. Look here, this study is—or ought to be—the top study in the Remove!"

"What ho!" said Peter Todd.

"Are we going to be left out of the St. Jim's match?"

A Splendid Complete Tale of the Chums
of Greyfriars. Order Early.

"Not if we can help it!" said Peter.
 "That's what I say!" said Bunter. "We're all up against it. What do you say, Dutton?"
 Tom Dutton looked up from his Virgil.
 "Eh!" he remarked.
 "What do you say about it?" demanded Bunter.
 "Who's spouting?" inquired the deaf junior. "Alonzo?"
 "Spouting! Who's talking about spouting?" growled Bunter. "Blessed if you don't get deafer and deafer every day, you ass. I say, are we going to stand it?"
 "Eh?"
 "Are we going to let those rotters give us the go-by?" yelled Bunter.
 "Who's dotted you in the eye?"
 "Oh, crumbs! Look here——"
 "You needn't shout!" said Dutton. "I'm not deaf!"
 "Oh! Look here, Dutton, this study is being left out of the St. Jim's match. I'm not going to stand it. Are you going to back me up?"
 "Certainly!" said Dutton.
 Smack!
 Billy Bunter uttered a roar as Tom Dutton's open palm smote him upon his fat face. He glared at the deaf junior through his spectacles.
 "You—you silly ass!" he spluttered. "What did you do that for?"
 "You asked for it," said Dutton, in surprise. "I suppose you were being funny; but you shouldn't ask a fellow to smack your mouth if you don't want him to!"
 "Oh, you—you deaf dummy!"
 "Eh?"
 But Billy Bunter did not waste any further efforts upon Tom Dutton. He turned his attention to Peter Todd.
 "Look here, Todd," he said. "All the Remove know jolly well that the best cricketer in the Form is to be found in this study. They all know it, I tell you."
 Peter Todd looked flattered.
 "Well, it's the case, whether they know it or not," he remarked.
 "You really think so?" asked Bunter, also looking flattered.
 "Most certainly I do!"
 "Well, I'm glad to hear you say so," said Bunter. "They might have a really splendid player if they came here for him; and they're keeping out their best man by personal jealousy!"
 Peter Todd shook his head.
 "It's not that," he said. "There's no jealousy about them. They simply don't know what they're missing."
 Bunter sniffed.
 "I know them better than you," he growled. "You've only been here a week or two. It was just the same about the footer, before you came!"
 Peter Todd looked astonished.
 "The footer!" he said.
 "Yes; it was just the same then!"
 "I don't see how they could have put me in the footer team before I came to the school," said Peter.
 "Eh! Who's talking about you? I say they left me out of the footer just the same as they're leaving me out of the cricket now!"
 "You!" ejaculated Peter Todd.
 "Yes, me!" said Bunter, emphatically and ungrammatically. "Me! Who did you think I was talking about?"
 "Ha, ha, ha! I thought you were talking about me! You said a good cricketer——"
 "You!" Bunter sniffed. "I was talking about myself, of course. I don't want to brag—it's not in my nature—but a better cricketer than myself never handled a bat. When you come to real batting, I'm your man. I've seen Jessop and Fry play in County matches, and it struck me that I could have done better!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" growled Billy Bunter. "The question is whether this study is going to be passed over or not!"
 "Not!" said Peter, promptly.
 "Good!" said Bunter. "I'm going into the eleven——"
 Peter Todd roared.
 "Ha, ha, ha! You ass! You can't bat for toffee, and you can't bowl for nuts! You couldn't play a team of white rabbits!"
 "Oh, really, Todd——?"
 "You can do some things, Bunter. You're a jolly good ventriloquist, and when it comes to cooking, you're A.1. And at polishing off a feed you haven't your equal in all Greyfriars. But you can't play cricket for toffee, my son. Don't be funny!"
 Bunter glared at Peter Todd.
 "I'm going in the eleven!" he said. "I've been over to St. Jim's before, and they stand you a ripping feed. There's a chap there named D'Arcy, who simply rolls in money; and he cashed a postal-order for me once——"

"Did he ever get the postal-order?" asked Peter.
 "Ahem! I shall send it to him when it comes, of course. The fact is, I was very pally with that chap D'Arcy—a chap very like me to look at. I want to see him again, and to——"
 "To get him to cash another postal-order?"
 "Oh, really, Todd! I'm jolly well going over in the team, by hook or by crook. The question is, how is it going to be worked?"
 "Ask me another!" said Peter. "I've been to No. 1 Study about it myself, and I was chucked out! They're not having any!"
 Billy Bunter rose to his feet.
 "Well, I'm jolly well going to talk to them plainly," he said. "I shall give them my opinion of their conduct——"
 "Better put a mattress or something in the passage to fall on!"
 "Oh, rats!"
 Billy Bunter quitted the study, and started down the passage. The door of No. 1, at the end of the passage, was open; and Bunter heard voices in the study. He recognised the nasal tones of Fisher T. Fish, the American junior.
 "I guess you guys can't do better than put me in the crowd—just a few! I reckon I can show you what cricket is really like—how we play it over there. I guess——"
 "Did you see the notice on the door?" roared Wharton's voice.
 "Yep!"
 "Well, are you going?"
 "Nope!"
 "Kick him out!"
 "Go slow! I guess I'm the cricketer you want! I'm just the cricketer from Cricketville, and don't you forget it. Got that? I'm the old boss that never gets left—and I guess—ow—leggo—yah—oh! Oh!"
 Bump!
 Fisher T. Fish descended upon the linoleum outside the study, and rolled over almost at Billy Bunter's feet. The study door closed.
 "Ow!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "Grooh!"
 Billy Bunter hesitated a moment, as the Yankee schoolboy limped away gasping. It was an object lesson; the notice on the door was evidently seriously meant. But Billy Bunter was in deadly earnest; and he screwed up his courage to the sticking-point, and opened the door of No. 1. There was a savoury smell of hot muffins in the study. Harry Wharton & Co. were having tea. They turned their heads and glared as one man at the Owl of the Remove.
 "I say, you fellows——" Bunter began.
 Harry Wharton pointed to the door.
 "Travel!" he said, laconically.
 "Oh, really, Wharton! I've come to tell you that I've thought about the matter, and that I'm jolly well not going to be left out of the cricket eleven for St. Jim's—— Here, hands off, Cherry, you beast! Nugent, you rotter, I—oh—ab—yah!"
 Bump!
 And the door of No. 1 Study closed upon William George Bunter; and he did not open it again. He rolled away gasping. Peter Todd grinned at him as he came back into No. 7.
 "Well, how did you get on?" asked Peter, genially.
 Bunter groaned.
 "Ow! The beasts! They chucked me out!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "But I'm jolly well going, all the same," said Bunter. "I'm not going to miss the feed—I mean the match—at St. Jim's. I'm going, I tell you. Fair means or foul——"
 "Hold on!" said Peter Todd, warningly. "None of your tricks, Bunter!"
 Bunter grunted.
 "I'm head of this study," said Peter, "and if you don't play the game, Bunter, you get it in the neck. I warn you—none of your rotten tricks, or I shall come down on you like a ten-ton steam-hammer. Savvy?"
 "Br-r-r-r!" said Bunter.
 And, in spite of Peter Todd's warning, Billy Bunter did not give up his idea. He thought over the matter very much that evening. And Billy Bunter, though generally regarded as an ass—and quite justly—had a large allowance of cunning, as duffers very often have; and Billy Bunter could prove dangerous—a fact the Remove cricketers were destined to discover!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Precious Pair!

THE list was posted up at last! Remove fellows crowded round when the paper, in Wharton's handwriting, was seen on the school notice-board that evening.

The list was very much as it had been expected to be, but

there was a considerable amount of grumbling from fellows who did not find their names there. Upper Fourth and Shell fellows joined the criticising crowd, and criticised heartily. They had offered their services to Wharton—a great honour, considering that the Remove was a lower Form in the school. And their services had been declined—without thanks, in many cases. Hence a large amount of sniffing and snorting over the list on the board.

"H. Wharton, Capt.; R. Cherry; F. Nugent; J. Bull; H. J. R. Singh; M. Desmond; R. Ogilvy; R. Penfold; M. Linley; T. Brown; Bulstrode major. Reserves: P. Hazeldene; R. Russell."

That was the list.

There were eleven fellows satisfied, and two fellows somewhat satisfied. The rest were decidedly dissatisfied.

"Rotten!" said Bolsover major.

"No good!" said Vernon-Smith.

"They're going over for a licking," remarked Temple, the captain of the Fourth. "And they'll get it!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Blessed cheek, the Remove making a fixture like that at all!" said Hobson of the Shell. "Rotten Lower Fourth fags—and the St. Jim's juniors are a second school team—Shell, and Fourth. Cheek, I call it!"

"Yes, rather!"

"They'll be licked—that's a dead cert."

"Jolly well hope so!" said Vernon-Smith savagely.

"Oh, that's rot!" said Hazeldene. "You don't want a Greyfriars team licked, Smithy, even if you are left out."

"No; draw a line at that," said Rake of the Remove. "I could have suggested some improvements, but I hope they'll win."

"Hear, hear!"

Vernon-Smith swung away angrily. The Bounder of Greyfriars wanted very much to play in that match. He had heard a great deal about St. Jim's, and there were some fellows there he wanted to know better. And he had heard, too, that a certain Miss Cleveland, a cousin of D'Arcy of the Fourth Form at St. Jim's, would be there for the match, and Vernon-Smith wanted to meet Ethel Cleveland again. But there was no chance of the Bounder getting into that eleven. He had played Wharton too many tricks for the Form-captain to trust him again. And the Bounder's feelings were very bitter as he swung away with his hands in his pockets.

"I say, Smithy—"

Vernon-Smith uttered an impatient exclamation as Bunter stopped him in the passage.

"Oh, get out, you fat duffer!" he growled.

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Get off; don't bother!" snapped the Bounder.

"I want to speak to you about the eleven," said Bunter.

"I've got an idea. I don't think those rotters ought to go and leave us behind."

The Bounder looked at him curiously.

"Come into my study," he said shortly.

Billy Bunter followed Vernon-Smith into his study. The Bounder closed the door.

"Now, what is it?" he said sharply.

Bunter blinked at him in a rather uncertain way.

"I say, Smithy, you know, you agree that it's rotten of them to leave out a jolly good cricketer, don't you, because of personal feelings in the matter?"

"Yes, yes!"

"And—and don't you think they deserve to have the team mucked up, if it could be worked, as a punishment for their—ahem!—rotten conduct?"

The Bounder's eyes gleamed.

"I jolly well wish I could think of some way of mucking it up!" he said.

"You mean that, Smithy?"

"Of course I mean it, fathead!"

"Besides, if some fellow had to be left behind, they'd want another chap to take his place," said Bunter sagely.

"They wouldn't put me in," said Vernon-Smith. "Wharton wouldn't put me in if half the team fell sick on the spot. He'd rather play some rotter out of the Fourth or the Shell, even, than give me a chance."

"Ahem! I was speaking of myself—"

"Ha, ha! You ass, you can't play cricket! Did you come in here to talk silly rot like that?" demanded the Bounder.

"Well, I think I can play cricket, and I know they stand a ripping good feed at St. Jim's; I've been there," said Bunter. "I'm going in the team if it can be worked, and you can get in, too, if you're careful. If there were two places—"

"I tell you Wharton could easily fill all the places. He's got three Forms to choose from," said Vernon-Smith. "He'd rather play a fag out of the Third or Second, too, than put me in. As for putting you in, don't talk rot."

Bunter coughed.

"But suppose the vacancies occurred in the team after they've left Greyfriars to-morrow morning?" he hinted.

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NEXT MONDAY:

"STANDING BY SKINNER!"

EVERY MONDAY,

The "Magnet" LIBRARY.

ONE PENNY.

The Bounder started.

"By Jove, that's an idea!" he said. "But it couldn't be done. Besides, they've got two reserves with the team."

"One of the reserves is Hazeldene. You've got him under your thumb," said Bunter. "He owes you money—"

"More than he'll ever pay, that's a cert," said Vernon-Smith.

"And you don't like him, though you pal with him. He never lets you speak to his sister Marjorie if he can help it—thinks you're not good enough—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Well, you know it's true. Suppose you put the screw on Hazeldene, and make him leave the team to-morrow morning—say at the station. That's one."

"I think I could do that," said Vernon-Smith. "Hazel's simply putty in my hands, except as far as his sister Marjorie's concerned, and he wants me to put some money on a horse for him this week. He wouldn't dare to break with me."

"Well, that's one," said Bunter, encouraged. "Then there's young Penfold—Dick Penfold. You know he's one of those scholarship rotters; his father's the cobbler in Friar-dale, and mends boots for the fellows. Penfold goes down on a half-holiday sometimes and helps him. Disgusting, I call it—a Greyfriars fellow mending boots and shoes! Pah!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Vernon-Smith. "It's as good as keeping a public-house, as your people do, Bunter."

"My people don't keep a public-house!" roared Bunter.

"Well, a fried-fish shop, then—"

"They don't keep a fried-fish shop, either, you beast! Look here, Smithy—"

"Well, never mind your people now," grinned the Bounder. "What about young Penfold? How are you going to get him out of the team?"

"Suppose he got a message at the station, from his father—rush of work, lots of boots to mend, or got the brokers in, or something," suggested Bunter. "I know his pater's frightfully hard up, and being dunned for rent."

"How do you know that?"

"Oh, I get to know things," said Bunter airily.

"I know you do," said the Bounder, with a curl of the lip. "But I don't see what keyhole you can have heard that at."

"Look here, Smithy, you beast—"

"Well, get on to business," said the Bounder. "Suppose young Penfold got a message at the station—a message that the bailiffs were in his pater's shop—ha, ha, ha! I could get a village kid to take the message; I'd stand a half-crown for that with pleasure. There's that kid Hogg, who was fighting Penfold the other day—doesn't like him being a Greyfriars chap now. He's do it, with pleasure."

"There you are!" said Bunter. "It would work, and that's two gone—one of the team, and one of the reserves. And we can think of ways and means with the others if we're on the spot. We can go in the same train; you wouldn't mind standing the expenses, I'm sure."

"Don't you be too jolly sure about that," said the Bounder unpleasantly. "I don't want to pay through the nose for you, Bunter."

"Well, you couldn't work the bizney without me."

"I don't see that I couldn't."

"You couldn't, because if you left me out I should regard it as my duty to acquaint Wharton with the whole bizney."

Vernon-Smith clenched his hands for a moment; then he unclenched them, and laughed.

"All right, Bunter," he said. "We're in this together."

"Besides," went on Bunter, "they have to change trains twice for St. Jim's, or three times—I forget—and when you're changing trains in a hurry, that's where a ventriloquist has a chance to chip in. Chaps who lose trains and are too late for the match—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Jolly good idea, ain't it?" said Bunter. "They'll be starting without any reserves, anyway, and if they lose one or two more on the road—"

"My hat, you're a bigger rascal than I ever gave you credit for, Bunter!" said the Bounder admiringly. "Most of the chaps think you're only a fool, but I'd bet a great deal that you'll finish your days in a prison instead of a home for idiots."

"Look here, you rotter—"

"It's a go!" said the Bounder. "We'll work it. We shall have to give ourselves a holiday to-morrow, and face a licking afterwards."

"Not if we play in the match," said Bunter shrewdly. "Wharton has permission to take the members of the team and the reserves. If we're used as reserves, that sees us clear."

A Splendid Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars, Order Early.

"Well, it might. Anyway, we'll risk it, to take these rotters down a peg," said Vernon-Smith gleefully. "Mind, not a word! They'd scalp you."

And he left Vernon-Smith's study quite satisfied with himself and with his scheme, and quite unconscious of the fact that he was acting like a thorough rascal. Vernon-Smith was quite conscious of it, but it did not affect him at all; the Bounder of Greyfriars never allowed himself to be troubled by little things like that.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

French Leave!

THE next morning Harry Wharton & Co. were in great spirits.

It was a glorious morning towards the end of April, with a bright sun and a cool breeze, and the prospect of a day's holiday, with a good cricket-match and a long excursion, was more than enough to make the members of the eleven cheerful.

After breakfast, while the other and less fortunate fellows were preparing for classes, the Remove eleven were getting ready for their journey.

It was a half-holiday that day at Greyfriars, but on the occasion of the St. Jim's match, on account of the distance, the half was turned into a whole holiday by the kindly Head.

Many fellows would have been glad to follow the team, and Wharton would have been pleased enough to take a crowd, but he could not very well ask the Head to give leave to more than thirteen fellows from lessons. So all the fellows who were eager to act as reserves and as umpires had to be left behind.

The eleven started in great spirits.

A crowd of fellows saw them off at the gates, and gave them a cheer as they started down the road with their cricket-bags, and their coats on their arms.

They looked a handsome set of lads as they walked down the road in the bright spring sunshine, and very fit indeed.

"Good luck!" shouted Rake of the Remove, as they started; and he waved his cap after them as they turned the bend in the lane and disappeared.

"Hope they'll win!" Bolsover major remarked. "It was rotten to leave me out, but I hope they'll win for Greyfriars, anyway."

"Yaas, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "That's right, my dear fellow."

"I don't think anybody wants them to be licked, excepting Smithy, I guess," said Fisher T. Fish. "But I guess there's not much doubt about it. They've left behind a chap who could show them how we play cricket over there—in the Yew-nited States—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I don't see where the cackle comes in. I guess—"

"By the way, where's Smithy?" said Bolsover major.

"I saw him packing a bag," said Morgan. "I asked him if he was going out, and he told me to go and eat cocoanuts."

"Dear me!" said Alonzo Todd. "And did you, Morgan?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's Bunter, too?" said Bolsover major. "Bunter was saying last night that he was going to play at St. Jim's, whether Wharton liked it or not. He said that he regarded it as his duty to be there."

"Where's Bunter, Dutton?" bawled Rake, in the ear of the deaf junior. "He's one of your crowd, and you ought to know where he is. Has he gone out to go to St. Jim's?"

"Eh?"

"Where's Billy Bunter got to?"

"You needn't shout; I'm not deaf!" said Tom Dutton.

"Oh, my hat! Has Bunter gone to the match?"

"Yes. Here you are!"

Tom Dutton drew a matchbox from his pocket. Rake stared at it.

"What's that for?" he asked.

"Eh! Didn't you ask me for a match?"

"Ha, ha! No, I didn't! I asked you if Bunter had gone to the match!" roared Rake.

"A punting match?" said Dutton. "Yes, I don't mind if I do, after school. I can punt!"

"Has Bunter gone after the team?" shrieked Bolsover.

"Not likely!"

"He hasn't?"

"Certainly not. I can punt, and I'm not at all likely to fall into the stream. Besides, if I did, I could get out again. I can swim!"

"Oh, crumbs! Has Bunter gone to St. Jim's?"

"Gone for a swim? Who?"

"Bunter! Bunter! BUNTER!" bellowed Bolsover.

"Has he gone to St. Jim's?"

"No, Bunter doesn't swim—"

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

"Oh, I give it up," said Bolsover. "I sha'n't ask Dutton any more questions till I get a megaphone. I shouldn't wonder if Bunter has gone—he's quite ass enough to think he might be played if the reserves were crooked or anything."

"I guess it would be a sight for sore eyes, to see Bunter playing cricket!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish. "Just a few! Yep!"

"Hallo! Here they are!"

Vernon-Smith and Billy Bunter came out of the house. They had their hats on and their coats on their arms, and Bunter carried a bag. It was Vernon-Smith's bag. The juniors gathered round them at once.

"Where are you going?"

"Where are you off to?"

"What's the little game?"

"I'm going to St. Jim's," said Vernon-Smith, calmly.

"I'm going to be a spectator, you know, as they don't want me to play. Bunter's going, too."

"Got leave to go?" demanded Bolsover major.

"No!"

"Are you going without leave?" exclaimed Newland.

"Yes!" said the Bounder, coolly.

"You'll get licked!"

Vernon-Smith yawned.

"All in the day's work," he said. "I've been licked before, and survived it. Besides, something might happen, you know, and more reserves might be wanted. You never know! And I might play as a substitute if a fellow gets crooked with a cricket-ball—and then I should count in as a reserve, you see."

"My dear Smith," said Alonzo Todd, severely. "You should not think of absenting yourself from lessons without the express permission of your masters. My Uncle Benjamin would never approve of such a step."

"Go hon!" said the Bounder, calmly. "Come on, Bunter. We've got to get that train; and I don't want to have an argument with any bothering prefect before I start!"

"I guess you wouldn't start if a prefect spotted you!" grinned Fisher T. Fish.

"You'd guess wrong, then," said Vernon-Smith. "I'm going. If Quelch asks after me, you can give him my kind regards, and tell him to go and chop chips!"

"Ha, ha! We're likely to do that—I don't think!"

The juniors stared after Vernon-Smith and Bunter as the two went out of the school gates, and walked down the lane. They could hardly believe that even the cool and iron-nerved Bounder would have the audacity to give himself a day's holiday unpermitted. But Vernon-Smith had evidently done so.

"Well, my word!" said Trevor. "That takes the cake! Hallo, there's the bell for chapel. Smithy's saving up lickings."

Vernon-Smith and Billy Bunter were absent from chapel, as well as the cricketers bound for St. Jim's. And they were absent from the Remove Form-room when the Lower Fourth assembled for morning lessons. Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, glanced over his class, struck at once by the number of fellows who were missing. The Remove master was not likely to overlook the fact that two extra ones were gone.

"Are not Vernon-Smith and Bunter here?" he asked.

"No, sir," said Bolsover major.

"Indeed? Do you know where they are?"

"I fancy they're gone out, sir."

"Gone out!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, in surprise.

"Where?"

"I couldn't say for certain, sir."

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch.

And the matter dropped there. But the expression on the Remove master's face showed that the two truants would be called to a very severe account when they returned to Greyfriars. But morning lessons in the Remove Form-room concluded without anything being seen of the two missing juniors.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

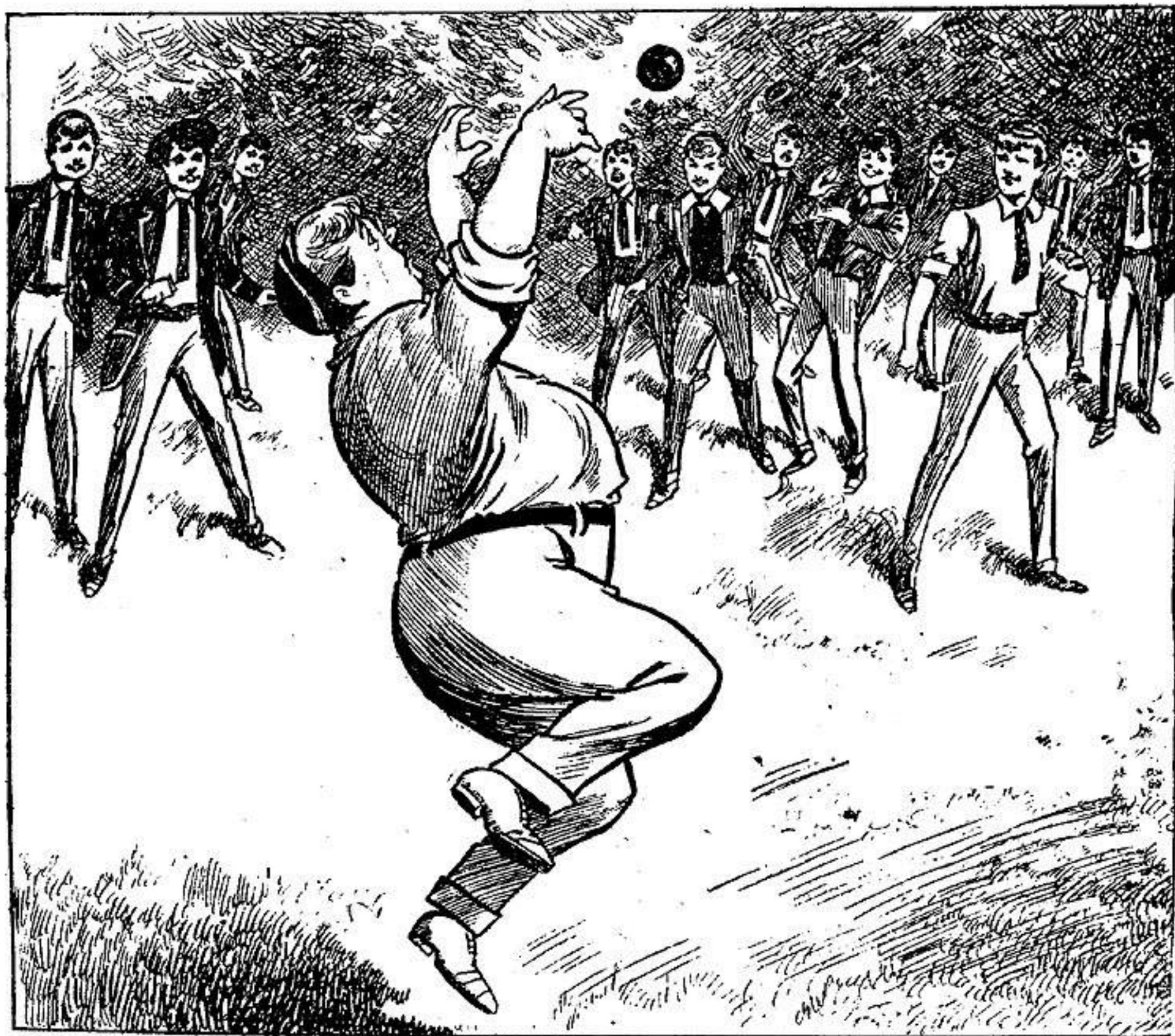
The Start for St. Jim's!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. arrived at the railway-station in Friardale in good time for the train. They were, in fact, ten minutes early. Wharton was a good commanding-officer; and he considered it better to be early than late. The juniors gathered cheerily enough upon the platform. There was only one of them whose face was not cheery. That one was Hazeldene. There was a cloud upon Hazeldene's brow; and Wharton noticed it after a time, as he saw the junior leaning against an automatic machine, staring glumly down the line. He tapped Hazeldene upon the shoulder, and Hazel turned red.

"Anything wrong?" Wharton asked.

Hazel's flush deepened.

"If you don't feel fit, say so," said Harry. "But you were



Bunter did not realise that the ball was coming his way until quite late; a yell from the whole field warned him. "Bunter! Look out!" Billy Bunter jumped at it, with his fat hands outspread. (See Chapter 10.)

all right yesterday. Not feeling nervous about the match, surely—you a reserve. You won't have to play!"

Hazeldene grinned faintly.

"No!" he said. "It isn't that!"

"You've got something on your mind," said Bob Cherry.

"Is Marjorie all right?"

"Yes, Marjorie's all right!"

"Well, buck up, then!" said Bob.

"The fact is," said Hazeldene, slowly, "I—I—I—" He broke off.

"There's something wrong?" asked Wharton.

"I—I'm not feeling fit," said Hazel. "I—I ought to have told you before, I suppose, but—but I thought I should come round all right. But—but I'm feeling seedy. Do you mind if I don't go?"

Wharton frowned.

"Well, dash it all, you might have told me a quarter of an hour ago, before it was too late to get another reserve from the school!" he said.

Hazel crimsoned. That was exactly what he had not dared to do. He was, as the Bouncer had said to Billy Bunter, quite under the thumb of Vernon-Smith.

"I—I'm sorry!" he said, awkwardly. "I—I thought—I hoped—that is—"

"Look here, is this all right?" said Johnny Bull, in his direct way. "You were jawing to Vernon-Smith last night; I saw you. Has Smithy got anything to do with this?"

Hazeldene started.

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NEXT
MONDAY:

"STANDING BY SKINNER!"

"I—I don't understand you!" he faltered.

"I mean, are you really seedy, or has Smithy been patting you up to this? I know you are mighty thick with the rotter!"

"I hope you don't think I'm malingering!" said Hazel.

"Well, I'm not so jolly sure about it!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, come!" said Harry. "Hazel wouldn't play a rotten trick like that; besides, why should he?"

"Well, Smithy would do anything to make matters awkward for us to-day, I know!" said Johnny Bull.

Wharton laughed.

"Losing a reserve won't make matters much worse for us," he said. "We've still got Dick Russell; and we shan't want any reserves, as a matter of fact. If you feel seedy, Hazel, you'd better go; but you really might have said so before, and you might, anyway, have opened your mouth before I bought your ticket. No need to put the cricket club to that expense for nothing."

"I should say not!" said Ogilvy, warmly.

"Well, I'm sorry!" said Hazel. "And I'll pay for the ticket out of my own pocket!"

"Well, perhaps you'd better," said Harry. "It's not fair to stick the club for it, under the circumstances. Still, I'm sorry you're seedy; you'd better cab back."

Hazeldene nodded, and walked slowly off the platform and disappeared. He was not feeling seedy, but he was feeling

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sick with shame for what he was doing. But he was under the Bounder's thumb, and that was an end of it.

"Blessed if I don't think it's gammon!" said Johnny Bull. "Marjorie will be disappointed, too, at his not coming—especially if there should happen to be a chance for him to play. Not that we're likely to want him."

Bob Cherry looked at his watch.

"Train in two minutes," he said. "Pull up your socks. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's a young man in a hurry!"

A lad came dashing breathlessly upon the platform. Some of the juniors knew him by sight—a village lad who carried home medicines from the local chemist. He had been an acquaintance of Dick Penfold's before the latter had won the scholarship which gave him admission to Greyfriars. They had never been friends, certainly; and since Penfold had been in the Greyfriars Remove they had had several fistio encounters; Master Hogg resenting Penfold's rise in life, and apparently taking it as a personal injury and insult.

"Penfold 'ere?" called out Hogg.

"I'm here!" said Dick Penfold, quietly.

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! You sheer off, young shaver!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "No rags allowed when a chap's starting for a cricket match. Go away and carry home your giddy bottles of sudden death!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I ain't come 'ere to row with Penfold!" the boy said. "I've got news for him!"

"Oh, that alters the case. You can go ahead with the news!"

Penfold looked quickly at the chemist's boy.

"News for me?" he asked.

"Yes."

"What is it?"

Penfold's voice was quick and anxious. The scholarship lad of Greyfriars knew only too well the struggle that was going on in the poor little home in Friardale. Mark Linley, who was also a scholarship boy, and knew what poverty meant, gave Penfold a sympathetic look, and moved away, so as not to hear what Hogg had to say.

Hogg made a gesture towards the Greyfriars fellows.

"Better not 'ave it out before them!" he said.

"Come along the platform, you fellows!" said Wharton.

"Train's due in one minute!" said Bob, as he passed Penfold.

The scholarship junior nodded.

"All right!" he said.

He turned to the chemist's lad quickly as the Greyfriars fellows passed out of hearing.

"What is it—quick?" he exclaimed. "Anything wrong at home?"

"Can't you guess?" grinned Hogg.

Penfold grasped him by the arm.

"What is it—quick! Did my pater send you?"

"Pater!" sneered Hogg. "He's your pater now, is he? He used to be your father, when you was mending boots and shoes with him in the shop!"

"Will you tell me what is the matter? Do you come from my father?"

"I saw it as I was passin' the shop," said Hogg, sullenly.

"I'd seen you come to the station with the young toffs, so I thought I'd come and tell you, in case you wanted to get 'ome!"

"You saw it—what? What has happened?"

"Wot generally 'appens when you don't pay the rent," chuckled Hogg. "The brokers, my boy—the bailiffs!"

Dick Penfold staggered back with a cry.

"The bailiffs!"

"Wot do you think?"

"Oh, good heavens!"

"I thought I'd come and tell you," said Hogg. "Course, it needn't make any difference to you. You can go just the same."

Penfold did not reply.

He ran along the platform to where Harry Wharton was standing. There was the shriek of an engine-whistle down the line. The train was in sight. Penfold caught hold of Harry Wharton's shoulder in his excitement and agitation.

"Wharton—Wharton—I'm sorry, I can't come!"

"Hallo, another of 'em!" said Johnny Bull. "And why can't you come?"

"My people are in awful trouble," panted Penfold. "I must get home—get home at once! I—I couldn't play if I came, with this on my mind, Wharton. It's a shame to leave you like this, but—but—"

"It can't be helped, if your people are in trouble," said Wharton quietly. "We'll play Russell instead of you, Pen. Lucky we've got one reserve left, after all. Good-bye, kid! I hope it won't turn out to be very bad."

"Thanks! I'm sorry—"

"Oh, it's all right! Russell will fill your place all right."

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

Hallo, here's the train! Good-bye, Pen! I hope it's not so bad, after all."

And the train stopped in the station, and the Greyfriars juniors crowded into it. The scholarship boy turned away heavily and miserably. He looked round for Hogg, but the chemist's boy had already disappeared. Dick Penfold did not cast a glance at the crowded train. Greyfriars and cricket and everything else had vanished from his mind now, at the wretched knowledge that his home was ruined at last—that the brave struggle his father had made had ended in grim and miserable failure.

He moved dully and blindly from the station.

Bob Cherry looked out of the train after him. Then he uttered an exclamation:

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo! Look there!"

"Great Scott, Bunter!"

"And Smithy!"

"By Jove, then they're coming!"

Vernon-Smith and Billy Bunter were seen to rush across the platform, and jump into a carriage far down the train. The cricketers looked at one another in amazement.

"Those two bounders are coming to see the match then," said Nugent. "They must have bunked without leave, or they could have come with us."

The train started.

Out in the village street Dick Penfold tramped away gloomily towards his home. He came in sight of the little shoemaker's shop in the old High Street. He had expected to see a crowd gathered there; but the little shop presented its normal aspect of quiet. Penfold, with hope and fear in his heart, hurried on. He looked into the shop doorway, down the three old steps that led into the ancient shop, where his father had worked for forty years or more. Mr. Penfold was in his usual place, at work upon a shooting-boot, and he glanced up as his son looked in.

"Dicky!" he exclaimed.

"Father, then it's not true?"

Mr. Penfold looked puzzled.

"What's not true, Dick?" he asked.

"Hogg told me the bailiffs were here!"

Mr. Penfold frowned.

"That ain't true, Dick," he said. "And I hope it never will be true. I—"

But Dick was gone. Penfold realised that it was a trick of his old enemy, and he was dashing away towards the station at top speed. He had a faint, lingering hope that the train might not be gone yet. He dashed into the station; he tore upon the platform, but the train was gone. It had been gone more than five minutes, and the disappointed junior turned away with a heavy heart.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Left Behind!

THE Greyfriars cricketers filled up two carriages in the train. In the bright sunshine, the train sped along amid fields and meadows of vivid green, and the cricketing-party were very merry. Harry Wharton and his chums were feeling a little concerned about Penfold. Although not a "pal" of theirs, they liked the lad very much indeed, and they were thinking about him and the supposed bad news as the train ran on. But the coming match soon drove other matters from their minds, and they joined in the gay chorus that some of the cricketers started in the carriage.

Courtfield was the first stop of the train, where the juniors had to change. The party poured out of the train with their coats and bags, and made their way across to the other platform, where the express was already in. Vernon-Smith and Billy Bunter joined the party, Bunter looking a little nervous, and the Bounder as cool and unconcerned as ever.

"You're coming to St. Jim's?" Harry Wharton asked them.

The Bounder nodded coolly.

"Yes. No objection to our coming to watch the match, I suppose?"

"None at all, so far as I'm concerned," said Wharton. "As a matter of fact, I'd have been glad to take all the Remove; only we couldn't quite expect the Head to let them all off for the day. It would have been asking rather too much."

"The too muchfulness would have been terrific," remarked Hurree Singh, with a shake of the head.

"Did you fellows get leave?" asked Bob Cherry.

"No; we didn't ask."

"Then you'll get into a row when you get back."

"I shouldn't wonder. It's worth a row to have a day off and see the St. Jim's match," said Vernon-Smith.

"Well, it's your bizney, I suppose. But it's rather a serious matter buzzing off and cutting lessons without leave."

"Well, we had to come," said Bunter. "You deliberately left behind two of the best cricketers in the school, and we

felt bound to come in case anything should happen. Wharton might decide to do the right thing at the last moment."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides, I've got friends at St. Jim's," said Bunter. "Last time I was there I palled on with a chap named Wynn, who's a really good sort. And then there's that chap D'Arcy. I got on with him rippingly. He's bound to remember me."

"Did you borrow any money of him?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Well, that's generally the reason you give people for remembering you," said Frank. "Look here, if I catch you borrowing of anybody, there will be a slaughtered porpoise lying about soon afterwards—remember that!"

Bunter grunted, and got into the train. The Bounder and his companion were in the carriage next to the two which were filled by the cricketers. They had the carriage to themselves—the cricketers preferring to keep together. The Bounder gave Bunter a significant look as they sat down. He glanced at his watch.

"The train goes in one minute," he said.

"Ahem! I know it does," he said.

Bunter coughed nervously.

"This is where you begin."

"Ahem!"

"Are you finking it?" said the Bounder angrily. "Look here, you fat rotter, you're not good for anything except what I've brought you here for; and you've got to play up! See?"

"Oh, really—"

"If you think I'm going to plank down a quid for the pleasure of your company, you're making a big mistake!" growled the Bounder.

"I—I'm ready, you know."

"Then pile in!"

Billy Bunter leaned out of the carriage window. The cricketers were all in, and their carriage door was closed. Some of them were looking out of the windows. Bunter coughed and cleared his throat. The Owl of the Remove, obtuse as he was in every other matter, was a really clever ventriloquist. It was a gift with him. And his skill in imitating voices was really wonderful. He did not have much scope for his great gift at Greyfriars; for ventriloquial tricks were not appreciated by the Remove fellows. And Bunter had suffered many pommellings on the subject. Billy Bunter's tricks were generally of an ill-natured kind, hence the painful results to himself.

"Go it!" murmured Vernon-Smith.

"All right, Smithy! Don't hurry me! You know I—"

"Oh, pile in, and dry up!"

"How can I pile in, if I dry up?" said Bunter argumentatively.

The Bounder scowled. He could see that Billy Bunter, now that he was fairly started for St. Jim's, was by no means eager to keep his half of the compact. The Bounder took Bunter's ticket out of his waistcoat pocket. The Bounder had had to pay for both tickets, of course, and he was keeping both of them in his possession.

"Do you see that?" he asked.

Billy Bunter blinked at the slip of pasteboard.

"Yes, Smithy. It's my ticket, isn't it?"

"Do you want to be hauled up at the next station for travelling without a ticket?"

"Oh, really, Smithy, why, you've got the ticket there!"

"I shall chuck it out of the window if you don't keep your bargain!"

"Oh," growled Bunter, "you beast!"

"Keep your word, then!"

"I—I'm just going to. If they find out—"

"You'll have to risk that. Don't let 'em find out."

Bunter grunted again, and put his head out of the carriage window. The porters were closing the doors along the train; the express was about to start. In Harry Wharton's carriage there was a buzz of talk.

"Time this blessed train started," said Bulstrode, looking at his watch.

"Bulstrode!"

Bulstrode jumped.

The voice came from the platform; and it was the well-known, sharp-toned voice of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

"Hallo! I didn't see Quelch on the platform!" said Bob Cherry. "He's come here after Smithy, I'll bet my hat!"

"Bulstrode, step from the train immediately! Come here at once!"

Bulstrode put his head out of the carriage window in amazement and dismay. He did not know what special delinquency of his had reached Mr. Quelch's ears; but the Form-master certainly seemed angry. He could not see Mr. Quelch on the platform; but there was a hurrying crowd of passengers there, running to catch the train at the last moment.

"We're just starting, sir," said Bulstrode, scanning the platform in search of Mr. Quelch. "I shall lose the train!"

"Come here at once!"

"But, sir," stammered the dismayed Bulstrode, "I—"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 273.

NEXT
MONDAY:

"STANDING BY SKINNER!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

"Will you obey me, Bulstrode?"

Bulstrode gave his comrades a hopeless look, and stepped out of the train. There was a trolley with a pile of luggage close at hand, and Mr. Quelch's voice seemed to come from the other side of it, as if the Remove-master was keeping back there out of the way of the hurrying passengers.

"Here I am, sir!" exclaimed Bulstrode, as he ran round the pile of luggage. "If you please, sir, the train's just starting, and I'm in the team for St. Jim's. And—and, Mr. Quelch—Where are you, sir?"

The last door slammed, the engine shrieked, and the express began to move.

Bulstrode stared round him blankly. The Remove-master was not to be seen. There was no one behind the pile of luggage. Bulstrode dashed round it, and then ran towards the train again.

"Bulstrode!"

It was the Remove-master's voice again. Bulstrode stopped to look round, and his last chance was gone.

The express was rushing out of the station now. Bulstrode gazed after it in dismay.

The train was gone, and Bulstrode was left behind on the platform of Courtfield Station, with the happy knowledge that there was two hours to wait for the next train.

The junior looked up and down, and around about in search of Mr. Quelch, but there was no sign of the Remove-master.

It dawned upon Bulstrode at last that he had been tricked somehow.

"The beast's not here!" growled Bulstrode between his teeth, alluding to his Form-master in that disrespectful way. "Someone was playing a trick—imitating his blessed rasp of a voice! The rotter! Bunter, of course! I'd forgotten that fat beast!"

Bulstrode was simply raging. He had lost the train; and he realised that it was owing to a trick of the Greyfriars ventriloquist—now that it was too late! If Bulstrode could have got within hitting distance of Billy Bunter at that moment, Bunter would have felt that life was not worth living. But Bunter was safe in the express, dashing away at fifty miles an hour; and Bulstrode was stranded at Courtfield Junction; with two hours to wait for another train!

In the express, the cricketers were discussing wrathfully the astounding action of Mr. Quelch, in calling one of their number out of the train at the last moment. In the next carriage, Vernon-Smith was chuckling with glee.

"Good for you, Bunter!" he said. "Good for you, fatty! There isn't another train for two giddy hours—and Wharton will have to play somebody—eh?"

Bunter nodded and grinned.

"Yes—he can't very well leave me out now!" he remarked.

The Bounder sniffed scornfully.

"You! You fat duffer! Do you think he will put a boiled owl like you into the team! He will simply have to play me!"

"What rot!" said Bunter. "I'm a better batsman than you any day in the week, Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Besides," said Bunter shrewdly, "Wharton won't play you, because of the tricks you've served him—even if I'm a duffer, he'd rather play me than you!"

The Bounder started, and looked very thoughtful. There was something in what Billy Bunter said; and the Bounder knew it.

"Look here, Bunter!" he said, after a pause. "It's possible—just possible—that Wharton might play the giddy ox like that, because of that old trouble he had with me. You haven't finished yet—another of 'em has got to go! Understand?"

Bunter looked uneasy.

"They'll tumble to it if it's tried again!" he said.

"You must risk that!"

"But I say, Smithy—"

"And I'll stand you a quid for a feed at the end of the journey, Bunter!"

"Oh!" said Billy Bunter. "Now you're talking! All right, Smithy, I'd do anything to oblige a fellow I really like—you rely on me!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bad Luck for Micky!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. were looking a little less cheerful now as the train bore them onwards on their journey. The desertion of Hazeldene and the loss of Penfold had left the team just eleven, and now that Bulstrode was gone there were only ten men to take the field at St. Jim's. Russell, who had come as a reserve, filled the place of Penfold very well. But who was to fill Bul-

A Splendid Complete Tale of the Chum-
of Greyfriars. Order Early.

strode's place? That was a question Wharton had to find an answer to before the team arrived at St. Jim's.

"Man short!" growled Bob Cherry. "Blessed if I can understand old Quelchy playing the giddy ox like that! He knows how important the St. Jim's match is—or he ought to know, anyway!"

"I suppose Bulstrode has been up to something!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Quelchy must have come across to Courtfield from the school, to be here when we changed trains, just to get Bulstrode. I wonder what he's done!"

"The silly ass, to get old Quelchy on his track when he's starting for a match at a distance!" said Nugent.

"The silly-assfulness of the esteemed Bulstrode is terrific!"

"Who are you going to play, Harry?"

Wharton wrinkled his brows thoughtfully.

"Of course, we could pick up a man at St. Jim's," he said. "Lots of fellows there would be willing to chip in to fill up an empty place. Only——"

"Only if we beat them, with a St. Jim's chap playing for us, it won't be the giddy victory we want!" said Nugent.

"That's it!"

"There are two other Greyfriars chaps in the train, too," remarked Ogilvy. "You could play either of them. Bunter's no good, of course; but Vernon-Smith can play a splendid game when he likes."

"He doesn't always like!"

"Well, he would be bound to play on an occasion like this!" said Ogilvy. "I think it's a bit of luck his being in the train. He'd play if you asked him!"

Wharton bit his lip. It went very much against the grain with him to ask such a favour of his old enemy.

"There's Bunter!" he said.

Ogilvy sniffed.

"You couldn't put that fathead in the team! St. Jim's would laugh us to death if they saw him play. Besides, what would the fellows say at Greyfriars, if you left out a good player to put that hopeless ass in!"

"I don't want to play Smithy!"

"I know you don't!" said Ogilvy, somewhat tartly. "But I think that this isn't a time to consider what you want and what you don't want. I know you and Smithy are at daggers drawn; but we want to beat St. Jim's!"

"Faith, and you'll have to play Smithy, Wharton darlint!" said Micky Desmond. "He'd play if you asked him!"

"I know he would!"

"Then that settles it!" said Ogilvy.

"It doesn't settle it!" said Wharton, sharply. "I'll think it over!"

"Well, I consider——"

"Blow what you consider! I had an idea that I was skipper of this team!" said Wharton, angrily.

"Oh, rats!" said Ogilvy.

"Look here——"

"Peace, my children, peace!" said Nugent. "Don't rag one another now, for goodness sake! That isn't the way to win cricket matches, or lucifer matches, or any kind of matches!"

"I shouldn't wonder if the Bounder's had a hand in this!" said Harry. "It's jolly queer, losing three fellows on the way—first Hazel, and then Pen, and now Bulstrode!"

"I suppose Smithy didn't put the brokers into Penfold's shop, did he?" asked Ogilvy, sarcastically.

"I can't help thinking that he's at the bottom of Hazel's going, anyway. Hazel never showed any sign of being seedy till we got to Friardale Station!"

"You're making a pleasant accusation against Hazeldene, I must say!"

"Well, I don't want to do that. But——"

"But you're doing it!" said Ogilvy.

"Oh, shut up!"

Ogilvy growled and relapsed into silence. Wharton sat in worried thought. He knew that most of the team took it for granted that he ought to play the Bounder to fill the empty place in the eleven. But it went very much against the grain; and he could not help suspecting, too, that Vernon-Smith had a hand in the misfortunes of the eleven since they had left Greyfriars. He knew the Bounder of old.

If Vernon-Smith had been guilty of trickery in the matter, it would be too hard to be forced to give him a place in the team as a reward for his tricks.

On the other hand, the team could not play a man short—not, at all events, without inviting a licking from Tom Merry's team at St. Jim's.

The train rushed on while Wharton was thinking it out.

There was another change to be made half-way to St. Jim's, and when the train stopped, the cricketers poured out of it, and the Bounder and Bunter joined them. Vernon-Smith looked over the party.

"Hallo! Bulstrode's not got out!" he exclaimed.

"He's not in the train!" said Ogilvy.

The Bounder looked astonished.

"Not in the train!" he exclaimed.

"No; he was left behind at Courtfield!"

"Why, I saw him get into the train!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Old Quelchy turned up and called him out, bedad!" Micky explained. "Faith, I think Quelchy might have found something better to do. Didn't you see him?"

"No; I was reading," said the Bounder. "Then you're a man short?"

"Faith, and we are!"

"I shouldn't mind playing, if you want me, Wharton," said the Bounder, diffidently.

"Thanks!" said Harry.

"Well, do you want me?"

"I'll let you know!"

"Oh, really, Smithy, I think you shouldn't put yourself forward in this way, you know. Of course, Wharton is going to play me!" said Bunter.

"It's not a comedy we're going to play; it's a cricket match!" explained Ogilvy. "We'll play you when we're doing a screaming farce, Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's the train!" growled Wharton. "Get in—and for goodness' sake don't any of you get left behind!"

The juniors were not able to get carriages to themselves this time. The train was pretty full. The Famous Five got into one carriage; and Mark Linley and Tom Brown and Ogilvy into another. Micky Desmond got into a carriage with the Bounder and Billy Bunter, and they squeezed into the space for two, all but two places being filled in the carriage.

"Faith, and it's going to be a squeeze intirely," said Micky.

"Sure, and you might get out, Bunter darling. It doesn't matter if you lose the train!"

"Rats!" said Billy Bunter, promptly.

"Don't shove me, you fat porpoise!" said Micky, as the fat junior settled down heavily into his seat. "Sure, you're making me shove this ould gentleman next to me!"

The old gentleman next to Micky glared at him. Micky had trodden on his feet, and was certainly squeezing him uncomfortably. Bunter required more than average room, and his weight told as he settled down on the crowded seat. The old gentleman was very snappish.

"You should not crowd into a full carriage, you boys!" he exclaimed. "One of you should get out. There is more room along the train!"

"Faith, and I didn't see any, sir!" said Micky.

"I shall speak to the guard!" exclaimed the old gentleman.

"This is outrageous! I did not pay for my ticket, to be pushed by unmannerly boys!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

The old gentleman jumped.

That was certainly not a respectful reply; and if Micky Desmond had uttered it, he would certainly have deserved to have his ears boxed. But Micky Desmond had not spoken; it was the Greyfriars ventriloquist again. But the old gentleman could not be supposed to know that. He turned quite purple with indignation.

"Boy! You young rascal——"

"Eh! Are you spaking to me?" demanded Micky Desmond, in surprise.

"Guard!" shrieked the old gentleman, leaning from the doorway. "Guard!"

"Urry up, there!"

"Guard! Guard!"

"Oh, shut your silly head, you old josser!"

"Faith, and who said that?" murmured Micky Desmond, in surprise.

Vernon-Smith chuckled.

The old gentleman was not in doubt as to who had said it. He bellowed for the guard, and the guard came to the door.

"Wot's the matter 'ere?" he demanded.

The old gentleman pointed to Micky Desmond.

"I insist upon that young ruffian being removed from the carriage! The carriage was full before he entered, and he has insulted me grossly! I insist——"

"Sure, and I——"

"The train's full up!" said the guard. "The boy can change at the next station into another carriage."

"I insist——"

"Can't be done—jest going to start——"

"You're a liar!"

The guard jumped. It certainly seemed to be Micky Desmond's voice, and the guard glared at the amazed Irish junior in speechless wrath.

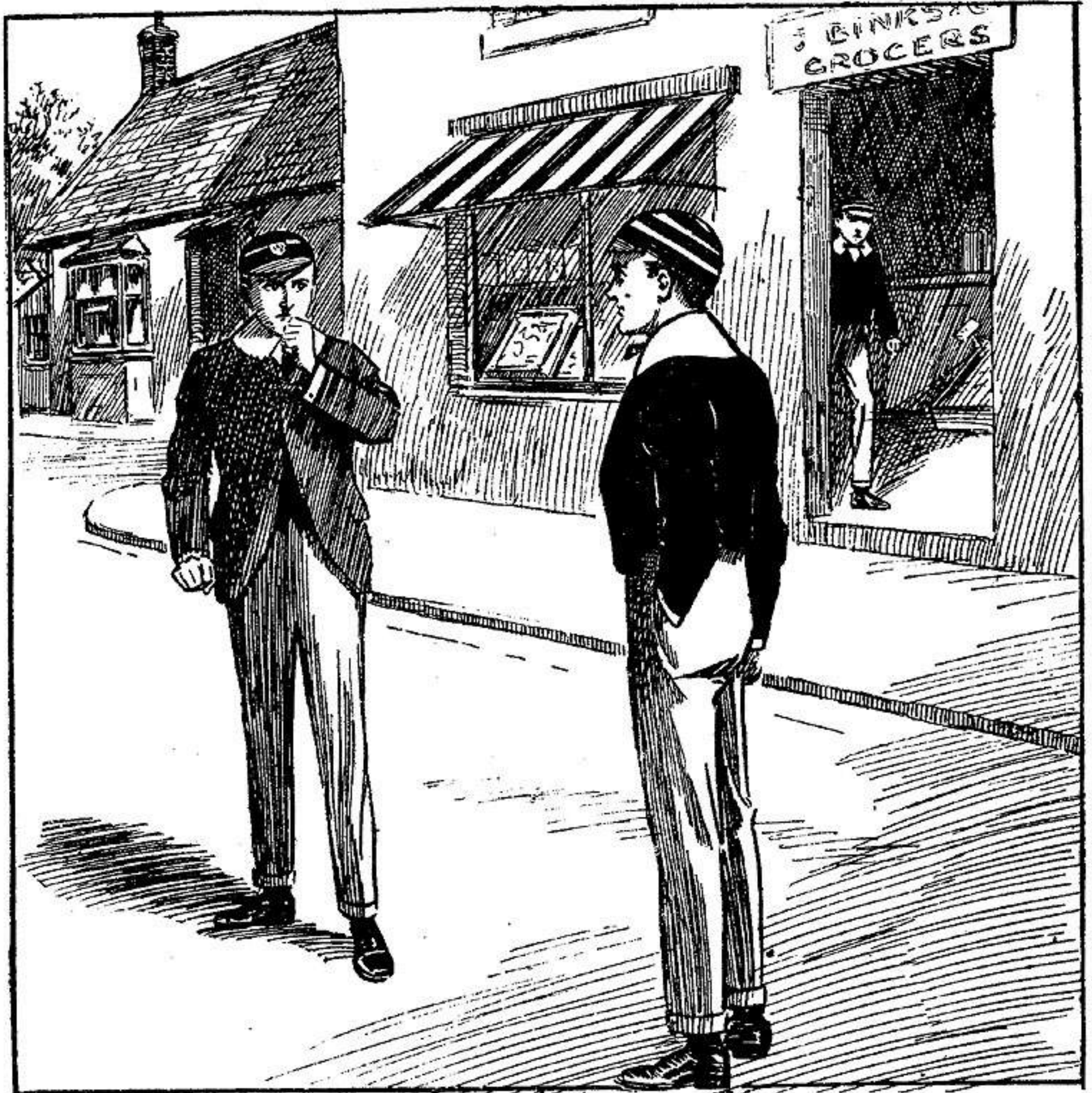
"There!" roared the old gentleman. "There is a sample

ANSWERS

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 273.
"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.



"Be quiet, for goodness' sake!" ejaculated the Grammarian anxiously. "I can't explain. My name is Tom Sinclair now, and I'm the new boy at the Grammar School. Please—please don't say another word, Jack. I promise to explain later!" Levison, from his point of vantage, had seen and heard everything, and he gazed at Jack Blake with undisguised curiosity. (For this incident see the grand, long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's, entitled "The Schoolboy Informer!" by Martin Clifford, which is contained in this week's issue of our popular companion paper, "The Gem Library," Out on Wednesday. Price One Penny.)

of that young ruffian's manners! Perhaps you will remove him now!"

"A liar, am I?" spluttered the guard. "My 'at!"

"Take your face away! Go and buy it!"

"W-oo-ut!"

"Buzz off, before I do you in the eye!"

"Dot me in the eye!" roared the guard, scrambling into the carriage. "I'll show you! You get outta this carriage!"

"Rats!"

"Hout you go!"

Micky Desmond roared as the guard laid a hand upon his shoulder, and jerked him out of his seat.

"Phwat are ye doin'?" roared Micky, whose Irish accent always became stronger when he was excited. "Phwat do yez want, inirely? Hands off, ye spalpeen!"

"You get hout!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 275.

NEXT
MONDAY;

"STANDING BY SKINNER!"

"No fear!"

"Hout, I say! I don't believe you've got a first class ticket, neither!"

"Sure, and I—"

"Show your ticket!" roared the guard.

"Faith, it's here!" Micky Desmond felt in his waistcoat pocket, but the ticket was not there. "Sure, I—I've got it here somewhere!"

"He is travelling without a ticket!" shouted the angry old gentleman.

"Where's your ticket?" roared the guard.

"Faith, I—I-I've lost it! I—"

"Then hout you go! I've 'card that tale afore!"

"Sure, I— Oh, ye blaggard! Ye spalpeen! Oh! Yah!"

(Bump!

A Splendid Complete Tale of the Ohums
of Greyfriars. Order Early.

Micky Desmond alighted on the platform, and the guard slammed the door of the carriage. Micky Desmond jumped up in a fury.

"Sure, I'm going by that train! I—"

"Travelling without a ticket, Bill!" said the guard, to a porter who rushed up. "'Old him! Young swindler!"

"Sure, I—"

"Stand back there!"

The guard swung himself into the train, and it started. Micky Desmond remained on the platform, struggling wildly in the grasp of the porter.

"Faith, and I've got to go!" he roared. "Ye spalpeen, leggo! I shall miss the match! I— Yah! Let me go! Yaroo-oh!"

But the train was gone before the porter released him.

"You'll come with me to the station-master, young gentleman!" he said. "And if you've not got a ticket, you'll be given in charge!"

Micky Desmond went desperately through his pockets. He distinctly remembered putting his ticket into his waistcoat-pocket. He remembered seeing the edge of it protruding from the pocket as he sat down. But as he went through his pockets now, he found the ticket in his jacket-pocket. But there it was right enough, and the porter had to be satisfied.

"You should have shown it to the guard," he said.

"Sure, and I couldn't find it!" mumbled Micky. "Sure, I put it in me waistcoat-pocket, and goodness knows how it got here!"

The porter grinned.

"Better be more careful next time," he said. "You've lost the train."

"When is the next?" growled Micky.

"Where for?"

"Wayland Junction."

"Two hours."

"Oh, howly mother av Moses, and tare an' 'ounds!" groaned Micky!

The train was rushing on. Harry Wharton & Co., who were in a carriage some distance up the train, had not seen the row, and did not know the misfortune that had happened to the Irish junior. Vernon-Smith and Billy Bunter were chuckling in their carriage. They had succeeded. One more of the cricketers had been left behind. Bunter's ventriloquism had started the trouble, and the curious displacement of Micky's ticket had done the rest.

"Queer he couldn't find his ticket, Smithy," Bunter murmured.

The Bounder laughed.

"I saw it sticking out of his waistcoat-pocket," he explained, in a low voice, unheard by the other passengers. "I whipped it out, and slipped it into his jacket-pocket. He will be all right; he'll find it. He will be arrested for travelling without a ticket."

Bunter grinned.

"You are a deep beast, Smithy! I never thought of that, now."

"But, I say, Wharton will have to play both of us at St. Jim's."

"What-ho!" said the Bounder.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder Has His Way.

THREE juniors were standing on the platform at Wayland Junction, where the party from Greyfriars had to make their last change for St. Jim's. They were three juniors from St. Jim's—Tom Merry, Manners, and Lowther, of the Shell Form at that ancient school. They were waiting for the train, having walked over to Wayland to meet the party there, and to come over with them to St. Jim's.

"Here she comes!" said Manners.

Tom Merry came out of the volume he was reading, and Monty Lowther detached himself from the automatic sweet machine he was leaning against, and took his hands out of his pockets.

The train had appeared in sight down the line.

"I wonder what they will be like this time," Tom Merry remarked. "A good team, I expect, anyway. It will be a ripping match!"

"I can see a face I know," said Monty Lowther, scanning the advancing train, as it steamed into the station, and catching sight of Billy Bunter's fat face and gleaming spectacles. "Chap they call Punter, or Shunter—I forget. I wonder if they're going to play him? About as good as playing the porpoise from the Zoo."

The train stopped.

The cricketers poured out of the various carriages, and the Terrible Three of St. Jim's shook hands warmly with Harry Wharton & Co.

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
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"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
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"Come over to meet you here," Tom Merry explained. "No hurry, the local for Rylcombe doesn't start for ten minutes yet."

"Good of you to come over," said Wharton.

"The goodfulness is terrific, my esteemed Merry," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh; and Tom Merry smiled.

He had met the Nabob of Bhanipur before, and he liked him and his English immensely.

"All your flock here?" asked Manners, looking along the crowd.

"Yes. We lost our reserves coming."

"Playing ten men, then?"

"Ten!" said Harry Wharton. "There are eleven fellows here, without Bunter." Wharton had decided in the train that he would have to play the Bounder.

"Then I'm losing my eyesight in my old age," said Manners. "I can only count ten."

Harry Wharton looked round anxiously. It struck him at once that some further ill-luck must have happened.

"Micky's not here," said Nugent.

"Micky! Micky Desmond!"

But the Irish junior did not answer to his name, for very good reasons.

"Anybody here seen Desmond?" called out Harry Wharton.

"Any of you in the carriage with him?"

"I was," said the Bounder.

"Oh, you!" Wharton's suspicions revived at once. "Surely nothing's happened to him?"

"He didn't come on from the last change," Vernon-Smith explained.

"Why, I saw him get into the train!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

The Bounder nodded.

"He got out again," he said. "A guard wanted to see his ticket, and he couldn't produce it. Must have forgotten to take it."

"I took his ticket, along with the others, and gave it to him," said Harry. "He had his ticket right enough."

"Then he must have lost it," said the Bounder easily.

"The guard wanted to see it, and Micky couldn't show it, and the man yanked him out."

"He missed the train?"

"Yes."

"Oh, rotten!"

Wharton did not say to the Bounder the things he was thinking. He did not want to have any unpleasantness before the St. Jim's fellows. But without being unduly suspicious, he could not help thinking that Vernon-Smith had had something to do with Micky Desmond missing the train.

The Greyfriars' skipper's brow was darkly clouded.

The team was two men short now. What was to be done?

"By Jove, that's jolly unlucky for you!" said Tom Merry sympathetically. "And you haven't got any reserves with you?"

Wharton shook his head.

"We had two," he said, "but one turned seedy, and one of the team was called away at the last minute, and then another was called off by a Form-master, so—"

"Rotten chapter of accidents!" said Nugent. "Now Micky Desmond's missed the train, and we're two men short."

"Two!" said Tom Merry.

"Vernon-Smith and Bunter are not in the team," said Harry.

"Oh, I see!"

"But you'll play Smithy, Wharton?" said Ogilvy.

"I'm ready," said the Bounder.

"Yes, I suppose so," said Harry. "There's nothing else to be done. Let's get to the train."

The Terrible Three of St. Jim's could see plainly enough that there was a rift in the lute somewhere; but they politely did not notice it. Tom Merry led the way to the platform whence the local train started for Rylcombe, the station for St. Jim's.

"Trouble in the family, I fancy," Monty Lowther murmured, in Tom Merry's ear. "Wharton's got his little back up about something. Let's get in further down the train, and give them a chance to jaw it over."

"Good egg!" said Tom Merry.

Wharton signed to Vernon-Smith and Bunter to get in with him, and they obeyed. Tom Merry and Manners and Lowther went into the next carriage with Ogilvy and Nugent and Hurree Janset Ram Singh. It was quite plain that the Greyfriars skipper had something to say to Vernon-Smith and Bunter, which it was just as well the St. Jim's fellows took no notice of.

Wharton was relieved by the tact of the St. Jim's fellows. He wanted to speak to the two possible recruits, and he didn't want to do it in the presence of strange ears.

He did not speak till the train had started.

"We're another man short now," he remarked. "It's

jolly odd how we've lost chap after chap on the way to St. Jim's."

"Jolly odd!" agreed the Bounder.

"Looks as if somebody had something to do with it!" said Johnny Bull bluntly.

The Bounder smiled.

"If you suspect me of having anything to do with it, I can only say you are wide of the mark," he said. "I couldn't help Micky getting into a row with the guard."

"Well, let that drop," said Harry. "The question is, what are we going to do now? We're two men short in the team."

"I've said once that I'll play, if you like," said Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Wharton, I'm quite willing to play!" said Billy Bunter. "And I must say that I think it's all for the best, as it turns out."

Wharton growled.

"Smith can play," he said, "when he likes. You can't play at all."

"Oh, really—"

"Tom Merry may agree," Smith said, "but I can't. It's not good enough."

"Look here—"

"I tell you it's not good enough!" said the Bounder quietly. "You want to make use of me till Bulstrode comes—if he does come—and then to turn me out of the team. I'm not going to be made a fool of like that before all St. Jim's."

"Same here!" said Bunter, taking his cue from the Bounder. "If I'm good enough to play in the first innings, I'm good enough to play in the second."

"It's not making fools of you," said Harry sharply. "It's making reserves of you. If I'd asked you at Greyfriars, you'd have been glad enough to come as reserves."

The Bounder said nothing.

"I'll put you two into the team, but on conditions," said Harry. "Micky Desmond will come on by the next train. When he arrives, you'll have to stand out, Bunter, and Micky will take your place. I'll ask Tom Merry's permission to play a substitute till Micky gets here."

"Oh, really—"

"And the same applies to Vernon-Smith, if Bulstrode turns up," said Harry. "Bulstrode may be able to get away later, and, if he gets here, he must have his place in the team. Tom Merry is a good sportsman, and he'll understand how we're fixed, and let us put in two substitutes."

Vernon-Smith shook his head.

"But you didn't ask us at Greyfriars."

"What difference does that make?" demanded Wharton. "I'm asking you now to play as substitutes for two missing players. I've a right to expect it, as you are members of the Remove Cricket Club."

"Most certainly!" said Bob Cherry.

The Bounder's lip curled.

"It doesn't seem to occur to you that any other fellows have any rights," he said. "I think I have some rights too. If you want me to play, I'll play with pleasure, and I'll promise to put up the best game I can. But I'm not going to be made use of and then turned out if Bulstrode happens along. As a matter of fact, I'm a better bat than Bulstrode any day; and ten times as good in the field!"

"So am I!" said Bunter.

"Oh, shut up!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Do you mean that unless I give you a place in the team for the whole match, you won't play, Smith?" said Harry.

"I mean that I can't play unless I am treated decently." Wharton was silent.

He had turned it over in his mind for the last two hours whether he would offer the place to Vernon-Smith; and it was rather a shock to him to find the place refused now that it was offered.

Vernon-Smith was master of the situation, in point of fact. Wharton had been slow to make up his mind; but he had come to the only possible decision, to play the Bounder.

The team could not meet the Saints a man short; that was courting defeat.

But the Bounder, instead of accepting conditions, intended to impose them; and the power was in his hands to do so!

The train ran on, while Wharton sat with a wrinkled brow, deep in unpleasant reflection.

His chums were silent too; they could not help him.

They were exasperated at the idea of being dictated to by the Bounder—especially as they vaguely suspected him of having had a hand in causing the vacancies in the team.

But there was nothing to be done but to give way.

"Better make up your mind," suggested the Bounder, at last; "this run only takes a quarter of an hour, I believe."

Wharton gave him a bitter look.

"You won't play, then, unless I give you Bulstrode's place for the match, whether Bulstrode turns up again or not?" he asked.

"I feel that I can't play on any other terms!"

"You won't, you mean!"

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NEXT MONDAY:

"STANDING BY SKINNER!"

EVERY MONDAY, **The "Magnet"** LIBRARY, ONE PENNY.

"Let it go at that!" said the Bounder, with a shrug of the shoulders. "You can put it any way you like!"

"I think you are acting like a cud!"

"Thanks!"

"If it wasn't for risking losing the match for Greyfriars, I'd leave you out. But I can't throw away the match on account of my feelings in the matter!" said Harry, bitterly.

"I'll put you in!"

"For the whole match?"

"Yes."

"Honour bright—whether Bulstrode turns up or not?"

"Yes."

"Done!" said the Bounder.

"What about Bunter?" asked Bob Cherry. "Micky is sure to come on by the next train, and if we don't bat first, he'll be here in time for the first innings. It would be rot to have Bunter in the team. Better play a man short till Micky gets here—or Bulstrode—whichever of them gets here first!"

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Yes, that's all right; may as well play a man short as play Bunter!"

The fat junior glared at him through his spectacles.

"You rotters!" he roared. "You're jolly well not going to leave me out!"

"I'll put you in as substitute till Desmond gets here, if you like!" said Wharton, curtly. "I won't put you in on any other terms. You're no good, anyway!"

"Why, you—you beast—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"I won't shut up!" roared Bunter. "This is simply a case of personal jealousy, and I'm not standing it. Do you hear?"

"I'm not deaf!"

"Well, you're going to put me in, then?"

"Only on the conditions I've named."

"I refuse to play, then!"

"Good!"

Bunter spluttered with wrath. The juniors in the carriage were grinning; nobody cared whether Bunter played or not. Playing Bunter was not much better than playing a man short.

"And Smithy won't play, either!" roared Bunter. "Smithy and I are pals, and he won't play unless you play me!"

"Smithy is a rather uncertain sort of pal to rely on!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Vernon-Smith laughed, affecting not to hear Bob's remark.

"My dear Bunter," he said, "if we're pals, this is the first I've heard about it; and I'm certainly not going to stand out of this match because Wharton doesn't want to play a howling duffer!"

"Why, you—you—" spluttered Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Johnny Bull. "You've got it in the neck that time, Bunter!"

"You rotter, Smithy!" roared Bunter. "You said you'd stick to me—you—you rotter! If you don't stand by me, I'll jolly well tell them—"

"Shut up, you fat fool!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Tell us what? Out with it, Bunter. What's the giddy secret?"

Vernon-Smith turned red.

"It's nothing!" he said. "Only Bunter's rot!"

"What is it, Bunter?"

"Out with it!"

But Bunter did not "out with it." He realised in time that if he explained the tricks he had played on the members of the team it would be as bad for himself as for Vernon-Smith. He grunted, and made no answer.

"You can stay out of the team, Bunter," said Wharton. "That's settled!"

Bunter snorted.

"Upon the whole, I'll play," he said. "I'll play till Desmond gets here, if you like. But I think it's hard on a really good cricketer!"

"What really good cricketer?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Here we are at Rylcombe!" said Johnny Bull.

And the cricketers descended upon the platform of Rylcombe Station. A handsome and elegant youth with an eyeglass in his eye came forward to meet them, and Harry Wharton shook hands with Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the swell of St. Jim's.

"Jolly glad to see you, deah boys!" said D'Arcy. "It's a wippin' day, and we're goin' to have a wippin' match! What?"

"How do you do, Gussy?" asked Bunter, familiarly.

Arthur Augustus turned his eyeglass upon the Owl of the Remove.

"Bai Jove!"

"You remember me, old man?"

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"Weally, yaas, I think I do—your name is Gruntah—" "Bunter!" "Oh, Buntah! How do you do, Buntah?" "We've got a brake outside," said Jack Blake, of St. Jim's. "This way, my infants!" And in a few minutes the Greyfriars champions were in the brake, bowling along the sunny road between high green hedges towards St. Jim's.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.
The St. Jim's Match.

TOM MERRY & Co. of St. Jim's, had a special holiday that morning for the Greyfriars match, like the Greyfriars fellows. The rest of St. Jim's was at class when Harry Wharton and his team arrived. The St. Jim's junior eleven, and half a dozen fellows who were required, were out of the Form-rooms, and that was all. The afternoon was a half-holiday, and then there would be plenty of spectators to see the later developments of the match. But for the start, only the umpires were likely to see it, and the scorer, and one or two others. The junior pitch, beautifully rolled, looked very inviting; and the Greyfriars fellows were shown into very comfortable quarters in the pavilion.

"We shall have the ground to ourselves until twelve," said Tom Merry. "This is the only whole-day junior match played here, you know. The seniors have two or three; but this is our only one—"

"Our only giddy ewe-lamb!" said Monty Lowther, solemnly.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"We'll do our best to give you a good match," said Harry Wharton. "It was rotten luck losing a man en route; but Bunter—that fat chap yonder—is going to play as substitute till he arrives, if you've no objection."

"Right-ho!"

"Does Buntah play cwicket?" asked Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, turning his eyeglass upon the fat junior again.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Yes—after a fashion—better than playing a man short. You only need to warn the wicket-keeper not to let him brain him with the bat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ripping lot of chaps, these St. Jim's fellows," said Bob Cherry, when they were changing in the pavilion. "They've

got one chap as fat as Bunter, but he looks a very different sort—Wynn, I think his name is."

"He's a friend of mine!" said Billy Bunter, loftily. "I'm as pally with him as I am with D'Arcy!"

"Yes, I daresay you are!" agreed Bob Cherry, sarcastically. "Just as much—and no more!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

The Saints were all ready when Harry Wharton & Co. came out of the dressing-room.

They looked a fine team.

Tom Merry was the skipper of the St. Jim's junior eleven. The rest were Manners and Lowther, of the Shell; Blake and Herries and D'Arcy, an Australian named Noble, who was called Kangaroo by his comrades, and Figgins, Kerr, and Wynn—the last-named the fat Fourth-Former whom Bob Cherry had noticed resembled Bunter in his girth, though not in other respects. Fatty Wynn was the champion bowler of the junior team, and he was expected to do great things in the match.

Harry Wharton won the toss, and he elected to send in the Saints first, in order to give Micky Desmond and Bulstrode a chance to get to St. Jim's before the visiting side batted. Bunter in the field could not do much harm, but Bunter at the wicket was a wicket thrown away.

Harry Wharton led out his merry men, in spotless white, and posted them. Billy Bunter called out anxiously to his captain.

"Where do I stand, Wharton?"

"On your head!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really—"

"Wherever you like," said Harry. "It won't make much difference, only don't get in the way!"

"I prefer slip!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"Get into the long field!" said Harry.

"How far shall I go?"

"The further the better!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter snorted, and tramped away into the long field.

Tom Merry opened the innings for St. Jim's with Figgins at the other end. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy tapped his skipper gently on the arm as he was going on. Tom Merry halted, and turned his head.

"What is it, Gussy?" he asked.

"You've forgotten somethin', deah boy."

CONTRASTS.—No. 7.

Until the last few years, the would-be conqueror of the Alps had no alternative but to fight his way, slowly and laboriously, up the peaks on foot, aided by capable guides—the whole party being roped together for greater safety.



About two years ago the passage of the Alps was accomplished by the late M. Chauvez in an aeroplane in a few hours. The unfortunate airman was fatally injured on landing; but the feat has since been accomplished several times without accident of any kind.



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Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his monocle in his eye, and gazed down at the wicket in a very surprised way. "I suppose that's out, deah boy?" he remarked to the grinning umpire. "I suppose it is!" agreed the umpire. "Bal jove!" And Arthur Augustus carried home his bat. (See Chapter 10.)

Tom Merry glanced down at his pads, and then at his gloves.

"I haven't forgotten anything," he said. "What are you driving at?"

"I am not alludin' to your pads, deah boy. I was thinkin' that it gives a team a sort of a leg-up, you know, if there's a weally good score at the start."

"Yes, I believe I've heard something of the sort, Gussy."

"Pway don't wot, deah boy. Don't you think it's a good ideah to put in one of the vewy best batsmen for the first innings?"

"I'm putting in two," said Tom Merry.

"Weally, Tom Mewwy, you know what I mean."

"Blessed if I do!" said Tom Merry. "Do you think that Blake is a better bat than Figgins?"

"Yaas, but I'm not speakin' of that. I should be quite willin' to open the innings myself, in ordah to put heart into the team by a big score to start with," D'Arcy explained.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I fail to see anythin' to cackle at, Tom Mewwy," said the swell of St. Jim's, turning his eyeglass upon his captain with a withering look. "I am makin' this suggestion for the good of the team."

"My dear chap, the other side would buck up like anythink if we started with a duck's egg!" said Tom Merry.

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"Weally, you ass——"

"So I'll leave you till later. Ducks' eggs don't matter so much at the end of an innings."

"You uttah ass——"

Tom Merry laughed, and went on to the wicket. Arthur Augustus turned to Kerr for sympathy. Kerr was in the Fourth, like D'Arcy, but he was a New House boy, and his private opinion was that the team hadn't enough New House fellows in it. School House and New House at St. Jim's were keen rivals in cricket and other matters.

"Wathah a weckless way to open an innings, don't you think, Kerr?" asked D'Arcy, with a shake-of-the-head.

Kerr nodded.

"You mean Tom Merry opening it with Figgins?"

"Yaas."

"Awfully reckless," said Kerr. "Better have opened it with two New House chaps—say, Figgins and Redfern."

"I did not mean that at all, you ass! I meant——"

"There goes the first ball!" said Blake of the Fourth.

"You are intewwuptin' me, Blake."

"I know that, Gussy. My hat, that nigger is bowling well!" exclaimed Blake excitedly. "Look at his delivery! Wasn't that a daisy?"

The noble Nabob of Bhanipur, whom Jack Blake had thus disrespectfully referred to as a nigger, had certainly started

bowling in good style. His first ball, sent down to Tom Merry's wicket, was just stopped by the St. Jim's junior captain—just and no more. And his second ball was just stopped, too. And his third and fourth—just! The Saints looked at one another. In the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur the Greyfriars team had a bowler who was very hot stuff indeed.

It was a maiden over; Tom Merry did not score. That was something new; Tom Merry of St. Jim's generally broke his duck in the first over.

"We shall have to look out for Inky Darkness," murmured Monty Lowther.

"Bai Jove, what a queeah name!" said D'Arcy. "Is he weally named Inky Darkness?"

Lowther looked as solemn as a judge.

"The Royal Nabob Inky, Prince of Darkness," he explained. "That's the full style and title."

"Bai Jove! I've heard the Gweyfwilhs chaps call him Inky," said D'Arcy. "I thought his name was Huwwy, or Scauwwy, or somethin'."

"You call him Inky, Prince of Darkness, and you'll be all right," said Lowther. "Hallo, they're going for Figgy's scalp now. And Figgy looks as if he will lose it."

Tom Brown of New Zealand had been put on to bowl the second over. And the New Zealand junior was in great form. There was not much to choose between him and the Nabob of Bhanipur. Figgins was a smart and clever bat, but he found the bowling quite as much as he could handle. He took a solitary one on the last ball of the over, and that was all, but it was enough to make the New House members of the St. Jim's team chirp. Figgins had broken his duck, at all events.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter Surprises Himself!

THE St. Jim's innings went on steadily, Figgins and Tom Merry keeping their ends up for a good time, and piling up runs slowly but surely. The bowling and the fielding were so good that they had no chance to put up their unusual scores; but they did pretty well, and the numbers went up on the board. Figgins was out at last, caught at slip by Tom Brown, from a ball from the nabob, and Blake of the Fourth took his place. Blake did very well, but Tom Merry saw him out, and then Kerr came in. Kerr had bad luck, being clean bowled first ball by the nabob. And as he came disconsolately back to the pavilion, sarcastic voices inquired of him concerning the price of ducks' eggs—kind inquiries to which Kerr only replied with a grunt.

Tom Merry was still at the wicket, and he had thirty runs to his sole credit now, which was certainly good, considering the form of the field.

Redfern joined him at the wickets, and then Figgins & Co. grinned in anticipation. Redfern was a batsman of wonderful powers; he was certainly the equal of Tom Merry in that line, and Tom Merry was a mighty man of his hands when it came to batting. Redfern faced the nabob's bowling, and knocked it into a cocked hat, much to the surprise of Hurree Janset Ram Singh, whose opinion, expressed to Bob Cherry, was that it was terrific.

Two fours and a two from Redfern made the St. Jim's score jump, and Figgins and Kerr and Wynn roared approval.

"Well, hit, Reddy!"

"Bravo!"

"Jollay good!" said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy magnanimously. "Weddy bats vewy well for a New House chap. I couldn't do better than that myself!"

"Go hon!" said Kerr sarcastically.

"Weally, Kerr—"

"There goes another!" roared Figgins. "That's a boundary, I'll bet my hat!"

Harry Wharton clicked his teeth.

Redfern had sent the ball whizzing, and the field were running, but there was only one fellow who had a chance.

And that was Bunter!

Redfern had marked Bunter, and his utter incapacity, and he had really given Bunter a chance which he would never have given any other fieldsmen, confident that the fat junior would not be able to touch the ball even if it hit him on the chest.

But it was said of old that it is the unexpected that always happens.

Certainly that is very frequently the case in cricket.

The great summer game is a game of glorious uncertainties.

But certainly the most uncertain of uncertainties could not have surprised the Greyfriars field so much as what happened now.

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Bunter did not realise that the ball was coming his way till quite late: a yell from the whole field warned him.

"Bunter!"

"Look out!"

"Jump at it, you fat idiot!"

Billy Bunter jumped at it, with his fat hands outspread. Something hit him on his fat palm, and he gripped it, without even knowing that it was the ball.

The chances were about a million to one that Bunter wouldn't stop the ball.

But it was the millionth chance that happened.

Bunter had the ball!

He was so startled and flabbergasted himself that he didn't know that he had it, and he very nearly dropped it in his surprise.

Fortunately, he did not quite drop it.

He stood with the ball tight in his hand, blinking at it through his big spectacles with the blink of an amazed owl. There was a yell from the field.

"Caught!"

"Oh, well caught!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry threw himself down upon his back on the green turf, and kicked up his heels in hysterics.

"Caught! Bowled Inky, caught Bunter!" he gasped. "Oh, my hat! Oh, my Aunt Judy and Uncle George! Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The ha-ha-ha-fulness is terrific!"

"Caught Bunter! Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter blinked at the ball again, and blinked at the astounded and hilarious field. It dawned upon him at last what he had done.

Bunter, the champion ass of Greyfriars—Bunter, the born idiot so far as cricket was concerned—Bunter, the Owl of the Remove—Bunter had caught out the most dangerous batsman on the opposing side!

It was incredible, but it was true.

Billy Bunter knew perfectly well that it was a miraculous accident—one of those happy flukes which enliven the great game.

But he did not intend to say so.

Billy Bunter had caught out Redfern of St. Jim's, and Billy Bunter meant to have the full credit of that wonderful performance. He assumed an air of importance, and blinked at Wharton with sarcastic geniality.

"I suppose you'll admit that I can play cricket now?" he remarked.

Wharton roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How's that, umpire?" yelled Nugent.

"Out!"

"The batsman's out," said Bunter. "That was a jolly difficult catch—not specially hard for me, I mean, but it would be the ticklishest catch I've ever seen, and you couldn't have made that catch, Bob Cherry."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You jolly well couldn't have made it, Bull, with all your cackling!"

"Blessed if I could!" said Johnny Bull honestly. "It was the tickleshest catch I've ever seen, and you couldn't have made it excepting by a howling fluke."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Fluke or not, the man's out!" grinned Wharton. "I'm afraid you won't be able to do that again, Bunny, but you've done all right so far. You've missed a dozen chances, but this makes up for them. That chap Redfern looked as if he were set for a century, and now he's out!"

"And I've outed him!" said Bunter.

"Ha, ha! You have!"

"I suppose you'll put me on to open our innings, after this, Wharton?" said Billy Bunter importantly.

"Yes, I don't think!" said Wharton. "Trot along, you fellows—the bat's in."

Kangaroo was next man in for St. Jim's.

The St. Jim's fellows, of course, did not know much about Bunter. He certainly did not look like a cricketer. But appearances are often deceptive, and Bunter had made a catch that few of the fellows there would have undertaken to make. It was only natural, therefore, that Tom Merry & Co. should conclude that Bunter was a "dark horse," and that it would pay to look out very carefully for him.

And this impression caused them to give Bunter as wide a berth as they could, and thus to bestow more chances on the other fieldsmen, which was really as good for Greyfriars as if Bunter had been a good field.

No more chances came Billy Bunter's way—not that he could have made anything of them if they had. Such flukes were not likely to happen twice over.

But Billy Bunter declined to regard it as a fluke, and he

succeeded in persuading himself that he was a very fine fieldsman indeed.

Certainly that catch made a very considerable difference to the St. Jim's score when the home innings closed.

Redfern's wicket had fallen for ten runs, and but for that unlucky catch—unlucky from Redfern's point of view—he would probably have piled up at least forty for his side.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was last man in, and he came in with a flourish that indicated that striking things were to be expected. Fellows who were getting ready for their lunch might have taken warning from D'Arcy's manner that they would not have their lunch just yet. Unfortunately, a fast ball from the nabob whipped D'Arcy's leg stump out of the ground before he had had a chance of breaking his duck.

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy jammed his monocle into his eye, and gazed down at the wicket in a very surprised way.

"I suppose that's out, deah boy?" he remarked to the grinning umpire.

"I suppose it is!" agreed the umpire.

"Bai Jove!"

And with that ejaculation Arthur Augustus carried home his bat.

"Ducks' eggs are cheap to-day," Kerr remarked.

"Oh, wats!"

St. Jim's were all down for ninety in nice time for lunch, a circumstance which was very gratifying to Billy Bunter. Bunter had unexpectedly distinguished himself as a fieldsman, but he was going to distinguish himself still more at the lunch, and that, at least, would not be unexpected.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Is Not Wanted!

THE Greyfriars fieldsmen were going off after the innings, when two dusty fellows arrived and joined them. They were Micky Desmond and Bulstrode. Both of them had come on by the first available train, and they had met at Wayland Junction and come on to St. Jim's together. Bulstrode was looking very black as he joined the cricketers. He made a dart towards Billy Bunter, and Bunter, reading trouble to come in Bulstrode's face, scuttled away and joined the St. Jim's fellows. Bob Cherry caught Bulstrode by the arm as he was about to rush after the Owl of the Remove.

"No rows here, old chap!" he said. "Can't bump Bunter at this place, you know. When you're on a visit you have to pretend to have good manners, you know. It's the rule."

"Look here—"

"Easy does it," said Wharton. "Besides, what has Bunter done?"

"He made me lose the train at Courtfield!" roared Bulstrode.

"Bunter did?" exclaimed Wharton, in surprise.

"Yes, the fat boulder!"

"But it was Quelch! He called you out of the train!"

"Quelch wasn't there!" growled Bulstrode. "I hunted round the station for him, but he wasn't there; and I understood it too late! It was that beast imitating his voice!"

"Bunter! Oh, my hat!"

"Faith, and I think that was why I got into a row in the thrain, to!" said Micky Desmond. "It was Bunter's ventriloquism, the spalpeen!"

Wharton frowned.

"Do you know anything about that, Vernon-Smith?" he asked.

The Bounder looked surprised.

"How should I know anything about it?" he asked.

"Well, Bunter, was with you?"

"I'm not responsible for Bunter's actions, I suppose. Blessed if I think he's responsible for his actions himself, for that matter!"

"Looks to me like a rotten plot!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, I don't know about that," said Bulstrode. "But I know I lost the train through a rotten trick, and I'll make that fat beast smart for it when we get back to Greyfriars! I suppose you've been playing a substitute till I could get here, Wharton?"

Wharton looked uncomfortable.

"That's what I wanted to do, Bulstrode," he said; "but Vernon-Smith refused to play unless I promised to keep him in the team for the whole match."

"Look here, you can't give my place to Smithy!"

"I had to, as you weren't here."

"Faith, and what about me, thin?" demanded Micky Desmond.

"I've played Bunter as a substitute, intending to take him out and put in the first of you that got here," Wharton explained. "Now you've arrived together I shall have to leave Smithy in, as I promised him, unless he chooses to step out and make room for you, as he certainly ought to do."

"No fear!" said the Bounder.

"Look here, Smithy—" began Bulstrode hotly.

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"Faith, and look here, Smithy darlint—" began Micky Desmond, at the same moment.

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"It's no good talking," he said. "I've been put into the team, and I'm staying in the team! That's settled!"

"It's a rotten, caddish thing to take another fellow's place!" said Bulstrode.

"Sure, and it is, Smithy dear!"

"That's your business. You shouldn't get left behind. I fancy you're mistaken about Bunter playing a trick on you," said the Bounder calmly. "But, in any case, it doesn't concern me. Wharton asked me to play, and I've played, and I'm going to finish the match, too. I'm not going to fag through the fielding, and then miss my innings. Like your check to ask it, I think!"

"It's my place!"

"It's mine now," said the Bounder coolly.

"And you're going to keep it?"

"You bet!"

"Then which of us is going in instead of Bunter, Wharton?" asked Bulstrode, turning to the Remove captain. "I suppose you haven't promised that hopeless idiot to keep him in for the whole match?"

"No fear; I shall drop him now! But I don't know which of you to put in. I think upon the whole I'd better play Bulstrode, Micky. I wanted you mostly as a change bowler. And we've bowled one innings, and there are two to bat, so—"

Micky Desmond groaned.

"Sure, it's all right," he said. "I'm a reasonable chap, and I won't scalp ye for lavin' me out. But it's hard lines—so it is—and I think somebody ought to take Smithy round a corner and suffocate him!"

"Thank you!" said Vernon-Smith unmoved.

The Greyfriars fellows joined the St. Jim's crowd at lunch. The St. Jim's fellows were all out of the Form-rooms now. Harry Wharton & Co. lunched in the big dining-room in the School House, where a table had been specially prepared for them and the home team, and it was a very cheerful meal. Lunch—not to call it dinner—was provided by the school; but the juniors had added various garnishments to the meal, so that it was most varied and plentiful—indeed, Billy Bunter regarded it as quite sybaritic. Billy Bunter simply spread himself at the table. He had a good second in Fatty Wynn, of the New House at St. Jim's. But Fatty Wynn was not allowed to spread himself so much as he wished. Figgins and Kerr sat on either side of him, and they kept a keen eye on Fatty. They did not intend that he should knock himself up for the bowling. When Fatty reached for anything that Figgins and Kerr did not think would agree with his bowling form, they calmly pushed it away again. Fatty Wynn turned reproachful eyes upon them, but they were as adamant, or the nether millstone, in this matter.

"Plenty of time to gorge after the match, Fatty," Figgins remarked cheerfully. "You've got to take wickets this afternoon. Savvy?"

"But I can always bowl better after a good meal, Figgy," said Fatty Wynn, pathetically. "I always believe in laying a solid foundation."

Figgins chuckled.

"I dare say you do," he agreed; "but the foundation isn't going to be so solid as usual this time."

"And I always get extra hungry in this spring weather," Fatty Wynn went on.

"Then you'll enjoy the feed after the match," said Kerr.

"I think I might have a few tarts, Figgy."

"I don't think," said Figgins.

"Well, some of the pie then?"

"Not a bite!"

"I'll have the cream-puffs then."

"Not a morsel!"

"Oh dear," groaned Fatty Wynn, "talk about the tortures of Tantalus! Why, they were a joke to this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

What made it worse for Fatty Wynn was the sight of Billy Bunter enjoying himself to the full. Billy Bunter did not spare the feed, and he did not give a single thought to spoiling his form for the match. He was not thinking of the match, in fact. He was thinking of what was on the table before him.

"You'll have to be carried out, if you don't draw a line, Billy," murmured Nugent, in his ear.

Bunter blinked at him.

"That's all right, Nugent. I shall be in splendid form after this. You just see how I shall knock up the runs against St. Jim's."

Nugent roared.

"Yes. I think I can see you running after this," he said.

"You must weigh a hundredweight more than you did when you started. We might use you to roll the pitch, perhaps."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Twy the jam-puffs, dear boy," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, who was watching Billy Bunter's performances with great interest.

"Thank you; I will!"

"And the ewean-tarts are vewy good."

"Good! I'll have a dozen or so."

"And this jellay—"

"Thanks! Hand it over!"

Lunch was finished before Billy Bunter was satisfied. He was still eating while the fellows chatted round the table; but even the Owl of the Remove had to cry halt at last. His complexion had assumed a greenish tinge, and he moved in his chair with great difficulty. He was, as Bob Cherry remarked, loaded beyond the Plimsoll line, and in danger of sinking.

Billy Bunter's movements resembled those of a tortoise as he crawled out into the quadrangle again after the other fellows. A big crowd of fellows followed the two teams down to the ground for the Greyfriars innings. All the St. Jim's juniors wanted to see the match. Juniors of both Houses thronged round the ground. Harry Wharton was talking to Figgins, when the latter made a sudden movement, and became stone deaf to all Wharton's remarks. He was staring towards the Head's house, and, Wharton, following his glance, saw Mrs. Holmes coming down to the pavilion with a charming girl by her side. The fellows all raised their caps as the Head's wife and Cousin Ethel came up, and took their seats outside the pavilion to watch the game.

Figgins, apparently forgetting the existence of Wharton, moved quickly towards Ethel Cleveland; but Wharton only smiled. Vernon-Smith moved in the same direction, and made himself very agreeable to Mrs. Holmes and her young daughter. She knew little of him, but the little she knew did not make her like him. But Ethel was not cordial to the Bounder.

Billy Bunter poked Wharton in the ribs to draw his attention.

The Greyfriars junior captain looked down at the Owl of

the Remove. Bunter had upon him the air of importance that he had assumed ever since that remarkable catch which had put a sudden and unexpected end to Redfern's innings.

"I suppose you'll be putting me on to bat first?" Bunter asked.

Wharton stared at him.

"Something wrong with your supposer, then," he said tartly. "I'm not putting you on first, and I'm not putting you in at all. I told you you were being played as a substitute till Bulstrode or Desmond got here."

"You—you don't mean to say that you're leaving me out?"

"Of course I do!"

"After that catch?"

"Well, we don't want you to do any catching when we're batting, you know," said Harry. "and miracles never happen twice in the same place."

"Look here, I've done better than any other member of the team so far!" said Bunter angrily. "You can't leave me out!"

"I shall try, anyway!"

"It will be mucking up the match."

"I'll risk that."

"After I've made a catch that you couldn't have made yourself!" roared Bunter. "Look here, I won't be left out!"

"You knew the terms I played you on," said Harry shortly.

"Yes; but that's changed now, since I've proved to all of you that I'm the best cricketer in the team."

Wharton laughed.

"You haven't quite proved that, Bunty," he said. "You've proved that flukes happen in the game of cricket, that's all, and that they sometimes come even to hopeless duffers."

"I know you're jealous," said Bunter. "What will the St. Jim's fellows think if you leave me out from motives of personal jealousy?"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"Well, I think it's rotten!"

"No law against that," yawned Wharton. "Now, buzz off, and don't worry! We're going to start now. Go and sit down somewhere, and sleep off your gorge. Boa-constrictors always do, you know."

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"Why, you—you—"

But Wharton did not wait to hear the rest. It was time for the Greyfriars innings to begin, and Wharton opened the innings with Tom Brown of New Zealand. Tom Merry posted his men to field, and Fatty Wynn went on to bowl.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Fatty Wynn Goes Strong!

BILLY BUNTER stood before the pavilion and watched the innings begin, with a frowning brow. He was very much exasperated. To be left out of the team after distinguishing himself was too bad. He had intended to make a great display at the wicket—piling up threes and fours, with a few boundaries thrown in by way of variety.

"The rotter's left me out, Smithy!" he said to the Bouncer, feeling that he ought to have sympathy from Vernon-Smith, at all events. But the Bouncer only laughed.

"What did you expect?" he asked. "You can't play!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"By James and James's aunt; that fat chap can bowl!" said Bob Cherry. "He's as good as Inky—isn't he, Inky?"

Hurree Janset Ram Singh nodded. His eyes were fixed upon Fatty Wynn, with the keen appreciation of one good bowler for another.

"The goodfulness is terrific!" he said. "Our Brownful chum will have to keep his esteemed eyes open, or he will be bowlfully out!"

"I jolly well hope he will be!" growled Bunter. "I ought to be batting now."

"The batfulness is terrific, my worthy fat Bunter."

"Hallo! Hallo! Hallo!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Look at that!"

"Out, by Jove!"

"Poor old Browney!"

It was only the second ball of the over; but it had caught Tom Brown napping. Fatty Wynn had sent down a regular scorcher, with a peculiar break on it that would have perplexed many a county bat. And Tom Brown's middle stump was gone; and Tom looked ruefully at his wicket, and walked off without waiting for the umpire's laconic "Out!"

"Rotten hard luck, Tommy!" said Bob Cherry, as the New Zealander joined the crowd of waiting batsmen.

Tom Brown nodded.

"All in the day's work!" he said. "Who's next man in?"

"Your humble!" said Bob Cherry, fastening his gloves.

"Look out for a ball that looks like a wide, and breaks in as if it had had a sudden electric shock!" said Tom Brown.

"My hat! I'll try!"

Bob Cherry walked to the wicket. Fatty Wynn had the ball in his hand again. He took a little run, and seemed to turn himself into a particularly fat catherine-wheel, and the ball went down like lightning—and there was a shout:

"How's that, umpire?"

"Out!" grinned the umpire.

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Bob.

And Bob Cherry carried out his bat.

"Next man in!"

"You're next, Smithy!"

The Bouncer grinned sarcastically.

"All serene—wait till I get my pads on," he said. "I didn't think you were coming out in such a blessed hurry, Bob Cherry. Give a chap time!"

Bob snorted.

"Let's see if you'll do any better, then!" he growled.

"Well, I certainly hope to break my duck, at least," said the Bouncer, with a curl of the lip. "I don't think I shall let that fat bouncer knock me out first shot!"

"Let's see!" granted Johnny Bull. "Better face the bowling before you swank, Smithy; it's safer! Go and show us what you can do before you jaw!"

"Well, if I don't do better than Cherry, I'll undertake to eat my bat when I bring it out!" said Vernon-Smith.

And the Bouncer went on to bat, with his willow under his arm, and a decided swagger in his walk.

"Pride goeth before a fall!" said Nugent. "The Bouncer can bat, but I don't believe he's up to that chap's bowling."

The fellows all had their eyes upon Vernon-Smith. For the sake of the match, they hoped to see him stand against Fatty Wynn's bowling; but for all other reasons, they would have been very glad to see his swank punished by a duck's egg. Vernon-Smith, in spite of his swagger, however, was very careful. He was quite ready for that lightning ball when it came—but unfortunately for the Bouncer, it was not a lightning ball when it came—it was a slow teaser which he played a second too late—and before he knew what was happening, his middle stump was on its back, leaving his wicket with a toothless look.

"How's that?" roared Johnny Bull.

The Bouncer looked down at his wicket, and his face was black with anger for a second. The Bouncer was not a sportsman; he could not take defeat cheerfully. And after

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his remarks to Bob Cherry, his crushing defeat was too humiliating. He tried to compose his face as he came quickly back towards the pavilion, anxious to get out of sight. But he gave Fatty Wynn a look which implied that he would have been very glad to lay the useless bat about the bowler's shoulders.

The crowd were roaring now.

"Bravo, Fatty!"

"Well bowled!"

"The hat-trick! Hurray!"

"Well, you haven't done any giddy wonders, after all!"

Johnny Bull remarked, as the Bouncer came in, and next man went to take his place.

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Vernon-Smith.

"Will you have pepper and salt with it?" asked Nugent.

"Eh? With what?"

"With the bat!"

"The bat!" said the Bouncer, puzzled.

"Yes. You undertook to eat it, you know, if you didn't do any better than Bob," said Nugent, sweetly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bouncer swung away, scowling.

Next man in lived through the rest of the over. The field crossed over, and Harry Wharton had the bowling from Jack Blake. Then the Greyfriars score started. Blake was a good bowler, but not nearly so dangerous as Fatty Wynn; and Wharton was a first-class bat. The runs began to pile up now, and the Greyfriars fellows breathed more easily. The innings had opened disastrously, with three ducks' eggs in succession; but things were looking up at last.

"Ducks' eggs are cheap to-day!" Bunter remarked, contemptuously. "Wharton will be sorry soon that he didn't play me, I fancy!"

"Might have had four instead of three, if you'd gone in, eh?" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Bravo, Wharton! Well hit!"

"Why don't they run, the silly idiots," said Bunter, as the ball whizzed away, and the batsmen remained standing. "I should take at least two for a ball like that!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"They don't run, fathead, because it's a boundary, and Wharton can see it is," he replied. "Got that into your thick head?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Billy Bunter was a little less liberal with his criticisms after that. He strolled away and joined the group of fellows round Cousin Ethel's chair. Billy Bunter had a firm persuasion that he was a great lady-killer, and he "spread" himself to charm Cousin Ethel, and draw her attention away from Nugent and Micky Desmond, with whom she was chatting. But, somehow or other, Cousin Ethel remained unmoved by the voice of the charmer. The fat junior grunted discontentedly and ambled away again. He was feeling distinctly exasperated. He found the Bouncer sulking by himself under the eaves, in a savage mood at the wretched show he had made at the wicket. Billy Bunter was thinking of the "quid" Vernon-Smith had promised him for the success of his scheme, and he remembered that there was a well-supplied tuck-shop at St. Jim's. He tapped the Bouncer on the arm. He was too short-sighted to see the savage gleam in Vernon-Smith's eyes.

"I'll trouble you for that quid, Smithy!" he said.

"What do you want?"

"That quid!"

"What quid, you fat beast?"

"Oh, really, Smithy; you know you were going to lend me a quid for getting those chaps left behind. You wouldn't have been able to play but for me—not that your playing seems to have been much good!" added Bunter, with a fat chuckle.

The Bouncer's eyes glittered dangerously.

"You can hand over that quid now, Smithy, and I—oh! Yah! What are you up to?" roared Billy Bunter. "I—I say—yow—yah—yooooop!"

Bump! Vernon-Smith had laid violent hands upon the fat junior, and Billy Bunter descended upon the grass with a bump that shook all the breath out of his body. Then the Bouncer walked away scowling. Bunter sat up in the grass, gasping, and set his spectacles straight upon his fat little nose.

"Ow!" he groaned. "Beast! Ow!"

And the Owl of the Remove wandered disconsolately back to the cricket-field. He had the pleasure—for it was a pleasure to Bunter—of seeing all wickets down shortly afterwards—for a total of forty runs. Greyfriars had certainly not done well in their first innings; and St. Jim's went on to bat again in great spirits, with a confident anticipation of victory.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Causes Trouble, and Finds Some.

"**B** Al Jove! I fancy we shall pull it off, deah boys!" Thus Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The St. Jim's second innings was going strong; four down for forty so far. Arthur Augustus D'Arcy had knocked up twelve of the forty, in the second innings, so he was feeling pretty well satisfied with himself. He was watching the batting through his eyeglass, as he stood beside Cousin Ethel's chair.

"Oh, you'll pull it off all right," said Billy Bunter. "Those fellows can't field for toffee. You won't see any more good catches, I can promise you that!"

D'Arcy looked at him.

"That was a vewy good catch you made. Gwuntah!" he remarked.

"My name's Bunter!"

"Sowwy—I meant Buntah. That was a vewy good catch you made when you caught Weddy out. I couldn't have done bettah than that myself!"

Bunter smirked.

"Nothing to what I can do!" he remarked. "You should see me bat!"

"Yaas, wathah; I should like to!"

"It would be worth seeing, I can tell you that!" said Bunter, fatuously. "They're not playing me now, you know. I was only in as a substitute. I don't care for the fag of playing through a match; but I'm willing to give the team a helping hand."

"Oh, weally!"

"Yes, really," said Bunter. "I don't think the home team would have much of a look in if I were fielding now. But after all, I believe in giving fellows a chance. How many has Redfern got in this innings?"

"Eight, so fah—and there goes another three at least!"

Bunter blinked at the running batsmen.

"Better than a duck's egg!" he remarked.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"Sure, that catch was a rotten fluke!" growled Micky Desmond, who was growing fed up with Billy Bunter's bounce. "They've told me about it—"

"You didn't see it!" said Bunter, loftily.

"No; but they've told me; and I know you couldn't catch a ball excepting by accident!" said Micky.

"There would be some more accidents like it if I were fielding now," said Bunter. "As it is, Greyfriars will be licked, and serve 'em right!"

"Bravo, Reddy!"

"Well run!"

"Bai Jove, Weddy is in gweat form," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy. "He had a nawwow escape then, though—that return was vewy smart. Who's that chap fieldin' at covah-slip?"

"Oh, that!" said Billy Bunter. "That's Linley—a scholarship chap—not really one of us, you know. He worked in a factory before he came to Greyfriars on a rotten scholarship."

"He looks a vewy decent sort."

"Oh, we treat him well!" said Bunter. "But of course—"

"Sure, if ye don't shut up, Bunter, I'll dot ye in the eye, if the lady will excuse me," said Micky Desmond, exasperated. "Marky is worth fifty thousand of a fat silly worm like you, any day in the week!"

Arthur Augustus turned away to hide his smile; and Cousin Ethel gave the Irish junior a kind glance.

Billy Bunter blinked furiously at the Irish junior.

It was too bad to be eat on in this way, just when he was displaying himself before the eyes of Miss Cleveland for admiration.

Billy Bunter would have liked to wipe up the ground with Micky Desmond; but there was one drawback to that scheme, which was—Bunter would have been used to wipe up the ground if he had tried it. But the Greyfriars ventriloquist was not at a loss; he soon found his opportunity.

Redfern was still making the running, and the St. Jim's fellows were cheering him loudly. A four by Redfern elicited a regular chorus of bravos, and Arthur Augustus D'Arcy so far forgot the repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere, as to clap his aristocratic hands.

"Sure, and there's nothing to yell for!"

D'Arcy started, and looked round.

Micky Desmond was standing a short distance from him, looking towards the field, and D'Arcy was certain that it was his voice.

However, the swell of St. Jim's remembered that Micky Desmond was a stranger within the gates, and he restrained the reply that rose to his lips. He turned to the field again, and shouted louder than ever:

"Bwavo Weddy! Good man!"

"Faith, and ye might ring off, ye silly spalpeen!"

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D'Arcy simply jumped. He spun round as if electrified, and stepped quickly towards the Irish junior, and caught him by the shoulder. Micky looked round in surprise into D'Arcy's crimson face.

"Phwat's the matter?" he asked.

"I twust I shall not forget the fact that you are a guest here," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, his voice trembling with indignation. "But I must wemark that I wefuse to be chawactewised as a silly spalpeen!"

"Hey?"

"I wegard the wemark as wude."

"Phwat?" said the amazed Micky.

"I wegard you as ovahsteppin' the bounds allowed to a visitah, and I must wequest you to modewate your language when you are addressin' me."

"Sure, and I'm blessed if I know what you're talkin' about intirely!" said Micky Desmond, beginning to feel resentful. "If you say that me manners aren't all right, it's a silly gossoon ye are!"

"Weally, you ass—"

"Well, you fathead—"

"You uttah wottah—"

"You silly chump—"

"I considah—"

"Oh, rats!"

"Hallo, what's the trouble here?" asked Tom Merry, who had come off the pitch. "Not rowing with a guest, surely, Gussy?"

D'Arcy's face was scarlet with indignation.

"The uttah wottah—"

"Here, steady on!" exclaimed Tom Merry, in astonishment. "That isn't the way to speak to a visitor, Gussy!"

"I wegard this person as havin' transgressed the liberty to a visitah. I uttahly wefuse to be called a silly spalpeen!"

"By Jove, Gussy don't like these facts driven home, Desmond, you know!" said Monty Lowther.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Lowthah—"

"Oh, dry up, Gussy!" said Tom Merry.

"I do not quite know what a spalpeen is; but I am aware that it is an oppwobwious expwession," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "and I uttahly wefuse—"

"But I didn't call ye a spalpeen!" roared Micky Desmond, bewildered and angry. "I didn't open me mouth till you spoke to me!"

"Weally, I wegard that as a whoppah! You said—"

"Sure, if ye call me a liar, it's altering ye're features I'll be doing intirely!" said Micky angrily. "I tell you—"

"And I tell you—"

"You chawactewised me as a spalpeen, whatevah that is!"

"Sure, I didn't!"

"I wecognised your voice quite cleably!"

"I didn't speak!"

"You may have gone to sleep, standing up like a horse, you know, and dreamed it, Gussy," said Monty Lowther seriously.

"You uttah ass, Lowthah!"

"Sure, I didn't speak," said Micky. "I hope I'm not such a pig as to call a fellow names when I'm on his ground. I never said a word, intirely."

"I wecognised your voice."

Micky gave a jump.

"Oh, you recognised my voice! Ye didn't see me speak?"

"I had my back turned to you."

"Faith, and I tumble now! Where's Bunter?"

Billy Bunter executed a hasty strategic movement to get round the pavilion, but Micky Desmond dashed at him, and caught him by the collar, and swung him back.

"Ye spalpeen!" he roared.

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Oh, really, Desmond—"

"What has he done?" demanded Tom Merry, in amazement.

"Sure, he's a rotten ventriloquist; and he's always playin' these tricks," said Micky Desmond. "Own up, ye rotter, before I jump on ye!"

"Ow! Ow!"

"Bai Jove, a ventwiloquist!" exclaimed D'Arcy, in surprise.

"Sure, and the thafe of the worruld was imitatin' my voice—and so he wa!" said the excited Micky. "Faith, I'll bump him bald-headed!"

"Ow! It was only a jig-jig—"

"A what?" said D'Arcy. "What was a jig, my deah Buntah?"

"It was only a jig-jig-joke," stuttered Bunter, as Micky Desmond shook him furiously. "I—I only did it for a laak! Ow!"

"Faith, and I—"

"Ow! If you shake me like that my glasses will fall off! Ow!"

"Ye omadhau!"
 "And if they get broken you'll have to—ow!—pay for them!" spluttered Bunter. "It was only a jig-jog-joke!"
 Shake! Shake! Shake!
 "Then don't make any more jig-jog-jokes like that, ye spalpeen," said Micky Desmond. "Sure, and I'll shake ye in real earnest next time, ye thafe of the world!"
 "Yow!"

And Micky gave Billy Bunter a final spin which sent him staggering away, to collapse in a heap by the wall of the pavilion, where he lay gasping for a full five minutes before he recovered sufficient breath to rise.

"Bai Jove," said Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, "I'm sowwy I spoke to you as I did, Desmond, deah boy. I was quite undah the impvession that you had called me names. I apologise most sincerely."

"Sure, it was all that young rascal's fault," said Micky. "He made me lose the thrain here with his rotten ventriloquism. We're fed up with it!"

"I twust you will ovahlook my hastay wemarks?"

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

"Bravo!" yelled Tom Merry, as Redfern cut away another boundary. "My hat, Reddy is making the fur fly this time!"

"Yaas, wuthah! I don't believe I could bat bettah than that myself."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Weally, Tom Mewwy—"

"Bravo, Reddy!"

"Well hit!"

Redfern's innings turned out well for St. Jim's. At the end of the second innings St. Jim's were all down for a hundred and ten. Added to the score in the first innings, that made a total of two hundred. And as Greyfriars had knocked up only forty in their first innings, they had a big task before them if they were to beat St. Jim's.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER. Last Man In!

TEA followed the St. Jim's second innings. It was a glorious afternoon, and the cricketers had tea al fresco on tables under the shady elms. They were all in high spirits—especially the Saints. Tom Merry & Co. had no doubt whatever about the result now. If Greyfriars had knocked up only forty in their first innings, they were not likely to make a hundred and sixty in their second; and that was the figure required to tie with the home score. True, the great game of cricket is famous for its glorious uncertainty. The play had been fast, and there was plenty of time left for a good innings, if the visitors could stand against the home bowling. But could they? Nobody at St. Jim's believed that they could, and the visitors had strong doubts themselves. They only knew that they were going to play their hardest, and fight the match out to the finish.

Figgins and Kerr kept a very careful eye on Fatty Wynn at tea-time. The fat Fourth-Former was very precious; far above rubies, as Kerr remarked. He was not to be allowed to spoil his form by reckless guzzling, and his chums took very good care that he did not. Fatty Wynn sighed over the tea-table, and did not perform any of his usual wonders; but he consoled himself with the prospect of a gorgeous feed after the match.

After tea Harry Wharton spoke to his men very seriously before the second innings commenced. Wharton realised what an uphill battle the visitors had before them; and the St. Jim's bowlers were as dangerous as ever.

"We've simply got to put our beef into it," he said. "I wish we had young Penfold here; but it can't be helped."

"I haven't done so badly," remarked Russell, the reserve who had taken Penfold's place.

Wharton nodded.

"No; but some of the team have had bad luck," he said. "Never mind: we've got to pull together, and get in somehow."

"I suppose you are alluding to me," said the Bounder, with his disagreeable curl of the lip. "I don't see that I've done any worse than Bob Cherry, for instance."

"I didn't say you had," said Wharton quietly; "but you allowed yourself into the team, and refused to get out; and there's nothing to show for it. But I don't want to rag you about it. All we've got to do now is to play up and win."

"The playfulness shall be terrific, my worthy chum," said Durree Janset Ram Singh.

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"STANDING BY SKINNER!"

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"I could make a suggestion, if you like, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, blinking at the anxious cricketers.

"Well, what is it?" asked Wharton.

"Play me."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"Merry would agree to replacing a man, if you asked him."

"I'm jolly well not going to ask him, though! Clear off, and don't talk rot!" said Wharton tersely. "Now, you chaps, we're ready. Nugent will open the innings this time, with Bob."

"I'm quite willing to go in first," said the Bounder sulkily. "I'm not likely to get a duck's egg a second time. I've got on to that fat chap's bowling now."

"You're third man in," said Harry.

"Oh, all right!"

"Well, you'll jolly well lose," said Bunter, "and serve you right for leaving a really good man out! I hope you'll lose! Ow! Ow! Ow!"

Billy Bunter ceased his amiable remarks as Bob Cherry applied the end of a bat to his plump ribs.

Tom Merry & Co. were in the field now; and the ropes round the ground were thronged with onlookers.

Nugent and Bob Cherry went in first.

Tom Merry tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn, and the fat Fourth-Former grinned as he took it. He knew what was expected of him, and he meant to fulfil expectations, if he could. Figgins gave a chuckle.

"Isn't that rather rough on the poor infants for a start, Tommy?" he asked.

Tom Merry laughed.

"Better put them out of their pain," he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The field took up their positions, and Fatty Wynn went on to bowl against Frank Nugent. Nugent was all eyes, as it seemed, and he was watching for that ball like a cat watching for a mouse; but the ball took him by surprise, all the same. His leg stump was out of the ground before he knew what was happening. There was a roar:

"Well bowled, Fatty!"

"Bravo, Tubby!"

"Give us the bat trick again, old man!"

Nugent came back to the pavilion looking blue. He looked quite shamed as he passed his skipper.

"I'm sorry, Harry," he said. "That chap is a demon! I'm sorry!"

Wharton forced a smile.

"Can't be helped," he said. "St. Jim's are in wonderful form to-day, and we're not at the top notch, that's all. Next man in. Play up for Greyfriars, Smithy."

"I'm all right," said Vernon-Smith, with a shrug of the shoulders. "You can rely on me. I shan't be caught napping a second time."

"I hope not. Look out for a slow ball. That fat chap bowls fast and slow and medium, but the slow balls are the most dangerous. Look out for one that breaks from the off, and—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

Wharton's brow darkened. "Well, be careful," he said.

"I'm going to be careful. I know jolly well that this match is lost if I don't save it," said the Bounder arrogantly.

"You've bragged before, and come home with a duck's egg," said Johnny Bull caustically. "Don't make it a pair of spectacles. I shouldn't be surprised."

"Look here—"

"The field are waiting for you," said Wharton quietly.

"I'm not going to hurry."

Wharton's eyes glittered, but he held his peace. He did not want a row with one of his bat-men, with affairs in such a parlous state. The Bounder was a brilliant batsman when he chose, and when he was in form. But he did not seem to be in great form to-day, a little fact he had been careless of when he schemed to get into the eleven.

Vernon-Smith gave a vaunting look round, and then marched out to the vacant wicket, coolly indifferent to the fact that the field had been waiting for him three or four minutes. Johnny Bull snapped his teeth.

"If it wasn't for the team, I'd be glad to see that swank."

A Splendid Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

ing rotter bowled first ball," he growled. "And I shouldn't wonder if it happens, anyway."

"The probablefulness is terrific."

Wharton nodded without replying; his eyes were fixed upon the Bounder at the wicket. Fatty Wynn sent down a ball that was like lightning, and the bat gleamed as it rose, and there was a click. Vernon-Smith had stopped the ball, at all events, and it was whizzing away, and the Bounder ran.

But someone else was running, too!

Arthur Augustus D'Arcy was running for the ball, and his eye gleamed through his eyeglass, his slim white hands were raised. His eye never left the soaring ball, and it floated down, fairly into his upraised hand.

There was a soft sound, like the "kiss" of a billiard-ball, and the leather was in D'Arcy's palm and there was a yell from all St. Jim's.

D'Arcy threw up the ball, and caught it as it came down, right into his palm, true as a die. And the umpire said "Out!"

Vernon-Smith crossed to the pavilion with a scowling face.

"What price ducks' eggs?" demanded Johnny Bull. "Or, rather, what price spectacles?"

The Bounder grasped his bat hard by the cane handle, as if he would strike Johnny Bull with it, then he strode on, without a word, but with a brow black as midnight. Vernon-Smith had had his way; he had forced his skipper to play him, and the result had been a duck's egg in each innings—the dreaded "pair of spectacles." It was hard, perhaps, upon the Bounder, but it was harder upon the Greyfriars eleven.

Two wickets down for nought! It was a bad beginning.

"Next man in," said Wharton. "Your turn, Ogilvy, old man."

"I'll do my best," said Ogilvy.

Ogilvy did his best. But his best was not quite up to what he wanted. He piled up six runs before he was caught out by Figgins. Three down for six!

Bob Cherry was the next victim. He carried out his bat with four to his credit.

The innings was going fast enough. Two more wickets, and the total of runs was twenty-four. Five down for twenty-four! No wonder the crowd smiled, and considered the game over bar shouting. No wonder the Greyfriars fellow looked serious.

"Get in, Harry, and buck things up a bit," said Bob Cherry.

"Right-ho! It looks bad, though—we're in a-rotten way."

"Game's never lost till it's won," said Bob oracularly.

"True enough; we've got a chance left."

Harry Wharton went to the wicket. Brown was his partner there, and Brown was getting the bowling now, Fatty Wynn tried his hardest against his wicket, and Blake and Figgins did their best, but Tom Brown's wicket remained intact.

And now the runs were piling up.

Harry Wharton and Tom Brown between them sent the score jumping up. Fifty—sixty—sixty-one—then sixty-six!

And then Fate fell upon the New Zealand junior, in the form of a marvellously quick return from Tom Merry that knocked his bails to the wide.

But the Greyfriars juniors cheered the Colonial loudly as he came off. He had done better for Greyfriars than all the preceding bats taken together, and if Greyfriars had a chance now they owed it to Tom Brown.

Bob Cherry clapped him on the shoulder as he came back to the pavilion. There was not an atom of jealousy in Bob's frank and hearty nature. He had had bad luck himself, but he was whole-heartedly glad of the New Zealander's success.

"Jolly good, kid!" he exclaimed. "Ripping!"

"The rippingfulness is terrific."

"We've got a chance now," said Nugent. "The ghost of a chance, anyway. You're last man in, Johnny, and you'll have to do some stone-walling to back up Wharton. They won't get his wicket in a hurry."

Johnny Bull nodded.

"I'll keep up the wicket, if I don't take the runs," he said. "You can rely on me for that, I think. But we've got a frightful lot to get."

Bulstrode took Tom Brown's place, but he did not keep it long. A smart yorker from Jack Blake sent Bulstrode bootless home. The score was at seventy. Eight wickets down for seventy. Ninety runs wanted to tie—ninety-one to win! And only three wickets left to the team from Greyfriars!

Mark Linley was at the wickets now. The Lancashire lad played up well; he was always a reliable player. He backed up his captain splendidly, and Wharton and Linley between them added gaily to the runs. The St. Jim's fieldsmen were given more leather-hunting than they had bargained for at that stage of the game. There was a cheer from the Greyfriars fellows when the score turned the hundred. Then Mark

Linley was out, having barely failed to get back in time after running for three.

"Last man in!"

Johnny Bull picked up his bat, with an expression upon his face of a fellow who was determined to do or die.

"Stick it out, Johnny!" said Frank Nugent. "Pile in, old man! If you can make the innings last, Wharton can get the runs."

"Right-ho!" said Johnny Bull, with a chuckle. "You can depend on me to back up Wharton, and not go out for glory on my own."

"That's what's wanted," said Bulstrode.

"And that's what I'm going to do, as well as I can," said Johnny.

"Good for you!"

Johnny Bull went down to the wicket. Nine down for a hundred and three. Fifty-seven wanted to tie—fifty-eight to win! With a steady stone-waller at one end of the pitch, and a brilliant bat at the other, Greyfriars had a chance—the ghost of a chance!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER. By Sheer Grit!

ROUND the St. Jim's ground the crowd was thickest now. Seniors as well as juniors had come down to watch that obstinately-contested match.

Kildare of the Sixth, the handsome captain of St. Jim's, could be seen, towering over the crowd of juniors. Mr. Railton, one of the Housemasters, had joined Mrs. Holmes and Cousin Ethel at the seats before the pavilion. The Greyfriars wickets had gone down fast enough; but Wharton was in wonderful form, and his batting was a thing to be seen and remembered. And the St. Jim's crowd, like good sportsmen as they were, cheered every good hit—and they had a good many to cheer.

With so much leeway to make up, the batsmen could not afford to take risks; but Harry Wharton seemed to be taking them. He knew that everything depended upon fast scoring; and he was letting himself go. And yet he was cautious, too—as cautious as was consistent with piling up runs. Johnny Bull was a hero—with complete unselfishness he was willing to leave all the display to his leader, and to stonewall when he had the bowling; or to sneak a single run every now and then in order to give the bowling back to his partner.

Fatty Wynn exhausted himself against Johnny Bull's wicket in vain. He could not tempt the stolid junior to swipe out at the most promising ball—and the fieldsmen had no chance with him.

Johnny Bull was steadily and determinedly keeping the innings open, so that Harry Wharton could score; and he never lost sight of that object.

And Wharton was scoring!

Never had the champion junior batsman of Greyfriars shown himself to such advantage.

As the score crept up, the crowd watched with breathless interest; the Greyfriars fellows with an interest that amounted to keen anxiety.

A hundred and twenty; a hundred and thirty! A hundred and forty!

Excepting for an odd run here and there by Johnny Bull, Wharton was making all the running. His individual score now was forty, and it was going up fast.

A hundred and fifty! A hundred and sixty!

"Bravo, Wharton!"

"Well run!"

"Well hit!"

"Buck up, Greyfriars!"

"Bai Jove!" gasped Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, as he came panting back after a long excursion into the country after an elusive ball. "Bai Jove! They're holdin' out weally well, you fellows. Pewwaps you had better put me on to bowl, Tom Mewwy!"

"Oh, they're getting the runs fast enough!" said Tom Merry, cheerfully.

"Weally, deah boy—"

"They're sticking out the innings, and no mistake!" granted Blake, as he took the ball for a new over. "Their blessed innings is like the giddy what's its name—it's sting is in its tail!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blake went on to bowl against Wharton's wicket. The Fourth-Former tried all he knew; but all he sent down was sent back—with interest. A hundred and seventy-one; the odd run at the end of the over giving Wharton the bowling again, when the field crossed over and Fatty Wynn took the ball once more.

Tom Merry had changed the bowling with Blake and Kangaroo and Figgins, giving the fat Fourth-Former a rest.

Fatty Wynn came back to the bowling with fresh keenness, and the St. Jim's crowd looked for the fall of a wicket to finish matters.

But it did not happen.

Fatty Wynn was keener than ever; but Harry Wharton had fully taken the measure of the bowling; and he was beautifully "set."

The bowler tried every trick he knew; but the fact of the matter was that the batsman was equal to them all; or even a little more than equal! For the runs were piling up!

Then came a narrow escape that made the Greyfriars fellows gasp. The ball soared just out of the reach of Tom Merry's fingers; but it was so near a catch that Bob Cherry, as he declared afterwards, turned cold all over.

But a miss is as good as a mile—especially in the great game of cricket!

The batsmen went on—and the runs mounted up! A hundred and eighty—a hundred and ninety! Greyfriars were pale with anxiety now. For the ghost of a chance was materialising—only ten more wanted to tie—and eleven to win! The light was not so good now; but there was plenty of light for play—there would be ample time to get the runs—if they could be got!

Could they?

Even the St. Jim's fellows were beginning now to think that they could. Blake came off the bowler's crease after an over that gave the Greyfriars bats four, and tossed the ball to Fatty Wynn.

"I can't touch 'em!" he growled. "Fatty, old man, it all depends on you! You've got to get one of them out! If you don't, we'll jolly well serag you!"

"Yaas, wathah!" panted Arthur Augustus D'Arcy.

The bat had been on the crease a second before the ball reached the sticks; the wicket was down, but a second too late, and the game was saved!

"Not out!"

The the Greyfriars fellows yelled; and the St. Jim's crowd, like the Tuscans of old, could scarce forbear a cheer.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

"Well run, Wharton!"

"Not out! Bravo!"

Wharton was panting as he faced the bowling again. Strong and fit as he was that long and arduous innings was telling upon him. But the score was at a hundred and ninety-seven now, and the thing must end, one away or the other.

Three more to tie; four more to win!

"Oh, great Scott," murmured Bob Cherry, "how long is it going to last? I'm on giddy tenterhooks!"

It was not ending yet. Fatty Wynn was doing all he knew; and Wharton was playing a keen and cautious game. And Johnny Bull was stone-walling now, with Figgins trying his hardest to get through the defence, but trying in vain.

Fatty Wynn again; and the bowling for Wharton. The crowd gazed on breathlessly.

Somehow they all felt that this would be the finish. Either the champion bowler of St. Jim's would knock that wicket over, or the champion batsman of Greyfriars would take the runs that were wanted. Which was it to be? It was the most exciting finish that ever had been known on the cricket-ground at St. Jim's.

One, two, three. Three times the ball came down, and was stopped or snicked away, and nothing came of it. Then came the fourth ball, and the bat gleamed in the setting sun, and there was a click, and the leather was sailing skyward—away—away.

But the batsmen were not running. Johnny Bull had started, but Wharton waved him back. His voice came along the pitch.

"All right, Johnny, it's a giddy boundary!"

And a boundary it was. And, as a boundary counted four, the match was over, and Greyfriars Remove had won that historic match by a run.

There was a yell from the Greyfriars fellows as soon as they saw, and then they rushed upon the pitch. The match was won and finished, and Greyfriars had won. And they gathered round their skipper, and lifted him on their shoulders, and bore him back in triumph to the pavilion.

"Bravo, Wharton!"

"Well played!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

And the St. Jim's fellows joined heartily in the cheering. They had lost the match, but the win had been so close that there was almost as much credit due to the losing as to the winning side.

Tom Merry clapped Wharton on the back as his chums set him down, red and breathless and panting, before the pavilion.

"Good for you!" he said. "It was a magnificent innings. You'd have made your century if the play had gone on. It was ripping!"

"Yaas, wathah! Simply wippin'!" said Arthur Augustus

EVERY MONDAY, The "Magnet" LIBRARY, ONE PENNY.

D'Arcy. "I congwatulate you, deah boy. I nevah saw a game pulled out of the fiah like that before, Fii Jove! It was simply wippin'!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah!"

It was a joyous crowd that took the train home for Greyfriars after the match. Harry Wharton's splendid innings had pulled the game out of the fire, and won it for Greyfriars, and the eleven could not make enough of him.

And when they reached Greyfriars and announced the result, there was fresh cheering in the old Close, as Wharton was carried in shoulder-high.

The only one who was dissatisfied was the Bounder. He had a somewhat painful explanation with the Head about his absence; and both Vernon-Smith and Bunter left the Head's study rubbing their hands, and feeling that they might have done more wisely to "play the game." But in the general hilarity Vernon-Smith and Bunter growled unnoticed. The Greyfriars Remove rejoiced over the victory, and in all the junior studies that evening there were celebrations of the great success of the Greyfriars champions at St. Jim's.

THE END.

(Next Monday's long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled "STANDING BY SKINNER," by Frank Richards. Order a copy of "The Magnet" Library in advance. Price One Penny.)

TALES TO TELL.

THOROUGHLY CONVERSANT,

It was the moment to implant on the youthful mind some good advice, and the wise father took it.

"Myson," he said sagely to the lad, who had just started work in a busy shipping office, "you can't get on in this world without push. Luck is all very well in its way, and may give a man a helping hand now and then, but it is as variable as—er—ha, ha!—the English climate. Remember, first and last, that all the most successful men and women have made their way by pushing."

"But, father—"

"No 'buts,' Clarence. Just bear this little lesson in mind—it's the push that does it."

"I know that, father," said the lad sadly; "I got it this morning!"

SAVED FROM SLAUGHTER.

Young Jorkins was always bragging about his great muscular strength and his prowess with his fists.

Recently a story went round that he and Smithton had nearly come to blows after a cricket match, and Timson went to the hero to learn the truth of the matter.

"Yes," replied Jorkins, getting red in the face; "Smithton called me a cheat, and I wanted to lick him then and there. Ay, and I would have done it, too, if I hadn't been grabbed from behind and held back!"

"Really?" asked Timson eagerly. "And who held you back?"

"Oh—er—Smithton!" replied Jorkins curtly.

AN ILLUMINATOR.

No one could have called him handsome. Small, ugly, with a bowler-hat two sizes too small, he stood in the corner grumbling to another man, who was waiting for the tram.

"They're no soldiers," he remarked, indicating the local Territorials who were hurrying to their drill-hall. "They don't know how to walk like soldiers even. Anyone could see they're only bricklayers, shop-boys, and labourers. You can tell by the way they walk."

IN ANOTHER LIGHT.

The morning after the party two sweet young things met in the street, and at once began exchanging impressions.

"Oh, my dear," said the first sweet young thing presently, "you remember that handsome young man you introduced me to last night? Do you know, after I had sung two songs he was most complimentary? He told me—tee-hee—that he would give anything to have my voice. Wasn't it nice of him?"

"I don't know about that," was the crushing comment. "You see, he's an auctioneer!"

NEXT MONDAY,

"STANDING BY SKINNER!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. Order Early.

OUR THRILLING ADVENTURE SERIAL. START THIS WEEK!

TWICE ROUND THE GLOBE!

THE STORY OF THE
GREAT MAN-HUNT
BY SIDNEY DREW



Ferrers Lord, millionaire, and owner of the Lord of the Deep.



Prince Ching-Lung, adventurer, conjurer, and ventriloquist.



Nathan Gore, jewel collector, and multi-millionaire, Ferrers Lord's terrible rival.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

"BY FOUL MEANS OR FAIR, I'LL WIN!"

While crossing the Atlantic on his way to England—where the costly diamond, "The World's Wonder," is to be put up for auction—Nathan Gore, the American millionaire and jewel-collector, receives a message from his agent in London to say that the diamond has been bought by his hated rival, Ferrers Lord, who is the owner and inventor of the wonderful submarine, the Lord of the Deep.

Nathan Gore swears he will obtain possession of the diamond, and on the night of his arrival in London he goes to his rival's house, and, taking the stone, leaves in its place the message: "To Ferrers Lord,—Knowing that you would not sell 'The World's Wonder,' I have taken it. Do your worst! I defy you! The stone is mine!—Nathan Gore." The millionaire accepts the challenge, and a few hours after the robbery the chase is started. For five months, accompanied by his two friends, Chung-Lung, a Chinese prince, and Rupert Thurston, he pursues Nathan Gore, travelling twice round the world, but never being able to overtake him. At last Ferrers Lord, on board the Lord of the Deep, returns to Loneland, an island belonging to Nathan Gore, the millionaire, where he visits Gore, accompanied by his armed crew. He tries to persuade the mad millionaire to give up the stone, but is met with a curt refusal. Lord then informs his rival that he has paid off the many debts that Gore had incurred, and that therefore he is in debt solely to Ferrers Lord. Lord claims Gore's ships and house as a part of the debt, but does not take possession of them at once.

(Now go on with the story.)

A Visit From Captain Hackerden, Hero.

"They're signalling, by hokey!" said Thomas Prout. Tom converted his big hands into binoculars, and gazed at a winking light from the shore. It was repeating the "call," to draw the attention of some vessel.

"That's us," said Thomas Prout aloud. "'Lo-r-d—Lord of the Deep.' By hokey, that's us!"

"And your grammar, kind friend," said Ching-Lung, from behind, "is abominable. 'That's us' is atrocious, like your face! You should have said 'That is we.' Sounds a treat, doesn't it? But no matter, we shall be a long time dead. Yes, dear friend, they have got our number. They call us by our Christian name. Give 'em an answer."

The searchlight hissed and winked back an answer.

"Take it down, Tommy," said Ching-Lung. "I have strained my barjoska boom, and am, therefore, unable to write. Go on! Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder how you are! What are they twin-twinkling about?"

"Will—you—receive—envoy—Captain—Hack-Hack-Hack—emdown?" said Prout slowly.

"Hackerden, you ass! Can't you read yet? That's Mr. Joel F., the Yankee gent. Move your great carcass out of the moonlight, and let me tinkle the telephone." He rang the bell, and called: "Are you there, Lord, old chap? If not, why not? If you are, there's a chap come with your washing, and he won't leave it without the tuppence-half-penny. Write him out a cheque on blotting-paper, will you?"

There was no reply. Ching-Lung rang the bell of the instrument again.

"Are you there?"

"Yes, I heres, Chingy," said a voice. "What you wantes, Chingy?"

"Good gosh!" cried Ching-Lung, staggering, "he's been eating onions! Pray, dear Gan, do not blow up the pipe in that state of voice, or your onion-scented breath will make it spring a whole bed of leaks! I can spy you through the chinks. Go and ask Mr. Ferrers Lord to kindly step up. Then go and disinfect yourself."

Prout listened with an amused grin. Presently the millionaire sprang up the ladder.

"Old Gore wants to know if you'll see an envoy—that Hackerden chap," said Ching Lung.

"Of course," said Ferrers Lord. "Tell them that I can only permit one man to accompany him."

The message was flashed, and the light in the fort vanished. Ten minutes later it shone out once more.

"Agreed," said Ferrers Lord. "Send him down to me when he comes."

He paused at the head of the ladder, and laughed.

"This Hackerden is rather a decent fellow, Ching?"

"Not half bad, my boy," said Ching-Lung. "I thought he had resigned, and padded the hoof back to the States, but it seems he hasn't. I think you'll get on with him like an oil factory on fire. Leave me a few cigarettes before you go. Oh, thanks!" he added, as he caught the millionaire's gold cigarette-case, with its gleaming diamond monogram. "I suppose you won't want the case back?"

Captain Hackerden was some time in coming. Maddock went forward to watch for him in his bare feet, for the low deck was awash. Gan-Waga appeared, and he was chewing a candle. He squatted down on the floor, and smiled.

"Oh, don't Tommy's fat heads shine butterfuls, Chingy?" he lisped. "Just likes a chunk of lards!"

"It is a lovely head," admitted Ching-Lung.

"Buts he hasn't only emptinesses insides hairees," said Gan.

"It is so windy insides haïres, Chingy, dat it has blowed alls de haïres of haire, Chingy. Ho, ho, ho, ho!"

Ching-Lung patted Gan's pate.

"Not bad for a prize-bred fat Eskimo," he remarked. "You are getting on. Do not try and get on too fast, or you may get off very suddenly, and hurt your kersnozzle."

"Ahoy!"

A shout rang over the water.

"What's comin', Ben?" cried Prouf.

"A bloomin' sneller!" roared Maddock. "One of them floatin' scent-bottles!"

Maddock meant a petrol-lamp by this flattering description. The little vessel raced out of the darkness and glided alongside.

"That you, skipper?" asked Ching-Lung.

"Yes, siree," drawled a voice. "Yer might fix on to this bit of string, so as I can hitch her up."

Ching-Lung seized the rope and slipped its end through a ring. The Yankee had only brought a lad with him. He sprang aboard, holding out his hand frankly. Ching-Lung gripped it just as frankly. He liked the Yankee.

"Come inside," he said. "You needn't trouble about wiping the mud off your boots. I thought you were at home by this time, buying up Rockefeller, or running a boot-protector trust, or making a corner in tripe."

Joel F. Hackerden chuckled.

"Wal, your Highness," he answered. "I didn't get my pay, and I could bash up my copper-lined agreement. I guess it expires to-night, and I've got the shekels in my pocket. Gee-whiz!" he added, glancing round, "this is a slap-up daisy of a boat! I reckon you know how to do it. Pleased to meet you again, pardner."

"By hokey! I ain't so tearful at meetin' you!" said Prouf, extending a mighty hand.

"Allow me to renew your acquaintance with Imperial Pim—er—Imperial Greatness Gau-Waga, chief lord and two-foot ruler of Slanky-Wanky tribe of Greenland, where the greens come from," said Ching-Lung.

"Haves a bites of cangles, Mr. 'Merican mans, do," grinned Gau-Waga.

"Thanks, I'm not thirsty," said the Yankee, his eyes twinkling. "Howdy, stranger?"

"Ah!" said Ching-Lung, in a loud whisper, "this gentleman without the boots is a celebrated character. His feet are his fortune. He is the champion big-footed man of the earth—fact! The cups and gold medals he has pinched—hem!—carried off, I should say—is extraordinary. He buys his boots by the mile, Mr. Maddock—Mr. Hackerden—that is, Captain Hackerden."

"Shake!" said the captain.

Benjamin shook, and Ching-Lung asked the Yankee below. The brilliantly-lighted, exquisitely-furnished saloon sent the Yankee into raptures. He sank into a chair and stared about him.

"B'gosh," he gasped, "you do know how to do it!"

"Ah us! We knows hows to tickles haire, don't wesses, Chingy?" lisped Gau-Waga. "Shalls I offers hims a Flor de Smellalotto, Chingy?"

Gau wanted a cigar himself, and hence the question. Ching-Lung unlocked the cabinet and lighted the silver smokers-lamp. Then he rang for champagne, and a steward, in the millionaire's quiet, tasteful livery, brought it.

"B'gosh," said Hackerden, as he tasted the splendid wine. "this is real stuff! There's no flies in this. Don't Mr. Gau-Waga do any drinking?"

"Nots like haire," said Gau. "Like melted butters bests."

"Funny taste," said the captain; "but I guess you know your own business. Gee! What a ship this is! I guess the cost of her would run up to five million dollars."

"And you might multiply that by five," said Ching-Lung.

"What! Five million pounds? Gee-hosh-aphat!"

Captain Joel F. Hackerden drew in a deep breath. Then he rose to his feet and stood at salute. The door had opened, and the tall figure of Ferrers Lord confronted him. At a sign from Ching-Lung Gau-Waga sidled out of the room. The millionaire nodded curtly.

"You are an envey from Gore?"

"Well, sir, I can't be sure of that," said Hackerden. "I parra company with him to-night, and I'm not exactly too proud that I ever sailed under the rag he calls his colours."

"Then, you like the rest, are ready to abandon the sinking ship?"

Ching-Lung saw the colour spring into the Yankee's cheeks.

"Bether you," he answered. "that's as good as calling a man a rat! It's not my way to take such talk from any galoot that wears boots. That's about the size of Joel F. I've got a wife and children at home, and I'll have to fit round the globe a trifle to keep 'em and raise 'em. But I'm honest. P'raps I was mistaken when I froze on to that temptin' berth, but I was honestly mistaken. And, sure as little apples never grow on pear-trees, I'll cram the teeth of the galoot who says different down his lyin' throat!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 273.

NEXT MONDAY;

"STANDING BY SKINNER!"

EVERY MONDAY,

The "Magnet" LIBRARY.

ONE PENNY.

"And suppose I disagree with you?" said the millionaire lazily.

"Then I reckon you'll not regret it if you've got a dentist aboard."

Ferrers Lord smiled and sat down, crossing his long legs.

"I do not think we shall quarrel, Hackerden," he said. "Fill the captain's glass, Ching. When does your agreement expire, captain? You need not stand."

"It expired two minutes ago, sir!"

"I'm glad of that. You are no longer in Gore's employ, then?"

"B'gosh, I'm not, sir! I'm my own master again, and that means I'm out of collar. When a fellow has a family to raise it don't do for him to shack about. Bothered if I know when I shall get a ship home, and things are famine prices over yonder. What do you think of meat—real leather—a dollar a pound?"

Again Ferrers Lord smiled.

"Supplies are short, I presume?"

"Short? Gee! we're starving. The stores have never turned up, and the cable is cut. There's going to be the biggest—"

His lips compressed. He was saying too much.

"Riot, you mean?" said the millionaire. "They will raid the stores. It is like this, captain. The stores have not been delivered because they have not been paid for. The vessel did not arrive because her whole cargo has been transferred to me. She is at Capetown, awaiting my instructions. Gore is in a rather bad condition. He is a bankrupt, and the receivers appointed by the Court are in possession of all he has left. I wish you, captain, to understand the situation before I hear your message. I am aware that there are provisions in Goretown to last twenty-one days, if carefully handled. I know the men, the scum of the earth, that Gore has enrolled. Were I you, captain, I'd give Loneland and Goretown a wide berth. It is not a question of food so much as drink—strong drink. The moment the drink is exhausted and the saloons shut, then—"

He shrugged his shoulders suggestively.

"Riots, old chap?" asked Ching-Lung.

"A little revolution, Ching."

Hackerden sipped his wine thoughtfully.

"Wal, sir," he said, "I don't take much notice of rumours, but I gather that you and Gore ain't quite as honeyfied as love-birds. I've heard yarns and yarns, but I let 'em slide in at one ear and out at the next. You're right about the drink."

He took a long, appreciative pull at his cigar, and drawled on:

"I'm no pig-headed skunk to soak myself with liquor like most of 'em. Drink and gambling have cursed the place. The drink has about petered out, and that's a solemn fact. Whatever the old man is, I've eaten his bread, and I can't be mean and go back on him. They'll be rioting to-night. I owe him nothing, and he owes me nothing. But I guess he's old, and I guess he's weak in the attics, and I guess they hate him."

He paused to eject another cloud of smoke, and Ferrers Lord looked at him keenly.

"Your news, sir," he continued, "has made it bad for me, and perhaps worse for my wife and picanninies. We've kept 'em quiet by promises, telling 'em the ship would be along in no time. Gee! there's going to be the deuce to pay! I'll stick to the old man, if I'm riddled with lead. I'll see him through, or never see him again. And your Highness—"

"Yes, captain?"

"If I don't come through the row, you might let my wife have this. It's money, and there's the address written on it. B'gosh, I'd take it as a real kindness!"

He handed the prince an envelope. Ching-Lung admired the lean, sallow man with all his heart.

"But you don't know me, captain!" he protested.

"I guess I do, for I've seen you. I know it's as safe as if I took it myself. If that ship had come along, me and Gore would have parted. But there's going to be the dickens to pay 'way over there to-night, and I can't see an old man go down alone. I'll back him up—I'll back him up, after eatin' his bread, if he'd murdered my father!"

"Great Scott!" thought Ching-Lung, "there's a true blue."

Ferrers Lord was lazily turning over the pages of the log-book. He yawned.

"Oh, captain," he said, "I hardly think it worth while to hear your message; but, of course, if you choose, you can deliver it. I am a person—one of those absurd people who, when they make up their minds once, have made them up for ever. Does he accept my terms?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Thoroughly?"

"No, sir. What he means isn't my business. He says he'll give up the article—whatever that is—but he'll see you shot before he gives you a printed apology!"

"Take it, old chap," said Ching-Lung, "and end the miserable business!"

The millionaire dipped the pen in the ink, and made a correction in the log-book.

"Give him my regrets, captain," he said, "and tell him that I cannot take the trouble to alter my terms. They were and are final."

He rose, to show that the interview was at an end, and turned on his heel. A sudden impulse made him hold out his hand to the Yankee.

"Hackerden," he said, "take my advice, and stay here as my guest!"

"Bothered if I will!" said the Yankee. "Don't mind my roughness, sir, for I was always rough. I feel the honour, sir, and I'm grateful. You've got a splendid name all over the earth as a gentleman and a man of honour. Joel F. Hackerden is a name that few people have ever heard of, but it's a clean name. When a man hurts me, I don't turn the other cheek. I go for him with both fists and both feet. I reckon Gore has wronged you, and I don't blame you, sir, for what you do. But I've eaten his bread and handled his money. I know what's coming, and I'll stick to him. Good-night, sir!"

"Good-night, captain!" said Ferrers Lord. "I am almost sorry."

The door closed behind the millionaire. Ching-Lung looked at the Yankee sadly.

"They'll loot the place?" he asked.

"Gee! I'll lay odds they loot it and burn it!" growled Hackerden. "They're the wickedest lot of skunks on earth, and most of the brutes haven't been paid. They kept pretty quiet while the drink was there. The old man stayed 'em off by promising the ship would be in to-day. He even bluffed me into believing it. You bet your bottom dollar, they'll raise Cain!"

A Plot Discovered.

Ching-Lung stroked his chin. Ferrers Lord must have foreseen it all. He must have played his game move by move, remorselessly, terribly, craftily.

"Hackerden, old chap," said the prince, "you're an ass to go back! He owes you nothing, and you owe him nothing. Look here! Stay with us. We'll find you a decent job. We can't make you an officer, or anything of that kind. We don't have officers, really. We're a queer pack, pretty well all chums. I ought to be at home looking after a kingdom about twice as big as Great Britain, but I can't tear myself away from my pals and this rollicking life. You'd be splendidly paid, Hackerden. I'll guarantee that."

The Yankee pondered.

"I reckon you're a white man!" he said, and flushed like a boy when he remembered his mistake.

"Oh, don't worry about a slip of the tongue, skipper!"



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laughed the prince. "It's only a saying you have in the States, and you mean that I'm not a nigger or a redskin. I can't help being a bit yellow and slant-eyed. Anyhow, I've got a white man's heart, I hope."

"And you have!" said Joel Hackerden wistfully. "Your Highness is white all through! B'gosh, sir, will you leave your kind offer open for twenty-four hours?"

"Don't go!" said Ching-Lung. "Take my tip, and stay!"

"I can't, sir. If I did I wouldn't be a white man. I don't think many shakes of Gore, but I'm bothered if I'll leave him to-night! If I don't come through it, sir, you'll give that to my wife, and tell her I got sunk in bad weather."

Ching-Lung argued, but it was useless. The dogged, plucky Yankee was obdurate. A terrible riot was close at hand, and he thought it his duty to stand by the man who had employed him, and to die by his side if needs be.

Ching-Lung sighed as the launch throbbed away into the gloom. He heard a laugh, and turned, to see the millionaire bending over the chart.

"A fine fellow, that," said Ferrers Lord, "but something of an idiot!"

"I think him a man, old chap!"

"There, to a certain extent, we differ, Ching. I repeat that he savours of the idiot. There is a nobility and devotion in his madness, I admit. A good, faithful dog would act like that. I am afraid he is going to his death."

"What?"

Ching-Lung faced the millionaire.

"You don't mean that, Lord?"

"Timo will prove," said Ferrers Lord, shrugging his shoulders. "I only know that affairs in Loneland are in a precarious state. The men are almost starving. Gently ahead, Prout!"

"That fellow is a hero!" said Ching-Lung.

"Or an ass!" said Ferrers Lord drily. "Ah! Here comes the moon! Ching, may I have my cigarettes?"

The lean, sallow-faced Yankee steered the launch towards the winking light. He knew what was going on. Wages were overdue, and discontent was rampant.

Open mutiny had been threatened for a fortnight. Nathan Gore had promised that all wages would be paid at noon that day, and that free rations would be distributed.

His promise had proved a lie. He had gathered men of every race about him—the very wastrels of the earth, men of a score of races.

When well paid, well fed, and, above all, with unlimited drink, they had served his purpose. Now they were unpaid, and hungry, and the little strong drink that remained was kept from them.

"There'll be old Harry to pay!" thought the American. "They've got their backs up, the scum! I'll try and get the old galoot to put to sea, or b'gosh, they'll lynch him! Burn him, he's so mad that a man can't talk to him! It's a case of going under, I reckon."

He stooped forward to listen.

"What's that, Jim?"

"Sounded like a yell!" answered the lad.

"Round it!" growled the Yankee, and round went the launch.

"Ahoy!"

"Ahoy!" roared Prout. "By hokey, have you left anything?"

"No," said Hackerden; "but I want to leave this kid. He's only fifteen, and I reckon it ain't safe for brutes over yonder. Get aboard, younker! Say, friend, ask his Highness to look arter the brat. He's my nevy. If there's anything to pay take it out of what I've left. So-long!"

He had kept the launch level with the slowly-moving submarine. The boy took a leap, and the launch shot ahead. Prout gazed at the tousled archer in dumb amaze; it had all happened so quickly.

"By hokey!" he gasped, finding his breath. "What next? Is this a bloomin' floatin' orphanage?"

Hackerden went full speed to make up for lost time. The launch was a splendid boat, and of the newest type. It was no toy, and it raced along merrily.

Again he bent to listen. A hoarse, tigerish roar swept from the land, and a red glow sprang into the sky.

"B'gosh!" muttered the Yankee. "They're firing the saloon!"

He leaned forward again, watching the growing glare.

"B'gosh!" he growled, as a faint crack, crack, crack! reached his ears. "They're shooting!"

(This story will be concluded next Monday, and in No. 275 of "The Magnet" Library will appear the opening instalment of our grand new serial story, entitled "MYSTERIA!" by Sidney Drew. Order Early.)



My Readers' Page

WHOM TO WRITE TO:
EDITOR,
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FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"STANDING BY SKINNER!"

By Frank Richards.

Next week's long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars brings Skinner on the scene again. Skinner was once a member of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, until his rascally conduct caused him to be expelled by the Head.

Now Skinner wants to return to his old school, and our next story deals with the schemes and subterfuges he employs in order to gain his end. Skinner is finally successful in his object, and is once more able to call himself a Greyfriars junior.

The Removites make a point of

"STANDING BY SKINNER!"

for old time's sake, but Harry Wharton & Co. are by no means blind to the fact that the way in which he manages to achieve his ambition plainly shows, unfortunately, that his character has not changed for the better, but that he is the same old Skinner.

"THE GEM" STORYETTE COMPETITION.

The storyette competition now running in our grand little companion paper has caught on in a wonderful way, and "Our Weekly Prize Page" is rapidly becoming one of the most popular features in that popular story paper. Every week money prizes are being given away—a prize for the sender of every joke published on this page. So hurry up with that joke or good story that tickled you so when you heard it! Send it along to the Editor of "The Gem" ON A POSTCARD, and it may bring you a money prize which will make a welcome addition to your week's pocket-money. Unlike other competitions, there are no restrictions, the joke need not be original, and you can send in as many postcards as you like; also there is no entrance fee.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

T. Sherman (Bolton).—You should, first, obtain full particulars from the nearest recruiting office or barracks.

"Old Reader" (Furness).—I will certainly do as you suggest.

"Two Well Wishers" (Leeds).—I am afraid that, minus all the characters you take exception to, "The Magnet" Library would become a dull story-paper indeed, so that I can hold out little hope of your wishes being complied with.

"Perfee" (Bristol).—A book on ventriloquism can be obtained from Gamage & Co., of Holborn, London, E.C.

"A Loyal Reader."—Thanks for your letter and card. You are very lucky to live in such a charming place.

F. M. and C. B. (Notts).—Your suggestion is an excellent one, but I am afraid that Mr. Richards is too busy to consider it at once. We will see what we can do later.

Will the following readers accept my very best thanks for their letters:

A. Sullivan (Montreal), H. Herbert (Lancs.), V. Watkins (Kew), "Loyal Nelson," A. Davidson (Moltena), F. Harrison (Australia).

"Philen" (Kilburn).—"Escuelas" on the stamps you mention means "schools," and it indicates that all money obtained from their sale goes towards the upkeep of the National Schools of Venezuela.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 273.

"A Cork Girl Reader."—Thanks for your letter. I must state yours is a splendid method of advertising our companion papers, and I thank you heartily for it.

"A Cudworth Reader."—You should write to "The Times" Book Club, of Oxford Street, London, W.

"A Worried Reader" (Essex).—I advise you to apply personally at a recruiting station or barracks; they will tell you there all particulars. I might mention that a very strict medical examination must be passed before you can be enlisted.

"A Constant Reader" (Westminster).—Thanks for your letter. I will see what can be arranged as soon as Mr. Richards has time.

Mrs. Carlton.—I must thank you for all you have done and are still doing for our companion papers.

R. W.—To cure your chilblains in their present condition, rub them with orange-juice.

"Ackworth Reader."—I am afraid your friend will be unable to go on the stage in his present state.

"A Friend of 'The Magnet.'"—Try a course of physical exercises; they will be most beneficial in your case.

"An Irish Reader."—Alonzo Todd is returning to the school very shortly, and will make his appearance in "The Magnet" again soon.

G. Pepper.—The Exchange Column is only open to Colonials. You should answer one of the advertisements appearing in it.

HOW TO KEEP FIT.—No. 1.

By a Sergeant-Instructor.

It is a common error, with boys in particular, to confound the two terms "Gymnastics" and "Physical Culture." Now, although gymnastics may be called, or indeed be used as, physical culture, you may have a very thorough physical culture training without the use of gymnastics. Read the above again, and fix it in your mind. I want you to do this because the course of lessons I shall describe later on in the form of exercises may all be taken in any place where there happens to be room to swing your arms about. A gym. is not necessary; but if you are a member of one, or have access to one, all the better. I am now writing for such of my chums as cannot use a gym.

Who are they who need physical culture? The answer to this question is simple—everybody whose muscles are not as strong as Nature intended them to be. The muscles of the body were made to improve by use. If, therefore, your occupation does not call for the use of any one set of muscles to any great extent, then that particular set of muscles needs to be exercised in order to get them fit. Take the blacksmith. His muscles stand out in magnificent proportions all about the chest, neck, arms, and legs. Yet that same splendid-looking man may be suffering from weak lungs.

It is a general, all-round development that one needs in order to ensure good health, and a buoyant and cheerful disposition. Sick and ailing people are usually peevish. It is not their fault. One cannot be in pain and be merry at the same time. But it is not impossible to avoid pain. One may avoid many distressing ailments by building up the body.

In the case of the blacksmith, the particular exercise needed by him is known as deep-breathing. A few seconds every morning and evening given to filling the lungs with pure air has a most astonishing effect on the lungs, and not only makes them strong and large, but enables them to resist the deadly microbes which loves to attack weak organs, but which cannot live in a healthy pair of lungs. Why? Well, the healthy body nourishes a great army of healthy microbes. The two kinds cannot exist in the one place. One must be driven out. It depends, therefore, on yourself which army gains the victory.

(Another of these splendid Articles next Monday.)

THE EDITOR.

THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY SPECIAL COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

AH, WHY?



"Papa, are two mouses mice?"
"Yes, my boy."
"Then why don't they call a pair of trousers trice?"

TO BE CORRECT!



New Maid: "Please, ma'am, when I bring the dinner in should I say 'Dinner's ready' or 'Dinner is served'?"
Mistress: "Well, if it's like it was yesterday, say 'Dinner is spoilt'!"



"Yes, sir, I was wrecked on an island in the South Seas for five years, and when I was rescued I was a better shampooer than ever. I kept in practice all the time." "How did you manage that?" "I shampooed the cocoa-nuts."

AN UN-"FELINE" REMARK!



"That's a photo of me with my cats."
"Yes. You're the one with the hat on?"

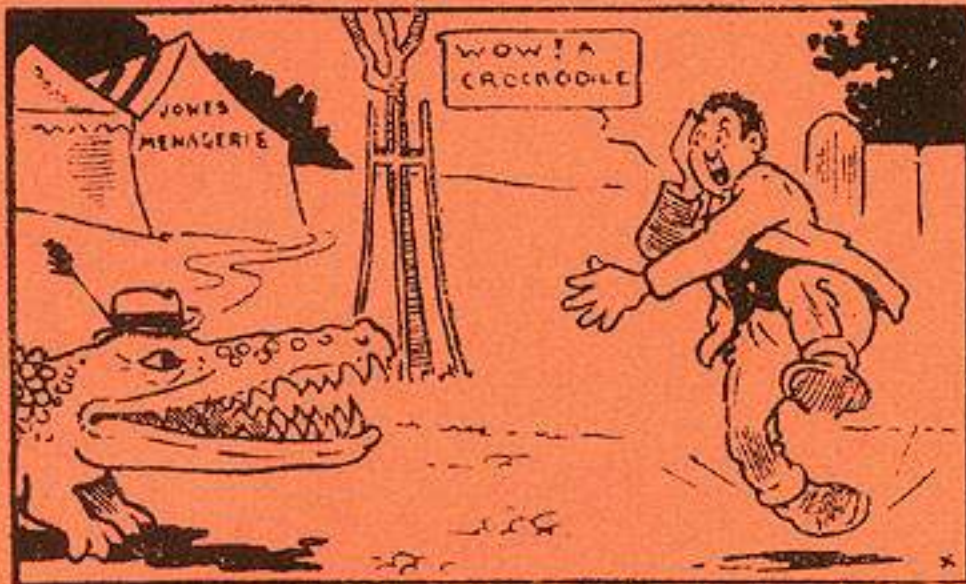


ALL OFF!
"I thought you were a suitor for Miss Splosh's hand?"
"I was, but I didn't."
"Didn't what?"
"Didn't suit her!"

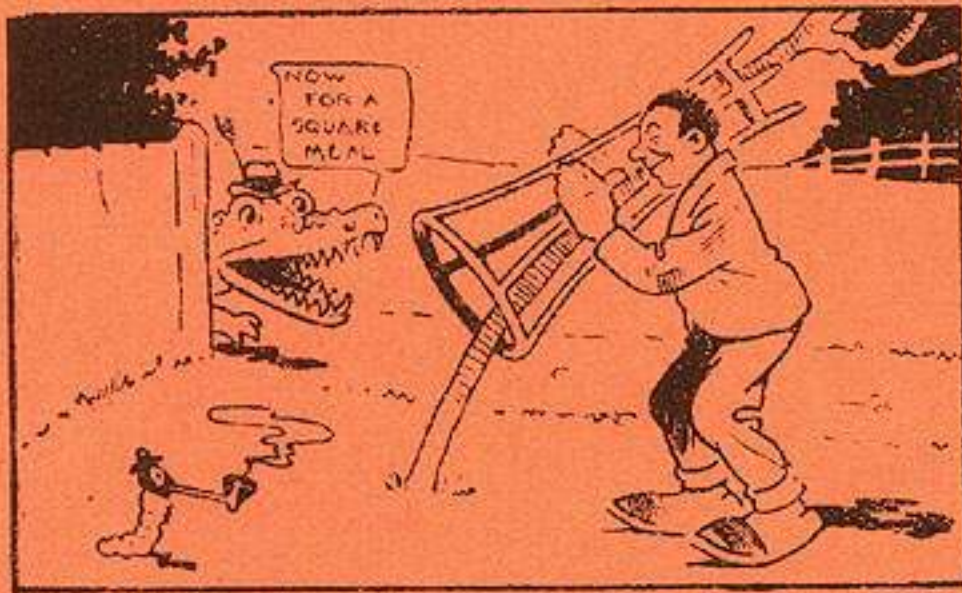
OVER THE GARDEN WALL!
Mr. Nagg: "You're next door to an ass, sir."
Mr. Wagg: "Quite correct. I'm living next door to you."



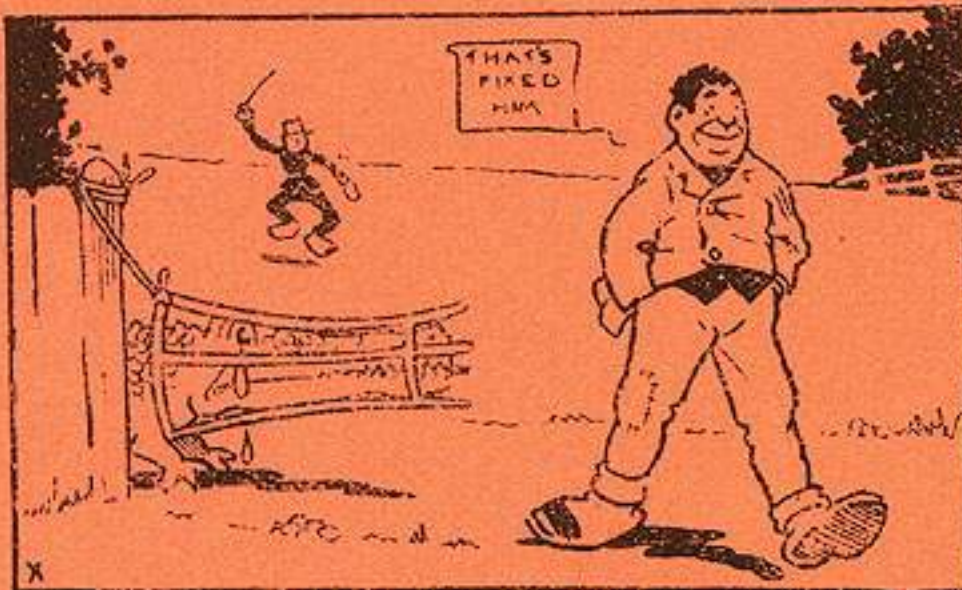
HE LEFT THE CROCODILE "RAILING" AT HIS FATE.



1. "Yow! Save me, someone!" gasped Timribs, as he spotted the escaped crocodile. "I'll be a ham sandwich in a tick, if I don't do something quick!"



2. But close by was a sapling with an iron protection round it. Timribs quickly waltzed over to it, and, lifting the railing away from the twiglet—

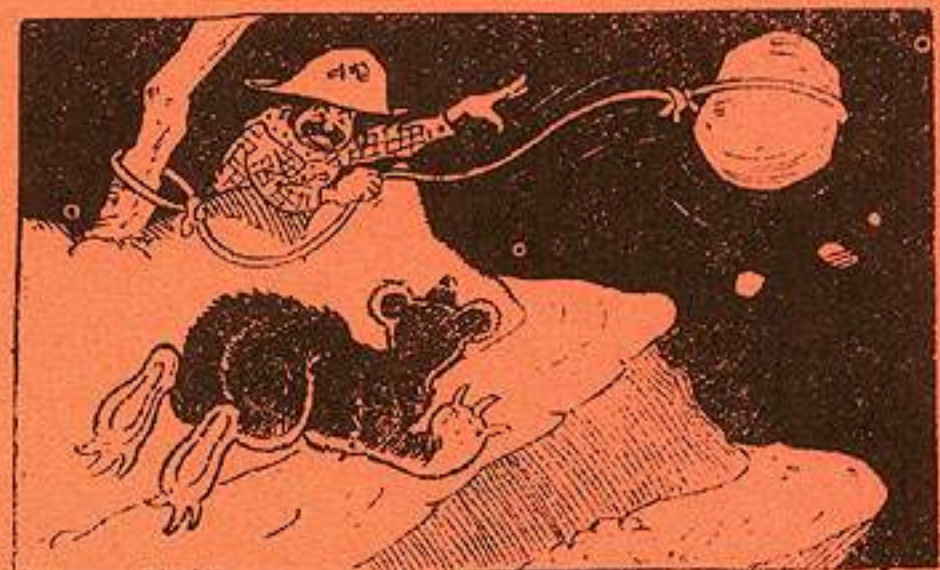


3. He rammed it over the crocodile's jaws, closing them with a snap, and preventing the fierce animal from doing any chewing until further notice

HE PRESSED HIM TO STAY.



1. "Yow!" said the merry cowboy. "This is what you might call an awkward position! But I'll just lasso this tree, and—



2. "Fasten this pebble to the rope while the bear comes round the corner, and I think that will do nicely, thank you!"



3. And, letting go the rope, he dropped the contraption over the bear's back and did the merry bolt, whistling a lively strain.



DOGGED HIS FOOTSTEPS.

Plodding Peter: "Dogs are among the few animals that'll faithfully follow man."

Sleepy Sam: "Yus, I had one foller me so closely yesterday that I could hardly keep ahead of it."

AN IMPOSSIBLE FEAT.

First Passenger (whose feet have been trodden on): "Where are your eyes?"

Second Passenger: "In my head."

First Passenger: "Well, can't you see my feet?"

Second Passenger: "No, you have your boots on."



RATHER UNNECESSARY.



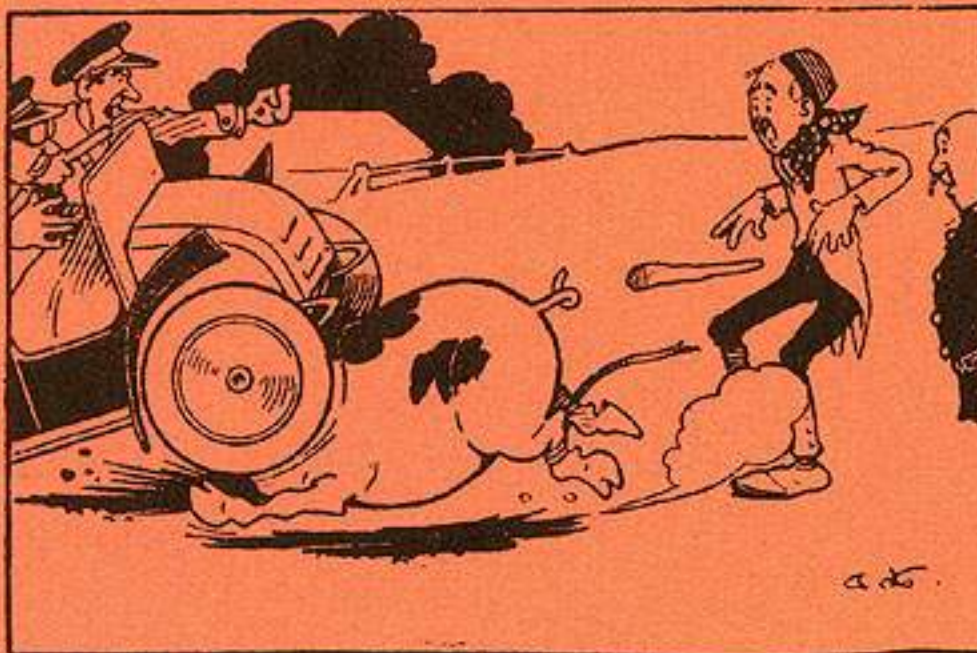
Suffragette: "Can I persuade you to read this little work of ours on 'The Tyranny of Man?'"

TWIG THE OLD BOY.

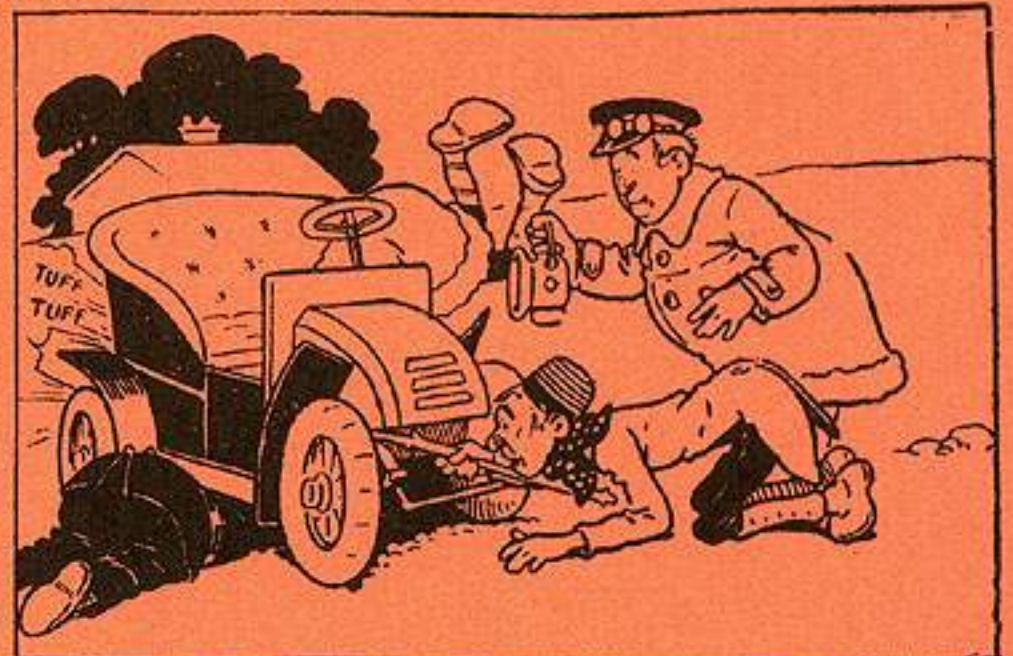


Elder Sister: "Thank goodness Fido is quiet at last."
Younger Sister: "He jolly well ought to be. I've just given him a fearful kick."

SAUSAGES ARE CHEAP TO-DAY!



1. Paddy was taking his pig to market, as he wanted some money for murphies, when it broke away and ran into a motor-car which came crawling along the road at sixty-eight miles or so an hour.



2. Much to the motorist's aggranoyance, they put the brake on, leaving the engine still buzzing, and although they hunted everywhere, even in the tool-bag, they couldn't find that porker.



3. But when the motorists started off again they nearly had fourteen and a half fits at once, for that porker immediately commenced coming out of the exhaust-pipe disguised as sausages. Paddy was so pleased he gave a taste all round. Fact!

SO "SHELL" WE!



Jim: "Do you know how to tell a bad egg?"
Blanche: "Not exactly, but if you have anything to tell a bad egg, break it gently!"