"QUITS!" A GRAND SCHOOL TALE

Bob Cherry wormed on again. His body was over the smooth slope of the rock now: his hands were upon the last hold to be had on the surface of the declivity. But now his feet were within reach of Smith's clutching hands. "Can you reach me?" "Yes!" came the muttered reply. *(For this thrilling incident see the grand, long complete story contained in this issue.)*

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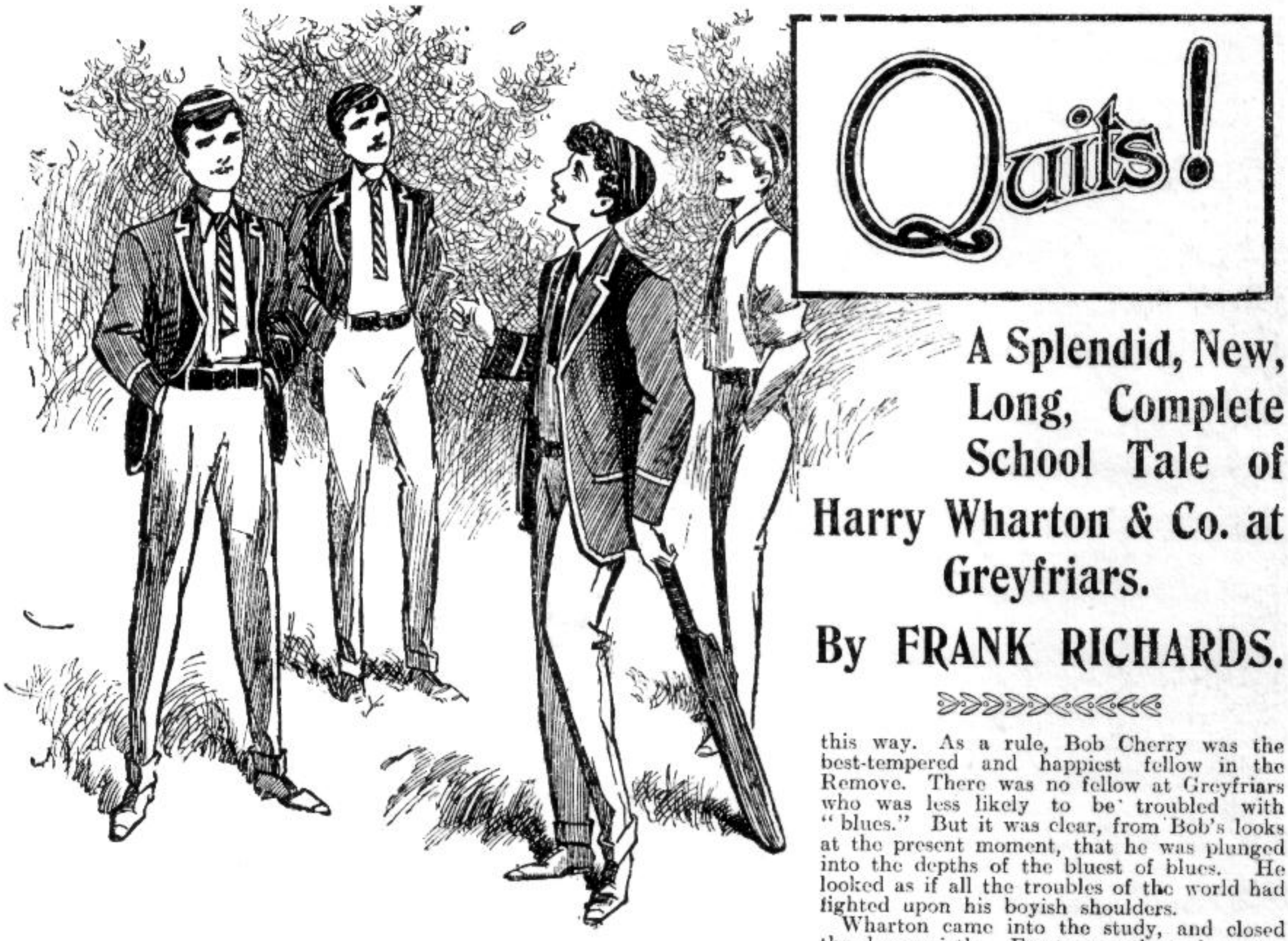


A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Very Much Out of Sorts!

"BOB!"

Bob Cherry did not reply.

He was seated in his study, in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, with his hands thrust deep into his pockets, his legs stretched out, and a deep, dark frown upon his brow. He did not hear Harry Wharton's voice, and did not see his chum looking in at the study doorway.

"Bob!"

Bob did not move.

Harry Wharton gazed at him in surprise. It was very unusual to see Bob Cherry's sunny countenance overcast in this way. As a rule, Bob Cherry was the best-tempered and happiest fellow in the Remove. There was no fellow at Greyfriars who was less likely to be troubled with "blues." But it was clear, from Bob's looks at the present moment, that he was plunged into the depths of the bluest of blues. He looked as if all the troubles of the world had fighted upon his boyish shoulders.

Wharton came into the study, and closed the door quietly. For two or three days past he had noticed that Bob Cherry had lacked his usual spirits. And Wharton, though naturally averse to forcing a confidence, meant to know now what was the matter. He stood before the despondent junior, and Bob could not help seeing him. He started a little, and gave Wharton a slight nod.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he said.

"What's the matter, Bob?"

"Nothing."

"Then what are you scowling about?"

"I'm not scowling."

"Don't you know it's time for the cricket?" asked Harry. "I came here to fetch you. Are you ready?"

Bob Cherry shook his head.

"Leave me out this afternoon," he said.

"But we're playing the Shell!" said Harry.

"I know."

"They're in great form, and we want our best men," said the captain of the Remove. "I can't leave you out!"

"Must!"

"Don't you feel fit?"

"No."

"You look fit enough."

"Can't play."

"Why not?"

"Don't want to."

Wharton paused. He had never known Bob Cherry in this humour before, and he did not quite know what to make of it. But one thing was certain; there must be something very much the matter with Bob Cherry if he did not want to play in the Form match.

Bob shook his head again.

"You won't?"

"No."

"Why not?" demanded Wharton.

"Don't want to."

"But it's a lovely afternoon," urged Wharton. "You can't stay indoors. It's not like you, Bob, to want to stick in your study when you might be playing cricket. You haven't taken to swotting, by any chance?"

Bob Cherry smiled faintly.

"No; I've tried, but I can't swot. I wish I could!"

"What on earth for?"

"Well, I might be able to get a scholarship then, like Linley, or young Penfold. But I can't," said Bob, with a heavy sigh. "I've tried, and I can't. I wasn't built to be a clever chap. No good for anything but cricket and footer and rowing, and things of that sort!"

"Well, you used to be pretty well satisfied with things of that sort," said Harry Wharton, in astonishment. "Why can't you be satisfied now?"

Bob did not reply. The gloomy frown had not cleared for a moment from his brow. He made an impatient movement, and that was all. It was quite plain that he wanted to be left alone. But Wharton did not intend to leave him alone just then.

"There's something wrong with you, Bob," he said.

Bob grunted.

"Not seedy, are you?"

"Rats! I'm never seedy."

"You've got the blues?"

"Yes."

"What about?"

No reply.

"What's troubling you, Bob?"

"You are!" said Bob bluntly. "Buzz off and let me alone, there's a good fellow! I don't want to play, and I don't want to watch the match. I want to be left alone!"

Wharton laughed.

"Same old polite Bob!" he remarked. "Never any mistaking your meaning. But I'm not going to leave you alone. You've been going about like a bear with a sore head for two or three days now. Lots of the fellows have noticed it."

"Blow the fellows!"

"Tell us what's the matter!"

"Rats!"

"You've got something on your mind."

"Br-r-r-r!"

"Then you won't explain?"

"No."

"I think you're an ass!"

"Thanks!"

"Look here, Bob, don't play the giddy goat," said Harry persuasively. "If you've got the blue devils, there's nothing like a good game of cricket to drive them away. You'll only make it worse by being a slacker!"

"I'm not slacking!" said Bob indignantly. "You don't understand!"

"Well, I'm willing to understand!" said Wharton. "Only I can't, if you don't tell me what's the matter, you know."

"Oh, rot!"

There was a thump at the door of the study, and it opened, and three juniors looked in—Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh of the Remove. They were in flannels, and Johnny Bull had a bat under his arm.

"When on earth are you coming?" demanded Nugent warmly. "Do you know we're waiting for you, you bounders?"

"Bob isn't ready!" said Wharton.

"Then it's time he was ready! Why, the bounder hasn't even changed!" exclaimed Nugent indignantly. "The Shell fellows are ready; they're on the ground now. Look here, Bob, what are you keeping us waiting for?"

"Don't wait!"

"We can't begin till you come, fathead," said Johnny Bull.

"I'm not coming."

"Not coming!" echoed the juniors together.

"No; buzz off!"

"What!"

"Can't you understand plain English?" growled Bob Cherry irritably. "I'm not coming. I don't want to play—I don't want to see the match! I don't want to jaw! I want to be let alone! That's plain English, isn't it?"

"The plainfulness of the worthy Bob's esteemed English is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Well, if that's what you want, you can have it, as far as I'm concerned," said Johnny Bull; and he sniffed and left the study.

"I must say you're rather a pig, Bob!" said Nugent, in surprise. "Where did you grow these beautiful manners? Been taking lessons from Vernon-Smith?"

"Oh, rats!"

"Well, we can't wait all day," said Nugent. "If Bob's not playing, somebody else must be put in, Wharton. Come on!"

Wharton lingered a moment. The opposing team were waiting on the ground, and Wharton was cricket captain of the Remove. He had no time to lose. But he was loth to leave his chum in that peculiar humour.

"I wish you'd come, Bob!" he said.

"I can't!"

"And you won't tell us what's the trouble?"

"No," said Bob bluntly.

"Well, we must go," said Harry. "I'm sorry you won't come!"

Bob Cherry did not reply. The juniors left the study, and Bob was alone. He remained as they left him; the gloomy frown on his brow, his forehead wrinkled in dark lines, his attitude one of utter dejection.

"What on earth's the matter with Bob?" Nugent exclaimed, as the cricketers went down the passage. "He's been like that for two or three days now."

Wharton shook his head.

"Blessed if I know. Bad news from home, perhaps."

"Then why can't he say so?" growled Johnny Bull.

"Give it up."

"Where's Bob?" asked Mark Linley, the Lancashire junior, meeting the Remove fellows as they came out of the School House.

"He's not coming."

Linley looked surprised.

"Not going to play?"

"No; he's got the blues, or something. Doesn't want to," said Harry. "Blessed if I like leaving him like that; but we've got to play the Shell."

Mark Linley hesitated.

"I'll go and see him," he said. "Look here, Wharton! If you could put in young Penfold instead of me, I'd look after Bob. I know there's something wrong with him. He's been queer for two or three days now, and I feel anxious about him."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"Right-oh! Pen's all right, if you don't mind standing out."

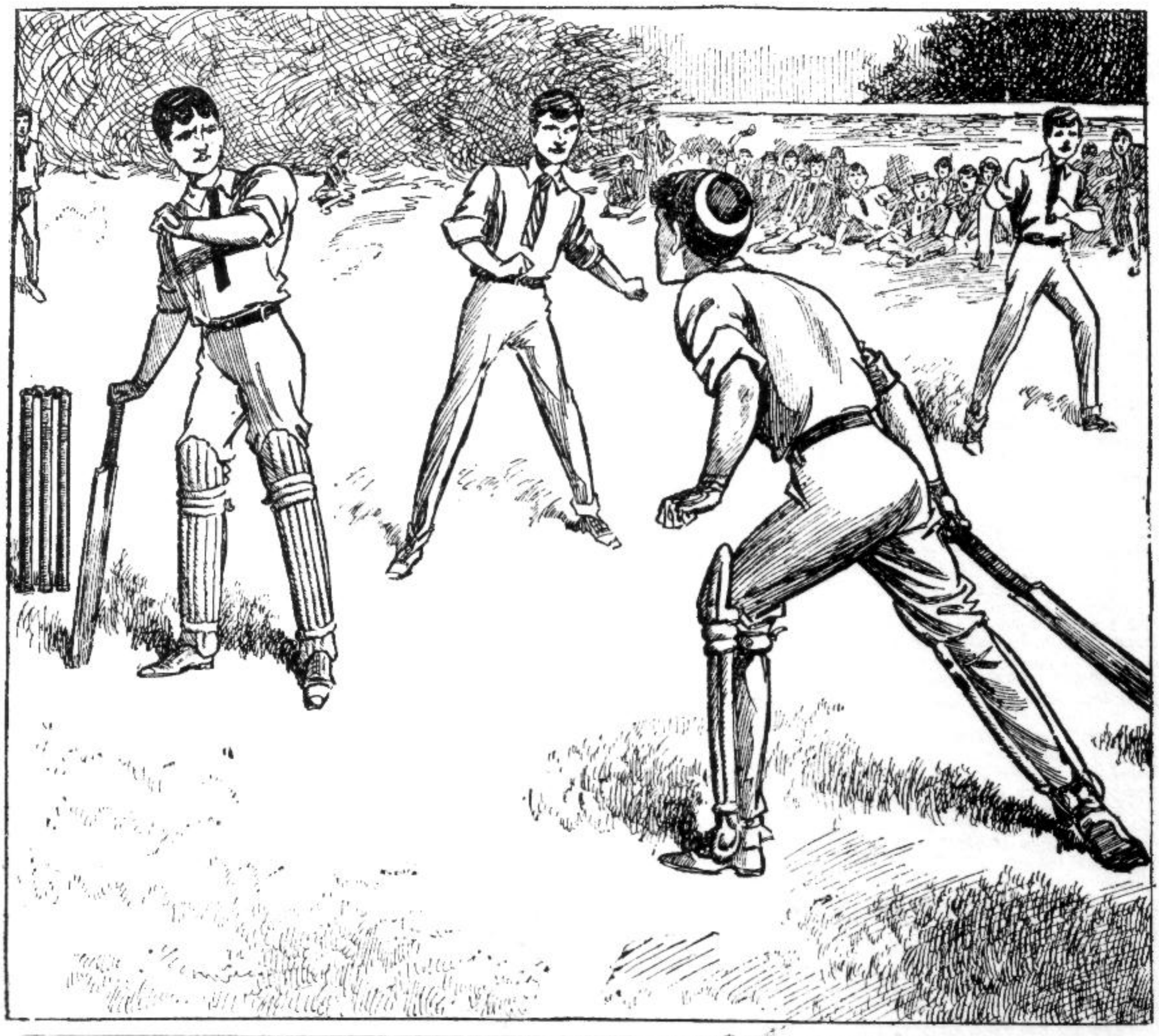
"Good!"

And Mark Linley did not follow the cricketers down to the ground. With a very thoughtful expression upon his face, he made his way up to the Remove passage.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
The Last Chance!

BOB CHERRY moved restlessly in his chair.

Outside, in the Close, the summer sunshine was streaming down. It was a glorious afternoon. From the playing-fields came the sound of happy voices. But the brilliant weather and the many attractions of the great



"Run! Run, you ass!" But the Bounder did not move. Either he did not consider the chance good enough or he did not choose to consider it, and Wharton had reached the middle of the pitch before he realised that his partner had not moved. (*See Chapter* 3.)

summer game did not appeal to Bob Cherry now. The junior who had always loved the open air and all athletic exercises seemed content to brood in his study, and "slack" away the afternoon as idly as Billy Bunter himself.

He made an irritable gesture as the study door opened and Mark Linley came in. The Lancashire lad was in flannels, and had his bat in his hand. Bob Cherry stared at him.

"I'm not coming," he said. "I know you're ready, and I know the Shell are waiting. I'm not going to play. Wharton's going to put somebody else in the team."

"I know," said Mark.

"Then what have you come for?"

"I've got some work to do."

Mark put his bat into a corner, and sat down at the table, and drew his books towards him. Bob Cherry watched him silently. The Lancashire lad, though a good sportsman, was what the Greyfriars fellows called a "swot." He had to be. It was only by means of the scholarship he had won by hard work and sheer grit that he was able to be at Greyfriars at all. He had worked in a factory before he came to the school, and "swotting" was child's play after the work he had been accustomed to. His future depended upon the amount of hard work he put in during the next year or two, and Mark had had too much close experience of the grim realities of life to think of throwing any chances away.

Bob Cherry watched him as he opened his books and settled down to work. Mark seemed to be able to work at all times.

"Aren't you playing in the match, Marky?" demanded Bob, at last roused out of his gloomy thoughts in spite of himself.

"No," said Mark, looking up.

"What are you standing out for?"

"Pen's taking my place."

"And you're going to swot?"

"Yes."

Bob Cherry grunted.

There was a long silence in the study. The bright sunshine, streaming in at the window, fell across Mark Linley's paper as he wrote. The queer-looking Greek characters—queer-looking to Bob Cherry's eyes—raced under his pen. Mark Linley could write in Greek as fast as most of the fellows could write in English.

"Blessed if I know how you do that!" growled Bob at last.

Mark smiled.

"Hard work," he said.

"I can't do it."

"You're not built the same way," said Mark. "But you don't need to, either. Chaps can do things when they have to, you know. If I don't get on here, I've got to go back to the factory when my scholarship expires. Not that I should mind that—I was happy enough at the factory—but I want

to get on and help my people. And there's only one way—work!"

Bob groaned.

"I wish I could do it."

"Why?" said Mark, with a smile. "You don't want to get a prize or a scholarship. You don't have to buy your books here out of the prizes you get for papers."

"You do that, don't you, Marky?"

Mark nodded.

"Yes. I haven't cost my people anything since I came here. A good many of the fellows don't like my doing it—Vernon-Smith calls me the prize-hunter, you know—but I can't help it. I'm not going to ask my poor old dad for money out of his little bit of wages. And the prizes were founded to help poor scholars. That's what they were intended for, and I don't see why I shouldn't bag them. I wouldn't stand in the way of another chap who needed them as much I do; but I don't see why I should stand out and let a millionaire's son like Vernon-Smith bag the prizes. He doesn't need them, and if he's out for glory, he can try for the medals. I'll leave him the medals," added Mark, laughing.

"I wish I could do it," said Bob, with a sigh.

"But you don't need to."

Bob grunted.

"That's all you know!"

Mark looked at him curiously.

"Bob! Is that it? Are you hard up?"

Bob was silent.

"Look here, Bob!" said Mark quietly. "You can tell me. I'm your pal, you know. When I came here, a factory lad, on a scholarship, a lot of the fellows were down on me. They called me an outsider, and a cad, and lots of things. You stood by me from the first, like the splendid chap you are, and helped me to pull through. If it hadn't been for your friendship, I should have had a much harder tussle here, and I might never have stood it out. I don't know—it was hard enough, anyway. You made a lot of difference by sticking to me."

"Did I?" said Bob, his rugged face softening. "Well, I'm glad I've done some good somehow, anyway, though I'm fit for nothing myself."

"Stuff!" said Mark. "You're fit for a good many things, Bob. If there's ever anything I can do in return, Bob, old man, you've only got to say what it is. Perhaps I can help you—you never know. What's the trouble?"

"I may as well tell you," said Bob heavily. "It will be out soon, anyway. I've got to leave Greyfriars, Marky."

Mark Linley started.

"Leave Greyfriars, Bob!"

"Yes."

"What on earth for?"

"Because my father can't afford to keep me here any longer."

Mark looked astonished.

"But—but I thought Major Cherry was well-off, Bob?" he said. "I know your people aren't rich—you've said so—but——"

"It's all the fault of a rotten cousin of mine," said Bob. "You've seen him. He came here once. He went to the bad, and robbed his employers, and the money had to be found to save him from arrest. I knew the pater was hard hit—he had to stand the lion's share—but—but I thought he'd got over it. But now it seems that he hadn't the money. He raised it by getting a loan from a moneylender—the English Loan Office, I think it's called—and the poor old chap has been paying awful interest on the loan ever since, and never telling me a word about it. He hasn't always been able to meet it. I fancy they've swindled him, you know. The dad is an awful duffer in business matters, and now it's come to a head. The blessed Shylock has claimed his pound of flesh, and the dad is going to be sold up at the end of the month! He hasn't an earthly chance of raising the money—not an earthly! You see, he's paid back the principal nearly twice over, but the interest has piled up somehow till he owes more than ever—you know the rotten tricks of moneylenders, and an old soldier isn't the kind of chap to deal with them. Now it's come to a head, the home is going, and I've got to get out of Greyfriars at the end of the term—and not come back!"

"Bob!"

"The dad suggested that if I could get one of the scholarships vacant this term, it would be possible for me to stay on," said Bob wearily. "Of course, I can't do it. I've thought it over, and—and tried. But I can't do the work. If there was a scholarship for getting goals or hitting boundaries, I could capture it, perhaps. But ancient history, and Latin prose—oh, my hat!"

"It's rotten, Bob!"

"Rotten isn't the word!" said Bob miserably. "I'm thinking more of the dad than of myself. A fellow like you could be useful if he went home. You could get a job somewhere, and put in something to help. I couldn't. I shall be a helpless brute, having to be fed, and not able to do anything even to earn my keep. And it will be an awful blow to the pater for me to leave Greyfriars. I can't do anything that's any use, but I can do a lot of things that are useless. And the pater fully expected to see me row for Oxford some day."

"What rotten luck!"

"So I'm done in," said Bob Cherry. "Only don't tell all the chaps, Marky. I don't want to be pitied." Bob's face flushed. "I couldn't stand that. I'd rather keep it quiet till the end of the term, and get out quietly."

Mark looked very thoughtful.

"But there are two scholarships going this term, Bob. One of them would be over your head, but one of them is open to junior chaps—the Bishop's scholarship, for three years, with twenty pounds down and twenty pounds each year for expenses."

"That's what the dad was thinking of," said Bob. "But I can't tackle it. A good many fellows have entered—Vernon Smith among the rest. Smithy doesn't really want it—he wants to get it just to show that he can work if he likes. And he can simply walk over me."

"It's not too late to enter," said Mark. "You've left it jolly late—but there's still time. If your name goes down to-day, Bob, you can go in."

Bob growled.

"I've been thinking it over this afternoon," he said. "But——"

"That's why you've cut the cricket?"

"Yes. But it's no good," said Bob despondently. "You see, I should be bottom of the list, and only make myself look an ass by entering at all. All the fellows would chuckle if they saw my name down on the list. It's no good."

"The Head's in his study now," said Mark. "He has to take the names. Come on." The Lancashire lad rose from the table.

"Come on, where?"

"To the Head!"

"What for?"

"To put down your name."

"My name?"

"Yes—an entrant for the Bishop's scholarship examination."

"Rot!"

"Come on!" repeated Mark.

"It's no good!"

"You can try!"

"And look a silly ass!"

"Better than slacking."

"Look here, Marky——"

"I'm waiting for you," said Mark quietly.

"Don't be a josser!" roared Bob. "I'm not coming."

"Yes you are; come on."

"What's the good of entering, when I can't possibly hope to get within miles of it?"

"You're going to swot."

"I can't! I tell you I've tried—and—and I fell asleep over it."

Mark grinned.

"You'll try again, and keep awake! I'm going to help you! I'm going to coach you! You're going to enter."

"I'm not!" growled Bob.

"Look here, Bob, you owe it to your father to do your best," said Mark earnestly. "Suppose you were last man in, in a cricket match, and it seemed impossible to get the runs wanted to win—would you let them knock your wicket down?"

"No fear," said Bob promptly.

"What would you do?"

"Play the game out to the last gasp," said Bob.

"Exactly: and that's what you're going to do now. You're going to bag the scholarship, or else have the satisfaction of knowing that you did your best," said Mark. "Come on."

"But——"

"No time for buts. To-day is the last day for entering——"

"But I tell you——"

"This way!" Mark Linley took a firm grip on Bob's arm, and led him out of the study, in spite of himself. In the passage Bob made a last resistance.

"Look here, Marky, it's only playing the giddy goat," he said. "I tell you I haven't any chance—not an earthly. The fellows will cackle——"

"Let 'em cackle," said Mark, dragging Bob along. "This way!"

Bob burst into a laugh, in spite of himself.

"What an obstinate beggar you are, Marky. I tell you——"

"Come on!"

They reached the door of the Head's study. Mark Linley knocked, and the Head's deep, pleasant voice bade them enter. Bob Cherry would have retreated even then, but Mark Linley did not let go his arm. Bob was marched into the study. Dr. Locke smiled at them as he surveyed them over his glasses.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

"Cherry wants to put his name down for the Bishop's Scholarship, if it's not too late, sir," said Mark.

The Head looked surprised.

"It is not too late," he said. "But——"

"I told you so, Marky," murmured Bob. "The Head knows——"

"Then Cherry's name can go down, sir?" asked Mark.

"Yes, certainly. But—I think I should tell you, Cherry, that this is a very difficult examination," said the Head gently. "Have you considered the matter?"

"Yes, sir," said Bob grimly. "I've considered it, and I know I haven't a chance. But if you'll let me enter, sir, I'm going to try."

"You may certainly enter, Cherry, and I wish you every success," said the Head.

"Thank you, sir."

When they left the Head's study, Bob Cherry looked grimly at his chum in the passage.

"It's done now!" he grunted.

"A good thing done!" said Mark.

"But it's no good. The Head doesn't think I've got a ghost of a chance—you could see that by the way he spoke."

"We shall see."

"It's all rot, Marky. You can't help me pass the exam. It's not in me," said Bob despondently.

"We'll put it in you, then," said Mark. "You're going to swot, and I'm going to coach you. I'll get some of the old exam. papers, so that we can see just what you've got to get into form for—and we'll slog at it."

"But you've got lots to do, without wasting your time coaching a fathead like me," said Bob.

"I'll find time."

"You're a good chap, Marky," said Bob gratefully. "But——"

"No buts allowed," said Mark. "Come on; we're going to begin now."

And in ten minutes more they were sitting at the study table, with the old examination papers before them, conning them over, and ascertaining just the kind of work that Bob had to prepare himself for—much to Bob's dismay. But, in spite of himself, he was cheered by Mark's determined hopefulness, and, in the long run, he began to feel a glimmer of hope himself. And, at all events, he meant to do all that hard work could do; and that was the state of mind Mark wished to get his chum into.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.
The Form Match!

VERNON-SMITH, the Bounder of Greyfriars, was lounging on the cricket-field when Harry Wharton and Co. arrived there.

There was a cloud upon the Bounder's brow.

It was a beautiful afternoon for cricket, and the Bounder would have been very glad to play in the Form match. He was a splendid cricketer when he chose, and if he had cared to "play the game," he would have been assured of a place in the Form team on all important occasions.

But, instead of "playing the game," the Bounder had chosen to accomplish his ends by "ways that are dark, and tricks that are vain." With the result that he had failed; and, instead of forcing Harry Wharton out of the captaincy of the Remove, he had lost for himself the chance of playing in the eleven.

After his many tricks, Wharton would not trust him again; and he could hardly be blamed for that.

The Bounder was wondering, as he leaned against the pavilion and looked over the bright green playing-field, whether he would not have done more wisely, for all his cunning, if he had simply "played the game."

He glanced at the chums of the Remove as they came down to the field, in spotless white, and in merry humour. Hobson & Co. of the Shell were waiting for them.

"Oh, here you are!" said Hobson sarcastically.

"Here we are again!" said Nugent.

"As large as life, and twice as natural," said Tom Brown. "And ready to give you the licking of your lives."

"The readyfulness is terrific, my worthy and esteemed ludicrous Hobson."

Hobson sniffed.

"Well, if you've screwed your courage up to sticking point, we'll begin," he said.

Vernon-Smith walked over to the Remove cricketers.

"Isn't Cherry playing?" he asked.

Wharton shook his head.

"Nor Linley?"

"No."

"Then you want new hands," said the Bounder.

"I'm putting in young Penfold in Linley's place," said Wharton, "and Bulstrode is going to play instead of Bob."

"I say, Wharton." Billy Bunter, the fattest junior in Greyfriars, rolled up, and blinked at the Remove captain through his big spectacles. "I say, you fellows, I'm ready."

"Ready to be booted off?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! Penfold can't play, and I'm going to take his place—if you want a really good and reliable bat, and a fellow who's handy in the field, and a fast runner."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you chaps remember a catch I made in the St. Jim's match, I hope," said Billy Bunter, with an indignant blink. "I pulled that game out of the fire, at any rate. And as young Penfold can't play——"

"What's the matter with Pen?" asked Harry Wharton sharply. "Where is he?"

Bunter sniffed scornfully.

"Gone home for the afternoon, to help his father mend boots, I suppose. He didn't know you wanted him, you see. He's cobbling now——"

"Oh, shut up, you fat rotter!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I've come here to offer to play instead of Penfold," said Bunter. "You fellows must admit it's pretty infra dig. to have a cobbler's son in the Form team. I consider——"

"Shut up!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Don't be an ass, Bunter!" said Wharton. "You can't play for toffee. Anybody seen Morgan about—I'll ask him."

"He's gone on the river!" said Ogilvy.

"Then there's Newland——"

"He's gone with Morgan."

"Dash it all!" said Wharton crossly. "The reserves might stick here till they see whether they're wanted, when there's a Form match on. Where's Hazeldene?"

"Gone over to Cliff House to see his sister," said Vernon-Smith, with a grin.

"Anybody seen Dick Rake?"

"He's out on his bike, with Elliott," said Nugent.

The Bounder smiled sarcastically.

"I suppose you'd rather put in little Banthorpe, or a fag of the Third, than me?" he suggested.

"I don't want to play you!" said Wharton shortly.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm aware of that. But I'm a member of the Remove Cricket Club, and I suppose I've a right to be played sometimes? And you've not got another player anything like my form to fill the vacant places!"

"Sure, that's thrue enough," said Micky Desmond. "Put him in, Wharton darling."

"I don't see why not," said Bulstrode.

"But I see why not!" said Wharton tartly. "When Smithy's in the team, he won't obey orders, and he seems to think he's the skipper. He shoved himself into the team for St. Jim's, and got a pair of spectacles for his innings."

The Bounder flushed. He did not like to be reminded of the inglorious result of his playing for Greyfriars on the historic occasion of the visit to St. Jim's.

"Well, do as you like!" he growled. "I think I ought to be played, and I'm willing to toe the line; but you can't expect me to kow-tow!"

"I don't want you to kow-tow, but I want a team that can pull together," said Wharton. "I'll play you, but if there's any of your rot, I shall shift you out, and we'll play the Shell a man short, that's all!"

"Right-ho!"

"Aren't you a bit rough on the Bounder, Harry?" murmured Nugent, as Vernon-Smith hurried away for his bat. "I think he means to play up this time!"

Wharton frowned.

"He's willing to agree to anything, to get into the team," he said. "Once he's in it, he will show the cloven hoof as usual. He's a fellow who simply can't endure to play second fiddle at any time, and he has no idea of fair play at all. If he's batting with a fellow he dislikes he will try to run him out, without caring what becomes of the game. I wouldn't put him in now—I'd rather play young Bolsover of the Third—only I can see all you fellows think I ought to give him a chance. I'll give him one, and we'll see how it turns out. Anyway, we can beat the Shell!"

"We've beaten them before—but young Penfold did the hat-trick that time!" remarked Johnny Bull. "Still, I think we can knock spots off them!"

"I suppose you fags are going to be ready some time to-day?" asked Hobson of the Shell, sardonically.

"We're ready now!" growled Wharton.

And the two junior skippers tossed for innings. Wharton

won the toss, and elected to bat first. He opened the innings for the Remove with Nugent and Johnny Bull.

Benson of the Shell went on to bowl. Benson was a good bowler, and as a member of the Shell—almost a senior Form—he cultivated a lofty contempt for fags. He went on with a flourish, intending to show the crowd of onlookers what quick work it would be to take Remove wickets, and send Remove batsmen home without scoring.

Luck, as it happened, favoured Benson. Nugent was caught napping, and his wicket went down at the first ball of the over. The Shell fellows grinned. Frank Nugent came out looking rather blue.

"Ducks' eggs are cheap to-day!" murmured the Bounder.

Nugent flushed angrily.

"See if you can do any better!" he snapped.

"I'll try!" said the Bounder imperturbably.

"Next man in!" said Wharton. "You're next, Smithy!"

"I'm ready!"

Vernon-Smith buttoned his gloves, and went in. He received the rest of the over from Benson, and knocked the bowling right and left. The Bounder was certainly in good form on this occasion. A four and three twos resulted from his batting in that over, and some of the Remove fellows cheered him.

Then Johnny Bull had the bowling, and was unfortunate. Hoskins of the Shell caught him out after two runs. The Shell fellows grinned more emphatically.

"Man in, Bulstrode!"

"Right!"

Bulstrode joined Vernon-Smith at the wickets. He did not stay there long. The Shell were in unusually good form that afternoon; Hobson & Co., in fact, had been training hard to avenge their recent defeat at the hands of a lower form. The score was at 30 when Bulstrode was dismissed; and of that total, 23 belonged to the Bounder.

"Smithy's in good form, that's one comfort," Ogilvy remarked, as Bulstrode came tramping out.

Wharton nodded shortly. The Bounder was certainly doing well for his side—not so much from a desire to help his side to win, as from the wish to show what he could do, and what a mistake it would have been to leave him out. He wanted, too, to show that he could bat as well as Wharton, the champion bat of the Remove. But, whatever his motive, he was piling up the runs; and that was really what was wanted.

Wharton took his bat in when Bulstrode came off. He passed the Bounder as he went on his way to the further wicket, and Vernon-Smith called to him.

"Wharton, just a word!"

The Remove captain paused.

"What is it?"

"Back me up!" said the Bounder coolly. "I'm doing the batting—you've seen that! I could get a century against bowling like this—if I'm given a chance. There's no need for you to flourish, you know. Just you do some good, steady stone-walling, and give me a chance to score, and I'll get all the runs that are wanted. Savvy?"

Wharton turned red with anger.

He was captain of the team, and generally admitted to be the best junior bat at Greyfriars. And to be told by a casual member of the eleven to "stone-wall," and leave the run-getting to the other, was a little too much.

"You cheeky ass!" he said sharply. "I was a fool to play you—I knew you'd never know your place."

"My place is to score runs," said the Bounder. "If you want to swank, go ahead and do it! If you want the side to win, back me up and let me get the runs!"

"And you consider that's the way to talk to you skipper on the cricket-field?"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

Wharton choked down the things he would have liked to say; he could not make a row with a member of his own team, with the grinning Shell fellows waiting for the batsman to get to the wicket. He had guessed that something or other of this kind would transpire if the Bounder were let into the eleven. But he said no more, and went on to his wicket. There was a wicked gleam in the Bounder's eyes. He certainly could not have expected his captain to accede to his astounding request. Wharton was the better bat of the two at any time. But the Bounder had no intention of allowing his own performance to be put in the shade. He was well on the way to making a record score for the Remove, and he did not intend that a better bat than himself should overtop it.

Hobson of the Shell bowled to Harry Wharton. Wharton let himself go at the ball, which was an easy one, and sent it whizzing far.

He ran.

Vernon-Smith watched the ball for a moment before he ran, though he ought, of course, to have obeyed his captain instantly. However, he ran, and they crossed the pitch, and then crossed it again. The Shell fieldmen were panting after the ball, and there was time for a third run, and Wharton started at top speed to make it.

The Bounder remained at his wicket.

There was a shout from the Remove fellows before the pavilion.

"Run! Run, you ass!"

The Bounder did not move.

Either he did not consider the chance good enough, or he did not choose so to consider it—and Wharton had reached the middle of the pitch before he saw that his partner at the stumps was not moving.

He understood, and raced back to his own wicket to save it.

But the ball had come in from the country, and it had been caught and was crashing at the wicket now.

Wharton put on a desperate spurt.

But the few seconds of halting, turning, and getting back had been a few seconds too much! His bat was inches from the crease when the ball came in.

Crash!

The stumps were down!

There was a yell from the Shell fellows.

"How's that, umpire?"

"Out!"

Wharton halted, breathing hard, his face crimson with rage. Out! His wicket was down, and from the other end of the pitch the Bounder grinned at him, allowing for a moment his thoughts to appear in his looks.

"Out!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.
Ordered Off the Field!

HARRY WHARTON strode along the pitch, his face aflame.

The Bounder, in spite of his coolness and his nerve, quailed before the angry gleam in the Remove captain's eyes.

There was a hush of silence on the field; all the team, and all the spectators, could see that something was about to happen.

"You cad!" Wharton's voice was loud enough for everybody to hear. "You did that on purpose!"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"I kept here on purpose," he said. "There was no time for a run."

"You saw me start."

"Yes, I saw you start, and I saw there was no chance," said the Bounder coolly. "You ought to have got back, as I didn't start."

"Who's the captain of this team?"

"You are; but I don't see that I'm bound to throw away my wicket when you make a mistake," said the Bounder.

Wharton clenched his hands.

"I felt that you'd play some rotten trick if I put you into the team," he said. "You've done it! I told you that if you did, we'd play a man short, and I'll shift you off. Get out!"

"What!"

"Get off the field!"

The Bounder's jaw dropped.

He had deliberately sacrificed the best wicket on the Remove side for his own ends; and the fall of Wharton's wicket, of course, made it all the more necessary that Vernon-Smith should go on batting, and batting his best.

That Wharton would venture, under the circumstances, to turn him out of the team, at such a risk to his side, was a thing the Bounder had not dreamed of.

He stared blankly at Harry Wharton.

"You don't mean that!" he muttered.

Wharton's eyes blazed.

"I do mean it! You've played a rotten trick, as I knew you would! You're not going to have the chance to play another! Get off the ground!"

"Do you understand that you're throwing a wicket away?" said the Bounder, between his set teeth. "You're throwing away the match!"

"I'm not here to argue with you. Get off!"

"I won't!"

Wharton's jaw set squarely.

"You'll get off this ground, or I'll throw you off!" he said, in a low, steady voice. "So long as I'm cricket captain I'm going to give orders. Now, are you going?"

The Bounder was white with rage.

He gave one look at Wharton's set, savage face, and walked off the pitch with a scowling brow.

The Remove captain followed him off.

"You'll get off the field, or I'll throw you off!" said Wharton to the Bounder. "Now, are you going?" Vernon-Smith gave one look at Wharton's set, savage face, and walked off the pitch with a scowling brow.
(*See Chapter* 4.)

"Ogilvy and Desmond in," he said curtly.

Ogilvy and Desmond went silently to the wickets.

The Bounder left the field. All his hopes of making a huge score, and of shining forth as the greatest batsman of the Remove, had been shattered. He had treacherously lost his captain's wicket, but in doing so he had lost his own. His play for that day was ended

Wharton stood breathing hard. The other Remove fellows were very silent. Opinion was divided as to whether the Bounder had deliberately sacrificed the captain's wicket. But it was not divided for the rest—all the team were against throwing a wicket away. But they knew it was useless to argue with Wharton when his mind was made up. He preferred to fight an uphill battle a man short rather than continue to play a traitor in the ranks, and doubtless he was right. But the Removites' hopes of beating the Shell in that match had sunk to zero.

It was a single-innings match, and the best Remove bats were out. Five wickets down for thirty, counting the Bounder's wicket.

And the scene on the field had not inspirited the Remove batsmen. The tail of the innings ran dismally out, and the score had reached only forty-four when the last wicket was down.

"We've got to make it up in the bowling," said Wharton quietly.

Judging from the looks of the Shell fellows, the Removites were not likely to make it up in the bowling. Hobson and Benson opened their innings for the Shell, and they swaggered to the wickets with a great flourish. Harry Wharton led his men out to field, a man short, of course. He handed to ball to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. The dusky nabob was the champion bowler of the junior team.

"Do your best, Inky, old man," said Wharton, in a low voice. "You know what all the fellows will be saying if we're licked—that I oughtn't to have ordered the Bounder off. Not that I care twopence what they say, only——"

The nabob nodded.

"Rely upon me, my worthy chum," he murmured. "I shall do my honourable and ludicrous best, and I will tryfully attempt the honourable hatful trick."

And Hurree Jamset Ram Singh went on to bowl with deadly determination.

The nabob was in great form.

His second ball whipped Hobson's leg stump out of the ground, and the captain of the Shell carried out his bat without having broken his duck.

Next man in was clean bowled with the next ball.

Then the faces of the Removites brightened up. There was a roar of cheering for the dusky Indian.

"Bravo, Inky!"

"The hat trick, old man!"

"Go it, Jampot!"

The nabob smiled. His bowling was first-class, and he knew that it was above the weight of the Shell batsmen. Third man in received a ball that whipped away his middle stump before he knew it was there, and there was a roar from the Remove.

"Hurrah!"

"The hat trick! Hurrah!"

The Shell were looking serious now. Hobson urged his men, as they came in one after another, to do their deadly best. They did, but the Remove bowlers and the field were doing better. In the second over Benson was bowled by Nugent. Four down for two! Then there was a catch by Harry Wharton, and another wicket was down.

The Shell were playing hard now, and even the nabob found his bowling stopped. The runs piled up at last. If the Shell had had a big score to equal they could never have done it. But 44 was not a large figure to reach. By the time the sixth wicket fell, the score was at 26. Another wicket down—for 34. Then another, and the figure was 40. And then another—nine down for forty-two!

"Last man in!"

"We shall do it all right," said Hobson, with a breath of relief. "I began to think the young rotters would beat us! But it's all right now."

"Right as rain!" said Benson.

But was it?

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh was bowling again. Shell and Remove watched with deepest anxiety. They knew that upon this over depended the result of the match.

The ball was soaring away, the batsmen were running.

"It will be three, and a win!" grinned Hobson.

But Hobson was a little too early.

For Harry Wharton was running as well as the batsmen, with his eye steadily on the round red ball in the air, his hand outstretched.

Click!

Then a roar.

"Caught!"

"Oh, well caught!"

And the Shell looked blue!

"How's that?" roared the Remove, with one voice.

"Out!"

"Hurrah!"

The Remove had won the Form match after all!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.
Bob Cherry, Swot!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came in after the cricket match in great spirits.

They had beaten the Shell again—beaten the Upper Form a man short! It was glory for the Remove, and they were proud of themselves.

And the result of the match had removed all desire from the cricketers to criticise the action of their captain. If the Remove had been beaten, his action in ordering a batsman off the field would have caused talk and trouble. But the Remove had won—and it was Wharton himself who had, at the last moment, by a masterly catch, won the match. Nothing succeeds like success, and so the captain of the Remove was justified in the eyes of the Form.

Wharton bumped his bat on the door of No. 13 Study, and opened it.

Bob Cherry and Mark Linley were seated at the study table, with open books before them, hard at work.

Wharton stared at the scene in surprise.

In the keen excitement of the cricket-match he had forgotten, for the time, the trouble of his chum, and the unknown cause of Bob's refusal to play.

He had come to see what Bob was doing now; but the last thing he had expected to see was his chum swotting.

He stared at the two juniors in amazement. It was no unusual thing for Mark Linley to spend a half-holiday over his books. But for Bob Cherry——

"Hallo!" said Wharton.

Bob Cherry looked up.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! How has the match gone?" he asked.

"We've beaten them."

"Good. If you're going to have tea, we'll come along, when we've got this done. Marky is driving the ablative absolute into my head—or trying to. I never could handle the ablative absolute."

"What on earth are you bothering with the ablative absolute for, on a half-holiday?" demanded Wharton, in amazement.

Bob Cherry groaned.

"I'm swotting!"

"You swotting!" yelled Nugent, who had followed Wharton into the study. "You! Oh, my only Uncle Joseph! Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton could not help laughing.

"Not ill, Bob?" he asked.

"No, ass!"

"Or dotty?"

"No, fathead!"

"Then what are you swotting for? What's the little game?"

"I've entered for the Bishop's Scholarship."

Wharton and Nugent gave a simultaneous jump.

"You! The Bishop's Scholarship!"

"Yes."

"Bob! You must be potty!"

"I told you so, Marky!" groaned Bob. "All the chaps know perfectly well that I can't do it. I knew you were only wasting your time."

"You can do it, and you're going to!" said Mark.

"But it isn't a footer match and it isn't a rowing match," said Wharton. "It's an exam., and a jolly hard exam."

"I know it is."

"Then what have you entered for? Is it a joke on the Head?"

"No; it's Marky's little joke on me. He thinks I've got a chance," said Bob dismally. "I know I haven't, but Marky thinks I have. He's going to coach me. That's what I'm doing 'Teucro duce' now for. Blow Teucer, I say!"

"If you mean business, I wish you good luck," said Harry Wharton, becoming serious. "But what is it for, Bob? This isn't in your line at all."

"I jolly well know that. But——" Bob paused a moment. "I don't want to keep it a secret from you fellows, only don't let it go any further. If I don't get the Bishop's Scholarship I've got to leave Greyfriars at the end of the term!"

Wharton and Nugent looked blank.

"Oh, Bob! Leave Greyfriars!"

"My pater's had bad luck," said Bob wretchedly. "It was all through having to raise money to get that rotten cousin of mine out of a scrape. He owes it to a moneylender—a hard-fisted Shylock who's been bleeding him ever since. He's got a grip on the house now, and he's going to sell the pater up!"

"Oh, what rotten luck!"

"I've got to stay here on my brain or get out," said Bob. "So you can guess how much chance I've got of staying."

Wharton wrinkled his brows in thought.

"You're jolly well not going to leave Greyfriars!" he said. "Perhaps it may not turn out so badly for your pater after all. Does he owe a lot?"

"I don't know how much, but it's a big sum. You see, the interest has piled up for two years, and more becomes due when it isn't paid to time, and that bears compound interest, and so on—you know the old game of moneylenders. And the man the pater's got to deal with seems to be a specially hard case. I don't know his name—he calls himself the British Loan Office. The name's all there is British about him, I expect. But he's got the pater in his grip, and we're going under!"

"Poor old Bob! It's rotten!"

"Not so bad for me as it is for the poor old pater. I can't help him—unless I can get this rotten scholarship, and stay here, and save him from having a useless fathead to keep!" groaned Bob.

"Then you're going to get it!" said Harry.

"I can't! Why, you've entered!" said Bob. "You know jolly well that you can walk over me in that kind of thing, same as I can over you with the gloves on."

Wharton smiled.

"My name's down on the list," he said; "but it won't stay there long! I was going to get it if I could, to please my uncle, and show him that I can do class work as well as cricket and footer. But my uncle would be the last man to let me stand in your light, Bob."

"Bob shook his head.

"You're not going to withdraw on my account," he said.

"I jolly well am!"

"Look here——"

"Rats! I sha'n't be sorry to miss the fag of the exam., anyway; and I'll go in for the Latin prose medal instead, to show what a clever chap I am!" grinned Wharton.

"But I'm not going to let you——"

"You can't help it," said Harry calmly. "I'm going to [illegible]!"

"I knew he would, Bob," said Mark Linley quietly; "and Wharton was the fellow with the best chance of getting home in the exam."

"What about Smithy?" said Bob. "Smithy stood second, if not first; and you won't find Smithy standing out! No fear! And Smithy can beat me hollow!"

Wharton looked grave.

"I'm afraid he can, Bob, old man! The only thing to be done is to work—hard! We'll all help you—we'll all give you a shove on, you know. And you've got some weeks to work in, and Marky knows all the subjects inside out. You've got a chance."

"I wish I could think so!"

"You've got to think so!" said Harry. "Pile in now, with your giddy ablative absolute, while we get tea ready in the study."

Wharton left the study. He did not go immediately to No. 1—his own quarters; he went to the Head's house to see Dr. Locke.

The Head looked curiously at the junior when he explained what he had come for.

"You wish to withdraw your name from the list of candidates for the Bishop's Scholarship, Wharton?" he repeated.

"Yes, sir," said Harry.

"May I ask your reason?"

Wharton hesitated.

"I don't want to stand in another chap's light, sir," he confessed at last. "There's one of the chaps entered who needs the scholarship badly. I don't need it—I was simply entering to please my uncle. He wants me to take something, and that's why I entered for the Bishop's. But now—since I've found out—I hope you'll excuse me, sir——"

The Head smiled.

"I think you are acting very generously, Wharton. I will remove your name from the list, as you wish."

"Thank you, sir!"

And Wharton retired from the Head's presence satisfied. Nugent was getting tea ready in No. 1 Study, and there was an appetising smell of frying sausages when Wharton arrived there. Nugent looked up with a crimson face from the fire.

"Call the chaps!" he said. "Tea's ready."

"Right-ho!"

Johnny Bull and Mark Linley and Bob Cherry came in at Wharton's call. Bob was looking very tired. The struggle with the ablative absolute seemed to have told on him.

"You've earned a rest, Bob," said Mark, with a smile. "Pile into the sosses!"

"Good!" said Bob, following the Lancashire lad's advice with great gusto. "But I say, Wharton, I've been thinking it over, and I'm not going to allow you to stand out of the exam."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You've thought it over a bit too long, old chap," he said. "It's done!"

"What!"

"I've seen the Head, and my name's off the list already."

"You—you bounder!" said Bob, half-reproachfully and half-gratefully.

"Now, if somebody would take Smithy into a quiet corner and suffocate him," said Nugent, "it would be all right for Bob!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Smithy will beat me hollow!" said Bob despondently.

"There's one way to prevent Smithy from beating you," said Mark.

"What's that?"

"By beating him! And that's what you're going to do! Swot's the word!"

And when tea was over in No. 1, Mark Linley carried off his chum to his study once more—to "swot."

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.
Very Funny!

"HA, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, burst into a roar of laughter that drew many eyes upon him at once.

He was standing before the notice-board in the hall. Upon the board was pinned, as usual, the list of the names of the entrants for the forthcoming scholarship examination.

Vernon-Smith had been looking glum enough since the Form match.

He had had an unexpected opportunity of doing well for his Form, and of winning credit for himself; and he had lost it through his own incurable duplicity.

The Bounder was far from blaming himself. He laid all the blame on Harry Wharton & Co., and his feelings towards the Co. were very bitter.

But the scowl departed from his face as he read down the list on the notice-board.

Fellows came round to see what it was that was amusing the Bounder so much.

"What's the joke, Smithy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted the Bounder.

"Sure, and phwat is it intirely?" demanded Micky Desmond.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see the joke, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove. "Would you mind explaining, my dear fellow?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Look!"

Vernon-Smith pointed to the list of names. The last name on the list caught the eyes of the curious juniors at once:

"ROBERT CHERRY, LOWER FOURTH."

"Bob Cherry!" gasped Vernon-Smith. "He's entered for the Bishop's! Bob Cherry—who just knows a declension from a duck's egg! Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder's laugh was echoed now on all sides.

The juniors stared at Bob Cherry's name on the list, as if they could hardly believe their eyes, as indeed they hardly could.

Billy Bunter's name there would have hardly surprised them more.

Bob Cherry was not at all a duffer. He was a good footballer, a good cricketer, a good oarsman, a good swimmer. There were few athletic exercises at which he did not excel. At boxing, even Bolsover major could not stand against him. But in the class-room Bob Cherry hid his light, if he had had one, under a bushel.

He did not excel in Form-work. He was more than halfway down the class, and Mr. Quelch, his Form-master, was something exasperated with him. Bob did his best; he was not a slacker, inside the Form-room or out of it. But his gifts did not lie that way. He was not a dunce, but he was not brilliant. And the Bishop's Scholarship was one that could only be carried off by a scholar who was very brilliant.

In the Remove there were not more than four fellows who could be considered to have a chance—Mark Linley, Harry Wharton, Vernon-Smith, and Russell. Linley and Russell had not entered, and Wharton's name had evidently been withdrawn, as it did not appear in the list.

Several other Remove fellows' names were down, certainly; but now that Wharton's name was gone, no one could doubt that the exam., as far as the Remove was concerned, would be a walk-over for the Bounder.

But Bob Cherry!

He had less chance than "kids" like Bolsover minor or Dicky Nugent would have had!

His entering for the exam. was a joke!

No wonder the Bounder roared.

"Well, this is rich, and no mistake," said Bolsover major, wiping his eyes. "I suppose it's a joke on the Head!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I didn't know Bob Cherry was a giddy humorist," grinned Temple, of the Fourth. "Why, I've entered for that exam. myself."

"So has Benson, of the Shell," said Bulstrode. "But Bob Cherry—ha, ha, ha!"

"He's got seven chaps against him," said Russel, reading down the names. "Ogilvy, Smithy, and Newland, of ours—all of them could walk over him."

"To say nothing of a Fourth-Former and a Shell chap!" grinned Bolsover major.

"It must be a joke," said Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Queer the Head allowed him to put his name down," said the Bounder. "He must know he is only going to make himself look a silly ass!"

"Yes, rather."

"Wharton's name is withdrawn," Temple remarked.

The Bounder sniffed.

"He's standing out on Cherry's account, you may be sure," he said. "Not that it will do Bob Cherry any good. Fancy Bob Cherry winning a scholarship!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's the giddy joke of the season," grinned Snoop. "It must be a joke. He can't be in earnest."

"I suppose that's why he's stood out of the cricket this afternoon!" chuckled Ogilvy. "He's been swotting!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The idea of Bob Cherry swotting sent the Removites into hysterics.

"You'll have to look out for your laurels now, Smithy!" chuckled Bolsover major.

The Bounder roared.

"Wharton was the only chap I was nervous of," he said. "Now he's out of it, and I could take it with my eyes shut. Temple and Benson haven't an earthly!"

"Why, you cheeky fag——" began Temple, of the Fourth wrathfully.

"You haven't!" said the Bounder coolly. "That exam.'s

mine now; right in my pocket. And I mean to get it—more than ever now."

The Bounder gritted his teeth as he spoke. He had no need of the scholarship himself; he had entered for it simply to show that he could do it if he liked. But now that Bob Cherry had entered, the Bounder had an additional incentive for working hard at the exam. and making sure of it. He had been turned out of the team, and ordered off the field by Harry Wharton. He would return that favour with interest by making assurance doubly sure that Harry Wharton's chum did not win the scholarship.

"But what on earth has Cherry entered for?" said Russell. "It can't be a joke; he can't put his name down and withdraw it afterwards without giving the Head a reason."

The Bounder's lip curled.

"He wants the scholarship!" he said.

"But what does he want it for? He's not like Penfold and Linley, with nothing else to live on," said Bolsover major.

"How do you know?"

"Why, we all know his people are well off," said Bulstrode. "His father's a retired major; they're not rich, but they've got enough."

"That's where you're off the mark. Retired majors s metimes dabble in business matters, and get left," said the Bounder.

"Do you mean to say you know anything about it?"

"Perhaps I do."

"Have Cherry's people had bad luck?" asked Newland.

"Better ask him!" said the Bounder, with a yawn. "I wondered what he would do; but I never expected he'd have the check to enter for the Bishop's. That's too rich!" And the Bounder roared again.

"Well, I'm sorry if Cherry's people have come a cropper," said Bulstrode. "It's rotten for Bob, for he hasn't an earthly chance of getting the Bishop's."

"Not a giddy earthly."

"He must have been an ass to enter."

"Where is he now?" asked the Bounder. "Haven't seen him all the afternoon? Is he swotting—grinding up giddy knowledge to astonish the examiners? My hat, he'll astonish all Greyfriars if he gets within a mile of passing the exam."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's swotting!" grinned Bolsover major. "Bob Cherry swotting! Something like an elephant learning to dance! Ha, ha, ha! Let's go and have a look at him."

And the grinning juniors crowded away to Bob Cherry's study. The sight of Bob swotting over books would be a sight worth seeing. Bolsover opened the door of No. 13 Study in the Remove, and the crowd of fellows looked in, grinning.

Bob Cherry and his chum were at work at the table. Bob had a wet handkerchief tied round his head. There was an expression of deep and almost desperate determination on his rugged face.

There was no doubt about it. He was swotting!

The two juniors looked up as the door was flung open. Mark Linley gazed in surprise at the grinning crowd. Bob Cherry sighed wearily.

"What do you want?" asked Mark.

"We want to see the show!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Joke of the season," explained Vernon-Smith. "We've just seen Bob Cherry's name on the list entering for the Bishop's."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's right," said Bob grimly. "I've entered."

The juniors roared.

"Is it a joke?" asked Bulstrode.

Bob snorted.

"No, it isn't a joke, fathead!"

"You're really going into the exam.?"

"Yes, ass!"

"Oh, crumbs! What are you doing it for?"

"To get the scholarship, if I can!" growled Bob.

There was a fresh yell at the idea of Bob Cherry getting the scholarship!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"When you've finished, you might clear off," suggested Mark Linley politely. "We're rather busy just now."

"Swotting?" grinned the Bounder.

"Yes, swotting. Clear off!"

"Bob Cherry swotting! Bob Cherry entering for scholarships! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Awfully funny, isn't it?" said Bob, with miserable sarcasm. "Grin as much as you like. I'm going to do my best. Only go and grin somewhere else, please!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Can't we watch you swotting?" demanded Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "I guess it's a sight for sore eyes—just a few!"

Bob Cherry jumped up, and picked up a cricket-stump. He charged at the grinning juniors in the doorway, and they scattered. Bob Cherry slammed the door. He gave his Lancashire chum a hopeless look.

"You see what the fellows think of it, Marky!" he groaned.

"They'll think differently after the exam.," said Mark.

Bob Cherry settled down to work again. Downstairs, in the common-room, the Removites were very hilarious. Bob Cherry was the subject of their hilarity. There were very few fellows in Bob's Form who did not consider his entering for the Bishop's Scholarship as the joke of the season. And poor Bob was very much inclined to agree with them!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
The Secret Out!

"YOU fellows haven't been saying anything, have you?"

Bob Cherry asked the question, a couple of days later, in No. 1 Study.

He had come in to No. 1 to tea, after an hour's work in his study following afternoon lessons. Bob was sticking to his work. It was hard, especially for the sturdy, healthy junior, to whom every breath of fresh wind from the sea, every gleam of the sun was a call to the open air. But Bob Cherry was showing that he had real grit; and he was sticking to it.

Bob's brow was a little clouded as he came into No. 1 Study. A good tea was ready, and a pile of muffins smoked on the table. The chums of the Remove were treating Bob very well. If he was going to work, they were going to help him in every way in their power, and a good feed was the best aid they could think of.

"Saying what?" asked Harry Wharton in surprise, as Bob propounded his question all of a sudden.

"About what I told you—of my home affairs, I mean?"

"About your pater's difficulties?"

"Yes," said Bob.

Wharton frowned a little.

"Surely you know that we shouldn't say a word," he replied. "You told us in confidence, Bob?"

"You might have let a word slip."

"Well, I haven't, for one. I didn't even mention it to Johnny till you told him yourself."

"That's right enough," said Johnny Bull.

"No secrets in the family," said Bob Cherry. "I don't mind my own chums knowing. But it is rotten to have one's home affairs jawed over by all the fellows, in the common-room and up and down the passage."

"Well, we haven't said a word," said Frank Nugent.

"Not a giddy syllable," said Johnny Bull.

"The discreetfulness of our noble selves has been terrific," assured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Bob Cherry nodded gloomily.

"I suppose it's got out through my entering for the scholarship," he said. "The fellows know, I suppose, that I wouldn't take on such a grind unless I had to."

"But has it got out?" asked Wharton, in surprise.

"Yes."

"About your pater being—h'm—hard up?"

"Every word! The fellows even know that he's been raising a loan from a moneylender, and can't keep it paid up."

"Bob! How do you know?"

"Because Skinner just mentioned it to me, and asked me if it was true."

"What did you say?"

"I didn't say anything. I chucked him out of my study!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's very queer, though," said Wharton, becoming grave. "They might guess you were hard up, Bob, by your entering for the Bishop's. But they couldn't possibly guess about the moneylender. Somebody has been listening, and picked it up."

Bob Cherry gritted his teeth.

"Bunter, I suppose," he said.

"Most likely. He might have been listening when you told us, that afternoon," said Harry Wharton.

"Bunter wasn't listening then," said Johnny Bull.

"How do you know?"

"Because it was just after the cricket-match with the Shell, and I saw Bunter go out with Peter and Alonzo Todd and Tom Dutton. They went down to Friardale."

"He may have heard you speaking about it since," said Bob.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"He hasn't! We haven't spoken about it, excepting, perhaps a word of allusion that nobody would be able to make anything of. I can't understand it, especially the fellows knowing about the moneylender bizney. It looks as if one of us had been chattering; but we haven't—I know that."

"Is the twain in yet, Twumble deah boy?" Arthur Augustus asked the old Rylcombe porter. Trumble stared at him, for a third and a fourth streak of marking ink had emerged from under D'Arcy's hat, and he was beginning to look somewhat like a zebra. "Oh, scissors!" murmured Trumble. *(An amusing incident taken from the grand, long, complete story of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, entitled "COWARD OR HERO?" by Martin Clifford, in our companion paper "THE GEM" LIBRARY. All "Magnetites" are strongly advised not to miss this splendid tale. Out on Wednesday. Price One Penny.)*

"The knowfulness is terrific."

"Well, I suppose it can't be helped," said Bob with a sigh. "I did want to keep it dark about my poor old pater being in such a bad way. If a giddy miracle happened, and he pulled through, after all, nothing need have been known at all, you see. But it's out now, worse luck!"

The chums of the Remove looked decidedly uncomfortable.

Bob Cherry had kept his miserable secret to himself for several days, and had surprised them with his grumpiness and his fits of the "blues." They had almost forced him to tell them what was the matter, in the end. And now he had told them, it seemed that all the fellows knew, and the only assumption possible was that one of Bob's friends had been indiscreet. And yet each of the juniors was quite certain that he had not been the one to gossip.

"I suppose Bunter's found out something, somehow," said Nugent, at last. "You know what a nose he has for nosing things out, the fat bounder."

Tap!

"Come in!" said Wharton irritably.

The door opened, and Billy Bunter came in. The Owl of the Remove blinked round the study through his big spectacles. He was too short-sighted to see the grim expressions on the faces of the Famous Five.

"I say, you fellows, is Cherry here?"

"I'm here!" growled Bob.

Billy Bunter blinked at him. There was a smirking grin on the fat junior's face. It was teatime, and tea was on the table, but for once the Falstaff of the Remove had not come in search of a feed.

"I say, Cherry, is it true?"

"Is what true?" growled Bob savagely.

"About your pater."

"What have you heard about my pater?"

Bunter sniggered.

"About his borrowing money from moneylenders, and being sold up," said the fat junior. "I say, is it true? Is that why you've entered for the Bishop's, because your pater can't afford to keep you at Greyfriars any longer?"

Bob Cherry crossed to the door, and closed it. Bunter caught the expression on his face, at last, and edged towards the door. But Bob was in the way now.

"Not going, Bunter, are you?" said Bob, with grim pleasantry.

"I—I say, I'm in rather a hurry——"

"Sorry, for you can't go! You've got to answer some questions first. Did you find out about my pater by listening at a keyhole?"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Did you?" roared Bob.

"Then it's true?" asked Bunter.

"Never mind whether it's true or not. How did you know anything about it?"

"Skinner told me. I came to ask you whether it was true," said Bunter. "Of course, I'm sorry if it's true. I don't see what you want to drop on me for because I came to offer you my sympathy, Bob Cherry."

"Hang your sympathy!" growled Bob. "I don't want your sympathy, or anybody else's. I want to know who started that yarn about my pater and a money-lender."

"Well, I had it from Skinner. I suppose Skinner had it from somebody who knew. Didn't you tell anybody yourself?" asked Bunter.

Bob Cherry did not reply to that question.

"Sorry, you chaps, I can't stop to tea," he said. "I'm going to see Skinner."

And Bob left the study. Billy Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove in surprise.

"What's Cherry cutting up so rusty about?" he asked. "I'm sure I didn't start the yarn about his father. Isn't it true?"

"Mind your own business!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Then I suppose it's true. He's told you chaps, and you've let it out," said Bunter. "I must say I'm surprised at you. Fellows should always keep a secret if it's told them in confidence. I'm surprised at you—ow!"

A jam-tart, hurled by Nugent, caught Bunter on the mouth, and stopped his utterance. As he spluttered, a hot muffin caught him on the ear, and the Owl of the Remove rolled out of the study under a shower of missiles. He looked very sticky and pammy when he escaped into the passage and fled.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.
The Bounder Explains.

SKINNER was in the common-room, chatting with Snoop and Stott. The three juniors were grinning, as though they found something humorous in the topic they were discussing. Bob Cherry caught his own name, as he came in. He strode straight up to the trio.

They became suddenly silent.

"I want to speak to you, Skinner," said Bob, in his direct way.

"Go ahead," said Skinner, a little uneasily.

"You've told Bunter a yarn about my pater."

"Ahem! I happened to mention what all the fellows are saying, if that's what you mean," said Skinner. "No harm intended. If it's not true, I shall be glad of it. I asked you whether it was, so that I could deny it next time I heard it. You didn't answer me."

"I don't intend to answer questions about my private affairs," said Bob. "What I want is, to find out who started this yarn. I want to know what chap it was who's taken so great an interest in my personal affairs as to play the spy, and find out things. If you are the spy, Skinner, you'd better own up."

Skinner turned red.

"I don't care twopence for your affairs," he said tartly. "Go and eat coke!"

"Whom did you get the yarn from?"

"I heard Bolsover major telling Russell about it."

"Where's Bolsover major?"

"He was in the gym. a few minutes ago," said Skinner.

Bob turned away without another word, and made his way to the gym.

His brow was clouded, and his eyes gleamed. Unless one of his chums had betrayed his confidence, someone else had played the spy, and Bob meant to know for certain. The thought that his family misfortunes should become the talk of the Remove was bitter as gall to him. The derision of [illegible] of others, would be equally bitter to his proud nature. The [illegible] was miserable enough, without its being made the [illegible] of the school.

Bolsover major was [illegible] with his minor. He was putting Bolsover minor [illegible] some exercises on the parallel bars. Bob Cherry [illegible] him on the shoulder, and Bolsover major looked [illegible] surprise at Bob's clouded face.

"Hallo," he said, "what's the [illegible] found that it's no good swotting for the Bishop's? [illegible] by Removite chuckled.

"You told Skinner some yarn about my p[illegible] Skinner says. Did you?"

"Oh, about that moneylender yarn," said Bol[illegible]

"Then you started it?' said Bob, his eyes glinting.

Bolsover major shook his head.

"I didn't exactly tell anybody," he said. "I spoke of it—fellows do speak of things, you know. I didn't know you were keeping it a secret. If you were, you should have been a bit more careful about it, I should say."

"You mean you heard it from somebody else?"

"Of course I did. I don't suppose you think it was revealed to me in a vision, do you?" Bolsover major asked sarcastically.

"Who told you?"

"Vernon-Smith."

Bob Cherry started at the Bounder's name.

He realised that he had been blind; of course, he ought to have thought of the Bounder at first! A blow of this kind was likely to come only from that quarter. And yet—how had the Bounder known anything?

"Vernon-Smith!" he repeated.

Bolsover major nodded.

"Did Smithy tell you how he knew?" asked Bob quietly. "Did he hear it from somebody else, as you all seem to have done?"

"I suppose he did," said Bolsover, puzzled. "He couldn't have dreamed it. He didn't tell me, that I remember, but I fancy he heard it from somebody you told; I gathered as much, anyway. I don't know for certain; but you ask Smithy. He'll tell you."

"From somebody I told!" repeated Bob.

"So I understood; better ask Smithy."

"I'm going to!"

"I say, Cherry," said Bolsover major, as Bob turned away, "I'm awfully sorry if it's true, and I hope you'll get the Bishop's."

"Thanks for your good wishes, but you can keep them!" growled Bob.

And he strode away.

He looked for Vernon-Smith in his study, and found the Bounder there. Vernon-Smith was smoking a cigarette when Bob Cherry came in. He did not remove it from his lips, but looked at the angry face of the junior through a cloud of blue smoke.

"I didn't hear you knock," the Bounder remarked quietly.

"I've no time to waste on you," said Bob, halting before the Bounder, who did not rise from his seat. "I've got something to say to you, Smithy."

"Pile in, dear boy!" said Vernon-Smith lazily. "I suppose you don't mind if I go on with my cigarette, do you?"

"You can do that, or any other caddish thing you like, so long as you let my affairs alone," said Bob.

The Bounder yawned.

"Thanks—then I'll go on. You might close the door; I don't want a prefect to see me, if one should come along the passage."

Bob did not move.

"I've come to speak to you about what you said to Bolsover."

"Really!" said the Bounder. "Now, I wonder what I said to Bolsover? About the cricket?"

"No; not about the cricket."

"About Coker, I suppose——"

"No, nothing about Coker," said Bob, between his te[illegible] The coolness and nonchalance of the Bounder exasper[illegible] him almost beyond measure, and he could hardly rest[illegible] himself from planting his fist full in the cool, mocking f[illegible]

"Then I'm afraid I don't know what you're speal[illegible] about. Perhaps you wouldn't mind explaining," sugge[illegible] the Bounder.

"It's about my pater."

"Yes."

"A yarn about a moneylender, and my pater being up!" said Bob savagely.

"That isn't a yarn," said Vernon-Smith—"that's tru[illegible]

Bob clenched his hands hard.

"True or not, it seems to have been you who[illegible]irst anything on the subject," he replied. "I want to know how you knew anything about it?"

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"Well, as I'm not a fortune teller or a magician, I should think you could guess how," he replied. "I was told, of course."

"Who told you?"

"That's asking too much. I want to know why you want to know first."

"I want to find out," said Bob, in a low, savage voice, "because I want to find out who meddled and spied in my affairs, and pried into the hiding of his life. That's why I want to know."

"Suppose it was a friend of yours?"

"It wasn't."

"But suppose it was," persisted the Bounder. "What then?"

Bob Cherry drew a deep breath.

"If a friend of mine gave away what I told him in confidence he wouldn't be a friend of mine any longer," he said. "But you are lying, as usual; you want me to believe that it was one of my chums, and I don't believe you—not a word of it."

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"What's the good of asking me, then, if you're not going to believe what I tell you?" he inquired.

"Do you mean to say that it was a friend of mine who told you—somebody I had told?" demanded Bob.

"I don't mean to tell you anything. I was told, that's all; and if you're going to hammer the chap who told me, and make a fuss, it's not right for me to tell you who it was. I'm not going to give you the chap's name if you're going for him. You can't expect it."

"If you don't give me the chap's name, I shall conclude that you did the spying, and started the yarn."

"And what then?"

"Then before I leave this study, I shall hammer you till your own father wouldn't know you if he saw you," said Bob grimly.

"Well, I suppose I should have something to say about that," remarked the Bounder coolly. "I'm not exactly a kid, to be handled as you choose. But I can't give you the chap's name; it wouldn't be the decent thing to do."

"This is the first time you've troubled about doing the decent thing, isn't it?"

The Bounder grinned.

"We all have our fancies at times," he said. "But even if I told you the name, you wouldn't believe me. But if you weren't the biggest idiot going—excuse me—you could guess for yourself."

"How could I?"

"Well, you confided the matter to certain persons. You know what fellows you told, and what fellows you didn't tell. If the story's got out, it must have been told by somebody who knew, not by somebody who didn't know. Isn't that clear?"

Bob was silent. It certainly seemed clear enough.

"Think over all the fellows you've told, and decide for yourself which one of them gave you away," said the Bounder. "That's all I can suggest."

"None of them gave me away!"

"Then how do you suppose I heard anything about it?"

"I suppose you listened at a keyhole when I was telling them."

"Thank you! Call to mind the exact time you told them, and I'll see if I can prove an alibi," said the Bounder lazily.

Bob Cherry reflected.

"I was speaking to them about the matter just after the cricket match on Wednesday afternoon," he said, "in my study."

"I played in that match, and was booted off," said the Bounder. "You are aware of that. As I wasn't wanted in the match I went out—with Snoop and Stott and Trevor. I went out with them before the innings finished, and I didn't come in till after dark, when I saw your name in the list on the board. I was with three chaps all the time, and they will tell you so."

"I wouldn't believe Snoop or Stott——"

"You can depend on Trevor."

"Well, yes."

Ask him," said the Bounder.

Bob Cherry stood silent. If the Bounder had been out of doors he could not have overheard that conversation in Study No. 13. And indeed, the Bounder, bad as he was, was not given to the sneaking ways of Billy Bunter; he was not exactly the kind of fellow to listen at doors. A gleam of malicious triumph came into the Bounder's eyes. He saw that Bob Cherry was nonplussed.

If the Bounder had not overheard Bob speaking to his chums on the subject, there was only one way he could have learned anything of the matter; he had been told by someone who knew. And who knew? Harry Wharton, Nugent, Linley, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. Nobody else!

"Well," said the Bounder lazily. "Are you satisfied?"

"No," said Bob.

"Go and ask Trevor questions, then. If you're not satisfied with him, go down to the bunshop in Friardale, and ask them what time we left. That will satisfy you."

"I suppose you must have been told," said Bob reluctantly.

The Bounder nodded.

"As a reasonable chap, you must see that," he agreed. "But don't ask me the name of the chap who told me. I can't tell you—and you can guess for yourself if you think it out long enough. You wouldn't believe me if I told you. I might say it was Wharton, Nugent, Linley, Bull, or Inky, and in each case you'd call me a liar."

"I would!" said Bob.

"Then what am I to do? It's no good saying anything."

"I wouldn't listen to you, if you told me it was one of my chums," said Bob. "I'd soon stop your mouth if you started."

"Then what's the good of asking me?"

That was a poser. Bob Cherry felt that he was beaten all along the line; yet he felt that the Bounder could have enlightened him further if he had chosen.

"I didn't know you were trying to keep it dark," added the Bounder, with an air of great sincerity. "I wasn't repeating it as anything against you—I simply remarked to Bolsover that it was bad news for you, and hard lines on you. I said I was sorry. That's all. I'm sorry for any chap who's down on his luck. It isn't my fault the story's got out. The fellow who told me may have told others; he's not a chum of mine, certainly."

"That means that it was one of my friends?"

"Whom else could it have been?" demanded the Bounder.

Bob did not answer. With a heart full of bitterness and misery he turned away. He could have hammered the Bounder—that would have done no good. Vernon-Smith had made his defence good enough; he had simply repeated carelessly what he had heard—if he was to be believed. And if he was not to be believed, how was his knowledge of the matter to be accounted for at all? Bob Cherry quitted the study with a downcast face, and a heart as heavy as lead.

The Bounder chuckled softly as the door closed.

"I fancy I've put a spoke in their wheel this time," he murmured. "I really think Wharton will be sorry that he ordered me off the cricket-field!"

And the Bounder lighted another cigarette with great satisfaction.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry Loses His Temper.

THE Remove fellows had seen Bob Cherry's new departure with considerable amusement. That the "swotting" would continue very few of them believed. But the doubting Thomases had to be convinced at last.

Day after day Bob was missing from his usual haunts.

He did not play in the matches, he did not join in the excursions up the river, he was seldom seen in the tuckshop or lounging about the Close with the fellows.

Indeed, he would have given up all exercise altogether, if Mark Linley had not fairly forced him out sometimes.

All his attention was given to his task of preparing for the scholarship examination. He had written to his father that he had entered for the Bishop's scholarship, and that he meant to do his best to get it.

And he was doing his best.

The grit and energy he had been accustomed to putting into cricket and rowing he now put into "swotting" over books and exam. papers.

It was a hard task—harder to Bob Cherry than it would have been to almost any other fellow in the Form. But he stuck to it manfully. The danger was that he was inclined to overdo it. Mark Linley had to use force sometimes to get him out of the study and down to cricket practice, or for a walk along the river. If he had swotted as hard as he wanted to, his health would certainly have suffered.

Bob Cherry had a clouded brow in these days. His old joyousness seemed to have departed from him.

It was not only the unaccustomed work and confinement to the house that weighed upon him, however. His home misfortunes had become the talk of the Form, and of the school. All Greyfriars knew that Major Cherry was in the power of a money-lender, who was going to sell him up, and that Bob had to leave the school at the end of the term unless he could win the scholarship.

Most of the fellows were sympathetic. Some were quite careless, and some derisive. Bob, kind and good-natured fellow as he was, had his enemies, and they did not lose the opportunity of making him "squirm," as Snoop elegantly expressed it.

It was gall and wormwood to the proud-spirited lad to know

that his father's ruin, and his own dreary prospects, were the talk of the school.

Pity was more bitter to him than the derision of the Bounder and his set. To be an object of compassion was worse than anything else.

So it came about that well-meaning sympathisers received very gruff replies from Bob Cherry when they attempted to sympathise, and a great deal of sympathy was killed by that process.

How had the matter become public property? The continual humiliations that made Bob Cherry wince every hour of the day were due to some careless tongue that had let out the secret. For days he had told his chums nothing, in the fear that they might allow a careless word to escape them. He had been almost forced to confide in them; and now the secret was out. The malice of the Bounder had spread it, undoubtedly; but it could not be the Bounder who was to blame in the first place, as far as Bob Cherry could see. The Bounder could have known nothing unless he had been told. Who had told him?

Bob was sure that it was not Mark. The Lancashire lad was naturally reserved and quiet, and he never had anything to say to the Bounder. Between the millionaire's son and the lad who had worked in a factory there was little in common. They very seldom exchanged any remarks at all, and certainly they were never likely to have had a conversation in which Bob's affairs had cropped up. It was not Mark. But who was it? Bob turned that question over in his mind. He had told his chums in confidence, and it was up to them to keep his secret. Someone had let it out. Who had done it?

With that miserable doubt in his mind, it was natural that a rift should show itself between Bob and his old chums.

He might have forgotten the indiscretion, whoever had committed it, but for the fact that its results were always with him. Hardly an hour passed without some allusion being made to his altered circumstances.

And Bob could not help feeling bitter about it. The least he could have expected of his chums was that they would be careful not to allow his wretched affairs to become the gossip of the Form. And they had evidently not been careful—one of them at least.

As Bob Cherry went up to his study for his usual work, after lessons one afternoon, he heard voices raised in a chorus in the Bounder's study. Vernon-Smith had some friends in to tea, and they burst into song as Bob's heavy footsteps were heard in the passage. It was an old music-hall song they were singing, and the burden of it was that "The Brokers are Hanging on the Backyard Wall."

There was, of course, no allusion to Bob in the words of the song, but he knew very well that it was intended for his ears, and in allusion to his [illegible] ruin.

The Bounder's door was wide open, and Bob paused and glanced in. Vernon-Smith, and Snoop and Stott, and Billy Bunter were there, all grinning. They affected not to see the dark, clouded face at the doorway.

"'The brokers are hanging on the backyard wall,'" trilled Billy Bunter.

"'Waiting for their two-pound-two!'" roared Stott.

"You rotters!" said Bob Cherry.

The Bounder looked round with an air of surprise.

"Hallo! Is that you, Cherry?"

"You knew I was here," said Bob.

"Come in, old fellow, and have tea!" said the Bounder.

"Go and eat coke!"

"Thanks! I've got something nicer to eat," said Vernon-Smith imperturbably. "Come in, and be sociable! We're having a little sing-song, you know, and we've got a really ripping selection of songs. 'The Brokers are Hanging on the Backyard Wall' is one. How do you like that for a song?"

And Vernon-Smith's choice company grinned.

"Then there's 'Stony Broke—it ain't a Joke!'" said Vernon-Smith cheerfully. "That's a ripping song, you know. And 'The Cash was Lent at Ten per Cent.' I dare say you know that song."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do come in!" urged the Bounder. "There's a pathetic song in this lot, too: 'When They Sold My Father's Shirt at Auction.'"

And the choice company yelled:

"Do come in, Cherry!"

"Join in the chorus, old man!"

"Yes; I'll come in!" said Bob.

And he came in!

He came in with a rush, and pushed over the chairs Bunter and Snoop were sitting on, and those two youths rolled on the carpet.

Then he took a grip on the edge of the tea-table and tilted it up.

The Bounder, with a howl of rage, leaped up, just in time to catch a cascade of tea-things and eatables on his chest.

He staggered back and sat on the floor, with plates and cups and saucers and jam and cake and butter swarming over him.

"You rotter!" shrieked the Bounder. "You—you——"

Words failed him.

Bob Cherry strode out of the study without a word, and slammed the door behind him.

Vernon-Smith & Co. sat up among the ruins of the feed and blinked at one another. Billy Bunter extricated himself

CONTRASTS.—No. 15.

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Vernon-Smith pointed to the list of names of the entrants for the scholarship. The last name on the list caught the eyes of the juniors at once: ROBERT CHERRY, LOWER IVth. "Bob Cherry!" gasped Vernon-Smith. "He's entered for the scholarship! Bob Cherry, who just knows a declension from a duck's egg! Ha, ha, ha!" And the Bounder's laugh was echoed on all sides. (*See Chapter* 5.)

from the jam-dish he was sitting on, and put his spectacles straight upon his fat nose.

"Ow! The beast!" he groaned.

"Groogh! The rotter!" mumbled Snoop.

"Yah! The cad!" grunted Stott.

The Bounder's face was black with rage.

"I'll make him suffer for this!" he hissed.

"Yes; go after him and wallop him, Smithy!" urged Billy Bunter.

"Go for him, Smithy!" urged Snoop and Stott, without, however, showing any desire to "go for" the redoubtable Bob themselves.

Vernon-Smith mopped butter and jam from his clothes. But he did not follow Bob Cherry. Bob was not in a mood to be lightly tackled just then.

Bob Cherry had gone into No. 13, where Mark was waiting for him. The Lancashire lad had the books all ready to begin the customary "swot."

But Bob flung himself into the armchair, breathing hard. He was not in a humour for work just then. Mark looked at him in surprise.

"What's the matter, Bob?" he asked.

Bob gritted his teeth.

"Only some more of it," he said savagely. "Getting at me over my people being done in—the Bounder and his lot, you know."

"The cads!" said Mark.

"I'm getting it every day," said Bob. "Coker of the Fifth offered to raise a subscription for me. The silly ass meant it kindly, so I didn't give him a bash, as I felt inclined to. I only told him he was a fathead and a silly idiot."

Mark grinned.

"I can't stand it!" growled Bob. "It's getting too thick! I'm talked about as if I were a rotten beggar, sticking here on sufferance. After all, my fees are paid up to the end of this term, at any rate."

"Of course they are, Bob," said Mark soothingly.

"I shouldn't have to stand this if somebody hadn't jawed," said Bob. "One of the chaps I told must have let it out."

"I can't think that, Bob."

"Then how did the fellows get to know?"

"I don't know. But——"

"Somebody has jawed, and I think it's rotten!" said Bob passionately. "I wish I knew who it was. I'd never speak to him again, anyway!"

Mark flushed a little.

"I don't think you ought to look at it like that, Bob. I was one of the fellows you told, and I'm just as likely to have repeated it as anybody else."

"You didn't!" said Bob.

"No, I didn't; I shouldn't be likely to chatter with Vernon-Smith on that subject or any other. But I don't believe the other fellows did, either."

"Then how did he find out?"

"He is a cunning rotter. He may have wormed it out somehow. I know he was out of doors the day you told us. But—but he's so jolly deep, you know."

Bob snorted.

"He couldn't know without being told by somebody. Either one of the chaps told him, or they chattered it over carelessly where he could hear them."

Mark was silent. There really did not seem to be any reply to be made to that. He could think of no other explanation himself.

"It's no good thinking about it, Bob," he said, at last "It's rotten, but it can't be helped. Let's get to work."

Bob Cherry drew his chair up to the table. He was in hopes that the Bounder would follow him to his study for vengeance; he was just in the humour to deal with the Bounder at that moment. But Vernon-Smith did not come, and Bob settled down to work. But in the troubled and disturbed state of his mind it was not easy to work, and it was long ere he could force his thoughts into the task before him.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Rift in the Lute!

"HOW are you getting on, Bob?"

Harry Wharton asked the question as he met Bob in the Close, where the junior had gone out for a breather after his swotting.

"All right!" said Bob shortly.

"Work going all right?"

"Yes."

"Feeling seedy?"

"No."

"I suppose it's telling on you a bit, old chap?"

"I'm all right!"

Wharton looked sharply at his chum.

The extreme curtness of Bob Cherry's replies could not be wholly accounted for by the fact that he was tired and out of sorts. There was something more in it than that. Harry slipped his arm through his chum's.

"What's the matter, Bob?" he said seriously. "You're not ratty with me about anything, are you? I'd be sorry to give you any trouble of any kind at a time like this. If I've done anything, tell me what it is and I'll set it right."

Bob was silent.

"Get it off your chest, Bob," said Wharton. "No sense in brooding over a thing; and it's not like you, either. You never were sulky."

"I'm being ragged to death over my father's affairs," blurted out Bob, jerking his arm away. "They're giving me no rest. The Bounder won't let the subject drop. He keeps it in fellows' minds, and a lot of the others are too fond of it to let it die, too."

Wharton's face clouded.

"It's rotten, Bob. But that's no reason for you to cut up rusty with your own pals that I can see."

"Not if they acted like pals," said Bob bitterly.

"Do you mean that we haven't acted like pals, Bob?" asked Harry quietly.

"Yes, I do; some of you."

"Myself, or the others?" asked Harry, still very quietly.

"I don't know—but some of you. I told you about my father's affairs in confidence. I didn't want to tell you; you simply made me. I had kept it to myself for some time, though goodness knows I wanted some chap to speak to about it all. Well, I told you, and the next day it was all over the school. You can't expect me to be pleased about it, I suppose."

"You think I broke my word, then?" asked Wharton coldly.

Bob stirred restlessly.

"I don't say that! [illegible] must have jawed, or the thing couldn't have [illegible] suppose you don't deny that."

"Yes, I do. How it got out I don't know, unless the Bounder——"

"The Bounder's proved to me that he was out of doors when I told you about it."

"You take his word against ours?"

"He's proved it, I tell you. I made sure. Trevor was with him, as well as Stott and Snoop. And I asked questions at the place where he'd been, and they confirmed it. I wasn't willing to believe that—that——"

"That we had given you away?"

"Well, yes."

"And you believe it now?"

"Do you want me to believe that Vernon-Smith dreamed it, or that an angel revealed it to him?" demanded Bob angrily.

"I want you to believe that your own pals didn't talk about you and break their promise to you," said Wharton, with equal anger. "I don't know how it got out. I know I haven't said a word, and I'm sure Nugent hasn't, or Johnny Bull or Inky or Linley."

"I know Linley hasn't."

"Then you put it down to one of us?"

"Yes, I do. I don't think you told, but I know you must have talked about it somewhere where the Bounder could hear you——"

"That's not true. We haven't talked about it, unless a word or two that nobody could have made anything of if he'd heard it. Do you think Nugent and I went about saying to one another 'Bob's father's going to be sold up?'" demanded Harry.

"Well, if you didn't chatter about it, and get overheard, one of you must have told—that's all there is about it."

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"I won't quarrel with you, Bob," he said. "You're mistaken, though I can't explain how it came about. But you're mistaken."

Bob grunted.

"I won't quarrel with you. I know how worried you are now, and you can say what you like," said Harry. "I can stand it."

"I shouldn't be worried as I am if I hadn't confided my business to fellows I thought I could trust," snapped Bob. "I shall know better another time."

And he tramped away.

Harry Wharton remained where he was, with knitted brows. If anybody but a chum—and a chum in trouble—had spoken to him like that, there would have been a quarrel on the spot. Wharton thrust his hands deep into his pockets and reflected. How had the secret got out? He could not guess, but he felt that it was somehow due to the cunning of the Bounder. He did not want to quarrel with Bob in the hour of distress, but he could not allow himself to be accused of breaking a confidence. A slap on the shoulder brought him out of his glum reverie, as Nugent and Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh joined him.

"Wherefore that worried brow?" asked Nugent cheerfully. "Coming for a stroll along the cliffs?"

"It's Bob!" said Harry shortly.

"What's the matter with Bob?"

"He's being ragged by the chaps about his trouble at home. And he thinks that one of us let out the secret."

Frank Nugent frowned.

"Well, that's a nice thing to think about us. I must say!" he exclaimed. "We promised him to keep it dark."

"And we've kept our word," growled Johnny Bull. "I know I have."

"The knowfulness of my esteemed self is also terrific," murmured the nabob.

"But how did it get out?" said Harry.

"Give it up!"

"It's a giddy mystery," said Nugent. "I suppose Smithy must have wormed it out somehow, but how he did it is a mystery. I give it up."

"Bob's got his back up about it," said Wharton uncomfortably.

"Well, he ought to know that we wouldn't break our words," said Nugent tartly. "I can understand that he's feeling rotten, but he's no right to turn on his own pals. And I don't want to have anything to say to a chap who suspects me of breaking a promise, and that's flat."

"Doesn't he suspect Linley as well?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"No; he seems satisfied that it wasn't Linley."

"I don't see where the distinction comes in. Linley's as likely to break his word as the rest of us, I suppose," said Nugent angrily.

"I suppose so, only he neve[illegible]s to the Bounder, and we do. And it seems to be Sr[illegible] who first set it going."

"Always the Bounder!" [illegible]ted Johnny Bull. "He's found it out in some bles[illegible]way, that's all. Might have found a letter from Bo[illegible]. He'd read another chap's letters. He's that sort

"Well, it's possibl[illegible]

"If Bob's got hi[illegible], he can keep it up so far as I'm concerned. I'm [illegible]g to argue with him about whether I broke my word [illegible]," said Bull. "Let's get out. We're going on the cliffs

The chums of the Remove went out; but they did not enjoy that stroll along the cliffs in the bright sunshine and with the sea glistening at their feet. They could not help thinking of Bob Cherry's worries and his unjust suspicions.

When they came in, Bob was in the Common-room with Mark Linley; but he did not speak to them.

Later did he speak when the Remove went up to the dormitory at bedtime.

There was a rift in the lute with a vengeance now.

The Bounder observed it, and he smiled. He felt that he was repaying the incident on the cricket-field with interest now—as, indeed, he was.

And once a breach between the chums had started it was not easy for it to be closed up again.

For the cause of offence still remained. The secret was out, and Bob Cherry's suspicions, groundless or not, continued. And his chums were hurt and offended by his want of faith in them.

The next morning it was plain to all the Remove that Bob Cherry was not on speaking terms with his old friends.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.
Father and Son.

ZIP! ZIP!

Toot!

The big motor-car glided up the drive, and came to a stop before the School House.

A good many fellows gathered round to look at it.

They knew the car—the big, handsome, fifteen-hundred-guinea car of Samuel Vernon-Smith, the father of the Bounder of Greyfriars. The millionaire had visited the school before in that magnificent car, and had taken the Bounder for a run in it many a time, the observed of all observers.

True, fellows might sneer at the way Vernon-Smith's pere had piled up his millions. That he was an unscrupulous speculator, that he fed fat upon Stock Exchange gambles that ruined hosts of others, that he was suspected of being the head of a money-lending business—all that did not count very heavily against the undoubted fact that he did possess millions, and that Vernon-Smith was heir to an immense fortune.

And the Bounder, with all his unpleasant ways, was the apple of his father's eye; Mr. Vernon-Smith was fond of him and proud of him; as several fellows had remarked on the subject, there was no accounting for tastes.

Vernon-Smith came out of the School House to meet his father.

Skinner, and Stott, and Snoop, and several other fellows were with him. They would all have been glad of a run in the magnificent car, and a handsome spread at some hotel en route. They all raised their hats very respectfully to the millionaire.

But Vernon-Smith was not taking any of his friends with him this time. He shook off Billy Bunter's fat hand as it fastened on his arm.

"I say, I'll come with you, if you like, Smithy," said Bunter affectionately.

"You won't!" said Vernon-Smith calmly.

He stepped into the car.

The big motor glided away, envious glances following Vernon-Smith as he sat there by his father's side.

"Lucky bargee!" growled Bolsover major. "Don't see why he couldn't take a pal, either."

Vernon-Smith was not thinking of his pals just then.

"You didn't want to bring any of your friends with you, my boy?" the millionaire asked, as the big car glided out into the road.

"No, dad; I want to speak to you."

The millionaire laughed.

"Money?" he asked.

"No; I've got plenty," said the Bounder. "You keep me well supplied with that, dad."

"My son is going to have as much money as any man's son at the school," said Mr. Vernon-Smith loftily. "You have a larger allowance than Lord Mauleverer, and you can always have more when you want it."

"About that affair of Major Cherry's," said Vernon-Smith abruptly.

The millionaire looked serious.

"I told you about that," he said. "I understood from you that the major's son at Greyfriars was no friend of yours."

The Bounder gritted his teeth.

"He's the fellow I hate most in the school, I think," he said. "More than Wharton—much more! He's a fellow I never could pull with, somehow. I should be glad to see him kicked out of Greyfriars."

"You won't be troubled with him much longer, then."

"About the major—you're sure of him?"

Mr. Vernon-Smith smiled—the kind of smile a cat might indulge in when he sees a mouse fairly cornered and unable to escape.

"Quite sure," he said. "He owes the English Loan Office over a thousand pounds still, and the last payment of interest fairly stumped him. He cannot raise a tenth of what is due, and he has pledged his house and estate for it. In a week or two the plum will be ripe."

"And you will rake it in."

"Certainly. The loan office does not neglect its business, or run business on lines of sentiment. He should not borrow the money if he cannot repay it—with interest, of course. But what is your concern in the matter? I mentioned it to you in the first place because I knew that the major had a son at Greyfriars, and if he had been a friend of yours I could have made things easier for Major Cherry."

"I'm glad you mentioned it to me, dad. I want you to put the screw on—grind them as hard as you can—grind them down—hang them!"

"You can rely upon the firm to do that."

"You are the firm, pater."

Mr. Vernon-Smith smiled complacently.

"Yes, I am the firm," he said; "but, of course, it is best not to let one's own name appear in these matters. I shall be setting up for Parliament shortly, and anything in the nature of being concerned in a money-lending business would tell very much against me."

"Yes, I quite understand that."

"You have not allowed this boy Cherry to know anything?" asked the millionaire.

"Not a word! We have always been enemies, more or less—and more than ever now. His father won't be able to keep him here?"

"His father won't be able to keep him in bread-and-butter, I fancy," said the millionaire. "You need not trouble your head about him; he will have to leave Greyfriars at the end of the term."

"Good! He has entered for the Bishop's scholarship, so I suppose he knows it as well as you do, dad. It's his last chance to stick on."

"The Bishop's scholarship! Isn't that the scholarship you have entered for, my boy?"

"Yes."

"Has he any chance of beating you?"

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"About as much chance as a cart-horse has of beating a race-horse at Epsom," he said arrogantly. "He will be last on the list. If I'm beaten, it won't be by him. But I'm putting in some hard work, in case of accidents—I'm determined that he sha'n't have the Bishop's scholarship and stay at Greyfriars on it."

"Very good," said Mr. Vernon-Smith. "You dislike him very much?"

"Yes."

"What has he done to you?"

The Bounder coloured a little.

"I don't know that he's done anything special," he said; "but he sets himself against me. He's up against everything I do. We don't think alike on a single subject. He's the kind of fellow I can't stand. Besides, he's a close chum of Wharton's, and when he's gone I may have a chance to become captain of the Remove."

"And you ought to be," said Mr. Vernon-Smith, with a proud glance at his son. "Well, you need not worry about this fellow Cherry. They are utterly under my thumb, and I can sell them up next week—lock, stock, and barrel."

"Good egg!" said the Bounder, between his teeth.

And then the talk turned on other matters; and at length

the car swung back through the country lanes, and the Bounder alighted at the gates of Greyfriars.

He shook hands affectionately with his father for good-bye.

It was one redeeming trait in the Bounder's character that he was not ungrateful for his father's care and affection. His father was the one person in the world for whom there existed a spark of affection in Vernon-Smith's hard heart.

"Had a good ride?" demanded Snoop, as the Bounder came sauntering in, when the big car with the millionaire in it had buzzed away.

The Bounder nodded.

"Quite nice, thanks," he said.

"Might have taken a friend with you, I should think."

"Had private matters to talk about, my son," said the Bounder calmly, "otherwise I should have been charmed with your company."

And the Bounder strolled into the house, in a mood of great satisfaction. He passed Bob Cherry in the hall. Bob's face was darkly clouded. The Bounder paused to speak.

"I hear that you're not on good terms with No. 1 Study now, Cherry," he remarked.

"Mind your own business."

The Bounder winced. Bob's replies were generally straight from the shoulder, and it was as much as Vernon-Smith could do to retain his suavity.

"Thank you!" he said. "I was going to say that I'm sorry to see you on bad terms with your friends, because——"

"Keep your sorrow till it's asked for," said Bob savagely. "I know you, Smithy! You wormed this out of one of them, just to spread it round, to make things rotten for me. I think you are a rotten cad."

The Bounder turned pale.

"If that's all you've got to say——" he began.

"That's all—unless you'd like to come into the gym. with me, and have the gloves on," said Bob harshly.

"Thank you, I won't trouble you now," said the Bounder. "I won't fight you in your last few weeks at Greyfriars."

"It may not be the last few weeks [illegible] the scholarship, you cad."

"If pigs fly, and steam-rollers run," [illegible] the Bounder, laughing. "The age of miracles is past, you know; you won't get the scholarship. I'm going to give it as hard as I can, if only to keep you out. Understand?"

Bob Cherry clenched his hands, and the Bounder walked away smiling. He was in great good-humour. Everything was going as he wished it; in the fall of Bob Cherry and his quarrel with the rest of the Co., Vernon-Smith had struck the hardest blow that had ever been struck at the Famous Five.

Bob Cherry looked after him gloomily, and walked away to his own study—to work. The Bounder had said that he would never get the scholarship; and Bob Cherry, after all his grinding, felt that the Bounder was right. He would never get it—and all his trouble would be in vain. He was struggling against the tide that would never be driven back.

But he drove the despondent thoughts from his mind with an effort, and sat down to work.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry Makes a Discovery!

BOB CHERRY'S life was not a cheerful one in those busy days.

Estranged from his old friends, and hard at unaccustomed work, his usual sunny spirits had quite deserted him.

With the exception of Mark Linley, his old friends had nothing to say to him now. Even Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the good-natured, good-tempered Nabob of Bhanipur, had taken to avoiding No. 13 Study. Hurree Singh had shared that study with Bob Cherry and Mark, and little Wun Lung, the Chinee. But of late the nabob had taken to doing his work and having his tea in No. 1 Study with Wharton and Nugent, or in No. 14 with Johnny Bull.

Bob Cherry's suspicions were natural, but they were unjust. And his friends could not be expected to accept them cheerfully.

They had promised Bob not to say a word about his confidence in them, and he believed that they had failed him.

Under the circumstances it would have been difficult for him to believe anything else.

But that did not make his suspicions any the less bitter and galling to the fellows who were conscious of having kept their word faithfully.

In the present stress that Bob was labouring under his chums were very loth to desert him. But Bob's action had left them little choice. They could not pal with a fellow who declared his belief that they had broken their faith with him.

Bob tried to drive the miserable thoughts out of his mind by hard and harder work, and Mark Linley backed him up manfully in that.

And hard and distasteful as swotting was to the junior, he found that work and resolution were telling, and that he was making altogether surprising and unexpected progress.

His hope of getting the Bishop's Scholarship strengthened.

Vernon-Smith was his most dangerous opponent. Even Benson, of the Shell, though almost a senior, was nowhere near the form of the Bounder, and Temple, of the Fourth, was much less dangerous than Benson.

It was the Bounder he had to beat.

And Bob slaved away in the hope of getting into the required form to beat the Bounder. He knew that Vernon-Smith was working with unusual diligence lately to prepare himself for the exam., and leave nothing to chance.

It was at this time, when he was fighting the hardest battle of his young life, that Bob most needed the help and encouragement of his friends.

And that was precisely what he now lacked, owing to the machinations of the Bounder.

For days now Bob had not spoken a word to his old friends.

When they met they affected not to see one another.

The rift in the Famous Five excited a good deal of comment in the Remove, and many curious inquirers wanted to know what was the matter.

"Sure, you're not speaking to Wharton & Co. now, Cherry darling," Micky Desmond ventured to remark one day, in spite of Bob's forbidding look.

"No," grunted Bob.

"And for why, Cherry?"

"Find out!"

Micky grinned.

"Sure, and that's what I'm thryin' to do," he said.

Bob snorted, and walked away.

Micky Desmond, having failed to obtain any enlightenment from Bob, proceeded to lay siege to the other members of the old Co.

"Ye're on bad terms with Bob Cherry intirely, Wharton," he remarked to the captain of the Remove.

"Who told you that?" Wharton asked.

"Faith, it's aisy to see it," replied Micky. "Phwat is it about?"

"Do you really want to know?"

"Faith, yes."

"Better ask Bob."

"Sure, I've asked him, and the spalpeen told me to find out," said Micky plaintively.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, I can't do better than repeat what he said," he answered. "Find out."

And Wharton walked away.

Nugent and Johnny Bull were equally uncommunicative. Micky Desmond, in despair, tackled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. The nabob was so good-tempered a fellow that he could scarcely fail to satisfy a junior who was simply agonising for information.

"Sure, and ye're not so much in ye're own study now, Inky," Micky remarked.

The nabob shook his head.

"You don't get on with Bob as you used to."

"The honourable penetration and perspicacity of the esteemed Micky are terrific," said the Nabob of Bhanipur gravely.

"But what's the reason?" demanded Micky.

"The reasonfulness is great."

"Yes, but phwat is it? What have you got against Bob?"

"Nothing, my esteemed chum."

"Phwat has he got against you?"

"Nothing, my worthy and ludicrous Micky."

"Then ye're quarrelling over nothing intirely?"

"The exactfulness of the esteemed Micky's honourable statement of the case is terrific."

"Then I think that ye're a pair of silly gossoons," said Micky.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh nodded assent.

"The rightfulness of that esteemed opinion is also terrific."

"But sure, you can tell me what it's about?"

"The weatherfulness to-day is very good," said the nabob, with a nod towards the window. "The sun is shining brightfully."

"I wasn't talking about the weather. What have you rowed with Cherry for?"

"But the sunful shine may be followed by the rain," continued the nabob imperturbably.

"Blow the rain! Will you tell me about Bob?"

"The rainfulness, however, will be good for the crops."

"Look here, Inky——"

"And, after the rain, the shinefulness of the esteemed and august sun will again be terrific," said Inky calmly.

And Micky gave it up in disgust. There was evidently nothing to be extracted, in the way of information, from the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur.

Other fellows burning for knowledge asked many questions, as well as Micky, but they were all left equally unsatisfied.

The Famous Five had lost their old harmony, but they were not disposed to let outsiders into the secret of their little differences.

And, ere long, the rupture of the once united Co. became a matter of course, and ceased to be remarked upon.

Matters were in this state when, one afternoon, as Bob was swotting in his study, Trotter, the housepage, brought up a letter for him.

Bob took the letter, and Mark, who was expounding some terrifically difficult point in Latin prose composition, paused.

"It's from my pater, Marky," said Bob. "I'll look at it now, if you don't mind."

Mark smiled and nodded.

"Of course," he said.

Bob opened the letter.

He read it quickly, and a sudden exclamation broke from his lips, and he started to his feet, his eyes flaming.

"Oh, the villain!"

"Bob!"

"The utter scoundrel!"

"What's the matter, Bob?"

"The awful liar!"

Mark rose, too, in amazement.

"Whom are you talking about, Bob?" he asked.

"Vernon-Smith—the liar, the cad, the thief, the worm!" roared Bob. "I never guessed it—I couldn't guess it—I was an ass; but——"

"What on earth do you mean?"

Bob gasped.

"About my affairs getting out—I thought one of the fellows had told about them—you know—but it was wrong! It was Smithy!"

"Yes, we know it was Smithy—he says he heard it from them," said Mark.

"He lied—as he always does."

"How do you know?"

"Listen to this!" panted Bob. He read out a paragraph from the letter from his father:

"The money-lending firm is called the English Loan Office, but it is, in fact, a business run by a single man, whose name you must have heard—the well-known millionaire, Samuel Vernon-Smith. This is kept a secret from the public, and I did not know it myself until quite lately."

Bob stared at Mark.

"Do you understand that?"

"Vernon-Smith's father!" said Mark.

"Yes. I remember, now, hearing a long time ago that Smithy's father was a money-lender, as well as a lot of other rotten things. He had a claim on the Head once, and ground him down, too," said Bob. "I'd forgotten all about that. But that makes it clear. That's where Smithy got his information from—not from Wharton or Nugent, or Johnny Bull or Inky—but from his father."

Mark nodded. It seemed clear enough now. The discovery that Major Cherry's creditor was Samuel Vernon-Smith, the millionaire, let in a flood of light upon the subject. It was from the money-lender millionaire, his father, that the Bounder had learned of Bob Cherry's private affairs—though, of course, Bob could never have guessed that.

"The awful cad!" said Mark. "He deliberately led you to suppose that one of our chums had told him!"

"Yes—to make trouble between us—and I let him do it, like a fool!" said Bob, with bitter self-reproach.

"You couldn't help it, Bob. You couldn't possibly have guessed this—nobody could have guessed it. I've thought hard enough about the matter, but nothing of this sort ever occurred to my mind, for a moment," said Mark.

Bob clenched his hands hard.

"I'll make the cad pay for it," he said, between his teeth. "and—and I must go and find Wharton and the rest, and tell 'em I know, and that I'm sorry. Good Lord, I think I owe them an apology, don't you think so?"

"That's right enough."

"You said all along that you didn't believe they had blabbed," said Bob. "You were right, Marky, old man, only I couldn't see it. I'll buzz off now."

"They're on the cricket-ground," said Mark.

"Good!"

And Bob Cherry ran out of the study.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.
All Serene!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. had gone down to the cricket. It was a half-holiday, and they were playing the Upper Fourth team.

The Remove were batting, and Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth, were in the field when Bob Cherry arrived on the scene.

The Remove innings had opened with Ogilvy and Penfold, and the rest of the batsmen were lounging before the pavilion, looking on, waiting for their turn.

Harry Wharton and Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were standing in a little group by themselves, chatting.

"Hallo!" murmured Johnny Bull, as he caught sight of an excited junior dashing at top speed towards the ground. "Here comes Bob!"

"He looks excited!" said Frank.

"The excitefulness is terrific!"

The chums of the Remove watched Bob as he came panting up. Bob Cherry's face was crimson with excitement and exertion.

The juniors looked at him rather grimly. It was evident that Bob was about to break the ice that had grown up between them. But unless he withdrew his accusation against them they were not inclined to meet him half-way.

"You fellows!" gasped Bob. "I—I beg your pardon!"

"Good!" said Johnny Bull drily.

"I've found something out," said Bob breathlessly.

"What is it?"

"About Smithy—about how he knew——"

Wharton's face cleared.

"You mean that you've found out that you were wrong in suspecting us of having given you away?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Oh, good!"

"The goodfulness is terrific, my worthy chum," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The cloudfulness has rolled by."

"I'm awfully sorry," said Bob. "I—I hope you'll forget about it. I'm willing to admit I was an ass!"

"Hear, hear!" said Johnny Bull.

"But what was I to think?" asked Bob. "Smithy knew, and he couldn't have known unless somebody told him. You must see that it was—was——"

"But that's still the case," said Frank Nugent. "Do you mean that you haven't altered your opinion of us, after all?"

"No, no! I've found out who told Smithy."

"Who was it?"

"His father!"

"His father!" exclaimed all the juniors together.

"Yes; I know it now. I mean, there can't be any doubt about it. You remember some time ago hearing that Smithy's father was mixed up in a moneylending business."

"Yes; I'd forgotten it," said Harry. "I remember now. But what——"

"Smithy's father is the moneylender who's got my pater in his clutches."

"Great Scott!"

"I've just had a letter from the dad, and he's told me. That makes it quite clear, of course, where Smithy got his information from. He led me to believe that one of you chaps had told him. He put it to me that he couldn't possibly have got his information from any other source. I didn't know anything about his father being head of the British Loan Office. How was I to know anything of the sort?"

"Well, there's something in that," said Harry. "But I think you might have had more faith in us, all the same."

"Well, I'm sorry," said Bob.

"Chap can't say more than that," said Nugent oracularly. "If Bob admits that he was wrong, owns up that he was an ass, and says he's sorry, that's all we want."

"Well, I do," said Bob.

"Then it's all over."

"The all-overfulness is terrific."

"And I'm jolly glad you've found out the facts, Bob," said Harry Wharton. "It was rotten to have you suspecting us, and we couldn't take it quietly. But as for Smithy, he ought to be scragged. He deliberately put it into your head that we had given you away to cause trouble among friends."

"The cad!"

"The rotter!"

Bob Cherry's eyes glinted.

"I'm going to see Smithy about it," he said. "I'm going to tell him what I think of him, and make him smart for the trick he's played. But I wanted to tell you fellows first."

"Good! Give Smithy one extra for me," said Johnny Bull.

"And another for me," grinned Nugent.

"And a hardful one on his esteemed nose for me," murmured the nabob.

There was a shout from the cricket-field. Penfold's wicket was down.

"Man in!" said Wharton.

Bob Cherry hurried away.

His first impulse had been to see his old chums, and to tell them that he was sorry for his unjust suspicions. His second thought was to find the Bounder, and to make him sorry for the cowardly and treacherous trick he had played.

The thought of the ease with which the Bounder had gulled him made Bob writhe with rage. He had been twisted round the schemer's finger with hardly an effort. His plain, blunt, honest nature was no match for the cunning of the Bounder. It had pleased Vernon-Smith to put him on bad terms with his old friends at a time when he most needed their friendship and help; and Bob had fallen blindly and helplessly into the trap. He ground his teeth now as he reflected how he had been taken in.

He wanted to find the Bounder now; and he wanted to find him badly. The afternoon's "swotting" could wait until he had dealt with his treacherous enemy.

But the Bounder was not to be seen in the Close. Bob Cherry looked for him high and low, but he did not find him. He spotted Billy Bunter outside the tuckshop, and bore down upon him in quest of information. Bunter generally knew everything that was going on, and he probably knew where Vernon-Smith was.

"I say, Cherry," said Bunter, blinking at the red and excited junior as he came hurrying up, "I say, can you cash a postal-order for me!"

"No, I can't. I——"

"Mrs. Mimble has got a fresh lot of tarts in," said Bunter eagerly. "If you can't cash a postal-order for me, will you lend me a bob?"

"Have you seen Smithy?"

Billy Bunter sniffed.

"Blow Smithy!"

"Do you know where he is?"

"Yes, I do, and I think it's rotten. I offered to go with them. You know Marjorie would rather see me than Smithy any day."

"What are you talking about, you fat duffer?"

"Marjorie doesn't like Smithy, and she doesn't like Hazel taking him to tea at Cliff House," said Bunter. "Smithy must have a jolly thick skin, or he wouldn't go. I know jolly well why Hazel takes him, too—he owes Smithy money, and——"

"Has Smithy gone to Cliff House?"

"Yes. They went nearly half an hour ago," said Bunter. "I offered to go."

"Which way did they go?" asked Bob.

"I think they went along the cliffs. They're not due at Cliff House until five o'clock, so they've plenty of time," said Bunter. "I consider——"

Bob Cherry did not wait to hear any more. He ran in the direction of the gates. Billy Bunter blinked after him in surprise.

"I say, Bob Cherry!" he roared. "If you're going to lend me that bob—I say, Cherry, there's something I forgot to tell you!"

Bob halted. He turned quickly.

"What is it?" he exclaimed hastily, thinking that the Owl of the Remove had something more to tell him concerning the direction Vernon-Smith and his companion had taken.

"Mrs. Mimble has got some new pies, as well as tarts," said Bunter confidentially, rolling towards him. "You see——"

"You said you had something to tell me!" snapped Bob.

"Yes, that's it. Those pies are simply ripping, and if you could lend me a bob—ow—ow! Leggo! Groo! Yah!"

Billy Bunter found himself suddenly sitting down on the hard cold ground, with his cap knocked over his spectacles.

He gasped for breath, and put his glasses straight, but by the time he blinked round in search of Bob Cherry that youth had vanished.

Bunter gasped for breath.

"Ow! He's mad—mad as a hatter! Grooh! Beast!"

And Billy Bunter picked himself up slowly and painfully, and limped back to the tuckshop, where he resumed his mournful contemplation of the tarts that were beyond his reach—like a very fat Peri at the gate of Paradise.

Bob Cherry ran out of the school gates, and down the lane to the cliffs.

If Vernon-Smith and Hazeldene were not to reach Cliff House till five o'clock they would take it easy on the way, and he had a good chance of overtaking them there, and having his little explanation with the Bounder.

By the time the "explanation" was over, the Bounder would not be feeling quite fit for a tea-party, at Cliff House or anywhere else, Bob reflected grimly.

He came out on the cliff path. The path ran along the summit of the great cliffs, with a sudden descent on the left, hundreds of feet down to the sandy beach below, and the shining sea. In the clefts of the rocks were the nests of innumerable seabirds, and adventurous lads sometimes climbed down on ropes to capture the eggs—a risky task that required a strong nerve and a cool head.

Bob Cherry caught sight of a figure ahead of him on the cliff path, and recognised Hazeldene of the Remove. He redoubled his speed, and came panting up.

Hazeldene, who was staring towards the abrupt edge of the cliff, looked round quickly at the sound of his footsteps on the chalky soil.

Bob noticed that his face was white.

"Bob Cherry! I—I'm glad you've come!" stammered Hazel.

Bob caught him by the arm.

"Where's Smithy?"

"Smithy! He—he's——"

"What are you stuttering about?" demanded Bob angrily. "Where is he hiding himself? I've got an account to settle with the cad. Do you hear? I'm going to hammer him till he won't know his own face in the glass! Where is he, you ass?"

Hazel groaned, and pointed towards the cliff.

"What, you——"

Bob ceased to speak. From the precipice came a faint, anguished voice—the voice of someone who could not be seen—of someone who was clinging to the cliff over the dizzy void!

"Help!"

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

To Save His Enemy!

"HELP!"

Bob Cherry looked round quickly.

"Help! Hazel, you funk, come and help me!"

It was the voice of the Bounder.

For a moment Bob Cherry's heart almost ceased to beat.

"Hazel! He has fallen——"

"He would go!" muttered Hazel. "He said he could get at the nest in the cleft down there; and he slipped. He will be killed!"

Bob set his teeth.

His brain was in a whirl. He had come there with anger and bitterness in his heart, thinking only of vengeance. He had found his enemy, and he had found him in the shadow of death.

Vernon-Smith was over the cliff!

Bob Cherry knew the ground well; knew what was beyond that steep, sudden edge. For a dozen feet or so the cliff sloped. At the end of the slope was a sheer drop for two hundred feet or more, and at the bottom the curling waves among sharp rocks. A fall meant instant death—a death too horrible to be thought of without a shudder.

And the Bounder was there.

Hazel was white as death. He was not a lad of strong nerve, and he dared not even approach the edge of the cliff that hid his companion from sight. Even within three or four feet of the edge his brain was dizzy.

"I—I can't help him!" stammered Hazeldene. "I—I should fall if I just looked over—he knows that! He shouldn't have gone. I warned him not to. He wanted to take the eggs with him to Cliff House, to show off to the girls. It's his own fault!"

The faint voice came again from the void:

"Help!"

"Keep back, Hazel," said Bob quietly. "You can't do anything."

Bob Cherry dropped on his hands and knees, and crawled to the edge of the cliff. Hazel watched him in terror. Even for that much he had not the nerve. But Bob Cherry was made of sterner stuff.

Bob approached the edge cautiously, and looked over.

Below, the rock sloped away a dozen feet—rough and broken, offering hold for the hands of a cool and steady climber. There were nests in the clefts of the rocks, but the boldest egg-hunters of Pegg had left them untouched. At the end of the slope, a sheer drop.

And on the very verge, clinging to a point of rock, was the Bounder.

Bob understood what had happened. The Bounder was a good climber, and he had a nerve of iron. He had ventured upon a place that would have turned many a fellow sick, even to contemplate. And then—a slip of the foot, and he had rolled down the slope to the dreadful edge.

He had caught at the point of the rock at the very verge of the precipice, and was holding on, convulsively, with his body and legs out of sight below, swinging over space.

Bob Cherry could see his head and his arms clutched on the rock, and that was all. Evidently he was not able to drag himself up.

His strength was going! Sea and sky were swimming round his eyes; the very horror of his position, the terrible necessity to hold on, sapped away his nerve, and at any moment he might let go! And then, a rush through the air, a crash upon the hard rocks far below!

Bob Cherry shivered.

The Bounder's face was haggard; his eyes seemed to be starting from his head. His wild gaze was fixed upon the cliff above him, in the hope of seeing Hazel's face looking over, and he saw Bob Cherry's.

His ghastly face lighted up. It was the face of the fellow he had injured and plotted against. But it was the face he would have wished most to see in that dreadful moment. For it was the face of a fellow full of courage and generous devotion, a fellow who would have risked his life even for an enemy.

"Bob Cherry!" he panted. "Help me!"

Bob looked at him steadily.

"I'll try," he said.

"Help me, Bob Cherry! I—I've been a beast to you!" panted the Bounder. "I'll make up for it. I can make up for it. I——"

"That's enough! Save your breath."

"But help me!"

"I will help you if I can!"

Bob Cherry scanned the slope before him. In venturing upon it at all he would be taking his life in his hand. And to venture down to the horrible edge—there to be seized by the Bounder, and to bear his weight—it seemed like throwing his life away. Yet the brave lad did not hesitate.

The Bounder's starting eyes never left his face. He could hardly believe that Bob would run that frightful risk for him; but he hoped. It was his only chance of life. He knew that he could not hold on many minutes longer.

"Keep cool," said Bob. "I'm coming."

"I'm cool enough. I'm not a coward," said Vernon-Smith, with a touch of his old arrogance. "But my arms are aching. I can't hold on much longer."

"You can't pull yourself up?"

"There's nothing to get a hold on, or I could."

Bob scanned the rock. Just above the Bounder, the sloping cliff was as smooth almost as glass—no hold for a hand or a foot—for a space of five feet, at least. On the smooth rock the Bounder had clawed and clawed again, without finding a grip for his hand. A rope would have enabled him to climb; but there was no rope, and the nearest house was more than a mile away.

"There's only one way, Smithy," said Bob steadily. "I'll lower myself down till my feet are within your reach. Understand?"

"Yes, yes."

"Then you must take hold of me, and climb over me."

"You—you can't stand the strain——"

"I must stand it."

The Bounder groaned.

"It's the only way!" said Bob. "The only chance! You must use me to climb over. I'm coming!"

"God bless you!" said the Bounder wretchedly.

Bob did not reply. He lowered himself carefully over the dizzy slope, feet first, taking a firm grip on the rough rock with his hands.

Then he lowered himself down the slope towards the clinging junior.

He moved slowly and cautiously, finding a strong hold for his hands on the rough edges of weather-worn rock.

Half-way down the slope he paused.

"Can you reach me yet, Smithy?"

"No; a couple of feet more."

"Good!"

Bob Cherry wormed on again. His body was over the smooth slope of rock now; his hands were upon the last hold to be found on the surface of the declivity.

But now his feet were within reach of the Bounder's clutching hands.

"Can you reach me?"

"Yes!" muttered the Bounder. "Hold on! You've got a good hold?"

"Yes, climb!"

"I'm coming!"

A grip like iron was laid upon Bob Cherry's ankles. The Bounder reached him, first with one hand, and then with the other.

The strain upon Bob was terrible.

The dragging weight of the Bounder was thrown heavily upon him, and it seemed to the junior, as he lay face down on the cliff, that the strain must tear him away from his hold: but he clutched on grimly, desperately.

The Bounder was climbing now. Bob Cherry's limbs and clothes afforded him the hold he wanted, and he had not lost his nerve or his courage. With all his remaining strength thrown into the effort, he climbed.

Bob Cherry held on, breathing hard. Higher came the Bounder, dragging himself desperately up till his grip was on Bob's jacket, and then on his shoulder.

He stopped to breathe then.

Then he climbed on again, and took a grip upon the broken rock higher up, where Bob Cherry's hands were clutching tight.

The strain was taken off Bob at last.

It was time; his strength could not have held out much longer.

"All right?" he muttered

"Yes," breathed the Bounder.

The rest was easier. The Bounder had a good hold now, and he climbed on, and dragged himself over the top of the cliff.

Bob Cherry remained where he was, resting, to get his strength back. The effort of holding on under the Bounder's weight had exhausted him.

Vernon-Smith lay on the top of the cliff and peered over anxiously.

"Bob Cherry! Come on!"

"I'm coming!"

Bob climbed up, dragging himself up slowly, with failing strength.

But at the top the hand of the Bounder was stretched out to help him, and he dragged himself into safety.

He fell exhausted on the cliff path, and then, for several minutes, the sky and the cliffs swam before him.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Quits!

BOB CHERRY sat up dizzily at last.

He passed his hand across his throbbing forehead.

The Bounder was sitting upon a chunk of chalky rock near him, regarding him with a curious expression. Hazel was standing near, his face still deathly white.

"We're well out of that!" said the Bounder, as he met Bob Cherry's gaze.

Bob nodded.

"You've saved my life!" said Vernon-Smith.

"I know that!"

"You nearly went yourself in doing it. It was touch-and-go!" said the Bounder.

"I know."

"It was a decent thing to do," said the Bounder.

"I don't want your thanks," said Bob Cherry, rising to his feet with an effort. "I came here to look for you, Vernon-Smith."

"Jolly lucky for me."

"Yes, as it turned out. But do you know what I came for?"

The Bounder shook his head.

"I've discovered that you were deceiving me—that it is your father who is my pater's creditor—that you led me to suppose my chums had given me away, when you really had your information from your father."

"I don't deny it."

"I came," said Bob, his voice trembling with anger, "to give you a hammering—to give you the licking of your life!"

The Bounder smiled strangely.

"And you've saved my life instead!" he remarked.

"Yes. I can't lick you now," said Bob. "I hope you'll have the decency to feel ashamed of yourself, but after what's happened I don't feel I can touch you."

"You can lick me if you like," said Vernon-Smith quietly. "After what you've done, I won't raise a hand to stop you!"

Bob laughed contemptuously.

"I don't want that!"

"No, I suppose you don't!"

"I don't want to have anything more to say to you, that's all. I've found out your rotten trick, and I've made it up with my chums. You won't be able to take me in again. You've done all the mischief you could, but you can't do any more."

Bob turned away.

"Hold on," said the Bounder. "I'd like to speak to you."

"I don't care to listen."

"I've treated you badly," said the Bounder slowly. "You've saved my life. I'm in your debt."

Bob Cherry's lip curled.

"You needn't trouble about that," he said. "I don't want your gratitude, and I don't want your thanks. Don't let that worry you."

"I don't choose to remain in your debt, anyway," said the Bounder. "I can make it up to you, and I will!"

"Oh, rats!"

"Look here——"

Bob Cherry did not stay to listen. He tramped away over the cliff path, turning his back on the Bounder. Vernon-Smith looked after him, a strange expression upon his face, till the cliffs hid him from view. Then he turned to Hazeldene.

"Lucky for me Bob Cherry came along," he said sarcastically. "I suppose you were going to stand there and let me fall over?"

Hazeldene flushed.

"I—I couldn't help you!" he stammered. "I—I——"

"I know you couldn't, you funk!" said the Bounder, dusting down his clothes. "Well, it's time we got on, or we shall be late for tea."

"You're—you're going to tea, just the same," said Hazel, staring at him.

"Why not?"

"No reason why not; only—only I shouldn't have thought you'd feel fit——"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"I'm not a funk!" he said. "I've been in danger, but it's over now. No good sitting down and trembling over a danger that's past, that I can see. Come on; I'm hungry!"

And they proceeded up the path towards Cliff House.

Bob Cherry walked back to Greyfriars in a subdued mood. The danger he had been through had made an impression on his mind. His dislike of the Bounder was as strong as ever, but his anger was gone, and he felt no desire now for vengeance. After all, the harm that his enemy had done had been undone again, and he was on good terms with his chums once more. He paused on the cricket-ground to look at the play before he went back to his study. Mark Linley was there, his work finished. Harry Wharton and Tom Brown were batting, and they were piling up runs. It came queerly into Bob's mind that the match had been going on all the time that he was clinging to the cliff, between life and death, his chums unconscious of his danger.

There was a shout from the Removites as Tom Brown drove the ball away to the boundary, and Bob joined in it.

"Bravo! Well hit!"

Bob walked away slowly and thoughtfully towards the house. He went to his study, and with a sigh settled down to his books again. While the other fellows were enjoying the sunshine, and the glorious game of cricket, it was for him to grind, to swot, only consoled by the knowledge that he was doing his best to help his father in the dark days that had come upon the brave old gentleman.

He was hard at work some time later when there was a knock at the door.

"Come in!" said Bob, and he looked up, expecting to see his chums fresh from the cricket-field.

But it was Vernon-Smith who entered.

Bob frowned.

"I didn't know it was you," he said abruptly.

"Or you wouldn't have told me to come in, I suppose," said the Bounder quietly.

"No, I wouldn't," said Bob bluntly.

"Well, here I am, all the same." The Bounder closed the door and sat down, Bob eyeing him grimly. "Sorry to bother you, but I've got something to say, and I've got to say it."

"I told you——"

"Yes; you don't want any thanks, and you don't want any gratitude," said the Bounder, with a grin. "Quite so. I know that. I haven't come to thank you or to make any speeches about gratitude. I'm not that sort. You saved my life—and I'm not all bad. I've treated you badly, and I'm going to make up for it. That will make us quits. I can't save your life, as you're not in any danger, and, to tell the truth, I don't know whether I'd do for any chap what you did for me this afternoon. But I can do something for you!"

"I don't want you to do anything for me."

"In the first place," pursued the Bounder, unheeding, "I've withdrawn my name from the list for the Bishop's Scholarship. I sha'n't enter for the exam."

"What rot!"

"Although I say it myself, I had the best chance of bagging the scholarship," said the Bounder. "That's off now."

Bob flushed.

"Look here, I'm not asking any favours at your hands," he said angrily. "I jolly well won't allow anything of the kind!"

"You can't help it. I've spoken to the Head, and he's taken my name off the list," said the Bounder, unmoved.

"Well, I think it's like your rotten cheek to persist in doing me a favour against my wish," said Bob bluntly. "That's all the thanks you will get from me."

"That's all I want," said Vernon-Smith cheerfully. "We shall never be friends, and I'm not asking you to pal on with me. I don't want you to. But I'm going to pay the debt I owe you, with interest. I've written to my father."

Bob stared at him.

"What's that got to do with me?"

"Lots! My father will do anything I ask him, and I've asked him something."

"What?"

"I've asked him to cancel your father's debt to him and let Major Cherry alone. He would do more than that if I asked him, and he will do that. I've explained the circumstances to him, you see. I shouldn't wonder if he comes down here and hugs you when he knows that you saved my life. He values me highly, for some reason best known to himself," the Bounder added, laughing.

"But—but——"

"So your father will be saved from all his trouble. As a matter of fact, he has paid his debt. It's a question of interest, and the British Loan Office's claim to interest will now be cancelled," said Vernon-Smith. "I think that is a favour you won't refuse, Bob Cherry!"

"It's only justice," said Bob. "My father was—was——"

"Swindled, you were going to say."

"Well, yes. It amounts to swindling."

"Thanks! Anyway, the debt will be cancelled now. Your father won't have to pay another penny!"

There was a long silence in the study.

Bob Cherry did not know what to say. As the Bounder had declared, this was a favour he could not refuse. To save his father from the ruin that impended, to lift the weight of care from the kind old man—the mere thought of it made Bob's heart lighter, and cleared the clouds from his brow. The Bounder watched his face with a curious half-cynical smile.

"What are you doing this for me for?" asked Bob, at last.

"You saved my life, and risked your own. I want to be quits with you," said the Bounder tersely.

"It will make us more than quits!" said Bob. "I can't refuse, and—and I don't want to refuse. And—and I'll say that you're not such a rotter as I've thought."

Vernon-Smith rose.

"That's all right; it's a go, then. We're quits!"

And without another word the Bounder left the study. Bob Cherry was left alone, silent and pensive. He did not turn to his books again, he was too busy with his thoughts. When Mark Linley came in, a little later, he was surprised to see the sunny expression upon Bob's face. Bob Cherry seemed his old self again.

"Had good news?" asked Mark.

"Yes, rather!" And Bob explained.

"Well, my hat!" said Mark.

And that was all he could say.

. . . . . .

Harry Wharton & Co were surprised enough when they heard of the action of the Bounder. Perhaps they had some doubts; but, if so, Bob's next letter from his father removed them. Major Cherry's troubles were over. But Bob Cherry did not slack on that account, and he made a good fight for the Bishop's Scholarship, and—perhaps owing to the fact that the Bounder had withdrawn, as well as to his own industry—he won it! And there was a great celebration in No 1 Study in the Remove when Bob Cherry's name was announced as the winner.

THE END.

TALES TO TELL.

SINFUL WASTE.

Old Graball is mean—really mean. He once built a house, and nearly gave himself brain-fever deciding which was better: a lot of windows—which were cheaper, but needed soap and water for cleaning—or more bricks for wall space.

One day he came home and found that his wife had saved money out of her housekeeping allowance, and was re-papering the dining-room. And then he started to rave.

"I don't object to the money being spent—although new paper is just extravagance, when the old one has only been on seven years," he gasped, red and hoarse with rage—"but I do object to the way you have put it on! Oh, how dare you paste it on!" he finished, with a wail.

"But how else could I put it on?" asked Mrs. Graball, in surprise.

"How else?" he retorted, when he could speak. "Why, tack it on, of course! You don't suppose we shall live in this house for ever, do you?"

TOO BUSY FOR BUSINESS.

In a quiet little country town, so quiet that the silence hurt, a commercial traveller entered the general store. Going through to the parlour at the back, he found the proprietor and a friend having a game of draughts.

"Here, Mr. Slocum," he said, in an energetic whisper, "there are two customers in the shop."

Slocum never raised his eyes from the board. He merely shook his head, and whispered in reply:

"That's all right. Keep quiet, and they'll go away again!"

EASILY IDENTIFIED.

After the tennis match, the ladies' team returned in triumph in a char-a-banc.

Perhaps it was their shrill of delight at their success that frightened the horse; but, anyway, he bolted.

After a thrilling few minutes the vehicle dashed into the bank at the roadside, and sent all its occupants flying in a heap.

What a scene it was! No one was hurt, but there was a perfect sea of waving arms, feet, and heads. And out of the very midst came a squeal:

"Help, oh, help! Save me, somebody! Mine are the green shoes and stockings!"

BACK TO EARTH.

Sweethearts, they sat close together on the pier, looking away across the bay at the white-winged yachts.

"Dearest!" he whispered.

"Yes, dearest!" she replied.

"Aren't all these people a nuisance?" he queried.

"It's a pity there's such a lot of them," she answered.

"Wouldn't it be scrumptious, dearest, to be on an island, with the blue sky overhead and feathered songsters in the woods—just you and I?"

"Ice cream!" came a raucous cry from the beach, interrupting the lovers' rhapsody.

Then the lady spoke, love written plainly in every line of her pretty face.

"'Orace," she remarked, "I could just do with a rasp'ry and vanilla, couldn't you?"

YOU CAN START TO-DAY!

'Mysteria'

Ching Lung & his Chums in search of THE LOST LAND.

—By SIDNEY DREW.—

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is surrounded in his magnificent London residence by his friends Ching-Lung, Barry O'Rooney, Gan-Waga, the Esquimo, and Prout & Co —the stalwarts of the millionaire's famous submarine, the Lord of the Deep. After a period of inaction there is a rumour afloat that Ferrers Lord is about to start upon one of his great expeditions again. Meantime, the millionaire himself is devoting all his attention to a curiously carved narwhal's tusk, which he has picked up in an East End curio-dealer's shop. The tusk proved to be hollow, and to contain some gold coins, and a small wad of parchment, which bears a strange message from the sea. This tells of a mysterious floating island, inhabited by strange monsters, which Ferrers Lord determines to go in search of. Thurston immediately christens the phantom island "Mysteria," in advance. All hands board the Lord of the Deep, which slips out of its secret cave on its mysterious new quest. Ben Maddock, who has been over the side tapping the cable, makes a big catch of lobsters, which he bestows in a locker to await the pot. However, Gan-Waga and Ching-Lung effect a capture, and a fine meal is prepared. In Gan's temporary absence from the board, Ching-Lung invites Rupert Thurston to join in, and the two commence on the lobster salad, little knowing that the theft has been discovered, and that the enraged Maddock, O'Rooney, and the chef are plotting revenge.

"Well, Rupert, what do you think of Mysteria?" asks Ching Lung, having finished his first helping. Rupert Thurston smiles. "To tell you candidly, Ching," he replies, "I think that for some reason of his own, Ferrers Lord is playing a terrific bluff on us."

(Now go on with the story.)

Revenge is Sweet.

"A battered, greasy Eskimo has scooped all me brains out. Run away and play!" came a strange voice from the lobster salad.

"Don't try your ventriloquism on with me," said Thurston. "I think exactly what I told you, and Lord knows I think it."

"'Ere, guv'nor, take that red-'eaded chunk of beetroot away from me ear; he's scorchin' me whiskers," put in the lobster plaintively.

"I ain't, you fat'ead," protested the beetroot. "Don't speak to a respectable wegetable, you fishy-eyed outrage."

"Perhaps I'd better put them away before they come to blows, Ru," said the prince. "We've left plenty for Gan, though he has the appetite of an ostrich. The next item on the programme is the mysterious vanishing trick, invented and performed only by myself. I may state that an enthusiastic and admiring public presented me with a fishshop for performing this brilliant trick. I received it by instalments—a brick and a cod's head at a time. Watch me closely, please, and notice that my hands are empty."

"So is your head," put in Thurston.

"That's your giddy jealousy. Watch. When I pronounce the magic word, dish and salad will vanish into thin air."

Ching-Lung poised the dish on his finger-tips, and raised it above his head.

"Presto!" cried the prince.

A large Turkey sponge that had soaked up about a gallon of cold water whizzed through the air. Ching-Lung's face stopped its onward career. It struck the prince with a squelching sound. The dish flew upwards, shedding the salad, which fell in a pinky-green mass on his Highness. Gan had not spared the oil and vinegar. To say the least, the salad was sticky. Rupert leapt out of the way, and by sheer luck the dish alighted on the spring ottoman undamaged.

The door shut with a noisy crash, and hurried footfalls, beating a quick retreat, rang from the corridor.

The prince looked like a Jack-in-the-Green at some old-time village festival. He was smothered in clammy salad. Fragments of beetroot and lettuce glided down his cheeks. The pepper got into his eyes, the oil and vinegar trickled over his spine, and filled his boots. Thurston held his sides and roared. The door opened. Joe, Barry, Maddock, Prout, and Schwartz, their faces twisted and distorted with mirth, thrust in their heads.

"What is it, by hokey—tell me?" shouted Thomas Prout. "I'll give a box of the best strike-me-deado cigars for the correct answer!"

"Ut's a grane linnet," said Barry. "No, ut ain't. On me sowl, ut's a grane parrot wid a red crest. Gimme a gun, and Oi'll shoot ut afore ut flois away. Shoo! Hallo, Polly! Purty Polly wants some sugar. Ha, ha, ha, hee-e-ee! Ho, ho, ho, ho! Howld me bonnet whoile Oi put some salt on ut's tail, darlints."

Joe had thrown the sponge. In his search for Gan he had reached the billiard-room. The door was ajar, and through the crevice the carpenter, bubbling over with wrath and indignation, had beheld the fate of the stolen lobsters. To wreak summary vengeance on his Highness was out of the question. To carve pictures on the head of a superior officer with a hatchet might have ended in a court-martial. Joe found a less deadly weapon in Rupert's cabin, and, having chosen the exact moment, he had used it with deadly effect.

Ching-Lung said nothing. He scraped.

"Hi! Come out o' them cabbages!" cried Maddock. "Souse me, d'ye think I can't see you?"

And Barry added, as the prince scraped on:

"My luv is in the woild granewood,
Pickin' the flowers so swate,
There's honeysuckles in his nair,
And corns upon his purty fate."

A howl of laughter greeted this beautiful flight of poetic fancy. The chef giggled until he shook the bandage from his eye. Ching-Lung loathed himself as he scraped and wiped. Prout and his comrades, beside themselves with delight, chaffed unmercifully, and Rupert was almost crying with merriment.

"Didn't Oi always tell yez that the poor, dear jintleman was grane on the top?" said O'Rooney.

"By hokey, you did, Irish," said Prout. "I remember you saying so."

"He, he, he, he, he! Hee-e-ee!" giggled the chef, who possessed a laugh that would have broken any ordinary window.

"If I were you, Sir Ching," said Thurston, "I'd go and have a bath. You're a disgusting and disreputable exhibition. What about the magic word and the disappearing trick? Is this part of the performance, or just an extra?"

"Oi think the poor jint fancies he's a lettuce-bed, sir, in the back garden," said O'Rooney. "Arrah, phwat a piteous soight, and him so young and fair! 'Tis enough to wring tears of sorrer from the oies of a tater. So young in years, and——"

"So old in crime," added Joe, with a sob.

"And so-so-o-oo big about the feet, by hokey!" moaned Prout. Balminess will out. It runs in some families."

"But, bedad, ut gallops full spade in his," grinned Barry. "In fact, Misther Rupert, Oi belave, on me sowl, that the balminess in his family rides on a fifty horse-power mothor-car."

Ching-Lung, like a tree in the late autumn, had shed most of his leaves. There were tears in his eyes, but they were more the result of cayenne pepper than of sorrow. He stood on his hands and shook himself. A clever back spring landed him on the billiard-table. He cast a swift glance over the heads of the men into the dim corridor, and he saw Gan-Waga.

"Gan!"

The word sounded close to the Eskimo's ear.

"We've got 'em now. Turn the hose on 'em, quick. Never mind the damage, old son. I'll square that."

Gan-Waga glided away to where the coil of hose hung just below the cook's galley, and Ching-Lung bowed low, his hand on his heart.

"Have a bit more lobster salad, sir," said Joe.

"I thank you from the inmost recesses of my soul for your generous invitation, Mr. Carpenter, but I beg to decline," said Ching-Lung. "I am delighted to think that I have afforded you pleasure. To amuse kids is the joy of my life. If, as a favour, any of you will introduce me to the gentleman who shied the sponge, I will amuse you further by showing you how to turn a man into a mass of putty inside the minute. Don't all speak at once, please."

Naturally enough, the information was not forthcoming. They were not going to give Joe away. Ching-Lung could have eaten him, for the slight, lithe Chinaman was the finest boxer on the ship.

"Plaze, your Hoighness, may Oi ax yez a question?" piped O'Rooney.

"Certainly," said Ching-Lung, shooting a keen glance into the corridor. "Twenty, if you like."

"Ut's loike this, sor. Oi've made a bet wid Prout for foive hundred pounds—er—of coal, sor, that—Oi mane, yez see—— Here, Tom, phwat do Oi mane?"

"How the hokey do I know, you hoctopus!" growled the steersman.

"Howld on," said Barry. "Oi've got ut. This is the question, sor. Was your face always loike that, or was ut sthruck by loightning?"

"He, he, he, he, he-e-ee!" squeaked the chef. "Dot vos goot! Strugk mit lighdnings! Ach! Dot was grandt! He, he, he-e-ee-ee!"

"Here, put a nozzle on that insect!" said Ching-Lung. "It might bite somebody. Is it safe without a chain on?"

"Don't be froightened, sor," said Barry. "Ut won't touch yez, sor. We gave ut a good meal of pork a bit ago, and the craythur ain't hungry enough to ate yez, though ut's only porrk ut'll touch."

Ching-Lung slipped off his drenched blouse and raised himself on his toes.

"Look out, Barry!" shouted Prout. "He's comin' for you, by hokey!"

"Howld me back, thin, afore Oi lay his quiverin' corpse at your fate!" grinned the son of Erin. "Niver wance did an O'Rooney, of Ballybunion Castle, show his back to the foe! Let thim all arroive. My blud's up. Av Oi lose, lay me in a hero's grave, and carrve theso worrds upon my tombstone: 'Whin his brith stopped he turned up his toes, but whoy he did that same nobody knows.' Let him come. Oi'll present yez wid his pigtail to wear as a necktoie, Tommy!"

The prince gave a sudden leap that made the men draw back hurriedly. It seemed as if Ching-Lung must alight on their heads. Instead of that, he alighted on the top of the door as nimbly as a monkey.

"Let it go, Gan!" he yelled.

"He goings, Chingy!" roared Gan-Waga's voice. "He is a butterfuls treats!"

Bounding to the ground, Ching-Lung closed and locked the door. Joe was the first to see the shadowy outline of the Eskimo. He shrieked out a warning, and started to run. A tremendous jet of water gushed from the brass nozzle of the hose, catching the carpenter squarely under the chin and lifting him from his feet. Then Gan-Waga, who danced and screamed with excitement, turned the hose on Herr Schwartz. The chef was a light weight, and went down like a skittle. Prout, Maddock, and Barry tumbled over each other in their haste to escape, and took refuge in Rupert's cabin.

Gan, his fat face beaming blissfully, washed the squealing cook into the corner, and played on Joe till Joe roared for mercy.

"Dear, dear, dear!" said Ching-Lung, looking out. "Have we sprung a leak?"

"Stop him, sir, for the love of marcy!" wailed Joe.

"Dunder und blitzen! Dey haf gilled me!" moaned Herr Schwartz, making frantic efforts to swim. "Der vessel is zunk! Ach, himmel! I vas drownedt! Ooh! Oh, mine Vaterlandt! Der ship vas town do der pottoms! Help! Vere vas der lifepoys?"

Gan turned off the water, and the bedraggled and wild-eyed men sat up. Angry voices bellowed hideous threats through Thurston's keyhole.

"Gan-Waga," said his Highness, in tones filled with pain, "did you do this on purpose?"

"No, Chingy. Did it wid de nose-pipes," gurgled the Eskimo. "It butterfuls nose-pipes—squirts a treats!"

"Oi'll cremate yez!" screamed Barry O'Rooney. "Oi'll dhraw and quarter yez!"

"By hokey, I'll ram an umbrella down your throat and open it inside ye!" bellowed Thomas Prout from the cabin.

Herr Schwartz had not realised what had happened with any clearness, but he realised it now. There was a good deal of pluck in his little fat body. Without a bump of caution, pluck is often a dangerous quality to possess. The chef had received more than his share of water, but it failed to quench his burning thirst for vengeance.

He made for Gan like a living comet. Gan took careful aim, fired, and, catching the ruler of the galley with both feet off the ground, bowled him over as he would have bowled over a rabbit.

"Ho, ho, hoo! I gets cocoanuts and cigars fo' dat, Chingy hunk!" he giggled. "I hits de cowseye dats times, hunk!"

Overcome with unholy mirth, Gan doubled himself up to laugh. It was a careless thing to do, for he forgot to turn off the water. In one huge convulsion of merriment he thoughtlessly lifted the nozzle. Ching-Lung tried to dodge, but Joe caught him by the ankle. Down went Ching-Lung before the tide, and then the torrent shot through the door and washed Rupert, who was laughing hysterically, half-way across the room.

Gan saw what he had done. He turned green with horror, dropped the nozzle, and, uttering a shriek of dismay, bolted for the swimming-bath and safety.

Under the Sea on an Unknown Errand—A Climb Over the Rocks—Mysterious Lights—A Ghostly Wreck.

Altogether, Gan-Waga, Esquire, was going the right way to get himself disliked. In other company this might easily have come about, but malice, hatred, and uncharitableness were unknown aboard the Lord of the Deep. For several days the Eskimo spent most of his time in the company of the dog-fish. He was rather afraid that Rupert Thurston might resent the ducking he had received, and he was well aware that Prout, Maddock, O'Rooney, and Joe were waiting for him, armed with rope-ends and boot-stretchers.

Gan was lunching lightly off a pound of tallow-candles when the door, which he had securely locked, opened. The tall figure of Ferrers Lord confronted him. Gan-Waga smiled, and went on with his meal.

"How is the dogfish, Gan?"

"Oh, him butterful 'nough!" answered the Eskimo. "Getting ons fine. Watches him come."

He dangled a whiting in the water by its tail, and the ugly, shark-like fish rose and took it from his hand.

"Calls him Barry Roonatics, cos' he so bad 'nough uglyful," said Gan, as he masticated a candle. "Hoo, hoo, hoo! Nots so uglyful as Barry. My Chingy say de sames. Was Ruperts snappy when I soaks hims, hunk?"

"I know nothing about that; but I want you. We are going out."

Gan crammed the remainder of the candles into his pocket with alacrity. More water began to gush into the bath. At the same moment a bell sounded, the engines ceased their

monotonous buzzing, and the Lord of the Deep came to a standstill.

"Me keep near you, den, hunk," said Gan-Waga.

"Why?" asked Ferrers Lord, the ghost of a smile on his lips.

"Tink I gets my heads punch," said the Eskimo. "Dey nots love me butterful much. Ole Prouts and Joe lookin' for me wid axe-pickers and chopperses. Ho, ho, hoo! Tink I keeps near yo' and my Chingy. Not likes axe-pickers and chopperses; dey too bad 'nough."

Ferrers Lord smiled again. A hoarse voice called Gan-Waga, and other voices joined in. Gan waddled off at the millionaire's heels. He passed Barry, who was concealing a rope's-end behind him, and as he passed Gan put his thumb to his nose.

"By all the cats of Kilkenny, did ye iver see the loike of that?" growled the disgusted Irishman. "The scandalous impulence of the ould fat baste! Troth, Oi was goin' to give him a hoigh ould larrupin', and that's phwat he does!"

Prout heaved a sigh as he discarded a useless cane.

"By hokey," he said, "it's more than flesh and blood can stand. Did ye see him stick his ugly thumb to his uglier nose?"

"Oi did, the rogue! No matther—no matther. We'll save ut up!"

Maddock and Joe, whose duty it was to help the Eskimo into his diving-dress, managed to slightly relieve their pent-up feelings by giving him numerous prods and pinches. Gan bore them heroically until his helmet was on.

"Wait minutes," he said. "Not screw nozzles ups!"

"What's the matter now, souse me?" growled the bo'sun. "You're as much trouble as fifty kids!"

"Cap's slippings down," said Gan. "Pulls him up!"

Through the left goggle Gan-Waga saw Hal Honour standing near. Maddock squeezed his big hand through to adjust the thick flannel cap, and Gan's teeth closed on his thumb.

"Ow! Leggo! Leggo, you cannibal!" howled Maddock, "Ouch! He's bitten me to the bone! I'll—I'll——"

Maddock, with his thumb in his mouth, commenced a new and original dance of his own invention, for Gan had bitten quite hard enough to hurt. Hal Honour himself screwed on Gan's nozzle. Ching-Lung, Thurston, and the millionaire were ready and waiting, looking like three triple-eyed monsters taken direct from a nightmare. They limped heavily into the diving chamber, and the waterproof door was shut by the silent engineer.

"Ho, ho, hoo!" chuckled Gan-Waga, in the depths of the helmet. "Made ole Ben sit up fo' dem puncheses. We nots so silly as we lookses!"

Like Ching-Lung and the Eskimo, Rupert Thurston was completely ignorant of the purpose of this submarine trip. When the outer door opened, and the four lamps flung their bright rays through the gloomy waters, the white discs of light rested on tumbled masses of rock. Huge seaweeds flung up their snaky arms, and anemones of varied hues showed like clusters of flowers. A colony of gurnets and large, brilliant-hued wrasse, gorgeous to look at, but worthless to eat, darted here and there, like great butterflies.

Beyond the short range of the lamps all was shapeless and misty. Ferrers Lord stood for a moment, as if undecided. Then he glanced at the slate fastened to his belt. A rough chart was scrawled on it. He waved his hand. Then, clutching at the fronds of seaweed, he began to climb the rocks, sending silvery beams of phosphorescence dancing through the water at every step.

They followed him with the same care. He moved more quickly as the ascent became easier. Then he halted, and waited for them to join him. Ferrers Lord extinguished his lamp. The others did the same. He touched Rupert's hand and pointed downwards.

For a time they saw nothing. It was night above—a black, tempestuous night—and impenetrable darkness and silence shut them in. Then little by little faint lines of ghostly blue began to form on the black sheet of submarine gloom.

What could it be?

The Great Treasure Ship.

Gan-Waga seized Ching-Lung's hand in sudden terror. He was still somewhat superstitious, and anything that he could not understand frightened him. The lines of flickering blue grew more steady and clear. There, marked out before them in phosphorescent streaks, lay a phantom vessel. She had heeled over to port, and a few of her spars were still standing. A shattered smoke-stack hung by a few stays over her port bulwarks. Her whole appearance was indescribably ghostly and eerie.

Before the others could recover from their surprise, the millionaire was again advancing, great bubbles rising like strings of pearls from the valve of his helmet. The luminous lines dimmed as they neared the sunken vessel. They were caused by myriads of marine creatures that clustered thickly on the ship's woodwork. Ferrers Lord's lamp flashed on her stern, and there in faded letters the divers read: "Senorita Juanita, Rio de Janerio."

She was a vessel of about eight hundred tons, evidently a yacht of an old-fashioned type. Snaky weeds had grown up around her. Slowly Ferrers Lord pulled himself up her sloping side, and pulled himself over her rotten rail. They reached her weed-grown deck.

"Boiler exploded," thought Ching-Lung. "What the deuce was she? I seem to have heard of the Senorita Juanita somewhere."

Her aft deck was completely torn open, and a big lobster waved its tentacles from a heap of splintered wood. Ferrers Lord unwrapped a rope from his waist, and tied a rusty pinnace anchor to it. He dropped the anchor into the hole, and made the rope fast. Then he rapidly wrote a few words on a slate. They read:

"Chilian revolution, 1874. Senor Pedro Amoutada fled in yacht with State treasure on this vessel. Senorita Juanita never heard of again—except by myself. Am going below. She was reputed to carry nearly £400,000 in specie."

Both Thurston and Ching-Lung remembered now, though neither of them had been born at the time of the disaster. Dozens of vessels had gone in search of the missing yacht, and all sorts of theories had been spread abroad as to her fate.

"Four hundred thousand pounds in specie," thought the prince. "Whew! No wonder Lord told me the sea was his bank and treasure-house. Whoa! Wait a minute!"

He wrote something on his own slate, and held it up for the millionaire to see.

"I go halves, you bounder, and don't you forget it."

Ferrers Lord smiled, and lowered himself into the dark pit. Not meaning to be left behind, Ching-Lung slid down the rope after him. They alighted on a tangled heap of rusty iron, the wreckage of the engines. Fish of all kinds love to haunt wrecks, and several enormous congers had made the place their home. They swam round the invaders lazily, but showed neither alarm nor anger. A loathsome octopus writhed his long tentacles, and wrapped one of them round Ching-Lung's wrist. The touch of the sucker was like an electric shock. Ching-Lung gave the brute a blow with his axe. It spat out a stream of sepia that blackened the water like ink.

It was some time before they could see, but gradually the water cleared. Then they saw that they had gone to the port side, they would have escaped a climb. Timbers and plating had been blown clean away, leaving a jagged hole six feet high, over which the seaweed hung like a fringe. A few slashes of the millionaire's axe cleared a passage.

It was an easy climb to the deck. Thurston, all eagerness, scrawled "Have you found it?" on his slate. Ching's answer was "No such luck, sonny."

They waddled forward in the millionaire's wake, as ugly and repulsive in their inflated suits as four ghouls who had come to feed on the corpses of the sunken vessel's crew. The fore-companion was clear, and they descended by it. Broken timbers blocked the way. Ferrers Lord turned back once more. It was evident that the ill-fated yacht would not yield up her treasure easily.

It seemed ages before the welcome light of the conning-tower gleamed through the dull water. The door closed behind them, and a few moments later ready hands were divesting them of their helmets. Ferrers Lord spoke a few words into the telephone.

The submarine rose high enough to clear the rocks, and then, the vessel bustling with life and energy, dropped gently and came to rest beside the vessel of the dead. The steel shutters of the saloon were rolled back. Thurston and Ching-Lung drew up two easy-chairs, and lighted their cigarettes.

"This is a sight one seldom sees, old man," said Ching-Lung, "and there's no charge for admission. There goes Hal Honour."

The distorted figure of the great engineer crossed the window and vanished. He appeared for a second on the yacht's deck. Other figures followed him. Thurston grunted as he watched them working a powerful hand-drill.

"I suppose they are going to dynamite her," he said. "By the way, Ching, is there any law about treasure recovered from the bottom of the sea?"

"Not that know of, old man," answered the prince, "unless it's within the three-mile limit. I fancy it all belongs to the people who find it. Anyhow, I don't think anyone outside ourselves will handle much of that. What do you think?"

There was a gentle knock.

(Another splendid long instalment of this grand new serial next week.)

My Readers' Page

WHOM TO WRITE TO:
EDITOR, "THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
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OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE GEM" LIBRARY.
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AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR"
EVERY FRIDAY.

The Editor is always pleased to hear from his Chums, at home or abroad.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"IN ANOTHER'S NAME!"
By Frank Richards.

Under this title our favourite author has written one of the most powerful yarns it has ever been my pleasure to read.

Harry Wharton is mystified when he receives a number of anonymous letters commanding him to meet the sender in a secluded part of the woods near Greyfriars School. The Remove Form captain ignores them, until he receives a telegram containing the same order. Then he and his chums set off in a body. Harry walks boldly forward to meet the writer of the anonymous letters, has a heated interview, and, incensed by a threat the man makes, calls up his chums, who, in their own way, "make the punishment fit the crime!"

However, the matter does not end there, and the mystery is not cleared up until Skinner, the one-time reprobate, is compelled to come forward in order to lift the cloud of suspicion which hangs over Harry Wharton's head.

Under no circumstances must you miss

"IN ANOTHER'S NAME!"

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

S. Mc.P (Ayrshire).—I am afraid a competition on the lines you suggest would prove to be too easy.

George B., and others.—I am sorry you are disappointed at not hearing more about your favourite character in "The Penny Popular," but I suppose I cannot expect everybody to be perfectly satisfied. Perhaps I shall be able to do something more for you later on.

R. Smith (Australia).—Vernon-Smith is a surname. It is a hyphen word.

"Old Reader" (Barking).—To cure yourself of the complaint, it being in your case only slight, undertake a course of suitable exercises.

J. H. N. (Sheffield).—I am afraid I am unable to value your coin, as you do not send any details.

W. Hall (Newcastle).—Thank you for your letter. I will put what you say before Mr. Richards.

R. N. (Preston).—I am sorry I cannot comply with your request.

B. C. (Birmingham).—There are twenty-six numbers of "The Magnet" to a volume.

"A True Magnetite."—The first number of "The Magnet" is now out of print.

M. Allan (London).—I am very much obliged for your suggestion, which I will bear in mind.

G. Evans (Birmingham).—"Remove Form" is simply the name given to the particular Form our chums of Greyfriars are in. A Remove Form is found in most public schools at the present time.

J. C. B. (Oldham).—You will hear more about the particular object you mention anon.

C. Plant (Birmingham).—Very many thanks for letter and toryettes. I will bear what you say in mind.

A. Pegg (Rotherhithe).—I am afraid that I cannot advise you on the subject.

W. W. (Hull).—You can assure your friends that I have not forgotten the characters. They will hear more of them in the near future.

"Ruby" and "Pearl" (Ramsgate).—You will hear more of Cousin Ethel very soon.

"A Loyal Reader" (Castledere, Ireland).—Will you please send me your full address?

"Singer" (Cardiff).—You are just at the age when your voice will "break," and you should rest it as much as possible, if you want to take up singing.

M. C. (London).—Water on the hair when used in moderation does not harm the roots; hair oil if applied in small quantities is good for the hair. The best remedy for your other complaint would be gentle massage twice daily.

"An Enthusiastic Reader" (Portsmouth).—The fields are inside the gates.

"A Butonian Reader."—Will you send me your full name and address?

"Old Reader" (Kirkcaldy, N.B.).—The old numbers you refer to are out of print.

"A Dublin Knut."—By all means write to me as often as you like. I shall always be pleased to hear from you.

C. of T. P. L. (South Wales).—Very many thanks for your letter. I am considering what you suggest.

HOW TO KEEP FIT.—No. 8.
By a Sergeant-Instructor.

In the Gym.

The tricks you see performed upon the stage are not due to any great strength on the part of the performer. I am now alluding to the graceful performances which take place on the horizontal bars. Knack is the secret. To know just when to use this muscle, and when that muscle. Take the "giant swing," sometimes called "the grand circle." This is the name applied to the complete circle of the horizontal bar, with the arms at their full extent. The knack consists in knowing just when to pull on the biceps, and just when to give that upward jerk which sends the body over the bar. Of course, strength is necessary; but it is not a feat of strength, but nerve and knack.

If you can use a gymnasium, I would advise you to make use of the parallel bars, in preference to all the rest of the apparatus, for a while at least. Here is a fine and a safe exercise:

Stand between the bars at one end, with your hands resting a few inches from the ends. Spring up, and stiffen both arms until your body can go no further. Then bring all your strength to the effort of forcing your body to its first position. This is grand for both the biceps—on top of the arm—and for the triceps, under the arm. If you succeed after a year in doing this exercise twelve times, properly, you are in the pink of condition.

How to Climb a Rope.

This is a most useful and healthy exercise. It is very simple if you have a good grip. In the gym. you will find a rope suspended from the roof. Catch hold tightly, and draw yourself up by the strength of your arms. Use one at a time, and catch hold of the rope above the place where you have already got a hold, and before your arm has time to stretch. This is called "climbing with arms bent." Come down in the same way, holding with one arm bent as you let go and grip with the other hand. You may use your feet, of course, but this is a different and far less difficult exercise. The rope is gripped between the feet by placing the outside of the feet together, and using the knees to grip also. This exercise should be learned and practised by every boy and girl. Your life may one day depend on your ability to swarm up a rope smartly and surely.

When in a gym. do not attempt any tricky turns without the permission of your instructor. The feat may appear easy, and you are burning to try it. It may be your last attempt, if no watchful eyes are upon you. Go ahead, by all means, but use caution. Little by little is a good motto. Do not overtax your strength, or you will find the result far worse than no exercise at all. If you feel painful and stiff after an evening's good work, the cure is—more work, done gradually.

The Editor

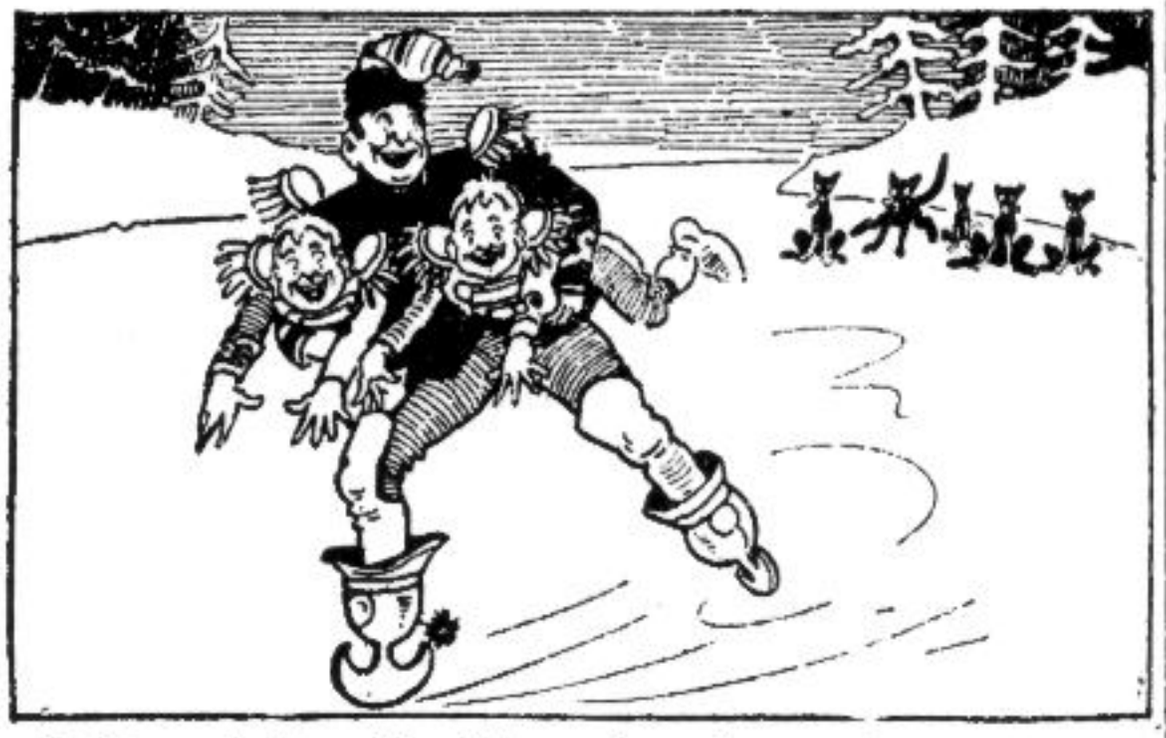
THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY

SPECIAL COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

THEY HAD A NARROW ESKATE!

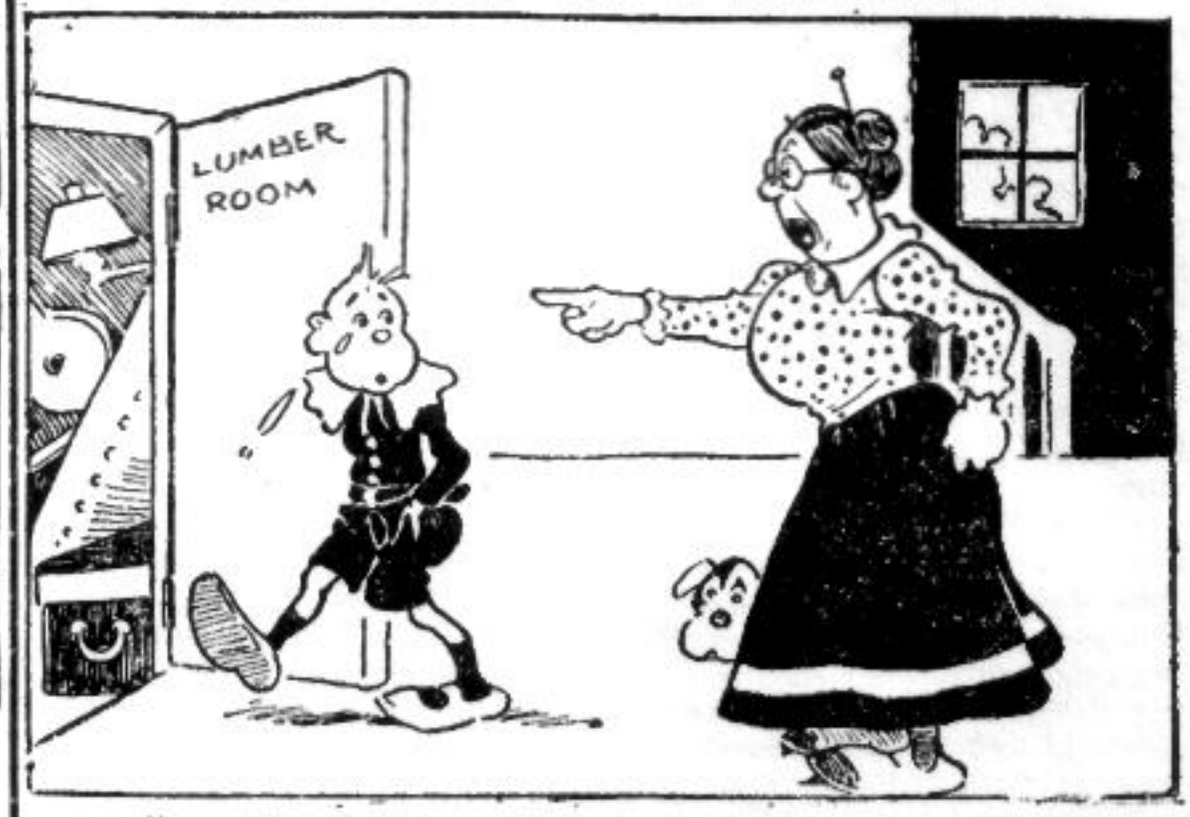
1. This is the way skates were invented, readers. General Bunkovitchski was returning from the war, preceded by two drummer-boys, when suddenly—

2. Wolves were seen approaching. "Quickski!" cried the gallant general. "Give me your helmets, sharpovitch!" And grabbing the drummer-boys' helmets—

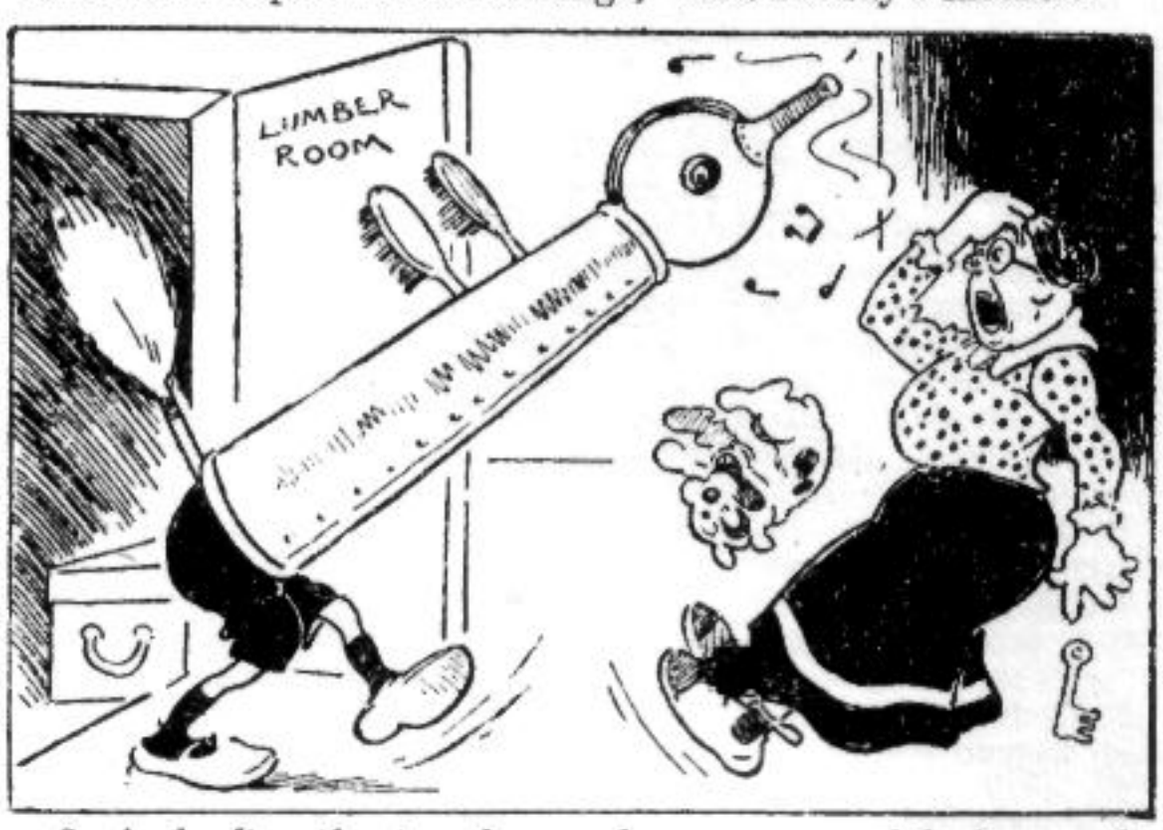


3. He used them like this, and getting on the ice, they all got home nice and comfy, and in good time for tea. No wonder the wolves looked surprised.

FREDDY HAD HIS R-R-REVENGE!



1. "Go into that lumber-room for two hours, and when you come out I expect to see a change," said Freddy's mother.



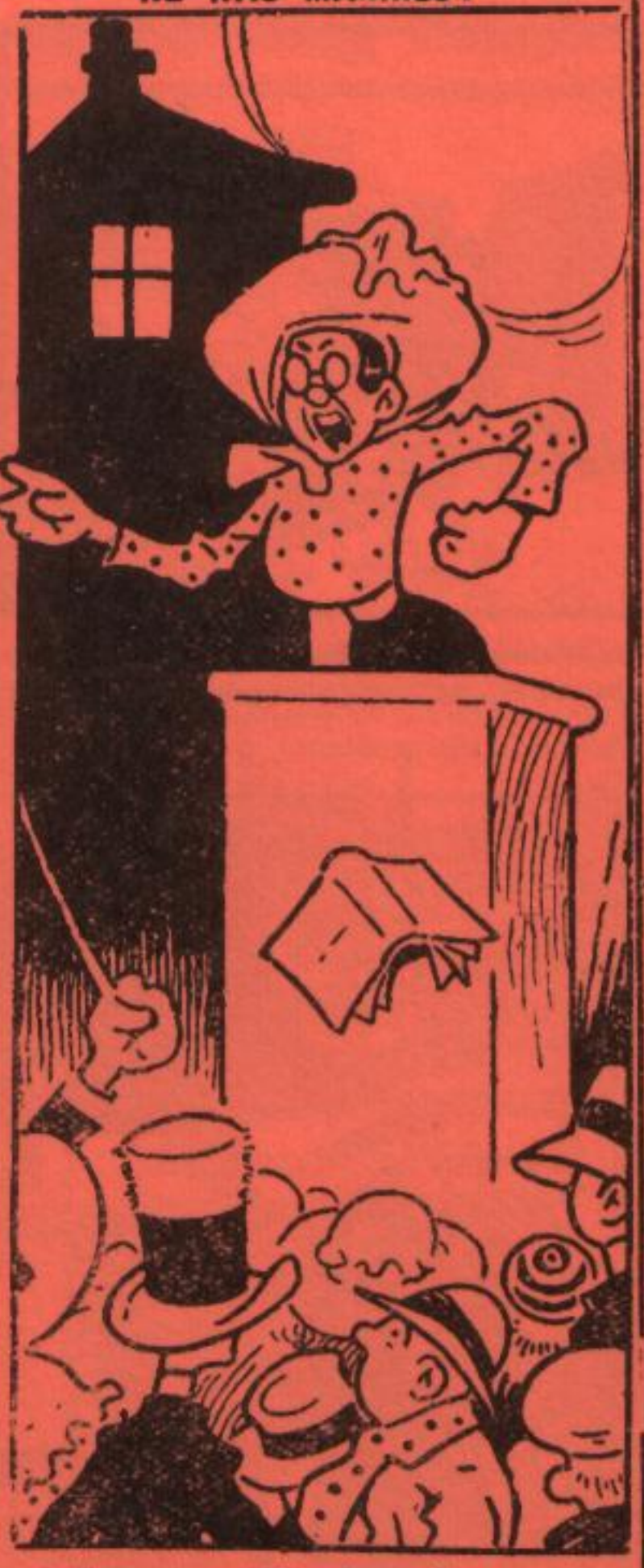
2. And after the two hours she saw an awful change, for Freddy had used that lumber-room and turned himself into a prehistoric reptile. Help!

A LINE—ILLUSTRATED.

"The Clothes of a Summer's Day."

Printed and published by the Proprietors at The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, England. Agents for Australia Gordon & Gotch, Ltd., Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, and Wellington, N.Z.; for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd., Cape Town and Johannesburg. Subscription. 7s. per annum. Saturday, June 28th, 1913.

HE WAS MARRIED!

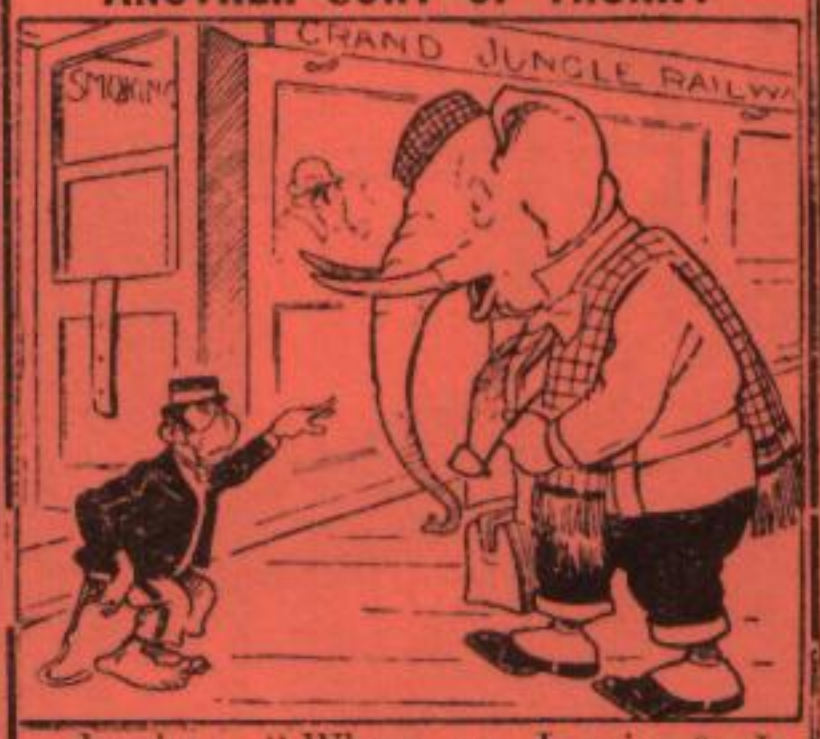


Suffragette: "The time will come when woman will get man's wages!"
Man in Crowd: "Yes—next Saturday night."

QUICK, MARCH!

Poet: "I can write about anything."
Editor: "Well, right-about-face! There's the door!"

ANOTHER SORT OF TRUNK!



Jumbo: "Where am I going? In the smoker, of course!"
Gateman Jacko: "No trunks allowed in the smoker. You'll have to go in the baggage-car."

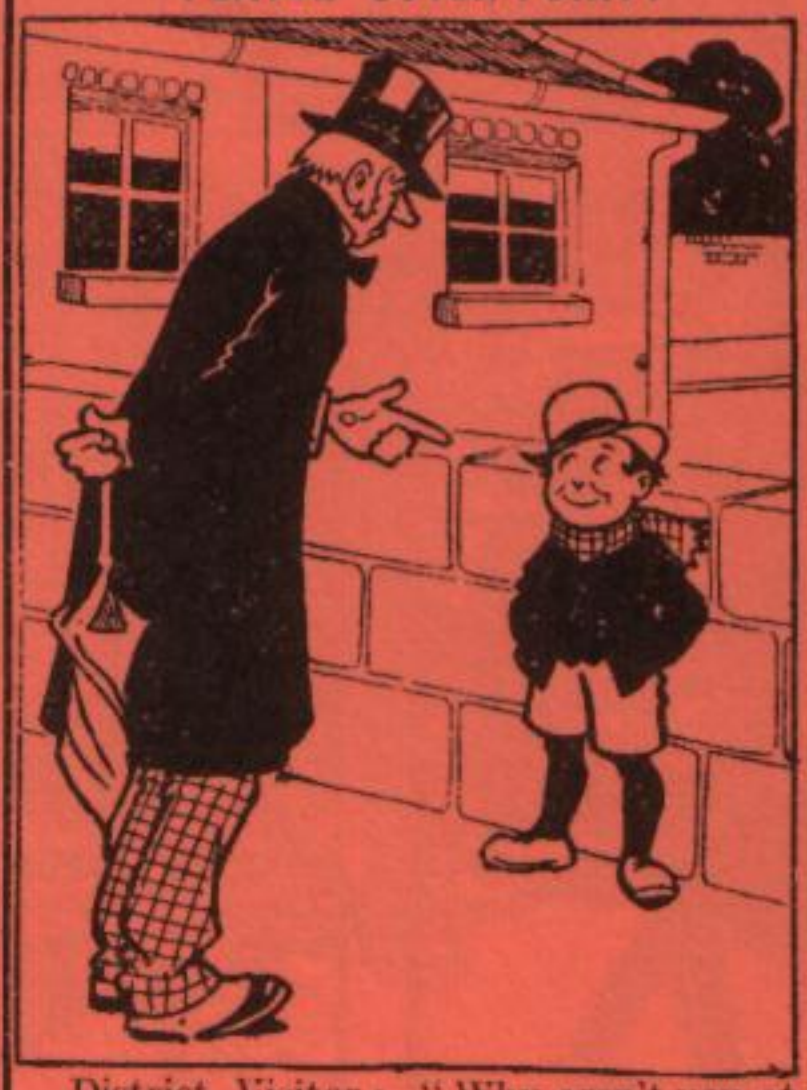
ILLUSTRATED SAYINGS!

"As he gazed out of the window a beautiful picture caught his eye!"

FETCH PA'S CANE, SOMEBODY!

Father: "You'll never grow big if you smoke."
Son: "How about those chimneys, then?"

PLAYED COVER-POINT!

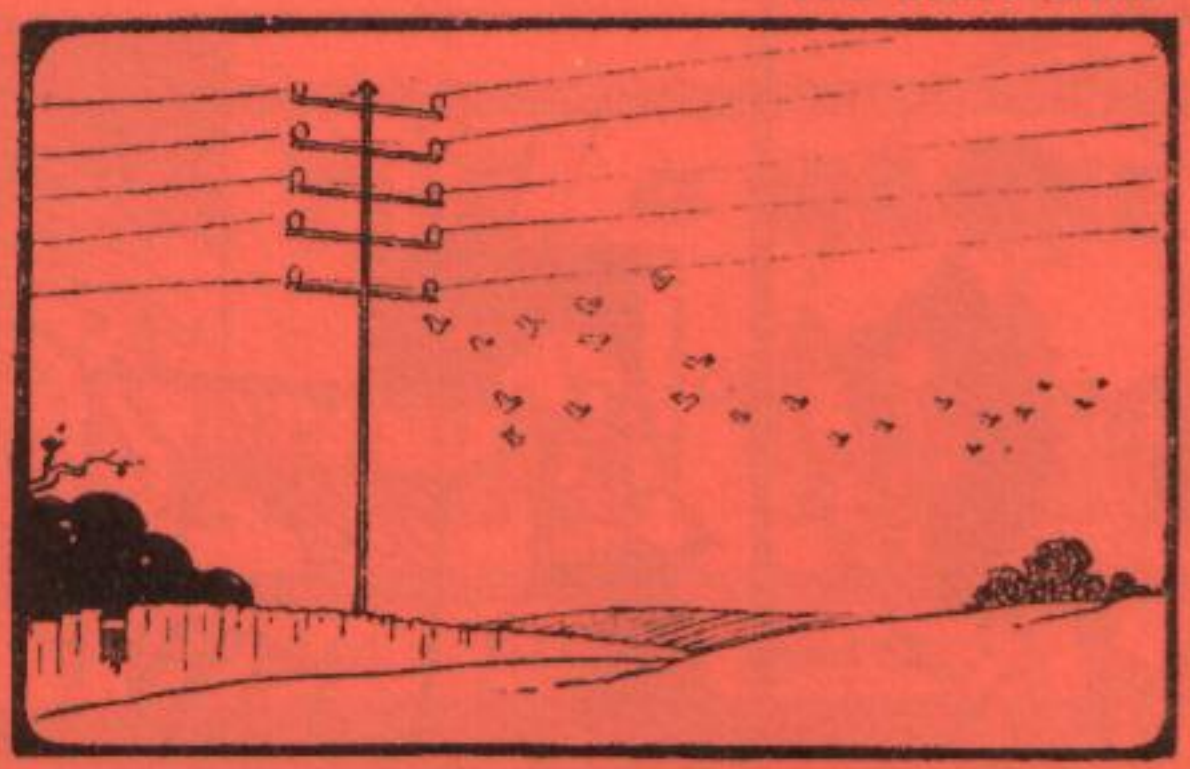


District Visitor: "Why aren't you at school this morning?"
Tommy: "Mother wanted me part of the time. You see, she's lost the lid of the copper, and I had to sit on top and keep the steam in!"

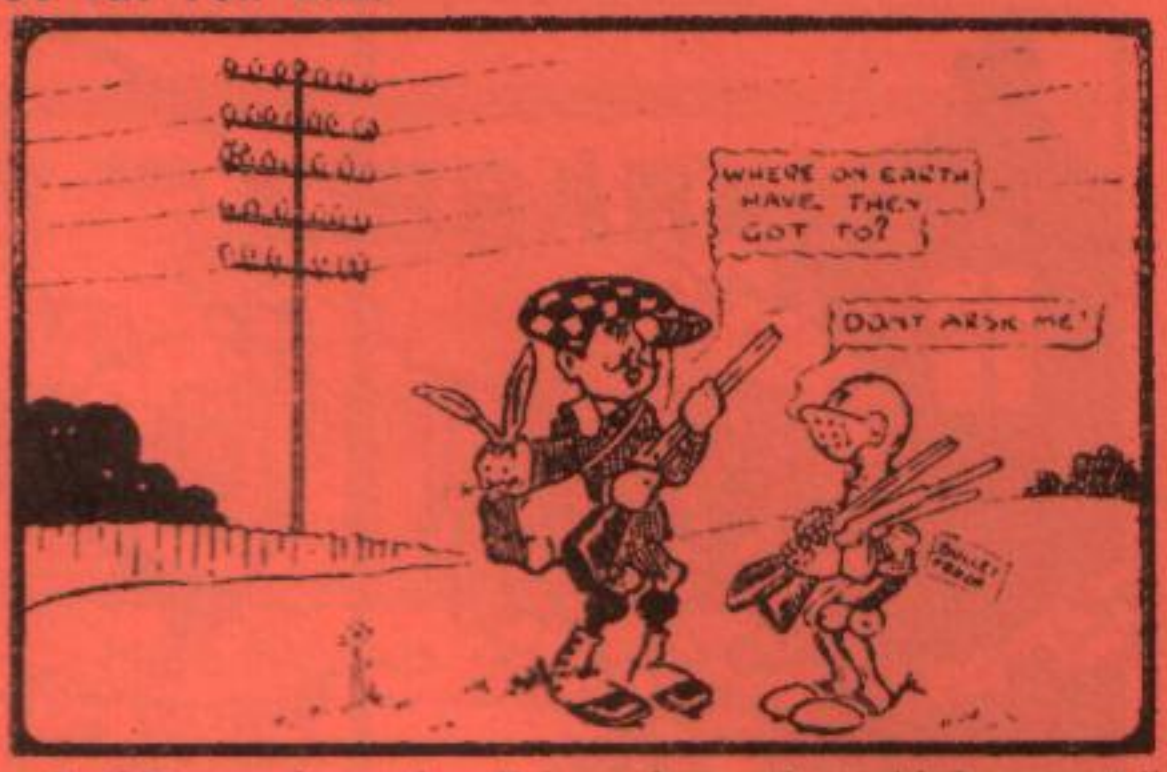
A VEILED JOKE!

Boy (watching wedding): "Papa, why do brides wear long veils?"
Papa: "To conceal their satisfaction, I presume, my son."

THE BIRDS WERE TOO FLY FOR HIM.



1. "Look out, boys!" said the Sparrow. "Here comes that City feller with a gun. Let's hide."



2. "Now, where the dickens have those birds gone?" said Algy later.

(Concentrate your eyesight on the telegraph-pole, reader, and you will have the solution to the problem.)

SAUCY GIRL.

He (feeling his way): "I wish we were good friends enough for you to call me by my first name."

She: "Oh, your last name is good enough for me!"

RING OFF!

[Doctor (answering ring at 2 a.m.): "Well?"

Biffin: "No; ill, doctor—very ill."

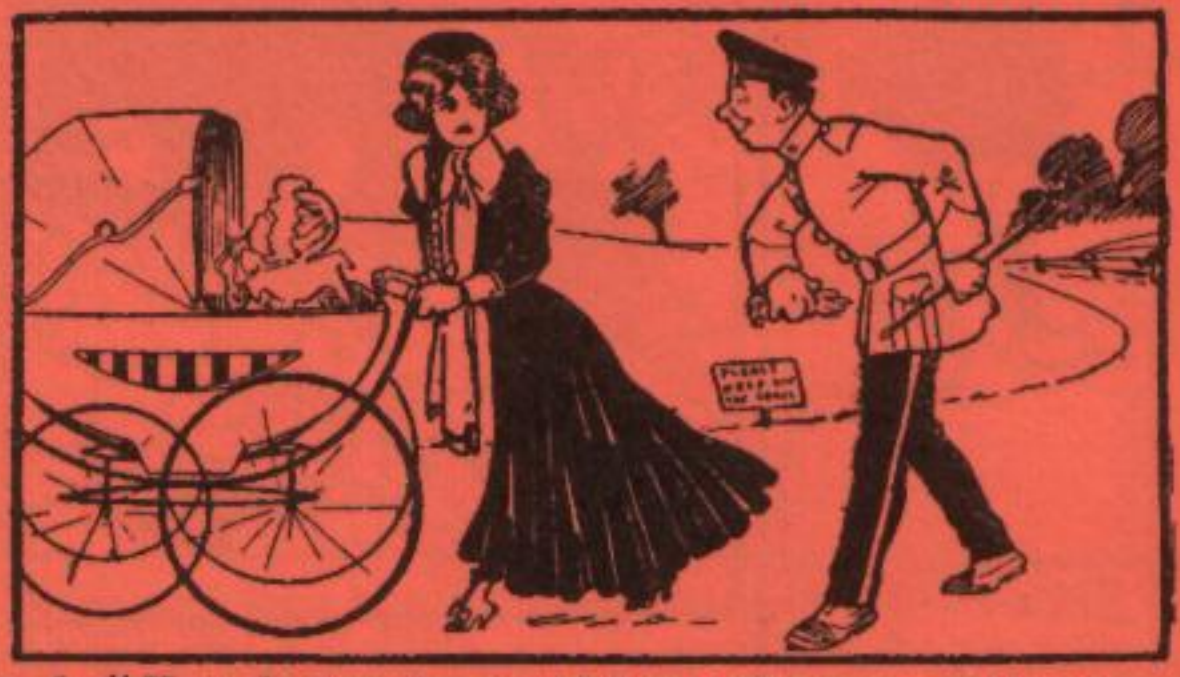
THE EARL AND THE GIRL.

Gladys: "I was sitting talking to the Earl of Landtax when you called last night, dear."

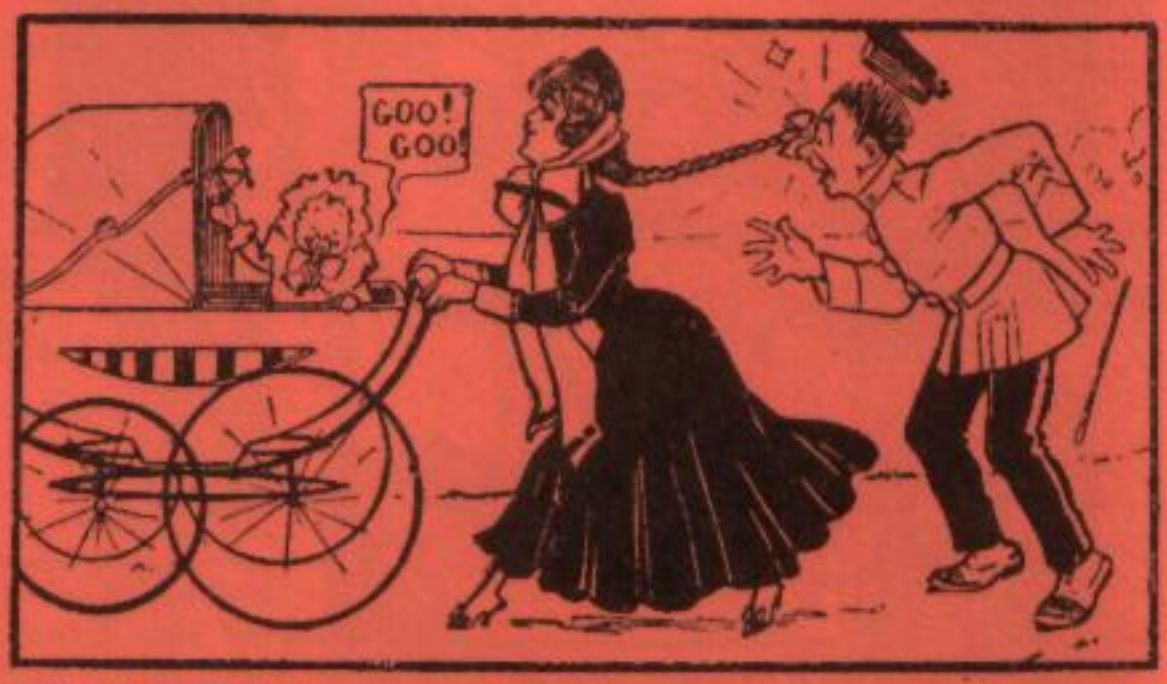
Flossie: "Where were you sitting?"

Gladys: "On the peer."

IT SC—HAIRED POOR TOMMY ATKINS.



1. "How do you do, miss?" said the saucy soldier boy. "Nice day if it doesn't rain—eh, what? May I wheel the pram for you?"



2. But at that moment Winnie, the pretty nursegirl, turned her head sharply, and Tommy had a nasty blow on the proboscis, as per above.