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No. 482. Vol. 11.



TRENCH WARFARE!

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Published by Howard Baker Press Ltd, 27a Arterberry Road, Wimbledon, London, S. W. 20.



NATIONAL SERVICE AT GREYFRIARS!

By FRANK RICHARDS.

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Rival Claims!

"WHAT'S the little game, I wonder?" Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, asked that question.

"Echo answers what!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"The whatfulness is terrific!" observed Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

The Famous Five of the Remove had just come in from the playing-fields, and they stopped to survey a new notice on the board.

Several Remove fellows were already gathered round the board reading the notice, and the Famous Five joined them to see what was on. It was quite a prominent notice, in the elegant handwriting of Temple of the Fourth. It ran:

**"GREAT PATRIOTIC MEETING!
SEVEN O'CLOCK
IN THE RAG!
ALL THE LOWER SCHOOL ARE
REQUESTED TO ROLL UP!!!
THE MEETING WILL BE
ADDRESSED BY C. R. TEMPLE.
SENIORS ARE INVITED.
ALL PATRIOTIC MEMBERS OF
GREYFRIARS SCHOOL ARE EX-
PECTED TO BE PRESENT.
"BY ORDER."**

"Well, what's Temple's little game?" asked Peter Todd. "Blessed if I feel inclined to be addressed by C. R. Temple!"

"Same here!" remarked Johnny Bull. "And what about our rehearsal? That's fixed for seven in the Rag."

"There'll be a clash!" grinned Nugent.

"The clashfulness will be terrific!" observed Hurree Singh. "But the esteemed rehearsal can proceed while Temple is addressing the patriotic Lower School."

"Like his cheek!" said Wharton warmly. "There's our notice on the board to the members of the Dramatic Society, fixing the time for the rehearsal. Temple must have seen it."

"We're not putting it off!" said Bob Cherry emphatically.

"No fear!" "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Temple! Let's ask him what the game is."

Cecil Reginald Temple, captain of the Fourth Form, came along the passage with Dabney and Fry, his chums.

They were deep in conversation, and did not appear to notice the crowd of Removites.

"Double-trenching is the thing," Cecil Reginald was saying. "I know it's hard work, but we've simply got to dig the trenches, that's all."

"Trenches?" repeated Bob Cherry, with a stare. "Who's going to dig trenches, Temple?"

Temple glanced round. "Eh? Did you speak, Cherry?"

"Yes, I did, fathead! Who's going to dig trenches? Are you three cheery lunatics in the next draft for Flanders, by any chance?" asked Bob sarcastically.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Not exactly," said Temple. "As a matter of fact, my dear fellow, we've got somethin' on a bit more important than drafts for Flanders."

"Eh?" "What?"

"More important than the war?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, yaas!"

"Why, you shrieking idiot—"

"What's the little game?" demanded Vernon-Smith.

"Wait and see!" replied Temple loftily.

"Wait and see is out of date!" remarked Peter Todd, with a chuckle.

"Look here, you can't hold your meeting in the Rag at seven!"

"Eh? Why can't we?" demanded Temple warmly.

"Because the Rag is booked for a rehearsal of the Remove Dramatic Society. That's our paper on the board—it was put up yesterday."

"Dramatic Society be blown!" said Fry. "There's no time for amateur theatricals now! Don't you know there's a war on?"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "You should look at the papers, you kids. Then you'd find out that the country's at war!"

"You cheeky ass—" began Bob Cherry wrathfully.

As Bob's father was at the Front, he was quite well aware that there was a war on.

"You howling chump!" exclaimed Ogilvy.

Ogilvy of the Remove had the unique distinction of having six brothers at the Front. That was the best show that any fellow at Greyfriars could make.

"This meeting is important," said Temple loftily. "In fact, it's of national importance. I may have noticed your paper on the board I forgot! But there's no time now for such rot!"

"Rot?" repeated Wharton.

"Yes, rot!"

"You're thinking of the Fourth Form players!" said Wibley. "That's rot, if you like! The Remove Dramatic Society is IT!"

"Yes, rather!"

Temple waved his hand in a lofty way.

"You kids keep off the grass, with your blessed dramatic rot!" he said.

"You can come to the meeting, if you like. In fact, you'd better come! All Greyfriars patriots are expected to turn up!"

"We're going to hold our rehearsal, fathead!"

"You're not! It won't be allowed!"

"My hat!"

Temple & Co. walked on loftily.

"Double trenches," Temple resumed, as he went on. "Double trenches, you know, and—"

That was all that was heard.

"What is the blessed duffer burbling about trenches for?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Off his rocker!" suggested Johnny Bull. "Anyway, we're going to rehearse 'King John' all the same. Those Fourth Form duffers want taking down a peg or two."

"You bet!"

All the Removites were agreed upon that.

There was a keen rivalry between the Fourth Form and the Remove, and in football and cricket Harry Wharton & Co. certainly held the honours.

Temple evidently had some new wheeze for securing the limelight; but the Remove fellows did not mean to put off their rehearsal on that account. In fact, the prospect of a row with the Fourth made them keener on the rehearsal than ever. Fellows who did not belong to the Dramatic Society at all determined to be present, to take part in the expected row.

The Removites went in to tea in a war-like mood.

After tea they gathered for the invasion of the Rag. The Famous Five—Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Nugent, Hurree Singh, and Johnny Bull—were all leading members of the Dramatic Society; and they were also excellent fighting-men, which, on the present occasion, was perhaps still more to the point.

Vernon-Smith and Todd and Mark Linley and Tom Brown and Squiff and Delarey and Ogilvy and Rake and six or seven other fellows joined them in the passage.

When the party reached the Rag they found a considerable number of Fourth-Formers pouring into that apartment.

Temple's call to a patriotic meeting was being obeyed by the members of his own Form at least.

Wilkinson of the Fourth was stationed in the doorway, and was apparently acting as doorkeeper.

He held up his hand authoritatively as the Remove party appeared.

"You fellows for the meeting?"

"Not exactly," said Wharton. "We're for the rehearsal."

"There isn't any rehearsal," said Wilkinson.

"Your mistake—there is!"

"Only people for the meeting admitted here," said Wilkinson firmly. "If you're not attending the meeting, pass on!"

"Well, of all the nerve!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Bump him, and let's get in!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Hands off, you cheeky fags!" roared Wilkinson indignantly.

But the Removites collared the doorkeeper, bumped him on the floor, and walked into the Rag—over the doorkeeper.

They made it a point to wipe their boots on the unhappy Wilkinson as they passed in over him; and by the time they

had passed the doorkeeper was in an extremely dusty and disordered condition.

"Yow-ow-ow! Gerroff! Yoop! Yah! Oh!" came in suffocated accents from Wilkinson of the Fourth.

But the Removites marched on, regardless of his cries.

A shout greeted them as they entered the Rag. Cecil Reginald Temple had viewed their proceedings with boiling indignation.

"Get out, you fags!" shouted Temple.

"Bow-wow!"

"Look here——"

"Rats! Ring off!"

"Boot 'em out!" roared Fry.

"Come on!" said Bob Cherry invitingly.

"Hold on!" said Temple. "We came here for a patriotic meeting, not for a rag with a gang of fags. We'll lick them another time. Gentlemen, the meeting is now open!"

The Removites, grinning, prepared for their rehearsal of "King John." And Cecil Reginald Temple mounted upon a chair, and the Fourth-Formers gathered round him, with one eye, as it were, upon their rivals at the other end of the room. It was only too probable that the patriotic meeting and the rehearsal would clash.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Something Like a Scrap!

"GENTLEMEN!"

"Hear, hear!"

"This meeting has been called——"

"Heat me those irons hot!" came in Bob Cherry's deep tones. "And look thou standest within the arras."

The Remove edition of "King John" began with the dungeon scene. Frank Nugent was Prince Arthur, and Bob Cherry was Hubert. Johnny Bull and Squiff were the two murderers. Shakespeare, as played by the Remove Dramatic Society, was considerably abridged. Whether the abridgment was an improvement was perhaps a doubtful point, but certainly it made it far more likely that the audience would stick it out to the finish.

"When I strike my foot upon the bosom of the ground," continued Bob Cherry, "rush forth and bind the boy whom you shall find with me fast to the chair."

"Gentlemen, this meeting has been called for a great and patriotic reason. You are all aware that the country is threatened with a food shortage this year——"

"I hope your warrant will bear out the deed!"

"Owing to the submarine bizney of the disgusting Huns. It's up to every fellow to help in adding to the national supplies of grub. Therefore this meeting has been called——"

"Uncleanly scruples! Fear not you! Look to it! Young lad, come forth! I have to say with you."

"To consider the position. It is up to the Fourth Form of Greyfriars to set an example to the rest of the school in food production."

"Hear, hear!"

"Good-morrow, Hubert."

"My idea is, therefore, that the Head shall be requested to give us allotments in the school grounds where we can grow potatoes——"

"Good-morrow, little prince!"

"I've been readin' up a book on vegetable-growin', and it's really as easy as fallin' off a form. You trench the ground——"

"As little prince, having so great a title to be more prince, as may be. You are sad!"

"Having trenched the ground, you stick in your seed potatoes. A good foot apart is best——"

"Indeed, I have been merrier."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Both the rehearsers and the patriotic meeting were chuckling by this time. Lines from "King John" mixing with a speech on potato-growing certainly had a very funny effect.

But Cecil Reginald Temple did not chuckle. He was pink with wrath.

He ceased his speech, and glared at the Removites.

"Will you silly asses dry up?" he bawled.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mercy on me!" continued Nugent. "Mehinks nobody should be sad but I. Yet I remember, when I was in France——"

"Ring off!" yelled Temple. "How's a chap to make a speech while you're spouting that piffle?"

"Piffle!" exclaimed Wibley warmly. "Do you call Shakespeare piffle, you howling duffer?"

"How are we to get on with the rehearsal while you're talking rot?" demanded Wharton, in his turn.

"You cheeky Remove fag——"

"You swanking Fourth Form duffer——"

"Look here——"

"Rats!"

Temple jumped down off the chair. Inspired by high patriotic fervour, and full of a great new scheme, he could not stand it any longer. The Remove rehearsal appeared to him in the light of Nero fiddling while Rome was burning.

"Kick those fags out!" he roared.

"Hear, hear!"

"Go for 'em!" shouted Wilkinson.

There was a rush towards the rehearsers.

"Line up!" sang out Bob Cherry.

"Buck up, Remove!"

Rehearsal and patriotic meeting had both come to a simultaneous and sudden end. There was a terrific scrimmage instead.

The Fourth-Formers had rather the advantage of numbers, but the Remove were great fighting-men, and they were quite ready for battle.

The rush of the Fourth was stopped, and they were driven back in their turn. They rallied, however, and engaged hotly with the enemy.

The Rag was a very good imitation of pandemonium for some minutes. Scuffling and pommelling and yelling and trampling resounded on all sides. Other fellows belonging to both Forms came crowding in to join up, as it were, on the outbreak of war. There were half a dozen couples rolling on the floor in terrific struggle, hand-to-hand combats were proceeding in every corner, and there were rushing and trampling galore. The din was tremendous, and in the excitement of the combat the rival Forms forgot that it must be heard far beyond the limits of the Rag.

They were suddenly reminded of that fact, however.

Wingate, Gwynne, and Walker, three of the Sixth, rushed into the room with ashplants in their hands.

They did not pause to make any remarks to the rioters. It was a time for action, not for words.

They rushed among the combatants, and their blows fell with great impartiality on everyone within reach.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, as Wingate's ashplant landed across his shoulders. "Gerroff! Yaroooh!"

"Get out, the lot of you!" roared Wingate.

"Yarooooh!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Keep off!"

"Oh, my hat!"

There was a rush for the door. Fourth and Remove were equally anxious to escape. Three ashplants going like flails were not to be argued with.

Naturally a jam took place in the doorway.

This put the juniors in a very favourable position for punishment, and the attack in the rear by the three prefects elicited fiendish yells from the unfortunate juniors.

They struggled through at last, and fled.

Only two or three breathless juniors remained in the Rag, and these were promptly routed and clouted out by the prefects.

Wingate bestowed a wrathful glare on the crowd in the passage when the room was cleared.

"You noisy young scoundrels——"

"I say, Wingate——"

"Look here, Wingate——"

"Clear off, all of you!" shouted Wingate.

"But we're holding a meeting!" roared Temple.

"We're having a rehearsal!" yelled Wharton.

Wingate closed the door of the Rag, locked it, and put the key in his pocket. Apparently the rival claims to a meeting and a rehearsal did not have much weight with him.

"Now clear off!" he rapped out.

"But look here——"

"Have you got anything to say, Temple?"

"Yes, I have! I——"

"Hold out your hand instead!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" mumbled Cecil Reginald.

Swish! Swish!

"Have you got anything to say, Wharton?"

"No fear!" said Wharton promptly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, get out of my sight, and if you make any more row I'll fetch your Form-master to you!"

And the juniors cleared off. The rehearsal and the patriotic meeting were over.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Not a Bad Idea!

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Oh dear!"

"Rotten!"

"The painfulness in my esteemed shoulders is terrific!"

The Famous Five had foregathered in Study No. 1 in the Remove passage after the unfortunate affair in the Rag.

That cheery quintet of juniors had suffered considerably from the reckless application of ashplants. A chorus of mumbles and groans sounded in Study No. 1.

"Never mind, we've dished the Fourth," said Bob Cherry, as cheerfully as possible.

"The dishfulness of our esteemed selves is also great!" groaned Hurree Jamsel Ram Singh.

"Yow! I'm hurt!" mumbled Johnny Bull.

"Wingate's a beast!" groaned Nugent.

"The silly ass seemed to think he was beating carpets!" Yow-ow!"

"Well, the Fourth got as much as we did," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"But, say, you heard what Temple was gassing about?"

"Something about potatoes. Blow him and his taters!"

"It's not a bad idea," said Harry, with a very thoughtful look. "Blessed if I know how Temple came by it—an ass like that! Come to think of it, potato-

growing is a bit more important than rehearsing Shakespeare."

"Well, we can't grow potatoes, I suppose?"

"Why not?" said Wharton.

"Eh?"

"The whyfiness is terrific!"

"It's a jolly good idea, though Temple thought of it!" said Wharton. "They're doing it in some public schools already. We could chuck up amateur theatricals for a bit, and take to vegetable-growing."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Everybody ought to be doing it, you know. The submarine bizney may turn out to be really dangerous. We can't very well grow corn here—"

"Not really?" asked Johnny Bull sarcastically. "I was wondering whether I could raise some wheat in a window-box in the study window."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats! Look here, we could grow potatoes," said Wharton, evidently very much taken with the idea. "We're on food regulations now, and they will be stiffer later on, most likely. Potatoes are a jolly good food, and you can eat them instead of bread, if bread runs short. I wonder I never thought of it before. We did try gardening once, you know—"

"And chucked it up."

"Yes. But this time it's of national importance. Temple's an ass, and he will make a muck of the scheme. But there's no reason why the Remove shouldn't take it in hand and make a success of it."

"Well, that's so."

"How do you grow potatoes?" asked Nugent.

"Well, you plant 'em, you know," said Wharton rather cautiously. "You dig the ground first, and—and put in seed potatoes, you know, and—and—and they grow up in no time."

"I've heard there's a scarcity of seed potatoes," said Bob.

"I dare say there is; but if you can't get seed potatoes, any old taters will do, next best. The thing is to grow 'em. It would be a corker to grow enough potatoes for the whole school, and perhaps have a ton or two left over to hand out to the poor in Friardale and Courtfield. They'll need 'em next winter."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Temple will be awfully ratty if we collar his scheme," he remarked.

"Well, he was calling his meeting to point out to us that we ought to join up as vegetable-growers, I suppose. We're taking his tip, that's all."

"And we could make a success of it, and Temple couldn't," agreed Bob. "Why, all the Remove wiring in, would produce enough potatoes to—to feed half the county, very likely. Of course, it'll cost money."

"There'll have to be a subscription. We'll hold a Form meeting on the subject," said Wharton.

"Not in the Rag?" grinned Nugent.

"Ahem! No. In this study. All the leading members of the Form," said Harry. "No need to call Bunter and Fishy and Skinner, and those chaps. They're slackers, and would be against anything in the shape of hard work. We'll get Squiff and Toddy and Smithy and Tom Brown and Delarey and Hazel and Newland and Rake and Micky Desmond, and one or two others. What do you fellows say?"

"Good egg!" said the Co.

The anguish caused by the trouble in the Rag had subsided by this time, and the Co. were prepared to be enthusiastic once more.

Bob Cherry hurried off to call the recruits to the meeting in Study No. 1.

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Some of the Removites were beginning their preparation; but prep was put off for the purpose of attending the meeting.

The news that a scheme was in hand for giving the Fourth Form the kybosh was quite enough to draw the Removites thither.

Study No. 1 was crowded.

The meeting had gathered when Billy Bunter blinked in, with a cunning gleam in his eyes behind his big spectacles. Bunter had spotted that there was something unusual on in Wharton's study.

"I say, you fellows—" he began.

Bob Cherry waved his hand to the door.

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"This is a business meeting—porpoises not admitted," said Peter Todd. "Make yourself scarce, Bunt."

"Perhaps you'd like me to tell Wingate," said Bunter, with a sneer.

"Eh? What could you tell Wingate?" demanded Wharton.

Bunter sniffed.

"Do you think I don't know what the game is?" he exclaimed. "You're going to have a feed, against the food regulations. I know your little game!"

"You fat idiot!" roared Johnny Bull.

"You needn't yell at me, Bull. I know the little game. I don't approve of it. Still, I'm willing to be a pal, and I don't mind joining you once in a way. Where's the grub?" inquired Bunter, blinking round the study.

The Famous Five gave the Owl of the Remove a glare of exasperation.

Billy Bunter was perpetually seeking to dodge the food restrictions, which did not agree with his ideas at all, and he did not believe that anybody else was more particular upon the point than he was himself.

Bob Cherry picked up the poker.

"Outside!" he said briefly.

"I say, you fellows— Yaroooh! Keep that poker away, you silly ass!" bellowed Bunter, as Bob made a lunge at his ample waistcoat.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter jumped into the passage, escaping the poker by an inch.

"Look here, you rotters," he gasped, "I know what you're up to! I tell you I'm not going to be left out—"

Slam!

The sudden closing of the door cut short Bunter's flow of eloquence.

"Now let's get to business!" growled Bob.

"What's the game, anyway?" asked Vernon-Smith. "I suppose it isn't a feed?"

"Of course not, you ass!"

"Oh, keep your wool on!" said the Bounder, laughing. "But if it isn't a feed, what the merry dickens is it? We're not having a rehearsal here, I suppose?"

"It's a meeting about the food question," said Wharton.

"Eh? Food?"

"Exactly!"

"Yah!" came a howl through the key-hole. "I heard you, you rotters! I knew it was a feed! I'll jolly well—"

"Clear off!" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is again, by Jove!"

Billy Bunter opened the door and blinked in.

"I say, you fellows, you've admitted it now— Yarooogh!"

A cushion in Bob Cherry's hand interrupted Bunter.

Swipe!

The Owl of the Remove fled, with a terrific roar. Bob Cherry pursued him to the stairs, still swiping.

He came back to the study looking

rather red and breathless. Billy Bunter did not follow.

"I don't think that fat boulder will bother any more," gasped Bob, tossing the cushion into a corner. "Now get on with the jaw, Wharton!"

"Proceed jawfully, my esteemed chum."

"Go it, Wharton!"

"On the ball!"

And the captain of the Remove, with the eyes of all the meeting turned upon him, proceeded jawfully, as the dusky nabob expressed it in his wonderful English.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Not Guilty!

"I'VE only a few words to say, you chaps—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Good!"

"Order!" rapped out Bob Cherry.

"It's about the food question—a question of national importance. That swanking ass Temple was talking about growing potatoes. That's what his merry meeting was going to be about, if it hadn't been interrupted. Well, as Temple suggested the idea, you'd naturally think it was a rotten one—"

"Ha, ha!"

"But I think there's something in it, and that in the hands of the Remove it might be a success. The idea is to ask the Head for allotments—"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And plant potatoes, and grow 'em," said Wharton firmly. "It will take up a lot of our spare time, and will be hard work. But we're not afraid of hard work."

"Not exactly fond of it, though," remarked the Bounder.

"Well, it's up to us. Mimble, the gardener, will give us tips about gardening, and all that. We can raise the money to buy the seed potatoes. Every potato planted will produce a dozen, or two dozen, or something—"

"Or something or other," remarked Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"With a fine crop of potatoes in hand, we shall be fixed for vegetables for next winter," said Wharton. "The war can't end before that, of course. If the German submarines go on sinking ships at the present rate there'll be a big shortage of grub next winter. Every potato will count. The fact is, that while the rest of the country is slogging away at warwork and things, we ought to be doing something beside grind Latin and play cricket. Vegetable-growing is war work of the most valuable sort. Chap who produces grub is doing as good work as a chap at the Front."

"Well, it's not a bad idea," said Tom Brown. "I'm all right at gardening, if it comes to that. I've done it at home in New Zealand. Of course, we've got a better climate and things there."

"Bow-wow!"

"Rats!"

"Still, things can be grown in England," said the New Zealand junior. "It's possible, though not easy or comfortable—"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "If you know anything about gardening you'll come in useful. I admit I don't know much."

"Same here," agreed Bob Cherry.

"The sameness is terrific!"

"Have you ever grown potatoes, Browney?" asked Peter Todd.

"Tons of 'em!" said Tom Brown.

"Good! Then we'll make Browney commander-in-chief of the Potato

Corps," said Bob Cherry. "How do you begin, Browney?"

"At the beginning," explained Tom.

"Ass!"

"First of all you dig your trenches

"Eh? We're not going to fight the Germans!"

"You want trenches for potatoes as well as for fighting Germans, ass!" said the New Zealand junior. "Do you think you can grow potatoes by sticking a tater into a hole in the ground?"

"Well, yes, I did think so."

"Then you're an ass!" said Tom Brown politely. "There's more than that in potato-growing. Agricultural work is a highly-skilled job—quite as much so as engineering, for instance."

"Oh, my hat! There's more in it than meets the eye, then!"

"More than meets your eye," agreed Tom Brown.

"We'll make Browney foreman, as he knows the game," said Harry Wharton.

"Now, is it all agreed?"

"Yes, rather!"

"Then we'll have a whack round to raise the tin for the seed potatoes."

There was a general diving into pockets.

"How much shall we want, Browney?"

Tom Brown laughed. As a fellow with a knowledge of gardening, he had jumped into importance all of a sudden. There was nothing like swank about Harry Wharton. He was captain of the Remove; and there was no one at Greyfriars who could tell him anything he did not know about footer or cricket, boxing or swimming. But he was quite willing to take second place to a fellow who knew more than he did. He had cheerfully yielded first place in the Dramatic Society to Wibley; and he was ready now to place himself under the orders of the New Zealand junior.

He was aware that there is more in potato-growing than merely sticking a tuber into the ground and waiting for it to come up. And he was glad to have the expert assistance of the Colonial junior on the subject.

"Seed potatoes are jelly scarce just now," said Tom Brown. "We sha'n't get them at a day's notice. It's a bit late for beginning, too. Still, we shall get on all right with main crop. First earlies are over and done with."

"Are there different kinds of taters?" asked Hazel.

Tom Brown snorted.

"Of course there are, ass! First earlies go in first, second earlies next, and then main crop."

"Oh, I see! You live and learn."

"I dare say we can get some potatoes from the farmers round about here for seeding," said Tom Brown. "If we get ground from the Head to grow 'em, we can make a round to-morrow buying them, as it's a half-holiday. But the first step is to make sure that we can have the ground."

"Oh, the Head's sure to— Come in!" added Wharton, as there was a sharp rap at the door.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, opened the door and stepped into the study. His brow was very stern.

The juniors who were seated rose respectfully as their Form-master entered.

Mr. Quelch gave them a scrutinising glance.

"Wharton!" he rapped out.

"Yes, sir?" said Harry, in surprise, wondering what the Remove master wanted.

"I understand that the food regulations have been disregarded in this study."

"Oh, my hat!"

"What!"

"I—I—I mean, not at all, sir!"

"I have been informed to that effect," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Certainly, I see no traces of the reckless greed I was led to expect to find here. I trust that I have been misinformed."

Harry Wharton smiled. He could guess that the disappointed Owl of the Remove had set Mr. Quelch on the track of the supposed feed.

"You have been misinformed, sir," he said. "This is a Form meeting for quite a different purpose. It's about the food question, sir."

"Am I to understand, Wharton, that you complain of the food regulations?" the Remove-master exclaimed sternly.

"Ahem! Oh, no, sir!"

"Then what do you mean by holding

The Remove-master's brow relaxed very considerably.

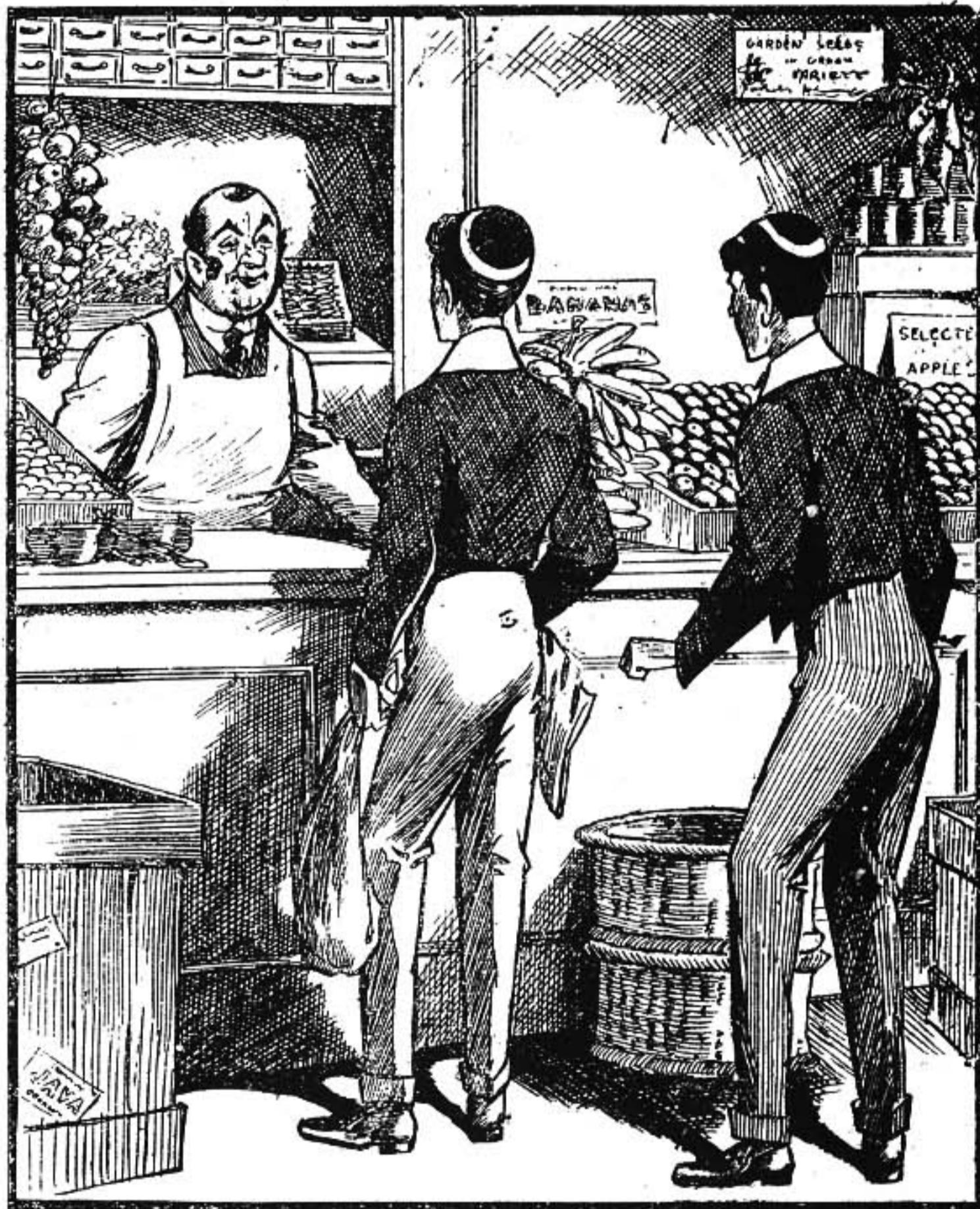
"My dear boys," he exclaimed, "I am very glad to hear this! As a matter of fact, the Head has been thinking of the idea, and he will be very pleased to hear that the suggestion has come from the boys themselves. Certainly I will speak to Dr. Locke, and you may be assured that sufficient land will be placed at your disposal for the purpose you have in view."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

"Not at all," said Mr. Quelch kindly. "Your intention is very patriotic and praiseworthy. I am pleased with you."

And Mr. Quelch quitted the study looking very pleased.

"Good egg!" said Harry Wharton,



"Seed potatoes are off!" (See Chapter 6.)

a meeting, as you term it, on the subject of the food question?"

"We're thinking of growing food, sir."

"If you are jesting, Wharton—"

"Not at all, sir," said Harry, thinking it a good idea to strike the iron while it was hot. "If you would be kind enough to ask the Head to let us have some ground to cultivate, sir, we want to go in for allotment gardening."

Mr. Quelch started.

"Brown knows all about it, and he's going to be foreman," continued Wharton. "We've got the money for seed; and we think we can grow enough potatoes for the school, and perhaps have a lot left over to give to the poor. We're all willing to work jolly hard, sir."

"The willingness is terrific, honoured sahib!"

with great satisfaction. "Everything in the garden is lovely—at least, it will be when we get the garden going."

"Hear, hear!" said the meeting heartily.

Mr. Quelch returned to his study. William George Bunter was there, looking a little uneasy. Bunter had satisfied himself that it was his bounden duty to inform the Remove-master of the supposed breach of regulations in No. 1 Study, since he was not admitted to a share of the surreptitious feed. But he had not been pleased when Mr. Quelch told him to await his return. He looked still more uneasy as the Form-master fixed a frowning glance upon him, and picked up a cane from the table.

"Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, in a thunderous voice, "you are well aware that I do not approve of tale-bearing! I was

bound, however, to act upon the information you gave me."

"I—I felt it my duty, sir—"

"Possibly. You should, however, make sure of your facts before making an undesired report to your Form-master. I am glad to say that you were entirely mistaken, and that there was no breach of the food regulations proceeding in the study you mentioned. I shall, therefore, punish you for wasting my time and giving me incorrect information. Hold out your hand!"

"I—I—I say, sir—"

"Hold out your hand!" thundered the Remove-master.

Swish! Swish!

"Yooop! Hooop!"

"You may go, Bunter."

Billy Bunter went.

He rolled down the passage, squeezing his fat hands under his arms, and groaning deeply. And he repented very sincerely that his sense of duty had led him to lay that information before Mr. Quelch. There really seemed to be no encouragement for a fellow with a keen sense of duty.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Roll Up, Remove!

CECIL REGINALD TEMPLE stared.

He could scarcely believe his eyes for a moment.

He found his voice at last, and gasped:

"Cheek!"

It was the day following the rowdy meeting in the Rag. Morning lessons were over. There was a new notice on the board. A good many fellows were reading it. It made Temple jump. For it ran:

"GREYFRIARS NATIONAL SERVICE CAMPAIGN.

The Remove Potato Corps will commence work this afternoon on the Remove allotment.

All members of the Remove Form are expected to roll up and work.

No slackers allowed.

In case of shirkers, the Remove Committee will consider the question of Compulsion.

ROLL UP AND GROW POTATOES!
BEAT GERMANY IN THE GARDEN!

(Signed) H. WHARTON,
Director of Greyfriars National Service,
T. BROWN,
Expert Honorary Superintendent."

"Cheek!" repeated Temple. "Why, that's my idea—my wheeze—all mine! The cheeky beasts! My only hat!"

Temple stared at the Remove notice.

To have his great scheme lifted out of his hands in this barefaced manner was a little too thick.

Certainly Temple ought to have been pleased at seeing his suggestion taken up in this enthusiastic manner. But he did not seem pleased.

"Well, of all the nerve!" chimed in Fry.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Jolly good idea!" said Bolsover major of the Remove. "I don't mind lending a hand; but if anybody starts compelling me, there will be trouble!"

"Rotten, I call it!" said Skinner, with a sniff. "I know I'm jolly well not going to dig up mud!"

"Don't be a slacker, Skinner!"

"Oh, rats!"

"You will lend me a hand!" roared Bolsover major. "I'll jolly well run you down to the allotment by the neck if you won't go!"

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Evidently Bolsover major regarded compulsion as justifiable in some circumstances. Apparently it depended upon whether it was applied to him or by him. In that respect Bolsover major resembled quite a large number of his elders.

"I guess it's not good enough!" said Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee junior.

"There's no mention of payment."

"Who wants paying?" demanded Rake.

"Well, I guess I should!" said Fish emphatically. "I calculate I'm not giving away my labour for nothing! Not by long chalks!"

"Same here!" said Snoop. "It's rot! We sha'n't be short of grub, anyway!"

"The whole country's short of grub!" said Ogilvy.

"Well, the poor, perhaps!" said Snoop.

"Rich and poor don't count now—it's all of us against the Huns!"

"Oh, rats!" said Snoop.

"Shut up, Snoop!" said Bolsover major. "You're going to work like the rest! If you eat, you ought to be willing to work. And you're jolly well going to, if I have to stand over you with a cricket-stump!"

"Hallo! What are you up to, Temple?" exclaimed Russell, as the captain of the Fourth made a grab at the paper on the board.

"I'm going to tear up that cheeky rot!" snorted Temple. "This is my scheme, and I'm not going to have it bagged by cheeky fags!"

"Hands off!" roared Bolsover major.

"Rats!"

Bolsover major grasped Temple and dragged him back from the board.

"Hands off!" yelled Temple, in his turn.

But Bolsover major didn't take his hands off. He rushed Cecil Reginald down the passage and bumped him on the floor. Dabney and Fry rushed to the rescue, and Ogilvy and Russell and two or three Removites piled in; and there was a terrific scene for a few minutes.

Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, hove in sight, however, and the combatants scuttled away.

Fisher T. Fish remained reading the notice on the board with a very thoughtful expression upon his thin, keen face. Having read, marked, learned, and inwardly digested the notice, so to speak, Fisher T. Fish ambled away in search of the Director of Greyfriars National Service.

He found Harry Wharton in his study, with the rest of the Co., debating the question of seed potatoes. The purchases were to be carried out that afternoon, if possible.

Dr. Locke had allotted a very considerable extent of ground for the amateur gardeners, at Mr. Quelch's request; indeed, the Head had expressed great approval of the project. The Potato Corps felt considerably bucked by their headmaster's approval.

"Of course, seed potatoes are important; but we've got to get the ground ready first," said Wharton. "Chaps had better be started on digging, and then we'll go out looking for seed potatoes. Two of us will be enough. We can go on our bikes, and make a long round if necessary. Browney and I can do that."

"We'll take bags to bring them home," remarked Tom Brown. "No time to wait for deliveries."

"I guess—"

"Buzz off, Fishy! We're busy!"

"I guess I'm interested in this hyer scheme!" said Fisher T. Fish. "It's a big stunt, and no mistake."

"Good! You can help in the digging," said Wharton.

"Ahem! The labourer's worthy of his hire, you know."

"You'll have your whack in the potatoes—when grown."

"Suppose they don't grow?"

"Oh, they will, fathead!"

"I guess the best thing you can do is to get a first-rate director!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"We've got one. Browney knows the whole game."

"I guess I'm willing to offer my services as director!"

"Good-bye!"

"I calculate I shouldn't stick you very much in the way of fees," said Fisher T. Fish persuasively. "A reasonable remuneration—"

"Oh, kick him out, somebody!"

"Hold on, you jays! Look hyer, have you got your seed potatoes yet?"

"We're getting them this afternoon."

"I guess they're pretty scarce!"

"Tupper's, in the village, have some," said Tom Brown; "and we can go round the farms getting them, too."

"You haven't given your order yet?"

"No. We're going directly after dinner."

"All serene!" said Fisher T. Fish, and he walked away looking very thoughtful indeed.

It was close upon dinner-time; but Fisher T. Fish was not thinking of dinner. He hurried down to the bike-shed and wheeled out his machine.

A few minutes later he was pedalling swiftly down the road to Friardale.

Fisher T. Fish was absent from the dinner-table.

Dinner was nearly over when the Yankee junior came pedalling in, with a sack fastened on the handlebars of his machine.

He put up his bicycle, and carried the sack to the wood-shed, where he carefully concealed it behind a pile of faggots.

Then, in a somewhat breathless state, he walked into the Hall, where the mid-day meal was nearly finished. Mr. Quelch greeted him with a frown.

"Fish, you are late!"

"Sorry sir! I was out on my bike—"

"You will take fifty lines, Fish!"

"Yes, sir."

Fisher T. Fish did not seem to mind the lines. There was an expression of satisfaction upon his thin face as he made a hurried meal. After dinner a large number of the Removites proceeded to work, but Fishy did not join them. Skinner and Snoop and Stott and Bunter were also conspicuous by their absence. But all the rest of the Remove turned up. Agricultural implements of all kinds had been borrowed or commandeered. Mimble, the Head's gardener, had done his best for the juniors, and the tool-shed had been raided, and some of the fellows had cycled down to the village to make purchases. Spades and garden-forks and hoes were there in great numbers. And if the juniors were somewhat unaccustomed to the use of those implements, there was at least plenty of enthusiasm to make up for lack of experience.

The piece of ground assigned by the Head lay within the school walls, and had been a garden at one time. It required clearing of weeds and old roots, and then preparing for the potato-planting. There was plenty of work to be done; potato-growing was not the simple operation some of the juniors supposed.

Certainly, it was possible to raise potatoes simply by sticking them in the ground after digging to a depth of a foot or so. But that was not the way to raise a good crop. There was much more than that in the real scientific thing, as Tom Brown, with an air of knowledge, explained to the enthusiastic amateurs.

But before the Remove gardeners could commence operations there was an interruption.

Temple of the Fourth arrived on the scene, with a very red and excited face.

"Stop!" he shouted.

The Removites stared at him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What are you burbling about?" inquired Bob Cherry pleasantly.

"You're not going to borrow my scheme, you cheeky rotters! It was my idea, an' you know it! You can join us if you like. The Fourth are takin' the matter in hand—"

"Bow-wow!"

"Rats!"

"Look here, I tell you—"

"My dear ass, nothing's preventing you from going and doing likewise," said Harry Wharton. "The more the merrier!"

"It's got to be done under my direction," said Cecil Reginald loftily.

"You'd make a muck of it, you know. Now, you know what an ass you are, Temple," said Bob Cherry argumentatively.

"You cheeky fag—"

"Buzz off, Temple! We're busy!"

"I tell you—"

"Carry him home!" suggested Hazel.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a rush at Temple. Cecil Reginald, gasping with wrath, was picked up and rushed away, with his arms and legs wildly flying.

He was deposited with a bump on the steps of the School House; and the gardeners returned to the potato-patch. Cecil Reginald did not follow them. He was as wrathful and indignant as ever; but for the present he had had enough.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Forestalled!

"NOW, then, Browney!"

"Give your orders, mighty chief!"

"We don't want any orders," growled Bolsover major independently. "I know how to grow taters."

"So do I," said Wibley. "You dig a hole and bury the tater—"

Tom Brown gave a sniff.

"This is a potato-patch, not a graveyard!" he said. "First of all, you dig trenches. Form up in line first."

"What for?" demanded a dozen voices.

"To trench."

"Are you expecting the Germans here?" asked Russell.

"Fathead! Nugent, take that cord, and mark off the first trench," said the New Zealand junior. "The whole length of the patch, and a width of three feet."

"Right-ho!" said Nugent.

"Now, first of all, you dig down to the subsoil—"

"What's that?" inquired Hazel.

"The soil under the top soil, ass! The top soil has to be laid aside very carefully by itself."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Then the subsoil has to be turned out separately—"

"Oh!"

"To the depth of about a foot. When the under soil is clear, you dig it up thoroughly to the depth of another foot, and dig in manure."

"Phew!"

"Then the subsoil is replaced, mixed with manure," continued Tom Brown. "After that the top soil is laid back. When I see it, I shall see whether lime is wanted. We don't want to provide a feast for wireworms."

"I say, all that sounds like a jolly lot of hard work," said Vernon-Smith.

"It isn't quite as easy as falling off a form!" said Tom Brown sarcastically. "Now, pile in, and mind you don't mix the top soil with the subsoil."

Some of the Removites looked a little less enthusiastic now. Digging to a depth of three feet, and keeping the soils carefully separated, was not quite the easy job they had anticipated.

However, there were no shirkers present.

Under Tom Brown's skilful direction they started work, and fork and spades were soon delving away manfully.

"Keep that up," said Tom Brown. "I've got to get off now to get the seed. Bolsover major can oversee the work while I'm gone."

"Good!" said Bolsover major. "I'll see they keep up to it."

Harry Wharton and the New Zealand junior left the diggers hard at work, and wheeled out their machines. A large bag was fastened on each bicycle, to carry home such seed potatoes as they were able to capture.

They rode away cheerfully in the spring sunshine to the village.

It did not take them long to reach Mr. Tupper's shop in Friardale. Mr. Tupper was a greengrocer, and he was supposed to have a supply of seed potatoes. His "first earlies" had long gone; but the juniors hoped to secure a good supply of "main crop."

But as soon as Mr. Tupper heard what they wanted, he shook his head.

"Sorry—right out!" he said. "Sold the last lot this afternoon—not more'n two hours ago."

"Oh, crumbs!" said Tom Brown. "What a sell!"

"There's been such a rush on them," explained Mr. Tupper. "I had twenty-one pounds of main crop left, and a young gentleman from your school snapped them up."

"From our school?" exclaimed Wharton, in astonishment.

"Yes, Master Wharton."

"Temple's been before us!" growled Tom Brown.

"Oh, rotten!"

"No, it wasn't Master Temple," said Mr. Tupper. "A young foreign gentleman—"

"Eh! Not Inky—I mean, not Hurree Singh?"

"I mean an American young gent," said Mr. Tupper. "I think his name is Bish, or Fish, or something like that."

"Fish!" yelled Tom Brown.

"Yes, that's it, I think."

"Fish has been here buying up seed potatoes!" ejaculated Wharton. "What did he want them for?"

"I understood there was some gardening going to be done at the school, sir, and Master Fish came to get the potatoes. Otherwise, I shouldn't have let him have them, as there are lots of people wanting them. But I understood from him that your headmaster wanted the boys to grow potatoes, so I let him have the last lot to oblige Dr. Locke."

The two juniors exchanged glances.

As there was nothing doing they left the shop. In the street, Wharton gave his comrade an expressive look. He remembered the Yankee junior's peculiar turn for making money by speculations which would never have occurred to any youth less smart and cute than Fisher Tarleton Fish.

"What did Fishy want those potatoes for, Browney?" said Wharton.

"Might be going to spring them on us as a pleasant surprise—perhaps."

"That's not much like Fishy."

"Well, no, it isn't."

"If he's got any dodge of making money out of the game he will hear something drop," said Wharton, frowning.

"By gum! We'll scalp him, if that's the game!" growled the New Zealand junior. "But let's give him the benefit of the doubt. He may intend to save us trouble."

"M'yes! He may!"

"Well, what's the programme now?"

"We'd better go farther, and see what we can get. We've got to give orders for the hop-manure and the lime, too."

And the two juniors remounted their machines.

For the next two or three hours they were very busy.

Even hop-manure and lime were not easy to obtain; but their orders were taken at last, and delivery promised within a day or two. But seed potatoes were extremely scarce; indeed, any potatoes at all were not easy to get in anything like a quantity.

But at one place and another the juniors gradually filled their bags. Several farmers of the vicinity, on hearing what was to be done at the school, generously handed out a quantity of potatoes; and although they were not all exactly seed potatoes, were all good for planting.

But they did not secure as many as were required. Still, with the twenty-one pounds of first-class "main crop" secured by Fisher T. Fish, there would be enough. And, whatever might be Fisher T. Fish's intentions with respect to those twenty-one pounds, Harry Wharton's intention was clear—Fishy was going to hand them over, either on the voluntary system or by compulsion!

The two juniors rode home to Greyfriars at last, pretty well satisfied with the results of their excursion, and very keen to know how the trenching had gone on in their absence. They little guessed!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Rival Patrio's!

"GO it, Temple!"

The Rag was crowded with the Fourth Form of Greyfriars. Cecil Reginald Temple was mounted on a chair.

While Wharton and Tom Brown were out in quest of potatoes, and the Remove fellows were digging industriously in the potato-patch, Temple & Co. had called an indignation meeting.

Cecil Reginald was boiling with wrath. His feelings were fully shared by his Form-fellows.

That patriotic scheme which was to have covered the Fourth Form with glory had been lifted out of their hands in the most barefaced manner.

While Temple had been talking, as it were, the Remove fellows had been getting to work. The suggestion had been Cecil Reginald's, but the Remove had acted on it. National Service had been promptly instituted at Greyfriars, with the great Cecil Reginald left out in the cold.

Temple considered that it was not good enough, and his Form-fellows fully agreed with him. So Temple "went it" with great eloquence.

"You know what's happened, you fellows!" Temple's voice thrilled with indignation. "We started the National Service scheme here—"

"Hea, hear!"

"And those cheeky Remove kids interrupted the meeting. And then they had the awful nerve to bag the idea!"

"Shame!"

"Of course, we're willing to take the lot of them on as—as assistant labour," said Temple. "We were going to make 'em all work—for us. But the superintendence was to be in our hands, of course!"

"Oh, rather!"
 "I had my eye on that bit of ground, and was goin' to ask Capper to speak to the Head about it, and now they've bagged it!"
 "Rotten!"
 "Are we going to stand it?"
 "Never!"
 "Are we going to take it lying down?"
 "No!"
 "Then you back me up, and we'll jolly soon bring the Remove kids to their senses!" said Temple, with a warlike look. "They've got our ground, and they've collared every blessed thing you can dig with that's to be found in the school! We're not standin' it!"
 "No fear!"
 "But what's the programme?" asked Wilkinson.
 "We're going to clear them off the ground—by force!"
 "Oh, my hat!"
 "There are times when only force is any good," explained Temple. "You can't argue with Prussian militarism, for instance—you have to hit it in the eye! It's the same with Remove check!"
 "Hear, hear!"
 "We're going to drive those trespassers off, and collar the digging things," continued Temple. "Every fellow in the Fourth will be wanted. We're going to take possession of the ground, and keep it!"
 There were loud cheers from the Fourth.
 Temple's warlike plan was quite in accordance with the ideas of the indignant juniors.
 "Then come on!" said Temple, jumping down off the chair. "The sooner the quicker, you know!"
 "Bravo!"
 And, with the great Cecil Reginald at their head, the Fourth Form of Greyfriars marched out on the war-path. Hobson and some more of the Shell joined them, having been already parties to Temple's project before it was so coolly lifted by the Remove.
 Forty fellows at least marched down to the potato-patch in warlike array. The potato-patch was at a good distance from the school buildings, and shut off by trees, which was fortunate under the circumstances.
 Temple & Co. did not want any masters or prefects to arrive on the scene.
 "Hallo, hallo, hallo! This looks like trouble!" remarked Bob Cherry, resting on his spade and surveying the enemy.
 "They'll get all the trouble they want if they bother us!" growled Bolsover major. "Here, you Fourth-Form bounders, clear off our ground!"
 But Temple & Co. did not clear off. They came on.
 The digging ceased. Evidently there was war at hand.
 Temple raised his hand commandingly.
 "Clear off!" he said.
 "Eh?"
 "You're trespassers," said Temple, with the same loftiness. "This is our potato-patch. Lay down those spades and things, and clear off!"
 "Well, of all the cheek!" said Bob Cherry.
 "The cheekfulness is terrific!"
 "I give you one minute!" said Temple commandingly.
 "Rats!"
 "Fathead!"
 "Go and eat coke!"
 From those replies it was pretty evident that the Remove did not intend to clear off peaceably.
 "Are you going?" shouted Dabney.
 "Rats! No!"
 "Then we'll jolly soon shift you!"
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"Oh, come on!"
 Temple waved his hand.
 "Charge!"
 And the Fourth Form charged.
 The melee that followed was simply terrific.
 The odds were upon the side of the assailants; but the Removeites put up a great combat in defence of the potato-patch.
 Fellows rolled into the half-dug trench in deadly embrace, and emerged smothered with mud.
 They trampled over the newly turned-up soil and subsoil, and the mixing of the two, which Tom Brown had warned the gardeners against, was carried out pretty effectually.
 But no one heeded that. The carrying on of the war seriously interfered with the pursuit of industry, as is the case in all great wars.
 For ten minutes or more the battle raged, with sore punishment on both sides, and by that time the Removeites and Fourth-Formers alike seemed to have collected upon their persons most of the earth that had been dug up by the gardeners.
 But numbers told. Moreover, the Removeites had been working hard for nearly two hours, while the enemy were quite fresh.
 In spite of their resistance, the Remove were driven back, slowly and obstinately, and gradually edged off the potato-patch.
 The Fourth-Formers pressed on, flushed with victory.
 "Back up!" roared Bob Cherry.
 "No surrender, Remove!"
 "Give 'em socks!" bawled Temple.
 "Yah! Oh, crumbs!"
 Thump! Thump! Thump! Crash! Splash! Squash! Trample! It was a combat worthy of the stylus of a Homer, or the fountain-pen of a Kipling.
 The Removeites rallied, and drove the enemy back, but they had to give ground again. But they clung fiercely to the last corner of the potato-patch. The combat was raging fiercely, when a sharp voice was heard above the din of battle:
 "Cease this instantly!"
 "Oh, crumbs! The Head!"
 "The Head! Oh, Jerusalem!"
 The combat ceased as if by magic.
 Muddy, dusty, clayey, pommelled and dishevelled juniors blinked in dismay at the majestic figure of the Head.
 Dr. Locke surveyed them wrathfully.
 "What does this mean?" he thundered.
 "Groogh!"
 "Oh! Ow!"
 "Yow!"
 "Answer me, Temple! You hear me?" thundered Dr. Locke.
 Temple mumbled.
 "I—I—L—we—we—ahem—"
 "Cherry, what does this disgraceful combat mean?"
 "Groogh!"
 "Those rotters tried to collar our potato-patch!" roared Bolsover major.
 "It's our potato-patch!" shouted Fry.
 "It was our idea from the start, and those fags boned it!"
 "What? What?"
 Explanations poured out on all sides in such volume that the Head raised his hand for silence.
 "That will do! I understand that you have been disputing over the potato-ground. I am glad to see that this patriotic enthusiasm is so widespread at Greyfriars. But you must show it in a more orderly manner. Every boy present will take two hundred lines!"
 "Oh!"
 "The Remove will continue to cultivate this piece of ground. Temple, you are forbidden to interfere with them."
 "Oh!"

"However, a piece of ground of equal extent will be assigned to the Fourth Form for cultivation," said the Head graciously. "If you had made this request to me, Temple, I should have granted it with pleasure."
 "But—but it was our idea from the start, sir."
 "Then you should be pleased to see boys of a junior Form taking it up with such enthusiasm."
 "Oh!"
 "In future, let your rivalry be an orderly one," continued the Head. "Compete with one another in the great work of National Service. Let it be seen whether the Remove or the Fourth Form can raise the larger crop of potatoes to serve the national needs. That will be a worthy rivalry."
 "Hear, hear!" cried the juniors in chorus.
 "You will now go and clean yourselves," said the Head. "You are all in a really disgusting condition. Let there be no more disputes, but an honourable rivalry in serving your country."
 And the Head rustled away.
 The Removeites and the Fourth blinked at one another rather uncertainly.
 "Good old sport!" said Bob Cherry. "The Head's got a lot of sense! And we'll jolly well raise a bigger crop than you chaps do."
 "Rats! Of course, we shall beat you hollow!" said Temple loftily.
 "Wait and see!" chuckled Bob.
 And the rivals of Greyfriars cleared off for a much-needed wash and brush-up.
 A quarter of an hour later Harry Wharton and Tom Brown arrived. They blinked at the potato-patch. It was deserted, and the turned-up soil was wildly trampled in every direction, with agricultural implements sticking in it or half buried in it.
 "My hat!" said Wharton.
 That was all he could say.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Compulsion Is Applied!

THESE were tired looks among the Remove fellows in the Common room that evening. Trenching the garden for potato-planting had told upon the enterprising youths. But they had considerable satisfaction in the thought that they had been doing useful work, and, under Tom Brown's expert superintendence, doing it well.
 Some of the juniors felt really too fatigued to do their prep, and they debated whether Quelch would excuse them in the morning on the ground that they had been engaged upon work of national importance. Even the less enthusiastic gardeners felt that they would be willing to give up lessons for a bit; indeed, even for the duration of war, if necessary. But, upon the whole, it was probable that Mr. Quelch would expect the Form work to be done as usual, and only a few decided to risk it. Among the few were Skinner and Bunter, which was rather cool, considering that they had not done any digging at all.
 That was all to be altered on the morrow, however. Harry Wharton declared that it was a case of all hands to the wheel; and, in the event of shirking compulsion would have to be applied. Bolsover major was very keen on applying compulsion, having a natural bent in that direction. In fact, the bully of the Remove thought that the scheme was really spoiled so far by the lack of any element of compulsion. He was quite prepared to take any shirker by the scruff of the neck to work. It was possible that Bolsover major's enthusiasm would peter out, and that his own turn to be taken by the scruff of the neck might come, when

no doubt compulsion would appear to him in a different light.

Fisher T. Fish eyed the Famous Five in a somewhat curious way when he came into the Common-room. He knew that Wharton must have learned of his little deal in seed potatoes, and he expected the matter to be mentioned.

But it was not mentioned.

The potatoes were not wanted yet, and the Co. had resolved to give the Yankee merchant his head for a time, to see what he intended to do with his plunder.

Most of the juniors were talking gardening that evening. Only Wibley showed some signs of discontent. "King John" was relegated to a more convenient time; amateur theatricals were "off"—very much off—at present. Wibley was keener on theatricals than anything else, and he made an effort to round-up the Dramatic Society for a rehearsal that evening—an effort that was a dismal failure. There was not likely to be any more rehearsing till the potatoes were fairly planted.

"Half-past six in the morning," said Tom Brown, when the Removeites went to their dormitory.

"Eh? Rising-bell's at seven!" said Bob Cherry.

"Time to get in some digging before breakfast."

"Oh!" said the juniors.

"Anybody got an alarm-clock?"

"Well, I have," said Rake. "But I'm blessed if I'm keen to hear it go off at half-past six in the morning!"

"No slacking, Rakey!"

"Oh, rats! I'll turn out if you do!"

"I say, you fellows, don't put that dashed alarm-clock near my bed!" said Billy Bunter. "I don't want to get up till seven!"

"You'll turn out at half-past six!" roared Bolsover major.

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

"I jolly well sha'n't!" said Skinner.

"You'll see in the morning, Skinner!"

"I suppose it's a free country, isn't it?" bawled Skinner. "Can't a fellow do as he likes?"

"Not in war-time," said Bob Cherry. "It's not going to be a free country again till peace breaks out."

"Blow your potatoes, and you, too!" growled Skinner. "I'm jolly well not going to get up before rising-bell, I know that!"

"You wait and see!" remarked Bolsover major ominously.

Skinner sniffed, and turned in. Wingate put out the light for the Remove, and in a few minutes most of the Form were sleeping the sleep of the just. Hard work is a good inducer of sleep.

The early rays of the sun were stealing in at the high windows when there was a sudden explosion of rattling, fizzing, and whizzing. It was Rake's alarm-clock in full action.

Grrrrrrrrrrrrrr! went the alarm-clock.

Tom Brown sat up in bed.

"Oh, my hat!" he ejaculated.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Time to get up!" yawned Bob Cherry.

"Turn out!" called Harry Wharton.

The Famous Five jumped from bed, setting a good example to the rest. Bob Cherry fixed his eyes on Tom Brown, who appeared to be wrestling with the alarm-clock.

"What are you up to, Browney?"

"Stopping these dashed fireworks!" growled Tom.

"Why don't you turn out?"

"Ahem! On—on second thoughts, it's rather cold, and, upon the whole, I—I rather think—"

Tom Brown did not finish stating what he rather thought. Bob Cherry grasped him, and he rolled out on the floor in a tangle of bedclothes, with a fiendish yell

The alarm-clock escaped from his hands, and rolled under the bed, still emitting a succession of ferocious rattles and buzzes.

"You silly ass!" roared Tom Brown.

"Anybody else want any help?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Keep off, you silly ass!" roared Skinner, as Bob came towards his bed.

"I'm not getting up yet!"

"Do you want me to start Bolsover on you?" demanded Bob.

"I tell you— Yaroooh!"

Skinner landed on the floor. Then Bob turned to assist Snoop; but Sidney James Snoop hopped out of bed in time. Stott also managed to rise without assistance. Billy Bunter blinked furiously at Bob, but he turned out on the other side of his bed as Bob came towards him.

"Good!" said Bob. "Now then, Rake—"

"I'm getting up, fathead!" howled Rake. "Keep off, you dummy!"

"Do you want any help, Kipps?"

"No, idiot!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You're not up, Bolsover!"

Bolsover blinked out of the blankets, and yawned.

"On second thoughts, I think it's rather a mug's idea to get up to early," he said. "I'm staying in till rising-bell."

And the burly Removeite laid his head on the pillow again and closed his eyes. His eyes remained closed for about the tenth part of a second. Then they opened again suddenly as a wet sponge was squeezed over his face.

"Yurrrgg!" gurgled Bolsover.

"Wharrer you up to, you silly chump?"

"Waking you up, old scout!" said Bob innocently.

"Gerroff!"

"Do you want some more?"

"Keep that sponge away!" roared Bolsover major. "If I get up to you, I'll mop up the dorm with your silly carcase! Gerroff!"

"But it's time to get up."

"I'm not getting up, I tell you!"

Bob shook his head.

"Your mistake! You are!" he said.

"You were recommending compulsion yourself, you know."

"Let me see anybody trying to compulse me!" said Bolsover ferociously.

"Certainly! Here goes!"

And Bob Cherry grasped Bolsover with both hands and dragged him out on the floor. Percy Bolsover landed with a terrific crash and a roar of wrath. He was on his feet in a moment, and charging at Bob Cherry like a bull.

"Hold on!" shouted Wharton.

"I'll smash him—"

"Order!"

Three or four pairs of hands grasped Bolsover major. He was bumped on the floor of the dormitory with great effect.

"Order!" said Wharton. "You've got to turn out with the rest!"

"I won't if I don't choose!" howled Bolsover major.

"What about compulsion?"

"Blow compulsion!"

"Well, you can't be a merry compulsionist one minute and a giddy voluntaryist the next!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"You're coming out to dig!"

"I'm not!" roared Bolsover.

"We'll carry you, if you don't walk!"

"Hear, hear!" chuckled Skinner. "I'll lend a hand! Bolsover was awfully keen on compulsion last night!"

"Oh, what a difference in the morning!" chuckled Squiff.

"I'm going back to bed!" yelled Bolsover.

"If you don't dress, you'll be taken down to the potato-patch as you are!" said Wharton.

Bolsover major defiantly plunged into bed again. The rest of the Remove

dressed themselves, Bolsover glowering at them over the sheets. When they were ready to go down, a dozen Removeites surrounded Bolsover's bed.

It had been agreed that every fellow in the Form was to take his fair share of the work, and that compulsion was to be applied to shirkers. Bolsover major had been one of the most strenuous advocates of compulsion. The time had come for him to be "compulsed."

"You take his clobber, Frank," said Wharton.

And Nugent grinned and gathered up Bolsover's clothes.

"I'm not coming!" said Bolsover grimly.

"Collar him!"

There was a roar from the bully of the Remove as he was grabbed out of bed. His struggles were not much use in the grasp of a dozen pairs of hands. A blanket was rolled round him, and he was borne out of the dormitory. A bare leg flourished in the air as he was rushed down the passage to the stairs.

At that early hour nobody was about. The great door of the School House had been opened by an early maid, who fled at the sight of the shouting crowd of juniors. Bolsover, in the blanket, was rushed out into the quadrangle.

Muffled roars proceeded from the bully of the Remove as he was carried head-long down to the potato-patch.

There he was rolled out of the blanket. He sat up on the broken earth and gasped.

"Grooogh!"

"There's your clobber!" said Nugent chuckling. "Now dress yourself, and pile in! You can't stay out of doors like that, Bolsover. Suppose Mrs. Mimble should come along?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover major, with a face like thunder, dressed himself hurriedly. He had been "compulsed" with a vengeance.

Having dressed himself, he debated in his mind whether to join in the work or run amuck among the grinning juniors. Fortunately for himself, he decided to work.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Fishy isn't here!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Squiff and Toddy, go and fetch him!" said Wharton.

"Right-ho!"

The two juniors rushed off to the School House for Fishy. That astute youth had gone back to the dormitory after the other fellows were clear. But he was not left to repose. Three minutes later Squiff and Peter Todd came dashing down to the potato-patch, with the Yankee junior struggling in their grasp.

"Let up!" Fisher T. Fish was yelling. "I calculate I'm not working for nothing! Let up, you jays!"

"Now, then, start work!" said Bolsover major, in his most bullying tones. Bolsover was evidently quite himself again. "No slacking, Fishy, or I shall touch you up with this hoe—like that!"

"Yaroooh!"

"Do you want some more?"

"Nope!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

And he set to work with the rest. By breakfast-time the enterprising Removeites had displaced a very considerable quantity of the top soil, and, to judge by their appearance when they streamed into the house, they had disposed of most of it about their persons.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Business-man Begins!

JEST a word with you gaboots!"

Thus Fisher T. Fish, when the Remove came out after lessons that morning. He came up to the Famous Five in a businesslike way.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"I guess you fellows are looking for some potatoes—first-class main crop?" said Fish, in a persuasive tone.

The chums of the Remove exchanged glances. The Yankee merchant was coming to business at last.

"Well?" said Wharton.

"I guess I've got a good line in 'tatoes to dispose of!" said Fisher T. Fish. "You can't get seed potatoes for love nor money, you know. I guess you didn't rope in too many yesterday!"

"Not enough," said Nugent.

"Exactly. Now, I've got twenty-one pounds to sell."

"So you're starting in the greengrocer business?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Ahem! This is a special line," explained Fish. "I guess you'd better have those potatoes! I'm open to sell them at a shilling a pound!"

"A shilling a pound!" exclaimed Wharton. "Potatoes at a shilling a pound!"

"Well, they're first-class seed potatoes, you know."

"How much a pound did you pay Tupper for them?"

Fisher T. Fish smiled.

"That's neither here nor there," he replied. "I guess, as you're a friend of mine, I'll let you have 'em at tenpence a pound. What do you say?"

"Worm!" said Johnny Bull.

"Rotter!" said Nugent.

"I guess that chinwag isn't business! How much are you going to offer me for my special line in seed potatoes?"

"Don't you know there's a maximum price for potatoes, and it's breaking the law to sell them dearer?" said Wharton.

"I guess that cuts no ice with me! Are you going to buy my little lot, or shall I see Temple about it?"

The Famous Five looked grimly at the Yankee junior. They had expected something of this sort, after learning of Fishy's purchase, and they had no intention of being swindled by the astute business-man of the Remove.

But contemptuous looks had no effect upon Fisher T. Fish. Contempt cut no ice with him, as he would have expressed it in his native language.

The chums of the Remove did not waste words on him. They collared him, knocked his head against the wall, sat him down, and walked out.

Fisher T. Fish scrambled up, gasping. He rubbed his head ruefully.

"Yow! The jays!" he mumbled. "Thar ain't a galoot in this sleepy old island with any notion of business, I guess! I kinder calculate they won't see anything of my potatoes after this! I'll try Temple."

And, still rubbing his head, the enterprising Yankee set out in search of Cecil Reginald Temple.

But he did not find him. Temple had gone out on his bicycle. It was not till dinner-time that Cecil Reginald came in, looking very bad-tempered.

"Well, what luck?" asked Fry, meeting him as he came into the School House.

"Rotten!" growled Temple. "Can't get any seed potatoes. The blessed ordinary kind seem nearly as scarce as golden quids, too. Those Remove bouncers seem to have cleared up all there were to be had!"

"Oh, rotten!"

"Looks as if we shall have a lot of delay, and those young rotters will get their potato-patch going first!" grunted Temple. "I'm jolly well not goin' to ask them for any of their taters. I dare say they haven't any more than they need, either. Hallo! What do you want?"

Fisher T. Fish came up with an ingratiating grin.

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"I guess you galoots want some seed potatoes?" he said affably.

"I suppose you haven't any to sell?" said Temple sarcastically.

"That's where you're off the mark," said Fisher T. Fish at once. "I've got twenty-one pounds of first chop main-crop seed potatoes to sell at a reasonable figure!"

"My hat!"

"The fact is, I knew you galoots would want 'em, and I bought them up on purpose," said Fish glibly. "It didn't seem fair to me to let the Remove bag the whole caboodle!"

"Well, that was jolly decent of you, I must say!" said Temple, more cordially.

"Oh, rather!"

"What did you give for them?" asked Temple.

Fisher T. Fish coughed.

"That ain't the point. I suppose you galoots know that prices are rising!"

"Not potato prices; that's fixed by law."

"Ahem! This is a special line of potatoes, and going at a special price. I can let you have them at tenpence a pound!"

"Tenpence!" yelled Temple.

"Yep!"

"Why, you—you Shylock!"

"Is it a deal?" asked Fisher T. Fish, unmoved. "The longer you wait the less likely you are to get a crop, you know. The season's advanced already. You'd better close with my offer. Prices are rising fast!"

"Go and eat coke!" growled Temple. "You're not going to swindle me!"

"I guess— Oh, Jerusalem!"

Temple knocked Fishy's cap off, and strode away with his friends. Cecil Reginald Temple was anxious to obtain seed potatoes, but he was not prepared to pay tenpence a pound for them.

Fisher T. Fish fielded his cap, replaced it on his bony head, and shrugged his narrow shoulders.

"I guess he'll come round," he remarked to himself. "He won't get potatoes anywhere else, I calculate. They'll keep!"

After dinner Temple met Harry Wharton as he was starting for the potato-ground. He bestowed a lefty sneer upon the captain of the Remove.

"You seem to have scoffed all the potatoes in the neighbourhood," he said.

"First come, first served, you know," said Wharton good-humouredly.

"Is it National Service to buy up seed potatoes and hold 'em back for a high price?" sneered Temple. "What would the Head say to that?"

Wharton flushed.

"We're not doing anything of the kind, fathead! As for Fishy, we don't own him. He's an outsider and a worm!"

"He's in your Farm," said Temple. "If a chap in my Farm played dirty tricks like that we'd slaughter him. How much are you fellows going to get out of his profits?"

"Why, you rotter—"

"Oh, rats!"

Temple walked away with his nose in the air, leaving Harry Wharton red with anger.

Temple knew well enough that the Co. would disdain to have any hand in Fishy's shady transactions; but he was feeling so sore about his disappointment that he did not trouble to be just, and the taunt was a very unpleasant one for the Removes.

Fishy was in their Farm, and his shady tricks reflected discredit on all the Remove.

"Fishy's got to be called to order!" said Bob Cherry.

"The rotter!" said Wharton angrily. "We'll make him disgorge his plunder

somehow! He's a disgrace to the Farm!"

"By gad! I've got an idea!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, with a glimmer in his eyes.

He rushed after the captain of the Fourth.

"Hold on, Temple!"

Cecil Reginald gave him a supercilious look.

"Well?" he snapped.

"You're entitled to Fishy's potatoes," said Bob. "We can make shift with the lot we've got. Twenty-one pounds will see you through, if you're careful with them."

"I'm not going to be swindled by a Remove rotter!" said Temple, with a sneer.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Bob. "You know we don't own that rotter! But I've got an idea, and you're welcome to it. Give Fishy a pound for his potatoes!"

"No fear!"

"I'll give you the pound first if you like."

Temple stared.

"You'll pay for the potatoes?" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"You must be jolly wealthy to have quids to chuck away!" said Temple.

"I didn't say a quid—I said a pound!"

"What's the difference?"

"Lots. Is it a go? I'll hand you the pound, and you can give it to Fishy for his potatoes!"

"Well, it's up to you fellows to stop his swindling, as he's in the Remove," said Temple. "I agree. Where's the pound, though?"

"Here you are!"

Temple gave a sudden roar as Bob Cherry smote him forcibly in the ribs. He staggered back against a tree.

"You silly ass!" he roared. "Wharrer you up to?"

"Giving you a pound," said Bob cheerfully. "Pounding you in the ribs is giving you a pound, isn't it?"

"Why, you—you—you—" gasped Temple.

"Give Fishy the same sort of a pound, and bag the potatoes," said Bob.

And he hurried away to join the gardeners.

Temple stared after him.

After a minute or two's reflection, however, he grinned. If Fishy's seed potatoes could be bagged for a pound of that description it would be a good bargain for the Fourth-Form gardeners, and a just punishment for the Yankee merchant.

And Cecil Reginald Temple hurried away to look for Fisher T. Fish, ready to do a trade with that enterprising youth.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Left!

"V AMOOSE, you jay!"

Fisher T. Fish snorted out that objurgation as there came a tap at his study door. The door of No. 14 was locked.

The Yankee junior had locked himself in till afternoon lessons to escape compulsion. He was not yearning for work of national importance.

"You there, Fishy?"

It was Cecil Reginald Temple's voice outside.

"Yep! So it's you," said Fish. "I thought it was that jay Bob Cherry, or that galoot Bolsover. Wharrer you want, Temple?"

"About those potatoes."

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

He had felt sure that Temple would come round in time, when he found that

it was difficult to obtain potatoes elsewhere; but he had not expected quite such a prompt surrender.

"Oh, you're looking for 'tatoes, are you?" he chuckled.

"Yes. Open the door!"

"Any Remove galoots in the passage?"

"No. They're all out digging."

"Good!"

Fisher T. Fish unlocked the door, and Temple entered the study. Fishy regarded him with a grin.

"Well, I'm ready to take your seed potatoes off your hands," said Temple briskly. "Got them here?"

"No fear! Those 'tatoes are in a safe place, my pippin. I'm not risking having my stocks raided!"

"Where are they, then?"

"Somewhere in Yurup," said Fisher T. Fish coolly. "I don't know that I'm anxious to tradé, either. They're always worth their money!"

"Will you take a pound for the lot?"

Fishy's greedy eyes glistened.

"I'm asking a-shilling a pound," he said. "That's a guinea for the lot!"

"Make it a pound, and it's a go."

Fisher T. Fish shook his head. He had been prepared to accept tenpence a pound, but now the victim was anxious to buy the price rose.

"Shilling a pound is the minimum," he said firmly. "Fork out a quid and a shilling, and the twenty-one pounds of 'tatoes are yours. That's the rock-bottom price!"

Temple hesitated a moment; but he nodded.

"A pound and a shilling?" he said.

He reflected that the potatoes were well worth the odd shilling.

"That's a go!" said Fish.

"Done, then! Where are the goods?"

"Where they'll stop till you've paid up," said Fisher T. Fish cheerfully. "All sums payable in advance. That's business."

Temple knitted his brows.

If he paid Fishy that "pound" in advance, it was absolutely certain that the Remove merchant would not hand over the potatoes in exchange.

"Look here, that's not business, Fishy! How do I know you've got the 'tatoes at all, if you come to that?" demanded Temple.

"I guess they're there. If I don't supply the goods you claim your money back. I'll give you a receipt, I calculate."

"Suppose I give you the shilling in advance, and the pound as soon as you hand over the goods?"

"Nope!"

Fisher T. Fish was very firm on that point. He did not suspect the nature of the pound he was to receive, but he suspected that the potatoes might be raided instead of purchased if he produced them too soon.

Temple rubbed his ribs reminiscently. He had received the pound from Bob Cherry—forcibly. But it did not seem feasible to pass it on to Fishy—in exchange for the goods, at all events.

"Now, cash up!" said Fisher T. Fish, in a businesslike tone. "You'll never get the goods elsewhere. And mind, I can find a sale for 'em outside the school if I like. A bob advertisement in the local paper, and they'll go like hot oakes. I'm treating you generously, and giving you first chance."

"You're a generous chap!" agreed Temple sarcastically. "Look here, Fishy, you can't expect a fellow to trust you. Hand over the potatoes first, and I'll give you two pounds."

"By gum!" said Fish, in astonishment. He knew that Temple was eager to get to work to beat the Remove in

the potato competition, but he did not expect a liberal offer like that.

"Two pounds down on the spot as soon as you hand over the potatoes," said Temple. "Is it a go?"

"It's a go!" said Fisher T. Fish, with a cunning gleam in his eyes.

Whether Temple was so keen after seed potatoes that he was willing to pay that staggering price, or whether he was seeking to get hold of them by hook or by crook, without intending to pay, Fishy did not know.

But the Yankee merchant did not intend to run risks. His cunning idea was to "give him rope," as he would have expressed it.

"It's a go," he said. "I'll write a note to Gosling to hand over the sack to you personally."

hand over the durocks, and here's the note."

Temple picked up the note, blotted it, and put it carefully into his pocket. Then he turned on the Yankee merchant.

"Two pounds!" he remarked.

"Correct! Hand 'em over!"

"Here goes!"

Biff!

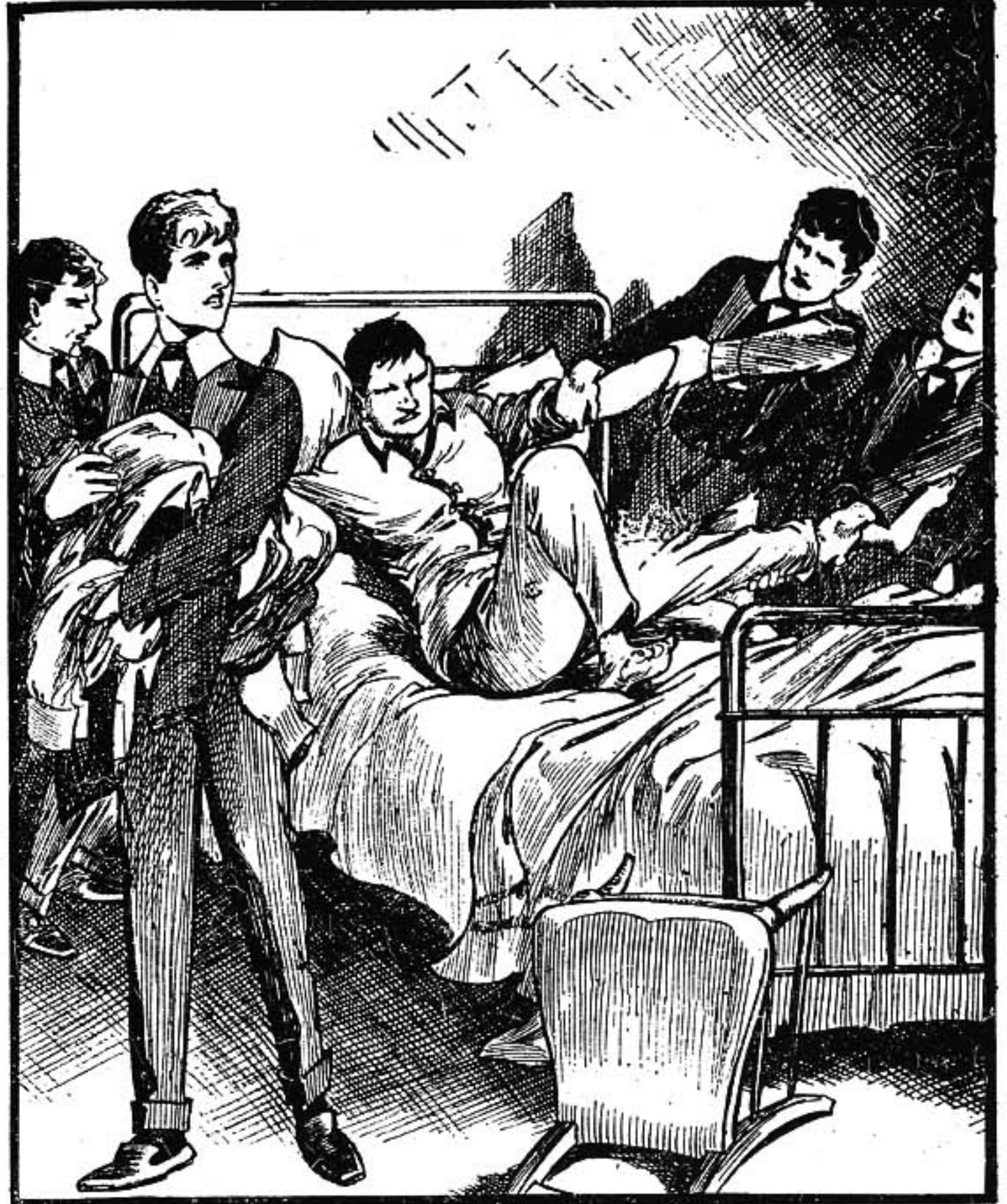
"Yarroooh!" roared Fish, staggering back as Temple pounded him forcibly in the ribs. "By gum— Oh, Jerusalem!"

Biff!

Temple delivered the second pound, and Fisher T. Fish collapsed on the floor.

The captain of the Fourth grinned down at him.

"Two pounds in the ribs," he explained. "I didn't explain the kind of



Compulsion for Bolsover! (See Chapter 8.)

"Oh, Gosling's minding the potatoes for you, is he?" said Temple carelessly.

"You bet! I guess I can't keep a sack of potatoes in the study. But Gosling won't hand them over without written instructions from me."

"Well, give me the blessed written instructions," said Temple.

"Yep."

Fisher T. Fish sat down at the table and dashed off a note. It ran:

"Please hand over the sack of potatoes to the bearer, C. R. Temple.—(Signed) F. T. FISH."

Temple's eyes glistened.

He felt considerable satisfaction in spoofing the acute Yankee junior, whose boast was that he never got left.

"Take that note to Gosling, and there you are," said Fisher T. Fish. "Now

pounds you were going to get, you welsher! Jevver get left? Ha, ha, ha!"

And Temple walked triumphantly out of the study.

"Yow-ow-ow!" mumbled Fisher T. Fish, sitting on the floor and rubbing his ribs. "The jay! The slab-sided galoot! Yow-ow-ow!"

Dabney and Fry joined Temple on the stairs. Cecil Reginald flourished the written instructions.

"All serene!" he chuckled. "Gosling's minding the potatoes for the swindlin' cad, and here's his written instructions to hand 'em over. I've given him two pounds, an' left him on the floor."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Dabney and Fry.

Temple smiled complacently. He felt

that he had carried that business transaction through with a cuteness worthy of a business-man raised in New York. Fishy had been beaten at his own game. "Come on!" he said. "Fish will try to get to Gosling and countermand this order. If he comes out, collar him and pin him."

"What-ho!"
But Fisher T. Fish did not come out. The three Fourth-Formers hurried down to Gosling's lodge. The porter came to the door as Temple knocked.

Temple handed him the note, at which Gosling blinked in astonishment.

"Wot's this 'ere?" he inquired.
"I've called for the potatoes," explained Temple.

"Eh? Wot 'taters?"
"Fishy's potatoes that you're minding for him."

Gosling grunted.
"Wot I says is this 'ere. You clear haff and play your little jokes on somebody else, Master Temple."

"But I want the potatoes!" exclaimed Temple.

"Look 'ere—"
"Aren't you minding some potatoes for Fish of the Remove?" ejaculated Temple, a dreadful suspicion rising in his mind.

"No, I ain't!" grunted Gosling.
"Didn't he leave a sack of seed potatoes in your charge?" yelled Temple.

"No, he didn't do nothin' of the kind!" snorted Gosling; and he withdrew into his lodge and slammed the door.

Temple & Co. blinked at one another.
"Spoofer!" grinned Fry.

"Oh, rather!"
"The—the—the welshing rotter!" gasped Temple. "He's got the potatoes hidden somewhere. He was spoofering me with this note."

"I suppose he knew you were spoofering him," grunted Fry.

"I—I—I'll pulverise him!" roared Temple.

He rushed away to the School House, with his chums after him. They arrived, red and breathless, at No. 14 Study in the Remove. The door was locked, and there was a chuckle from within as Temple pounded on it.

"Fishy, you rotter! Fishy, you fishy swindler—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Fisher T. Fish. "Have you landed those 'tatoes, Temple?"

"Where were they, you spoofering cad?"

"Where you won't find 'em till you've paid over the rhino!" retorted Fisher T. Fish.

"Open this door!"

"I guess not. If you want to do a trade, you can pass two pound notes under the door," said Fisher T. Fish coolly.

"You—you—you—"

Temple kicked the door furiously, and retired. He had not succeeded, after all, in spoofering the acute Yankee, and he had to admit that in that business deal he had been left.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Inky's Idea!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! How's the merry allotment getting on?" asked Bob Cherry, as Temple of the Fourth came into No. 1 Study a few days later.

The Famous Five were at tea there. They were very cheerful.

Work in the Remove allotment had been going on splendidly. Most of the juniors were sticking it in the most praiseworthy manner.

Compulsion had to be applied to

Skinner, Snoop, and Banter, as a rule, but the other fellows were very careful to see that they did their fair share of the digging.

Under the New Zealand junior's expert guidance the allotment had been thoroughly trenched, the top manure had been dug in, the subsoil limed where necessary to extirpate the troublesome wireworm, and the top soil replaced with great care.

And that afternoon the Remove gardeners had put their potatoes in. Tom Brown confidently anticipated getting at least seven or eight pounds of potatoes from each potato planted, and later on he was going to instruct the gardeners in the mysteries of hoeing up.

Naturally, Harry Wharton & Co. were very well satisfied.

Temple was not looking so satisfied however. He bestowed a glum and resentful look upon the cheery five.

"I see you've got your potatoes in!" he snapped.

"Yes. We belong to the Get-It-Done Brigade," said Bob. "Are you Fourth Form duffers still waiting and seeing?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Jolly funny, isn't it?" snapped Temple.

"Your gardening?" asked Bob. "Oh, very!"

"The funnifulness is terrific!" agreed Hurrée Janset Ram Singh.

"Anything we can do for you, Temple?" asked Harry Wharton good-humouredly.

"Yes; if you can make that thief Fishy hand over the potatoes!" said Temple sulkily. "I've been trying all round, everywhere, and I can't get any. Of course, I can plant old potatoes cut in pieces, and they'll give a crop; but why should we do that when that swindling rotter's got twenty-one pounds of best

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seed potatoes hidden away? The brute actually won't part with them for less than two pounds now! He says the price has gone up!"

The juniors became grave. "It's up to you, as he's in your Form," said Temple. "We've dug our allotment thoroughly, and it's all ready for the potatoes to go in. I understand that that cad is going to advertise his lot in the local paper if he can't welsh us into buying them. It's a swindle, and it doesn't reflect any credit on the Remove, I can tell you!"

"You're right there," said Wharton. "You're entitled to the potatoes at the price Fishy gave."

"Well, he won't part with them under about five hundred per cent. profit."

Wharton nodded. "It's up to us," he said. "You can leave it in our hands, Temple. We'll see that the potatoes are handed over to you at cost price."

Temple's brow cleared. "Well, I expected that much of you," he said. "It's a competition between us to get the biggest crop, but you don't want to take an unfair advantage. Besides, the more potatoes that are grown the better. There's certain to be a bad shortage in the autumn, and the less we have to buy here the more there will be for poor people."

"You're going to have Fishy's lot," said Harry.

"Right-ho! Then I'll rely on you," said Temple.

And he left the study. "Not so jolly easy to get Fishy's plunder away from him," said Nugent doubtfully. "Of course, we could rag him—"

"Temple's been ragging him already," said Johnny Bull. "That won't make the beast part with his loot."

Harry Wharton nodded. "We've got to find a way," he said. "After all, the things are hidden about the school somewhere. They can be found."

"Temple's tried that," remarked Bob Cherry.

"May I make a suggestive remark?" inquired the Nabob of Bhanipur, with a glimmer in his dark eyes.

"You may make a suggestion, if that's what you mean, fathead!"

"If I make a remark suggestively, that is a suggestive remark, my worthy chum, or else I do not understand the respectable and ludicrous English language."

"Well, you don't!" grinned Bob Cherry. "But what's the suggestion?"

"There is an esteemed maximum price for the honourable potato, and it is against the law to exceed it—is it not so?"

"That's so." "Then the esteemed Fishy is breaking the law."

"I don't know whether the maximum price applies to seed potatoes, sold for seed purposes," said Wharton. "I think it doesn't."

"But the esteemed, swindling Fishy probably does not know, either."

"Very likely. He doesn't know much of anything."

"Suppose an inspector from the Food Controller's Department heard of his worthy swindling, and came down to inquire?" suggested the nabob.

"Eh? He wouldn't."

"But if he did, the esteemed Fishy would be scared out of his ludicrous wits, and he would jump to hand over the plunder."

"He would, rather! But we can't write to the Food Controller about him," said Harry.

"But we can speak to the merry Wibley."

"Eh? Wibley?"

"The esteemed Wibley has been grouching dolefully about the neglect of the amateur theatricals, owing to the work of national importantfulness. He will be pleasefully delighted to play an esteemed part—"

"By gum, that's an idea!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "Wib can make himself up as anything, except a good-looking chap."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Talk of angels!" Wibley of the Remove came into the study. He was frowning.

"Look here, you chaps, what about 'King John'?" he demanded.

"Eh? He's dead, I believe," said Wharton.

"I mean the play, ass, you know that! Now those dashed potatoes are in, I suppose we can find time for a rehearsal!" said Wibley sarcastically. "I suppose you're not going in for onions and asparagus next?"

"We're going in for onions," said Wharton. "But never mind the onions now, and never mind 'King John.' Shut the door. Could you make yourself up as a man of about fifty?"

"Eh? A hundred, if you like," said Wibley. "I could make myself up as your grandmother's Aunt Tabitha."

"Well, lend me your ears," said Harry. He proceeded to explain Hurree Singh's suggestion. Wibley grinned and nodded as he listened.

"Easy as falling off a form!" he said. "I've got all the things, too, in my property-box. Whiskers and spectacles, and a rusty frock-coat suit, and a silk hat, and a wheezy voice. Easy as winking!"

"Then it's a go!" said Harry.

And the plot was plotted in Study No. 1, and not a word was breathed outside that famous apartment. There was trouble in store for the enterprising merchant of the Remove.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Disgorging the Plunder!

CRICKET was the order of the day on Saturday afternoon.

Having successfully planted their potatoes, the Remove gardeners felt that they were entitled to give gardening a rest for that half-holiday. There was a match between the Remove and the Fourth, and gardening was dismissed from their minds for the time.

While the cricketers were busy on Little Side, Wibley of the Remove was busy in his study, with the assistance of Micky Desmond and Ogilvy, who had been admitted to the plot hatched in No. 1.

Fisher T. Fish strolled down to the cricket-ground to look on, in a far from amiable mood.

He had fully expected Temple to come round. But Cecil Reginald hadn't come round. Fishy had gone to the length of lowering his price to thirty shillings, and Temple had only replied by dotting him in the eye. Then Fishy had offered his plunder to Wharton for twenty-five shillings, and Wharton had kicked him along the Remove passage by way of an answer.

These proceedings were not business, certainly; but Fishy had long ago given up expecting the Greyfriars fellows to understand business, as understood in "Noo" York.

His plunder was, in fact, lying heavy on his hands. He knew that if he kept the sack of seed potatoes he could sell it sooner or later at a profit. But it was a whacking profit he wanted, and he had fully expected to make it out of the enthusiastic schoolboy agriculturists.

Still, he comforted himself with the reflection that Temple was bound to come

to terms now that his allotment was all ready for planting, and seed potatoes were not to be had.

When the cricket-match was over, and the juniors came off the ground, Fishy sidled up to Temple—with his eyes very wide open, however, to dodge another dot if Cecil Reginald cut up rusty.

"I guess, Temple, you can't do better than take my taters off my hands," he said insinuatingly. "I guess I'll let you have the sack for twenty-five bob—"

Temple made a lunge at him with his bat, and Fisher T. Fish fled.

He grunted angrily as he went in to tea.

"I calculate I'll advertise the lot in the local paper, and sell 'em for what they'll fetch," he said to himself. "That'll do the cheeky galoot in the eye, anyhow."

Micky Desmond met him as he came in. "Ye're wanted, Fishy," he said.

"Eh? What's wanted?"

"Sure, there's a visitor for ye," said Micky. "He's waitin' for yez in the visitors'-room. I was comin' to tell ye."

Somewhat surprised, the Yankee junior made his way to the visitors'-room. He was not expecting any visitors.

A little old gentleman rose from a chair as he came in.

Fish stared at him.

The gentleman looked about fifty or fifty-five years of age. He wore a short beard and a grey moustache and gold-rimmed spectacles, and his scalp was nearly bald. His silk hat reposed on the table.

"Master Fish?" he inquired, in a wheezy voice.

"Yep."

"I have called to see you, Master Fish."

"I guess I've never met you before, sir!" said the Yankee junior, in surprise.

"What's on?"

"A somewhat serious matter, I am afraid!" said the gentleman sternly. "However, I desire to hear what you have to say before I see your headmaster."

"M-m-my headmaster!" ejaculated Fish.

"Yes. In the first place, however, you may make your explanation to me."

"But—but I guess I don't catch on!" exclaimed Fish. "What's the matter?"

"The matter concerns an infraction of the law by a boy in this school!"

"The—the—the law?"

"Yes, the law concerning the maximum price of potatoes."

Fish's jaw dropped.

"The—the—the maximum price of potatoes?" he murmured feebly.

"Precisely."

"Oh, Jerusalem!"

The Yankee junior cast a glance at the door.

"You are under no obligation to explain the matter to me," said the visitor icily. "If you prefer to be called into the presence of your headmaster—"

"Nope! Nunno! Oh, crikey!"

Fisher T. Fish ceased his inattentive sidling towards the door. It was better to face the music here than in Dr. Locke's study. His thin, keen face was quite pale.

"But—but who are you?" he gasped.

"You have probably heard of the Food Controller's Department?"

"Yep!" groaned Fish.

"It is the duty of officials of that Department to examine into all cases of infractions of the law of maximum prices. The penalties are severe. I have called specially to see you about this matter, which has been brought to my attention by some of your schoolfellows."

"Oh, crumbs!" moaned Fish. "Temple, the rotter! I—I never calculated he

would give me away like this! It's sneaking!"

"What! You confess—"

"Nope!" gasped Fisher T. Fish, in alarm. "Not at all, sir! It—it's quite a mistake! Temple's under a—a delusion—"

"It was not Temple, whoever he may be, who informed me of this matter. It was a boy named Wharton."

"Oh, the rotter!"

"Now, kindly answer my questions," said the official, with a stern glance at the Yankee junior over his spectacles. "Did you, or did you not, call on Mr. Tupper, in Friardale, on day last week, and purchase a quantity of seed potatoes—to wit, twenty-one pounds?"

"I—I—"

"Yes or no?"

"Yep!" gasped Fishy.

He had a wild idea for a moment of denying it, but he remembered in time that Mr. Tupper's evidence would be conclusive on that point.

"Have you used those seed potatoes for planting purposes?"

"N-n-nope!"

"What have you done with them?"

Fisher T. Fish wiped the perspiration from his brow.

"I—I—'m goin' to hand them over to some galoots for planting," he mumbled.

"Have you done so already?"

"N-n-nope!"

"Have you made any attempt to sell them to your schoolfellows at a price in excess of the maximum price fixed by law for potatoes?"

"I—I—"

"Kindly answer me!"

"I—I—I guess—"

"I am not here to listen to prevarication. Under the circumstances, as you refuse to make a candid explanation, I think the matter had better be referred to Dr. Locke—"

"Nunno!" gasped Fish. "I—I don't mind explaining, sir. It—it's all due to a misunderstanding."

"I am waiting for your explanation," said the official coldly. "I may mention that my time is of value."

"The—the fact is—is—"

"Did you, or did you not, endeavour to effect a sale of this commodity to a schoolfellow for the sum of two pounds?"

"That was only—only—only a joke, sir."

"Did you offer them to Master Wharton for the sum of twenty-five shillings?"

"Oh, the scallywag!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "The—the fact is, that was—was another little joke, sir."

"You appear to be a humorous youth, Master Fish."

"I—I guess I am, sir—that's my strong hold!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Merely my little joke, sir—that's all!"

"Then, how is it your intention to dispose of the potatoes, which you kept back from use for a period of time exceeding a calendar week?" demanded the official sternly.

"I—I guess I was keeping them for Temple, sir, till he got his ground ready!" stammered Fish. "That's all, sir. I—I was going to offer them to him to-day, as—as a present, sir."

"Is that the truth, Master Fish?"

"Honest Injun!" mumbled Fish.

"If that is the case, of course the Department cannot take action in the matter," said the official, much to Fish's relief. "I must, however, be satisfied that you are speaking the truth, Master Fish. Where are the potatoes at the present moment?"

"In the wood-shed, sir," said Fish reluctantly.

"Very well. If you send for Master Temple, and hand the potatoes to him, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 482.

as you declare to be your intention, I may be able to consider the matter closed," said the gentleman, more graciously. "At all events, I will report your action to my superiors."

Fisher T. Fish groaned.

There was no help for it. He had never dreamed of falling within the clutches of the law on account of his little speculation in potatoes.

But the law had come down on him, and unknown penalties were hanging over his cute head.

Merely a report to Dr. Locke of the circumstances would be sufficient to earn him a severe flogging and confiscation of the potatoes.

As to what the Food Controller might do Fishy had very vague ideas; but he had a horrifying vision of a police-court, and a reformatory to follow.

The sacrifice of his loot was a cheap price to pay for getting out of such a scrape.

He opened the door, and called to Micky Desmond, who was in the passage.

"Will you ask Temple to come here, Desmond?" said Fish feebly. "Tell him I'm going to make him a present of my potatoes, if he'll accept them."

"Sure, I'll do it for yez with pleasure, Fishy darling!"

Micky hurried away.

Fisher T. Fish waited dispiritedly. The gentleman from the Food Controller's Department—perhaps—sat stiff and silent, with a very stern gaze directed upon the Remove merchant.

In a few minutes Temple of the Fourth entered the visitor's room. He glanced at the stiff, silent official, and then at Fisher T. Fish.

"Well, what is it?" he asked.

"I—I—I guess I was joking with you, Temple, about those potatoes," said Fisher T. Fish reluctantly. Even now he could scarcely resign himself to parting with his plunder. "I—I'll be obliged if you'll take them off my hands—at—at cost price—"

"What!" rapped out the official voice.

Fish gave a jump.

"I—I mean as a present!" he gasped. "I guess that's what I mean, Temple. I got them as a present for you."

"Thanks awfully!" said Temple, with a grin. "Where are they?"

"In the wood-shed, behind the faggots."

"Right-ho!"

"Kindly ascertain whether the potatoes are there, Master Temple," said the official of the Food Department. "Please return and inform me. Otherwise, it is my duty to take this boy to his headmaster, with a view of being handed over to the police for forestalling and extortion."

"Oh, crumbs!" said Temple. "I'll be back in a minute, sir!"

He dashed out at a run. In five minutes he was back, with a merry grin on his face.

"All serene, sir!" he announced.

"You have found the potatoes?"

"Yes, sir."

"And taken possession of them?"

"Certainly! I'm setting the chaps to work getting them in at once, sir," said Temple. "I've handed over the sack of 'tatoes to Fry and Dab, and they're beginning already."

"Very good! Master Fish, I am glad that the matter has ended so satisfactorily for you."

Master Fish groaned. The matter hadn't ended satisfactorily for him at all. Not only had he lost his profit, but he had lost the money he had paid for the potatoes in the first place. He had saved his bacon, certainly. But of even that consolation he was soon to be deprived.

He limped out of the room, and went upstairs dejectedly. To his surprise the Food Control official followed him.

"This ain't the way out!" snapped Fisher T. Fish, turning on the landing.

"Thank you! I am not looking for the way out," said the official, as he went on to the Remove passage. "It's time to get these whiskers off."

"Wha-a-at!"

The Food Control gentleman went into No. 1 Study, leaving Fish rooted to the floor with amazement.

There was a roar of laughter.

Fish recovered himself a little.

"What the—what the thunder—what the dickens!" he stammered.

He rushed furiously into No. 1 Study.

The Famous Five and Micky Desmond and Ogilvy were there, roaring with laughter. The Food Control gentleman was also there, but presenting rather a different aspect now. He had taken off his spectacles, whiskers, and moustache, and, in spite of the make-up on his face, Fisher T. Fish recognised Wibley of the Remove.

He stared at the official as if mesmerised.

"You—you—you spoofing jay!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish.

"Done brown!" roared Bob Cherry.

"You can thank your stars it was only Wib, and not a real Food Control man, Fishy. You might have gone to chokey, you know."

Words failed Fisher T. Fish. He made a wild rush at Wibley, but half a dozen pairs of hands grasped him, and he was lifted out of the study and deposited on the floor of the passage—hard.

"Oh, Jerusalem!" moaned the Yankee merchant, as he scrambled to his feet.

He shook his fist at No. 1 Study, and dashed away downstairs. He arrived, breathless and excited, on the Fourth Form allotment, where Temple, Dabney & Co. were merrily busy.

Fish flourished a bony fist in Temple's face.

"Temple, you jay—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Temple.

"Jevver get left?"

"I guess you're going to pay for those taters!"

"Ha, ha! I guess not!"

"Oh, rather not!" chuckled Dabney.

"Ten bob the lot, if you like—"

"Ten rats!" grinned Temple.

"Look hyer, I'm out of pocket!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish. "Hand over what I paid for the dashed things, and you can have them at cost price—there!"

"My dear chap, I don't pay when a fellow makes me a present," said Temple coolly. "Thanks awfully for the potatoes! You won't get anything but thanks."

"I—I—I guess I'll make potato-scrappings of you—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish, almost besides himself, jumped at Temple. The Fourth-Formers promptly seized him, and bumped him in the newly-turned earth, and rolled him in it, and then dribbled him off the allotment like a football.

Fisher T. Fish escaped at last, feeling as if he had been through a mangle. He limped dismally into the School House. A howl greeted him as he passed the open door of No. 1 Study.

"What price potatoes, Fishy?"

Fisher T. Fish did not reply. He limped on, followed by a roar of merriment. Once more the acute business-men of the Remove had been badly left!

(Don't miss "SIR JIMMY'S SECRET!"—next Monday's grand story of Harry Wharton & Co., by FRANK RICHARDS.)

THE GREYFRIARS GALLERY.

No. 18.—GEORGE BULSTRODE.

FOR a long time past Bulstrode has not been a specially prominent figure in the Greyfriars stories; but in the early yarns he played a big part. He was beyond all question cock of the Remove at the time when Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry came along as new boys. Bulstrode could lick anyone else in the Form, and he was ready to do so on the slightest provocation.

Rotters of the Skinner type toadied to him because of his big fists and his plentiful supply of pocket-money. Decent fellows like Nugent, Ogilvy, Desmond, and Morgan, did not toady; but they knew that they were not his match individually, and there was no born leader among them, so that it was scarcely feasible to raise the standard of revolt.

Moreover, Bulstrode always had his good points. He was not a mere bully, delighting in cruelty for cruelty's sake. He wanted his own way; and, like most other people, could be quite pleasant when he got it. His particular form of unpleasantness, when he failed to get it, was of the bullying type—that was all.

Such overlordship was not good for the Form. It was not really good even for Bulstrode!

With the coming of Harry and Bob a big change was soon manifest. At the outset Harry Wharton was an undisciplined, passionate cub, but a cub with great stuff in him. Bob was very much what he is now—the best and pluckiest of good fellows, but not a born leader; much more of the sort to be a capital second in command.

The first fight between Wharton and Bulstrode occurred at a time when the new boy's knowledge of boxing was less than rudimentary. Harry knew that fists were the things to use; but that was about all he did know. Bulstrode licked him, of course. But the bully found Bob Cherry a far more difficult proposition. And when he and Wharton met again there was a complete turning of the tables, for by that time Harry had profited by his chum's tuition.

Then Bulstrode had to take something like a back seat. Wharton became captain of the Form, and proved himself far worthier of the post than his rival. But always there was Bulstrode in the background—and trying to get out of it—a centre of disaffection for all who disliked Wharton's rule to rally to—a possible leader, simply because he had been a leader in the past. When his only supporters were fellows of the Skinner faction, the case for him was hopeless. But when more decent members of the Form got fed-up with Wharton for the time being—as happened now and then—Bulstrode's chance came. As a rule, he could not take sufficient advantage of it to get back. His following was scarcely strong enough for that. And when it looked like proving so, he generally managed to disgust part of it by something off the rails.

But once he regained his old sway, and was captain for quite a longish time. He had thrashed Wharton in a fight which took place when the loser was really unfit. And there were other causes making for temporary unpopularity for the Remove's best leader. Bulstrode was skipper of the Form at the time when the death of his younger brother hit him so hard that he was absent from the school for a period, to give him a chance



George Bulstrode

of getting over it. He returned as captain, and ran against Bolsover on the way, and found in that burly personage a fellow who could beat him at his own rough game.

But he was never considered quite a satisfactory captain. After all, something more is required in a leader than a readiness to punch the head of anyone who disagrees with him. Bulstrode lacked Wharton's resource in emergencies, his moral courage, his keenness for the welfare of the Form. And the rest found this out, and, after all, were only too glad to get Harry back.

There are some pretty black spots in Bulstrode's record. His persecution of Mark Linley was one of the blackest of them. Nothing was too bad for the boy whose only crime was that he had worked with his hands before his brains took him to Greyfriars. In his attempt at chipping Mark's sister Mabel, when she visited Greyfriars, Bulstrode went far beyond the limit; and the getting Snoop to disguise himself as Mark Linley's father—or, rather, as the kind of object that no self-respecting boy would care to own as a father—was scarcely less bad.

But Bulstrode had little notion of chivalry in those days. Do you remember how he bought fireworks for a jape—in wretchedly bad taste—on the Cliff House girls? And how Wharton, trying to stop him, incurred the disapprobation of Miss Primrose as quarrelsome? Do you remember how, with the help of Skinner, he wangled into Tom Brown's pocket another paper instead of the lecture on New Zealand, which Tom was to have given at Cliff house, and had carefully prepared beforehand? That may have been—though one would say not—a fair joke on Tom Brown. It was not fair as far as Tom Brown's auditors were concerned. But, in the long run, gentle Marjorie Hazeldene had something to do with making Bulstrode the decent fellow he now is.

Bulstrode's treatment of Wun Lung was no better than his treatment of Linley. The little Chinese put him on his back by methods that were new to Bulstrode. After that came a war between the two—a war in which the Oriental craft of Wun Lung generally proved more than a match for the force of Bulstrode.

Bulstrode has often been in the wars. One does not refer here merely to his fights, though there have been plenty of them. For instance, he has been beaten by, and in turn has beaten, Mark Linley; he has gone down before Tom Brown; and most of the leading warriors of the Remove have at one time or another tried conclusions with him. But apart from this, he has been roughly handled by the Highcliffe nuts. In seeking to tar and feather Linley he has taken to himself—with Linley's aid—a generous share of the tar and feathers, and has been caned by Mr. Quelch for planning the trick. It was Snoop who told tales, though Snoop was one of the conspirators; it was Mark who was accused of telling them. Bulstrode has been a prisoner in the crypt. He has been in danger of expulsion as the supposed author of an anonymous letter to Mr. Quelch—the blackguardly work of Snoop again.

And one of his worst experiences was when his father and mother came along and found him, as they fancied, bullying that dear, sweet innocent, Billy Bunter. For once, at least, Bulstrode's drastic measures were fully justified. But the result was that for a time he was "Barred by His People."

In days when he had resigned all pretensions to the captaincy for himself, Bulstrode backed up Vernon-Smith in his long campaign against Wharton. But by that time he had shed some of his worst faults. His support of the Bounder did not extend to the schemes in which Skinner & Co. were ready to play their part. He was rough and boisterous still; but he had turned aside out of the crooked paths of old.

What turned him? Partly Marjorie. Partly a growing recognition of the fact that the fellows he called his enemies were far more reliable than those he called his friends. Wharton, Linley, Wun Lung—all did him good turns—were less ready to believe of him evil wrongly ascribed than Skinner & Co. They asked for proof before they would hold him guilty, though he was their declared foe. Skinner & Co. were ready to believe him guilty without proof, though he was their friend. Deep down in George Bulstrode, one thinks, there was always a recognition of the value and rightness of fair play, even when he went astray from it himself. Deep down in him was a better nature, to which appeal could always be made. He showed that at times in his dealings with Mark Linley. Apologies—grumbled, unwilling, but not insincere—came from him when he was proven in the wrong. He went back to his old feud; but he must have gone back to it each time with a growing conviction that it was doubtfully worth while.

He had the grace to be ashamed, in short. And there is always hope for the fellow who can be honestly ashamed of his misdoings—whose remorse is something more than regret at being found out.

In these days Bulstrode is not one of the most prominent members of the Remove. But he is a far more likable fellow in his comparative obscurity than he ever was in the period of his comparative greatness. Tom Brown and Peter Hazeldene, who share with him No. 2 Study, may be referred to on that score by any doubter.

(Next week: Hurree Jamsot Ram Singh.)

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IN A LAND OF PERIL!

By BEVERLEY KENT,

Author of "Officer and Trooper," "Cornstalk Bob," "A Son of the Sea," etc., etc.

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Bob Musters arrives in Cape Town to meet his cousin, Jasper Orme. Jasper sends him up country with a scoundrel named Faik, and it is made apparent that Faik and Jasper are in league to put Bob out of the way. Disgusted with Faik's bad treatment, Bob escapes, in company with Ted O'Brien, an Irish boy, and they take with them the map which shows the spot where a treasure is located, and which it was Faik's aim to seize. The two lads push on into the wilds, and are captured by savages. They are imprisoned in a kraal, and food is brought to them by a slave of their captors. Mendi, the slave, helps Bob and Ted to escape. He tells them of a mysterious ancient city under a lake. Mendi takes his companions up country into the remote wilds, where they meet with MacGregor, an old Scot, long resident with the natives. Bob is acclaimed by the savages as their chief, but Mopo, a warrior, challenges him as a rival. Ted knocks Mopo senseless.

Bob Musters is accused of having betrayed the tribe in the past, but the appearance of Faik, the real traitor, proves him to be innocent. The old chief dies, and Faik is now at Bob's mercy.

(Now Read On.)

Faik's Friendliness.

"I'll have to get out of this somehow," Bob remarked.

"In time, laddie, in time, ye ken," said the canny Scot. "For the noo ye munna think o't. And it is fortunate that ye hae a' the power noo; for though yon criuging coward deserves scant mercy, yei we are bound to save his life."

"It's a big change since last we had to do with him," Ted chuckled. "Then he meant to do us in. Now he is at our mercy, and you can make a slave of him, Bob, if you like! Ha, ha, ha! I'd rather enjoy making him obey orders for a bit, if it was only to see the sulky look on his ugly dial. But what shall we do with him?"

"We'll hae to haud him prisoner an' put a guard over him," MacGregor said. "After Kazna's funeral will be time enough to decide on the next step."

"He sha'n't come with us to search for that treasure," Ted insisted.

"I'm wi' ye there, laddie," the Scot replied. "But aiblins we can get him out of this on that pretext."

"That's a good idea," Ted agreed. "Well, what's our next move now?"

"That's for Bob to decide," MacGregor remarked, with a smile. "We're his men, ye ken."

"Oh, please stop that, Mr. MacGregor!" Bob urged. "It's only a silly game, after all, and I look to you to pull me through it. But about that cur Faik—"

"He's getting up!" Ted cut in. "I wonder what he thinks he's going to do? It's him for check, anyway!"

Faik was slowly rising. He eyed the three white men apprehensively for a moment; then he wiped the froth from his mouth, and tried to adopt a dignified

tone. But the effect was ludicrous. Dignity and a mud-plastered, terror-stricken face did not go well together.

"It's a good job you chaps were here," he remarked, in an off-hand manner as he came towards them. "These savages are a vile crew! For a few moments I almost thought my number was up, but I guess with four of us to tackle 'em we'll manage it. Eh? What do you think?"

Ted began to splutter with uncontrollable mirth. Faik assumed a severe air of reproach, and Ted laughed the harder.

"What's amusing you, young fellow?" Faik demanded.

"Oh, Bob, did you ever see such a guy?" the Irish lad guffawed. "He's a sight to cure sore eyes, isn't he? Don't you try to twist your face about, Faik, old sport, with a splash of mud right over your left optic. You'll send me into convulsions if you keep on playing the giddy goat."

Faik drew his long, lean figure to its full height, and turned on his heel with a gesture of contempt.

"Well, Musters, how have you been getting on since last we parted?" he asked Bob, with a touch of condescension.

"Better than you, it seems," Bob replied. "And I hope to do better in the future."

Faik turned to the old Scot.

"These youngsters will have their jokes, and we can't blame them, for we were young once ourselves," he remarked. "What's your name? I have an idea we've met before, but you're a bit altered since then."

"Oh, ay, we met, and I'm no likely to forget it!" MacGregor answered. "Do ye remember the night when, not far frae here, ye bribed the carriers to leave a white man to perish that ye might hae the treasure—ye and that scoundrel Orme? I am that white man!"

"Con MacGregor!" Faik gasped, stepping back.

"It wad seem, Faik, that ye've come up with no very friendly crowd, and ye ken that noo," MacGregor said sternly.

"Ye hoped I had been wiped out. Ye tried to play the same game wi' these lads, and only their pluck and perseverance saved them. We're no your friends, and we dinna intend to forget the past. The sooner ye come to heel the better! Mon, if I was younger, I'd give ye a hiding now!"

"I'm ready to have a cut at him, Mr. MacGregor," Ted said, a grin on his face.

"That's for Bob to arrange," the old Scot answered, with a dry smile. "Noo, Faik, you'll find that the tables are turned with a vengeance," he continued. "Out on the veldt ye thought ye could thrash this lad with impunity. Now your fate rests in his hands. If he says your head is to be cut off, off it comes on the instant. For he is the chief of the Inrobi!"

Faik was trembling again. He struggled desperately to control his shaking legs and twitching mouth.

"That is a surprise," he said. "And I'm very glad to hear it, for, of course, Musters will stand by me. There may

be some slight explanation needed, but I will soon convince him that at heart I have always been his friend."

"That's a lie," Bob said quietly. "I haven't yet decided how to deal with you, but you're not going to get off altogether; you may make up your mind to that. And— But what is it, Mr. MacGregor?"

The Scot had laid a hand on the lad's shoulder.

"See," he said, "Mendi is coming this way."

"What does he want, do you think?" Bob asked.

"Humph! Something awkward maun be afoot," MacGregor answered. "We are no clear of a' trouble yet."

Bob Speaks His Mind.

Mendi's face lit up with pleasure as he drew near to Bob. But there was a trace of anxiety in it.

"O great white chief, all has come true, as I foretold, when we were the captives of that jackal Kaasohiki," he said. "You now are my lord and master, and so shall it be to the end. And 'tis as thy servant I come hither."

"You will always be very welcome, Mendi," Bob replied. "And whatever happens we will stick together. But what may your tidings be?"

"Kampa and the other medicine-men are holding an indaba," the black boy replied, "for that is the law when one chief dies. They are talking of many things. And Mopo has been bidden to appear before them, but he will not come. And there are others, too, more than I thought, who also defy the medicine-men."

"That's awkward," MacGregor commented. "Mopo and some of his supporters are oot to defy the constituted authority. Bob, and ye'll be called on to deal with them."

"And what will I be asked to do?" "There's but the one punishment for ony offence—the axe."

"Oh, that rotten axe!" Ted grunted.

"And the medicine-men are casting spells to see if the evil spirit be in yonder stranger with the egg-shaped head and eyes like a reptile," Mendi continued. "Of a truth it must be so, for who saw one ever like unto him before?"

"You're right, there, Mendi. He's a fair curio," Ted agreed. "And the news you've just told doesn't seem to have livened up his face, does it? But what will happen if they find out what a rotter he is?"

"There will be the ordeal by fire first, and if he does not smile through his pain, there will be the axe."

Faik yelled in alarm.

"They mean to burn me!" he raved. "I've seen this sort of thing, and it's horrible! Musters, you must go to these silly fools, and tell them to drop this nonsense. Be quick, man! The very thought of what these brutes would do sends a shiver down my spine!"

"The great white chief must not stop the indaba," Mendi said. "It is against the law. And what matters the ordeal by fire, if the evil spirit be in thee, and thus it be burned out? Thou hast the

heart of a pigeon, and 'twas not of thee I came to speak, for what matters thy fate? It is nought. But Mopo should be dealt with, and that quickly!"

"I've been turning things over in my mind," said MacGregor, "and good may come out of this. They hae all sorts of rules when one chief dies and another steps into his shoes, and we may be able to turn them to our use. First comes a big to-do when the old chief is buried. Then some weeks maun pass before the new chief is enthroned. That is in our favour. As for you cur Faik, we canna just leave him to his fate. Bob, will ye step this way a moment?"

The two walked apart, and conversed together for a few minutes. On their return the lad spoke.

"Mendi, go back and tell the medicine-men that we are on our way to meet them," he said. "Have a kraal prepared for us. Let the drums notify the people of my arrival, so that all may keep away, for that is my wish. And let a meal be ready!"

The black boy bowed low, and ran back. Bob turned to Faik.

"As for you," he said, "it seems that once again I am to save your life. We rescued you a while back, after you showed your hand, and we have seen clearly that you meant to destroy us once the treasure was found. We must save you from the fate that would be yours, though you richly deserve it. But you may as well understand that as soon as we get you out of this place we chuck you altogether, to sink or swim, as chance may be. And now I take you as my slave, since that's the one way to satisfy these people; and I can tell you you're not going to have a very lively time. Ted is to boss you; and if you don't obey his orders I will give you the thrashing you tried to give me! Ted, march him before you, and set about him if he resists. We had better follow Mendi at once."

Mendi, running swiftly, had carried Bob's message to the indaba, and the drums began to beat. As the party came to the kraal in which old Kazna had lived they saw a group of men gathered to meet them, and in front stood Kampa, the principal medicine-man and sooth-sayer.

"I have sent my messenger to you, for there is much that I would say at once, wise men of the Inrobi," Bob began. "And first I have decreed that Mendi shall be my attendant henceforth."

"It shall be as thou wishest, chief," Kampa answered.

"Then, as concerns that white knave yonder," Bob continued, "He is of the same colour as myself, and, therefore, it is best fitting that I should mete out his punishment. Therefore have I made him my slave until such time as his punishment is due."

Kampa seemed to hesitate.

"The great Kazna knew him for the false dog who brought destruction on our people," he said.

"And as the great Kazna died he cried out that the vengeance is for me, who am to fill his place," Bob answered. "All who were there heard those words. Therefore has a duty been laid upon me which only I can perform. Woe be to him who tramples on the last wishes of the dying, Kampa! I have spoken! And if I be not obeyed, no chief of the Inrobi am I!"

"But you will punish him, great chief?"

"Ay! He will suffer hunger and thirst, and the wild beasts shall track him down, and the thunder and the wind and the rain shall be his portion, and never more shall he see his people!" Bob replied.

"Thou speakest like a true prophet," Kampa said. "Take him as thy slave!"

"And now, there is but one more thing to be done, and, in truth, thy agreement is given already; for do not you, better than all men, know the laws?" Bob continued. "And wast thou not a lad when Kazna came to rule?"

"That is so, chief."

"And was there not great merry-making in the weeks before he was enthroned?" Bob went on. "But what did Kazna do? Did he join in the music and feasting? Ye know the answer."

"I know it," replied Kampa.

"The great Kazna hied him to the mountains, and there he communed with the spirits, to learn how to make his rule wise. And wise and glorious was his rule," Bob said. "And thus should a new ruler seek counsel. And as Kazna did so will I do, for how better could I act? Therefore, I rest here to-night, and to-morrow I depart. And on the day for my enthronement I return."

"And whilst thou art away——" Kampa began.

"Thou, as the chief medicine-man, rulest during that time," Bob cut in. "And what better choice could there be?"

The old medicine-man's face brightened.

"In that thou showest true wisdom," he said. And Ted turned away to hide a grin.

"Then make these my orders known to the people," Bob concluded. "And let there be silence to-night, for the great chief Kazna still sleeps amongst us. And let none accompany me to-morrow, when I leave at dawn, save only Mendi and this white knave, my slave, who will walk with a rope around his neck, and these my two friends, who will guard me against danger. And do thou see that we lack not for food during our sojourn away, but have it ready, that we may bear it with us. Now I would rest."

He entered the kraal that had been set aside for his use, and, for the first time, the three Britishers smiled.

"That was jolly well done, Bob!" Ted said. "Of course, we are off to find the treasure?"

"Yes, Mr. MacGregor put me up to all I was to say," Bob explained. "And I, for one, won't be sorry to get away from all this palavering. Won't it be grand to be out on the veldt again, leading the open life a Britisher loves, with our rifles and and grub, and the excitement of looking for the treasure?"

"Ay, mon, it's what I've longed for these many years!" the old Scot agreed. "But wi' my auld limbs I'll be a drag on ye, I fear. But I'll e'en do my best."

"And without you we might search for years in vain," Bob made haste to reply.

"And will you come back here?" Ted asked.

"Yes, I must."

"So I thought. It would be playing them down if you didn't. And then they will make you their chief. That's rather rotten, but you'll have to get out of it some way."

"There's a lot he'll hae to do before that," MacGregor said. "But there's no use worrying as to what the future has in store. We're going to lead the lives of white men for a spell, an' that's about the biggest holiday possible. And noo here comes Mendi wi' the supper. Let us fall to, and then hae a good sleep, for a long journey lies before us to-morrow."

"Ay, ay, I'm agreeable!" Ted chuckled. "And the grub looks fine! What-ho! It doesn't matter if we haven't knives and forks!"

A Night Surprise.

While the three Britishers had been talking together Faik had been put into the charge of Mendi, and Bob now

directed that he should be lodged securely, and should be ready to start with them in the morning.

After a hearty meal they fell asleep, tired out by the excitement of the day.

At dawn the following morning they started. Their provisions, tools, and new ammunition, years before captured by the tribe, were in a cart drawn by a mule, and, whilst within sight of the village, Faik walked with a rope round his neck, the end of which was held by Ted. But when they had covered five miles the rope was unhitched, as none of the party had any wish to inflict unnecessary indignity on the scoundrel.

All that day they tramped, MacGregor sometimes travelling in the cart, and they pitched their camp at nightfall. The second day was as the first. In the middle of the third Bob, after consultation with MacGregor, cried a halt, and turned to Faik.

"We now part company," he said. "We give you your freedom. Go where you like! That's no concern of ours!"

Faik scowled.

"Where am I to go?" he asked.

"It's your own fault," Bob explained. "You took the risk in coming up here, and you certainly can't expect us to add you to our party. You would betray us if you got the chance. There is not one of us whom you have not tried to destroy. Clear out, and make your way back to Cape Town, or anywhere else you like. But don't come near us again; if you do, we will deal with you as an enemy. And don't go back to the Inrobi. You know what fate you might expect there. Now sheer off!"

They started again, leaving Faik standing alone in the great expanse of the veldt. When they had gone half a mile they saw that he had sat down on a boulder. For a couple of minutes they were all thoughtful.

"He looks pretty miserable," Bob said at last. "Villain though he is, I can't help feeling sorry for him. But there was nothing less we could do."

"Ye needn't worry about him," MacGregor answered. "I ken him of auld, far better than ye do. He's full of resource, and there's no man of more experience in the country. It's no the first time he's been stranded, and he'll get safely wherever he decides to go. I only hope it's the last we're to see o' him."

"He can't do any mischief now, anyhow," Ted remarked.

"Mon, he winna keep out of mischief as long as there's breath in his body!" the old Scot affirmed. "And, mark my words, it's no the getting to the coast he's thinking of at this moment. He means to lay hands on that treasure yet."

Ted laughed.

"Then he'll have to think jolly hard," he replied. "He'll be a genius if he succeeds."

They did not look back again, and in truth there was enough in front to keep them interested. The lake lay to their left, a wide water glistening in the hot sunlight. Away to the right a range of high mountains stretched to the horizon; in front were forests. The scene was beautiful, yet through it all danger lurked.

On the fourth day they had drawn so near to the forests that the trees could be plainly discerned. Their experiences when with the Inrobi tribe seemed as a dream. Out on the veldt, away from all savages, leading the open life, with a white man for company, the spirits of the two lads became buoyant; but MacGregor occasionally dropped into long reveries; and Mendi, though he seldom spoke, showed a strange nervousness at times.

Before they entered the forest on the following morning MacGregor gave the first hint of danger.

"It's a' been plain sailing up to this, ye ken," he began, "but from now on we'll have to carry our rifles at the ready. These forests are full of dangerous beasts, and there's no path, except the one we hewed out when I was here many years ago. And I reckon that by this time it's overgrown again."

"And how did you manage to steer your way then?" Bob inquired.

Macgregor took a small compass from his pocket.

"Our lives depended on that," he said, "and our lives depend upon it noo. If I dropped that our expedition would fail. I've treasured it ever since those days, more for the memories it evoked than frae any hope that I wad find it useful again. We won't be long in that forest before it will be more valuable than all else we have."

"And how big is this forest?"

"It took us three weeks to go through it. It's rough travelling. We don't see the lake again until we come out on the far side."

"This is going into the unknown with a vengeance!" Ted remarked. "It puts a stopper on Faik, anyhow, if that's the only good thing about it. Are you certain where you entered?"

"Ay! I remember those two great trees well, and the thoughts that were in my mind as we passed between them. Little I kenned then what we were up against. But to be forewarned is to be forearmed, and that is where I should be useful now. And Mendi is a big asset, too."

He called to the black boy.

"You go ahead," he said, "and see if you can find any trace of the track I made yonder at one time."

Mendi pushed his way through the tangled growth. A grin was on his face when he returned.

"Me know the way," he said. "Me want an axe."

He set to work, and Bob and Ted by turns worked with him. When not thus employed, either of the lads carried a loaded rifle. MacGregor followed, leading the mule and cart.

Mendi was able to trace out the old track by some aboriginal instinct, the same that gave him an urgent warning when danger lurked close by. Without him they would have had to cut a new path. But even thus the task was heavy and their progress slow. At noon they rested.

The sunlight had gone. No more would they see it until they emerged on the far side of the forest. The air was oppressively hot, and a mist hung between the branches. Up in the trees all day long a discordant chatter was broken at intervals by shrill shrieks. From the depths around came the sullen roar of wild beasts. Sometimes the air fairly vibrated with their bellowing. Once the ground shook as a herd of elephants crashed past close by.

"If one of those herds comes our way they'll e'en walk over us, and there'll be naething to pick up when they're gone," MacGregor remarked. "Now, lads, ye see what ye're in for. Shall we turn back? It's for ye to say. I'm auld, and I dinna mind which way ye decide."

"We'll go on," Bob said decisively.

"What's your notion, Ted?"

"Same as yours," the Irish boy answered readily. "We didn't expect this to turn out a picnic-party, Mr. MacGregor, and we mean to chance our luck!"

"Spoken like Britishers!" the old Scotchman commented. "Well, we'll get a move on again, for it won't be long before we'll hae to set about making a camp for the night. And that's a long job in the forest, as ye'll find."

For three hours more they hewed a way. Then MacGregor called a halt.

"It was to this spot we won on our first day," he said. "Ye can see how the trees are felled around. But a pile of stuff has grown since then that it will take two hours to clear out. We must have a big space, and we'll hae to light half a dozen bonfires, and keep 'em going till morning. They will scare the lions off, and the elephants, too, will give them a wide berth."

Though much fatigued, Bob and Ted each took an axe now, and worked with Mendi, who seemed tireless. Meantime, MacGregor unyoked the mule and cooked the supper. An impenetrable darkness gathered with nightfall; as Ted said, one could almost cut it with a knife. But the big bonfires lit up the camp splendidly, and inside its circumference the scene was cheery. The chattering had long since died away; only fitfully was the silence broken by the roar of a hungry lion searching for his prey. So far they had not seen the king of beasts.

After the meal they divided the party into two watches, Bob and Mendi taking the first. MacGregor and Ted were soon sound asleep, and Bob, sitting before one of the bonfires, his rifle across his knees, was left to his own reflections.

Many thoughts thronged his mind in the solemn hush. So much danger and excitement had been compressed into a few months that he had seldom had time to look back. But by night alone, and on a long vigil—for Mendi was posted at another corner—his brain worked quickly.

Six months before he had been at home in England. Now that seemed almost unbelievable. The experiences of a lifetime divided him from the old life.

One day in Cape Town, where he had expected to settle down, perhaps for life. Then across the veldt with Faik, in the full belief that he had met an honourable man. Then the discovery of the villain's character, and the break from him; the capture by Kaashohiki; the many perils, the escape, the long, desperate journey into the wilds; the meeting with MacGregor and the Inrobi tribe; and now this forest and all that lay ahead!

His thoughts came surging in wild confusion. But the fire had begun to burn low. He stood up to throw some logs on it. Close by the mule was tethered, and Bob stared at it with curiosity.

The animal was trembling violently. The lad went closer, and saw that it was stricken with terror, and yet not a sound had he heard. Ah, lions! He remembered reading how tame animals always trembled at their approach. Then one of these ferocious beasts was prowling round the camp!

He turned to seek Mendi. The fire in that corner had gone low, too, and he could not see him. So he swiftly crossed the camp. But Mendi was not there!

Bob, now alarmed, made a circle of the camp. But Mendi was not to be found. He had disappeared!

The lad was about to hurry to the cart where Ted and MacGregor were sleeping when some instinct warned him not to move. If the lion meant to attack, most probably he intended the mule for his prey. And were the mule killed, they would have to leave most of

their provisions behind, or, at the least, the difficulty of transporting them would be increased enormously.

So a few yards from the mule he lay down, his rifle to his shoulder.

The fresh logs he had thrown on the fire suddenly blazed up. For twenty yards from where he lay the darkness once again was illuminated. Ah! He heard the cracking of a twig!

He lay still, his heart thumping hard. Could he save the mule? Would his first shot get home?

And then he felt almost paralysed for a moment. He saw, straight ahead, a pair of glittering eyes shining like fire. To the right were more, and to the left more still.

A figure slowly rose.

Good heavens! Why had he feared a lion? This was danger far more terrible. He guessed it by some instinct.

"Mopo!" he gasped. "And we are surrounded! We have been tracked down, and I alone can save my friends!"

Mendi Helps His Friends.

Just for a few moments Bob stood, too startled to move. His companions, with the exception of Mendi, were asleep, and the latter had disappeared. Before him the figure of Mopo rose; around the camp he saw other savages, more clearly silhouetted. It looked as if his doom was sealed.

Only for a moment did he stand irresolute. Then the paroxysm of dread swept away, and his mind was busy again. All was not lost. At least he and his friends could go down fighting. Bringing his rifle to his shoulder, he fired.

The shot rang out, loud and startling, in the dense silence of the forest. A shout proclaimed that Ted had been aroused, and was hurrying to the spot. But Mopo had not been hit. He sprang over the tree-trunks, brandishing his axe.

Bob did not wait to fire again. He knew well that the small band could only ward off the attack if they stayed together, and he dashed for the mule-cart, meeting Ted as he ran.

"There are a whole pack of them; how many goodness knows!" he shouted. "Back with you to the cart! That's our only chance!"

MacGregor was on his feet by this time. As the lads rushed back, the old Scot guessed what their method of defence was to be. They all dropped flat on the ground to meet the onrush, and only just in time. A full score of savages were charging forward, yelling and brandishing their spears.

The British party fired simultaneously, and the savages turned and fled. Mopo rallied them, and they came on once more. The rifles rang out, and two dropped. The others wavered; but there was no retreat, and Mopo's voice rang out fiercely, urging them anew to the attack. Then came another voice, shouting encouragement from the darkness, and in English this time.

The savages pressed forward, and then dropped to the ground.

The camp-fires were waning; it was very difficult to discern the enemy.

"Things look very bad for us!" growled Bob. "Can you see them, Ted?"

"No. They're writhing along like eels," Ted replied. "If they would only lift their heads and give us a chance of a shot we could keep them off still. And it's a couple of hours yet to the dawn!"

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"We must e'en do our best," MacGregor remarked drily. "Whaur's Mendi? I havna seen him since the scrap began. Have they wiped him out?"

"I don't think so. I missed him before then," Bob explained. "And did you hear that voice coming from the dark? It was Faik's! The cur is at the back of all this!"

"Look out!" Ted cried.

Some of the savages had jumped to their feet, prepared to make the final rush. A volley of bullets brought them quickly to the ground again; but next moment the whole attacking party were rushing forward, their axes swinging.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Again the bullets whistled through their ranks, but still they came on. Face to face with death, the gallant Britishers stood firm. To fight to the bitter end, seemed all they could hope for, and the end could not be delayed more than a few moments. Yet very coolly they loosed off their rifles.

And when it seemed that all hope had fled, at the moment when they could look clearly into the gleaming eyes of their adversaries, safety came as none for a moment could have dreamed. Once again a voice rang out from the darkness, and this time it was full of terror:

"Mopo, stop them! Pull them off! I command!"

The rushing mob halted. Mopo turned and peered into the darkness.

"Stop! Stop!" the voice wailed. "I am a dead man if you fail!"

"Warriors, give back!" Mopo snarled. "We meet anon," he continued, shaking his fist at the Britishers. "And next time witchery will not save you!"

Two seconds later the savages had disappeared. The camp was empty except for the Britishers. For a couple of seconds they lay tense and silent, their rifles still to their shoulders. Ted mopped the perspiration from his face.

"They have cleared out," he murmured. "Well, of all the amazing things! I felt sure we were goners! What did that villain Mopo mean by throwing up the sponge just when he was about to run?"

"Faik called him off," Bob replied. "Perhaps at the last moment Faik, cur as he is, hesitated to wipe us out!"

MacGregor was the first to rise. A smile was on his face.

"They're gone, and they winna come back to-night," he said. "I know the ways of these savages from lang experience. Yes, that was a verra narrow shave—as close a one as I have ever had in all the years I've lived in wild parts! We can go round and light up the fires. We're absolutely safe the noo! But, Bob, I may tell ye that ye give Faik credit for what he doesn't deserve!"

"Then how was it? I—" Bob began.

"We'll hear the tale before long," MacGregor said. "Now I'm going to have some grub. I'm always hungry after a wee bit of excitement. Then I'll take your place on guard. You'll need what sleep you can get, laddie, for we have a long and hard day before us!"

He sauntered away to throw brushwood on one of the fires, and Ted went to look after another. Puzzled, and yet very weary, Bob lay down, and before long fell asleep. When he awoke the sun was up. He knew that much from the better light in the forest; for though the sun's rays never pierced the matted foliage overhead, yet whilst it was shining objects could be plainly discerned. He looked around. Some distance away Ted and MacGregor were preparing breakfast. He joined them.

"Feeling fairly fit again?" the old Scotchman asked.

The lad nodded.

"Yes, I'm all right," he replied. "Do you mean to start soon?"

"We'll hae to wait for Mendi; but I expect it won't be long before he turns up," MacGregor answered quietly.

"Mendi! I had forgotten about him," Bob said. "The fact is, I was too tired to think about anything. Why did he clear out, do you think? It wasn't because he was afraid of danger, I'm sure. He's too plucky for that!"

MacGregor chuckled.

"Mendi has the eyes of a hawk and the scent of a hound," he said. He knew those savages were coming up here when they were still half a mile awa', and he went off to play his own game. He'll have a surprising story to tell, and—But we winna hae to wait for it. Here he is!"

The black boy, jumping over the fallen trees, came running towards them, his white teeth shining in a hearty grin. He dropped to the ground by the fire.

"Me hungry," he said. "Me very glad to eat!"

"Mendi, why did you leave us last night?" Bob asked.

"That I might defeat the jackals who were coming to slay us, O master," Mendi answered. "For did I not hear the hoot of an owl not once, but often, and have I seen an owl since we came into this forest of gloom? And do I not know the cry of my people when they go forth to give battle?"

"Then why did you not tell us?"

"Because that first I went to seek how many there might be. And how was I to know that the cry came from those behind? I followed the cry to where it came from, and there I found nothing for a time."

"And what did you do then?"

"Fear seized me, but not for myself, O master, for then I knew that the jackals had pressed on, and that they might attack before I could give the warning. I hurried back, looking for Mopo, for if I could have slain him then, the others were certain to flee. But Mopo was leading, and I could not overtake him. Yet was I not without hope."

"You're a cheery sort of customer in a tight corner, anyhow," Ted chuckled. "There wasn't much hope in me, I can tell you. What did you expect to do?"

"The paleface knows not the way of my people," Mendi answered. "Most are brave, but some have the heart of the antelope. Therefore did I look for this second leader, divining who he might be."

The giraffe with the eyes of a fish! Did you not let him go? But who was I to point out the folly? And did he not sit down and wait, knowing that Mopo was following us?"

"He means Faik, of course," Bob commented. "You were right about that scoundrel, Mr. MacGregor, when you said you weren't certain we had seen the last of him when we gave him his liberty. This was a put-up job between him and Mopo when we were all in Mendi's village. Now, then, Mendi, out with the rest of it!"

"Thus did I judge, and quickly did I return," the black boy continued. "Nor had I gone far when I came upon the whiteface of whom I have spoken, and some of my people. And they were holding back, and he was raining blows upon them, nor did I do aught."

"But when they ran on, then did I spring like a wildcat on him, and my fingers was strong at his throat. And when the breath was nearly gone from him, then did I drag him to his feet, for the fight in him had fled. And I told him, before strength came back to him, that if he did not call out to Mopo, I would finish what I had begun. And a great trembling seized him, and he obeyed."

"Then did I hear Mopo calling, and soon I saw his braves hurrying away, and I knew that all was well with you, for had not your iron tubes spat fire and death without a pause? And I led the whiteface coward away, so that none would meet him."

"Through the thorns and brambles I forced him, laughing as he groaned, nor did I stop till hours had passed and dawn was nigh. And then I left him, caring naught what might befall him, and came hither that I might eat. I have spoken."

"And you have earned your grub, old sport," Ted said, "and after that long-winded speech set your jaws working," and he handed a great platter of food to the black boy. "And now, Bob, what's the next move?"

"Mr. MacGregor knows best," Bob replied. "We're in his hands."

"As soon as Mendi is ready we had better load up the mule-cart and get on the way," the Scotchman said. "We've several days yet cutting out the path before we get through this forest."

"And what then?" Ted asked.

"Time enough to face trouble when it comes," MacGregor answered vaguely.

(Continued on page 20.)

READY ON FRIDAY, MAY 4th.	
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IN A LAND OF PERIL.

(Continued from page 19.)

"And we've enough of that on hand as it is. Faik will haul on, and Mopo and his crowd have only to follow the path we make. But they winna take us by surprise again; so, wi' vigilance, we stand a gude chance of shaking them off in the end."

"But Mendi has left Faik stranded," Ted urged.

"Faik is in a fix he would never get out of by himself, but Mopo will find him during the course of the day," MacGregor replied. "These fellows are like Mendi, and a broken twig is hint eno' for them. No. Faik will come along still, I'm sure. Now, let us pack, and yoke the mule. Yes, and ye had better sharpen your axes. Ye've a big day's work before ye."

A Council of War.

In half an hour they were cutting their way through the forest again. All that day they toiled. In the evening MacGregor explained the plan by which he hoped to ward off the savages. On his advice they made a small, strong camp of fallen logs just large enough to contain themselves and the mule and cart.

The circular barricade was as high as their shoulders. There were loopholes here and there through which they could fire. Thus, almost back to back, and able to kneel and still fight if the savages hurled their axes, they could, if forced, take such a deadly toll of the enemy as probably to scare off the rest.

The night passed uneventfully, and next morning they moved on. But Bob and Ted had to do all the axe work now, for Mendi was scouting hither and thither all the time. MacGregor thought that if

Mopo had seen their new camp he might essay a day surprise.

With only the two lads hewing a path, a rest at times became necessary, and their advance was slower. But the journey was not altogether drudgery. The spirit of adventure buoyed them up; every day they became more inured to the toil, and the hope of success grew greater.

Thus ten days passed without any startling incident. They had almost forgotten Mopo and Faik. Even Mendi seemed to be less apprehensive. But in the middle of the eleventh night they were attacked again.

They were ready this time, and their precautions saved them. After a stiff fight the savages desisted, carrying away some that had fallen. Mendi followed them, and on his return stated that they had camped about a couple of miles back, and were holding an indaba. MacGregor shrugged his shoulders.

"I've ne'er kened such persistence in the Inrobi," he said. "It isna like them to keep on hammering awa'. I hae my doots. There's something behind it all."

"Faik's behind it," Bob suggested. "That's what I'm thinking, laddie," the old Scotchman said. "Though how he manages to draw them sae far from their hame is worrying me, I wadna deny. Besides, what can the puir body hope to gain by all this?"

"He means getting the treasure," Ted said. "If he follows us, and we find it, and then he wipes us out, he'll have it, won't he?"

MacGregor chuckled.

"And how is the puir loon to get it back doon country?" he asked. "Is he gaun to trust this fellow Mopo and the others? Wouldn't they wipe him out in turn? Ye canna drive savages unless you've got the whip-hand of them, and without a rifle he's altogether at their mercy."

"Then he's got something up his sleeve of which we don't know," Bob said.

"That's my opinion," MacGregor replied.

Next day the journey was renewed. And as they were building their camp on the following night Mendi suddenly dropped a log he was carrying, and looked around. The log hit Ted's foot, and as he hopped about on one leg he began to upbraid the black boy.

"Hi, there! What game are you up to now?" he demanded. "Where are your manners, my son? You've nearly broken my toes, and you just stand there as if you had been turned into stone. What ails you? Have you got a touch of—"

"Lo, I am hearing the coming of one who must be a friend!" Mendi said, his face alight with expectation. "He does not pause, but holds on his way with steady steps."

"A friend!" Bob exclaimed. "And we miles from anywhere! Surely, Mendi, thy ears deceive thee?"

"Hist! He stops," the black boy said. "Now he comes on again. He stayed to look at us when for the first time he saw us. He is coming faster. Ay, watch yonder!"

He pointed to a spot to the right. MacGregor, who had been tethering the mule, gazed earnestly. Bob and Ted stared incredulously. For half a minute nothing happened. Then of a sudden the bushes were parted, and a savage stepped out into the open ground, and salaamed. Mendi gave a whoop of joy, and ran towards him.

"Galza, son of Gomanka," he cried, "was it then thy step I heard?"

"Great Scott!" MacGregor gasped. "I knew that fellow Galza well. He is one of the Inrobi, and he's come all this way after us. He's the fleetest runner they have. I canna understand the meaning of this!"

Galza and Mendi were embracing one another and talking eagerly. Seizing Galza's hand, Mendi led him towards Bob.

(Next week's issue will contain another splendid instalment of this exciting story.)

The Editor's Chat.

For Next Monday:

"SIR JIMMY'S SECRET!"

By Frank Richards.

In the fine story which will appear next week a prominent part is played by Sir Jimmy Vivian, the schoolboy baronet brought up in Carker's Rents. Sir Jimmy does not find life at Greyfriars altogether easy, for there are some fellows who think it amusing to jape him on account of little things which are not his own fault—such as the dropping of the aspirate. And Sir Jimmy, who is not thick-skinned, does not find it amusing to be japed. From the first Skinner has been his enemy, and, of course, the

egregious Bunter has looked down upon him from a pedestal of purely fictitious breeding. Skinner and Bunter both play parts in the story, as do Bolsover major. But apart from Sir Jimmy and an acquaintance of his—not a friend—of the Carker's Rents days, who is known as Scaly Bill, Bob Cherry and his cousin, Paul Tyrrell, are the chief characters in the story.

A TREAT IN STORE!

One hears now and then of Magnetites and Gemites who regard each other as rivals and foemen, somewhat after the fashion of the Forms at St. Jim's. There does not seem much reason for it. On the face of it, there is nothing against a fellow's liking the MAGNET best, and yet being able to be patient with his next-door neighbour who swears by the "Gem." But this splitting into parties seems part of our imperfect human

nature; and as long as it does not lead to any real bitterness there can be no harm in it. Nevertheless, I believe that the very large majority of my readers read both papers; and I am confident that in Magnetite eyes the next best thing to a "Boys' Friend 3d. Library" issue, containing a story by Mr. Frank Richards, is one containing a story by Mr. Martin Clifford. Well, I cannot promise you a Frank Richards book just at present; but you are going to have a Martin Clifford one in a very short time. The title is:

"AFTER LIGHTS OUT!"

And in the story—one of the best Mr. Clifford has ever written—Levison major and minor and that erratic, puzzling fellow, Ralph Reckness Cardew, play big parts. Racke—"Young Moneybags"—also comes into the foreground. But our old friends—the Terrible Three and the chums of Study No. 6, and the rest of them—are not forgotten. This is a really great yarn, and you will do well to

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(Signed).....



Your Editor