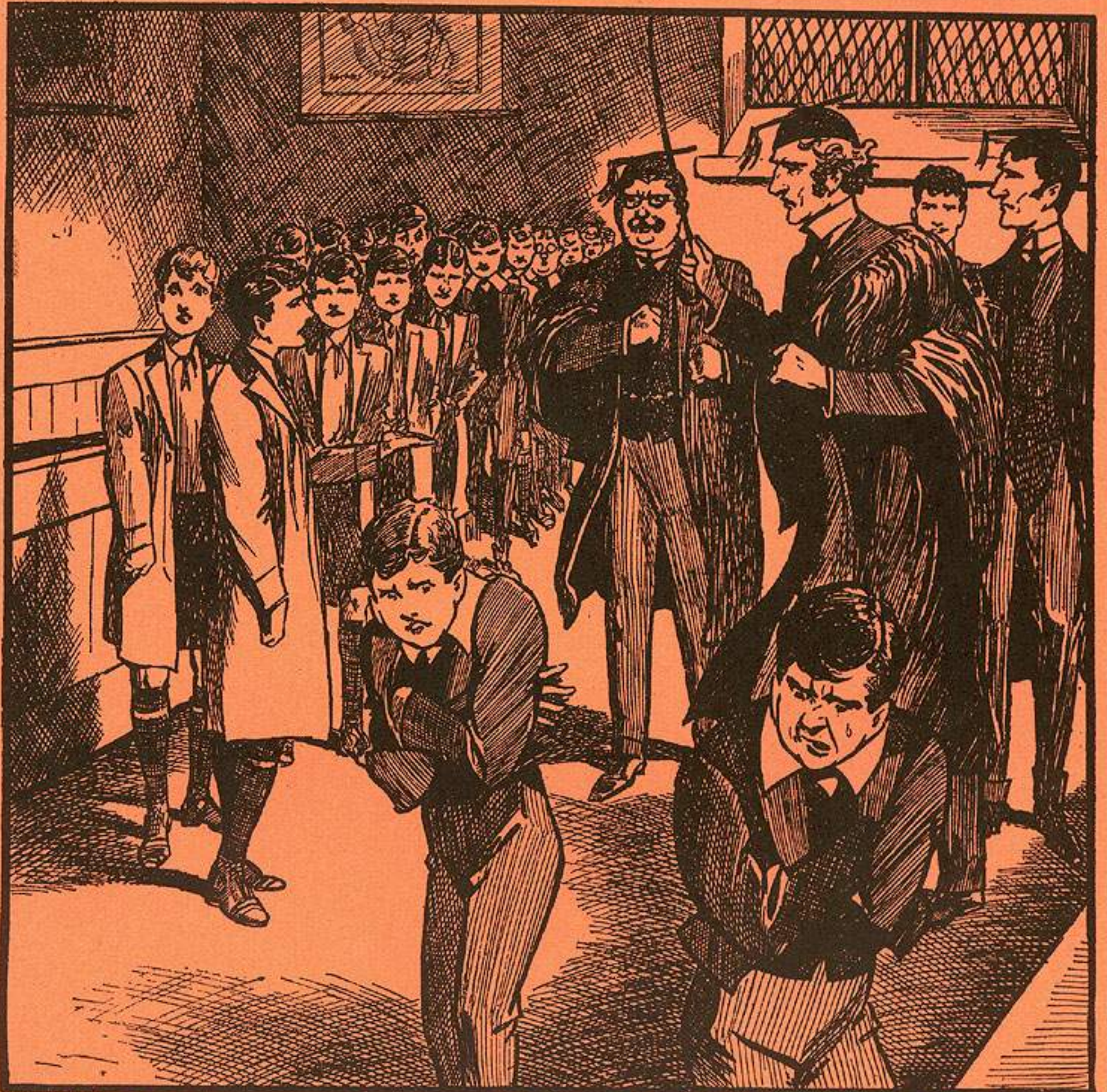


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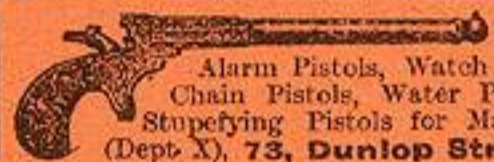
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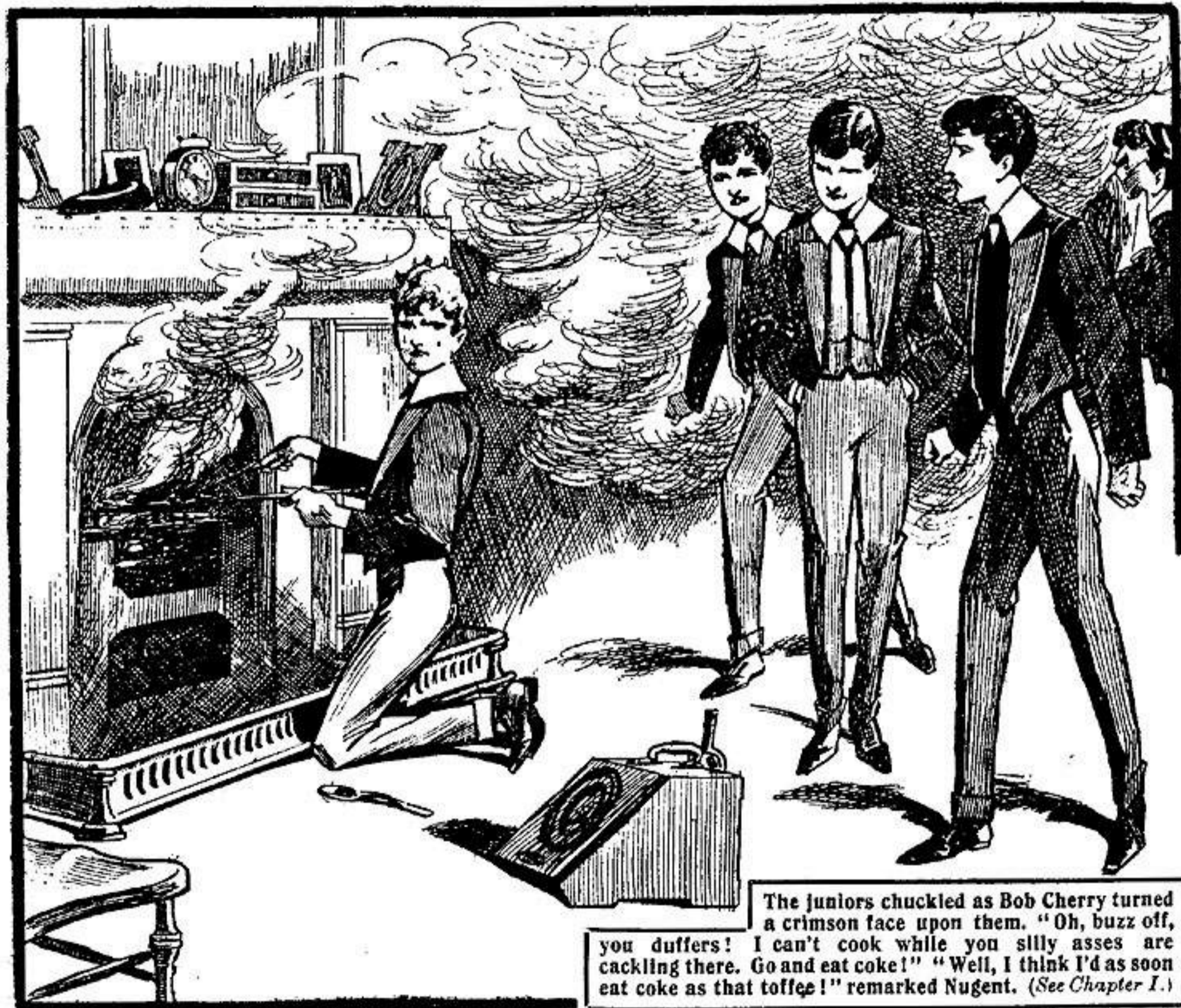


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RUCTIONS IN THE REMOVE!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



The juniors chuckled as Bob Cherry turned a crimson face upon them. "Oh, buzz off, you duffers! I can't cook while you silly asses are cackling there. Go and eat coke!" "Well, I think I'd as soon eat coke as that toffee!" remarked Nugent. (See Chapter I.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Bob Cherry Makes Toffee!

"**B**EGAD!" "Oh, my hat! What are you up to, Bob?" Lord Mauleverer and Mark Linley looked into the doorway of No. 13 Study, in the Remove passage at Greyfriars.

It was a cold winter's day out of doors, and there was snow on the ground in the Close. But it was not cold in No. 13 Study in the Remove. The study was like an oven, and there was a strong smell of burning. The fire was piled high in the grate, and Bob Cherry was kneeling before the fire, attending to a frying-pan on the glowing coals. He turned a crimson and perspiring face towards the two juniors in the doorway.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Come in!"

"Begad, I'd rather stay out, if you don't mind, my dear fellow!" said Lord Mauleverer. "You're a little warm in there!"

"What on earth are you up to, Bob?" asked Mark.

"Can't you see? I'm making toffee!"

"Toffee!"

"Yes. I'm getting on. Bunter thinks he's the only chap in the Remove who can make toffee, but you'll see what this is like when I've finished."

"Something like burnt cinders, I should say, to judge by the smell!" said Mark Linley, laughing.

"Begad, I thought the study was on fire, don't you know!" remarked Lord Mauleverer.

Bob Cherry snorted.

"I couldn't help it burning a little bit. That will really only give it an extra rich flavour, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! Setting the house on fire?" asked Harry Wharton, coming along the passage. "What the dickens are you doing, Bob?"

"Making toffee!" snorted Bob Cherry.

"Oh, crumbs! Not baking bricks?"

"Fathead!"

The three juniors stood in the doorway, and watched Bob with great interest. They did not care to enter the study; the heat was terrific, and the smell of burning was not agreeable. They could not help wondering what the toffee would be like when Bob had finished it. Bob could do many things—he could swim and run and row, and as a half-back he was famous—but as a cook he did not shine.

Frank Nugent came along the passage with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. The smell of burning was attracting the Remove fellows from all quarters.

"Hallo! What's the game, Bob?" asked Nugent. "What are you doing?"

"Making toffee!" shouted Bob. He was getting exasperated with the same question over and over again. "Can't you see?"

"What are you burning it for?" asked Nugent. "Toffee isn't supposed to be burnt!"

"Ass!"

Bob devoted all his attention to the black, sticky mass simmering in the frying-pan.

The group of juniors chuckled in the doorway. Bob turned a crimson face upon them.

"Oh, buzz off, you duffers! I can't cook while you silly asses are cackling there! Go and eat coke!"

"Well, I think I'd as soon eat coke as that toffee!" remarked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo! What are you doing, Bob?" asked Johnny Bull of the Remove, joining the group in the doorway, with the same old question.

"Making toffee!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

"My hat! I thought you were trying some chemical experiment by the smell!" said Johnny Bull, sniffing. "What are you making it for?"

"To eat, you ass!"

"Oh, rats! You won't be able to eat that!" said Johnny Bull, with another sniff.

"Buzz off!" roared Bob Cherry, exasperated. "How do you think I can cook with a crowd of silly asses staring in and cackling?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I don't think you can cook!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"The cookfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "and the smellfulness of the esteemed study is also great!"

"That will pass off!" growled Bob Cherry. "This is going to be jolly good toffee. One of you silly asses get me the pan to pour it in; it will be ready soon."

Mark Linley obligingly braved the heat and the smell in the study, and extracted a large flat pan from the cupboard, and handed it to Bob Cherry.

"Put it on the chair!" growled Bob.

Mark laid the pan in the armchair at Bob's elbow, and retreated to the door again.

The crowd of juniors in the passage was thickening. Half the Remove seemed to be deeply interested in Bob Cherry's efforts as a cook, and they were all grinning. Skinner said it was as good as a cinematograph, and cheaper.

"I say, Cherry, old man," said Billy Bunter, peering in through his big spectacles, "you'd better let me do that for you, you know. I can make toffee! You've spoiled that lot; but if you've got any stuff left, I'll make you a fresh lot—"

"Shurrup!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Why, what are you doing, Cherry?" exclaimed Tom Brown of the Remove, arriving on the scene.

Bob Cherry breathed hard through his nose.

"You're about the tenth silly chump who's asked me that duffer question!" he said. "I'm making toffee!"

"Oh, crikey!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's nearly done," said Bob, gasping for breath. "You'll see that it will be all right. We'll have a feed after lessons this afternoon!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a sudden yell from Bob Cherry as the frying-pan shifted a little, and a wave of melted toffee simmered over into the fire.

Sputter—sputter—sputter—fizzzz!

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Clear off!" roared Bob Cherry, as he righted the frying-pan. "You'll make me muck up the whole bizney with your silly cackling!"

"We're not going to miss the show!" remarked Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, crumbs, how the study niffs!" said Mark Linley. "I say, Bob, Herr Gans was coming here before afternoon lessons to help me with my German—"

"Blow your German!"

"But Herr Gans—"

"Blow Herr Gans!"

Mark Linley laughed.

"I think I'd better go and look for him, and keep him off the grass," he remarked. "Ta-ta, Bob! I hope that toffee will be a success!"

"Well, if it isn't, it's because I've been bothered by a set of jackasses!" said Bob Cherry crossly. "How's a chap to cook with a set of silly asses cackling at him all the time, I'd like to know?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mark Linley departed, to look for Herr Gans, the German master at Greyfriars. Herr Gans was a very kind gentleman, and, in the kindness of his heart, he helped Mark Linley with his Deutsch out of lesson hours; but even his kindness would probably have stopped short of enduring the dreadful atmosphere of No. 13 Study just then.

Bob Cherry rose from before the fire at last, holding the frying-pan gingerly by the handle. Thick, smoky steam rose from the toffee, and it hissed as Bob Cherry poured it out into the flat tin pan on the armchair. About half the toffee remained sticking to the frying-pan, where it had been burnt; but there was nearly enough to fill the other pan, and Bob was satisfied.

"When that's set, you'll see that it's jolly good toffee!" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob opened the window to allow some of the fumes to clear off. The juniors cleared off, too, glad to get away from the smell. Bob Cherry himself was almost overcome, though he would not have admitted it.

He set the study door wide open, so that the draught between door and window would clear the atmosphere in the course of time. Then he marched out of the study to cool his heated brow in the open air of the Close.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Right Behind!

"SEEN the Gander?"

Mark Linley of the Remove was asking that question up and down the School House.

The "Gander" was Herr Gans, of course. "Gans" being German for "goose," the Greyfriars juniors had naturally nicknamed Herr Gans the "Gander" the first day he came to Greyfriars.

But the Gander was not to be found.

Mark was anxious to find him. The Lancashire lad was working for an examination which included a German paper, and Herr Gans had very kindly offered to give him a little extra tuition when he could find time for it. Mark was very glad of his assistance; but it looked as if Herr Gans had forgotten this time.

Mark had gone to his room, and looked into the masters' room, and into the Close. But the Gander was not to be seen.

"Haven't seen hide or hair of him," said Harry Wharton when Mark asked him. "Perhaps he's gone out. He goes over to Pegg sometimes to see his uncle there."

Mark nodded.

"Perhaps. He said he would come into my study for a quarter of an hour if he had time. Perhaps he hasn't had time."

"Perhaps he's gone to your study," suggested Wharton. "Have you looked there?"

"Bob's there making toffee," said Mark, laughing. "He would come and tell me if the Gander had come for me."

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Mr. Quelch dragged at the pan with both hands. There was a sound of rending cloth, and then the Remove master let go hurriedly. Herr Gans bolted out of the form-room, and even the stern brow of Mr. Quelch could not restrain the yell of laughter that followed him. (See Chapter 3.)

"Bob's finished the toffee. He's been in the Close for the last ten minutes," said Harry. "The Gander may be waiting for you in your study all the time."

"Oh, my hat!"

Mark Linley hurried upstairs to the Remove passage at once. It was close upon time for afternoon lessons now, and there would be no time for the "extra toot," but he wanted to see if the German master was there, and apologise for having failed to meet him there.

The study door was closed, and Mark Linley hurriedly opened it and looked in.

Herr Gans was there!

He was seated in the armchair, with his pipe in his mouth and his feet on the fender, evidently very comfortable. Evidently he had come up to the study while Mark was searching for him downstairs, and had taken a seat to wait for the junior to arrive.

The smell of the burnt toffee had cleared off now, driven out by the wind from the Close, which blew in at the open window. Mark gave a quick glance round the study for the toffee. It was not to be seen.

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FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"HELD UP!"

Herr Gans blinked at the junior kindly enough through his spectacles.

"I shall come, but it is not that you are here," he remarked.

"I'm sorry, sir," stammered Mark. He was thinking of the toffee. "I was looking for you downstairs, sir, and only just came up to see if you were here."

"Dere have been some cooking in te study, hein?" said Herr Gans, with a smile. "Ven I come it he smell of it."

"Yes, sir. That's why I was looking for you. I thought you wouldn't like it," said Mark.

The Lancashire lad was feeling very worried. The pan of toffee was not to be seen.

Mark remembered that it had been reposing in the armchair. The German master was short-sighted. Was it possible that he had sat down in the toffee without noticing it? If it had been still hot, he certainly would have noticed it—emphatically. But if it was cool, he might not have observed it. The big flat pan was quite large enough for even the stout German master to sit in comfortably. Herr Gans was an absent-minded gentleman, and never noticed things. If he was sitting in the toffee—

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Herr Gans looked at his watch.

"I am afraid tere is no time for Cherman before lessons now, mein poy," he said. "I am sorry."

"I am very sorry, sir."

"Ve vill see dis evening," said Herr Gans. "Now, I must go."

And he knocked out his big pipe in the grate and rose to his feet.

Mark watched him breathlessly.

The toffee was there!

Evidently it had been cool and half congealed when Herr Gans sat down in it without noticing it.

It was sticking to him now, having hardened since he sat down.

Behind the stout German the big flat pan was attached, like a shield, stuck fast to his lower garments as if glued there.

Mark Linley simply gasped. He dared not say a word.

Herr Gans, sublimely unconscious of the ornament attached to his ample trousers, walked out of the study, and went down the Remove passage with his heavy tread.

Mark Linley collapsed into the armchair, gasping.

"Oh, my hat! What's going to be done? Oh dear! Ha, ha, ha!"

He staggered to the study door and looked out. The German master had reached the head of the stairs. The bright wintry sunshine was streaming in through the passage window, and it gleamed and shone upon the polished surface of the tin pan. It was like a gigantic full moon shining behind the German master as he walked.

Mark Linley clung to the doorpost and almost sobbed.

"Oh, my hat! Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent were on the landing as the German master came down. As he passed them they caught the gleam of the pan, and stared after him blankly. Wharton hung on to the banisters and choked.

"Oh, crumbs! He's been sitting in Bob's toffee!"

"Oh dear! Oh, my aunt! Ha, ha, ha!"

Down in the hall half a dozen fellows caught sight of the German master's new adornment, and there was a ripple of laughter.

Herr Gans looked round severely.

"Vy for you laff, my poys?" he asked.

"Ahem!"

"N-n-nothing, sir."

"I—I was laughing at Vernon-Smith, sir," murmured Skinner. "He—he made such a funny face, sir!"

Herr Gans frowned and walked on. There was another yell of laughter as he went out into the Close. There were five minutes before afternoon lessons, and first lesson for the Remove that afternoon was German. Herr Gans intended to occupy the few spare minutes by taking a turn in the fresh air. The sun gleamed upon the tin pan, which cast bright reflected rays.

"Oh, my hat!" yelled Coker of the Fifth. "Look at that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"There's your toffee, Bob!" shrieked Nugent.

Bob Cherry stared blankly at the German master's adornment.

"The silly Dutch geezer!" he exclaimed wrathfully. "He's been sitting in my toffee! It's spoiled now! We can't eat it!"

"We couldn't have eaten it, anyway, my dear fellow," chuckled Lord Mauleverer.

"Rats! It was jolly good toffee!"

"Jolly good glue, at any rate!" grinned Tom Brown.

"It's sticking to him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Herr Gans could not be unconscious of the almost hysterical roars of laughter that followed him as he went. He paused and looked round, frowning. He was a very good-tempered man, but to find himself the centre of a yelling match was enough to turn the best temper a little "edgewise."

He strode up to Coker, who happened to be nearest to him. Coker seemed to be almost in convulsions.

"Vy for is tat?" demanded Herr Gans warmly. "You laff, Coker?"

"I, sir?" said Coker.

"Yes, you! Is it that you laff at me?"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I was really coughing," explained Coker. "On a cold day like this it—takes me like that, Herr Gans."

"You have laff, Potter?"

"I, sir!" said Potter of the Fifth. "I—I was laughing at Coker, sir. It always makes me laugh when he coughs, sir."

Herr Gans frowned at the hilarious Fifth-Formers, and walked on. He did not care to promenade in the Close among a laughing crowd, so he sat down on one of the old oaken benches under the elm-trees.

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Clang!

Herr Gans jumped. The tin pan had come into violent contact with the wooden seat as he plumped down, and the clang of it astounded him. He jumped up, and looked quickly at the seat, with the impression that he had sat upon some metal object carelessly left there. But the pan, of course, rose with him, and the seat was bare when he looked at it.

"Mein Gott!" murmured Herr Gans. "Dat is ferry strange! I tink tat I hear it viz mein ears, but it is tat I am mistaken wiz myself."

And he sat down again, very much puzzled.

Clang!

Herr Gans sprang to his feet as if he had been electrified. This time there was no mistake. He had distinctly heard the clang of metal. And yet, as he gazed in amazement at the oaken bench, there was nothing there.

Herr Gans stooped down and looked under the seat, suspecting that some mischievous fag might be playing a trick. But there was no one near the bench save himself.

Very much puzzled, and a little alarmed, the German master walked away towards the School House. Fifty pairs of eyes had been watching him, and as he walked away with knitted brows from fifty throats there came a wild yell:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Fun in the Form-room.

HERR GANS frowned darkly, and strode into the School House.

He could have no doubt now that he was the object of the hysterical laughter that followed him on all sides. The cause of it he could not fathom, but it was very disrespectful and very annoying. He naturally suspected that it was a "rag," and he was angry and indignant.

It was time now for afternoon lessons, and the German master went directly into the Remove Form-room.

The Removites gasped with laughter as they came in for lessons.

"He hasn't found it out yet," sobbed Johnny Bull. "I wonder how long he's going to carry Bob's toffee about? Ask him for it, Bob!"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"No fear! He's spoiled it now, and he can keep it!"

"I say, one of us ought to tell him, you know," murmured Mark Linley.

"He will be jolly ratty when he knows," said Harry Wharton. "I don't want to be the one to tell him!"

"He'll find it out in time," chuckled Johnny Bull.

The Removites went into the Form-room, and took their places. Herr Gans was already there, with heightened colour and knitted brows. His eminent good temper was quite gone now. There was likely to be trouble during the next half-hour unless the juniors were very careful indeed.

The curious thing was that Herr Gans had not yet discovered the toffee-pan. Of course, he could not see behind him, and could not observe the bright reflection of the sun's rays that his unsuspected adornment gave forth. The afternoon sun streamed in at the windows of the Form-room, and when Herr Gans moved about, the polished pan glittered and shone behind him.

The juniors were in a state of suppressed hilarity, which they could not quite control. Chuckles burst out from time to time in different parts of the Form-room, and Herr Gans grew rattier and rattier.

"Dis is vat you call a rag, ain't it, peffore?" he exclaimed. "I tink mit myself tat it is disrespect to your master, mein poys. I tink tat I cane te next poy tat go for the laff."

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bunter.

"Punter!" rapped out Herr Gans.

"Eh! Yes, sir."

"You laff, Punter."

"Not at all, sir! Oh, no, sir!" said Bunter, in alarm, as he saw the German-master pick up a pointer from Mr. Quelch's desk. "I assure you, sir, that I was quite solemn. I—I was thinking of—of German, sir, and—and trying to conjugate a verb in my head, sir."

"Vat verb vas you trying to conjugate, Punter?"

"Ahem! Der—der—der Bruder, sir."

"Dat is not a verb, Punter, tat is a noun."

"I—I meant to say a noun, sir."

"So you vas try to conjugate a noun, Punter. You are not avare tat te nouns are declined, and te verbs are conjugated?"

"Oh, yes, sir! That's really what I meant to say, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"You vas tell untroots, Punter. Hold out te hand."

"Oh, sir—"

"Te hand!" thundered Herr Gans. And Billy Bunter fairly wriggled under a swipe from the pointer.

"Yow—yow—yow—yow—yow!" howled Bunter.

"Silence, you silly poy!"

"Ow! I'm hurt! Yow!"

"You will be hurt some more mit you if you do not close te mouth!" said Herr Gans angrily. "I vill have ordair in dis class!"

And there was no more laughter for a time. Herr Gans was glowering. The juniors settled down to the pleasures of a personally-conducted tour among German irregular verbs. Still, the toffee-pan clung to Herr Gans, and reflected the sunlight when he moved. About ten minutes later, when he had his back turned, Vernon-Smith skilfully projected a button at him, and there was a clink as it struck the pan.

Clink!

The German master fairly jumped at the sound behind him, and spun round.

"Vat vas tat?" he ejaculated.

Nobody appeared to know.

Herr Gans breathed hard. He felt that there was a trick somewhere; but he did not know where or what it was. The juniors were trying to keep straight faces, but it was a difficult task—more difficult than the German verbs. Billy Bunter was grinning; but his fat face became as solemn as an owl's as the Gander's eyes turned on him.

"I tink tat you pay no attention, Punter," said Herr Gans.

"Oh, yes, sir," groaned Bunter, dismayed at having drawn the German master's eye upon him again. "I was listening to you like anything, sir."

"Ferry well. Den give me at vunce te present indicative of dürfen."

"The—the present indicative of—of—of dürfen," said Bunter. "C-c-certainly, sir. Ich darf—ich darf—ich darf—"

"Go on, Punter," said Herr Gans grimly.

"Ich darf—thou art daft!" stammered Bunter, in confusion.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Punter, you have not been paying attention. You tink only of to laff at some silly shoke, isn't it? Vat is te meaning in Englisch of dürfen?"

"Oh, crumbs!" murmured Bunter. "Give me a tip, Smithy."

"It means to eat coke!" murmured Vernon-Smith.

"I wait for your answer, Punter."

"Eat coke, sir!"

"Vat!"

"Eat c-c-c-oke!" stammered Bunter.

"You stupid poy!" shouted Herr Gans, while the juniors yelled. "Silence in te class! Te meaning of dürfen is to be allowed."

"Oh, you beast, Smithy!"

"Ich darf, I am allowed, du darfst, thou art allowed—"

"I—I—I ain't, sir," said Bunter, who had completely lost his wits by this time. "N-n-n-nothing of the sort, sir."

"Vat!"

"I'm quite quiet, sir."

"Are you stupid, Punter? I did not say tat you was not quiet."

"You—you did, sir. You said I was aloud."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" shrieked Herr Gans. "Te whole class will take vun hundred lines of Cherman. You hear me—vun hundred lines of Cherman for te whole class!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Fortunately, Mr. Quelch came in just then, to take the Remove for the next lesson. He found the Form very cross, and the German master very excited. Mr. Quelch looked at the German master with his cool, grey eyes, which the Remove fellows likened to gimlets on account of their penetrating qualities.

"I hope you have had no trouble with my Form, Herr Gans?" said Mr. Quelch.

"Mein Gott! I have had nozzing but trouble," said the German master. "Te poy's keep on to laff all te time, for some reason tat I do not know because."

Mr. Quelch was about to reply, but as Herr Gans turned towards the door he caught the glitter of the polished pan behind him. The Remove-master's eyes almost started from his head at the sight.

"Herr Gans!" he ejaculated.

"Ja wohl!" said Herr Gans.

"What—what—what is that? May I inquire for what reason you have a metal pan fastened upon your—your garments?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"A vat—where?" roared Herr Gans.

"There is a large metal pan behind you!"

Herr Gans jerked a fat hand round his stout person, and his face was a study as he felt the toffee-pan.

"Aoh! Tat is vy tey vas for to laff!" he ejaculated.

"De pad poy's! Dis is a drick tat tey have play on me."

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FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"HELD UP!"

He jerked at the pan, but it declined to come off. The toffee was set as hard as glue now, and there was no removing the toffee-pan. Herr Gans jerked at it in vain, his face growing redder and redder till it resembled in hue a well-boiled beetroot.

"Ach! Vill you help me, sir?" he gasped.

"Certainly!"

Mr. Quelch dragged at the pan with both hands. There was a sound of rending cloth, and the Remove-master let go hurriedly.

"I—I think it would be more advisable to retire to your room to—to remove it, Herr Gans!" he exclaimed. "It—it appears to be stuck to your—ahem!—garments with some kind of glue. It is very extraordinary. I think—"

But Herr Gans did not wait to hear what Mr. Quelch thought. He bolted out of the Form-room, and even the frowning brow of Mr. Quelch could not restrain the yell of laughter that followed him.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Just a Hundred!

LORD MAULEVERER, the dandy of the Remove, came into the Rag with a cheery smile upon his face.

Afternoon lessons were over, and the Remove were free—and they had a good use to put their freedom to just then.

Lord Mauleverer, the millionaire schoolboy, was standing a feed to the whole Form in the Rag; and on an occasion like that the Lower Fourth rose as one man to make the thing a success.

There was only one cloud on the horizon; and that was the imposition handed out by the German master. A hundred lines of German for every fellow in the class was no light task; and the lines had to be handed in by six o'clock. Nobody felt inclined to put off the feed till the lines were written out; and at the same time, they did not want to have Herr Gans down upon them again. The usually good-tempered German-master was very ratty now; which was perhaps not surprising considering what had happened during the afternoon. He was sure to be very sharp about that impot., and to report the matter to Mr. Quelch if it was not handed in to time. And Mr. Quelch was a gentleman whose idea erred a little on the side of severity in maintaining discipline.

"It's rotten," growled Bob Cherry, as he came into the Rag. "Blessed if I see why the old Gander can't keep his beastly Cherman to himself! How are we going to write out a hundred lines each before six?"

"I say, you fellows, we can't put off the feed," said Bunter, in alarm. "I suppose some of you chaps wouldn't mind doing my lines for me? The Gander can never tell one fist from another in German scrawl."

"Shurrup!" growled Bob.

"I've got an idea," said Peter Todd.

"Go it, Toddy!"

"The Gander gave the whole Form a hundred lines in German—"

"We know that!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, let's give him a hundred lines from the whole class. That will be about three lines each for all of us!" said Peter Todd coolly.

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He distinctly said, 'The whole class will take a hundred lines,'" said Peter Todd. "You all heard him. That must mean a hundred lines for the lot of us. If there's a misunderstanding, it's his own look-out, for not speaking better English."

The Removites chuckled gleefully.

Whether Peter Todd's device would get them out of the impot. or not, at all events it would be a joke on the Gander.

"Good egg!" said Harry Wharton. "Get some impot. paper, somebody, and we'll soon get through a hundred lines at that rate."

"The soonfulness will be terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The scheme was carried out at once.

The grinning juniors gathered round the table in the Rag, and each of them wrote three or four lines in turn, and in a very short time a hundred lines from Schiller were complete.

The peculiar imposition, in so many hands, was laid aside, ready to be conveyed to Herr Gans at six o'clock; and then the business of the feed went forward.

It was a great feed. When Lord Mauleverer did anything, he did it in style, and the schoolboy earl did not lack the money.

There was enough and to spare for all, and even Billy Bunter found the supply more than he could clear off. The

fat junior was observed filling his pockets, as a store for a future occasion. Bunter was very thoughtful in these matters.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's six!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the strokes boomed out from the old clock-tower.

"Time for the Gander's lines. Who's going to take them to him?"

The juniors exchanged doubtful glances.

It had seemed a very good joke to affect to misunderstand Herr Gans, and write out only a hundred lines for the whole Form, but nobody appeared to be anxious to carry the joke as far as the German master's study.

"Wharton's captain of the Form," suggested Skinner.

"Ahem! It was your idea, Toddy."

"Yes; but I did my little bit in suggesting the idea," remarked Peter Todd. "I don't want to shove myself forward too much."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Toss up for it," suggested Vernon-Smith. "It's quite possible the Gander may be ratty. He hasn't been sweet-tempered to-day, owing to Bob Cherry's making toffee, and so on. He might take it good-temperedly, or he might cut up rusty, and start with a pointer. You never can tell. Let's all take a chance."

"I say, you fellows, I didn't really approve of the idea, you know—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"But really, you know, I wanted one of you fellows to do my lines for me. You remember perfectly well that I suggested it—"

"Shut up!" roared Bob Cherry. "Now, we'll toss up in pairs, and keep on till there's only one chap left out, and he's the man to take the lines in to the Gander."

"Hear, hear!"

"That's fair play."

And it was done—and the lot fell upon William George Bunter. Bunter and Snoop were the last two left in, and they tossed, and Bunter guessed wrong. When he said "tail," Snoop showed the head of the penny.

"It's Bunter!" said Bob.

"I—I say, you fellows, I—I really meant to say head, you know."

"Pity you didn't do it, then," grinned Johnny Bull. "It's head, and you said tail, and you're going to take the lines in to the Gander."

"But I—I—I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, and get off!"

"Get a move on, Bunter!"

"Shove a jam-tart down his neck!"

Billy Bunter jumped up.

"Look here, you fellows, I'm not going—"

"Collar him!"

"I—I—I mean I'm ready to go!" stuttered Bunter, backing away. "Keep your paws off, you beasts! Of course, I—I'm quite willing to go."

"Go, then," said Nugent. "Take the lines, and pitch it nicely to the Gander."

Billy Bunter grunted, and quitted the Rag, with the impot. in his fat hand. The Remove fellows waited rather anxiously for his return. They were not at all certain how Peter Todd's brilliant idea would turn out.

Billy Bunter made his way slowly to the Gander's study. There was no getting out of it, and he had to go through with it, but he did not like the task. It was only too probable that the German master would take the Remove's little joke in a spirit that was not humorous; and if he was ratty, the first brunt of his rattiness would fall upon Billy Bunter.

Billy Bunter knocked gingerly at the German master's door.

"Gum in!" said the deep voice of Herr Gans.

Bunter went in. Herr Gans was seated at his table, and there was a dark cloud upon his brow. Whether he was still annoyed about the happenings of the afternoon, or whether he had private troubles of his own, certainly he was not in a placable mood.

"Vat is it?" he said sharply. "Oh, your lines, Punter! Ferry well, lay dem on te table."

"M-m-my lines, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"You may go after."

"B-h-h-but—"

"Are tey not your lines, isn't it?" snapped Herr Gans.

"Ye-e-e-es, sir."

"Den lay dem dere, and go mit yourself after at vunce."

And Billy Bunter laid the impot. on the table, and departed immediately.

He did not return to the Rag. He felt that it would be rather awkward to explain that he had not carried out his mission, and that he had allowed the German master to suppose that the imposition was his—Bunter's—own work—his hundred lines. Herr Gans would still be expecting a hundred lines each from the rest of the Remove, but Billy Bunter considered it judicious to allow them to discover that little fact for themselves.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Not a Success!

"JOLLY good feed!" said Bob Cherry. "Mauly, you're a giddy prince!"

"Yaas."

"May your shadow never grow less!"

"Yaas."

"Bunter hasn't come back," said Harry Wharton. "I wonder how he's been getting on with the Gander?"

"Must be all right, or he'd have come back," said Nugent.

"Well, I'm going to the gym," said Bob Cherry. "Thanks awfully, Mauly!"

"Not at all dear boy! Did you say you were going to the gym?"

"Yes."

"Then perhaps you wouldn't mind dropping in at the tuckshop as you go?"

"Not at all."

"I forgot to settle with Mrs. Mible," Lord Mauleverer explained. "If you wouldn't mind handing her this banknote, it'd save me the trouble of walking across the Close. I would never forget it, really."

"You slacker!" growled Bob. "But hand it over; I'll go."

Lord Mauleverer felt lazily in his pockets, and drew out a crumpled banknote, and handed it to Bob Cherry without glancing at it. Lord Mauleverer's carelessness with money was a proverb in the Remove. He had so much of it that he did not attach very much importance to it.

"I'm to give this to Mrs. Mible?" exclaimed Bob, uncrumpling the banknote and looking at it.

"Yaas. You see, I asked her to make it for exactly that amount, so as not to have any bother of accounts," explained Lord Mauleverer. "If you make an order come to a round sum, you don't have to go into figures. I thought of that myself," he added, a little proudly.

"You don't mean to say that the feed comes to this amount?" ejaculated Bob.

"Yaas."

"Fifty pounds!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"No; five, dear boy."

"You—you champion fathead! This is a banknote for fifty pounds that you've given me!"

"Begad, is it?" said Lord Mauleverer calmly. "I must have given you the wrong one, then. That's the one I'm going to pay for my new bike with. Here's the fiver."

He fumbled in his pocket again, and drew out another crumpled banknote. This time it was a fiver. Bob Cherry handed him back the fifty-pound note, which was followed by admiring glances by the juniors, and Lord Mauleverer shoved it back into his pocket.

"It that where you keep it?" demanded Bob.

"Yaas."

"Why don't you put it in your pocket-book?"

"Dropped it."

"Where?"

"In my study."

"Why didn't you pick it up again?"

"Too tired."

"So you're carrying a fifty-pound note about loose in your pocket?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "And you're quite idiot enough to pull it out some time to light the gas!"

"Begad!"

"You champion ass!"

"That's all right. The Government refunds the money in a case like that," said Lord Mauleverer calmly. "You've only got to prove you had it, and it was destroyed by accident, and they shell out. Your solicitor does it all, you know, and it's no trouble. That's what solicitors are for, you know."

"You frightful ass!" said Bob Cherry; and he walked away.

The tea-party in the Rag broke up. Billy Bunter had not been seen, and the juniors wondered what success he had had with Herr Gans. Some of them went to look for him to ascertain. Bunter was discovered in his study, feeding upon the supplies he had so thoughtfully placed in his pockets in the Rag.

ANSWERS

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
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"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.



Without intending to do so, but acting on impulse, Mauleverer withdrew his hand as the cane descended. Meeting with no resistance, the cane caught the German master's leg with a crack like a pistol shot. "Ach! Mein Gott!" he roared. (See Chapter 8.)

"How did you get on with the Gander?" Harry Wharton demanded.

"All right!" said Bunter.

"Was he satisfied?"

"Ahem! He didn't say he wasn't."

"Good egg, then!"

And the juniors dismissed the matter from their minds. Harry Wharton & Co. followed Bob to the gym., but a little later Nugent minor of the Second Form came in with a message for them.

"You chaps are wanted," said the fag.

"What's the trouble now?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Dunno, but Quelch wants you, and he sent me to tell you so."

"More trouble!" groaned Nugent. "Let's go and get it over. I fancy the Gander wasn't satisfied with the hundred lines, after all."

And the juniors repaired to Mr. Quelch's study. The Remove-master was looking stern and severe.

"Herr Gans informs me that he gave you an imposition for impertinence in the Form-room to-day!" he exclaimed.

"It was to be handed in by six o'clock. Only one boy in the Remove has handed in his lines."

"Oh!" ejaculated the juniors.

"With the exception of Bunter, the whole Form has deliberately neglected to obey Herr Gans!" said Mr. Quelch.

"What have you to say? I speak to you, Wharton, as the head boy in the Remove."

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FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"HELD UP!"

"Ahem! You see, sir——"

"Have you done your lines?"

"I—I did three, sir."

"Three!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Herr Gans gave you a hundred lines each!"

"Yes, but—but Herr Gans said the whole class were to take a hundred lines," said Harry meekly. "We took a hundred lines among us, sir, and did two or three each. That was what Herr Gans said. Bunter took in the lot."

Wharton hoped that Mr. Quelch's sense of humour would come to the rescue, and that he would smile. But the Remove-master was apparently lacking in a sense of humour that evening. He did not smile; he frowned.

"That is a quibble, Wharton!" he exclaimed. "Whatever Herr Gans may have said, you knew perfectly well what he meant!"

"Ahem!"

"Did you really believe that the whole Form was to share a hundred lines among them?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Well, not exactly, sir."

"But you affected to misunderstand?"

"Ahem!"

"I shall therefore double your imposition!" said Mr. Quelch severely. "Jokes like this are out of place in such matters, Wharton. Convey the information to the rest of the Form. Every boy will write out two hundred lines from Schiller this evening. As for Bunter, it appears that he

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Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. Order Early.

took this hundred lines from all of you and palmed it off upon Herr Gans as his own work."

"I—I don't know, sir. We gave it to him to take for all of us."

"Very well. Send him here."

The dismayed juniors left the study. In the passage Wharton and Nugent and Johnny Bull bestowed glares upon Peter Todd.

"That's what your blessed idea has led us into, you ass!" growled Nugent. "The rotten lines are doubled!"

"Can't be helped," said Peter Todd cheerfully. "And I fancy Bunter's going to get it worse, to judge by the look in Quelch's eye."

And he went up to No. 7 Study to tell Bunter that he was wanted.

"I'm jolly well not going!" exclaimed Bunter, in alarm. "Look here, Toddy, you go and tell Quelch I'm ill—very ill!"

"Rats!" said Peter. And he left the study.

Bunter groaned and rose to his feet. He knew that he had to obey the Form-master's summons. He passed Herr Gans in the passage, and he gave the German master a deadly glare through his spectacles. He felt that the Gander was at the bottom of all his troubles. Nothing of the kind would have happened if Herr Gans hadn't sat down in Bob Cherry's toffee that afternoon, and surely that was his own look-out? Billy Bunter would gladly have scalped the German master, if not have boiled him in oil.

He rolled nervously into Mr. Quelch's study, and found the Remove master looking as if his eyes were more like gimlets than ever.

"Bunter!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Ye-e-e-es, sir?" stammered Bunter, with a jump.

"You took an imposition to Herr Gans this evening?"

"Ye-e-s, sir!"

"It was not written by you?"

"Ahem, sir! I—I—"

"Do you dare to affirm that you wrote it, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir—I—I mean no, sir! Certainly not! I—I wouldn't have done such a thing, sir," stammered Bunter.

"You led Herr Gans to believe that you had written it?"

"Oh, no, sir! I can't answer for what he thought, sir."

"You are an untruthful boy, Bunter, in intent, if not in words. You will take three hundred lines of German, and write them out this evening or to-morrow, and bring them to me personally before tea-time to-morrow."

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Billy Bunter.

"Don't utter those ridiculous ejaculations in my presence, Bunter. You may go!"

And Bunter groaned and went.

He had been congratulating himself upon his successful negotiation with the German master over that imposition. He congratulated himself no longer. It was evidently and eminently not a success.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Gander's Trouble!

THESE were glum faces in the Remove that evening.

All the usual occupations and amusements of the juniors were suspended.

Two hundred lines in German was not a light task.

The rehearsal of the dramatic society had to be put off. The meetings of the debating society and the football committee were postponed. The juniors sat in their studies grinding out German, and none of them had finished their lines when they had to knock off to get on with their usual preparation.

Nearly all the fellows in the Remove had a balance of lines left over to keep him occupied in his spare time on the morrow, especially Bunter. Bunter was incorrigibly lazy, and that evening he succeeded in writing out about twenty lines from his three hundred. He made pathetic appeals to the other fellows to do them for him, but they had enough to do for themselves. And the remarks he made about the Gander were bloodcurdling. Boiling in oil was miles too good for Herr Gans, in Bunter's opinion.

All the Removites, in fact, were very much exasperated with the Gander.

Most of them had liked him for his kind heart and good-nature. But at the present moment he was distinctly unpopular.

All the fellows felt that he had come down too heavily, for, after all, it was his own business that he had sat down in the toffee. Nobody had put it there for him to sit in, though probably he suspected that was so. Certainly, he refused to allow Mark Linley to explain. Mark had received such kindness from Herr Gans, and he was distressed that the German master should suppose that the toffee incident was a jape.

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But Herr Gans declined to listen to a word on the subject. He was very much on his dignity, and his usually good-temper, too, was very sharp and irritable just now. It looked as if the "extra toot" Mark had been receiving from the German master was "off," as was only natural, if Herr Gans supposed that a trick had been played on him in Mark's study.

"But it isn't only the toffee," said Bob Cherry sagely. "The Gander has got something else on his mind. Temple of the Fourth told me that he was awfully ratty with them in class yesterday."

"Beastly temper, that's what it is!" growled Vernon-Smith. He had never liked the Gander, and had, indeed, had some severe rubs with him.

"But he was always so jolly good-tempered," said Wharton.

"Perhaps it's his beastly uncle being ill," said Billy Bunter.

"How do you know his uncle's ill?" demanded Wharton.

"I happened to hear him speaking to Prout about it—"

"Which keyhole did you happen to be at?" sniffed Bob Cherry. "I say, you chaps, we know the Gander is very attached to that old German chap, and if he's worried about him—why, we can overlook a bit of rattiness."

"Oh, rats!" said Skinner.

The Removites knew all about Herr Muller, the German master's uncle. Herr Muller had accompanied the German master to England when he came to take up his post at Greyfriars, and the old gentleman lived in a cottage at Pegg village.

It was pretty well known that he was supported by Herr Gans out of his salary as German master at Greyfriars, and as Herr Gans certainly was not wealthy, the fellows thought all the better of him for that.

Some of the Greyfriars fellows had seen old Mr. Muller, who toddled about the shore in fine weather with a stick. But they remembered now that nobody had seen him for a long time. They knew, too, that Herr Gans paid frequent visits to the cottage at Pegg. It was very probable that Herr Muller suffered from the rough weather on the coast where he now dwelt, having been almost an invalid when he arrived in England.

Some of the fellows, at the idea that the Gander was worried about his uncle's illness, felt that they could forgive him for being so ratty of late. But most of the Remove were exasperated. They had a sense of injury. They felt that they had been decent to the Gander, and that he had failed to play up. And all sorts of schemes for ragging him, in return for the troublesome German lines, were mooted in the Remove studies that evening.

"I'm sorry for the Gander, if that's what's the matter," Bob Cherry observed in No. 1 Study later. "Only I do wish he'd keep his blessed lines to himself. And he needn't be so ratty with poor old Marky. It wasn't Marky's fault. I left the toffee on the armchair to cool, and that blessed Dutchman came along and sat down in it!"

"Suppose we buck up and get the lines done, to show there's no malice?" said Harry Wharton, as if struck by a brilliant idea.

"Oh, rats!" said Bob at once.

"Bosh!" said Nugent. "I've done a hundred, and I'm jolly well not going to do another one to-night. I've got my prep. to do!"

"Same here," said Johnny Bull. "I've done fifty so far."

"I have also progressed fiftyfully with the esteemed lines," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh, "and the morefulness is not possible."

"But the Gander may row again if he doesn't get any handed in!" said Wharton. "Quelch said this evening, you know!"

"Blow the Gander!"

"Blow Quelch!"

"I'm going to get Bunter to start ventriloquising on him in the Form-room!" growled Johnny Bull. "It's time we made him sit up!"

"You pile in, Wharton, while we're eating these chestnuts!" grinned Nugent. "You can take your lines in, and ward off the Dutchman's fury from the rest of us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Wharton!"

"Well, there may be trouble if none are taken in," said Harry. "I think I'll do it. May as well get it over, anyway!"

And Wharton sat down to a steady grind at his lines. Wharton was a keen German scholar; he studied that language for pleasure as well as for profit, and he knew a great deal of Schiller by heart. This made it easier for him—he wrote down all he knew by heart very quickly, and then went on from the book. He was finished at last, and he rose from the table with a sigh.

"Done?" asked Nugent, who was busy with his preparation.

"Yes, thank goodness!"

"Good egg! You haven't left yourself much time for your prep. Better buck up, or you'll have trouble with Quelch in the morning over your construe."

"I'll be back in a jiffy!"

And Wharton took his imposition, and made his way to Herr Gans's study. There was a light under the door, showing that the German master was there. Wharton tapped lightly at the door. There came no answer from within, but he naturally opened the door after knocking and stepped in, his imposition in his hand.

Herr Gans was seated at the table. He did not see Wharton. His elbows were resting on the table, his face was buried in his hands. His spectacles were pushed up over his forehead. His whole attitude was one of utter dejection and misery.

Wharton looked at him with a startled gaze.

He had not had the faintest idea of taking Herr Gans by surprise in this way, of course; and he wished sincerely that he was well outside the study.

But to retreat now was impossible. Herr Gans might look up at any moment, and if he saw Wharton tiptoeing backwards out of the study, it would be very awkward. Harry made up his mind in a moment. He rattled the door-handle and coughed loudly.

Herr Gans looked up with a start. His face was very pale, and his eyes looked tired and troubled.

But the pallor of his face was gone in a moment, a deep flush coming over it as he saw the junior standing before him on the other side of the table.

"Wharton! Vat is tat? Vy you sall not knock, hein?"

"I knocked, sir," said Wharton respectfully.

"I did not hear, den. Vat you vant?"

"My lines, sir."

"Oh, dose lines!" said Herr Gans absently. "Lay dem down, Wharton." He paused, and the flush deepened in his cheeks. "You have seen, hein—" He jammed his spectacles straight upon his nose, but Wharton had seen only too plainly that his flaxen eyelashes were wet.

"Mein poy, you have seen tat—tat—tat I am droubled."

"I hope not, sir."

"It is so. Mein onkel is krank—vat you call seeck," said Herr Gans, with a heavy sigh. "Tat is all. It is necessary tat he should be taken to a varmer climate for te vinter, but—but tat cannot be done. Derefore, I am a leetle droubled mit my mind. If I have been a leetle cross mit you, I am sorry!"

"Oh, that's nothing, sir!" said Wharton eagerly. "We don't mind a bit, sir. You have always been very kind. I'm awfully sorry to hear that Mr. Muller is ill, sir!"

"He was very kind to me when I vas leetle poy!" said Herr Gans gently. "Ho pring me up, and send me to school. Now I looks after him, ain't it? But—"

"And he's too ill to be moved abroad?" asked Wharton sympathetically.

The German master's flush deepened to crimson.

"Not exactly tat, but—but dere are circumstances," he said hastily. "Tat is all—you vill not talk apout tat you have seen me droubled, and make it a shoke among te poy, Wharton?"

"Certainly not, sir!" said Wharton.

"Zen goot-night, mein poy!"

"Good-night, sir!"

Harry Wharton left the study. He understood it all now. Mr. Muller was ill, and required taking away to a milder climate for the winter—and he could not be moved. Wharton had naturally supposed at first that he was too ill to be moved, but the German-master's flushed face and awkward look had revealed the real reason. It was want of money. For a master of foreign languages, Herr Gans had a good salary at Greyfriars, but the inroads upon it were probably deep. And his little savings, probably, were not equal to the strain of sending his uncle to a southern clime, and providing for him there. Old Mr. Muller had to take his chance where he was, and no wonder it was a worry on the mind of the Gander.

Wharton was thinking about that very hard as he returned to his study. Frank Nugent looked curiously at his sombre face as he came in.

"Trouble?" he asked.

Wharton shook his head.

"No. But I say, Franky, it's rather rough on the Gander," said Harry. "I'm pretty certain that his uncle's in a bad way, and he can't send him away from want of cash. That's rather hard cheese, isn't it?"

"Yes, but there are lots of people in the same boat," said Frank. "I'm sorry for the Gander, though. We'll let him go on ragging us, without pulling his Dutch leg. That's all we can do, I suppose."

"I suppose so."

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FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"HELD UPI"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

"Not thinking of raising a subscription for him in the Remove, I suppose?" Nugent asked, with a grin.

"Ass!" said Wharton.

And he sat down to his preparation, and for the time dismissed his concern for Herr Gans from his mind.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Wasted Friendship!

LORD MAULEVERER was a very popular fellow at Greyfriars, and a good many fellows showed a friendly regard for him.

But on the following day Billy Bunter was exhibiting an affectionate devotion that simply "took the cake."

Mauleverer might have been his long-lost brother lately returned from parts unknown, from the affectionate way Bunter hung about him.

The schoolboy earl was a little puzzled.

When the Remove turned out in the morning, at the clang of the rising-bell, it started. Bunter, who generally stayed in bed until the latest possible moment, and then indulged in a wash which Bob Cherry described graphically as a "cat-lick," was up at the first clang of the bell on this particular morning. The Remove fellows washed or bathed, as the fancy took them, in cold water. Lord Mauleverer had a weakness for hot water, but it was a weakness that had to go ungratified at Greyfriars. But this morning Billy Bunter disappeared half-clad from the dormitory, and returned with a hot-water can, steaming.

"Spooney!" hooted Bulstrode. "What's the matter with cold water?"

"It isn't for me," said Bunter loftily. "It's for my pal Mauly!"

"Wha-a-a-at!"

"Begad, that's jolly good of you, Bunter!" said Lord Mauleverer, in utter astonishment. It was quite a new departure for Billy Bunter to sacrifice his own comfort to that of others.

"Not at all, Mauly!" said Bunter. "I'd do anything for a fellow I like!"

"Have half of it yourself," said Mauleverer.

Bunter shook his head.

"No, Mauly. It's all for you."

"Oh, Bunter doesn't want it!" grinned Bob Cherry. "He'd lend you his soap, too, if you wanted it. He doesn't need those things."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I must say it's jolly good of Bunter!" said Lord Mauleverer, as he filled his basin with steaming water. "I like this. Thanks awfully, Bunter!"

"Don't mench, dear boy," said the Owl of the Remove airily.

Bob Cherry tapped his forehead significantly. The only possible explanation of Billy Bunter's action, to his mind, was that the Owl of the Remove had suddenly gone out of his senses.

When the Remove went down, Billy Bunter walked with Lord Mauleverer. His lordship did not, as a matter of fact, specially care for Bunter's society, but after the incident of the hot water, he could not very well give him the cold shoulder. So he bore with him with cheery patience.

After morning lessons, Bunter joined his lordship again, and proposed a little walk. His lordship yawned.

"Tired!" he remarked.

"Take my arm!" said Bunter.

Lord Mauleverer grinned. He was a slim and somewhat tall youth, and Billy Bunter was short and fat. He would have had to stoop considerably to walk with his arm linked in Bunter's—and they would certainly have looked a peculiar pair.

"Thanks. I think I'll rest."

"I'll come up to your study with you."

"Ahem! I'll go into the common-room."

"Right-ho! Come on!" said Bunter cheerfully.

Lord Mauleverer suppressed a groan, and allowed Bunter to toddle into the common-room with him. He sank into an armchair, and Bunter fetched a cushion for his head and a footstool for his feet. The schoolboy earl gazed at him with as much amazement as he had energy to feel.

"You're jolly good, Bunter!" he said at last.

"Not at all," said Bunter. "I'm your pal, that's all."

Lord Mauleverer was too polite to deny it, though he had his own thoughts about that.

"Like to go to sleep?" asked Bunter, with great solicitude.

"Yaas."

"Good! I'll see that you're not disturbed!"

"Begad!"

Lord Mauleverer closed his eyes, as much to get rid of

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Bunter as to take a nap. But Billy Bunter, when he was being pally, was not so easy to get rid of. He sat down close to Mauleverer, and began to eat toffee to pass away the time. Bob Cherry came into the common-room, looking for Mauleverer.

"Hallo—hallo—hallo!" he exclaimed.

"Shush!" said Bunter.

Bob stared at him.

"What! What do you mean, fathead?"

"Shush! Don't wake Mauly!" said Bunter, in a hushed voice.

"Why not?" demanded Bob.

"He's tired. I'm watching to see that no silly idiot disturbs him!"

Bob Cherry bestowed a glare on Bunter, and strode over to Lord Mauleverer, and grasped him by his shoulder and shook him. His lordship's eyes opened.

"Begad!" he murmured.

"Oh, really, Cherry, you rotter—"

"Shurrup! Mauly, you slacker, come out into the Close! What sort of a state of health do you expect to get into if you slack about like that?" demanded Bob indignantly.

"Yaas."

"What?"

"Yaas."

"Wake up, you fathead!" said Bob, exasperated, and he whirled his lordship out of the armchair. "Now come along, and help me punt a footer about!"

"Oh, dear!"

"You'll feel ever so much better after it," said Bob encouragingly. "Kim on!"

"Look here, Bob Cherry, you leave my pal Mauly alone!" exclaimed Bunter, blinking indignantly at the burly Removeite.

"You let him alone, do you hear? Mauly wants to stay with me, don't you, Mauly, old man?"

"Not particularly, my dear fellow," said Lord Mauleverer.

"Oh!"

Bob Cherry chuckled, and rushed Mauleverer out of the room. Bob, in the kindness of his heart, had undertaken to cure Mauleverer of slacking. He had a difficult task before him, and was not likely to succeed, but he devoted a great deal of energy to it.

Lord Mauleverer came in panting, after helping Bob chase an elusive footer round the Close; but he had a good appetite for his dinner.

After dinner, he dodged away to his study to escape any further kind attentions from Bob Cherry; and as Bob was busy with his lines, he was allowed to escape. But it was not so easy to escape Billy Bunter. The fat junior rolled into Mauleverer's study, with an agreeable grin on his fat face, and the schoolboy earl groaned inwardly. He was getting fed up with Bunter's friendship, and he had a feeling as if the Owl of the Remove were haunting him.

"Like some toffee, Mauly?" asked Bunter, extracting a sticky-looking mass from his trousers' pocket.

Lord Mauleverer shuddered.

"No, thanks!"

"Going to have a nap?"

"Yaas."

"Like me to go?"

"Yaas."

"Ahem! I hope I don't bother you, Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"I'll just sit here, and see that nobody comes in and worries you," said Bunter. "I suppose that won't bother you, will it?"

"Yaas."

Bunter seemed afflicted with deafness, for he took his seat. Billy Bunter had done very well at dinner, and he was not averse to a nap himself. In one of Lord Mauleverer's deep and comfortable armchairs Bunter soon nodded off, and his deep and steady snore filled the study. He did not hear his pal Mauly tiptoe out of the room; but when he woke up he was alone there. He sat bolt upright and rubbed his eyes, and readjusted his spectacles on his fat little nose.

"Mauly, old man!"

No reply.

"I say, Mauly!"

Silence! Bunter blinked round the study in search of the schoolboy millionaire, and discovered that he had vanished. He grunted discontentedly.

"Beast!" he murmured.

The bell rang for afternoon classes, and Bunter rolled down to the Form-room. He gave Lord Mauleverer a reproachful blink as he met him going in. When lessons for the day were over, Bunter rejoined him in the passage.

"I'm coming with you, Mauly," he remarked.

"I'm not going anywhere, my dear fellow."

"Yes, you've forgotten. You'll have to go to the bank," explained Bunter.

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"The bank!" repeated Lord Mauleverer, in astonishment.

"Yes, of course. Mrs. Mumble won't be able to change it!"

"Eh?"

"She couldn't possibly change it, you know," said Bunter. "You won't be able to get it changed in the school at all. Better buck up and get down to Courtfield before the bank closes, old chap!"

"But—but I don't want to change anything," said Lord Mauleverer, in astonishment.

Bunter laughed good-humouredly.

"What a memory you've got!" he said. "Lucky you've got a pal like me to look after you! You've got the fifty-pound note to change, you know!"

Lord Mauleverer began to understand. A light was shed upon William George Bunter's remarkable devotion during the day.

"I'm not going to change that, Bunter," said the schoolboy earl calmly.

"Oh, really, Mauly! You're not going to carry a fifty-pound note about with you for good, without changing it, I suppose?"

"I'm going to change it when I get my new jigger," Lord Mauleverer explained. "That's what I've got it for!"

"Better change it at once, before you lose it," Bunter urged. "I'll walk down to the bank with you. In fact, I'll take it by myself, and get it changed if you like!"

Lord Mauleverer grinned.

"You're awfully kind, Bunter—"

"The fact is, I mean to be kind," Bunter explained. "Ain't I your pal? I don't mind taking the trouble, Mauly, old fellow—not the least little bit in the world. Just hand over the note, and I'll buzz off at once!"

"You're really too good—"

"Not at all!"

"And I'm awfully obliged—"

"Don't mench!"

"But I don't want the note changed."

"Oh, really, Mauly—"

"And I'm not going to change it."

"Now, look here, Mauly—"

"Begad! There's Bob Cherry calling me!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Ta-ta!"

And he fairly ran.

Billy Bunter blinked after him with feelings too deep for words. All day long, from early morn to dewy eve, he had been on the track of that banknote; and, after all, it was not to be changed! Bunter had fully intended to have a "whack" out of it, to be repaid later from a postal-order he was expecting—perhaps! And now—

"The—the beast!" muttered Bunter. "The—the swindler!"

And Bunter rolled disconsolately away.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Warm for Mauleverer!

SCHILLER was undoubtedly a great poet, and some of the Remove fellows were quite capable of appreciating his beauties; but that afternoon there was hardly a fellow in the Remove who did not wish that Schiller had never been born; or, failing that, that he had died at birth—or, at least, that he had never learned to write. The things the Remove fellows said about Schiller, as they ground out their lines, were really severe. But there was no help for it; the lines had to be done.

One by one the Lower Fourth dropped into Herr Gans's study with their finished impositions; but some of them were very late.

Among the fellows who could not get their lines finished was Lord Mauleverer. The dandy of the Remove had a way of never doing to-day what could be put off till to-morrow, and each time that he thought of the two hundred lines he put it off till a little later.

When tea-time came—the time for the lines to be handed in—Lord Mauleverer had exactly twenty done, and those twenty had been done for him by Bob Cherry to give him a start.

Bob looked into his study, and found him sitting at the table, with a pen in his hand, and a most despondent expression on his face.

"Finished?" asked Bob.

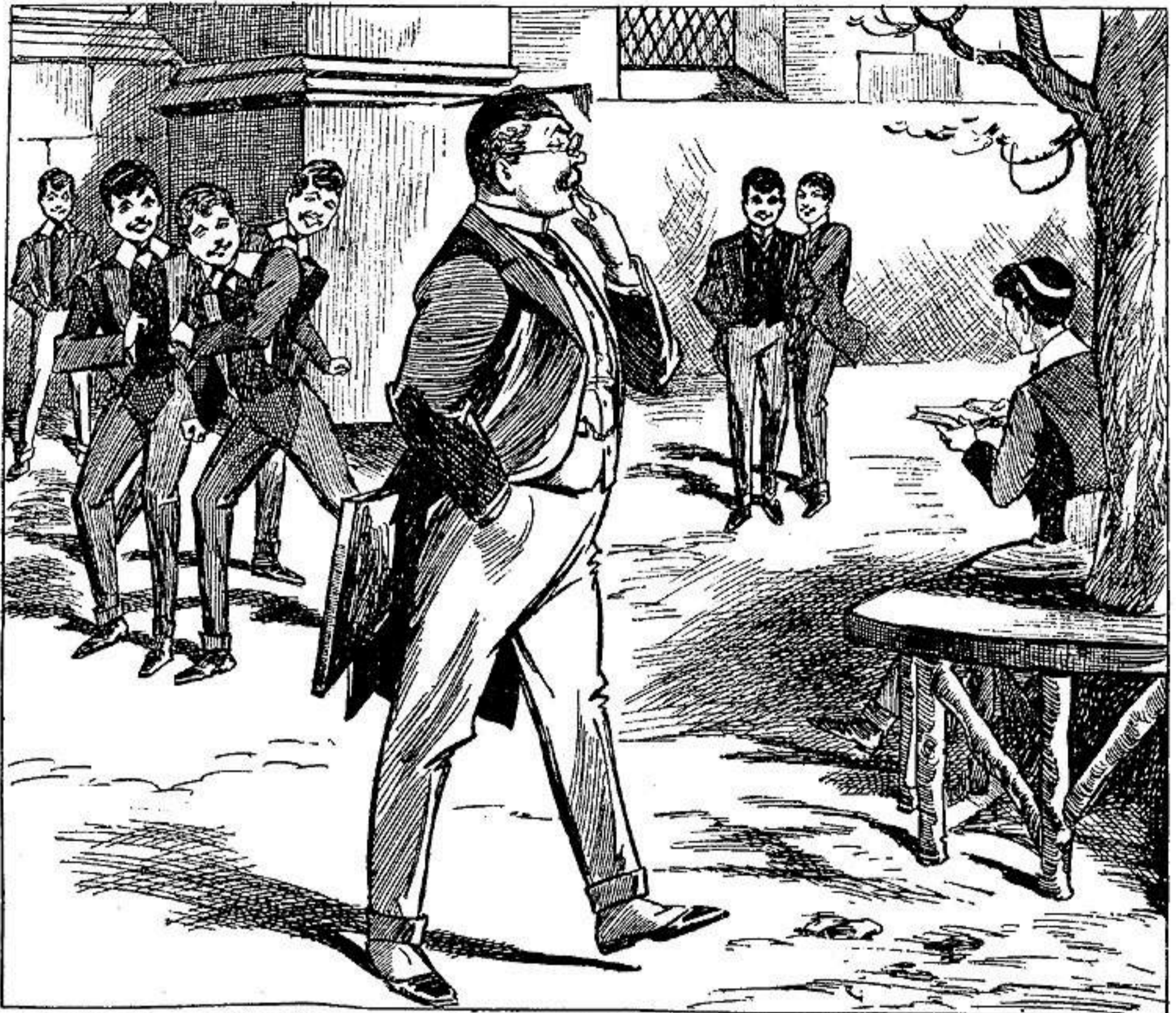
"I—I haven't started yet," confessed Mauleverer.

"Oh, you ass! The Gander has asked for you. All the other chaps have taken their lines in, and you're late!"

"Can't be helped."

"You'll get into a row," said Bob. "The Gander is very ratty to-day. He's been having trouble in the Fifth. Coker cheeked him."

"Yaas."



"There's your toffee, Bob!" yelled Nugent, pointing to the tin pan that was adorning the German master. "The silly Dutch geezer!" exclaimed Cherry wrathfully. "He's been sitting in my toffee! It's spoiled now!"
(See Chapter 3.)

"And Bolsover major was late with his lines, and when the Gander slanged him, Bolsover called him a Dutch beast."

"Begad!"

"He laid into Bolsover with a ruler," said Bob Cherry. "Bolsover's groaning in his study now, and swearing blue vengeance. Mauly, you ass, you'll get into a row! The Gander will be down on you like a ton of giddy bricks!"

"Yaas."

"Pile in and get done all you can," said Bob. "I'll help you."

"Yaas."

Lord Mauleverer groaned and began. Bob sat down at the table, and started to help him. But before they had been at work ten minutes—in which time Lord Mauleverer had added three lines to his stock—Trotter, the page, put his head into the room.

"Herr Gans wants Lord Mauleverer, please!"

"Yaas," said Lord Mauleverer.

"He's on the giddy warpath!" said Bob. "You'll have to go. Pitch it to him as sweetly as you can, Mauly, and rub him down the right way."

"Yaas."

Lord Mauleverer betook himself to the Gander's study. He found the German-master in a very bad temper. Herr Gans had many causes of annoyance. Beside the private trouble that was weighing on his mind, he had been much exasperated that day.

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FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"HELD UP!"

Coker, of the Fifth, had been cheeky, and he could not cane Fifth-Formers, who were seniors. Some of the Reinovites had "cheeked" him also, when he found fault with their lines, and he had caned several of them. And he had discovered that the trousers to which the toffee had stuck were quite ruined—a heavy blow to an economical German.

In his present mood, Herr Gans was prepared to see offence in everything, and he attributed Lord Mauleverer's failure to bring his lines to sheer impertinence, instead of to his lordship's laziness which was the real cause. He bent his brows, and his blue eyes glittered over his spectacles as the schoolboy earl came in.

"You are late—ach!" he exclaimed.

"Yaas, sir."

"Is it not tat I have to receive te lines at dea-dime?"

"Yaas."

"Tat is now an hour to have passed?"

"Yaas."

"You intend to be vat you call sheeky, ain't it, after?"

"Yaas."

"Vat!" ejaculated the German.

"I mean no, sir!"

"I tink tat I sall cane you, I must!" said Herr Gans.

"Lay your lines upon te table!"

"M-m-my lines, sir?"

"Ja, ja! Lay tem on te table. isn't it?"

"I—I haven't done them, sir!"

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Herr Gans's brow grew thunderous. He picked up a cane, and swished it in the air.

"You have not done tem, Mauleverer?"

"No, sir."

"And vy not?"

"Tired."

"Ach, I tinks I give you somedings for tat!" said Herr Gans. "Hold out te hand, you pad and sheeky poy!"

"Oh, begad!" groaned Lord Mauleverer.

"Tat you hold out te hand!" thundered Herr Gans.

Lord Mauleverer held out his hand in a gingerly way. The masters were generally very lenient with Lord Mauleverer, and he was seldom caned. He did not like it. He watched Herr Gans swing back his arm for a terrific swipe, and he shuddered. If that blow had descended upon his hand, he would certainly have been very much hurt.

Without intending it, but acting simply upon impulse, he jerked his hand back as the cane came slashing down.

The cane was descending with great force, and, meeting with no resistance, it lashed with a terrific lash on Herr Gans's own plump leg. The crack of the cane on the German master's leg sounded like a pistol-shot.

Lord Mauleverer gave a gasp of dismay, and Herr Gans uttered a whoop like a Red Indian on the warpath, and jumped clear of the floor in his agony.

"Ach! Mein Gott! Ach! Donner und Blitzen!" he roared. "Oh, you pad and vicked poy! Ach! You like me tat I break te leg, isn't it? Ach! Mein Gott!"

"Oh, begad! I'm awfully sorry, sir!"

"Ach! Oh, mein Gott!" gasped Herr Gans, standing on one leg, and clasping the injured limb with both hands. "Ow, ow, ow! Oh, you pad poy! I tink tat I trash you!"

"I say, sir— I— Oh— What are you up to? Yaroooh!" roared Lord Mauleverer, roused into energy at last.

The German-master had seized him by the collar with his left hand, and lashed at him with the cane in his right.

Lash, lash, lash, lash!

Herr Gans had completely lost his temper. The cane descended upon Lord Mauleverer's back and shoulders with terrific force. The schoolboy earl hopped and roared, but the blows came down like rain.

"Take tat, und tat, und tat, und tat—"

"Stop it!" yelled Lord Mauleverer. "Let go, you Dutch dummy! I'm not going to stand this, begad! You silly Dutchman, chuck it!"

That was not really the way to make Herr Gans leave off. The blows fell harder and faster.

Lord Mauleverer wrenched himself away, slipping out of his jacket, and leaving it in the grip of the German-master. He made a leap for the door, and fled into the passage, leaving his jacket in Herr Gans's hand.

"Gum pack!" roared Herr Gans.

But Lord Mauleverer did not come back. He ran for his life.

Herr Gans ran into the passage, flushed and furious; but he paused. Perhaps he felt that the junior had had enough, or perhaps he realised that he would look ridiculous chasing a junior in his shirt-sleeves along the passages. He went back into his study, and closed the door.

Lord Mauleverer did not leave off running till he had reached his own study in the Remove passage, where he sank into a chair, gasping.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Herr Gans Is Sorry!

"GREAT SCOTT! What's the matter?"

Bob Cherry jumped up, and stared at Lord Mauleverer.

The schoolboy earl sat, gasping, in his shirt-sleeves.

"Oh, begad! Oh, crumbs! M-m-my hat!"

"Where's your jacket?"

"That blessed Dutchman's got it!"

"Got your jacket?" ejaculated Bob.

"Yaas. I slipped out of it, and bolted!"

"Oh, crumbs! Tell me what happened?"

Lord Mauleverer explained, in breathless jerks. Bob Cherry could not help grinning.

"Well, you ass," he commented, "if you made him whack himself, you ought to have expected him to be rather ratty! But I suppose he doesn't want to keep your jacket as a souvenir. I'll go and ask him for it."

"Better keep out of his way, my dear fellow; he's simply dotty!"

"Oh, I'll risk it!"

Bob proceeded to Herr Gans's study. He knocked, and an agitated voice bade him enter.

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Herr Gans had had time to cool down, and he was sorry for what he had done. Never before had he allowed his temper to carry him away in that manner. His face was very red as he met Bob's grim look.

"Can I have Mauleverer's jacket, please?" asked Bob politely.

"Take it!"

It was lying upon a chair, and Bob picked it up, and left the study without another word. He found Mauleverer still groaning when he returned to him.

"Here's your jacket," he said. "I say, the Gander is looking pretty sick, Mauly. He's sorry, I think!"

"So am I!" groaned Lord Mauleverer.

He put on his jacket, and sat down again, his face quite white. The terrific thrashing he had received had quite upset his usual equanimity. Bob consoled with him as well as he could, but he left him looking extremely doleful.

Bob met Billy Bunter as he went down the passage, and he found the fat junior wringing his hands and emitting sounds of woe.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the matter with you?" asked Bob, not very sympathetically.

Bunter groaned deeply.

"I've just seen the Quelch-beast! I had to take my lines in to him, you know. I had only done a quarter of them—Ow! So he caned me instead! Yow!"

"Serve you right!" said Bob.

"Ow! It's all that beastly Dutchman's fault! I'll make him sit up for it somehow!" groaned Bunter. "Ow, ow, ow!"

And he rolled into his study groaning.

But Bunter did not get much sympathy in his own study. Peter Todd politely told him to shut up, or he'd heave a boot at him. Alonzo Todd suggested that it would be a valuable lesson to him not to be lazy. Dutton, the deaf junior, could not hear him groaning; but he requested Bunter forcibly not to make such hideous contortions with his face, adding that that face was unpleasant enough, anyway.

Bunter rolled out of the study again, as soon as he had had tea, feeling deeply injured, and too good for an unsympathetic world.

He had had a very frugal tea in No. 7, funds being low in that study; and he looked into Lord Mauleverer's room in the hope of finding something better. But Lord Mauleverer was not having tea. He was sitting in his armchair in the deep dusk, not having troubled to light the gas.

"Hallo, Mauly!" said Bunter. "Had your tea?"

"Ow! No. Ow!"

"What's the matter?"

"Licked!"

"Same here," said Bunter dolefully. "Quelchy licked me. But I'm going to make the Gander sit up for it—it was all his fault. I say, Mauly, I'll have tea with you, if you like, just to keep you company. Got any matches?"

"No!"

"I haven't, either. No good moping in the dark," said Bunter. "Much better buck up and have tea. I'll fetch anything you like from the tuckshop."

Lord Mauleverer rose to his feet. The pain of his tremendous licking was abating, and he realised that he was getting hungry.

"Plenty of stuff in the cupboard," he said. "You can help me if you like."

"Pleasure, dear boy!"

Lord Mauleverer fumbled in his pocket for matches, but found none.

"I'll buzz off and borrow some of Bob Cherry," said Bunter.

"It's all right—I've got an old letter here—I'll light it from the fire."

"Good!"

Lord Mauleverer fumbled in his jacket-pocket again for a fragment of paper, found some, and twisted it into a pipelight, and thrust the end into the fire. It blazed and cracked up, and he turned on the gas and lighted it, and tossed the end of the burnt pipelight into the coal-scuttle. In the gaslight his face showed up white and troubled. Bunter stared at him a little. He had never seen Lord Mauleverer looking like that before. The cool, easy calmness of the slacker of the Remove was quite gone for the time.

"I say, Mauly, you must have had an awful licking," said Bunter. "Never mind; I'll make the Dutch beast sorry for it."

"That's all right—I don't owe him any grudge. I made him cane his own leg, you see." And Lord Mauleverer chuckled at the remembrance. "It wasn't surprising that he was a bit wild. I shall get over it soon."

"Nothing like a jolly good feed to help you forget your troubles," said Billy Bunter encouragingly.

And Bunter proceeded to forget his troubles that way. He did all the work of getting the tea, Lord Mauleverer watching him from the hearthrug; and perhaps he felt entitled to indemnify himself for the trouble he took. At all events, he did it. The good things vanished at a remarkable rate before Bunter's onslaughts—and perhaps it was just as well for the schoolboy earl that he had a light appetite. He would have found difficulty in satisfying a heavy one, with Bunter as a rival.

"Now, that's what I call something like," said Bunter, with a grunt of satisfaction. "Will you have the last tart, Mauly?"

"Thanks, no!"

"May as well finish it," said Bunter.

And he finished it.

"Jolly glad I've been able to cheer you up," said Bunter, as he rose to his feet. "Nothing like a good meal with cheerful company, when you're downhearted. I say, are you going to do your lines?"

"Not now," said Mauleverer.

He did not feel inclined to do lines. Neither was he yearning for Billy Bunter's company. Fortunately, the feed having been completely disposed of, the Owl of the Remove took his departure. Lord Mauleverer sank into the armchair, and stared at the fire. He was feeling upset and generally "rotten."

There was a knock at the door.

"Come in!" said Lord Mauleverer lazily.

It was Herr Gans who entered.

The schoolboy earl jumped to his feet at once.

"I have come to speak mit you, Mauleverer," said Herr Gans awkwardly.

"Yaas, sir."

"I did lose mein domper ven you gum mit me in mein study, Mauleverer. You make me gane meinselt, and it hurt. And I was upset, too. But it was not right to trash you so much as I did." Herr Gans flushed. "I am sorry, Mauleverer, tat I have allow mein domper to run off mit me like tat."

"It's all right, sir," said Lord Mauleverer, quite forgiving at once. "I ought to have done the lines. I didn't mean it as cheek, sir—it was just slacking, and I'm sorry."

"You need not do to lines now, Mauleverer. And I say again tat I am sorry," said Herr Gans. "Tat is all—but I felt tat I must say him."

"Thank you, sir; it's all right!"

And Herr Gans, with a kind nod, quitted the study.

Lord Mauleverer was considerably relieved by having the imposition cancelled. Indeed, now that the pain was abating, he began to think that he would rather, after all, have had the licking than the lines.

"Not such a bad sort of a Dutch duffer, don't you know," he confided to Wharton, later, in the common-room. "I don't owe him any grudge—though he did lay into me, and no mistake."

"I'm going to make the beast sit up, all the same," growled Billy Bunter. "I've got a jolly good idea. I'm going to take it out of him, and out of Quelch at the same time. I've got a ripping wheeze—"

"Go and boil it," said Bob Cherry. "You'd better not try to pull Quelch's leg. Quelch is a downy old bird, and he's sure to spot you."

"Cherry! How dare you!"

Bob Cherry swung round with a gasp of dismay at the stern, rasping tones of his Form-master. He stared at the doorway; but Mr. Quelch was not to be seen.

"Why, what—what—" ejaculated Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" said Bob, with a gasp of relief. "It was some more of your blessed ventriloquism, you fat bounder! I'll—I'll—"

But Billy Bunter did not wait to ascertain what Bob Cherry would do; he fled.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Shut Up!

HERR GANS came into his study, closed the door, and threw himself into a chair. His brows were knitted in a deep frown.

"Ach!" he murmured. "Vat is it tat I sall do?"

Click!

He started for a moment. The click was the sound of the key turning in the lock. The Gander stared at his study door. Someone had evidently placed the key on the outside of the lock during the German master's absence; and now that he was in the study, that someone had locked him in.

Herr Gans rose to his feet, and crossed to the door. He was worried, and his temper was irritable. He took hold of the door-handle and shook it hard.

"Who is dere?" he exclaimed. "Unlock dis door at once, you sheeky poy!"

"You Dutch duffer!"

Herr Gans simply staggered at that reply. It was not only

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"HELD UP!"

the impertinence of such an expression applied to him. But the voice! Well he knew the clear, sharp, metallic tones of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove. If it was not the Remove-master speaking outside the door, it was someone gifted with an exactly similar voice.

"Mein Gott!" ejaculated Herr Gans. "I cannot pelieve dis! I cannot pelieve mein ears pefore. Vat is tat? Who sall speak?"

"You know whom I am, you rotter!"

"Vat!"

"You have been ragging the boys in my Form!" went on the voice. "There isn't a fellow in the Remove who wouldn't like to wring your Dutch neck."

"Ach!"

"I'm not going to have any more of it. If you bother the Remove any more, I shall lick you myself."

"Mein Gott!"

"You understand that, you Dutch chump?"

"I tink tat I am treaming mit myself," the German master gasped. "It gannot be Mr. Quelch tat use tat language mit me."

"Don't you know my voice, you German sausage?"

"Ach! Ach!"

"I've a jolly good mind to come into the study and wallop you now."

"Ach! Mein Gott!"

"I'm going to leave you locked up for a bit. If you make a row I'll come in and give you a thick ear!"

"Mr. Quelch! You have been trinking!"

"Liar!"

"Vat, vat! Ach! I tink tat I tream!"

"Shut up, you Dutch duffer! Mind, if you come out of your study, I'll give you a hiding here in the passage!"

"I tink tat I have somedings to say apout tat!" roared Herr Gans, his temper rising. "I tink tat I giffs some of dem hidings, Herr Quelch."

"Oh, you couldn't lick a tom-cat!"

"You insulting plackguard!" shouted Herr Gans. "You open tat door, and I shows you vezer it is tat I licks you!"

"Rats!"

There was a sound of receding footsteps, and the voice in the passage was heard no more.

Herr Gans, crimson with rage at the insults that had been heaped upon him, dragged and shook at the door-handle, and thumped on the door, and shouted for someone to come and release him.

His stentorian voice and his loud thumping rang along the passage.

The noise reached Mr. Quelch's ears in his quarters. The Remove-master was wondering what was the matter, and thinking of going to inquire, when there was a knock at his door, and Bolsover major looked in.

"If you please, sir—"

"What is the matter, Bolsover?"

"Herr Gans is very excited, sir! I think he must have been drinking."

"Nonsense, Bolsover!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch sharply. "How dare you make such a suggestion?"

"Well, sir, he's raving and roaring in his study, and stamping and kicking at the door," said Bolsover. "We can hear him in the common-room."

"I will go at once," said Mr. Quelch.

As he heard the noise from the German master's study, Mr. Quelch could not help secretly sharing Bolsover's opinion; that the Herr had been indulging not wisely but too well. He hurried along the passage, and reached the German master's door. The loud voice of the Gander could be heard within, to an accompaniment of loud thumping on the door.

"Mr. Quelch! Gum pack, you vicked peast! I shows you vezer you licks me! Vere is tat rottair Quelch?"

Mr. Quelch turned quite pale.

He had no doubt that it was to himself that the German master was alluding, and the expressions Herr Gans used seemed to show beyond a doubt that he had been drinking.

Mr. Quelch tapped somewhat nervously at the door. He did not, of course, notice that it was locked on the outside.

"Herr Gans!" he called out softly.

"Ach! You are dere again, you scoundrel!"

"Herr Gans! This language—"

"You rascal!" shouted Herr Gans.

"My—my dear sir, pray calm yourself. This is most—most unseemly—"

"Mein Gott! Vat is it to vat you have say to me?" roared Herr Gans. "You blay tricks like a poy, and you insult me trough te keyhole, ain't it?"

"Sir! I—I—"

"You call me Dutch duffer and Cherman sausage! I tink—"

"My dear, dear Herr Gans, pray calm yourself," said

A Magnificent, Long, Complete School Tale of
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. Order Early.

Mr. Quelch, fully convinced now that the German was fearfully intoxicated. "I assure you that I called you nothing—nothing whatsoever."

"Tat is false."

"Herr Gans! On my word—"

"You lock me in my study, and call me names trough dem keyhole!" roared Herr Gans. "You say tat you giff me hiding."

"Oh, good heavens! I—I assure you, Herr Gans, I have only just come here."

"For te second time!"

"No; no; for the first time!"

"Tat is not true."

"Ahem! I beg you to calm yourself. If the Head should hear this disturbance—and—and think of the boys, too, Herr Gans. What will they think? Pray calm yourself, and lie down a little. You will be much better for it," urged Mr. Quelch, who was greatly shocked and scandalised.

"Open my door!" roared Herr Gans.

"Certainly—certainly!" said Mr. Quelch, who would have said or done anything to calm the excited Teuton.

A crowd of fellows were gathering along the passage, looking on and listening, and grinning and chuckling. The word was passed round that Herr Gans was drunk, and was slanging Mr. Quelch, and naturally the juniors came from far and wide for the fun.

The Remove-master tried to open the door, but it was

evidently locked. There was no key to be seen, but naturally Mr. Quelch thought that it was on the inside of the lock.

"I cannot open the door, Herr Gans," he said. "It seems to be locked."

"You have lock him, you rascal!"

"I assure you no—"

"Tat is a lie!"

"Oh, dear—oh, dear! Pray calm yourself, sir. Look about for the key, and doubtless you will find it shortly."

"You have dem key yourself," roared Herr Gans. "Is it tat I sall remain a brisoner in my study? Open tat door at vunce, I com mand!"

"But it is locked—"

"Unlock it, den!"

"But—but the key—"

"You have tat key, as you locked me in, you scoundrel!"

Mr. Quelch mopped his perspiring brow. Never had he been through such a scene. It was setting all his nerves on edge. His first thought had been to hush the matter up, and save the German master from the results of his outbreak. But his temper was rising now, and he determined to bring the Head upon the scene.

He gave the grinning crowd of boys a beressed look, and walked away.

"Gone for the Head!" said Bob Cherry. "The poor old Gander will get it in the neck this time, and no mistake!"

"Serve him jolly well right!" growled Bolsover major.

"The poor beast has been drinking to drown his giddy



GOOD TURNS.---No. 25.



A party of Magnetites on their Christmas holidays distinguish themselves by assisting the police to capture a dangerous gang of poachers who have been terrorising the countryside.



As he read the notice, the German master's face went red, then quite pale. "He's beginning to cotton to it!" murmured Bolsover, who was watching him, with three or four other fellows. (See Chapter 13.)

"troubles, I suppose," Frank Nugent remarked. "Fancy his breaking out like this, though. It means the sack for him."

"He must be frightfully squiffy," said Johnny Bull. And Hurree Janset Ram Singh observed that the squiff-fulness was terrific.

"I don't quite understand it," said Mark Linley, knitting his brows in thought. "I can't believe that Herr Gans is drunk."

"He wouldn't talk like that if he was sober."

"No fear!"

Thump, thump, thump!

Herr Gans, now in a state of fury, was thumping on the study door, and shouting:

"Gum and open this door! Guelch, you plaggard, gum and open dis door!"

There was a buzz among the fellows in the passage.

"Here comes the Head!"

Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, swept majestically on the scene, just as there was a terrific outbreak of thumping and shouting from the German master's study.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

No Luck for Bunter!

"GUM and open dis door! You scoundrel, I preaks every pone in your body! Gum pack!"

Thump, thump, thump!

Dr. Locke stopped outside the door, majestic in his wrath.

"Herr Gans!"

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The doctor's voice was not loud, but it was penetrating. The uproar in the study died away instantly.

"Yes, sir," came Herr Gans's voice in reply. "Is tat you, Dr. Locke?"

"It is I."

"Is tat Guelch dere?"

"Mr. Quelch is here."

"Will you request him tat he open tat door? Te plaggard have lock me in mein own study, mit dem key on te outside, isn't it?"

Dr. Locke looked at Mr. Quelch.

"It is a drunken fancy," whispered the Remove-master.

"Of course, I have done nothing of the sort. I was attracted here by the fearful noise, and I found the study door apparently locked. There was no key to be seen. Undoubtedly he has locked himself in, and lost the key."

Dr. Locke nodded.

"I am ferry sorry to make dis noise mit myself, Herr Doktor," went on the German master, "but it is too pad to be locked in mein own study, and insulted through the key-hole by tat Guelch. I tink tat he have been trinking. Always ve have been friendly, but now he have lock me up, and he call me a Dutch duffer and a Cherman sausage."

"Herr Gans, calm yourself! It is quite impossible that Mr. Quelch could have used such expressions—"

"But I hear him mit mein ears."

"A fancy, my dear sir—a fancy!" said Dr. Locke soothingly. "I beg you to be quiet. When you are calmer, we will speak of this matter again. But pray be quiet now."

"But I am a brisoner in mein study, Herr Doktor!"
 "Look for the key."
 "Herr Guelch, he have tat key in his bocket."
 "What an extraordinary delusion!" the Remove-master murmured.
 "Extraordinary!" agreed Dr. Locke.
 "It is barely possible that someone may have locked him in his study, but why he should imagine that I did it is beyond my understanding," said Mr. Quelch. "Of course, a fag may have played such a trick."
 "Perhaps so. Herr Gans, are you certain you cannot find the key?"
 "It is outside te door, Herr Doktor."
 "There is no key here."
 "Den tat rascal Guelch have taken it!"
 "Moderate your language, please," said Dr. Locke sternly.
 "He have call me Cherman sausage and Dutch duffer——"
 "Nonsense!"
 "But I hear him, Herr Doktor!" shouted the German master. "I am not deaf, and I am not trunken mit me, neider. He call me dem tings."
 "Calm yourself."
 "Herr Doktor, I am quite calm. You tink tat I have been trinking, but it is not so. I gum into my study after taking mein walk, and I sit down mit myself, den I hear te door lock on te outside. Somevun have put te key outside while I am not here. Den I hear Mr. Quelch speak, and he insult me trough te keyhole."
 "A delusion, of course," said the Head, looking helplessly at Mr. Quelch.
 But Mr. Quelch had given a start.
 "One moment, sir," he said. "Herr Gans, you did not see the person who locked your door?"
 "I did not."
 "How did you know that it was I addressing you through the keyhole?"
 "I tink tat I knows your voice, ain't it?"
 "But the expressions used were not such as you would have expected from me?"
 "Certainly not! I tinks tat you must be mad viz yourself to speak to me in tat vay."
 "Are you sure that it was not someone imitating my voice?"
 "Ach! I neffer tink of tat. But it is not bossible tat any poy imitate your voice so exact as tat."
 "There is one boy in the Remove who could do so," said Mr. Quelch. "He has played ventriloquial tricks before." He looked round at the crowd in the passage. "Bunter!"
 The Owl of the Remove was looking on with a grin on his fat face, but the grin suddenly vanished as he heard Mr. Quelch rap out his name. The fat junior would have vanished, too, but he had no chance. Mr. Quelch spotted him as he tried to wriggle away unseen in the crowd.
 "Bunter, come here at once! Bring Bunter here, please, Loder."
 Loder the prefect grasped the fat junior by the shoulder, swung him out of the throng, and marched him towards Mr. Quelch and the Head.
 Billy Bunter's little round eyes were rounder than ever with terror, and his fat knees were knocking together. Mr. Quelch bent a terrifying glance upon him.
 "Bunter!"
 "Ye-e-e-es, sir!" stuttered Bunter.
 "I suspect you, Bunter, of having locked Herr Gans up in his study, and of having imitated my voice in speaking to him through the keyhole!" the Remove-master exclaimed sternly.
 "Ach! Mein Gott!" came Herr Gans's astonished voice from within the study. Herr Gans did not know anything about Bunter's ventriloquism; but the fat junior's tricks had brought it to the knowledge of Mr. Quelch on more than one occasion.
 "Is that the case, Bunter?" said the Head.
 "Oh, no, sir!" said Bunter. "I certainly didn't lock Herr Gans in his study, sir. I should regard such a thing as quite disrespectful, sir."
 "Did you imitate Mr. Quelch's voice in speaking to him?"
 "Oh, no, sir! I spoke in my own voice——"
 "Then you did speak to him?"
 "Certainly not, sir. I never said a word."
 "But you have just stated that you spoke in your own voice, Bunter!" the Head exclaimed severely.

"Ye-e-s, sir; but—but that was only—only a figure of speech, sir!" gasped Bunter.
 "Did you, or did you not, lock Herr Gans in his study, and imitate Mr. Quelch's voice in speaking to him?"
 "Certainly not, sir!"
 "Where were you when it happened?"
 "I—I was in the Cloisters, sir. I had gone there to meditate, sir, on—on Latin irregular verbs, sir. I was in the Cloisters all the time!"
 "Do you mean you were in the Cloisters when Herr Gans was locked in his study?"
 "Exactly, sir. You've got it just right," said Bunter.
 "How did you know Herr Gans was locked in his study if you were in the Cloisters?"
 "How did—did I know?" stammered Bunter. "I—I know, sir, because—because—the fact is, sir, I was thinking about Herr Gans at the time, and—and—or, to put it more exactly, sir, I didn't know. That's it, sir; I didn't know anything about it."
 "You have just said that you did."
 "That was a—another figure of speech, sir!" faltered Bunter. "The truth is, that I didn't know Herr Gans had come in at all, until I heard this row going on, and then I came in to see what it was about."
 "What! Where were you?"
 "In the Cloisters, sir."
 "What! You declare that when you were in the Cloisters you could hear the noise from this study?" the Head exclaimed. "At that distance!"
 "Oh, crumbs!" murmured Bunter. "Ye-es, sir. I've got splendid hearing, sir—you often notice that short-sighted people are particularly keen of hearing, sir, and—and——"
 "You could not possibly hear anything in the Cloisters from this study, Bunter. You are speaking falsely!"
 "That's a thing I couldn't do, sir. I'm sometimes in trouble with the other chaps because I'm so truthful. I——"
 "If Bunter locked the door, he probably has the key still about him, sir," Mr. Quelch suggested.
 "Quite so. Have you the key to this door, Bunter?"
 "Certainly not, sir."
 "Loder, may I request you to examine him, and ascertain whether he has the key?"
 "Certainly, sir," said Loder.
 Bunter's jaw dropped. The second pocket that Loder dived his hand into proved to contain the missing key. Loder grinned as he drew it out and held it up.
 "Is that the key of this door, Bunter?"
 "Oh, no, sir!" said Bunter. "That's the key of—of my box, sir."
 "You can see perfectly well that it is a door-key, Bunter."
 "Ye-e-s, sir; I—I meant to say that—it's the key of my study, sir."
 "The number of the room is on the key, sir," said Loder, with a grin. "It's Herr Gans's key, sir."
 "Bunter, you have lied——"
 "Oh, no, sir! I—I picked that key up, sir. I was coming along the passage, and I saw it lying on the floor——"
 "Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from the juniors at the end of the passage. Billy Bunter's efforts at outdoing Ananias tickled them immensely. Bunter was a fibber of wonderful powers, but his tremendous "whoppers" had the one drawback that they never could be believed.
 "Bunter, cease this wretched prevaricating instantly!" thundered the Head. "Loder, kindly unlock the door. Thank you! Herr Gans," went on the Head, as the German-master appeared in the doorway, "you have heard what was said, and you understand now who played that absurd trick upon you."
 "I understand him, sir," said the German master. "I pegs Mr. Guelch's bardon for te vorts tat I have apply to him. But I have tink tat he call me a Dutch duffer und a Cherman sausage, and I tink——"
 "Pray say no more!" said Mr. Quelch. "I shall forget the whole matter. Dr. Locke, Bunter has played a most outrageous and impudent prank!"
 "Most outrageous," said the Head sternly. "I shall administer a lesson to Bunter which will, I think, keep his impertinence within bounds in the future. Bunter, you will follow me to my study. Loder, pray request Gosling to come to my study at once."
 And the Head marched majestically away. Billy Bunter followed him with a lengthy face. He knew what the order for Gosling meant—a flogging! He knew, too, that he deserved it; but that was no great consolation. Five minutes later sounds of wild anguish were heard proceeding from the Head's study, and when Billy Bunter came out, he was groaning deeply, and he twisted his way along the passage like a snake, feeling that the life of a really gifted ventriloquist was not worth living.

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"BEGAD!"

Lord Mauleverer uttered that exclamation in startled tones. The Remove had gone up to the dormitory. Lord Mauleverer had very nearly recovered from his licking; but Billy Bunter was still groaning from his recent flogging. The schoolboy earl was feeling in his pockets, and a surprised and uneasy look came over his face.

"Any of you chaps seen a banknote?" he asked.

There was a snort from Bob Cherry.

"So you've lost it?"

"No, I haven't lost it, my dear fellow," said Lord Mauleverer. "I can't have lost it. How could a banknote fall out of my pocket? I've got two or three letters in the same pocket, and they haven't fallen out."

"Then you've put it somewhere and forgotten it," said Nugent. "Serve you jolly well right for not taking better care of it, you ass!"

"Thanks! But I haven't put it anywhere. You see, I've just found my pocket-book, and I was going to put the banknote into it for safety, but now it's gone!"

"That's jolly queer," said Bob Cherry. "Feel in your pocket, again!"

Lord Mauleverer did so obediently.

"A fifty-pound banknote couldn't lie about without being seen," said Harry Wharton. "If it's really gone, it means somebody's taken it out of your pocket. If it's a silly joke, the silly ass had better own up."

"Yaas, begad! I want that note to-morrow!"

Wingate of the Sixth came into the dormitory.

"Not in bed yet!" he exclaimed.

"Mauleverer's been losing his blessed banknote, Wingate," said Russell. "Have you seen fifty quid lying about?"

"Fifty pounds!" exclaimed Wingate, in astonishment. "Do you mean to say that you had a banknote for fifty pounds, Mauleverer?"

"Yaas. I was going to get a new bike, you know."

"And haven't you taken care of such a sum of money?"

"Yaas!"

"Where did you keep it?"

"In my pocket."

"Isn't it there now?"

"No!"

"Then you've dropped it somewhere. If it's lost, it serves you right, and it'll be a lesson to you," said Wingate unsympathetically. "Turn in, you kids!"

And the Remove turned in.

The captain of Greyfriars put out the lights and left the dormitory. There was a buzz of voices in the dark dormitory as soon as he had gone.

"Somebody's collared that giddy banknote," said Ogilvy.

"I say, Bunter, have you been borrowing Mauly's quids?"

"Oh, really, Ogilvy—"

"The matter's got to be settled," said Harry Wharton. "If it turns out that Mauly's lost the note himself, I suggest that we give him a bumping, and fine him a feed for the whole Form."

"Hear, hear!"

"Oh, begad!"

"But we've got to find out what's become of the note. It's dashed unpleasant. You are sure you had it in your jacket-pocket, Mauly?"

"Yaas!"

"Have you left your jacket lying about anywhere?"

"Only in the Gander's study!" chuckled Mauleverer.

"And the Gander wouldn't pinch my banknote, would he?" Wharton started, and sat up in bed.

"In the Gander's study!" he exclaimed. "What do you mean, Mauleverer? How did you leave your jacket in the Gander's study?"

Lord Mauleverer explained.

"My hat! The Gander's got it!" yelled Bolsover major. "I know he's hard up! The Gander's pinched Mauly's banknote!"

"Oh, piffle!" said Lord Mauleverer uneasily. "The Gander wouldn't do anything of the sort! He lost his temper and gave me an awful licking, but he came to my study afterwards, and said he was sorry. He's very decent."

"More likely came to see whether you'd missed the banknote!" sneered Bolsover.

"Oh, begad!"

"How long was the jacket in the Gander's study?" asked Harry Wharton.

"About ten minutes, I suppose. Bob Cherry fetched it away."

"I suppose you didn't drop the banknote out, carrying it along, Bob?"

"Of course I didn't!" said Bob.

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FOR NEXT
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ONE
PENNY.

"Did you notice anything suspicious about the Gander when you fetched the jacket?" asked Bolsover major.

"Can't say I did. He was looking very red and very rotten, but I put that down to what he'd done to Mauly. He was sorry he'd broken out like that."

"He'd got the banknote in his pocket, you bet!" said Bolsover.

"I guess it looks pretty black against him," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "I kinder reckon it's up to the Gander to produce that banknote!"

"But—but it's impossible!" said Wharton uneasily.

But even as he spoke, his mind was deeply troubled. He knew, more than anyone else in the Form could know, how bitterly in need of money the German-master was.

The fifty pounds, which the schoolboy millionaire would have spent idly and carelessly, would have meant so much to Herr Gans—health and comfort for the sick relative to whom he was deeply attached. Fifty pounds would be enough to provide all that was required for Mr. Muller.

It was quite possible that the banknote had slipped out of the jacket when Mauleverer was wriggling in the German-master's grip, or that the Gander had heard the rustle of it, or, indeed, that he had known it was there when Mauleverer came to his study. There had been a great deal of talk about Lord Mauleverer's £50 note, and some hint of it might have reached Herr Gans's ears.

It was likely enough, but—

But it was impossible, Wharton decided.

The Remove fellows did not think that it was impossible. Their feelings towards the German-master just then were bitter. They had been worried and bothered over the German lines, and some of them had been caned for being late with their impots. Some of them had had the imposition renewed for having done it too hastily and badly. Nearly all the Form were very much "down" on the Gander just then, and just in the mood to believe anything against him.

"I say, you fellows, it's quite clear!" Billy Bunter exclaimed. "The Gander has stolen Mauly's banknote, and I think Mauly ought to go to the Head about it!"

"Go to the Head in the morning, Mauleverer."

"Show the Dutch rotter up!"

"It will mean the boot for him!"

"Good egg!"

But all those encouraging remarks from the Removites fell upon deaf ears.

"Rats!" was Lord Mauleverer's reply.

"Look here, Mauly, you're not going to stand a loss of fifty quid, I suppose?" exclaimed Tom Brown warmly.

"Can't be helped."

"You've got to complain to the Head!" shouted Bolsover major angrily. "I'll jolly well thump you if you don't! Do you hear?"

"Yaas."

"Well, are you going to the Head in the morning?"

"No."

"Well, if you don't, I will!" declared Bolsover. "There's a thief in the school, and he's got to be booted out! And the thief is old Gans!"

"Faith, and it looks like it!" said Micky Desmond.

"But if it turns out that Mauly has put the banknote into another pocket, sure you'll get into trouble for accusing the Gander!"

"We'll make the silly ass search all through his things to-morrow morning!" said Bob Cherry. "He shall go through all his clothes, and turn everything inside out. Then if the banknote doesn't turn up, we shall know it's been pinched."

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer, in dismay. "I can't take all that trouble, you know! I really couldn't do it!"

"You've got to, fathhead!"

"Begad! I'd rather lose the money!"

"Tain't a question of what you'd rather, ass! That banknote has got to be found!"

"Oh, crumbs!" groaned Lord Mauleverer.

It was quite late before the Removites fell asleep that night. Discussion was very eager on the subject of the £50 banknote. There were very few dissentients from the general opinion that the Gander had taken it—especially the fellows who were smarting from recent canings believed that he was the thief.

This was not very logical, but it was natural, perhaps. But certain as the fellows were as to what had become of the banknote, they all agreed that a thorough search should be made before anything was said.

It was no light matter to accuse a master of dishonesty—indeed, even Bolsover major was not likely to go so far as to take that extreme step. But as soon as the matter leaked out, the whole school would be ringing with it, and the effect

would be the same. Herr Gans would be called upon to explain what he knew about the banknote.

"It's impossible!" Wharton declared. "Quite impossible!"

"Rot!" said Bolsover. "We all know he's hard up. He's got a sick relation, too; and old Muller may need things he can't afford. There's a motive for you!"

Wharton made no reply to that; he knew that it was only too true. But he did not intend to tell Bolsover major what he knew.

"My hands are still aching from the licking he gave me!" added Bolsover viciously. "I'd like to see him kicked out!"

"Caning you doesn't make him a thief!" suggested Peter Todd.

"Oh, rats! He's a thief, right enough!"

And most of the Remove fellows agreed with Bolsover major; and they went to sleep with cheerful anticipations of seeing Herr Gans "booted" out of Greyfriars at an early date.

When the rising-bell went in the morning, and the Remove turned out of bed, there was only one matter in all minds—the £50 banknote!

— — —

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Suspected!

LORD MAULEVERER was very busy that morning. Much against his will, he had to make a search for the missing £50 note in all sorts of possible and impossible places.

He raised pathetic objections, on the ground that he would rather lose the quids than take all that trouble. But his objections were not listened to. A crowd of juniors had taken the matter into their hands, and Lord Mauleverer was not spared. He was made to go through the pockets of all his clothes—a very considerable task, as his wardrobe was extensive.

Then he was taken to his study, and forced to open every box, drawer, and receptacle of every kind and go through it. The search was exhaustive, but the banknote was not revealed.

The study was thoroughly searched, by Harry Wharton & Co. as well as by the schoolboy earl. But they did not find the £50 banknote.

The searching occupied all the juniors' spare time until morning lessons. But the banknote was still missing when they went into the Form-room.

Wingate had remembered the matter, and as the Remove came to their Form-room that morning, he stopped Lord Mauleverer and asked him if he had found the banknote.

The schoolboy earl shook his head.

"Have you looked for it?"

"Everywhere!" groaned Lord Mauleverer. "Begad, I've been searching ever since I got out of bed! The fellows made me!"

"Quite right, too!" said Wingate. "I've made some inquiries, but nobody's seen it about anywhere. I'll put a notice on the board that it's been lost."

"Yaas."

"I think you must have lost it; you are very careless with money. I can't think that anybody has taken it," said Wingate.

"We jolly well know somebody's taken it!" blurted out Bolsover major.

Wingate looked at him sharply.

"Indeed! If you know something about it, Bolsover, you must tell me, as a prefect. You say you know somebody's taken it. Who, then?"

Bolsover hesitated.

"Come; out with it!" said Wingate impatiently.

"Well, we know that it was in Mauleverer's jacket pocket, and that his jacket was in the hands of a certain party for ten minutes," said Bolsover.

"Who was that?"

"The Gander!" said Bolsover defiantly.

"What! Herr Gans?"

"Yes."

"You young ass! How dare you suggest such a thing!" exclaimed Wingate angrily. "Besides, how could Mauleverer's jacket be in the German master's hands? Don't be absurd!"

"But we know that it was——"

"Nonsense!"

"Begad, that's a fact, Wingate!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"Of course, I know that the Gander doesn't know anything about my banknote. That's all rot, of course!"

"The Gander was licking Mauleverer in his study yesterday," said Bolsover major. "He tore his jacket off him——"

"I slipped out of it to get away," corrected Mauleverer.

"Well, anyway, Gans got the jacket," said Bolsover; "and he knew the banknote was in the pocket, of course. It wasn't there afterwards. That's pretty clear!"

"You have no right to suggest such an infamous thing, Bolsover!" said Wingate sternly. "I have a good mind to report you to the Head!"

"We all think the same," said Vernon-Smith, coming to Bolsover's rescue.

"Then you are all equally stupid! Such a thing is impossible!"

"We all know the Gander's hard up——"

"Nonsense!"

"And he can't raise the money to send his uncle away as the doctor orders!" chimed in Billy Bunter triumphantly.

"I know that for a fact!"

Wharton looked sharply at the fat junior. He had had no idea that Billy Bunter was aware of that circumstance. But there were very few things that could be kept from the knowledge of the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars.

"You cannot know anything of the kind, Bunter," said Wingate. "Hold your foolish tongue!"

"But I do!" howled Bunter. "I heard him talking to Dr. Pillbury in the lane——"

"You were eavesdropping, you young rascal!"

"Oh, really, Wingate! Certainly not! I happened to stop and tie my shoelace, that was all, and I heard old Pillbury say that Muller ought to be sent to the South; and old Gans said it was impossible, because——"

"Don't tattle to me!" said Wingate; and he took Bunter's fat ear between his finger and thumb. "You are a mean little cad!"

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Ow! Leggo!"

"I'll put the notice on the board," said Wingate. "I've no doubt the banknote will turn up soon. And, meanwhile, I'd recommend you not to say silly things about Herr Gans! If the Head got to hear of it, you'd get into trouble!"

And the Removes went into their Form-room, Billy Bunter rubbing his ear ruefully.

The Remove were in a state of suppressed excitement during morning lessons.

Mr. Quelch noticed it, though he could not guess the cause. There was a half-holiday that afternoon, and a German lesson in the morning, the third lesson being German. Under the circumstances, suspecting Herr Gans as they did, the Removes felt a thrill of excitement when Mr. Quelch left them in the German master's charge.

Herr Gans was very quiet and subdued.

The irritability of temper that had marked him for the past few days seemed to have disappeared. He was almost meekly patient and kind. Harry Wharton & Co. thought they understood the reason. The Gander's temper had carried him away the previous day, and he had acted cruelly and harshly; and he had repented of it, and was very much on his guard against such a thing happening again. His really kind nature was deeply troubled by what he had done in the anger of the moment.

But most of the fellows did not look at it as Wharton did. They observed the change in Herr Gans, and they found other reasons for it. Bolsover whispered to Vernon-Smith that the Gander's troubles were over now, now that he had found the money he wanted; and Smithy nodded assent. Skinner suggested that the Gander was trying to make a good impression on them, because he didn't want them to suspect him; and the fellows agreed with Skinner.

Herr Gans, with the aid of a chalk and a blackboard, was giving the Remove a demonstration of the difference between "zahlen," to pay, and "zahlen," to count—a rock upon which some of the juniors had come to grief.

Leaving the juniors to feast their eyes upon those cheery verbs on the blackboard, the German master went back to the Form-master's desk for a book; and the moment his back was turned, Vernon-Smith whipped out of the class, wiped the verbs off with a brush of his sleeve, and scrawled a new verb in their place.

In a few seconds he was back in his place, cool as a cucumber.

The Remove gasped as they looked at what he had written. In large letters the word "STEHLEN" stared from the board—stehlen, to steal!

Herr Gans turned back from the desk, with the book in his hand, without a suspicion. He heard a ripple of laughter sweep through the class.

"Now ve vill go on mit tat verb," he said, opening the book. "Ve vill take first 'zahlen,' vich is, so to say, pay."

Then Herr Gans's eyes fell upon the blackboard.

He stared at it blankly.

"Mein Gott!" he murmured.

The juniors looked at him with breathless eagerness. Surely, if Herr Gans had stolen Lord Mauleverer's bank-

note, the finding of that word on the blackboard should have brought a flush of guilt to his plump cheeks.

But it did not.

The German master seemed simply astonished.

"Somevun have change te vord here!" he exclaimed. "Who has altered vat I have written on te plackboard?"

There was no reply. Herr Gans frowned, and he seemed upon the verge of an outburst of temper; but he controlled himself.

"Very well," he said. "I did not see who did dis, and I say notings!"

And he took up the duster and rubbed out the "stehlen," and started again with "zahlen" and "zahlen." The Removites felt vaguely disappointed. Surely that reminder on the blackboard ought to have touched the German master on the raw. Very likely, as they considered, he had Mauleverer's banknote tucked away in his pocket at that very moment.

The word "stehlen" surreptitiously written on the blackboard ought to have given him a hint that he was suspected; but apparently it hadn't.

"He's got a jolly good nerve," Vernon-Smith muttered to Bolsover major, "or else he hasn't taken the banknote at all!"

"Oh, he's taken it right enough!" said Bolsover positively.

"Tell you what," murmured Skinner. "Let's ask him if he's seen it!"

"Oh, good!"

Herr Gans's eyes travelled towards them.

"You talk mit yourselves, mein poys," he observed mildly.

"Tat is not right. Please tat you keep order in the class!"

"If you please, sir, I want to ask you something," said Bolsover, standing up.

"Shut up, you ass!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Bolsover major did not heed. He remained standing, with his eyes fixed coolly upon the German master's face.

"Ferry vell, Bolsover. Vat is it?"

"Lord Mauleverer has lost some money, sir—a banknote—"

"Tat is notings to do mit me, Polsover. You sall report tat to your Form-master," said Herr Gans. "Ve vill keep to te Cherman, please!"

"But, sir, we thought you might have seen it."

"I have not seen him."

"It was a banknote for fifty pounds, sir."

"Indeed! It was ferry wrong of you to be so careless mit so large a sum of money, Mauleverer!" said Herr Gans severely.

"Yaas, sir."

"It was lost in your study, sir," said Bolsover, fairly making the plunge, as he had not succeeded in "drawing" the Gander so far.

Herr Gans gave a start.

"Vat! Vat is tat you say, Polsover?"

Bolsover paled a little, and his heart beat hard. But it was too late to retreat now, and he had a kind of bulldog pluck that kept him on. He meant to show the other fellows that he wasn't afraid of Herr Gans, anyway. Besides, he wasn't accusing him; he was only stating facts.

"You yanked off Mauly's jacket yesterday, sir," said Bolsover, as coolly as he could, but with a slight tremor in his voice. "The jacket stayed in your study. The banknote was in the pocket. When Mauly looked for it afterwards, it wasn't there."

"Ach!"

"We—we thought it might have fallen out in your study, sir, and you might have seen it," said Bolsover, faltering a little.

He dared not put it more plainly than that. Every eye in the Remove was fixed upon Herr Gans's plump face.

The German master shook his head.

"No, Polsover; I have not seen him. I tink it cannot have fallen dere, pecause te housemaid have done my study dis morning, and she would have found tat panknote if it had been dere. But she say notings."

"But it can't be found, sir."

"I am sorry; but you should be more gareful, Mauleverer. Ve vill now go on mit te lesson," said Herr Gans.

"But, sir—" said Bolsover.

"Tat is enough, Polsover! Say no more! Take your seat mit you!"

Bolsover major sat down. He was defeated. It had seemed to him an absolute certainty that the Gander would show some signs of guilt; but he had never turned a hair. And for the rest of the lesson, too, he was quite calm and composed; and when he dismissed the Remove, he bade them a kind good-morning.

But the impression of the Remove fellows was that he was a clever actor, and that the £50 banknote was in his pocket all the time.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 308.

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"HELD UP!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bolsover Takes the Lead!

"SOMETHING ought to be done!"

Thus Bolsover major.

Bolsover—possibly because his palms were still a little sore—felt that it was up to him to take the lead in the matter. Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, said flatly that he wouldn't have anything to do with getting at the German master. He didn't believe that Herr Gans had pilfered Mauleverer's pocket, and there was an end of it.

Vernon-Smith believed with Bolsover, but he was not anxious to make himself conspicuous in the matter. He had got into severe trouble over his last rub with the German master, and he did not want to repeat the experience. Bolsover major therefore felt that it was up to him, and he threw himself into the breach, as it were. And the Remove were quite willing to back up Bolsover major in very nearly anything. They had suffered at the hands of the German master, and they were eager for a chance to get their own back, as they expressed it.

So when Bolsover major stated to a crowd of fellows in the Close that something had to be done, there was a general chorus of approval:

"Hear, hear!"

"Go it, Bolsover!"

"We all know that the Gander goes over to Pegg every afternoon now," said Bolsover major. "This time he'll take the banknote with him. That means that it will be gone for good, and we sha'n't be able to prove it against him!"

"There's the number?" suggested Morgan.

"Mauly doesn't know the number, like the silly ass that he is! If he had the brains of a bunny rabbit, he'd take the number of a note; but he hasn't!"

"Oh, really, you know!" murmured Lord Mauleverer.

"But the number can be found out," said Harry Wharton.

"They always keep the numbers of notes at the banks, I believe. You can get the number, Mauly."

"Can't!"

"Why not?" demanded several voices.

"Not going to make a fuss. It's my own fault I lost it, and I'm going to stand it."

"Oh, that's all rot!" said Vernon-Smith. "If somebody's taken your banknote he ought to be shown up and made to hand it back."

Another shake of the head.

"Look here, Mauly, that's right enough," said Harry Wharton. "If it's stolen, the thief ought not to be allowed to keep it, though you did place temptation in his way by being so careless. But the number ought to be given to the police if the note isn't found."

"Rats!"

"Well, if Mauleverer won't move in the matter, we must!" exclaimed Bolsover major. "I believe he feels sure that the Gander's got it, and doesn't want to make a fuss because of getting Gans into a row."

Lord Mauleverer walked away.

"We don't want a thief here, as German master, or as anything else," said Bolsover major. "I vote that we make the Gander hand the banknote over before he has a chance of taking it away from the school. If Mauleverer's not going to publish the number, he will be quite safe as soon as he's passed it."

"But how are we going to make him shell out?" asked Bulstrode. "I believe he's got it, but we can't collar him and search him in the Close."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, something ought to be done," said Bolsover.

"You do it," suggested Snoop. "We'll all stand round and watch you."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm not afraid to take the lead, if you fellows will back me up," said Bolsover angrily. "I'm fed up with the Gander, and I want to see him get it in the neck. Whether we get the fifty quid back or not, I'm going to show him up."

"Hear, hear!"

"He'll be coming out soon, and I'm going to have something ready for him," said Bolsover.

Bolsover was busy for the next ten minutes, eagerly aided by a crowd of Remove fellows. The result was seen when Herr Gans came out.

The German master had his coat and hat on, and his cane in his hand. He was evidently going on his usual afternoon walk to Pegg, where his uncle lived. As he came down from the School House towards the gates a peculiar sight met his eyes. A strip of canvas was fastened to two sticks stuck upright in the ground in the form of a banner. And

upon the faded old canvas words were daubed in large black letters in capitals by a heavy hand wielding a brush:

"LOST IN GERMANY!
A 50 QUID BANKNOTE!
FINDING'S KEEPINGS!

P. S.—HONESTY IS THE BEST POLICY!"

Herr Gans stopped and looked at that peculiar banner and the significant legend it bore.

His expression at first was simply of amazement.

Apparently he did not understand.

But the juniors, watching him from a distance, saw the look on his plump face slowly change.

The allusion to Germany and "finding's keepings" could not fail to strike Herr Gans, and to make him understand what the words were intended to convey.

His face became very red, and then quite pale.

"Mein Gott!" he muttered.

"He's beginning to cotton to it," murmured Bolsover major, who was watching the German master with three or four other fellows.

"He ought to have cottoned to it before this," said Vernon-Smith. "Anyway, he can't pretend now that he doesn't know what we think."

"Rather not!"

Herr Gans remained for several moments staring hard at the inscription on the flaunting canvas. Then he turned round and strode towards the School House.

"Hallo! Where's he going now?" exclaimed Bolsover major.

"Going to the Head, perhaps."

"Oh, my hat!"

"He can't do anything else," said Vernon-Smith. "He's practically accused of stealing the banknote, and he must ask the Head to inquire into it, or else confess that he did it."

"Don't want the Head dragged into it, all the same," said Skinner uneasily.

Vernon-Smith chuckled.

"Too late to think of that now," he remarked. "There's nothing to be funky about. We'll all stand in together and back up Bolsover."

"Mind you do," said Bolsover major, who was beginning to feel a little doubt at the idea of being called before the Head. "We're all in this, of course. They can't flog the whole giddy Form, anyway, even if we don't make out our case."

"Quite so. And I fancy the Gander will find it pretty hard to answer to what we've got to say against him," the Bounder remarked.

Herr Gans had disappeared into the School House.

Five minutes later he reappeared, and this time the Head was with him. Dr. Locke was looking very grave and scandalised. At the sight of the Head the juniors scattered in all directions. Nobody wanted to be the first fellow called before the Head.

"Look at tat, sir!" Herr Gans's voice was trembling with agitation. "Look, sir, at tat! Vat is it tat you tink of tat?"

Dr. Locke gazed at the flaunting canvas.

The frown on his brow deepened, and a gleam came into his quiet eyes.

"It is outrageous, Herr Gans—outrageous!" he exclaimed. "This practically accuses you of—of—"

"Of taking tat panknote," said Herr Gans. "Tat is vat it means! Herr Doktor, you cannot tink such a thing of me?"

"Of course not! How can you ask?" said the Head sharply. "This is an infamous joke, and the authors of it shall be severely punished. Have you any idea who can have written this, Herr Gans?"

"I tink tat it vas somevun in te Remove," he said. "Tey have been ferry mooch disrespectful for some dime. I tink tat it vas te Remove."

"The Remove shall be assembled at once and questioned," said Dr. Locke. "You need not fear but that stern justice will be done upon the young rascal who has insulted you, Herr Gans."

"I tank you, sir."

And the Head, returning into the House, immediately gave orders for the Remove to be assembled in their Form-room.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Head Takes a Hand!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were on the junior football ground.

They were playing a Form match with the Upper Fourth that afternoon, and the match was about to start, when Loder, the prefect, came down to the ground and shouted to them:

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 308.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

"All Remove kids wanted indoors!"

"Oh, rot!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What are we wanted for? Isn't it a blessed half-holiday?"

"The rotfulness is terrific, my esteemed Loder," said Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "We are aboutfully to play the esteemed game."

"What's the matter, Loder?"

"Look here—"

"Go into the Form-room at once!" rapped out Loder. "Head's orders. You'll get into trouble if you don't turn up."

"Oh, rotten!"

The prefect turned and stalked away, and the Remove footballers exchanged dismayed glances. There was evidently no help for it. The Head's orders had to be obeyed, football or no football.

"I suppose we've got to go," said Bob Cherry angrily.

"I suppose so," said Wharton, biting his lip. "I suppose it's something or other to do with Bolsover's silly rot. You'll have to excuse us, Temple. We'll get back as soon as we can."

Temple, the captain of the Fourth, nodded genially.

"That's all right," he said. "You can't help it. We'll wait for you."

And the footballers put on their coats over their football clothes, and started for the School House. Removites, called together by the prefects, were coming in from all sides.

Coker of the Fifth was in the doorway when the Famous Five came in, and he gave them a sympathetic grin.

"Looks like a squall," he said. "The Head's in your Form-room, and he's looking awfully ratty. What have you been up to?"

"Snuff!" said Bolsover major. "We've found the Gander out as a thief."

Coker whistled.

"That sounds to me like piffle," he said. "But you'll want heaps of proof if you're going to tell that to the Head. I wish you luck!"

The Removites crowded into their Form-room. Wingate of the Sixth was there, and he saw to it that the whole Form came in.

Dr. Locke, Mr. Quelch, and Herr Gans were in the room. The two former were looking grave and severe, but the German master looked more distressed than anything else. The discovery of the estimation in which he was held in the Remove had come as a heavy blow to him.

The Removites stood in a body facing the Head. They looked very serious too. All of them felt that it was a critical moment. Even the fellows who had not been associated with Percy Bolsover in his scheme felt bound to stand by him. It was the Lower Fourth against the German master, and it meant serious trouble for somebody.

"Now, my boys," said the Head, in a deep, stern voice. "I understand that some of you have made a wicked accusation against Herr Gans, a gentleman whom I respect and esteem very highly. I call upon the boy who wrote that insulting notice in the Close to stand forward!"

No one stirred.

"I think it was a boy in the Remove," continued the Head. "If, however, it should prove not to be so, I shall question the other Forms in turn. As you do not answer, I will ask you the question individually. I commence with you, Wharton, as you are head boy of the Form, not because I think you would be guilty of such impertinence and bad taste. Do you know anything about this matter?"

Harry Wharton cast an expressive look at Bolsover major. Bolsover had taken the lead of his own accord, and he had put that notice up in the Close without even Wharton's knowledge.

It was evidently Bolsover's place to reply to the Head. The burly Removite understood Wharton's look; and he understood, too, the murmur from the Form. His heart beat a little faster, but he did not shrink from the ordeal.

"If you please, sir," he said. "I can answer better than Wharton. I know all about it."

"Good old Bolsover!" murmured several voices.

"Silence!" said the Head. "If you know anything about this matter, Bolsover, pray tell me immediately!"

"Yes, sir. I'm speaking for the whole Form, not for myself. We all think the same about it," said Bolsover, with a defiant glance at Wharton.

Wharton remained troubled and silent. He did not think the same as Bolsover; but he could not disclaim it now without appearing to desert the other fellows in a critical moment. He was doubtful on the subject—but to say so now would be to look as if he were trying to get out of danger. So he held his peace, though his mind was troubled.

"Go on, Bolsover."

"Lord Mauleverer's lost a banknote for fifty pounds, sir. He left his jacket in Herr Gans's study with the banknote in the pocket. Afterwards he looked for it, and it was gone. We

think that Herr Gans ought to know what's happened to it. As we happen to know that Herr Gans is hard up now, and wants money to send his sick uncle away—"

"You have no right to know anything about Herr Gans's private affairs, Bolsover, and I forbid you to say a word on that topic. The matter of the banknote must be thoroughly investigated—not because I think there is any foundation for your foolish suspicion, but in order thoroughly to clear Herr Gans's name."

"Thank you, sir!" murmured the German master, in a broken voice.

"Stand forward, Lord Mauleverer!"

The schoolboy earl came reluctantly forward. Very gladly he would have seen the whole matter dropped, even at the cost of saying good-bye for ever to his fifty-pound banknote. But the matter was out of his hands now.

"You had a banknote for fifty pounds, Mauleverer? I will not remark now upon the folly of having so much money in your possession. You have lost it?"

"Yaas, sir."

"Is Bolsover's statement correct?"

"Yaas."

"Why did you leave your jacket in Herr Gans's study? Surely that was a most unusual and extraordinary proceeding?" the Head exclaimed.

There was a hush in the Form-room. A pin might have been heard to drop. Never had there been a better opportunity of "downing" the Dutchman, as the juniors expressed it. That terrible thrashing Lord Mauleverer had received would never have been approved of by the Head. If Lord Mauleverer had related exactly what had occurred in Herr Gans's study, the situation would have been extremely painful for the German. Herr Gans realised it, and a flush came into his face. He was at the mercy of the junior whom he had thrashed so unmercifully.

Expectant looks were exchanged by Bolsover & Co. The obnoxious Gander was going to get it in the neck at last.

Lord Mauleverer understood well enough what was expected of him. But he had not the slightest intention of gratifying Bolsover and Bunter and the rest by making matters unpleasant for the German master.

A slight smile came over his cool, calm face as he noted the breathless hush with which his reply was awaited by the juniors.

"I had slipped out of my jacket, sir," he said.

"And why?" asked the Head.

"To clear off, sir. I had failed to do my lines, and Herr Gans was going to cane me, and I drew back my hand and he hit himself. I didn't mean it, but it happened. So Herr Gans took me by the collar, sir—and—I'm afraid it was rather cheeky of me, and I hope Herr Gans will pardon me—I slipped out of the jacket, sir, and ran out of the study."

Not a word about the thrashing. Herr Gans gave Mauleverer a quick look of gratitude. There was an audible grunt from Bolsover major.

"Oh, good man!" murmured Harry Wharton, delighted.

"Very well, that is quite clear," said the Head. "And the banknote was in the pocket of the jacket, Mauleverer?"

"Yaas, sir."

"How long did the jacket remain in the study?"

"Bob Cherry fetched it away soon afterwards, sir."

"Did you miss the banknote immediately?"

"No, sir; not till I went up into the dormitory."

"How long afterwards?"

"Quite three hours, sir."

"You did not make your statement quite correctly, Bolsover," said the Head sharply. "You had the jacket on for three hours before you missed the banknote from the pocket, Mauleverer, is it not so?"

"Yaas, sir."

"Nothing has been discovered of the banknote since?"

"No, sir; it seems to have vanished."

"It's been searched for everywhere, sir," said Bolsover major. "The whole Form hunted everywhere for it."

"Mauleverer probably dropped it from his pocket somewhere," said the Head. "It is simply infamous to suggest that it was taken out of his pocket in Herr Gans's study. It appears that the jacket was also in Cherry's hands. Do you suggest that Cherry may have taken the banknote, while bringing the jacket away from Herr Gans's study?"

"Wha-a-at!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Bolsover major. "We know jolly well that Bob Cherry wouldn't do anything of the sort."

"Quite so—I fully agree with you. I am certain he would not. I am equally certain that Herr Gans is incapable of a dishonourable action. There are no grounds whatever for even the slightest suspicion. You say that you speak for the whole Form, Bolsover."

"Yes, sir!" exclaimed a dozen voices.

"Then I can only say," exclaimed the Head, raising his voice, "that I am ashamed of the Lower Fourth Form of Greyfriars! I had had a better opinion of you. I think you have allowed this miserable suspicion to take root in your minds, simply because Herr Gans has had occasion to punish

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 308.

FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"HELD UP!"

you lately. Does every boy here agree with Bolsover in this insulting suspicion? All who repudiate him and his words may stand aside!"

No one stood aside.

"Very well," said the Head. "I shall cane the whole Form, in the hope of impressing upon your minds the respect due to a master. You will pass me in turn, beginning with the head boy. Mr. Quelch, may I trouble you for your cane?"

Mr. Quelch handed his cane to the Head.

The dismayed Remove marched past, led by Harry Wharton. It was specially hard on Harry, as he was quite against Bolsover in the matter. But at such a moment he felt that he could not speak out and desert the rest, and his chums looked at the matter in the same light. Every boy in the Form was caned, as he passed the Head; and the Remove filed out of the Form-room with much groaning and grunting and wringing of hands.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprising Discovery!

TEMPLE, Dabney, & Co., of the Fourth Form, enjoyed an unexpected triumph that afternoon. They beat the Remove in the football-match. The Remove players, fresh from a severe caning, did not play up to their usual form, and the Upper Fourth pulled it off by two goals to one. Which was a source of tremendous satisfaction to Temple, Dabney, & Co., and of extreme irritation to the Remove.

Herr Gans had gone out for his afternoon's walk, as usual. When he came in, the Remove were mostly in the Close, and they gave the German-master black looks.

The Head's decision had not changed their convictions one iota.

They still firmly believed that Herr Gans was guilty, and they were quite sure that he had disposed of the £50 banknote during his afternoon's walk. After that, there could be no proof against him; but they were quite certain on the subject. And they meant to let him see that they were not convinced by the Head's process of caning them.

"Stop, thief!" yelled a voice, as the German-master crossed the Close.

Herr Gans swung round as if he had been stung.

But only a few fellows were near, and they were standing with their backs towards him.

Herr Gans walked on towards the house, his face flaming.

Bolsover major passed him; and as he passed, he went through a pantomime of buttoning up his pockets. He was not looking at Herr Gans, but he knew that Herr Gans was looking at him. The German paused a moment, looking as if he would spring upon the bully of the Remove; but he restrained himself, and passed into the House.

He went slowly into his study, and lighted the gas.

Then an exclamation of rage burst from his lips.

Upon the looking-glass were chalked the words, in large, sprawling capitals:

"WHERE'S THAT BANKNOTE?"

"Ach!" muttered Herr Gans. "Mein Gott! I tink tat I call te Head—but what te use? I gannot drouble him all te time? It is shameful—but I tink tat I moost stand it, after."

He took a duster and wiped the inscription from the glass.

He sat down in his armchair, and picked up a German newspaper from the table. As he opened it, his eyes gleamed with anger.

Across the middle pages words were daubed in large, inky letters with a brush:

"FINDINGS KEEPINGS!"

Herr Gans hurled the paper to the floor, and rose to his feet, much agitated.

He had hoped that the matter was finished when Dr. Locke had caned the suspicious juniors all round; but it seemed that instead of being finished, it was only beginning.

He might appeal to the Head again—but there would be no means of finding out which of the juniors had done this. The only resource would be to punish the whole Form again—the innocent along with the culprits. Herr Gans's naturally kind heart shrank from such a course; and he realised, too, that it would be useless. It would only make the Remove more bitter, and his persecution would go on with more keenness than ever. The juniors believed him guilty; that was at the bottom of all the trouble. And there was no way of changing their fixed conviction on that point.

"Ach! Vat is it tat I sall do?" murmured the unhappy

German-master, as he paced to and fro in his study. Ach! I must go—I shall leave dis school—and yet—I cannot—dere is anozer I must tink of. Ach!"

There was a sound at his door, and a slip of paper was thrust under it, and then he heard rapid retreating footsteps in the passage.

With a painful throb at his heart he stooped and picked up the paper. He guessed what it was before he looked at it.

"WHERE'S THAT BANKNOTE?"

The writing was scrawled with a brush in capitals, and there was no clue whatever to the identity of the writer. Herr Gans opened the study door and looked out into the passage, but the passage was empty.

He closed the door and went back heavily into the study. There was a deep despondency, more than anger, in his face. For some time he paced the study in silence. Then there came a sudden tap at the door.

"Gum in!" said the Gander.

The door opened and Harry Wharton stepped in. Herr Gans looked at him grimly. He supposed it meant some new move in his persecution.

"Excuse me, sir," said Harry respectfully. "If I may speak—"

"You want to call your master a thief, or to ask vere is tat panknote, ain't it, pefore?" said the German-master bitterly.

"No, sir. I want to tell you that I, and a good many other fellows in the Remove, don't believe a word against you, sir!" said Wharton steadily.

Herr Gans started, and looked at him curiously.

"You mean tat, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir. We don't know what's become of the bank-note, but we know you wouldn't touch it. I wanted to tell you that, sir!"

The German-master's eyelashes were wet.

"Tank you, mein poy!" he said, in a moved voice. "I am ferry glad to hear you say tat. Yet vy did you not say so ven te head speak mit you?"

"We couldn't seem to be going back on Bolsover and the rest, sir, so we held our tongues. But a good many of us believe in you, and I think the others will come round in time, sir. I'm very sorry this has happened."

"Tank you, Wharton. You vas a goot poy!"

And Wharton left the study, feeling easier in his mind. He had thought the matter over very carefully, and upon the whole, he could not find it in his heart to believe that Herr Gans was a thief. There was no more evidence against him than against Bob Cherry, for that matter—and the idea that Bob could have taken the banknote was too absurd to be discussed. Why, therefore, suspect the German? To suspect him of stealing because he had given impositions and canings was illogical. Unfortunately, Wharton and his chums were alone in their opinion—but Harry felt that it was due to the unfortunate Gander to let him know that he was still respected by some. And he would have been still more glad of his visit to the German-master's study if he had known how much comfort his loyal assurance had brought to the sorely-tried master.

Wharton returned to No. 1 Study in the Remove. The Co. were there, and tea was ready. The fire burned brightly, and the study looked very cheerful, with the table gleaming with crockery—mostly of very old patterns—and a partially-clean tablecloth.

"Tea's ready!" said Nugent. "Have you seen the Gander?"

Wharton nodded.

"Good! Can't help feeling sorry for the poor beast!" said Johnny Bull. "I can't believe he had the banknote—though he gave me two hundred lines!"

"That's a good enough reason for Bolsover, with a caning thrown in!" grinned Nugent.

"Bolsover's an ass!"

"The ass-fulness of the esteemed Bolsover is terrific!"

"Thanks!" said a voice at the door, and Bolsover major looked it, with a sarcastic sniff. "The same to you, and many of them, you cheeky nigger!"

"I did not intend my esteemed remark for your long and ludicrous ears, my worthy Bolsover; but I am willing to repeat it earfully!" said Hurree Singh politely.

"I didn't come here to row with you, you inky ass!" growled Bolsover. "Look here, Wharton, I think Mauleverer ought to be made to get the number of that note, and hand it over to the police for inquiry. It's the only way of showing the Gander up!"

"I don't believe the Gander's guilty."

"Oh, rats! You know he is as well as I do. I suppose that means that you're funking taking a share in ragging him."

Harry Wharton flushed.

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR"
Every Friday.

"I'm certainly not going to take a hand in ragging him!" he exclaimed. "Let the man alone. There's no proof against him. You know what a careless ass Mauleverer is with money. He may have shoved the note anywhere."

"Stuff! We know the Gander had it, and I believe he's parted with it now. If the police had the number, they could trace it to him, and he would be arrested. That would pay him out for all he's done lately."

"Oh, rats!"

"Well, I'll try my hand with Mauleverer—"

"Thanks, my dear fellow!" yawned Lord Mauleverer, as he came into the study. "I believe I remember your asking me to tea, Wharton?"

"Yes," said Harry, laughing, "and tea's ready. Come in!"

"Look here, Mauleverer!" exclaimed Bolsover, in his most bullying tone. "You can get the number of that note, can't you?"

"Yaas."

"I want it handed to the police, so that Herr Gans can be shown up and collared. We want to see him get the order of the push!"

"But he didn't take the note, dear boy!"

"You know he did!" roared Bolsover.

Lord Mauleverer shook his head gently.

"Not at all, Bolsover. On the other hand, I know he didn't!"

"Bosh!"

"You see, my dear fellow—"

"I see you want to shield that rotten thief, you silly chump!" roared Bolsover, exasperated. "And I see that you're jolly well not going to do it. I'll get the number of that note myself, somehow, and let the police know that it has been stolen!"

"But it hasn't been stolen, my dear fellow!"

"It has—you know it has—" yelled Bolsover.

"Quite a mistake, dear boy—"

"Mauleverer!" Harry Wharton caught the schoolboy ear eagerly by the shoulder. "Mauly, old man, do you mean you've found out what's become of the fifty-pound note?"

Lord Mauleverer nodded cheerfully.

"Yaas."

"My only hat!"

"I was going to tell you fellows about it when Bolsover interrupted me," said Lord Mauleverer negligently. "Let Bolsover finish first, as he seems rather in a hurry to say his say. I don't mind a bit!"

"Fathead!" roared Bob Cherry. "Have you found the note?"

"Not all of it!"

"Part of it, do you mean?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yaas."

"Has it been changed?"

"No."

"Then how can you have found part of it, if it hasn't been changed?"

"Look at that, my dear fellows!"

Lord Mauleverer fumbled in his pocket, and drew forth a scrap of burnt-edged paper, and laid it on the table. The juniors gazed at it. It was an eighth or ninth part of a Bank of England note—and the rest, evidently, had been burned away. But it was still possible to distinguish the amount and part of the number. The juniors gazed at it, and then turned their eyes upon Lord Mauleverer, who was smiling cheerfully as he sat down to tea.

"Mauly, you fathead—"

"Yaas," said Lord Mauleverer. "Pass the jam, Johnny, dear boy!"

"How did the note get like this?"

"Got burnt!"

"I can see that, fathead!" roared Wharton. "Did you burn it—by accident?"

"Yaas."

"And how, you babbling, frabjous, burbling lunatic?"

"Quite inadvertently, dear boy—you see, I used it for a light!" said Lord Mauleverer calmly. "Thanks! I take both milk and sugar!"

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Lord Mauleverer is Fined!

"A—A—A LIGHT!" howled the juniors. "A light, you chump!" roared Bolsover major. Lord Mauleverer nodded, as he stirred his tea. "Yaas. Queer, ain't it? I should never have guessed it, either, only Trotter found that bit. You see, he was taking my coal-scuttle to refill it, because I want a fire in my study this evening, and he spotted that bit of banknote among the coals. He's heard about a banknote

being missing, so he brought it to me at once. Very thoughtful of Trotter, wasn't it, don't you think? I tipped him."

"You—you frightful ass!" gasped Harry Wharton. "You used a fifty-pound banknote for a pipelight!"

"Not intentionally, dear boy!" said Lord Mauleverer chidingly. "That would be beastly extravagance—quite suitable for an American millionaire, but hardly in good taste. But you see, it was dark in my study last evening, and I was a bit upset by the licking Herr Gans had given me—and then Bunter was bothering me, too. I remember just how it happened. I hadn't any matches— Pass the butter, will you?"

"Go on!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Yaas. I hadn't any matches, and I felt in my pocket for an old letter to light the gas from the fire. The banknote was in that pocket, and somehow or other I must have taken it out and used it for a light without noticing it. It was dark, you know."

"You ass!"

"I don't see that! Any fellow might have done it!" protested Lord Mauleverer. "I chucked the odd bit in the coal-scuttle, after lighting the gas, and, of course, didn't see it again!"

"You fathead!"

"I think it was jolly thoughtful of Trotter to hand me that burnt bit, don't you?" said Mauleverer admiringly. "Some chaps do think of things, you know. If I get the money back on that banknote, I shall stand Trotter a couple of quid at least. I think he deserves it, don't you?"

"I think you deserve to lose the money, whatever Trotter deserves!" growled Wharton.

"Oh, I sha'n't lose it! I shall send this bit to my solicitor, with an explanation, as soon as I can get time to write. The solicitor will be able to screw the money out of the bank, I expect. That's what solicitors are for, you know," explained Lord Mauleverer.

"Well, this takes the cake," said Bolsover major, a little shamefacedly. "It seems pretty clear that the Gander didn't take the banknote, after all."

"Yaas; doesn't it?"

"You can come and tell all that to the Head," said Wharton, catching Lord Mauleverer by the arm.

"After tea, dear boy."

"Now!" roared Wharton.

"Oh, begad!"

And Lord Mauleverer groaned and resigned himself to his fate. Harry Wharton marched him directly to the Head's study, where Dr. Locke listened to his explanation with a stern brow, but with great relief.

"You have been culpably careless, Mauleverer," said the Head; "but I am glad it has turned out so well. I hope that the boys who have entertained such cruel suspicions of Herr Gans will now have the grace to feel ashamed of themselves. Wharton, kindly tell this to Herr Gans, and then request him to come to me."

"Yes, sir."

And Wharton hurried to the Gander's study.

The German master was sitting gloomily in his chair. A book was open on his knees, but he was not reading. His look showed that he was plunged into the deepest dejection. He started as Harry Wharton burst into the study excitedly.

"It's all right, sir!" gasped Wharton.

Herr Gans rose quickly to his feet.

"Vat! Vat do you mean, mein poy?"

"The banknote's found, sir."

"Ach!"

"Tell him about it, Mauly, you silly ass!"

"Begad! How many more times have I got to go over it?" Lord Mauleverer demanded warmly. "You tell him, and I'll sit down for a bit. Ow, ow!"

"Tell him, you fathead!" said Harry, shaking the noble Removite violently.

"Ow! Oh, all right! Chuck it!"

And for the third time Lord Mauleverer told his story.

Herr Gans listened, with relief and satisfaction growing in his plump face.

"Ach! But I am glad!" he said. "I tink tat te poy's will be sorry now tat dey have suspect me. I not bears malice; I say nothings no more. Mauleverer, you are vun ferry careless young donkey!"

"Yaas, sir."

And Herr Gans went to the Head's study. Dr. Locke shook hands with him warmly as he came in, a sign of relief and satisfaction that went straight to the simple heart of the German.

"Fortunately, the missing banknote has come to light," said the Head. "That foolish and wicked suspicion will die a natural death now, Herr Gans. But there is another matter I wish to speak to you about. I must ask you to excuse me for touching upon your private affairs. A certain reference to you was made. May I ask you if it is a fact that you need a sum of money, in order to be able to send your sick relative to a milder climate? Speak to me as a friend."

The German master flushed.

"It is drue, sir," he faltered.

"I wish you had spoken to me, Herr Gans. It would have been a pleasure to come to your aid in such a case."

"But, sir, I could not accept—tat would be impossible—"

"You could accept a year's advance on your salary, Herr Gans, without any undue feeling of obligation," said the Head kindly.

"Oh, sir! Oh, Herr Doktor!" faltered the German master.

There were tears in his eyes. At that kind offer, the dark trouble that had lain long on his mind was lifted and gone. When he left the study, after wringing the doctor's hand with grateful fervour, the stout German master seemed to be walking on air.

The Remove were very much taken aback.

They had not expected that discovery.

That even Lord Mauleverer would use a fifty-pound banknote to light his gas with, no one had thought of suspecting.

But when they knew the facts, the Remove "played up." They went in a body to Herr Gans, and begged his pardon, and the beaming German master granted it with a full heart. Once more the Gander and the Remove were on the best of terms. Even Bolsover major was really sorry, and did his best to prove it.

As for Lord Mauleverer, he had considered the matter at an end when the fragment of the burnt banknote was discovered, and the truth established. But he was quite mistaken in so considering. The matter was by no means ended. The Removites had, as Bob Cherry expressed it, sworn a solemn swear that if it turned out to be Lord Mauleverer's fault that the fifty-pound note was missing, he should be bumped hard, and fined a feed for the whole Form.

And that sentence was carried out with unanimous approval—unanimous, that is to say, with the solitary exception of Lord Mauleverer.

Lord Mauleverer objected strongly to the first part of the sentence, but his objections did not make any difference. He was bumped six times, hard; and then he paid his fine—a tremendous feed in the Rag for the whole Remove, which was a happier ending than might have been expected to the affair of the fifty-pound banknote.

(Next Monday's grand long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled "Held Up," by Frank Richards. Have you read the important announcement on page 28? Don't forget to tell your friends the great news!)



Our Grand Serial Story!

MYSTERIABy **SIDNEY DREW**, Prince of Adventure Story-tellers.

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is surrounded in his magnificent London residence by his friends Ching-Lung, Barry O'Rooney, Gan-Waga, the Eskimo, and Prout & Co.—the stalwarts of the millionaire's famous submarine, the Lord of the Deep. After a period of inaction there is a rumour afloat that Ferrers Lord is about to start upon one of his great expeditions again. Meantime, the millionaire himself is devoting all his attention to a curiously carved narwhal's tusk which he has picked up in an East-End curio-dealer's shop. The tusk proved to be hollow, and to contain some gold coins and a small wad of parchment, which bears a strange message from the sea. This tells of a mysterious floating island inhabited by strange monsters which Ferrers Lord determines to go in search of. Thurston immediately christens the phantom island "Mysteria" in advance. All hands board the Lord of the Deep, and as they are steaming along one day a bank of fog ahead suddenly parts, and there, not a league away, appears Mysteria—the weird island. A continuous booming, caused by the cracking of shrivelled weeds, comes from the floating island, which also gives forth a disagreeable odour. Before sunrise the next morning a move is made to explore Mysteria. The landing-party find the island to be an evil-smelling swamp, with little sign of life. They catch a glimpse of a terrifying monster which inhabits a black lake, and then Barry creates a diversion by falling down a deep tunnel, and injuring his head. During the course of their explorations the party walk into a bed of huge anemones. Immediately they are soaked from head to foot by an inky deluge from the plants. Shortly after this adventure, Jimson, the parrot, is found croaking over a huge bush, and when Prout advances to catch his pet, he stumbles over the body of a man whom they have never seen before. The castaway is found to be alive, and is taken aboard the submarine—when Ferrers Lord, the millionaire, and Rupert Thurston amuse themselves by playing billiards. As there is but one table, the inseparable Ching-Lung and Gan-Waga decide to give them a few songs. Suddenly the Eskimo breaks off with a wild yell. "Helps! What's de matter? Ooh! Wow!"

(Now go on with the story.)

Boarded!

The galley door was suddenly wrenched open, for music had failed to soothe a dozen savage breasts. A torrent of missiles poured out, which the cunning Ching-Lung, who had been expecting an avalanche from the fore-castle, skilfully avoided.

The immortal Gan-Waga was not so lucky. Hard things smote him on portions of his anatomy that he could only reach with difficulty. Hoarse voices threatened to take his life, and bony fists were brandished menacingly in his face.

"Phwat in the name of all the madhouses and asylums iver built shall we do wid ut?" asked Barry from Bally-bunion.

"Der pest t'ing vas do take oudt der tongue of id, so dat it shall nod make der vicked noisis, aindt ud?" was Herr Schwartz's kind and loving suggestion. "Dunder, I haf mine ear-trums sblid mit der awful row alretty!"

"Boilin' in hoil might teach it sense, souse me!" said Maddock. "Shall us boil it in hoil?"

"Tie a shot to its 'ind legs, by hokey, and then sling it overboard," said the steersman. "Let it be a mermaid, and sing at the bottom of the sea. I've 'eard tell as mermaids sing. Let's make a mermaid hon him."

Hands that gripped like vices clutched the weary songster, and hustled him away to the deck. Lights were burning on the standards.

"Are you going to drown him wi'out a trial?" asked Joe.

"Did you 'ear him, souse me?" asked Maddock.

Joe admitted that he had not had that supreme bliss and rapture.

"If you 'ad, souse me, you wouldn't talk about trials," growled the bo'sun. "Where's that 'ere shot?"

With a great pretence of banging and bumping, a round object was rolled across the deck.

"Right!" said Prout. "One—two—go!"

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

"Chingy! Helpses!" shrieked Gan.

He shot over the rail, and splashed heavily into the chilly water.

"Now sing, you woolly himbecile!" howled Prout.

As Gan rose to the surface, Ching-Lung, having divested himself of his blouse and trousers, slipped through the port-hole, and sank silently into the sea. A few strokes brought him to the Eskimo's side.

"Chingy!"

"You bet it is, Eskimoses," said Ching-Lung. "Ha, ha, ha! They want us to sing, so we'll sing. I'll start, kiddy, and you do everything bar breaking a blood vessel."

The next moment, as the grinning men were peering into the gloom, a voice warbled:

"Old Tom Prout is a bat-eared lout,
O'Rooney's an Irish chump,
Silly Maddock's a mouldy haddock,
And Joe is a sawdusty lump."

And then Gan chimed in with the chorus of an Eskimo war-song. When Gan-Waga chose to sing in his native tongue the listeners were always seized by one supreme longing—an overwhelming desire to crawl away and die. The men on deck turned pale and faint as the weird notes came thunderously across the placid water. Then they fled, moaning, to hide themselves.

"We'll go aboard now before we get our feet wet," said Ching-Lung. "I think they've gone away to see what time it is, don't you? Choke it off at the top, Gan dear, 'cos I'm not feeling very well. You've got a sweet voice, but it wants training—the same way they train creepers and things up a wall, with bits of rag and tin-tacks. Let's look if they've all got away. There may be a few dead 'uns lying about."

Gan-Waga giggled joyously as they scrambled on deck.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

"I shifteds dem butterfuls, hunk, Chingy!"

"You absolutely pushed 'em off the face of the earth. You're a second Admiral Sago—I mean Togo. Hailo! By the style of the whiskers, that looks like Tommy Prout on the conning tower. Can it be Prout? Ah, now that I see its feet, I know it must be Tommy Prout. There's only one full set of feet on earth like his, I'm happy to state. How do you do when you don't, Thomas?"

"Whats cheers, ugly faces!" piped Gan-Waga. "How yo' wasn't when yo' arcs, hunk? Ole bad 'nough patrocidy!"

"Evenin', sir! Been bathin' I see," said the steersman affably.

"On the contrary, we have been hanging out to dry. We came up here because it was raining so heavily below. Permit me to introduce you to my friend Duke Eskimoses de Wagtail. Pooh-bah! You mustn't shake hands! It's the habit in the country he comes from for gentlemen to kiss. If you kiss him, he'll very likely confer upon you the order of the Purple Pig and Pink Polony. Don't be bashful, Tommy."

Ching-Lung trod gently on Gan-Waga's toe.

"By hokey, I'd sooner kiss a crocodile," said Prout, scenting no danger.

The prince's foot shot out across Prout's ankle, and his elbow did the rest. He plunged forward into Gan-Waga's watery arms. Gan hugged him once, and once was quite sufficient to soak him to the skin. Then Ching-Lung and the Eskimo went down the ladder as if they had a legion of fiends behind them.

"Ain't it funny how dey alls falls in loves wid me, and wants to kisses me?" gurgled Gan-Waga when they were safe and secure in the swimming-bath. "I must be butterfuls, hunk, Chingy."

"You're a vision of beauty, sonny—a dream of loveliness. Tommy didn't expect that, but he got it all the same. As I've told you before, we shall end our days in the workhouse—we give so much away. Ho, ho!"

There was a knock at the door.

"You're wanted, sir," said the voice of Joe.

"Thank you; I've had some," began Ching-Lung, thinking it a ruse. "We had some for tea and sup—"

"Help! Tumble up! We're being boarded! Help! Tumble up!"

Even through the massive door they could hear Prout's tremendous voice. A rattle of firearms drowned it. This was no ruse. Ching-Lung tore open the door. A body came thudding down the ladder, footsteps rattled on the steel deck, and hoarse, exultant shouts startled the air.

An Infallible Method of Getting Rid of Unwelcome Guests.

The man who lay on the floor after a precipitate descent down the ladder was Prout. Even in the wild excitement of the moment Ching-Lung found time to glance at the burly form. The prince was unarmed and astounded, but he leapt over the steersman without hesitation, and made a dash for the deck. He did not succeed in climbing a third of the rungs. To his consternation, he encountered the muzzle of a rifle, and he leapt back hastily.

"Keep where you are!" thundered a voice that was strangely familiar. "Shut that door up, and then it don't matter a rap if they sink her or not. We've got the drop on the dogs! We can pile their carcasses ten feet high if they try to rush the ladder! Don't be afraid of shooting. Let 'em have it!"

"By Jupiter, it's Red Nob, or his ghost!" gasped Ching-Lung. "Stand clear, Maddock, you fool! Don't get in the line of fire!"

Seizing the prostrate Prout by the heels, Ching-Lung dragged him aside. By this time the whole ship was alarmed, but it was alarm without confusion. Armed sailors choked the corridors.

"Souse me, this 'ere is a nice how-d'ye-do!" said the bewildered bo'sun. "This 'ere is a 'alf-oliday."

Ferrers Lord walked swiftly aft, holding a smoking cigarette between his fingers. Shuffling noises and hoarse whisperings came from the conning-tower above.

"Well?"

"It's anything but that," said Ching-Lung ruefully. "Red Nob has stolen a march on us. I don't know how many of his handsome friends he's brought with him, but I'd swear to his voice. He's up there, and we are down here. There's a difference, and we seem to have the worst half of it."

"Oi shud say ut was the worrst three-quarters," growled Barry O'Rooney savagely.

The millionaire pointed to Prout. Four men stepped forward and carried the senseless steersman away. Still the shufflings and whisperings went on. Ching-Lung met the millionaire's glance, but could not fathom its meaning. It was impossible to tell whether the millionaire was angry or slightly amused. He put the cigarette between his lips, and puffed at it thoughtfully.

"I did not expect visitors," he said. "And they have

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FOR NEXT
MONDAY—

"HELD UP!"

shut themselves in. Your friend has a certain amount of dash that makes one respect him. He also appears to possess the cream of the situation."

"He does, the brute!" said Ching-Lung. "If I had hold of him, he'd find that cream precious sour."

Ferrers Lord shrugged his shoulders and gave a swift look at the expectant faces. Faber was in control of the machinery. Only two men could scale the ladder abreast, but to attempt an assault would entail a great sacrifice of life, and would probably fail. There was another way of gaining the deck, but they would be no better off, the glass of the conning-tower being bullet-proof. It was equally plain that the enemy had no chance of descending. So far, the odds were practically the same on either side, with one point in Faber's favour—that he could leave the submarine whenever he chose, for he must possess a craft of some kind.

"The situation, Ching," said Ferrers Lord, breaking the brief silence, "is full of possibilities."

"Oi wish Faber was filled wid bullets, Ben," murmured the Irishman. "Wudn't Oi luv the filin' job, bedad!"

Suddenly Rupert Thurston, who had been indulging in a warm bath, made a belated appearance, attired only in a pyjama suit of blue silk. And at the same moment two wooden legs, stuck out at right angles, came into view on the ladder, and a little wooden-legged man stood grinning and blinking and kissing his hand in the unaccustomed light.

"'Ere's a brimstone game!" he chuckled. "'Ow are you all? Ho, ho, ho! 'Ere's a brimstone picnic!"

He pushed back his greasy cap to scratch his shock of red hair, and sniggered gleefully.

"Ain't you pleased to see me? Why don't you cheer! Ain't you goin' to ax me to 'ave a drink my noble gents? Why such a cold welcome? I might be a brimstone stranger, so I might. Where's your manners?"

Ferrers Lord lighted a fresh cigarette at the smouldering stump of the old one.

"We are delighted to see you," said Ching-Lung, "but, you must remember, we are not a demonstrative race. We are simply bubbling over with suppressed joy. Forgive me for having stitched you up in that tarpaulin, Stumpy. Try to think that I did so out of pure affection. It would have been such a loss to civilisation if a man of your superb talents and beauty had taken cold and died. If you want a drink, take one."

His arm swept round, dashing the contents of a fire-bucket over the cripple. With a spluttering shriek of rage and fear, Stumpy made a leap for the ladder, but Maddock's hand grasped one of his wooden legs, and he went spinning round like a top, to fall in a drenched heap at Thurston's feet.

"That's one the less," said Ching-Lung. "It wouldn't be kind if we didn't ask him to stay."

"Bedad," cried the delighted Barry, smiting the bo'sun on the back, "yez are a dabster at collectin' firewood, Ben. We'll have to put that lot in the oven to dhry afore ut's fit to burrn, Oi'm thinkin'. Hurroo!"

"You brimstone traitors!" whined the cripple. "Didn't I come with a white flag?"

"We'll 'ang you wi' a white rope, souse me, if that'll please you," remarked the bo'sun.

Two men held the cripple, and silently waited for orders. Hatred and dismay distorted the prisoner's face.

"'Ere, I'm a—a brimstone envoy," he croaked. "I've come to make terms, and I don't carry no weapons. Fair's fair, ain't it? What d'yer mean? This ain't the way gents treats an envoy!"

"It is the way we treat rascals here!"

Ferrers Lord had turned lazily, and his voice was very clear and quiet.

"Ain't you going to let me go, then?" snarled Stumpy, showing his teeth.

"Presuming I decline?"

"Then I'll tell you the brimstone truth," blustered the dwarf. "I'll tell you the 'ole truth, gov'nor."

"Do it slowly, please, for I am sure you will find it a matter of some difficulty," said Ferrers Lord.

Stumpy, soaked and bedraggled, gave a wince. He did not like that silvery voice, or the quiet manner with which the tall man in the dress suit regarded him. He had not much imagination, but the millionaire's tone reminded him forcibly of the purring of a tiger. But Stumpy was not a coward, and he felt confident that his precious comrades held the whip-hand. The coup had been well planned and splendidly successful.

"Sneerin' won't do no good," he croaked. "When a brimstone lie suits me best, I ain't afraid of lyin'. I don't know 'ow many men you've got aboard this ship, but there's a brimstone sight too many on 'em for any honest ship to

carry! Well, 'ere's the truth, gov'nor. We're sixteen, all told, wi' grub to last three months, and enough guns and brimstone ammunition to last a lifetime! And you can't do nothin'! We'll smash your machinery for a start, and then we'll scuttle you! Can we do it—eh? Ha, ha, ha! Can we, gov'nor?"

"Undoubtedly you can. You rather bore me when you speak the truth. What about terms?"

The ugly face brightened.

"Oh, we won't be 'ard on you!" grinned the cripple. "We just want landin' at some civilised port, and just a brimstone trifle each—say, two hundred quid—to keep us from starvin'. We've lost our ship, you see, and that rotten island is beginnin' to smell of fever. If you'll do that, and sign as you won't do us no 'arm arterwards, why, we can all be brimstone pals together!"

"To be sure we can!" said Ferrers Lord, the ghost of a smile on his face. "That is a brilliant suggestion!"

"And a few thousand quid won't hurt you, gov'nor! Ain't it better to be friendly than to lose this dashin' ship? And we're the merriest dogs in the world, and that trustin'! Bless your life, if you'll scrawl your name on a bit o' paper, sayin' as 'ow you won't go back on us, we'll sling our guns away and all be as 'appy as larks! It seems a brimstone pity to scuttle a vessel like this and drown you all! I'm not much of a judge, but I reckon there wasn't much change out of 'alf a million yaller boys when you'd paid the bill for buildin' of 'er. And you'll like Ju Faber. He's a reg'lar toff when he likes."

"I will consider the matter," said Ferrers Lord. "So far, we have come to no arrangement at all. You may go."

Barry managed to stifle a whistle of consternation. Ching-Lung kicked him gently, and just in time.

"You'll let us 'ear afore the night's over, won't you, gov'nor?"

"I can safely promise you that," answered Ferrers Lord.

Stumpy chuckled, and, using his knees like feet, went up the ladder, and vanished. They heard the steel manhole close.

"Keep guard here," said the millionaire, "and serve out rubber boots and gloves."

Ching-Lung caught the end of his pigtail between his teeth, and began to bite it, as he winked at Gan-Waga.

"Francis!"

A man stepped forward, saluted, and followed Ferrers Lord down to the engine-room. There was a smile on every face, for they knew what the order for rubber boots and gloves portended. Barry performed a noiseless jig, but, remembering that Tom Prout was hurt, he stopped in the middle of it, and went to inquire about his comrade.

"Souse me," thought Maddock, "there ain't no makin' 'ead or tail of the chief! There ain't no tellin' what he's drivin' at; but he always gets there! I wonder if wooden legs is proof agen' it?"

All the ports had been closed and bolted. They were covered with glass tough enough to flatten any bullet. After learning that Prout was only stunned and badly shaken, Ching-Lung descended to the engine-room. Ferrers Lord was sitting in Hal Honour's leather chair.

"So you have discovered that there are other things to make rats bolt besides water and fire, old chap?" laughed the prince.

"It was the first thought that came into my mind. How is the steersman?"

"Pretty fair," answered Ching-Lung. "He slid down on his head, poor chap, and a bullet cut the peak of his cap! Those fellows worked the thing cunningly. Do you think they'll damage the levers up there?"

"I hope not, Ching. This seems their one hope of getting back to civilisation, and to damage the vessel would do them more harm than good. It was a bold move, and they'll have my signature and three thousand odd for the privilege of becoming first-class passengers!" He laughed softly. "They will be dancing to another tune presently."

Working noiselessly, men were unrolling two lengths of thick insulated cable. They were passed upwards and received by other hands. Here Francis—the chief electrician—superintended the movements. They carefully cut away the steel ladder, and insulated it by means of bars of glass. Other men, wearing boots with thick rubber soles, and gloves of the same material, gathered under the lift that raised the launch. They lifted away the little vessel, and stood there in readiness, armed to the teeth.

Then the two copper cables were made fast to the ladder. "This promises to be rather amusing, Rupert," said Ferrers Lord, entering the saloon.

A touch of his finger sent the steel shutter sinking into its socket. A wave broke against the naked glass gently and sent a wavering thread of silvery phosphorescence across it.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 308.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR"
Every Friday.

This was the only atom of light they saw. Night had fallen in earnest, and the fog hid Mysteria.

"Is there any chance of the scheme failing?" asked Thurston, putting on his collar.

"None that I know of. I could give them a shock that would settle the affair once and for all, if I chose; but I do not feel at all murderous. And I think," he added drily, "you will save yourself a good deal of inconvenience and some gymnastics by changing your shoes. The ship will be as full of electricity as a thunderstorm presently!"

"Jove—I'd forgotten!" cried Rupert. "How could you tell in the dark?"

"By my ears, in spite of the thickness of the carpet. Hurry up, old fellow!"

The millionaire sank into an easy chair. The electric torch glowed crimson for an instant as he lifted it from the smoking-table to light a cigar. Rupert Thurston hastened out, and almost collided with Ching-Lung.

"Careful, clumsy child," said the prince. "You follow your nose a bit too fast. Here's the wounded warrior coming to take a front seat in the stalls."

Tom Prout, aided on one side by Gan-Waga and on the other by Barry O'Rooney, was walking rather unsteadily towards the saloon. The steersman was pale, and shaky about the knees. A patch of sticking-plaster did not add to the appearance of his nose, and his right eye, which had threatened to turn black, had been smeared with butter by the Eskimo, for Gan considered butter a cure for all the ills mankind is heir to.

"Yo' getting on likes a houses on fires, Tommy," remarked the corpulent Son of the North. "Yo' feels good 'nough, hunk?"

"I feel as if I'd been shot down a cellar gratin' wi' a ton of coal on top of me, by hokey!" growled the steersman of the Lord of the Deep. "Whoo-oo! Dash that there left leg! I wants to go for'ard, and the swab wants to take me aft."

"Niver say doie, my bould, bad bandit!" grinned the gentleman from Ballybunion. "Pull up your socks, darlint, and put your shoulder to the wheel, bedad!"

"Talk sense, Irish. Can I walk wi' my shoulder, by hokey?"

"No, and yez can't talk Frinch wid the back of your

(Continued on page 27.)



or, "Honour Among Thieves"

BORN and reared in the lowest of slums, brought in'to close contact daily with crooks and scoundrels of the worst type sweet Bessie Trent yet remains un'ainted by the influence of her terrible surroundings. Her life is full of

Adventure & Mystery

and she quickly gains the love and sympathy of everyone who meets her. But she is only one of the many interesting characters in "The Heart of the Slums"—a story with a fresh thrill in every chapter, starting in Wednesday's

CHIPS 1^D/₂

neck," retorted Barry. "But put down your fate all gently and nate, and we'll git there, my swate, afore ut stroikes eight by the grandfather's clock on the stairs. Troth, Oi cud compose poetry sthandin' on wan leg on the top of a scaffold-pole. Here we are, and en yez go."

Across the dark saloon they saw the gleaming tip of the millionaire's cigar.

"How did it happen, Prout?" "I can't tell you proper, sir," said the steersman. "I suppose I was off my guard, sir."

"That is natural enough," said Ferrers Lord. "Apparently there was nothing at all to keep a watch for."

"I was cleanin' up some o' the brasswork, by hokey," went on Prout. "Then I fancied I heard a kind of scrape, scrape, scrape, and looked round. Clip, crash goes summat past my 'ead, and I seed a flash, and yelled. But they was on me too quick. I got a smack on the side of the 'ead, and felt myself bumpin' down the ladder. Arter that it was a case o' stars and stripes wi' me, for I was knocked silly."

The shutter rose again, covering the window, and the saloon was flooded with light. The millionaire adjusted a small but powerful electric lamp with a series of highly polished reflectors. Francis entered and saluted.

"Yes?" "All is ready, sir."

"Good," said Ferrers Lord. "When I am ready you will hear me ring twice. You know how much to give them. They must not have time to tamper with the levers, but I do not wish them to be seriously hurt. At the third ring switch off the current."

With expressions of joyful anticipation on their faces, Barry, Prout, and Gan-Waga gazed at the shutter and waited.

"The other way, lads. Look behind you," said the millionaire. "On that sheet, Rupert."

There was an amused sparkle in his eyes. They turned and saw that a large white sheet had been hung on the wall.

The lights went out, and there was a breathless silence as the shutter went down. Ferrers Lord put one finger on the bell, and stood ready to press over the switch of the lamp.

Ting, ting!

A moment or two before Julius Faber opened the hermetically-sealed door of the conning-tower, for the atmosphere was stifling. Fifteen men were crowded there, drinking rum and smoking tobacco of doubtful quality. With the manhole closed, there was no ventilation, and the air was utterly poisonous. He drank in the breeze, sickly with the odours of the decaying island, but tasting almost

pure compared with the atmosphere of the conning-tower. "He fair cringed, the lean, brimstone fool!" bragged the cripple, busy with the rum bottle. "He'll pay the quids, and give us the paper."

"But how do you know he'll stick to it, Stumpy?" wheezed the fat man.

"By lookin' at the brimstone, idiot! He's one o' them asses as don't go back on their word for nothin'. Ho, ho, ho! Ain't I the timbertoeed beauty to get you out o' scrapes. 'Ere we go sailin' merrily 'ome wi' enough yaller boys in our pockets to charter another ship when the brimstone fever season's over, and then we goes back to pick up the cinnabar. Oh, oh! Old Stumpy's a daisy! And old Stumpy won't forget that Chinese poison neither. He'll find a quiet way o' puttin' that cove's light out. There'll be a missing brimstone pigtail-chow afore this voyage is over."

"Didn't he say we'd hear from him to-night?" wheezed the perspiring fat man.

Ting, ting, sounded a bell beneath their feet, and at the sound Franco's clicked back the switch.

Frantic howls and shrieks of agony and terror followed the movement of the electrician's thumb. To the horrified invaders of the submarine the steel plates of the conning-tower seemed to bristle with myriads of stabbing, white-hot needles. They leapt into the air, they trod upon one another, they rolled on the plates. Francis did not give them a continuous current, but a series of jerks and shocks. Screaming like demons, bounding, leaping, raining blows at each other, they fought their way out. The deck was one blaze of light, for the lamps could be controlled from below.

Down in the saloon, Barry, Prout, Rupert Thurston, and Gan-Waga were also shrieking, but it was with delight. On the white sheet, much reduced, of course, but as clear as life, was the picture of the deck. The sight of those bounding, leaping figures convulsed them. Then other figures rushed across the screen, Ching-Lung leading them, with burly Maddock a good second. Each man grasped a tough and tarry rope's-end in his gloved hand, and each man used his weapon to the utmost.

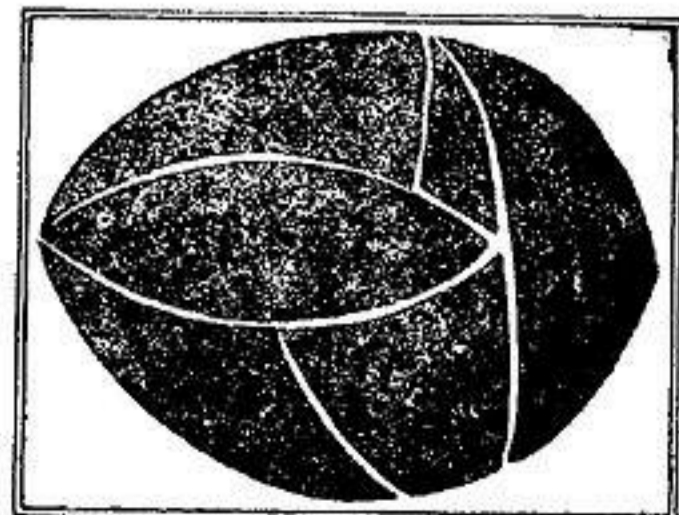
"He's got it, by hokey—he's got it!" roared Prout. Ching-Lung was dancing a breakdown, and brandishing something above his head. The light went out.

(This grand serial will be continued next Monday. Order early.)

GRAND NEW FEATURE. No. 11.

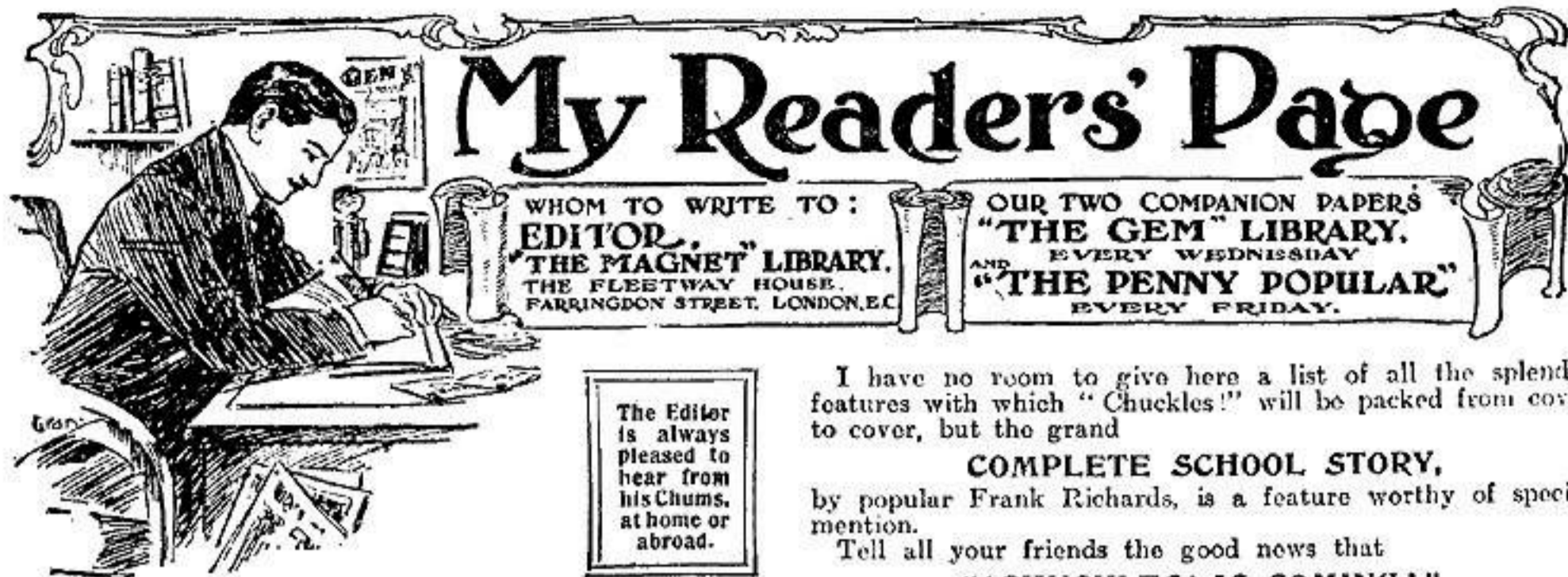
OUR WINTER EVENING PROBLEM CORNER.

This week's problem takes the form of a message that concerns every reader of "The Magnet" Library. This is how to find out what that message is. First of all, write out all the letters of the alphabet, one letter under the other. Then against the first letter place the figure 1, and against the next the figure 2, and so on right down until you come to No. 26. With this paper in front of you, you can decipher the message given below. For instance, the first figure in the message is 20. If you look on your paper, you will see that letter No. 20 is "T." When you come to a space, that means that the word is finished. The answer will be published on this page next week.



This is how last week's problem should look when properly pieced together.

20. 8. 5. — 5. 4. 9. 20. 15. 18. — 15. 16. —
 20. 8. 5. — 13. 1. 7. 14. 5. 7. — 12. 9. 2.
 18. 1. 18. 25. — 23. 9. 19. 8. 5. 19 — 1. 12. 12.
 8. 9. 19. — 18. 5. 1. 4. 5. 18. 19. —
 1. — 2. 18. 9. 7. 8. 20 — 1. 14. 4. —
 16. 18. 15. 19. 16. 5. 18. 15. 21. 19 —
 14. 5. 23. — 25. 5. 1. 18. —



WHOM TO WRITE TO:
EDITOR,
"THE MAGNET" LIBRARY,
 THE FLEETWAY HOUSE,
 FARRINGTON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

OUR TWO COMPANION PAPERS
"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
 EVERY WEDNESDAY
 AND
"THE PENNY POPULAR"
 EVERY FRIDAY.

The Editor
 is always
 pleased to
 hear from
 his Chums,
 at home or
 abroad.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"HELD UP!"

By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

In our next grand, long, complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co., Greyfriars is the scene of such stirring events as the old school has never known before in the whole of its long history.

It is raided literally by force of arms—masters and boys alike being helpless to avert the catastrophe. Certain Remove Form juniors, however, being by chance excluded from the general "hold up," manage to make things warm for the raiders, while Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry prove a veritable thorn in the side of their captors.

In the end things turn out so that the old school is the little the worse for its astounding experience of being

"HELD UP!"

"CHUCKLES!"

The time has now come when I feel myself at liberty to relieve my readers from the state of suspense which they have been kept in; in other words, I wish to announce this week that the name of our latest companion paper will be

"CHUCKLES!"

"Chuckles!" Just that, and nothing more—the very title, I think, for a paper whose sole object is to amuse, to while away a leisure hour in the pleasantest way possible; to add to the fun and gaiety of this old world; to bring

LAUGHTER AND LIGHT-HEARTEDNESS

into every home.

For such is the object which has brought "Chuckles!" into being—such the mission our new companion paper is designed to fulfil.

It is only a few weeks ago that the idea of such a paper was first mooted by a reader in a letter published in the "Magnet" Library. The idea was taken up eagerly by many thousands of fellow-readers; letters poured into this office, and the clear fact soon penetrated to the editorial sanctum that "something must be done!" My readers had spoken decisively—and that was enough! The editorial brains, therefore, such as they are, were set to work, and they have been working ever since, and at high pressure, too! They have set the brains of authors and artists to work, also, and as a result of all this terrific concentration of brain-power

THE FIRST NUMBER

of "Chuckles!" has been produced, and in the course of a week or two now will be in my chums' hands!

It will contain many special features, and will be "got up" in a really first-class manner, such as has never before been attempted by any paper selling at the price of one halfpenny. For remember that "Chuckles!" will only cost one halfpenny, so that it may be within the reach of every one of my chums. The price, however, will be the only cheap thing about "Chuckles!" It will be printed on good quality, fine-surfaced paper only, while the front page will be

PRINTED IN FOUR COLOURS!

For our front-page artist, I have been lucky enough to secure Mr Tom Wilkinson, admittedly one of the very foremost humorous artists of the day, whose work is famous throughout the world.

I have no room to give here a list of all the splendid features with which "Chuckles!" will be packed from cover to cover, but the grand

COMPLETE SCHOOL STORY,

by popular Frank Richards, is a feature worthy of special mention.

Tell all your friends the good news that

"CHUCKLES" IS COMING!

and ensure a grand welcome for THE GREATEST HALF-PENNYWORTH EVER OFFERED!

AMATEUR THEATRICALS.—No. 3.

By an Amateur Entertainer.

When the play is thoroughly mastered by every member, the full-dress rehearsal should be performed.

Now, with this, the final rehearsal, everything should go as if it were the real thing, and the audience were before you. If possible, a few privileged ones can be admitted as spectators; that will prepare you for the coming debut. They, being unbiassed, may also be able to point out faults which you would not note.

The performance should not consist of merely speaking the words. By this time you should have instilled into your company some idea of proper action. Impress each with the importance of being natural, and of disporting themselves as befits their parts, and the words they are uttering. Most characters which occur in drawing-room plays are easy enough to impersonate.

You, as stage-manager, should know every detail of the play by heart, so that you will be able to arrange correctly for the setting, entrances and exits, etc. It will help tremendously if the stage-manager is not also actor; he can then superintend progress with so much more thoroughness.

There should be two doors on the stage, left and right, and, if possible, a third at the back. They should all be well screened or curtained, but make sure that the way is clear to the stage, otherwise some humorous incidents may take place in course of the performance. All doors should, of course, open outwards.

Arrange for the entrances and exits to be neat and varied. For instance, don't make the whole show look odd by letting everybody enter and leave the stage by one door. Each should be used alternately; this does a lot towards making the piece look picturesque in enacting. See that everybody has their own special door to leave by each time. It will, of course, take a few rehearsals to perfect this alone.

If you possess the artistic eye, you should be able to furnish the stage with the greatest of ease. You will only want ordinary furniture, but place it well and wisely. You will not want the stage crammed with furniture, nor will you want bare boards. Those are the extremes. The medium will be a settee, armchair, table, few chairs, and screens, and a good carpet covering the whole floor space.

Of course, when you try a more venturesome setting, you will want some scenery—this can be home-made if there is a good artist amongst you. Costumes will also have to be altered according to surroundings.

Lighting, such as footlights, and limelights, are optional, but they make a great difference in effect.

All these things perfected, the way is clear for the great public performance. Needless to say, everything must be right up to the pitch for this.

After a little experience, if you keep the company well in hand, you should be able to aspire to something better than mere family performances. If you are enterprising, who knows but what your club may achieve great deeds?

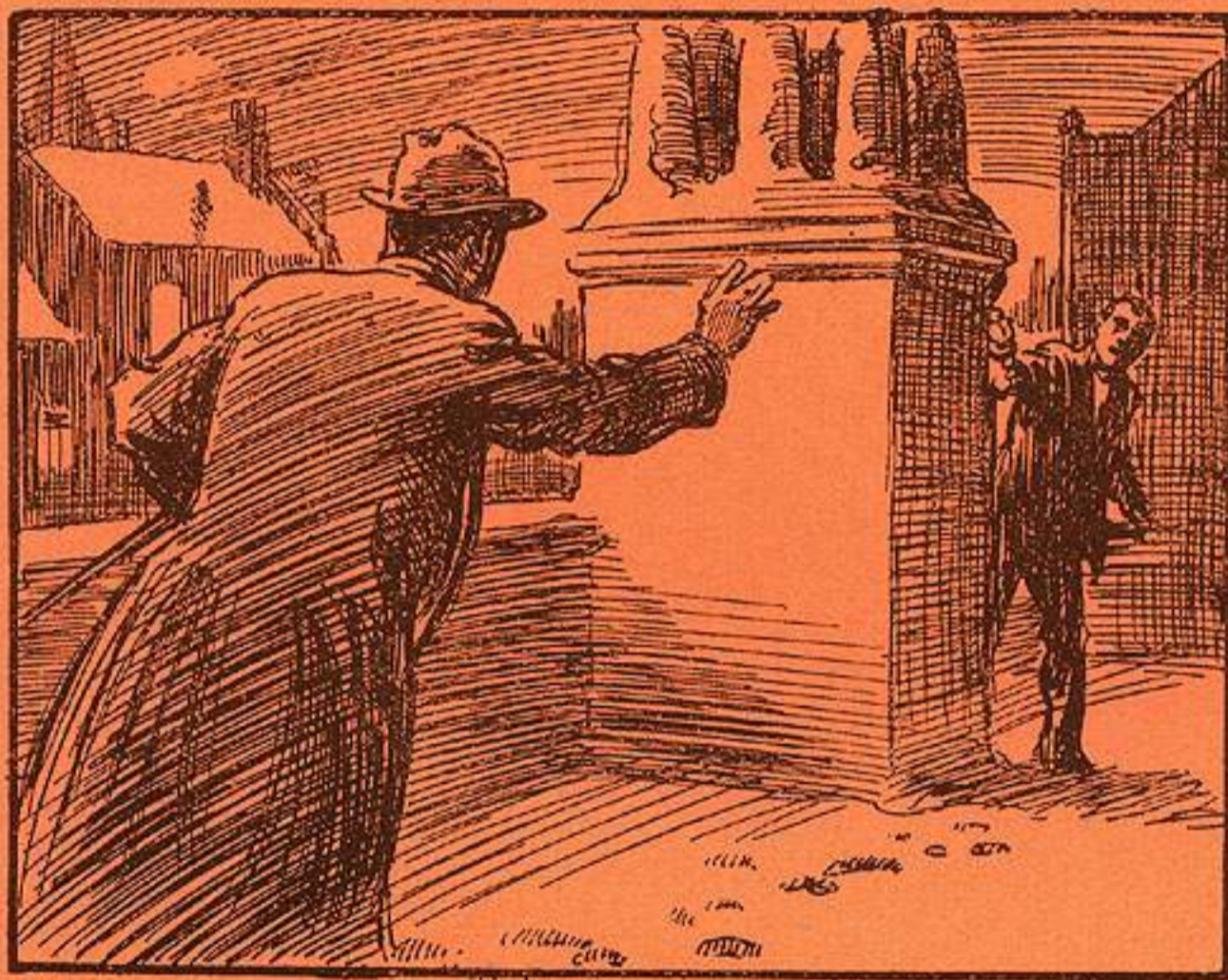
The Editor

A STORY TO INTEREST YOU!

The Slate Club Swindler!

A Magnificent, Long, Complete Tale, dealing
with the Further Amazing Adventures of

SEXTON BLAKE, DETECTIVE.



"Stop, or I fire!" Round the corner of the chimney-stack the younger Shaw was peering, and in his right hand he held a heavy revolver. "Drop that!" Sexton Blake commanded sternly. "I am your friend!"

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

At Work Again—The Burnham Street Club—Going the Round—A Dastardly Attack.

SEXTON BLAKE threw off his overcoat with a sigh of relief, and Tinker hung it up on its usual peg in the hall.

"I am beginning to think that I wouldn't mind a rest of a day or two," the great detective said, yawning slightly.

Tinker shook his head and grinned.

"You'd never take it, sir," he answered. "After one day you'd be pretty sick of it, and wanting to get back into harness again."

"Ah, you wait and see, my lad!" Sexton Blake said, with a smile. "I don't believe I'd take up another case for a few days if the King came and asked me to!"

"Stranger things have happened," Tinker murmured, as he followed his master into the consulting-room.

The electric light was switched on, and as it flooded the room the boy whistled softly.

"My word, sir," he said, "but aren't the Post Office people making money!" He picked up a number of telegrams that lay on the table, and counted them. "Nine, sir!" he announced.

Sexton Blake settled himself in his chair by the fire, and methodically filled his pipe.

"May as well read 'em to me, lad," he said.

Tinker tore open the first envelope, and as he scanned the message his eyebrows raised sharply:

"Please come at once, secretary missing—Burnham Institute Club!" he read.

The match that Sexton Blake had struck dropped from his fingers, and he sat up in his chair.

"The others!" he said sharply. Tinker tore open the second envelope, and a cry of amazement broke from him:

"Robbed by secretary; please come at once!" he read, adding the address of another slate club.

Sexton Blake laid his pipe down on the mantelpiece, and rose to his feet.

"The rest?" he asked.

One after another Tinker opened the telegrams, to find that each one was from some institute that had been robbed of the funds that its members had saved for Christmas and the New Year. Each and all of them had evidently heard of the way in which the great detective had been giving his time to cases of this kind, and so they had all wired to ask him to help them in their trouble.

"Fetch me my overcoat, my lad!" Sexton Blake ordered shortly.

Tinker grinned, but did not move to obey.

"I thought you didn't mean to take up any cases for a day or two, sir?" he answered meaningly.

Sexton Blake shook his head sadly.

"Tinker, Tinker!" he said. "How often am I to tell you that the orders of a superior officer should not be questioned?"

"Oh, only about once, sir!" the boy answered brightly, and disappeared out of the room, to return very shortly dressed ready to go out, and with his master's hat and coat in his hands.

"You may as well stay at home," Sexton Blake said; "you, too, were saying that you were tired."

"Ah, but then I'm another of the great detectives who changes his mind at times!" Tinker answered. "Therefore, I am going with you, sir!"

The boy gathered up the telegrams, made a note of the addresses, and slipped them all into his pocket.

"It's lucky that they all lie in the East End, sir," he said, "for we can make a regular round of them to-night."

"Yes," Sexton Blake agreed, adding in an undertone: "Curious that they should all have come at once."

Five minutes later the detective and his young assistant had boarded a taxi that was passing, and were being swiftly driven to the East End. On the way there the great detective said nothing, but sat back, with his eyes half closed, wondering what the night was to bring. So far, he had been singularly successful with the slate club cases that he had undertaken; but there were such a number all at once now that it almost made him feel nervous, and he was not given, as a rule, to doubts of that kind. It was Tinker who eventually broke the silence.

"It's commencing to look like winter, sir," he said. "There's a little snow falling, but it doesn't stand much chance with the mud. I like to be out in the country when it's snowing; it looks pretty there."

Sexton Blake woke from his reverie with a start, and shivered, despite the heavy coat that he wore.

"Ay, the snow's pretty enough when it can settle, lad," he answered; "but when you've lived as long as I have, you will know that all its beauty cannot make up for the suffering that it brings with it! You and I can admire the great stretches of white that look like a clean white sea, and are somehow so peaceful that one thinks of—" The detective broke off sharply, and shrugged his shoulders as if to throw away unpleasant thoughts. "But think what it means to the poor who have no firing, to the starving who have no food, to the thousands of unemployed who are wondering hopelessly where the next meal is coming from, unless they swallow their pride and go into the workhouses, to the many who are not warm and well-fed. To them it is a curse, my lad—a great white curse, that stifles them and freezes the little blood that is left in their withered hearts."

(Continued on page iv. of cover.)

Tinker looked at his master in surprise, for it was not often that he had heard him talk like that.

"I see, sir," he said simply.

"You know that I am a rich man, lad," Sexton Blake continued, "and that is why I decided to help the poor this winter. Even I cannot do much; but my little may help."

"It has!" Tinker put in with conviction. "Look what you've done already!"

"But I must do more!" the detective continued feverishly. "Somehow I have got the impression that the wires that have arrived to-night announce the beginning of the biggest of the slate club scandals. I only hope I am right."

The driver of the taxi slackened speed, and looked back into the cab, raising the window in the front so as to speak to the detective.

"This is the street, sir," he said. "If you won't want me after I have put you down, would you mind getting out here? I'll never be able to turn round in that alley, and the road's mighty slippery for backing. I'd be through a window before I know it."

Sexton Blake looked sharply out of the window, brought suddenly back from his bitter reflections regarding the poor, and saw that the cab had stopped at the entrance to a narrow, gloomy-looking street, the name of which, according to the inscription on the lamp at the corner, was Burnham Street. It was the wire from the slate club in this street that Tinker had opened first, and so Sexton Blake had decided to make it the first of his round of investigating calls.

"No; go on!" he ordered. "I shall want you all the evening, probably. I'll make the job worth your while!"

"Thank you, sir!" the chauffeur answered.

He touched his peaked cap, shifted his gears, and ran on cautiously into the street, for the falling snow, which had at once turned into slush and slime, had made the surface terribly treacherous.

The Burnham Street Club was not hard to find, for a dingy lamp, with the name of the club painted on it, hung before the door. Besides, outside the door of the house, which was open, a little knot of men and women stood. They were poorly dressed, but no one could have mistaken them for anything but respectable. If they had not been they probably would not have been poor, for it is not always honesty that brings riches.

The crowd of men and women pressed forward to look as Tinker alighted, and a pale-faced young man, who had been standing in the doorway of the house, came eagerly down the steps.

"You aren't—you aren't Mr. Sexton Blake?" he asked hesitatingly.

"Yes," the detective answered quietly. "I came the moment I received your wire."

The crowd of men and women pressed forward to look at the celebrated detective who had come to help them in their trouble.

"Looks a good sort, don't he?" one of the women said, in a whisper.

"An' he is, missus," a man answered, looking round as if he would rather like someone to dispute the fact, so that he might fight him. "Ain't the papers printed what he's already done ter help poor chaps like me this Christmas?"

"We had better go in," Sexton Blake said quietly. "I have other cases to attend to, so I must waste no time."

"Certainly, sir!" the pale-faced man agreed. "I'm Robert Brown, assistant-secretary to Jennings—the man who's run away. Come in, sir."

The detective and Tinker followed the man up the steps of the house, but Sexton Blake paused as he saw that the crowd meant to come, too.

"I would rather be alone," he said simply, "but I can assure you of one thing. I will guarantee that you are paid

the money you have saved, whether or not I recover it. You have my word for it."

"And that's good enough for us!" a man in the crowd cried enthusiastically. "Three cheers for Sexton Blake, mates!"

And as the detective stepped into the house the cheers of the men—the women joining in shrilly—reached his ears.

"These cases have their compensations, my lad," he said to Tinker. "I wouldn't miss one of them for the honour of putting a king back safely on to his throne."

The room into which Brown showed the detective was much the same as the other club-rooms into which he had been, save, perhaps, that the furniture was even poorer, and the sets of draughts and dominoes were of the cheapest kind.

"It's not much of a place, sir," Brown said apologetically, "but we're not rich people down this way. I've done what I can, but you can't do much, even if you want to, on thirty shillings a week."

Sexton Blake looked round keenly, taking every detail in, even to the account-books lying on a small table near the window.

"When did this Jennings disappear?" he asked.

"Last night, sir," Brown answered bitterly. "All the payments have been made, but he should have been here as usual. When he didn't come we began to get anxious, and I went round to his lodgings. They told me there that he had gone for two days, and I hurried back here."

"And you found—"

"The money gone," Brown answered huskily. "It wasn't much—not to anyone like you, sir—just over the hundred pounds, but you can't imagine what it means to the men and women who are members of this club."

"Yes, I can, my friend," Sexton Blake answered calmly, as he turned his attention to the ledgers lying on the table; "it means no Christmas."

Leaf by leaf Sexton Blake turned one of the ledgers, but there was nothing much to be learnt from it. There were just the neat entries of money paid in by each member, notes with regard to backward subscriptions, and that was all.

"Who wrote these entries?" the detective inquired.

"I did, sir," Brown answered. "Mr. Jennings always said that he knew nothing of bookkeeping."

"But you can show me a specimen of his writing?"

"No, sir—yes," Brown fumbled in his pockets, and produced a crumpled letter. "This is the only time Jennings ever wrote to me. Curious hand, isn't it?"

Sexton Blake looked at the letter closely, and there was a little smile on his lips.

"Very!" he agreed, for he could see that the writing of the letter was disguised, and that the man signed his name as if he were not used to it. "I don't think I need trouble you more to-night, if I may keep this letter."

"And you hope to succeed, sir?" Brown asked eagerly.

"One always hopes," the detective answered simply.

(How Sexton Blake, in his own wonderful way, sets about the tracking of Jennings, and lays bare the whole series of heartless frauds, which can be traced to a common source; and the perilous adventures which befall the famous detective and his assistant before the case is brought to its dramatic conclusion—all this makes "The Slate Club Swindle" thrilling reading indeed. The complete story is contained, with other good things, in our grand companion paper, "The Penny Popular," which is now on sale at all newsagents'. Price One Penny.)

45/-

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. . . IN . . .

CASH PRIZES

EVERY FRIDAY

IN

THE PENNY POPULAR.