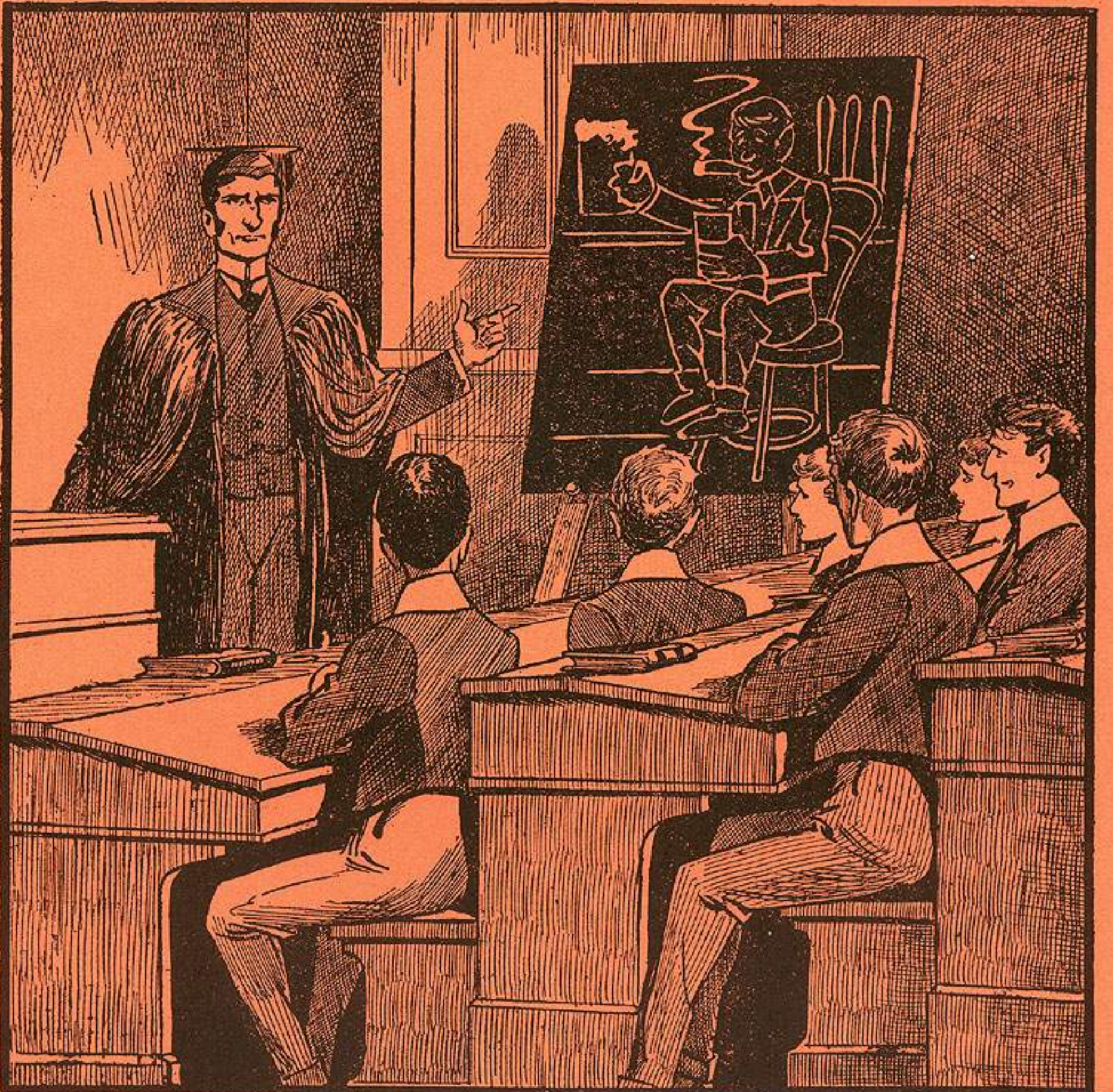


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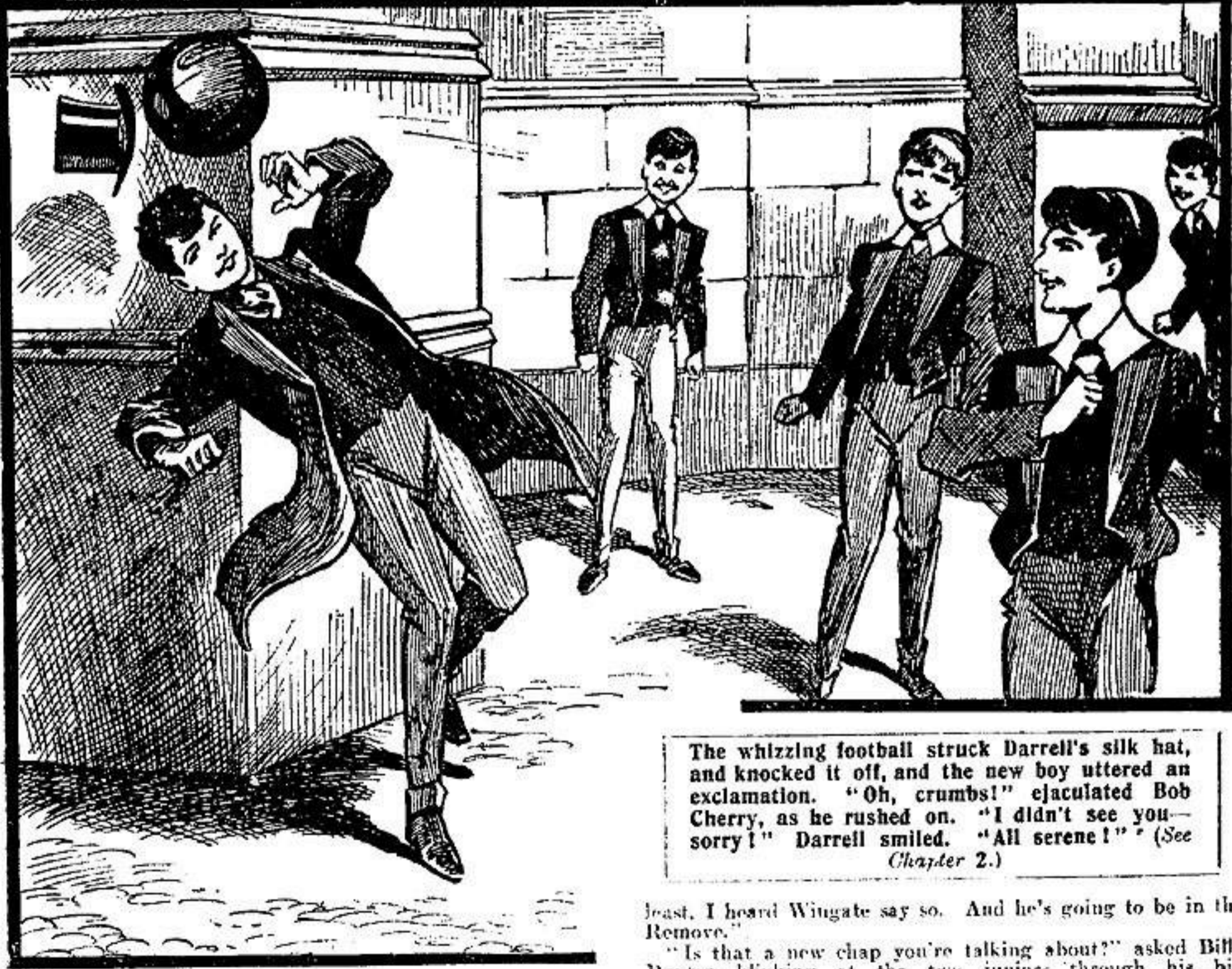
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A Splendid, New, Long, Complete School Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

The Right Sort!



The whizzing football struck Darrell's silk hat, and knocked it off, and the new boy uttered an exclamation. "Oh, crumbs!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, as he rushed on. "I didn't see you—sorry!" Darrell smiled. "All serene!" (See Chapter 2.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Nothing Doing!

DARRELL!"

"That's the name," said Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter pricked up his ears. Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry, of the Remove at Greyfriars, were chatting at the window of the junior common-room, while they were waiting for the dinner-bell. Billy Bunter was extended upon an armchair, with his little fat legs stretched out.

"I say, you fellows——"

"He's coming this afternoon," said Bob Cherry. "At

least, I heard Wingate say so. And he's going to be in the Remove."

"Is that a new chap you're talking about?" asked Billy Bunter, blinking at the two juniors through his big spectacles.

"Yes, Tubby."

"And his name's Darrell?" said Bunter thoughtfully. "I know that name. There was a chap named Darrell——"

"I dare say there have been a good many chaps named Darrell," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "You can't claim him as an old chum, Billy. And if I catch you squeezing a loan out of him, I'll give you a thick ear."

Billy Bunter grunted.

"If he's the Darrell I'm thinking of, I wouldn't own him as a chum," he said. "There was a Darrell at Repley School, I remember. You fellows know I've got an uncle at Repley; I've mentioned it to you. Headmaster there——"

"Head-gardener, more likely," growled Bob Cherry, "or head-boots!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! My uncle's mathematics-master, and you know it jolly well."

"Ha, ha! You said headmaster just now."

"Ahem! That—that was a slip of the tongue. He's mathematics-master. Splendid post, first-class salary, and—"

"Cheese it!"

"I remember a chap named Darrell last time I went over to see my uncle at Repley," said Bunter. "I go to see him every term, you know. I should go oftener, only—"

"Only he wouldn't stand it?" suggested Bob.

"Look here, Cherry—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There goes the bell! Dinner!"

"But I say, you fellows, this chap Darrell—"

But the chums of the Remove did not stay to listen to Billy Bunter. The dinner-bell was ringing, and they were hungry after punting a footer about in the Close. They hurried out of the common-room, and made their way to the dining-hall. Billy Bunter detached himself from the armchair with a grunt, and followed them at a slower pace. He was more eager for dinner than they were, but he had a greater weight to carry.

"Darrell!" murmured Bunter, as he rolled down the passage. "Of course, it can't be the same. He wouldn't have the cheek to come here. Still, it ain't a common name, and I'll have a look at him when he does come."

He nudged Bob Cherry as he sat down at the dinner table.

"I say, Cherry, do you know the new chap's front name?"

"No, I don't," snapped Bob. "Blow his front name!"

"I do," said Snoop. "I heard the Head mention him to Mr. Quelch. He's got a stunning front name—Algernon."

"Algernon!" ejaculated Billy Bunter.

"Yes; ripping, ain't it?"

"Oh, my hat! Then it must be the same!"

"Eh!" said Snoop, looking at him. "The same as what?"

Billy Bunter's little round eyes grew larger and rounder behind his spectacles with excitement.

"My only hat! There can't be a lot of Algernon Darrells!" he exclaimed. "I tell you I know that chap."

"Gammon!" said Snoop. "I know he's rich, and of course you'll be crawling round him the minute he comes, but you don't know him from Adam."

"I tell you I do," said Billy Bunter excitedly. "You know I've got an uncle at Repley—"

"I know you've said so!" remarked Snoop, with a manner that indicated his opinion that William George Bunter's statements required corroboration.

"Look here, Snoop, my uncle's mathematics-master at Repley, and I go to see him every year, whether he likes it or not. I—I mean, he's always glad to see me, but I can find time to go only once a year. It's a jolly long way from here—right up in Yorkshire. Well, the last time I went—"

"Not so much chatter at the table, please," broke in Mr. Quelch's severe voice, as the master of the Remove fixed his eyes upon Bunter.

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Silence, Bunter!"

And the Owl of the Remove was perforce silent. But his little eyes were gleaming as he ate his dinner. Billy Bunter was a born busybody; he took a deep interest in everybody's affairs, carrying it to the extent of reading other fellows' letters when he had a chance. It was his special pride that he always knew what was going on; and as he was not particular about his methods of acquiring information, he generally did. To be in exclusive possession of an item of news and to retail it to an interested crowd was great joy to Billy Bunter.

And this time he felt that he was on the track of something extremely unusual. He was so buried in thought that he forgot to take more than seven helpings at dinner, which was very moderate for Bunter. And his little round eyes

gleamed through his spectacles when he rolled out of the dining-hall with the other fellows after dinner.

He caught Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, by the sleeve in the hall.

"I say, Wharton—"

"No!" said Harry, jerking his arm away.

"Eh? No what?" said Bunter, blinking at him.

"I haven't got a hob to lend."

"I wasn't going to ask you for a bob!" howled Bunter.

"Well, I don't want to cash a postal-order in advance, either. Yes, I know it's coming by the next post, and that it will be something really handsome from one of your titled relations, but I can't cash it. Nothing doing."

"Look here, Wharton! Oh, you beast!" For Harry Wharton was walking away at a pace Billy Bunter could not possibly equal.

"I say, Bob, old man—"

Bob Cherry glared at the fat junior.

"If you 'Bob, old man' me, I'll squash you, you—you oyster!" he growled. "Sheer off!"

"But I've got something to tell you."

"Tackle Johnny Bull; he's had a remittance," grinned Bob.

"But it isn't a loan; that isn't what I want."

"No, I know that; it's a gift," chuckled Bob. "But you won't get it out of me. Sit down!"

And Bob Cherry gave Bunter a gentle shove on the chest that made the fat junior sit down quite suddenly on the oaken bench in the hall with a gasp. Then he walked away.

Billy Bunter sat gasping, till Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent came by together, and then he jumped up and seized upon them.

"I say, you fellows—"

"No, you don't!" said Nugent. "Nothing doing!"

"But I say—"

"Give him a shove, Johnny!"

"Ow, ow, ow! Yah!"

Billy Bunter sat down again, this time on the floor. A dusky-complexioned youth came along, and paused as he looked at Bunter panting on the floor. It was Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the Nabob of Bhanipur, a member of the celebrated "Co." in the Remove known as the Famous Five.

"Is the restfulness upon the esteemed floor more pleasant than upon the honourable chair, my worthy Bunter?" asked Hurree Singh, in his soft, purring voice.

"Ow! Gimme a hand up, Inky! That beast Bull—ow!"

Inky grasped Bunter's fat hand and dragged him up. Bunter gasped for breath. He was always short of wind, and especially so just after dinner.

"I say, Inky, I'll tell you something. You know there's a new chap coming here—chap named Algernon Darrell? Well, I know something about him—something he'd rather keep dark, you bet! I—"

"Then you should keep it darkfully also, my esteemed and tittle-tattling Bunter," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Your conduct in tattling is caddishful."

"Look here, Inky, I tell you this chap—"

Bump!

The dusky hand of the nabob smote Bunter's ample chest, and the Owl of the Remove sat down again suddenly, and roared. Inky walked on, laughing, and Bunter glared after him through his spectacles with a glare that was simply ferocious.

"Ow! Beast! I jolly well won't tell them now! Ow, ow, ow!"

And Bunter picked himself up with painful efforts, and rolled into the common-room, and settled himself in an armchair there and went to sleep.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The New Boy!

"PASS, you duffer!"

"Don't go to sleep!"

"On the ball!"

Algernon Darrell paused in the gateway of Greyfriars, and looked on at the busy scene in the old Close.

He was a handsome lad, with a thoughtful face and a well-knit frame. His eyes, dark blue in colour, were clear and frank, and steady in their gaze. His face lighted up a little as he gazed at the crowd of Removites and Fourth-Formers punting about an old footer in the Close. Temple, Dabney, & Co., of the Fourth, had brought that footer out for a run, and the Removites had cheerfully charged them off it, and taken possession of it, a proceeding that filled the Fourth-Formers with great indignation. Temple, Dabney, & Co. were making wild efforts to recover their ball, but Harry

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Dr. Locke, coming down the passage, caught sight of Darrell, and paused in utter amazement. "Darrell!" he exclaimed. "What have you come back for?" "I have something to tell you sir," said Darrell. "I couldn't explain before." (See Chapter 14.)

Wharton & Co. brought it along at a great rate, passing one to another amid breathless laughter.

The crowd of juniors came rushing down towards the gates.

The new boy was directly in their path. Bob Cherry had the ball at his feet, and Temple and Dabney, of the Fourth, were rushing at him, and Bob kicked through the gateway, intending to carry on the chase into the high-road outside.

Crash!
The whizzing football struck Darrell's silk hat, and knocked it off, and the new boy uttered an exclamation.

"Oh, crumbs!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, as he rushed on. "I didn't see you. Sorry!"

Darrell smiled.
"All serene!" he said.

He ran for his topper, and picked it up. The crowd of juniors and the footer went sweeping out into the road, and Darrell stood just within the gates rubbing his topper, which had been considerably soiled by rolling on the ground.

"Hallo, you the new kid?" said Skinner of the Remove.

Darrell nodded.
"Yes; my name's Darrell."

Skinner looked him over.
"Coming into the Remove, I hear?"

"Yes; that's the Lower Fourth, isn't it?"

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FRANK RICHARDS

"That's it! Ever been to school before?"

Darrell coloured.

"Yes."

"What school?" asked Skinner inquisitively.

"A school in the North. Who are those chaps?" asked Darrell, with a nod towards the tussling mass of juniors outside the gates.

"Remove and Fourth," said Skinner. "That chap with the big feet is Bob Cherry, chap who biffed your topper off. I'd punch his nose if I were you."

Darrell looked at him in surprise.

"Why should I do that?" he said. "It was an accident."

Skinner sniffed.

"Oh, I see, you're one of the namby-pamby kind that turns the other cheek—what?" he said. "You won't find that pays here. Well, as you like your hat being knocked off, I'll knock it off again for you! There!"

Darrell had replaced his topper, and Skinner suddenly lifted his hand, and knocked it flying, and then walked away, chuckling.

"By George!" ejaculated Darrell.

He looked after Skinner in astonishment, and then slowly proceeded to pick up his hat for the second time.

"On the ball! After it!" came a yell from the gates.

The crowd came pouring in. Temple of the Fourth had

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recovered the ball, and was rushing off with it. Bob Cherry, panting behind, shouted to Darrell:

"Here, you new kid, head him off! You're Remove, ain't you? Pile in, then! Stop those Fourth-Form rotters! They've got our ball!"

Darrell grinned. Without waiting to reply, and hardly settling his topper on his head, he ran to intercept Temple, and neatly robbed him of the ball. Temple gave a roar of wrath as the new junior skilfully twisted the ball away from his foot.

"You rotter! Gimme my ball! Why, you cheeky new kid—"

"Hurray!" roared Bob Cherry. "Pass!"

Darrell laughed, and passed to Bob Cherry, who was coming on like the wind, and Bob dribbled the ball on into the Close. After him went the crowd, laughing and shouting.

Darrell followed more slowly.

He liked the Greyfriars juniors, this first sight he had of them, and especially Bob Cherry. Bob had knocked his hat off with the footer, but Darrell did not mind that. There was something about Bob's breezy manner that made the new boy take to him at once.

He reached the School House, but instead of entering he stood on the steps, gazing towards the excited crowd of juniors, and wishing that he was familiar enough with them to join in their play.

The footer was rushed away into the Cloisters, and there at last Temple, Dabney, & Co. were allowed to recover it, and the Reinovites came in a laughing crowd towards the School House. Bob Cherry spotted the new boy at once, and came up to him with a frank smile.

"You're the new kid, Darrell?" he asked.

"Yes."

"You are a footballer I see."

"Yes, I've played," said Darrell.

"Good egg! You got that ball away from Temple a treat. I'm really sorry I knocked your topper off," said Bob. Darrell laughed.

"Never mind that; accidents will happen."

"By the way, there's a chap here knows you, or says he does," said Bob.

Darrell started a little.

"I don't know anybody here," he said abruptly. "I don't know anybody in the South of England at all."

"Chap named Bunter," said Bob.

"Bunter!"

"Yes; know the name?"

"I—I know—or, rather, knew—a man named Bunter," said Darrell. "I have never known a boy of that name."

"Yes; I knew he was telling whoppers, as usual," said Bob, with a nod. "You'll soon know him. You'll know him quite well if you've got any money. Billy Bunter has a nose for money like a terrier for rats."

"He says he knew a chap same name as you at a school in Yorkshire. Repley School, I think," said Nugent.

"Oh!"

"He's got an uncle there—mathematics-master," said Nugent. "Did you—"

"Excuse me," said Darrell. "I've got to report my arrival. Will you tell me where I am to go? I'm quite new here, you know."

"Certainly," said Bob Cherry, at once. "Come along, and I'll introduce you to Quelch."

"Who's Quelch?" asked Darrell, as he followed Bob Cherry.

"Mr. Quelch, our Form-master. You're coming into the Remove, I think."

"Yes; I was in the Lower Fourth before."

"Well, here you are!"

Bob Cherry knocked at Mr. Quelch's study door.

"Come in!"

Bob opened the door, and signed to Darrell to enter.

"The new boy—Darrell—sir," said Bob.

"Thank you, Cherry! Come in, Darrell!"

Mr. Quelch shook hands with the new arrival. Bob Cherry closed the door and walked away and rejoined his chums.

"Well, what do you think of the new kid?" he asked.

"Seems a jolly decent chap," said Wharton.

"The decentfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I like the way he passed that footer," said Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior. "Bunter was hinting that he knew something against him. I don't believe a word of it. He looks a thoroughly decent chap!"

"Oh, Bunter!" growled Bob. "Of course, he doesn't know anything about the chap at all. It's only some more of his gas. Now then, who's coming out for a spin on the bikes before lessons?"

The chums of the Remove wheeled their bicycles out, and for the time forgot all about the new boy, who was busy with Mr. Quelch in his study for some time.

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"CHUCKLES!"

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.

[Bunter Knows!]

DARRELL came out of Mr. Quelch's study, and glanced about him.

The house seemed deserted.

It was not yet time for afternoon lessons, and as it was a fine, sunny day all the fellows were out of doors, or nearly all.

Darrell was looking cheerful. His interview with the Remove-master had been agreeable enough. He felt a little lonely now, as was natural upon his first day at a strange school. He would have been glad to encounter Bob Cherry and his friends again just then, but the Famous Five were out of gates.

Darrell strolled along the passage, with the idea of looking about the place and taking his bearings. The junior common-room, with its wide windows overlooking the Close, and a cheerful fire burning in the grate, attracted him. He walked in, and found that he had the room to himself, with the exception of a fat junior, who was asleep in an armchair before the fire. Darrell glanced at the fat fellow curiously. It was Billy Bunter, of course. Bunter's spectacles had slid down his fat little nose, and he was snoring. But he woke up suddenly as the new fellow looked at him.

The fat junior straightened up in the chair, felt for his spectacles, and set them straight on his nose, and blinked at Darrell.

"Hallo!" he said.

"Hallo!" said Darrell.

"You're the new kid, eh?"

"Yes."

Billy Bunter rose to his feet, with a peculiar grin on his fat face.

"I thought so," he remarked, coming quite close to Darrell and scanning him very scrutinisingly through his big spectacles. "Yes, you're the chap!"

Darrell backed away a little. The colour had faded out of his handsome face, and there was a hunted look in his eyes.

"I don't understand you," he said.

"Don't you?" chuckled Bunter. "This ain't your first school. You've been to Repley, in Yorkshire. You were in the Lower Fourth there. Ain't that a fact?"

"It's no business of yours whether it is or not!"

Bunter chuckled again.

"Your name's Algernon Darrell?" he said.

"That's my name!"

"Not a common name—eh?"

"No," said Darrell quietly.

"As soon as I heard it, I said to myself that it must be the same chap," said Bunter. "Now I've seen you, I know you well enough."

"I don't remember ever seeing you before," said Darrell; but the hunted look was intensifying in his eyes.

"Very likely not; but I've seen you. Don't you remember the mathematics master at Repley—James Bunter? He's my uncle!"

"Your—your uncle?"

"Yes. Last time I visited him—last vac.—there had been trouble at Repley. One of the Lower Fourth was in trouble!" said Bunter airily.

Darrell made a movement.

"Chap named Darrell!" pursued Bunter, gloating over the discomfort that was very visible in the new boy's face. "I'd forgotten all about it—but I remembered it when I heard your name—and I wondered if you were the same chap who was expelled from Repley."

Darrell gave a little gasp.

"What I can't understand is your cheek in coming here," said Bunter. "The Head wouldn't have let you in if he'd known that you'd been expelled from another school. I'm jolly sure of that!"

Darrell was silent. His hands were clenching hard, and his eyes gleamed, as though he longed to throw himself upon the fat junior. But he kept quiet.

"Of course, my duty's plain," went on Bunter. "I'm bound to go straight to the Head and warn him that he's taking in a chap who was expelled in disgrace from Repley. It was a rotten thing to come here. I suppose you thought it was quite safe, as Repley is at the other end of the kingdom. You reckoned without me, eh? He, he, he!"

"Yes," said Darrell dully. "I reckoned without you!"

"Of course, it's my duty to expose you. Got anything to say before I go to the Head?" asked Bunter.

Darrell drew a hard, quivering breath.

"Blessed if I understand your people sending you here," said Bunter curiously. "They must have known it was likely to come out."

"I have no people," said Darrell, in a low voice. "My

people are all dead. If it hadn't been for that——" He paused.

"Who sent you here, then?" asked Bunter.

"My guardian."

"Not a relation?"

"No; a lawyer."

"But he knew——"

"I told him everything," said Darrell quietly. "I suppose I shall have to clear out now, as I can't tell the Head of Greyfriars everything. Go—and do your worst!"

"I don't see why you can't tell him everything," said Bunter, with a grin. "Anyway, I'll save you the trouble. Of course, you can see that it's my duty. I'm a chap with a very keen sense of duty—quite different from some of the fellows here. You've come here under false pretences—you didn't tell the Head that you'd been expelled from your last school?"

"No, I didn't tell him."

"You admit it?" said Bunter, in surprise. Bunter's course under such circumstances would have been to out-lie Ananias, and he was amazed at the frank admissions of the new boy, whose fate he held in the hollow of his fat hand.

Darrell smiled bitterly.

"I didn't know there was a tell-tale and a busybody here, who knew me," he replied. "If I'd known it, I shouldn't have come to Greyfriars at all!"

"Here, don't you call me names, do you hear?" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "I'm going to do my duty. And a tell-tale and a busybody ain't so bad as you are; you know jolly well what you were expelled from Repley for—getting tipsy and gambling at night in pubs! I've never done that, but you have!"

Darrell flushed crimson.

"I—haven't. I—I——"

"That's what you were sacked for, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Darrell, his voice dropping miserably.

"And you didn't deny it?"

"No; I didn't deny it!"

"Well, then," said Bunter triumphantly, "there you are! With that against you, what do you think the Head would say, if he knew the facts?"

"He would tell me to go, I suppose."

"Exactly. And it's my duty to tell him that he—that he's nourishing a giddy viper," said Bunter. "And that's what I'm going to do!"

"Go and do it, then!" said Darrell, turning on his heel.

"Here, I say, don't rush off like that!" exclaimed Bunter, in alarm. "I haven't told him yet, you know. I say, Darrell, I haven't made up my mind yet. Don't buzz off till I've finished speaking. Perhaps I sha'n't give you away—it depends."

Darrell turned back, his face suddenly flushed.

"Do you mean that you'll keep it dark?" he exclaimed breathlessly.

"Well—I might!"

"Does anybody else here know?" asked Darrell eagerly.

"Nobody! I was going to tell Wharton, only the beast wouldn't listen to me—and Bob Cherry shoved me over, the beast——"

"Nobody else knows?"

"Nobody!" said Bunter, with a nod, "and nobody will know unless I tell 'em! Of course, I don't want to be hard on a chap!"

Darrell looked at him long and hard. There was little in the fat, selfish face, to hint of kindness or generosity. Darrell's heart, which had felt a momentary pulse of hope, sank again as he scanned Bunter's fat features.

"What do you mean?" he said abruptly. "I know I'm under your thumb. You can give me away to the Head if you like, and get me kicked out. Are you going to do it?"

"Well," said Bunter meditatively, "I ought to!"

"If you think you ought to, go and do it!" said Darrell curtly.

"Hold on—don't be so beastly uppish!" said Bunter plaintively. "I'm thinking it out. If you've turned over a new leaf, and all that—ahem!——"

"Nothing of the kind will occur here, if that's what you mean," said Darrell. "What happened at Repley was under peculiar circumstances that I can't explain to you. And I admit that I expected the thing to come out sooner or later; but I hoped to have been here long enough, by then, to have made a good character for myself, so that Dr. Locke would give me a chance."

"Oh, I see! Well, of course, if you're going to be decent, I don't want to stand in your light," said Bunter generously. "I'll tell you what, I'll make a friend of you, Darrell, and look after you. I'll stick to you. I don't mind what you've done—I'm going to be your pal!"

Bunter looked at Darrell loftily, expecting to see him overcome with emotion and gratitude. But neither emotion or gratitude was visible in Darrell's harassed face. Probably

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he did not value very highly the proffered friendship of the Owl of the Remove.

"Well, what do you say?" demanded Bunter, somewhat nettled.

"I shall be glad if you'll keep the secret for me."

"I've said I'll be your friend."

"Thank you!"

"You must have blown a lot of money at Repley, on those pretty goings on!" said Bunter. "You have a jolly good allowance, I believe?"

"Yes."

"Do you still have it?"

"Yes," said Darrell, in some surprise, not for the moment seeing the fat junior's drift.

"Well, so have I!" said Bunter. "My people are very rich—some of my relations, in fact, are titled, and rolling in money. But I get short of tin sometimes, and when it happens—very rarely—perhaps you wouldn't mind making me a small loan?"

Darrell looked at him searchingly.

"It happens that I'm rather short at present," went on Bunter calmly. "I've been disappointed about a postal-order. Could you manage ten bob?"

Darrell bit his lip.

"Let's have it out plain!" he said coldly. "You want me to give you ten shillings for keeping my secret—is that it?"

Bunter sniffed.

"If you put it like that, I'll go straight to the Head, and tell him everything," he exclaimed angrily.

"I do put it like that!" said Darrell.

"Ahem! I—I wish you wouldn't put it in such a beastly way, Darrell. Of course, I feel too friendly to you to think of going to the Head, if you lend me ten shillings. Have you got it about you?"

Darrell felt in his pocket, took out a little leather purse, and extracted half-a-sovereign from it. Bunter's eyes gleamed as he caught the glint of several other gold coins in the purse.

"I—I say, Darrell, you—you may as well make it a quid——"

"There's your ten shillings," said Darrell icily. "Now keep your mouth shut."

And he turned on his heel, and walked out of the common-room without waiting for Bunter to reply.

The Owl of the Remove stared after him with wrath in his fat countenance.

"Why, the cheeky rotter!" he exclaimed. "To talk to me—a rotter who was expelled from his school for getting squiffy, just like Smithy used to do, and jolly near got sacked for here—my hat! I'll jolly well show him up—I mean, I would—only—only——" Billy Bunter looked lovingly at the half-sovereign, and slipped it into his waistcoat-pocket. "After all, if the brute's turning over a new leaf, perhaps I ought to give him a chance. I don't want to be hard on him. Now there's time for a snack before lessons!"

And Billy Bunter toddled away to the tuckshop as fast as his fat little legs could carry him.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Pig in Clover!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Whom have you been robbing?" Bob Cherry asked the question as he came striding into Mrs. Mimble's little tuckshop, in the corner of the old Close of Greyfriars.

The chums of the Remove had returned from their spin, and Johnny Bull's suggestion of lemonade before lessons was greeted with unanimous approval. Mrs. Mimble's home-made, hot lemonade was famous at Greyfriars, and was very pleasant on a cold day. The Famous Five found Billy Bunter seated upon a high stool at the counter, as they came in; and Billy Bunter was evidently enjoying himself. There was the wreck of a pie before him, and an empty glass, and he was piling into a plate of luscious jam-tarts.

He blinked round with a shiny look as the juniors came in.

Johnny Bull ordered lemonade, and the Removites discussed that cheery beverage, at the same time regarding Bunter's exploits with the tarts.

Bunter pointed a fat forefinger at the well-laden dish.

"Help yourselves, you fellows," he said hospitably.

Bob Cherry gave a jump.

"What! Oh! Say that again!" he ejaculated.

"Help yourselves! It's my treat!"

"Your—your treat!"

"Yes. Pile in. You can have two each if you like—tuppenny ones," said Billy Bunter, with great generosity.

"Well, this beats the band!" said Johnny Bull. "I hope you're not ill, Bunter."

Really, it seemed a little doubtful; Billy Bunter was a great hunter of feeds, but he was seldom known to provide them for others.

Bunter sniffed.

"I suppose a chap can stand a feed when he's in funds," he remarked.

"So you're in funds?" said Harry Wharton.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?"

"You don't mean to say that you've got a postal-order?" exclaimed Frank Nugent, in great astonishment.

"Some chaps have sufficient confidence in me to make me a small loan," said Bunter, with dignity.

"Not chaps who know you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob uttered a sudden exclamation.

"The new chap! Of course! Bunter's been squeezing a loan out of him—he always works that postal-order dodge with new chaps. Darrell's paid for those tarts."

"You needn't have any of my tarts if you don't want 'em," said Bunter stiffly. "I'll thank you not to pass personal remarks, anyway."

"The new kid must have come down pretty handsome, too," said Nugent, surveying the remains of Bunter's feast. "Might have given him a tip about Bunter, if we'd thought of it."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"I told you I'd give you a thick ear if you squeezed any money out of the new kid, you fat toad," said Harry Wharton, frowning.

"As it happens, Darrell's a friend of mine," said Bunter.

"In fact, we're quite pals. I'll thank you not to say anything against me to my pal Darrell."

"Your pal, eh?"

"Certainly; quite an old chum."

"You were saying that you knew something against him," said Bob Cherry. "You were trying to tell me some tattle or other—"

"Oh, that was a mistake! Darrell's a splendid chap—in fact, a fellow right after my own heart," said Bunter.

"He's right after your heart, and you're right after his cash," suggested Johnny Bull.

"He's rich!" said Bunter. "His people have lots of money, and they make him a good allowance. If it wasn't for that, very likely he wouldn't have got into trouble—ahem!"

"Got into trouble?" said Bob Cherry. "What trouble has he got into?"

"Oh, nothing!"

And Bunter polished off his tenth tart, and started on another. He was simply bursting to explain all that he knew about Darrell, but he realised that it would not do. He intended to make quite an income out of the new boy's secret; and, of course, if he gave it away that would come to an end at once. But it was almost painful for Bunter to keep gossip and tattle to himself.

"Do you really know the new kid, or are you lying as usual?" asked Bull.

"Of course I know him—quite an old pal."

"Was he at Repley, as you said?" asked Bob.

"Repley! Oh, no!"

"Then he's not the same Darrell?"

"Not at all—quite another Darrell," said Billy Bunter hastily. "Of course, it's quite a common name. I know him when I was a mere kid—brought up together, in fact."

"Played together in the back garden of the family pub," said Bob Cherry. "How interesting!"

"You rotter! You know my people don't keep a pub!" howled Bunter.

"I mean the family fried-fish shop—"

"You—you beast! My people don't keep a fried-fish shop. Nobody in my family has ever worked for his living!"

"Tramps?" asked Bob.

"Look here, you beast—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! That's the bell for classes. Bolt the rest of 'em, Bunter—only four left—they won't take you four seconds."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors hurried out of the tuckshop, and Bunter cast a lingering glance at the four remaining tarts. After consuming, unaided, ten shillings' worth of tuck, even Billy Bunter was feeling a little loaded.

"Put 'em in a bag for me, Mrs. Mimble," he said. "I'll take 'em with me. I dare say I shall be hungry in the Form-room."

Mrs. Mimble's countenance expressed mild surprise. She was wondering how Bunter could ever be hungry again, after the quantity of solid refreshment he had disposed of. But she placed the tarts in a bag, and Billy Bunter jammed the bag under his tight jacket for concealment, and bolted for the School House.

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He was a minute late, and he came in puffing and blowing. The rest of the Remove were in their places at the desks, Darrell with them. The new boy had taken his place quietly, evidently accustomed to a Form-room. His manner was quite sufficient to show that he had been at school before, and was not fresh from home. Mr. Quelch turned a severe eye upon Bunter.

"You are late, Bunter!" Mr. Quelch was a great stickler for punctuality.

"Sorry, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I stopped to—to tie up my shoelace, sir."

Mr. Quelch glanced at Bunter's feet. The Owl of the Remove was wearing squeaky, elastic-sided boots.

"You have no shoe-laces, Bunter!" said the Form-master sternly.

"Ahem! I—I mean, I—I stopped to—to blow my nose, sir."

There was a chuckle from the Form. Billy Bunter evidently considered that one lie was as good as another.

"Bunter, you must cure yourself of this habit of telling ridiculous falsehoods," said Mr. Quelch sternly.

"Oh, certainly, sir! I—I stopped to—to see the time by the clock-tower, sir!" gasped Bunter. "You know I'm a little short-sighted, sir, and I had to go quite close to it, and—"

"You did nothing of the kind, Bunter."

"Oh, sir! I—I stopped to post a letter for—for Mr. Capper, sir—"

"Come here, Bunter!"

"Wha-a-at for, sir?"

"I am going to cane you for telling falsehoods," said Mr. Quelch, taking up a cane from his desk. "You are the most untruthful boy in the school, Bunter. Come here!"

"If—if you please, sir—"

"You hear me, Bunter?"

The Owl of the Remove reluctantly approached.

"Hold out your hand, Bunter."

Bunter gingerly held out his left hand. His right was holding his jacket, keeping in place the bag of tarts hidden there. As the jacket was not buttoned, the bag required some support. Some of the fellows noted that Bunter's jacket was bulging on that side, and they grinned with anticipation. If Bunter's right hand was required, they wondered what would happen.

Swish!

"Ow-wow-wow!"

"Stop that ridiculous noise, Bunter!"

"Bow-wow-wow! I'm hurt, sir."

"Now hold out the other hand," said Mr. Quelch.

"The—the other hand, sir?"

"Yes; immediately!"

"I—I—I—"

"Do you hear me, Bunter?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"What is the matter with you, boy? Obey me at once!"

"If—if you please, sir, won't the same hand do again?"

"I—I've got a pain in my right hand," mumbled Bunter.

"I—I caught it in the lawn-mower, sir."

"What! Have you injured your right hand?"

"Yes, sir, awfully—I mean, frightfully! It's horribly lacerated, and—"

"Show it to me at once!" said Mr. Quelch. "If it is injured you must see a doctor, you stupid boy! Show it to me!"

"I—I—I—"

"Will you show me your injured hand, Bunter?" said Mr. Quelch, in a terrific voice.

"I—I can't move it, sir," said Bunter desperately. "It—it's gone stiff, sir. I—I think it's rather paralysed, sir—in fact, paralysed—and—and—"

Mr. Quelch grasped Bunter's wrist, and drew the hand away from the jacket it was pressed to. He looked at it through his glasses, but was unable to discover any sign of injury. His frown grew quite portentous.

"Your hand is not injured, Bunter!"

"Oh, dear!" said Bunter. "It—it's got well, sir! Remarkable—isn't it, sir?—that it should get well so quickly!"

He was keeping his elbow jammed against the jacket to keep the bag of tarts underneath from sliding to the floor.

"You have something under your jacket, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, comprehending at last.

"Under m-m-my jacket, sir?"

"Yes. What is it?"

"Mum-mum-my waistcoat, sir?"

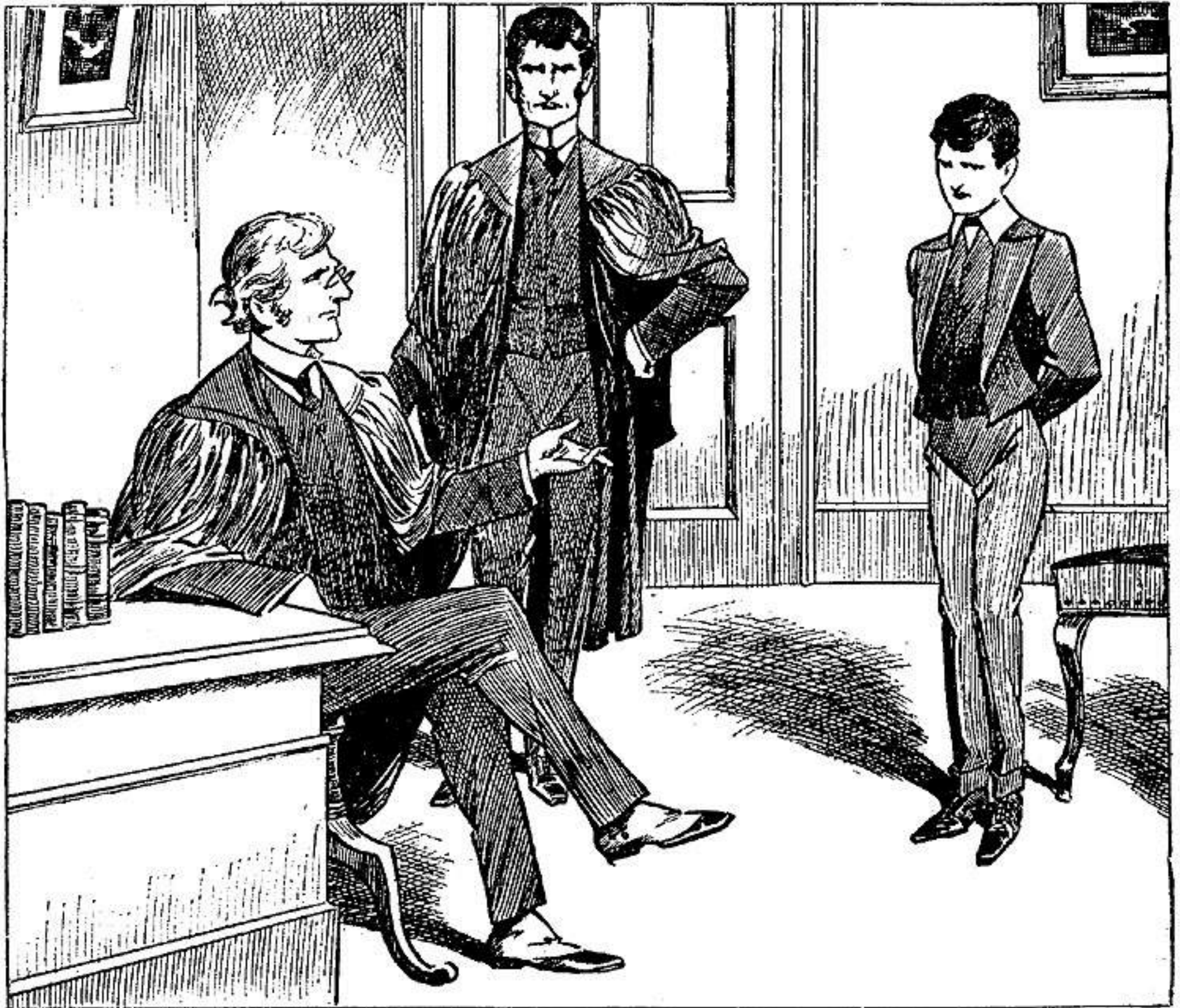
"You have something else!"

"Yes, sir—mum-mum-my watchchain, sir?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Open your jacket at once, Bunter! Ah, I thought so! What is in that bag?"

"N-nothing, sir," said Bunter desperately. "I—I didn't



"You understand that you must leave this school at once, Darrell!" said the Head. "I understand, sir!" replied Darrell, in a low voice. "Very well, you may go. Pack your box to-night, and you will be taken to the station in the morning." (See Chapter 13.)

bring the tarts here to eat in the Form-room, sir. I wouldn't think of such a thing. Of course, I know it's against the rules. I don't know how the bag got there, sir!"

"Take it and put it on the fire, Bunter!"

"On the fuf-fuf-fire!" gasped Bunter. "Four twopenny tarts, sir!"

"You said there was nothing in the bag!"

"Yes, sir; there—there isn't! You see, sir—"

Mr. Quelch took the bag of tarts and tossed it upon the fire. Then he collared Bunter, and the cane sang round the fat person of the Owl of the Remove.

"Take that!" said Mr. Quelch. "That is for bringing eatables into the Form-room—and that is for lying—and that is for lying again—and that—"

"Yaroooh! Ow! Help!"

"Now go to your place, Bunter; and remember that it is wisest, as well as more honourable, to tell the truth!"

"Ow! Ow! I always do, sir! I—"

"Go to your place!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

And Billy Bunter was glad to go.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Not Quite a Pal

MICKY DESMOND of the Remove came up to his study with a bag under his arm. He found Billy Bunter seated in the armchair in the study, apparently waiting. Bunter blinked round as the Irish junior came in, and gave a grunt.

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"Where's Darrell?" he asked.

"Sure, I don't know where he is," said Micky. "Phwat are you doin' in this study, Bunter?"

"I've come to tea."

Micky set his bag down on the table, and pushed back his cuffs in an extremely suggestive way.

"You've come to tea, is ut?" he asked. "You don't trouble about being asked first—what?"

"I've come to tea with Darrell—my old pal Darrell!" said Bunter, with dignity. "Darrell's been put into this study, along with you and Morgan!"

"Sure, I—"

"Darrell's my old pal, and I've come to tea with him. He's going to stand a jolly good tea," explained Bunter. "You and Morgan can have your whack if you like. Ah, here he is!"

Darrell came into the study, with books under his arm. He nodded pleasantly to Micky Desmond, but did not seem to observe the Owl of the Remove at all.

"Mr. Quelch tells me that I share this study," he said.

"Sure, it's welcome ye are!" said Micky.

"Thanks! You have tea in the studies here, don't you? We used to at—I mean, you do?"

"Sure, we do," said Micky; "and if you like to take your whack, we'll share it together. It comes to a better feed that way!"

"Nothing I'd like better!" said Darrell cheerily.

"Did ye ask Bunter? He says you did; but he's such an awful Ananias!"

"Oh, really, Desmond——"

"No, I didn't ask him," said Darrell curtly.

Micky Desmond made another motion of pushing back his cuffs.

"There's the door, Bunter," he said.

Billy Bunter did not move. His little round eyes turned upon Darrell with a threatening blink.

"I'm staying to tea," he said.

"You take one arm of the baste, and I'll take the other, bedad!" said Micky Desmond. "We'll fling the fat rotter out on his neck!"

"I say, Darrell, you want me to stay, don't you?" said Bunter.

Darrell looked at him grimly.

"You know I don't want you," he said.

Bunter rose from the armchair as Micky came towards him with a business-like air.

"Keep your beastly paws to yourself, Desmond! I'll get out if Darrell doesn't want me here! I've got to go to the Head, anyway, about some important business!"

Darrell looked at him fixedly.

"What are you going to the Head about?" he asked.

"There's something I ought to tell him. I feel it's my duty!"

"You fat cad!"

Bunter sniffed.

"Stay to tea if you want to," said Darrell. "You don't mind, Desmond?"

"Well, I do, as a matter of fact," said Micky. "Sure, I can't stand the fat baste! But if you ask him to stay, it's all right!"

"Darrell's my old pal, ain't you, Darrell?" said Bunter, all smiles again.

"No!" said Darrell grimly.

"Ahem! I mean——"

"Let the fat brute feed if he wants to," said Darrell. "I don't mind!"

"Look here, Darrell, if you call me names——"

"Oh, shut up!"

"I'll jolly well——"

"If you don't shut up I'll sling you out!" said Darrell.

"Hear, hear!" said Micky. "But, sure, what are you lettin' him stay to tea for intirely?"

Darrell did not reply to that question. It was difficult for him to conceal his dislike of the fat junior; but he realised that his conduct must look rather peculiar to Micky Desmond. He changed the subject abruptly.

"Let's get down to the tuckshop," he said. "I'm in funds, and I'd like to stand a decent tea, my first day here!"

"Good egg!" said Micky heartily. "I'll come wid ye wid pleasure!"

"I'll do the shopping for you if you like," said Bunter. "I don't mind taking any amount of trouble for a fellow I like!"

Darrell walked out of the study without replying, and Micky Desmond followed him. The fat junior blinked after them angrily.

"By George! I'm jolly well not going to stand his airs and graces!" muttered Bunter. "A rotter who was expelled from his school, putting on airs over me! I'll jolly well show him that I'm not going to stand it!"

Darrell and Micky came back into the study in ten minutes, with Morgan of the Remove, each of the three juniors carrying a package. Darrell was evidently standing something substantial, and Bunter's eyes glistened at the sight of the packages.

The tea-table looked quite festive when it was spread.

"This is something like!" said Billy Bunter, as he sat down.

"Faith, and it's ripping intirely!" said Micky.

And the four juniors certainly enjoyed their tea. Both Micky and Morgan considered that Study No. 8 had a great acquisition in Darrell. It was not only the spread, though, that was very handsome, but Darrell was pleasant and cheery, and did not put on any "side" because he happened to be rich.

Billy Bunter did his duty nobly at the well-spread table, and his thoughts dwelt beatifically on the long succession of feeds that were to follow—so long as he had Darrell under his thumb—and that would be until the secret came out.

After tea Micky Desmond and Morgan left the study, and Darrell remained in a thoughtful mood. Bunter was industriously finishing up the jam.

"Jolly good feed!" said Bunter, quite disposed to be friendly after the spread.

Darrell did not reply.

"I shall often come and have tea with you," said Bunter. "In fact, you can expect me very often indeed!"

Darrell looked at him.

"This is the first time," he said.

"Yes; but——"

"And it's going to be the last!" said Darrell, quietly but very decidedly.

Bunter blinked at him.

"I don't like you," said Darrell, very distinctly. "I don't like your company. I don't like you calling yourself my pal. Please don't do it again!"

"Look here, Darrell——"

"You've got me under your thumb to a certain extent," said Darrell. "I know that. You mean to make a profit out of it. That shows the kind of rotter you are!"

"Why, you—you rotter, you——" blustered Bunter.

"Shut up, and let me finish! I'm rich, and I can afford to let you have a little ready money, as you're rotter enough to take it! But that's the limit! I don't want your personal acquaintance, and I won't have it!"

"You—you——"

"I tell you I don't like it, and I won't have it! Don't plant yourself on me, I won't stand it! If you come into this study again I shall kick you out!"

Bunter's eyes gleamed through his spectacles.

"Do you want me to go to the Head?" he demanded threateningly.

Darrell shrugged his shoulders.

"You can do as you like about that. If you do, you won't get anything more out of me. Hold your silly babbling tongue, and I'll pay you for it. But let me alone, I won't have you palling on to me, and that's flat."

"Palling on to you, a rotter who's been expelled from his school!" shouted Billy Bunter. "Nice sort of a pal if I did! What would the fellows here say if they knew you as I do, I'd like to know? If they knew you had been sacked——"

"Hallo! What's that?" asked Skinner, looking into the open doorway. "Who's been sacked?"

Bunter stopped short.

"It's Bunter gassing," said Darrell calmly.

Skinner looked curiously from one to the other, but Bunter did not speak, and he went his way. Darrell closed the door.

"You nearly did it that time!" he said. "Remember, if it gets out you'll get nothing more from me. So you'd better be careful."

"Do you think I want your beastly money?" growled Bunter aggressively.

"I know you do."

"Look here, Darrell——"

"And now you can get out of my study," said Darrell. "I'm fed-up with you! I don't want you here. Is that plain enough for you?"

Billy Bunter, almost exploding with indignation, rolled towards the door. He turned with a purple face, and blinked at Darrell.

"I'm going to the Head!" he said.

"Go, and be hanged!"

"You'll be sacked!"

"Get out!"

"Look here!" said Bunter, pausing with his hand on the door. "I don't want to be hard on you, Darrell. I'm willing to be your friend."

"Thanks! I'm not willing, and it takes two to make a bargain."

Billy Bunter gave him a furious look. He had expected to keep the new boy tight under his thumb, and he had fondly imagined that Darrell would be only too glad to accept his friendly advances. In his mind's eye he had seen the new boy turned into a sort of humble follower, and the prospect had pleased him exceedingly.

But it was evidently not going to work out like that. Bunter was strongly tempted to give the secret away at once, and tell all he knew; but—— There was a but. After all, Darrell was a goose to lay golden eggs, however unpleasant his manners might be. And it would not be wise to imitate the foolish individual in the fable who killed the goose that laid the golden eggs.

"Well, are you going?" said Darrell.

"I'll go when I like," said Bunter, with feeble defiance.

Darrell rose to his feet.

"You'll go now!" he said.

"Look here, Darrell——"

"Outside, please!"

"I—I'm just going!" stammered Bunter. "Look here, can you lend me five bob till my postal-order comes?"

"I'm going to give you nothing whatever," said Darrell

ANSWERS

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calmly. "To-morrow you can have half-a-crown. Nothing before that."

"If you think I want your money——"

"What do you want, then?"

"Ahem! I—I'm expecting a postal-order, you see. Look here, Darrell, one good turn deserves another. Lend me five bob——"

"I've told you what I shall do."

"Very well; then I'll go to the Head!"

"Go, then!"

Darrell dragged the door open, and raised his foot. Billy Bunter rolled out into the passage in a great hurry, and the door slammed after him. The fat junior, breathing fury, started down the passage, but as soon as he had reached the stairs he paused.

"The beast! Half-a-crown—half-a-rotten-crown! As if I want his beastly money! Still, half-a-crown every day is a good bit. I—I mean I don't want to be hard on him. Ahem! I won't go to the Head just yet!" he murmured.

And he didn't.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Horn of Plenty!

DARRELL made a good many friends in the Lower School during the next few days.

Harry Wharton & Co. liked him from the first. He was, as Bob Cherry said emphatically, the right sort.

Wharton had tried him on the football-ground, and he turned out to be a very good player.

He was kind and cheerful and always good-tempered, and that naturally made fellows like him. He had plenty of money, and was quite free with it, and that helped to make him popular, too.

The only fellow he was not quite civil to was Bunter. He could not conceal that he disliked Bunter.

And Bunter had ceased to speak of Darrell as an old pal. Bunter repaid his dislike with interest. But that did not prevent him from bleeding the new boy regularly. If Algernon Darrell had not set a limit, Bunter would have cleared him out in a very short time, wealthy as he was. But Darrell handed Bunter his half-crown each day, and when it was handed over refused even to reply when Bunter demanded a fresh loan the same day. The fact that he could pay so much, apparently without missing it, showed that his allowance was far in excess of most of the junior allowances at Greyfriars. And Bunter was furious at being, as he considered it, kept short. Instead of half-crowns he wanted half-sovereigns or golden quids. Indeed, his thoughts ran to banknotes sometimes. He had discovered that Darrell had a couple of fivers in his pocket-book, and Bunter dreamed of those fivers and the enormous amount of tuck they would purchase.

But Darrell was as hard as iron. A dozen times Bunter resolved to punish him by giving him away; but each time he reflected that if he did the daily half-crown would cease immediately. And that was enough to make the young rascal halt.

Not that Bunter regarded himself in the least as a black-mailer. He hardly thought at all about that aspect of the case. All he knew was that Darrell had plenty of money, and that he wanted some of it. And the easiest way to get some of it was by trading on Darrell's secret. Bunter would just as soon have obtained it by giving I.O.U.'s or promises or anything. He was not particular so long as he got the money.

Besides Darrell's personal qualities, the fellows were somewhat interested in him because of his circumstances. It was known that he was an orphan, that he had no near relations at all, and that his guardian was an old lawyer in the City, who was no connection of his. There was a large fortune waiting for him when he reached the age of twenty-one, and, meanwhile, he had an ample, or more than ample, allowance. But he had no home, no people to go to in the vacations, and since his earliest years he had never known what family life was like.

He was reticent about his antecedents.

He had had a tutor, and he had been at a preparatory school. He spoke about that without concealment. But he had been to a later school, and that he never mentioned. Harry Wharton & Co., who remembered Bunter's remarks about Darrell at Repley, wondered whether he was that same Darrell. But as the new boy seemed not to want to speak about it they did not question him. And Billy Bunter apparently had no more to say on the subject. At all events, he said no more.

Bunter's sudden acquisition of wealth did not pass unnoticed.

His pocket-money was half-a-crown a week, and when he produced cash day after day in the tuck-shop, the juniors could not help noticing it, and feeling surprised.

Bunter talked airily about postal-orders from his titled

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relations. But the Removites knew that postal-order that was always expected, and never arrived.

It was Snoop of the Remove who discovered Bunter's source of wealth. Snoop spotted Bunter one day as Darrell was handing him half-a-crown, or, rather, throwing it at him like a bone to a dog, as Snoop said afterwards to Skinner.

Snoop kept his eyes open after that, and was assured that he had discovered the truth, that Bunter was borrowing regular sums of the new boy.

It was amazing to Snoop.

Bunter generally contrived to raise a loan or two from new fellows, but after a few days they came to know him, and refused to lend any more. Darrell, apparently, was keeping it up, for reasons best known to himself.

"What on earth are you lending Bunter money for, Darrell?" Snoop asked one day. "He never pays his debts."

"I know he doesn't," said Darrell.

"You won't get any of it back."

"I suppose not."

"Then what the dickens——"

Darrell coloured a little.

"Well, I have plenty," he said.

Snoop stared.

"Blessed if I see that that's any reason for handing out money to Bunter day after day," he said. "But if you've got such heaps and want to get rid of it I'm your man. Lend me a quid, will you?"

Darrell laughed.

"Thanks, no."

"Oh, I'll make half-a-crown do!" said Snoop.

"Nothing doing," said Darrell.

The day after Skinner of the Remove tackled him. Snoop had related in all quarters the curious circumstance that Darrell was supplying Billy Bunter with pocket-money, and Skinner thought that he saw a good thing in it. He came up to Darrell in the Close with a most agreeable smile.

"I say, Darrell, I knocked your topper off the day you came here," he said. "I'm sorry."

"That's all right," said Darrell.

"I suppose you couldn't lend me half-a-quid?" said Skinner.

"Quite right," agreed Darrell; "I couldn't, Skinner."

Skinner coughed.

"Well, as you seem to be giving away money, you know, I thought you might shell out a bit in my direction," he said—"say, five bob."

"Nothing doing."

Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form—Billy Bunter's minor—was not long in hearing of his major's windfall, and after a vain attempt to extract some of the plunder from Billy, Sammy Bunter bore down on Darrell. He found Darrell in his study at work, and he rolled in without ceremony. Darrell gave him a grim look; his feelings towards Billy Bunter did not dispose him to like Bunter minor.

"Well, what do you want?" he demanded.

"I hear you're awfully pally with my major——" began Sammy agreeably.

"Then you've heard wrong. I can't stand your major."

"Oh! But—but——"

"Good-bye!"

"Could you lend me five bob——"

"No!"

"Look here, what are you handing out money to my major for?" demanded Sammy, coming out into the open, as it were. "What's the little game? Does he know anything about you, or what is it?"

"Get out!"

"He might tell me, and let me into it, whatever it is, but Billy's such a beast!" said Sammy, in an aggrieved tone. "Look here, Darrell——"

Darrell rose from his seat, took Sammy by the shoulders, and spun him out of the study.

Sammy collapsed in the passage with a gasp, and the door slammed after him.

It was evident that there was "nothing doing."

The seekers of little loans were all disappointed, and perhaps that made them talk more than they would otherwise have done. At all events, before Darrell had been at Greyfriars a week, one of the most interesting topics in the Remove was the fact that he was supplying the impecunious Bunter with pocket-money. Why he should do so was a mystery; and whatever his motive was, he did not choose to explain it. A good many of the fellows asked him, but he replied very shortly—in fact, as good as told them to mind their own business, as Bolsover major complained.

Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, stopped Darrell in the passage one afternoon. Smithy had not had much to do with Darrell, but he rather liked him; and Smithy had had some experience of Billy Bunter's little ways.

"Do you know you're getting talked about in the Form, Darrell?" he said bluntly.

Darrell gave him a quick look, as if to ascertain whether his intention was hostile. But the Bouncer's face was quite amicable.

"Am I?" said Darrell quietly. "The fellows must want something to talk about if they bother their heads over my affairs."

"Well, they can't help being curious. You lend Bunter money every day—or, rather, give it, as he never pays his debts. I know Bunter. Once there was something—the Bouncer coloured a little—"there was something I didn't want talked about, and Bunter got hold of it, and he screwed money out of me for keeping it quiet."

Darrell smiled bitterly.

"Quite an old game with him, then?" he said.

"Well, he's not very particular how he gets money," said Vernon-Smith, with a nod. "Not that he means to be a rascal; he's too stupid to understand what a cad he is. But the fellows knew about that incident, and—and—"

"Well?" said Darrell.

"Well, there's getting a sort of idea about that Bunter knows something shady about you, same as he did about me, and is trading on it," said Vernon-Smith frankly. "Mind, it's none of my business; I've only spoken to give you a hint, so that you can stop it. But if you waste any more money on Bunter, I'm afraid you'll really give the impression that he's got you under his thumb in some way."

Darrell nodded.

"Thanks for the warning," he said. "I wonder you fellows can stand such a rotter in the school. He ought to be ragged out of Greyfriars."

"Well, he's more a fool than anything else," said Vernon-Smith. "Well, that's all. I thought I'd give you the tip."

"Thanks again!"

But the next day Billy Bunter was flush with money again, and the Bouncer noticed it, and he knew that his warning had made no difference. And Darrell began to notice, too, that some of the fellows eyed him very oddly, and that juniors who had been very friendly with him began to "edge" off, as it were, and show somewhat less inclination for his acquaintance. And with a heavy heart, the fellow who had been expelled from Repley realised that it was the beginning of the end.

"Murder will out," is an old saying. And it seemed fated that, sooner or later, Algy Darrell's secret was bound to come to light.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Speaks!

"I SAY, you fellows, there's a letter for Darrell!"

"By George, so there is!" said Bolsover major, looking at the letter in the rack. "It's the first he's had since he came here."

"He's got no people, you know," said Skinner, with a sniff.

Bunter took the letter down from the rack, and turned it over in his hands. He was very curious about that letter—as he always was about other fellows' letters.

"Let it alone!" growled Bolsover.

"I'm not going to open it," said Bunter. "I suppose I can look at the envelope if I like, can't I?"

"The postmark's Repley," said Skinner, looking at it.

"Anybody know where Repley is?"

"In Yorkshire," said Russell.

"There's a school there," said Snoop. "Haven't you got a grandfather, or something, who's an usher or something there, Bunter?"

Bunter glared.

"I've got an uncle, who's mathematics master there," he said.

"I wonder if that's the school Darrell's been to," said Skinner inquisitively. "Nobody knows, I suppose?"

"Don't they?" said Bunter.

"Do you?" asked Bolsover major.

"I know what I know."

"Well, I don't suppose that's much," said Skinner, who knew the best way to draw the Owl of the Remove. Bunter did not like to have his knowledge belittled.

"Don't you?" sniffed Bunter. "Well, I could tell you some things that would surprise you, if I chose. That letter's from Repley School."

"How do you know?"

"Well, I do know. I know a lot about Darrell."

"Is that what he gives you half-crowns for?" sniggered Snoop.

"Rats!" said Bunter; and, realising that he was saying too much, the fat junior walked away.

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"Hallo! Where are you taking Darrell's letter?" demanded Bolsover major.

"I'm going to take it to him," said Bunter. "He's on the footer-ground with Wharton now. I'll just take it."

"Mind it doesn't come open on the way!" jeered Bolsover.

Billy Bunter did not reply to that remark. He rolled out of the School House, and started for the football-ground; but before he reached it he turned aside, and went into the Cloisters. He was very curious indeed about that letter, and he sat down on one of the old stone benches in the Cloisters, and turned it over and over in his fat hands. He had no scruples whatever about reading another fellow's letter, but even he hesitated to open it.

"He wouldn't dare to make a row," murmured Bunter to himself. "He wouldn't risk a row with me, when I could give him away. After all, he's here under false pretences, and I've a right to know what's going on. It may be my duty to speak to the Head. A chap who comes to a school under false pretences can't complain."

He hesitated some time longer, but curiosity was too strong for him. He felt that it was queer that Darrell, who had been expelled from Repley, should have correspondence with a fellow in the school he had left. Bunter opened his pen-knife at last, and began to squeeze open the flap of the envelope with the blade. He had an idea of sticking it down with gum afterwards, and so covering up his tracks.

With great skill he prised open the flap of the envelope without tearing it. It was not the first time he had done that sort of thing.

The letter was open at last, and Bunter drew out the folded sheet; and after a quick glance round the Cloisters, to make sure that he was not observed, he unfolded it.

"Dear Algy," it began.

Bunter glanced at the end. It was signed, "Bertie Erroll."

"Erroll!" murmured Bunter. "I think I remember that name. A chap who was very friendly with Darrell before he was sacked. I suppose he's keeping up with him because he's got money."

It did not occur to Bunter that Erroll of Repley might have another motive for keeping up with Darrell.

He turned back to the beginning of the letter again, and began to read.

"Dear Algy,—I was jolly glad to get your letter. Jolly glad you're all right at Greyfriars. I've been calling myself every sort of a brute since you left for letting you go. What you've done for me was what nobody else would ever have done for anybody. I know that; I shouldn't have let you do it. If it hadn't been for my pater—"

"Bunter! Is that my letter?"

It was a sharp, angry, passionate voice.

Billy Bunter jumped up in great alarm, putting the letter behind him. Darrell had suddenly come into the Cloisters, and his brows were contracted, his eyes gleaming.

"Your—your letter?" stammered Bunter.

"Bolsover told me you had a letter for me!" said Darrell fiercely. "How dare you meddle with my letters? He said you were bringing it to me, and that you'd very likely read it!"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Where is my letter?" demanded Darrell imperiously.

"I—I'm sincerely sorry. I—I dropped it in the Close somewhere."

"I believe that is my letter that you were reading," said Darrell, in a low tone of concentrated anger.

"Oh, you know—" began Bunter feebly.

"Show me that letter!"

"It—it's mine!"

"Show it to me at once!"

"Look here, Darrell, I'm not going to show you my letters. Ow, ow! Hands off, you beast! I—I— It came open by accident, you know!" howled Bunter, as the sturdy junior laid violent hands upon him.

Darrell hurried him aside, and grasped the letter as he let it fall. His face was white with rage, and his eyes blazing.

"You rotten cad! You were reading my letter!" he shouted.

"I—I wasn't really! It—it came open, you know!" stammered Bunter. "I—I was just thinking how I could fasten it up again!"

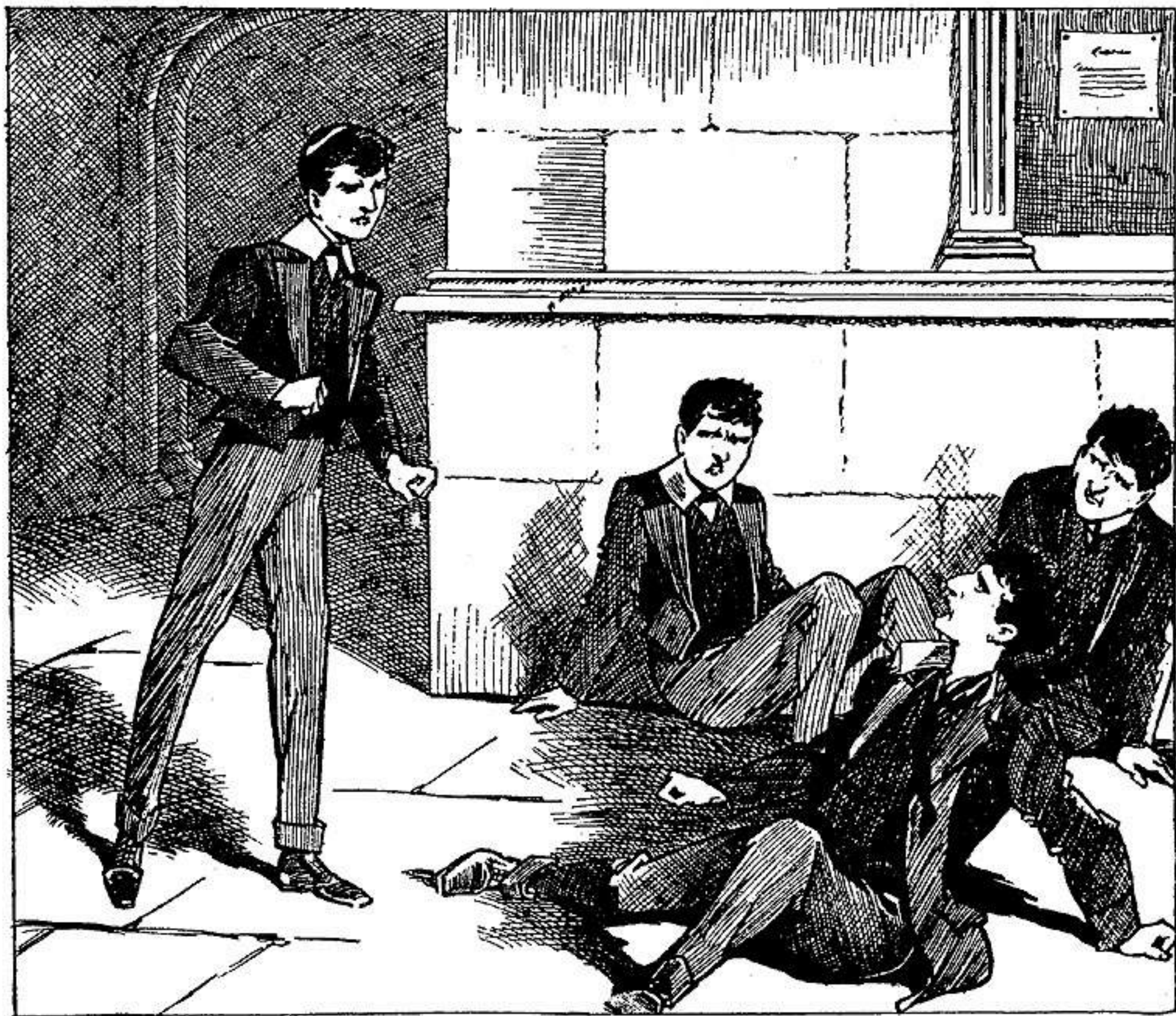
"You've read it?"

"I haven't. I hadn't finished—I mean, I hadn't started—that is, I wasn't going to read it! Of course, I should scorn to do anything of the sort!"

"You low cad!"

"Look here, Darrell, a fellow who comes to a school under false pretences hasn't any right to be so jolly particular!" said Bunter, recovering his courage a little. "And don't you start calling me names. I won't stand it!"

"You—you—"



Skinner, Snoop, and Stott sprawled on the stone flags, gasping and blinking. Darrell stood with clenched fists, his eyes blazing down at them. "Had enough?" he said, between his teeth. (See Chapter II.)

"I don't want any of your cheek!" said Bunter loftily. "A chap who's been expelled from his school for drinking and betting and things——"

Darrell grasped him by the shoulders, and shook him fiercely. Bunter gasped.

"Leggo! Ow, ow!"

"Did you read this letter?"

"Ow, ow! D-d-don't shake me like that! My glasses will fall off, and if they get b-b-broken——"

"Have you read this letter?"

"You'll have to pay for 'em! Ow, ow, ow! Yah!"

Clump, clump, clump!

Billy Bunter roared and yelled as Darrell boxed his ears right and left.

"Ow, ow! Help! Murder! Fire!" shrieked Bunter.

"Did you read this letter before I caught you, you rotter?" shouted Darrell.

"Ow! Only a few lines!" howled Bunter. "Ow! I was just going to bring it to you. I don't want to read your beastly letters! Ow, ow, ow! Yaroooooh!"

Darrell hurled him away furiously, and he fell heavily upon the stone flags of the Cloisters.

"You dirty cad! You mean hound!" shouted Darrell. "I've a good mind to lick you till you can't crawl, you rotten spy!"

"Ow, ow, ow! Help!"

Darrell crushed the letter into his pocket, and turned away. Bunter blinked after him furiously.

"You rotter! I'll settle you!" he roared. "I'll let the

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whole school know that you were expelled from Repley! I'll show you up!"

"Will you?"

Darrell turned back upon him, and brought his boots into play. He fairly dribbled Bunter out of the Cloisters into the Close, till the fat junior picked himself up and fled, roaring like a bull.

Darrell strode away, breathing hard.

Bunter dashed on at top speed, thinking of nothing but getting away from Darrell, and too terrified to be even aware that Darrell was not pursuing him.

He rushed right into a group of juniors who were crossing towards the School House, and there was a shout.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Look where you're running, you silly ass!"

"Ow! Help!" roared Bunter. "He's after me! Keep him off! He's dangerous! Ow!"

Bob Cherry grasped the fat junior by the shoulder, and shook him.

"What's the matter, you fat ass? There's nobody after you."

Bunter blinked round nervously.

"Ow, ow!" he groaned. "The beast! To turn on me like that, after I've kept his secret all this time! Ow! The rotter! I'll go to the Head at once, the beast!"

"Who's a beast?" asked Bob, in wonder.

"Darrell!" howled Bunter. "Darrell! He was expelled from his last school, and he's been k-k-kicking me, just because I knew about it! Ow, ow, ow!"

"Great Scott!"

"CHUCKLES!" 1/2d.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER. The Accusation!

I was out now!
Bob Cherry ran Billy Bunter up against a tree, and jammed him there, with a tight grip on his collar.
"Now, you silly ass, what are you talking about?" demanded Bob sharply. "Who's been expelled from his last school?"

"Ow! Leggo! Darrell has."
"Rubbish!" said Harry Wharton.
"I tell you it is so," howled Bunter; "and I can prove it. He's a rotter all through, and he was expelled from Repley for disgraceful conduct! He was found drunk in a pub. Ow!"

"I don't believe it."
"Rats!"
"Rubbish!"
"Rot!"
"I'll prove it!" roared Bunter. "I'll show him up before all Greyfriars! Ow!"

"What on earth's the row here?" exclaimed Bolsover major. Fellows were crowding up from all quarters, attracted by the disturbance. Bunter's voice could be heard half across the Close.

"Bunter's got hold of a silly yarn," said Wharton; "one of his fairy tales, as usual. He says Darrell was expelled from his last school."

"So he was!" howled Bunter.
"Phew!"
"Oh, that's rather thick!" said Skinner.
"The thickfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a shake of the head.

"I can prove it!" howled Bunter.
"You'll have to!" said Johnny Bull grimly. "If you say a thing like that about a decent fellow like Darrell, you'll have to prove it, or else take a ragging."

"Of course, there's nothing in it," said Nugent.
"Nothing at all!"
"Only gus!"

"I don't know," said Snoop, with a snigger. "What's Darrell been giving Bunter money for? Bunter's had a small fortune out of him."

"By Jove—yes!"
"Let's hear all about it," said Bolsover major. "I don't believe a word of it, for one, but we'd better hear the story."

Bob Cherry released the fat junior. Bunter was still gasping for breath, and he was greatly enraged. He had said too much to stop now, and he was too furious for the moment to realise that he was, in fact, slaying the goose that laid golden eggs.

"Out with it, Bunter!"
"Get it off your chest!"
"Let's have the giddy fairy tale!"
Bunter panted.

"Darrell used to be at Repley—he was in the Lower Fourth there. He was expelled from his school. He was found drunk in a pub., and betting with bookmakers—"

"Oh, what rot!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Darrell's the last chap in the world to do anything of that kind."
"Of course he is!" said Bob Cherry angrily. "If you can't spin a better yarn than that, Bunter—"

"It's true!" yelled Bunter. "I recognised him the day he came. I was there the day he was expelled, visiting my uncle. My uncle was one of the masters who found him in the pub. in the middle of the night."

"Oh, draw it mild!"
"Is your uncle as big an Ananias as you are, Bunt?"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He didn't deny it when I spoke to him," said Bunter. "He didn't dare to. He knew that I knew him. He's Darrell of the Lower Fourth at Repley."

"He might have been at Repley, without being expelled," said Nugent.
"He's had a letter to-day with the Repley postmark," said Snoop.

"Well, that might prove that he was there, but not that he was sacked," said Harry Wharton. "I don't believe a word of it."

"Ask him!" snorted Bunter. "He won't dare to deny it. He admitted it to me."
"Bosh!"

"I tell you he did! He—he offered me money to keep the secret, but I refused, of course—ahem!—I scorned to take it!"

"Why has he been giving you money nearly every day, then?" grinned Bulstrode—"or every blessed day, so far as I know?"

"Ahem! That—that was a loan. I'm going to settle that when my postal-order comes."
"By George! It looks as if there's something in it,"

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said Bolsover major. "We all know that Darrell has been handing out money to Bunter, and we know that Bunter wouldn't be above blackmailing a chap."

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"
"We'll ask him, anyway," said Skinner. "Dash it all, he ought to clear up a thing like this! After all, he's been jolly mysterious about his old school—never talks about it at all. It was Repley, right enough."

"Sure, and I don't believe he was sacked at all, at all!" said Micky Desmond. "The Head wouldn't let him come here if he'd been sacked from another school."

"The Head doesn't know!" snapped Bunter.
"There was a chap did that before and Smithy bowled him out," said Russell.

"But he had changed his name!"
"I don't believe this of Darrell!" said Vernon-Smith. "It's some mistake."

"Ask him!" yelled Bunter.
"We may as well ask him!" said Skinner. "No harm in that."

"Begad! It's nobody's business but his own, my dear fellows," remarked Lord Mauleverer.

"Why not give Bunter a licking, and then let the matter drop?"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, and it's a janius ye are, Mauly. It's a good idea intirely."
"Hear, hear!"

"Lemme alone!" roared Bunter. "I tell you it's the truth. He won't dare to deny it if you ask him! He hasn't got cheek enough for that! I tell you he admitted it when I spoke to him, his first day here. I give you my word—"

"Oh, rats! What's your word worth?" sniffed Bob Cherry.
"And I'm jolly well going to tell the Head!" said Bunter.

"It's my duty to show that chap up, as he's come here on false pretences. I—"

"You won't go to the Head," said Harry Wharton, frowning. "Whether it's true or not, it's not your business to sneak to the Head. And you'd find it rather hard to explain about Darrell's having given you money."

"That was only a loan—"
"Oh, cheese it!"

"Looks to me as if there's something in it," said Bolsover major. "and one thing's jolly certain—Bunter has been squeezing money out of the kid to keep his secret."

"Looks like it!"
"Jolly certain!" said Peter Todd. "And as Bunter belongs to my study, and I don't allow blackmailing rascals in No. 7, Bunter's going to be bumped. Collar him!"

"Here, I say—hands off—yah—oh—help!"
But several pairs of hands grasped the Owl of the Remove, and the grinning juniors bumped him with hearty goodwill.

Bump, bump, bump!
They streamed off to the School House, laughing, and leaving Billy Bunter gasping on the ground. The fat junior sat up rather dazedly, and set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose.

"Ow—ow—ow!" he groaned. "Ow! The beasts! Yow! But I've jolly well put a spoke in Darrell's wheel! Ow—ow—ow—ow!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER. Darrell's Answer!

HERE he comes!"
"Here's Darrell!"

The muttered words came distinctly enough to Algy Darrell's ears as he entered the junior Common-room.

Nearly all the Remove were there, and a good number of the Fourth and Third.

The story of Bunter's accusation against the new fellow had spread in the Lower School, and there was a breathless curiosity on the subject.

Everybody wanted to know what Darrell had to say. Harry Wharton & Co. persisted that the story was a wild mistake of some kind. Some of the other fellows agreed with them. But most of the Removites had to admit that they thought there was something in it.

It was an indubitable fact that Darrell had been handing out money to Billy Bunter, and it was equally certain that he had not done it out of friendship, because his dislike of the fat junior was well known.

Bunter, in betraying Darrell, had betrayed at the same time his own rascality; but he was too obtuse to see that at first.

It was the fact that Bunter had received so many little loans from Darrell that disposed the fellows to believe the story. Bunter's word unsupported was worth nothing, or less than nothing.

But what had Darrell paid him for, unless he had that secret to keep?

That was a question to which the Famous Five could find no answer, though they persisted in declaring that it was all rot, and that Darrell was the right sort.

No one had asked Darrell about it, so far. He had gone to his study with his letter, and had remained there for some time. But now that he came down into the common-room, there was a general feeling that it was time to "have it out."

If Bunter's story was false, it was easy enough for Darrell to say so, and most of the fellows would have taken his word without question.

All eyes were turned upon Darrell as he came in.

His face was a little pale, and there was a line in his brow; but his step was firm as he walked into the crowded room, and he met the glances of the juniors fearlessly.

"Here he is!" chortled Billy Bunter, taking care to keep the table between himself and Darrell. "Now ask him!"

"You shut up!" growled Bob Cherry.

"I say, Darrell—" began Snoop.

Darrell turned upon him.

"Well?" he said sharply.

"Ahem!" said Snoop, backing away a pace or two. He did not quite like Darrell's look. "I—that is—you—ahem!"

"Have you got anything to say to me?"

"Well, you see—"

"Yes, Darrell," said Harry Wharton directly. "Bunter's telling a yarn about you, and we want you to tell us it's all lies, or a mistake. I've said so already, but you may as well say so, too, and knock it right on the head."

Darrell smiled, a strange, slow smile.

"Thank you, Wharton," he said. "So you believe in me?"

"I know you're the right sort," said Harry.

"I hope I am!"

"And we'll take your word, too," said Bob Cherry.

"You've only got to tell us that Bunter's lying, and that's the end of it."

"I don't know about that," muttered Skinner. "We want proof."

"Darrell's word is proof enough," said Bob.

"Well, I think—"

"Never mind what you think," said Bob decisively. "I should recommend Darrell to lick any chap who doubts his word. I'll hold your jacket, Darrell."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, let's have it out!" said Bolsover major. "Is there any truth in what Billy Bunter has been saying about you, Darrell?"

"What has he been saying?"

"He says you were at Repley School, in Yorkshire—"

"That is true."

"No harm in that!" said Mark Linley.

"But he says you were expelled," said Bolsover major.

"I admit it sounds rather thick, but as you've been giving Bunter money lately, we all think that you ought to explain. I'm as willing as Cherry to take your word. I don't think you'd tell lies."

"I certainly shouldn't tell lies," said Darrell quietly.

"Well, then, is it true?"

"Yes."

Darrell's reply was calm and quiet.

A hush of astonishment, almost of stupefaction, fell upon the crowded room.

No one had expected that reply. They looked at Darrell's face—handsome and pale and set.

He was perfectly calm, and only a slight quiver of the lip betrayed any emotion. His glance did not falter. A tinge of colour crept into his pale cheeks, and that was all.

"True!" stammered Bolsover, at last, quite taken aback.

"Yes."

"You were expelled from Repley?" demanded a dozen voices at once.

Darrell's head drooped a little.

"Yes, I was expelled from Repley."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great Scott!"

"Begad!"

"Well, this beats it!"

There was a chortle of triumph from Billy Bunter. This was the hour of his victory, and the licking in the Cloisters was more than avenged now.

"I say, you fellows, what did I tell you? I told you he was sacked from Repley, didn't I? Sacked for drinking and betting in a pub—"

"Hold your tongue!" growled Bob Cherry; and his frown was so dangerous that Bunter backed away, and held his peace.

Darrell stood quite still, one hand resting on the table. The flush in his cheeks was deepening. There were little beads of perspiration upon his brow, showing what an effort it cost him to maintain his calmness. He had been prepared for this, and he was going through it with steady courage; but it was a terrible blow to him, and most of the fellows there could see it.

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"I—I don't quite understand," said Wharton, at last. "You say you were expelled from your school, Darrell? But—but you're a decent chap. What had you done?"

"Was it some mistake?" asked Nugent.

"Of course he'll say it was!" sniggered Bunter. "Ow! Leggo, my ear, Bob Cherry, you boast! Yow-ow!"

"I was charged and found guilty, and the Head expelled me," said Darrell dully. "That's all I've got to say."

"But what were you charged with?"

"That cad has told you. I was found in a public-house at midnight."

"You—you own up to that?" gasped Wharton.

"Yes."

"Then it was right; you were guilty?"

"I had nothing to say to the Headmaster, and I have nothing to say now," said Darrell evenly. "It's come out, and as I can't lie about it, I've owned up. If you care to let Dr. Locke know, I shall most likely have to leave Greyfriars, but—"

"The Head's bound to get to know about it, sooner or later," said Bulstrode.

"Well, it's my luck. I suppose I shall have to stand it."

"But—but there must have been some mistake!" Wharton urged. "I can't believe it. You're not that kind of chap!"

Darrell was silent.

"Anyway, Darrell has been decent enough since he's been here," said Bob Cherry. "This won't make any difference as far as I'm concerned."

"Same here!" said Frank Nugent.

"The samefulness is terrific."

Then for the first time emotion came into Algy Darrell's face. His features worked a little, and his voice was husky when he spoke:

"I—I say, you're awfully good, you chaps! I—I wish I could explain to you, but—it wasn't just as it seemed—only I couldn't explain to the headmaster—and I can't explain now. I wasn't my own master, and—and—" He broke off. "It's no good saying anything. That's all!"

And Darrell turned and walked out of the room.

He left the common-room in a buzz behind him. It was true, then—Darrell had admitted it without reserve—true that he had been expelled from his last school—and one question was on all lips—what would the Head say when he knew? For whatever resolutions the juniors might make to keep Darrell's secret for him, nothing was more certain than that it must come out sooner or later—probably sooner. What would the Head say?

THE TENTH CHAPTER.
Not a Kindred Spirit!

"WELL, that takes the giddy biscuit!" That was Bob Cherry's verdict, and the other fellows agreed with him. It did take the biscuit.

Darrell was not seen again downstairs that evening; he kept in his study.

Micky Desmond and Morgan found him there when they went to do their preparation in No. 8. Darrell was working steadily and calmly at the table, and he did not look up as the two juniors came in. Desmond and Morgan regarded him very curiously. They liked their study-mate very much, and Bunter's revelation had come as a shock to them. But somehow or other, they liked Darrell just the same.

"After all," Micky had remarked in the common-room, "phwat he was expelled for isn't any worse than goes on here with some fellows. The Bouncer could give him points about pub-haunting—couldn't you, Smithy?"

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"But Smithy hasn't been found out!" grinned Skinner.

"Sure, and there's you, too, Skinner, you're no better than you should be—and sure you were expelled once, and the Head let you come back!" Micky continued.

"Oh, shut up!" said Skinner. He did not like being reminded of that.

"And Bolsover, too—"

"You let me alone!" said Bolsover. "I haven't been expelled, anyway!"

"Blessed are they who are not found out!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Well, I dare say Darrell's no worse than some fellows here—still, I suppose you won't say that what he's done is right," remarked Ogilvy.

"Oh, no!" said Bob. "But he's decent enough now, we all know that. Let bygones be bygones, that's my idea!"

"Faith, and that's my idea intirely!" said Micky Desmond.

That was what most of the Remove fellows thought. Micky Desmond and Morgan agreed that they would treat Darrell

Just the same as before; indeed, Micky was almost bubbling over with good-nature when he came into the study.

Darrell worked on without looking up.

"Faith, and it's busy ye are, Darrell!" said Micky, breaking the silence at last.

Then Darrell looked up from his work.

"Yes," he said.

"Ye're lookin' a bit rotten," Micky commented, scanning his face.

"I'm feeling a bit rotten," said Darrell, with a faint smile.

"I suppose so. And it's throe intirely, Darrell—you were really sacked from Repley? Sure I can't quite believe it yet!"

"It's true; but I don't want to talk about it."

"Sure that's a polite way of tellin' me to mind me own business!" grinned Micky. "All right—I'll shut me head, my son. Only we're goin' on jist the same here—I haven't got anything agin you!"

"Same here, look you," Morgan remarked.

"You're jolly good," said Darrell.

"Of course, you've chucked it up now," said Micky, a little apprehensively. "I suppose you won't be fetchin' drinks or smokes into the study—h'm!—"

Darrell burst into a laugh.

"No; I have never done that."

"And ye won't be breakin' bounds to go pub-hauntin'?" said Micky anxiously.

"No; on my word!"

"Blessed if I know what you did it for at Repley!" said his feet.

Micky, in wonder. "You don't seem that sort of a spalpeen at all, at all! But you say you did!"

"I said I was found guilty," said Darrell quietly.

"You were found at a pub. late at night, weren't you?" said Morgan.

Darrell flushed painfully.

"Yes."

"You didn't go there to take 'em tracts, I suppose?" asked Morgan, a little sarcastically.

"No."

"Well, it's all over now, and we'll say no more about it," said Micky Desmond hastily. "I only hope the masters won't get to hear of it!"

And the three juniors went on with their preparation. A little later there was a knock at the door, and Fisher T. Fish looked in. The American junior nodded to the occupants of the study, and regarded Darrell with great curiosity.

"I guess I've just heard the yarn," he said. "I say, Darrell, I guess I want to look at you. How does it feel to be squiffy?"

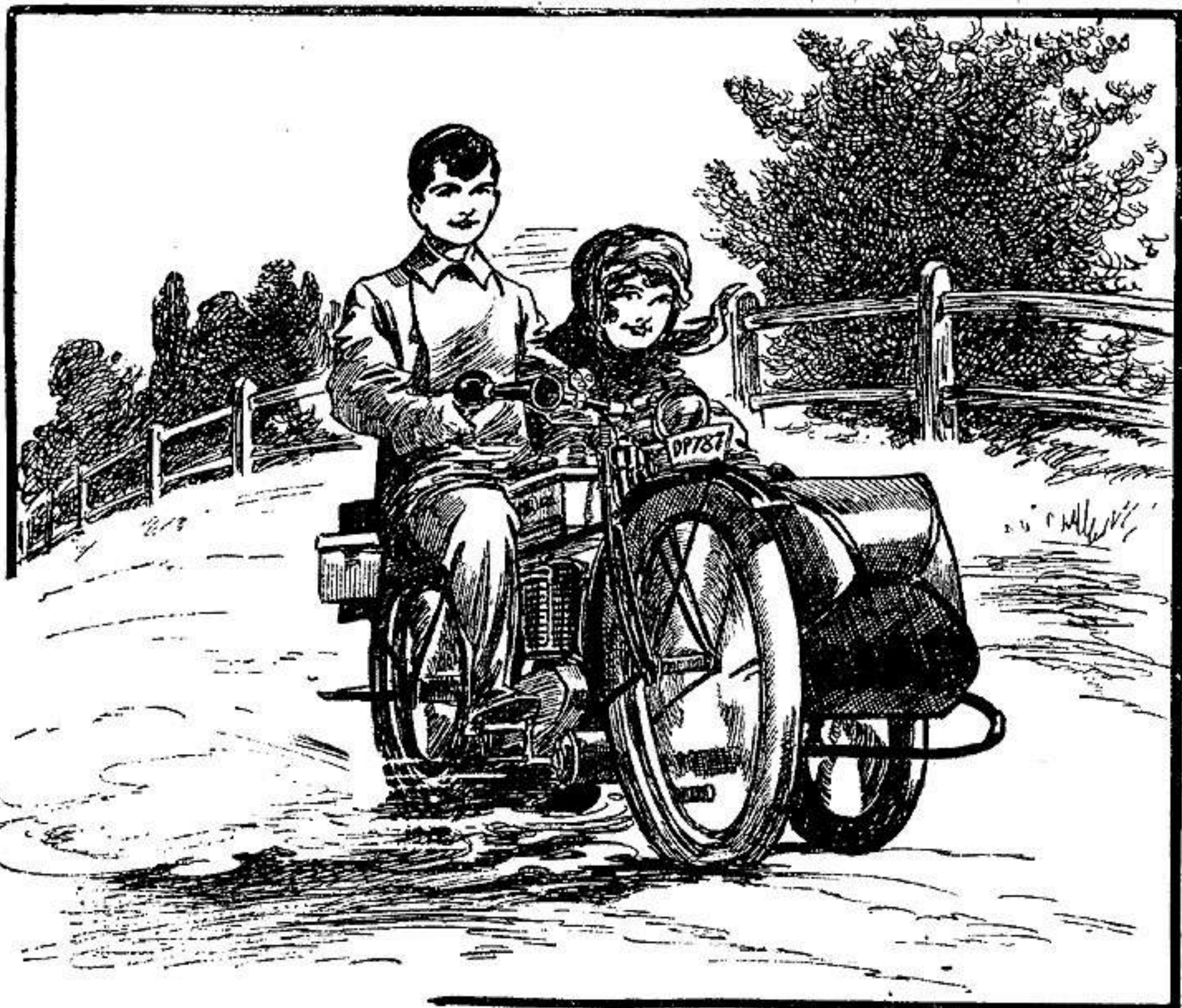
"Oh, clear off!" said Darrell.

"But I guess I want to know. I'm doing an article for the 'Greyfriars Herald,'" Fisher T. Fish explained. "I think I could make an interesting article if you'd give me some points about your experiences. 'How it Feels to be Squiffy; by One who has Been There.'—something like that, you know."

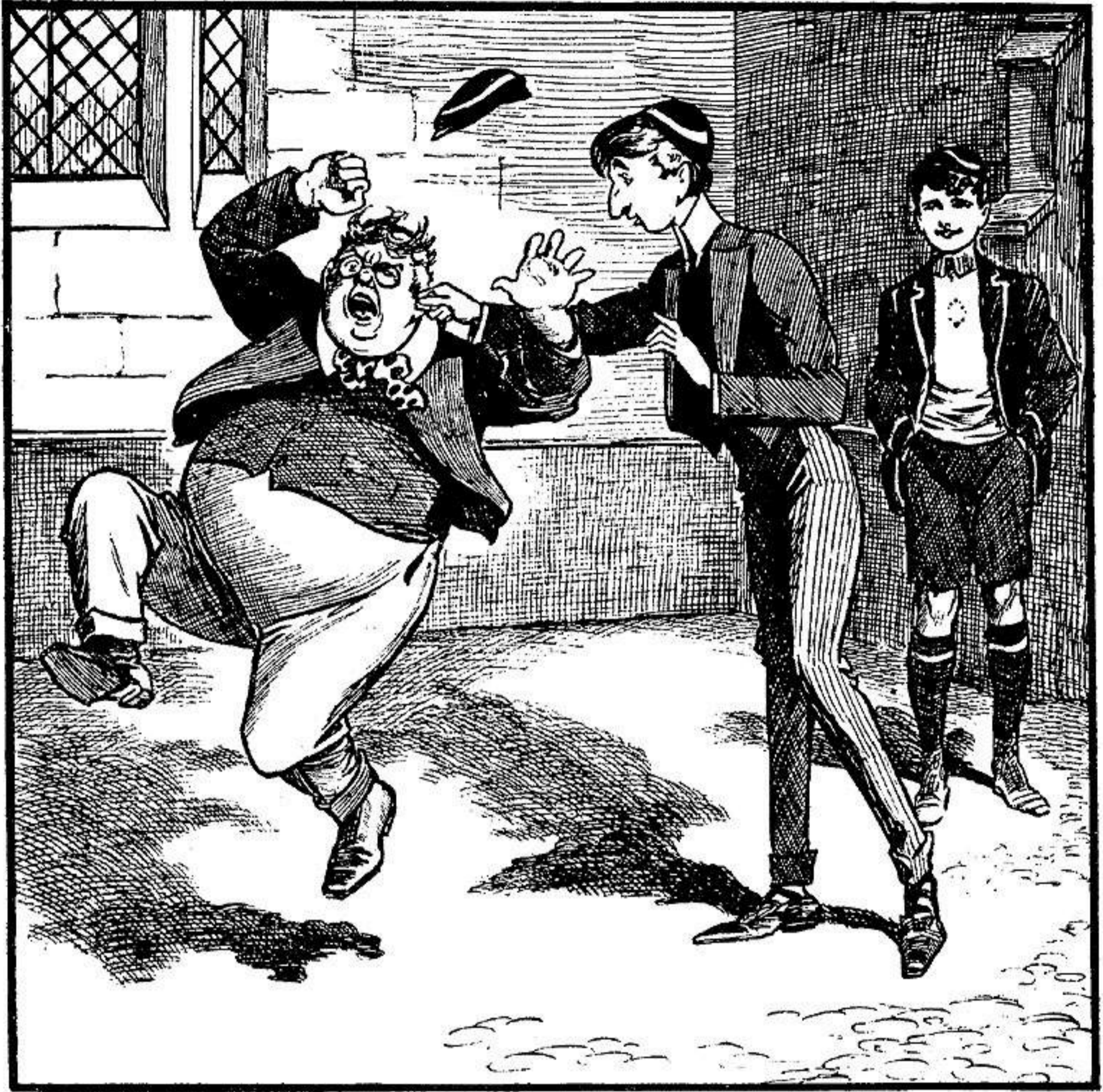
Micky Desmond and Morgan chuckled, and Darrell rose to



GOOD TURNS.—No. 27.



A Magnetite, who is the lucky possessor of a motor-cyclo and sidecar, takes advantage of a fine winter's day to take his invalid mother for a health-giving run in the crisp, keen air.



Peter Todd fastened his finger and thumb on Bunter's fat ear, and squeezed as if he would squeeze a hole in it. "Ow! Ow! Wharrer yer at!" roared Bunter. "Are you going to stop your rotten tricks?" asked Peter cheerfully. "You'd better make up your mind before your silly ear comes off!" (See Chapter 2.)

"Are you going to clear out, Fish?" he asked.
"Yep!" Fisher T. Fish backed into the passage. "No offence, you know—I only want to know, you know!"
Slam!

Darrell went back to his work with a red face.

Darrell remained in the study after Morgan and Desmond had finished and gone down. The rest of the Remove did not see him again until bedtime, when he came up by himself to the Remove dormitory.

Curious looks were cast at him; but he did not seem to observe them.

He went to bed quietly.

Darrell did not join in the cheery buzz of talk after lights out. Very few of the juniors had changed in their manner towards him; but it seemed as if the new boy already felt himself an outsider.

There was silence and slumber in the Remove dormitory
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at last; Darrell was the last to close his eyes, but at length he, too, was sleeping.

He was suddenly awakened.

In the darkness he felt a hand shaking him by the shoulder, and he started out of his slumber, and stared about him in the gloom.

"What—who is it?"

"S-hush!"

"Skinner!" said Darrell, recognising the voice.

"That's right!"

Darrell sat up in bed, and peered through the gloom at Skinner, wondering what he wanted. Eleven o'clock was striking from the clock-tower.

"What is it, Skinner? What's the matter?"

"Are you coming out?"

"Coming out!" repeated Darrell, in amazement.

Skinner chuckled softly.

"Yes, I'm going to the Cross Keys—lots of fun there if

you've got the tin to pay your whistle, you know. I didn't know it was in your line, or I'd have asked you before. Get up and dress quick—I'll show you the way out, and I'll give you a chance of seeing a bit of life."

"Seeing life!" repeated Darrell, hardly understanding. "I don't know what you're talking about. What do you mean?"

"You understand well enough," said Skinner impatiently, "and don't shout. I tell you I didn't know you were one of our sort—but I know now, and I'm willing to show you round, if you care to come!"

"And what are you going to do?"

"Well, there will be a game of nap, and smokes, and——"

"You rotter!"

Skinner started back.

"Eh—what's that?" he ejaculated.

"I called you a rotter! And you are a rotter! Get back to bed—that's the most sensible thing you can do. And don't play the giddy goat!"

Skinner gritted his teeth.

"What's the little game?" he muttered angrily. "I suppose you're not going to play the giddy Eric here, are you, now that we know all about you? We know what you were sacked from Repley for, don't we? Are you afraid to risk it again, or what?"

"I'm not afraid!"

"Then why don't you come?"

"Because I'm not a blackguard!"

"Oh, then what were you at Repley?" said Skinner, with a bitter sneer.

"Never mind what I was at Repley," said Darrell quietly. "Here I'm going to play the game, anyway. I'm not coming with you!"

Skinner breathed hard in the darkness. He was so angry that he could gladly have thrown himself upon the new boy and pommelled him right and left.

But Darrell was not exactly the sort of fellow who could be handled in that way, and Skinner did not want to make a disturbance, either. He controlled his rage with an effort.

"I was going to do you a good turn," he muttered.

"Thanks!"

"Well, if you won't come——"

"I certainly won't come!"

"Hang you, then!"

And Skinner disappeared. The black sheep of the Remove had confidently counted upon taking Darrell along with him on that little expedition. He knew how welcome a fellow with money would be among the circle of "sporting gents" at the Cross Keys. If Darrell had been fleeced there, Skinner would have pocketed a commission from Mr. Cobb on the transaction. That was Skinner's noble object.

Skinner went sullenly back to bed. He did not want to go without Darrell.

"The rotter!" he muttered. "He's jolly keen. He suspects that I should make something out of it. Hang him! But he's not going to come the goody-goody game with me, after being sacked from his old school! I'll make him sorry for what he's said. Hang him!"

And before he went to sleep Skinner turned over in his mind various plans for making Algy Darrell properly sorry for himself.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not Taking Any!

BILLY BUNTER wore a lugubrious expression the next day.

The fat junior had already repented of what he had done.

Under the painful influence of the licking Darrell had given him in the Cloisters, he had blurted out the whole story, and as Darrell had admitted the truth his hold upon the new boy was entirely gone.

There was nothing more for Bunter.

Billy Bunter had many times had occasion to be sorry for talking too much, but never had he repented so sincerely as upon the present occasion. He wore a worried look all the morning. When the Remove came out of their Form-room Bunter sidled up to Darrell in a rather hesitating manner.

Darrell glanced at him, and walked quickly away into the Close. Billy Bunter toddled after him in a hurry.

"I say, Algy, old chap, stop a minute."

Darrell stopped.

"What do you want?" he said angrily.

"I say, Algy——"

"If you call me Algy I'll knock you down, you fat brute!" said Darrell, in a tone of concentrated anger.

"Ahem! I—I say, Darrell, you know, I—I'm sorry I—I gave you away yesterday," stammered Bunter. "A fellow can't say more than that he's sorry, can he?"

"I don't care whether you are sorry or not. Leave me alone!" snapped Darrell.

"But I'm going to be your friend——"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"I owe you some small sums of money," said Bunter, with dignity. "Of course, it was understood that they were only temporary loans."

"Do you want to pay me?" said Darrell sarcastically.

"Ahem! I'm expecting a postal-order shortly, and then I shall settle in full. I owe you exactly twenty-five bob now."

"You can keep it."

"I decline to keep it. It was a loan, not a gift. I'm rather particular about money matters, and, of course, it would be quite impossible for me to accept a gift from you, especially considering the kind of fellow you are. Don't walk away while I'm speaking to you, Darrell. Look here, I was going to say, just lend me another five bob, and I'll hand you the whole thirty shillings as soon as my postal-order comes. Now, what do you say?"

"Clear off!"

"The Head doesn't know about you yet," said Bunter threateningly. "I've been considering whether I ought to go to the Head. I—— Oh! Yah! Wha-a-at are you doing? Yaroooh!"

It was pretty plain what Darrell was doing. He was taking Bunter by the ear, and he was pulling that ear till the fat junior felt as if it would come off. He roared and wriggled frantically in the strong grasp of the new boy.

"Ow, ow, ow! Leggo! Yowowow! Leggo my ear! Yah!"

"You fat cad——"

"Yaroooh! Rescue! Toddy!" howled Bunter, as he caught sight of Peter Todd in the Close. "Ow! Toddy! Rescue!"

Peter Todd came up.

"What's the row?" he demanded.

"This fat beast wants money out of me," said Darrell, breathing hard. "He's threatening to go to the Head. I'm giving him all he'll get from me."

"Ow, ow, ow! Make him leggo, Toddy!" wailed Bunter.

Peter Todd grinned.

He fastened his finger and thumb upon Bunter's other ear, and squeezed as if he would squeeze a hole in it. Bunter's roars redoubled.

"Ow, ow! Wharrer yer at? Chuck it! Yowow!"

"Now, are you going to stop your rotten tricks?" asked Peter Todd cheerfully. "You'd better make up your mind before your silly ear comes off."

"Ow, ow! Yes. Oh, yes! Yah!"

Billy Bunter jerked his head away, and clapped both hands to his crimson ears. He blinked furiously at the two juniors. Darrell, with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders, walked away. Peter Todd stood regarding the fat junior with a cheerful grin.

"You—you rotter!" howled Bunter. "Why don't you back up a chap in your own study? Ow!"

"Ain't I doing my best for you?" said Peter. "I'm trying to make you honest. It's an awful big job, but I'm going to stick to it. Whenever you wander from the straight and narrow path you can always rely on me to kick you back again."

"I'm jolly well going to the Head!" snorted Bunter. "It's a disgrace to have that—that blackguard at Greyfriars!"

"Wouldn't he such a disgrace if he shelled out—eh?" grinned Peter.

"Oh, rats!"

Bunter rolled away towards the School House. Peter strode after him.

"Where are you going, Bunty?" he asked affectionately.

"I'm going to the Head!"

"Your mistake; you're not!" said Peter. "No sneaking allowed in Study No. 7. Mind, Bunty, if you tell tales about Darrell I shall give you such a fearful licking that you'll wish you'd never been born. You know I'm a fellow of my word. That's all!"

"Look here, Todd——"

"That's enough. Shut up!"

And Billy Bunter did not go to the Head. He did indeed know that Peter was a fellow of his word, and he had no desire to experience a study licking. He had already had many painful experiences since Peter Todd had taken him in hand, with the noble intention of making a man of him.

Algy Darrell found many eyes upon him as he strolled in the Close. All the fellows in the Lower Form knew his

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story now, and fags of the Second and Third were talking it over. Fags came up to him to stare at him, as if curious to see what a fellow looked like who had been expelled from school. Humorous youths asked him what it was like to be squiffy, and whether he could give them a tip for the Swindleton Handicap. Darrell left the Close, and walked into the Cloisters for the sake of being alone.

There he took the letter from his pocket that he had received the previous day, that unlucky letter from Repley that had been the cause of Bunter's revelations.

He read it over again with a gloomy brow.
"I've been jolly careful since you left, Algy," ran one passage in the letter. "I've had just one plunge, which I hope will put me quite square. If it comes off all right I shall have done with that sort of thing for good and all. But I was bound to try to get square on the gee-gees, wasn't I? I hope you'll get on all right at Greyfriars, and that you'll make some pals there who won't be so much trouble to you as I was. I shall never forget how awfully good you've been to me."

Darrell crushed the letter in his hand.
"One more plunge!" he muttered, with a bitter smile. "Oh, the awful ass! As if what happened to me couldn't be a lesson to him! And he promised—"

He crumpled Bertie Erroll's letter into his pocket as three juniors came into the Cloisters. They were Skinner, Snoop, and Stott, and he could see that they were looking for him.

"Oh, here he is!" said Skinner. "Hiding out of sight—eh, Darrell?"

Darrell did not reply.
"I suppose you feel rather conspicuous just now," grinned Snoop. "But it will wear off in time, you know—as soon as something else happens for the fellows to talk about."

"How jolly dark you kept it," Stott observed. "We knew there was something up when it came out that you were giving Bunter money. But—"

"What do you want with me?" asked Darrell abruptly.

The three Removites exchanged glances.

"Well, the fact is, we've got a proposition to make to you," said Skinner.

"Like the one you made last night?"

"Well, something of the sort."

"Then you needn't make it," said Darrell coldly. "I don't want to have anything to do with anything of that kind."

"Look here—" began Snoop hotly.

"Easy does it," said Skinner. "Let's talk to him gently. Now, Darrell, it's no good coming the virtuous little Georgie bizney with us, you know, now that you're bowled out. We know you just as you are now. We're a little—well, a little society, we three, and we're willing to make you a fourth. Smitty used to be with us, but he's taken to nice ways now, and he has quite given up going on the razzle, for the present, at any rate. You're just the fellow we want."

"Sorry!"

"We're willing to give you a chance," said Skinner. "You can have us for friends or enemies, just as you like. Hang it all, now you're bowled out, what's the good of keeping up that hypocrisy?"

"Yes, what's the good?" said Stott. "Why shouldn't a chap enjoy himself? You seem to have gone the pace pretty thoroughly at Repley, anyway!"

"Now, what do you say, Darrell?" said Skinner persuasively. "We can put you up to having a good time!"

Darrell's eyes gleamed scornfully.

"I don't want what you call a good time," he said quietly. "Can't you understand that I'm not that kind of chap?"

"What were you expelled from Repley for, then?" said Skinner, with a sneer.

"You can leave that alone!"

"You mean that you don't want anything to do with us, is that it?"

"Yes; that's it!"

Skinner bit his lip. He was deeply annoyed and exasperated. Darrell was angry, too. Since the fact had come out that he had been expelled from Repley, the black sheep of the Remove seemed to take it for granted that he was one of themselves—that he was ready for any reckless black-guardism, and they were willing to receive him into their honourable society with open arms. They had felt the desertion of Vernon-Smith keenly; and they were eager to welcome Darrell to fill his place. Darrell was almost as well supplied with money as the Bounder, and that was the important point. But it was evident that the new boy was "not taking any," and that he was angry at their kind offer. The friendship of fellows like Skinner and Snoop and Stott was not at all what Algy Darrell wanted.

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ONE PENNY.

"Well," said Skinner venomously, "I must say you're jolly particular, for a fellow who was kicked out of a school for disgracing it. Not that I believe you—you know. I know you're only spoofing. You've practically deceived the Head by coming here without telling him the facts."

"Simply taken him in!" said Snoop.

"False pretences!" remarked Stott.

"Is that all you have to say?" asked Darrell grimly. "If it is, you can clear off, and leave me alone. I don't want to talk to you!"

"Why, you cheeky cad—" exclaimed Skinner.

Darrell clenched his fists.

"That's enough!" he said sharply. "I'm fed up with you. If you can't keep a civil tongue in your head, don't speak to me. I won't stand it!"

"You expelled blackguard—" Biff!

Darrell's temper failed him. His fist lashed out, and caught Skinner on the nose. Skinner dropped with a yell.

"Ow! Oh! You—you rotter! Ow!"

"Now, if you want any more, get up and have it!" said Darrell, pushing back his cuffs.

Skinner jumped up furiously.

"Pile in, you fellows," he shouted; "we'll give the rotten cad a lesson! My hat! We'll rag the cad bald-headed! Collar him!"

The three juniors rushed together at Darrell. Darrell did not back away. He stood up to the three of them, with flashing eyes and set lips. His right came crashing on Skinner's chin, and his left followed full on Stott's mouth, before they could get in a single blow.

The two fellows rolled over one another. Snoop backed away in alarm—but Darrell was rushing on now, and Snoop was hurled across Skinner with a terrific drive on the chest.

The three young rascals sprawled on the stone flags, gasping and blinking.

They had been far from expecting Darrell to turn out such "hot stuff." Darrell stood with clenched fists, his eyes blazing down at them.

"Had enough?" he said, between his clenched teeth.

"Ow!" groaned Skinner, caressing his chin.

"Grooh!" murmured Stott, with both hands over his mouth. He felt as if his jaw was no longer there.

"Yow! Lemme alone, you beast!" gasped Snoop.

Darrell turned on his heel and walked away.

Skinner & Co. sat up, and regarded one another dubiously.

"Ow! What a savage beast!" groaned Snoop. "Who'd have thought he'd cut up rusty like that? Tackling the three of us, too!"

"We'll make him sorry for it!" said Skinner savagely.

"Look here, I'm not going to tackle him again!" exclaimed Snoop in alarm. "You can, if you like; but you can leave me out!"

"There are other ways," said Skinner, gritting his teeth.

"I'll make him sorry for this. The cad—a rotten, expelled outsider! By Jove! I'll make him sorry he ever came to Greyfriars!"

And the three rascals, groaning over their injuries, put their heads together to discuss ways and means of making Algy Darrell sorry for what he had done.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Skinner the Artist.

MR. QUELCH stared blankly. He was astonished.

It was nearly time for afternoon lessons; the bell had just commenced to ring, when Mr. Quelch had come into the Remove Form-room.

The blackboard caught his eye at once.

It had been pulled out from the wall, and stood in full view; and upon the black surface was a drawing in chalk.

It was that work of art that astonished Mr. Quelch.

It had been done with some skill—and the drawing represented a boy in Etons sitting in the bar of a public-house, with a cigar in his mouth, and a glass of beer in his hand.

The features had been chalked in quite artistically, and the likeness had been caught. It was the face of Algernon Darrell, the new boy in the Remove.

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Mr. Quelch gazed at the drawing with astonished eyes. He did not know in the least what to make of it. He recognised the likeness of Darrell; but why Darrell should be represented in such a place, acting in such a way, was a mystery to him. He had observed the boy since he had come to Greyfriars, and he was quite satisfied with him.

As the bell rang, the Removites came into the Form-room. Some of them uttered exclamations at the sight of the drawing on the board, and some of them grinned as they went to their places.

Mr. Quelch waited till all the boys were at their desks; and then he pointed to the drawing on the blackboard.

"I desire to know what this means," he exclaimed. "If it is a joke, it is a joke in the most execrable taste. Who drew this picture?"

There was no reply.

"There is a certain amount of artistic skill in this," said Mr. Quelch. "The boy who drew this has talent that might be better employed. You can all of you recognise the boy for whom this is intended—it is Darrell. Darrell!"

"Yes, sir!" said Darrell. His face was very red.

"Do you know who has drawn this picture?"

"No, sir!"

"Do you know why it was drawn?"

"I suppose it is a caddish joke, sir."

"Have you done anything since you have been at this school to give the impression that you could possibly act in the way there depicted?" asked Mr. Quelch majestically.

"Certainly not, sir!"

"This picture is an insult as well as a foolish joke," said Mr. Quelch, his keen eyes sweeping over the form. "And the Form-room is no place for either. I demand to know which boy here has done this?"

Silence!

Harry Wharton's eyes turned upon Skinner. He knew that Harold Skinner had some skill as a draughtsman. But Skinner's face was quite wooden in its expression. If he had drawn the chalk picture, he had no intention of owning up to it.

Mr. Quelch frowned darkly.

"There is no excuse whatever for this action," he said. "Darrell, I am sorry that you should have been insulted in this way by a boy in this form, who is too mean to own up to his action. If I discover him, I shall certainly punish him severely."

And Mr. Quelch took the duster and rubbed out the tell-tale drawing.

Darrell sat very quiet.

He knew that his enemies were at work already; and that they would not be satisfied until his secret was known to the whole school, the masters as well as the boys. A feeling of weariness came over the unfortunate junior. He was tempted to rise and explain there and then to Mr. Quelch what that picture meant, and have it over.

But he did not.

It would mean disgrace—humiliation—a painful interview with the Head—and then an immediate departure from Greyfriars. He had wanted so much to make a fresh start at his new school, and to leave the shadows of the past behind him. But for that unlucky recognition by Billy Bunter he could have done so. Now that it must come out, surely it would be wiser to take the plunge, and get it over? And yet he naturally shrank from that. He clung to the hope that there might be a chance yet—and he wished to put off the evil day as long as possible.

His face was very clouded during morning lessons, and he could not help observing that Mr. Quelch glanced at him very sharply several times.

Mr. Quelch liked the new boy—Darrell had given satisfaction in every way. He was a good scholar; he was very attentive and keen to learn—without being a "swot." He worked hard in the Form-room, and he played hard out of it. Mr. Quelch liked him—but he could not help wondering why such an attack had been made upon him, as was implied in the drawing on the blackboard—unless he had done something to provoke it. Mr. Quelch would not have been surprised at such a gibe at Vernon-Smith, or Skinner—but why had the new boy been selected for such an attack? The Form-master could not help wondering whether he had been deceived in the new boy, and whether the other Removites knew more about him than his master did.

Darrell was quite keen enough to guess what was in the Remove-master's mind.

After lessons, Darrell left the Form-room with the rest, but quitted them in the passage, and walked away by himself. A few of the fellows had showed a desire to avoid him, because he had been expelled from his last school—it was not unnatural. And the sensitive lad shrank from appearing to force himself upon anybody. If anyone wanted his society,

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he was easily to be found. Five cheery juniors followed him into the Close and surrounded him.

"You're coming down to the footer practice?" said Harry Wharton.

Darrell flushed and hesitated.

"Come on," said Bob Cherry, slipping his arm through Darrell's. "You're not going to begin to slack now, now that you're getting on so well with the footer."

"If you want me—" began Darrell.

Harry Wharton interrupted him.

"Look here, Darrell, don't play the giddy goat!" he said. "I'll speak out plainly. It's unfortunate about what happened to you at Repley, but I believe you are the right sort. If you've done a rotten thing, and you're sorry for it, and trying to make up for it—or if there was some mistake—it's all the same. So long as you play the game here, we're all your friends. Isn't that so, you fellows?"

"Yes, rather!"

"The rathorfulness is terrific!"

"So don't take it to heart, and don't mope about it, and get suspicious," said Wharton bluntly. "Only a few fellows are down on you—and they are fellows who've been as bad themselves, or worse. Skinner was sacked once from this school, and the Head let him come back. He's a black sheep. Of course, it was Skinner who drew that rot on the blackboard. You needn't mind Skinner. Just shove the thing out of your mind, and go on as if it hadn't come out. And now come down to the footer."

Darrell smiled.

"You're jolly good!" he said. "I'm coming, rather!"

And in a few minutes he was on the football-ground with the chums of the Remove, in great spirits.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Darrell Declines!

"EXPELLED!"

"Yes!"

"Oh, rats! I don't believe it," said Loder.

"It's a fact!" said Skinner. "You can believe it or not, as you like. Don't let anybody know I've told you, that's all!"

Loder of the Sixth looked at the junior curiously. Loder was a prefect, and as a prefect it was his duty to look into the matter Skinner had reported to him. But Loder had his own ideas about the way he should do his duty.

Skinner was speaking in a low, cautious voice. They were alone in the Sixth-Former's study, but the sneak was very nervous. If the other fellows in the Remove discovered that he had "sneaked" to a prefect, it would go hard with him—he knew that. They might be down on Darrell, but they would all agree in punishing the sneak.

"What school was he at?" asked Loder.

"Repley, in Yorkshire."

"And what was he sacked for?"

"He was found in a pub. at midnight by some of the masters."

"Phew!"

"It's true. Bunter's uncle is a master at Repley, and that's how it came out," said Skinner. "Of course, you won't let it come out I've told you. The fellows would make it hot for me."

Loder grinned.

"They would," he said. "But I can't quite swallow it, Skinner. You are an awful liar, anyway!"

"It's the talk of the Lower School!" said Skinner sullenly.

"What have you told me for?" the prefect asked suddenly.

"Well, I think something ought to be done," said Skinner virtuously. "We don't want a fellow here who's been sacked from another school. The Head can't know. I think it's a disgrace to Greyfriars!"

"That isn't why you've told me. You don't like him?"

Skinner set his teeth.

"No, I don't! He's playing the goody-goody game now, and putting on airs. I want to take him down a peg or two."

"Why didn't you go to Wingate? He's head prefect."

"Well, Wingate never will listen to anything—"

"You mean, he doesn't encourage sneaking?" grinned Loder. "Well, perhaps you're right. So Darrell was expelled from Repley! It seems rather thick. The Head can't have a suspicion about it."

"Of course he can't. He wouldn't have let Darrell come here if he'd known, that's a dead cert. He's been taken in."

"Darrell's guardian must have had a hand in that, then," said Loder thoughtfully. "It's a queer biznai. It's a pretty rotten trick for you to give the kid away, too."

Skinner crimsoned.

"You're sometimes jolly glad to get information!" he said sulkily.

"Quite so; but I've got nothing against Darrell. He seems rather a decent and quiet kid. Still, I'll look into it. You can get out."

"You won't mention—"

"That's all right. Buzz off!"

Skinner left the study, feeling a little sorry. He wanted very much to get even with Darrell, as he regarded it; but he was not quite satisfied with his action. However, it was done now. Bob Cherry was coming along the passage, after a visit to Wingate's study, and he glanced at Skinner as the latter left Loder's quarters.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Trouble with Loder?" asked Bob sympathetically.

Skinner drew a quick breath.

"Ye-es; lines," he said.

And he hurried away. Bob looked after him rather curiously. He did not see why Skinner should look so confused if he had merely been taking lines to Loder's study. However, it was not Bob's business, and he dismissed the matter from his mind.

When the Remove came out of the Form-room that afternoon, a fag brought a message to Darrell.

"You're wanted!" he said, tapping the Removite on the arm.

"Hallo!" said Darrell. "Who wants me?"

"Loder—in his study."

And the fag walked away, whistling.

"What's the trouble now?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Have you been treading on Loder's pet corns, Darrell, old man?"

"Not that I know of," said Darrell, laughing.

He made his way to Loder's study. Although he was not conscious of having transgressed any rules, it was likely enough that the prefect was down on him. Loder was a bully of the first water, and the blackest sheep in the Sixth. Darrell did not know so much about him as the other fellows knew, but he had learned something of Loder's character.

But Loder had his most agreeable manner on when Darrell came into his study.

"You sent young Tubb for me, Loder?" said Darrell.

"Yes; shut the door."

Darrell shut the door.

"You can sit down," said Loder.

Darrell sat down, puzzled, but considerably relieved. It was evident that he was wanted neither for lines nor for a licking, as Loder asked him so urbanely to sit down.

"I've taken some notice of you lately," Loder remarked.

"Of course, as a rule, the Sixth don't have much to do with the juniors. You understand that?"

"I suppose not," said Darrell.

"Just the same in your last school, I suppose?" Loder remarked, with a narrow look at him.

"Yes," said Darrell.

"By the way, where was that school?"

"In Yorkshire."

"And you left it to come to Greyfriars?"

Darrell's heart sank. He felt that these questions could have only one object; the prefect had heard something. The blow had fallen at last. In spite of himself, his manner showed the miserable dismay that invaded his heart. Loder smiled.

"I—I was away from that school a couple of months," said Darrell falteringly.

"Yes. And then you came here?"

"Yes; then I came here."

"Your guardian sent you here, I think?"

"Yes."

"You haven't any near relations?"

"None."

"But you got a good allowance?" said Loder.

"Yes. I shall have plenty of money when I'm of age," said Darrell. "My guardian is very generous to me now. But—"

"Well, I don't want to be inquisitive about your affairs," said Loder easily. "I suppose you had a pretty good time at Repley?"

"Yes; it was all right there," said Darrell.

"Lots of fun sometimes, I suppose?"

"Ye-es," said Darrell, a little perplexed. "We were very keen on cricket and football; and I was in the amateur theatricals, too. I edited the school paper as well."

Loder laughed.

"But you had some other amusements—under the rose?" he asked. "A little game of nap sometimes, and a cigarette over it?"

"Oh, no!" said Darrell, shaking his head. "Some of the fellows did. I suppose it goes on, more or less, at all public schools. But I didn't; I never cared for anything of that kind. It wasn't in my line."

The prefect looked at him very hard.

"Then you wouldn't care for anything of the kind here?" he suggested.

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ONE PENNY.

"Oh, no; not at all!"

"Suppose," said Loder carelessly—"suppose there were some fellows in the school who made a sort of little club, where a fellow could get some fun nap and banker, you know, with smokes and that kind of thing—a little life, you know, to break the monotony. There's that kind of a club here, and there are seniors in it—in fact, a prefect or two. Did you know?"

Darrell turned red. He could not fail to see now what Loder was driving at, and he was feeling exceedingly uncomfortable.

"N-no!" he stammered.

"Of course, everybody isn't let into it," said Loder, growing more confidential. "But a fellow who has money enough to pay his way—and a chap who has seen life a bit, and knows what's what—that's the kind of chap they want. I dare say you'd find it very entertaining, you know—a smoke and a little game of nap in the evening. What do you think—rather in your line, eh? You can speak quite freely to me. As a matter of fact, I'm chairman of that little club—I tell you this in confidence, of course."

"I—I— But you're a prefect!"

"Yes," said Loder, laughing. "That makes it easier, of course. It's strictly under the rose—you understand that."

"I suppose so," said Darrell.

"Well, what do you say?" asked Loder kindly.

"I—if you'll excuse me, Loder, I'd rather not. It isn't in my line really—I don't care for that sort of thing!" said Darrell awkwardly.

Loder's face became hard and grim.

"You mean that?" he demanded.

"Yes, certainly!"

"What did you leave Repley for?" said Loder abruptly.

Darrell's face turned white. It had come at last; he realised that if he did not become a member of Loder's precious "club," and allow the rascals to fleece him, he was to take the consequences. But he was steady and firm.

"I think you know," he said. "I think you have heard about it, Loder, from what you've been saying. I was expelled."

"Does Dr. Locke know?"

"He does not!"

"Then you deceived him in coming here?"

"Nothing was said—and no questions were asked," said Darrell, flushing painfully. "I should not have told a lie."

"It amounts to one," said Loder. "Of course, you understand that it's my duty as a prefect to report this to the Head."

"It's your duty as a prefect to report to the Head about that club you were speaking of, isn't it?" said Darrell bitterly.

"I was saying all that to draw you out, of course," said Loder calmly. "There's no such club, and if there were, I should certainly report it to the Head if it came to my knowledge. I am quite willing to repeat before the Head all that I've said to you, and to take the consequences, if you mention it to him."

"I know you're quite safe, if that's what you mean," said Darrell.

"Don't give me any of your cheek. I'm sorry for you—but I've got my duty as a prefect to do. If I didn't, it would come to Wingate's knowledge soon, and he would report you. From what I hear, it's the talk of the Lower School."

"That is true."

"What were you expelled for?"

Darrell raised his head proudly.

"You are going to report me to Dr. Locke?"

"Yes, and at once!"

"Then I shall say what I have to say to him, and not to you," said Darrell. And he rose and walked out of the prefect's study, leaving Loder pale with anger.

Five minutes later the prefect was with the Head of Greyfriars.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Order of the "Sack"!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's the row?"

Bob Cherry looked quite anxiously at Darrell as he came into the Remove dormitory. Bob had come up to change, after a sprint in his running clothes. He found Darrell in the dormitory, kneeling beside his open box, with garments and all sorts of articles spread on the floor round about him. Darrell was packing.

The new boy turned a white face towards Bob.

"It's all up!" he said.

"Oh, my hat! What's happened?"

"Loder knows."

"Loder!" said Bob, in dismay.

"Yes; and he's gone to the Head about it."

"Oh, crumbs!" said Bob Cherry. "Have you seen the Head yet?"

"Not yet—but I know what he will say, of course. I'm getting my box packed ready. I shall catch to-night's train," said Darrell wretchedly.

Bob Cherry looked at him in utter dismay. Never till that moment had he realised how much he had come to like Algy Darrell. It seemed as if the departure of the new boy would leave a blank in the Remove, though he had been at Greyfriars little more than a week.

"Well, this is rotten!" said Bob, in troubled tones. "I'm awfully sorry, Darrell! But—but don't be in a hurry—the Head mayn't send you away!"

Darrell shook his head.

"He can't do anything else. I shall have to go."

"Pity you didn't tell him the facts at the start."

"It's all the same—then I shouldn't have been allowed to come here!"

"I—I suppose not!" agreed Bob.

"It's all up now. I'm only half sorry it's all over!" said Darrell, in a low voice. "Ever since I came—since Bunter recognised me—I knew that it couldn't last very long. Things can't be kept secret for ever."

"Not when a chap like Bunter knows them, anyway!" said Bob. "But somebody must have sneaked to Loder—My hat! Skinner, of course! I saw him coming out of Loder's study to-day, and he looked sheepish when I spotted him. The rotter—he had given you away! I'll—"

"It's all the same," said Darrell. "It was bound to come out in the long run."

"I say, let me help you pack!" said Bob dolefully.

"Is Darrell here?" exclaimed Walker, of the Sixth, looking into the dormitory. "Dash it all, young Darrell, I've been looking for you everywhere. The Head wants you—at once!"

"Yes, Walker."

Walker looked at him very curiously.

"I hear you were expelled from your last school, and it's just come out," he said. "Is it the fact, or has somebody been pulling Loder's leg?"

"It's the fact," said Darrell.

Walker whistled.

"Well, you had a jolly nerve to come here. Cut off to the Head—Quelch's with him, and they're both looking as solemn as judges. You've got a high old time in front of you, I can tell you!"

"Good luck, old man!" said Bob, as Darrell rose to his feet from the box. Darrell nodded with a faint smile, and left the dormitory.

His face was pale but calm as he tapped at the Head's door. The doctor's deep voice bade him enter.

Mr. Quelch was in the study with the Head. Both of the master's looked fixedly at the junior as he came in.

"Darrell," said the Head very gravely, "I have received a most extraordinary report with regard to you. You were sent here by your guardian, Mr. Harding, an eminent solicitor, upon whom I naturally placed every reliance. Is it true that you were expelled from the school you belonged to before you came here?"

"Yes, sir!"

"You were at Repley?"

"Yes, sir!"

"I understood that you came here from a preparatory school."

"I was at a preparatory school before I went to Repley, sir. I was only at Repley one term."

"No reference to that term at Repley was made to me by Mr. Harding or by yourself," said the Head severely.

"I—I wanted to make a fresh start, sir!" faltered Darrell. "Mr. Harding believed in me, and he consented that nothing should be said."

"It was most unfair to me, as you might have turned out here as you appear to have turned out at your previous school!" the Head said sternly.

Darrell crimsoned.

"Oh, sir, I—I can't explain, but my guardian knew that I was all right. He knew that I should play the game here. There was no doubt about that in his mind. He's known me since I was a baby. He was my father's oldest friend, and he had confidence in me."

"Did you justify his confidence in you when you were at Repley?"

"I did, sir!"

"Yet you were expelled?"

Darrell was silent.

"Why did the headmaster of Repley expel you?"

"I—I was found in a public-house at midnight!" faltered Darrell.

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Dr. Locke's face grew very dark, and Mr. Quelch uttered a startled exclamation.

"Bless my soul!" the Head exclaimed. "That was certainly an adequate reason for expelling you, Darrell. I should undoubtedly have done the same. And after that, you had the unparalleled impudence, sir, to foist yourself upon this school!"

Darrell's lip quivered, but he did not speak.

"Have you been guilty of any such conduct since you have been here?" demanded Dr. Locke.

"Certainly not, sir!"

"I must say that I have found Darrell a model pupil in every way, Dr. Locke," said Mr. Quelch, with a regretful glance at the pale-faced boy.

"But it is impossible to allow him to remain, Mr. Quelch. If he had stated the facts to me frankly—or if his guardian had done so—I should not have allowed him to enter Greyfriars. I can hardly allow him to remain, therefore, because he succeeded in deceiving me."

"No, sir, I don't suggest that."

"You understand that you must leave this school at once, Darrell," said the Head.

"I understand, sir," said Darrell, in a low voice.

"Very well; then nothing more need be said. I shall write to your guardian, and express very plainly my opinion of his action in sending you here without stating the facts to me!" the Head exclaimed.

"Mr. Harding acted out of kindness, sir, and—and because he knew I should do all right here," said Darrell falteringly. "The blame is all mine!"

"Very well; you may go! Pack your box to-night, and you will be taken to the station in the morning!"

Darrell met the Head's stern glance proudly.

"I am willing to go to-night if you wish, sir," he said.

"You will go in the morning," said Dr. Locke. "Now you may leave my study!"

"Very well, sir."

Darrell quitted the study. The stern expression faded from the Head's kind old face, and he looked worried and distressed.

"I am sorry for this, Mr. Quelch," he said. "The boy made a very favourable impression upon me. I am not often deceived in a lad's character, and I would have been willing to affirm that Darrell was an honest and upright lad."

"That is my impression also, sir."

"But I have no resource but to send him away. A boy expelled from another school for disgraceful conduct cannot be allowed to remain at Greyfriars. It is not fair to the other boys, nor to their parents."

"Yet it is a pity."

"A great pity!" said the Head. "The boy certainly looks as if he were worthy of better things. I am truly sorry; but it cannot be helped!"

And the subject was dropped.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Little Excitement!

"IT'S the order of the boot!" grinned Skinner.

"Darrell's got to go!"

"I say, you fellows, Darrell's got the push!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Rotten!"

"Poor chap!"

"Poor beast!"

"Oh, well, it was bound to come!"

There was much excited talk in the junior common-room when the truth was known. All the Remove knew that Darrell had been called before the Head, and they all knew what for.

When he came out of the Head's study, his face white and set, and went up to the dormitory to resume packing his box, it was known what the result was. He had to go; and even the fellows who wished him well had to say that they were not surprised at it. The Head could hardly have done anything else.

"You see, the Head's got to consider us!" said Billy Bunter. "It wouldn't be fair on us to let that awful black-guard stay here, would it?"

"Shut up!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Some dirty rotter must have given the chap away!" went on Johnny Bull wrathfully. "If I knew who it was, I'd wipe up the floor with him! Was it you, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter backed away in alarm.

"I—I— Certainly not! I shouldn't sneak, of course—"

"Oh, it got out, you know!" said Skinner calmly. "These

things do get out. So many fellows knew, the prefects were bound to hear somebody talking sooner or later!"

"Looks to me as if there's been sneaking!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, it makes no difference now," Snoop remarked. "He's got to go. And I, for one, must say that I'm not sorry!"

"Same here," said Stott, rubbing his nose reminiscently. Johnny Bull snorted contemptuously.

"Better for Greyfriars if some of you cads went instead!" he exclaimed.

Harry Wharton came into the common-room, and glanced round in surprise as he heard the excited voices, and saw the excited looks. He had been out, and had not yet heard the news.

"What's going on?" he asked. "Anybody in trouble?"

"It's Darrell," said Nugent. "Loder's found him out and reported him, and he's got the order of the boot!"

Wharton's face fell.

"Oh, that's rotten!" he said.

"And these cads are rejoicing about it!" growled Johnny Bull, with a glare at Skinner and his friends. "For two pins I'd wipe up the floor with them. It was one of them gave the poor chap away, I'll bet on that!"

"Where's Darrell now?" asked Harry.

"In the dorm., packing. Bob's helping him, and a crew of inquisitive rotters staring at him!" growled Bull. "He's going in the morning. Well, I dare say he'll be glad enough to get away from some of us!"

Wharton wrinkled his brows in thought.

"I don't like this," he said. "I don't care what happened at Repley; I believe that Darrell is a good sort, and a thoroughly decent chap. I can't help thinking that he could explain it all, somehow, if he liked!"

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fellows. I'd give anything to stay. But it's no good talking; I've got to go!"

"Not if you could explain——"

"But I can't!"

"Won't you tell me why not?"

"I can't!"

Wharton felt baffled. He was sure in his own mind that Darrell was "all right," as he would have called it—that there had been some ghastly mistake in his punishment at Repley. And if that was the case, it was doubly miserable that the unhappy junior should be turned out of Greyfriars as well. But if he would not speak, what could be done? What was the motive of his silence?

Darrell finished his packing, and went down to his study. He seemed to move like a fellow in a dream. His heart was heavy, his face darkly clouded. Skinner, when he passed him in the passage, and saw the expression on his face, felt a pang of remorse.

"I—I say, Darrell," he said awkwardly, "I—I'm sorry you're going."

Darrell nodded.

"Thank you!" he said dully.

He went into his study and closed the door. Bob Cherry came upon Skinner in the passage, and a glare came into his eyes. He brandished a big fist under Skinner's nose.

"You gave Darrell away to that beast Loder, didn't you?" demanded Bob furiously.

"N-no, I didn't," stammered Skinner. "I'm sorry he's got it in the neck like this."

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"Oh, rot!" said Bolsover major. "If he could, why doesn't he?"

"I'm going to see him," said Harry.

He hurried up to the Remove dormitory. Darrell, whose eyes were a little dim, but who was very quiet and calm outwardly at least, had nearly finished his packing. Bob Cherry was helping him, and Bob was almost on the point of blubbing.

A dozen other fellows were in the dorm., drawn there by curiosity. Darrell took no notice of them; but he gave Wharton a friendly nod.

"You're going?" said Harry.

"I've got to go."

"Look here, Darrell," said Harry earnestly, "is it bound to come to this? Isn't there anything you can say to the Head?"

"He knows that I was expelled from Repley," said Darrell dully.

"Yes; but he doesn't know all. We don't know the whole story. Look here; I know you pretty well by this time," said Wharton directly. "I know you're not that kind of chap. There was some mistake in that bizney. Now, wasn't there?"

Darrell gave him a strange look.

"If there was, I can't explain it," he said.

"But there was?" persisted Wharton.

"Well, yes, there was!" said Darrell at last.

"Then why can't you explain it?"

"I can't. I couldn't at Repley, and I can't here. I brought it on myself, and I'm not really sorry for what I did. It can't be helped now."

"But you don't want to leave Greyfriars?"

Darrell's face worked a little.

"Goodness knows I don't! I've been happier here than I was at Repley, and I like the place; I like most of the

Bob breathed hard.

"I wish I could be sure," he said. "If I knew it was you, I'd hardly leave a whole bone in your body, you rotter! I—Dash it all, you've always been down on him; and I'll give you a licking, anyway!"

"Here, I say, hands off! Oh—ow—yah—help!" roared Skinner, as the exasperated Bob rushed at him, hitting out with right and left.

Biff! Biff! Biff!

Skinner went rolling along the passage, roaring.

"Now get up and have some more!" shouted Bob.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"I say, what's that blessed row?" exclaimed Billy Bunter, looking out of Study No. 7. "I say, Cherry, I wish you wouldn't kick up such a row when I'm trying to do my prep! Why, what's the matter with you? Ow! He's mad! Help! Yarooop!"

Bunter had put his head out in an unlucky moment for himself. Bob Cherry collared him, and bumped him down in the passage—hard!

"Take that, you fat rotter—and that!"

"Yow—ow—ow! Wharrer marrer? Yah! Chuckit! Keep off!" yelled Bunter. "Are you dotty? Gerroff!"

Bob strode away, leaving him gasping on the floor. Bunter squirmed back into Study No. 7, and promptly locked the door, fully convinced that Bob Cherry had taken leave of his senses.

There were several gloomy faces in the Remove that evening. Darrell kept in his study, and when the Remove went to bed he came up, looking very pale and worn. Snoop looked at him with a chuckle, noting a redness on his eyelids.

That chuckle drew Bob Cherry's eyes on him. Bob was in a dangerous temper, and his wrath was directed upon Snoop.

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"What are you cackling about?" he demanded.

"I suppose I can cackle if I like?" said Snoop defiantly.

"That's where you make a mistake, you can't!" growled Bob. "Take that!"

"That" was a pillow, and it came whizzing through the air, curled round Snoop's neck, and carried him to the floor with a heavy bump.

"You rotter!" howled Snoop. "I'll—I'll——"

"Well, what will you do?" demanded Bob truculently.

Sidney James Snoop decided that he would do nothing. He went sullenly to bed, and he was not heard to cackle any more. Bob Cherry looked round the dormitory, apparently anxious for more trouble, if an opportunity should offer, and one or two fellows who had thought of "chipping" Darrell thought better of it, finding second thoughts best under the circumstances.

Wingate saw lights out for the Remove. He glanced compassionately at Darrell, but did not speak to him. Darrell had turned in quietly without a word to anyone. After lights out he did not speak; but long after the rest of the Remove were fast asleep Darrell lay wide awake, with sleepless eyes staring into the darkness, his brain crowded with troubled thoughts.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

For Another's Sake.

THE clang of the rising-bell in the winter morning found Darrell already awake.

He turned out of bed, first of all the Remove.

His face was a little pale, and very quiet as he sat at the breakfast-table, his last breakfast in the old oak-panelled dining-room of Greyfriars.

Many of the fellows looked at him curiously, but he did not seem to observe it. He was buried in his own thoughts. He ate very little, and was evidently glad to get away from the table.

Gosling, the porter, was to take him to the station, to catch the early-morning train before morning lessons.

Gosling brought his box bumping downstairs, and a little crowd gathered to see it placed in the trap.

There was a murmur as Darrell came out with his coat and hat on.

"Give us your fist before you go, old fellow," said Bob Cherry, a little huskily. "We're all jolly sorry you're going."

"The sorrowfulness is terrific," murmured Hurree Singh lugubriously.

Darrell shook hands all round with the chums of the Remove. Many fellows came forward to shake hands with him and wish him good luck. Certainly he did not look like a fellow who was compelled to leave his school for bad conduct. Even Mr. Quelch, the Form-master, came out to shake hands with him.

There was emotion in Darrell's face now. His features worked a little. He was sorry to go, and the kindness of the Remove fellows made it harder for him. He turned away at last, to mount into the trap, where Gosling was already seated and holding the reins, and looking a little impatient. Billy Bunter came hurriedly out of the School House, and rolled up to him.

"Darrell—I say, Darrell——"

Darrell paused and glanced round. His impression was that Bunter wanted to say he was sorry for the harm he had done, and to shake hands before they parted for ever. Darrell did not want to leave Greyfriars on bad terms with anybody, even Billy Bunter. So he controlled his repugnance, and turned quietly towards the fat junior.

"I say, Darrell, I'm sorry, you know——"

"That's all right," said Darrell.

"I didn't really mean to give you away."

"Never mind now."

"And—and I say," murmured Bunter, "could you lend me a quid before you go? I'll send you a postal-order for it——"

Bob Cherry's heavy grasp fell upon Bunter's shoulder, and he was swung away, and pitched on the steps.

Darrell mounted into the trap.

"You rotter, Cherry!" howled Bunter. "Look here——"

"Shut up, or I'll lick you, you fat beast!" said Bob Cherry, so ferociously that the Owl of the Remove backed hastily away.

The trap drove off.

"Good-bye, Darrell!"

"Good luck, old man!"

Darrell waved his hand, and the trap disappeared out of the gateway.

The Remove fellows were left looking glum and depressed.

"Well, he's gone!" said Bob Cherry gloomily. "Poor old Darrell! He was a good sort!"

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"CHUCKLES!"

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"A jolly good sort," said Harry Wharton regretfully.

The departure of Darrell seemed to leave a blank. Harry Wharton & Co. were discussing it in depressed tones while they waited for the bell, when a lad in uniform came across the Close towards the School House. It was the telegraph-boy from Friardale.

He had a telegram in his hand.

"Master Darrell?" he said, as he paused on the steps.

"Is that for Darrell?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes, sir."

"He's just gone." Wharton looked at his watch. "By Jove! Just time to catch him before he takes the train if I scorch after him on my bike. It may be important."

Mr. Quelch was in the hall, and Wharton stepped towards him quickly.

"There's a telegram for Darrell, just come, sir," he exclaimed. "May I bike after him, and take it to him?"

"Certainly!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Give me the telegram, kid."

Wharton thrust the telegram into his pocket, and ran round to the bicycle shed for his machine. He dragged it off the stand, and wheeled it quickly down to the gates, and mounted in the road. It was a pleasure to do one little service, at least, for Darrell before he went.

The captain of the Remove pedalled away swiftly down the road to Friardale.

He had only a few minutes before the train went, but the local trains at Friardale were seldom exactly to time, and he hoped to catch Darrell before he was out of the station.

He scorchd away at top speed down the lane.

The trap was long out of sight. It was at the station by that time. The dust flew under Wharton's wheels as he scorchd on.

He came into the old High Street of Friardale, and dashed on towards the station. Outside that building the trap was halted, and Gosling was standing chatting with a porter. Wharton dashed up and jumped off his machine.

"Train gone?" he called out.

Gosling stared at him.

"Jest going," he said.

"Where's Darrell?"

"On the platform."

Wharton ran into the station, and ran for the platform. The train was there, and Darrell's box had been already stowed away. Darrell was just stepping into a carriage when Harry Wharton came dashing on the platform.

"Darrell!" he shouted.

Darrell was in the carriage now. He looked back as he heard his name called. Harry Wharton came panting up to the carriage with the telegram in his hand.

"Just come for you!" he exclaimed breathlessly. "So I pelted after you. Thought it might be important."

"Thanks!" said Darrell gratefully. "You're awfully good."

He took the telegram with a slightly puzzled look. He did not know who could have been telegraphing to him. The guard was coming along slamming the doors of the train.

"Well, good-bye once more!" said Wharton, gripping Darrell's hand. "See you again some day, old fellow."

"I hope so," said Darrell. "Good-bye, and thanks again!"

"Stand back there!"

Wharton stepped back from the carriage, and the guard slammed the door. The train moved out of the station. Darrell looked from the window with a smile, and waved his hand. Harry Wharton watched the train out of the station, and then slowly left the platform, and mounted his bike, and rode back to Greyfriars.

Darrell sat in the carriage, as the train rolled on towards Courtfield, with the telegram in his hand, unopened.

He had almost forgotten it. He was thinking of Greyfriars, of the friends he had made there, and had been compelled to leave; of the fresh start he had tried to make, and which had ended so disastrously.

His heart was very heavy.

Bright sunshine gleamed upon the fields and meadows as the train rushed on through the countryside; but it brought no cheering light to the clouded face of the junior. He sat buried in gloomy thoughts.

He started a little as the telegram slipped from his hand, and fell to the floor of the carriage, and remembered it. He picked it up and opened it.

He glanced over the contents carelessly at first, then his gaze became fixed, and the colour came and went in his face.

He stared blankly at the message, short and crisp, but full of meaning for the junior.

"Good heavens!" he muttered. "Poor old Bertie! And so it was all for nothing—all for nothing! Poor old Erroll!"

The telegram read:

"Bowled out! Sacked! Confessed everything! Got the boot, but made it all right for you.—BERTIE ERROLL."

Darrell started to his feet. His face was greatly agitated. His old chum at Repley sacked at last! He had feared it, and it had come! And the telegram announcing the fact had reached Greyfriars on the very morning that Darrell had to leave. It was a curious chance. If it had come earlier—

"Oh, the ass!" muttered Darrell. "I saved him once. If he'd only taken warning by that. Poor old Erroll! But it's not too late for me yet!"

He sprang from the train at Courtfield Station, and was fortunate enough to catch a train back to Greyfriars almost immediately. And as he walked along the lane that led to the school, the world seemed very bright to the boy who had been expelled for another's sake.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Right Sort I

THE Greyfriars fellows were all in the Form-rooms. The School House seemed deserted when Darrell arrived there. Gosling, the porter, had stared at him in astonishment as he came striding in, but Darrell had not wasted any words upon Gosling. He hurried into the School House. From the Form-rooms came a murmur of voices. Darrell caught Trotter, the page, by the shoulder. Trotter blinked at him in great surprise.

"Where's the Head?"

"The 'Ead's taking the Sixth, Master Darrell."

"Oh! Then I'll wait for him."

Darrell sat down in the passage, eyed very curiously by Trotter. He remained there, waiting, till the Head came out of the Sixth Form-room. When Dr. Locke came down the passage, and caught sight of Darrell, he paused in utter amazement.

"Darrell!" he exclaimed. "What have you come back for?"

Darrell rose to his feet.

"I have something to tell you, sir," he said. "I couldn't explain before. But now I can—I've had a telegram. Will you read it?"

The Head took the telegram and read it. As he stood reading it, the door of the Remove Form-room opened, and the fellows came crowding out. There was a shout of astonishment at the sight of Darrell.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Darrell!

"What the dickens—"

Darrell glanced at the amazed juniors with a smile. He could smile now.

"It's all right," he said. "It's all come out now."

"What's come out?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Why I left Repley!"

"But—but—but—"

Dr. Locke fixed his eyes upon Darrell.

"What does this mean, Darrell?" he asked mildly. "Who is this Bertie Erroll?"

"He was my best chum at Repley, sir," said Darrell quietly; and all the Remove fellows hung upon his words. "He got into trouble with a set of rotters, who got him into betting, and breaking bounds at night, and that kind of thing. He was an awfully decent chap—nobody's enemy but his own. But—he was in trouble. It got out that a Repley chap had been seen haunting a pub. in the town—and he was spotted one night. I found out that some of the masters were going to keep watch on the place, to find out which fellow it was there—I got it from one of the prefects—and I knew that Erroll was there that very night"—

he paused—"so I cleared out of my dormitory, and scudded down to the town to warn him. I couldn't stand the idea of his being howled out and sacked—I wanted to save him. I got to him just in time. He cleared out of a window, and got clear off—and I was spotted. I could have explained, only—only then I should have had to mention Erroll—and I didn't want to. While they were collaring me, Erroll had time to get clear—and he got safe back to school and into the dorm.—and I was taken back by the masters."

"And did you not explain this afterwards?"

Darrell shook his head, and flushed a little.

"No, sir. I—I didn't quite know what to do—only Erroll's people would have been frightfully cut up if he'd been expelled. They're very fond of him, and—and I've got no people—there was nobody to care about me. And—and he was my chum! So—so I let it go. I made Erroll agree to keep mum, and I was sacked. It didn't matter so much for me—there was nobody to be hurt by it. That's how I looked at it, and I made Erroll look at it in the same way. That's how it was, sir. I told my guardian all about it afterwards, and he believed me—otherwise, he wouldn't have sent me here without telling you, sir."

The Head was searching Darrell's face with his eyes. It was easy enough to see that the boy was speaking the truth.

"And you tell me this now, Darrell? Why—"

Darrell pointed to the telegram.

"It's all come out now, sir. Erroll's got into trouble again, and this time he's got the sack. So he's confessed all about that old business, and made it all right for me. He promised me to run straight, if I saved him that time; but—but I suppose those rotters have got round him again. Anyway, there it is. And now I can go back to Repley if I like."

There was a pause.

"This certainly lets in a new light upon the matter, Darrell," said the Head slowly. "If this story is true—and I will say that I quite believe you—you have acted in a foolishly chivalrous manner—and I think you have been taken advantage of by a selfish boy. But chivalry, even when carried to the length of folly, is not a crime—you have acted very generously. I shall communicate with the headmaster at Repley, in order to clear up all doubts; but meanwhile, you remain at Greyfriars."

"Thank you, sir."

"If your former headmaster is satisfied, and permits you to return to Repley, then I can only be satisfied, too. In that case, you may take your choice of returning to Repley or of remaining here."

And the Head, with a kind nod, turned away.

There was a rush of the Removites to surround Darrell, and Harry Wharton & Co. shook him by the hand and patted him on the back, and thumped him on the shoulders in great glee.

"What did I tell you?" chortled Bob Cherry. "Didn't I say he was the right sort?"

"Didn't we all?" exclaimed Wharton.

"But what an awful ass, though!" said Bolsover major.

"The assfulness of the esteemed Darrell was great, but his generosity was—"

"Terrific!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Good old Darrell!"

And when the Removites went into the Form-room again Darrell went with them; and Mr. Quelch, who had heard the story, greeted him quite warmly. Darrell's face was very bright that morning. And the next day, when the Head had exchanged letters with the headmaster of Repley, and the truth was known beyond the shadow of a doubt, Darrell was given his choice of remaining at Greyfriars or of going back to his old school. He hesitated some time in making up his mind, but, as he explained to the chums of the Remove, he was a Repley chap, and it was better for him to return to Repley.

"That's all right," said Harry Wharton. "We shall miss you, but it was your getting the order of the boot that worried us. If you're going back to Repley with full honours that's quite different. Good luck to you!"

And when Darrell went the Removites gave him a tremendous send-off, and they retained the kindest remembrance of the junior who, after so many trials and troubles, had proved that he was The Right Sort I



Our Grand Serial Story!

MYSTERIA

By **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. 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. 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. Hal Honour prepares to blow the top of Mysteria off, but he is afraid that by doing so, the island will sink for ever. Although Ferrers Lord is anxious to explore the interior of the island further, he decides to risk it. "Mysteria must take her chances," he says. "Put in the charges."

(Now continue this splendid story.)

How has Mysteria fared?—Gan-Waga's Resolve.

The sun was sinking and flinging a pathway of gold across the sea. Very slowly the Lord of the Deep crawled astern.

"Ten, twenty, thirty, fifty, sixty! Heave away!" repeated Prout's powerful voice.

They were paying out the wire, and buoys of cork attached to it at intervals of sixty yards kept it afloat.

"Ease her! Steady! Shackle up!" thundered the steersman.

The evening fog had not yet descended on the sea, but the hot mist exhaled by the rotting island hung over the lower portions of Mysteria like an unhealthy steam. The lurid sun touched the summit of the hill, making the flag that marked the place where the rock had been bored and charged look like a splash of blood on the grey sky.

Ching-Lung suddenly uttered a deep and bitter sob.

"What do matters wid you, hunk Chingy?" inquired the sympathetic Gan.

"Phwat is ut? Where's the pain?" asked Barry.

"I am sad," sighed Ching-Lung. "Allow me to weep a few tears into your diamond scarf-pin, Gan. I think the pane must be in the scarf-pin, Barry, in the diamond part. It sparkles like a glassy window pane. But no, I cannot jest. How can we jest when our hearts ache? Poor, poor, doomed darlings! Yah-ow! ooh! It's too much!"

"Bedad, Oi thought mysilf ut was a bit overweight," said Barry. "Does ut still hurrt?"

"Terribly! To think-tut-ut-ut-ut—to think we'll never see them any more. 'Ow yow! Ah, us!"

"Not sees whats no morer, hunk Chingy?" asked the mystified Gan-Waga. "Whats not sees no morer, hunk?"

"Why, the blessed slimy slamapag and the oleaginous get-out-and-push. Never again shall we gaze into the sixteen blue eyes of the bunkey bang-bang bird, or pull the silken whiskers of the festive flab-toed chunkabooz. 'Cos why? 'Cos they're going to be blowed to bits. Where's your necktie? Let me sob my heart out! If you knew that docile creature, the perspiring get-out-and-push, you'd cry your

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heart out, too! You find 'em in the vicinity of motor-cars when those lovely smell-tanks get stuck going up hill. Oh, dear, dear—very dear!"

"Oh, yo' alls dottinesses, Chingy," said Gan in disgust. "Yo' only a can't-helps-it. Ho, hoo, hoo!"

"Faith," said Barry, turning away and grinning, "even a candle-swallowin', oil-swillin', haythun savage of an Iskimo can sometimes tell the truth! Phwat a loife—phwat a loife! And ut's the same wan Oi've had all the toime."

The sun sank swiftly as Francis, the electrician, connected the wires. Few of the men evinced any more interest or excitement than they would have shown had they been blasting an ordinary rock. Once discovered and fairly well explored, the mystery that had enshrouded the island disappeared, and with that its charm. But Mysteria's spell was strong upon one man—the millionaire.

Would the pressure of his finger hurl it to the bottom of the sea and take with it the secrets he longed to unravel—the secret of the dark cavern under those gloomy hills? In abandoning every thought of exploring the cavern alone, he had crushed down one of his keenest longings. He knew that to have gone there would have been folly—madness—insanity! To take anyone with him might have amounted to murder. And yet Mysteria might still survive the shock of the explosion.

He walked into the conning-tower.

"What are the odds, Hal?"

The engineer held up one finger. In his opinion it was an even chance whether Mysteria survived or was destroyed. Every eye was strained on the gloomy hills.

"I must confess," said the millionaire quietly, "that I do this reluctantly. Mysteria has my sympathy, although I am perhaps fated to be her executioner. Now for the plunge!"

His white hand dropped upon the table. Like a volcano in sudden eruption the hill flung up a tall plume of flame. A rumbling crash followed. Prout grasped the levers, ready to fling the vessel over the sea to escape the terrible whirlpool he expected would be formed as the broken island was sucked down.

"My red tam-o'-shanter!" shouted Ching-Lung. "Bravo, Mysteria! She's come through it without moulting a feather."

"Bedad, so she has! Thru for yez, Mither Ching!" put in Barry. "Ut reminds me of the ould rooster my Uncle Dennis owned whin Oi lived at Ballyunion Castle in the swate days of my youth. Wan day—"

"Shut up, souse me, you and your Uncle Dennis!" yelled a voice that nearly split the drum of Barry's left ear.

"Shut up, by hokey, and strangle your Uncle Dennis!" yelled another voice in Barry's right ear.

As the genial boy from Ballyunion crawled away, holding his head, he was glad that he only possessed two organs of hearing. Another yell in a third ear would have proved fatal.

"But Oi'll till thim that tale about the rooster," he muttered, "av Oi have to git thim in a corner and kape the spalpeens quiet wid a revolver. Oi'll till thim av Oi have to murder wan or two to make the others listhen!"

There was a puzzled look on the engineer's face that reflected in the millionaire's.

"The paper!" said Hal Honour briefly.

Ferrers Lord spread it out on the table, and they both bent over it.

"Where is the mistake, Harold? Can some of the charges have missed fire?"

"I attached the wires myself."

That was answer enough. Whatever the engineer did he did perfectly. There was no visible flaw in his calculations. Honour calculated the force of a certain measure of explosive and the amount of rock it would displace with the same care and accuracy that a skilled chemist would weigh out a dreadly drug.

"Something must have happened," said Ferrers Lord. "The explosion seemed a weak one to me."

"To-morrow," said the engineer, shrugging his shoulders confidently. "I made no blunder."

They were all sure of that. If ever a man was infallible in his own splendid and fascinating profession, Hal Honour was that man. He omitted nothing, forgot nothing. He had said that Mysteria had only an even chance of living after the explosion. Apparently Mysteria had hardly been shaken by it.

Shrugging his shoulders again, the giant went below to sit in his huge leather chair and smoke his pipe and look down at those vast monsters of steel, which, even at rest, filled him with pleasure and delight.

"This is a puzzle, Rupert," said Ferrers Lord; "but if you care to risk any more cigars, I am ready to wager a level hundred that Honour has made no mistake."

"No, thanks; you want a little too much. I don't bet against Hal," laughed Thurston. "You seem to like certainties. I got through the log while you were away. Ching-Lung is a lazy scamp. I suppose the log will be printed to adorn some book-shelves, as usual, and that unenergetic Chinese fraud hasn't taken a solitary photograph!"

"Oh, of course, blame poor little helpless me, you nasty-tompered villain!" said Ching-Lung. "I'll be good and take some in the morning to decorate your silly book. Say, Wagtail, part your hair in the middle and curl your blue-pink moustache, and I'll take you separately all in a group by yourself to stick on the cover! That'll keep the mice and the book-maggots from chewing the pages!"

"Yo' a silly can'ta-helps-its, as I tolded yo', Chingy!" retorted Gan-Waga. "Yo' talks dottinesses!"

"All serene," said Ching-Lung. "You can come and help me mix some developers and things ready for the fray if you like."

Ching-Lung made for the dark-room to load his cameras.

"Why yo' nots teaches me to takes pictures, Chingy hunk?" asked Gan. "Is it hards, Chingy?"

"As easy as biting butter. I teach you one of these fine days when it doesn't rain. Switch on that light—the red one, silly, not the white one! I've got some exposed films here six months old. If you don't go out now you'll have to stop for half an hour, for I can't open the door again. What sayest thou?"

Gan elected to go, for there was nothing very exciting in sitting there watching the prince develop films. Ching-Lung closed the door, bolted it, and fixed his attention on the developing-dish.

An appetising smell drew Gan-Waga towards the galley. Herr Schwartz, after many tribulations, had got to know his shipmates better, and had forgotten most of his earlier doubts and suspicions. He had discovered that they were a rollicking, jest-loving lot, more like overgrown schoolboys than men—rough in their play, perhaps, but harmless and good-tempered. He was beating up eggs to make a custard when Gan-Waga arrived.

"Shaf!" said the cook. "Vat you vant, and how you vas, is ud?"

Gan smiled his most seductive smile.

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ONE
PENNY.

"I comes to sniffs de butterfuls smells," he answered. "What niffs so butterfuls good 'nough, hunk, sossidge?"

"Dot vas ein grandt lovely omlette," said the cook with pride. "Id vas der mosdt peautiful omlette dot ifer vas made. Ja, ja! Dere vas nopody in der vide worldt do make ein omlette like Fritz Dunder! I vill show him do you. Ach, id vas aldogetter splentit!"

The cook raised a polished dish-cover, and revealed his masterpiece, a fine, golden omelette, so light that a breath might have swept it away. Gan's eyes almost started out of his head.

He determined that that lovely omelette should be his, but how could he appropriate it?

Gan in Trouble.

"What inside him, hunk?" Gan asked breathlessly.

"Dere vas cham insite of him—abricot cham!"

Gan heaved a sigh as the lid went down, hiding the alluring vision. He loved omelettes, especially when they contained apricot jam.

"Where dat's fo', sossidge?"

"Dot vas vor mineselluf," said the cook. "I haf got der —der vat-you-call-um pain in der box of me—der intigestion in der chest. Ach, yes, id vas most derrible! I gannot cad der meat, and zo I make mineselluf dat omlette. Ven I haf vinish der gusdart I shall ead him oop."

"Whir-r-r!" went the egg-beater, and Gan's hungry gaze wandered towards the dish.

"Yo' eats all dat yo'self, hunk, sossidge?"

"Himmel! Dere va nodings in id—id vas zo light," said the cook. "I gould eat six like dot alretty—yes."

"Bad 'nough, greedinesses!" thought Gan. "He busts ifs hims guzzle alls dat!"

Again his hungry eyes wandered to the stove. There was apricot jam in it. Apricot jam! Gan's mouth began to water. Swiftly and craftily he glanced over his shoulder. Herr Schwartz, with a wire basket of eggs beside him, was grinding away at the handle of the egg-beater. Gan moved his hand gently forward. He did not want the cook to make himself sick by over-eating himself, as he assuredly would if he devoured the whole omelette. Gan was always kind and considerate towards others, especially when there was apricot jam knocking about.

"Dere vas sossitches vor zupper," remarked the chef casually. "Dey vas bork sossitches."

Gan cared nothing about sausages—pork or otherwise—just then. His ambition in life was apricot-jam omelette.

Herr Schwartz turned his back. Gan lifted the lid, and plunged his finger into the omelette. It was not hot enough to scald him, and Gan's finger went to his mouth, and his little eyes rolled ecstatically. It was delicious.

"Dey vas grandt sossitches!" added the cook. "Dere vas nopotty gan make petter sossitches dan ole Fritz. Nein, nein! He vas der chambion sossitch-maker alretty. Dot vas zo, is ud?"

"Whir-r-r!" rattled the egg-beater, and Gan gave another glance over his shoulder. Then he lifted the lid of the pan, and scooped out a second handful. He was not long getting rid of that.

"Mein brudder Ludwig, in Perlin, make der sossitches vor der Kaiser," went on the cook. "Ach, nefer vas dere such sossitches ass der sossitches he make, except der sossitches I make mineselluf."

Gan went for the dish again, and abstracted another fistful of omelette and jam. He appreciated Herr Schwartz's cookery. He took a third handful, a fourth, a fifth, and a sixth. What remained after that was hardly worth leaving, for the Eskimo had not a particularly small hand. As he grasped the fragments, and crammed them into his mouth, the cook looked up. Gan-Waga had the lid of the dish in one hand, and he was sucking the fingers of the other. Herr Schwartz forgot all about his brother who supplied the German Emperor with "sossitches." His lovely omelette had gone for ever. Very gingerly Gan proceeded to replace the lid, and the cook let him do it.

"I goings now, Cooky," said Gan-Waga, with a sweet and innocent smile. "It a nices day, hunk?"

"Him vas ein mosdt peautiful day alretty, is ud," smiled the chef. "Bud you musdt nod go yed. Der pain in mine chesdt it was pad. Zo I gannot ead all der omlette. Stob mit me und have some of him."

Gan turned pale.

"Not likes dems," he said hastily. "Not hungrys neithers."

He was going to make a dive for the door, but Herr Schwartz, all smiles, was there first.

"Bud you must, mine tear friendt," he protested sweetly.

FRANK RICHARDS

Contributes a Splendid, Complete School
Tale in our New Companion Paper—

"CHUCKLES!" ½d.

"You haf only dasded pat omlettes, und dot is vy you do nod like dem. Ach, ven you dasde von of mine, you vill squeal mit choy. Himmel, dey vas almosdt doo lofely do ead. You vill dream aboutd id all der life of you."

"Buts I nots hungry," said Gan-Waga feebly.
"You vill be as hungry as ein shark ven you dasde him. Zit town, tear friendt, zit town."

Gan was not feeling happy, and his conscience smote him. He had never anticipated such open-handed generosity as this. And he knew that there was unpleasantness coming. He was just about to make a dash for it when, to his horror, the big figure of Mr. Thomas Prout filled the doorway.

"Hello, cooky!" he growled. "I'm gettin' peckish, by hokey. How about supper?"

"Dere vas sossitches vor zupper."

"Good enough, but how long?"

"Ach, in aboutd half an hour," said Herr Schwartz. "If you are very hungry, I haf make an omlette vor mineselluf, bud some of id I vill gif you and some I vill do Gan-Waga gif, is ud. To you like omlette?"

"Like omlette, by hokey! 'Ero, let me look at it. Where is it? Fetch it out!"

Gan Waga, the Eskimo, wished himself far away amid his native snows, or anywhere else except in the galley. Herr Schwartz, however, was in the way.

"Der omlette is in dot dish, Brout," he said.

Prout lifted the lid. A faint aroma of a vanished omelette lingered there, but the aroma was practically all.

"Is this 'ere a game, you old Dutch himage?" he roared. "There ain't nothing here."

"Nein!" shrieked the little cook. "I know dere vas nodings dere. Dere vas ein peautiful omlette dere fife leedle minutes ago. Und dat fat tief he sdeal id, und ead id! Dot tog of ein greey Eskimo he volf der lod. B-r-r-r! I gif him sdeal mein omlette! I gif him more omlette dan he efer vant. Like dot—und dot—und dot. B-r-r-r!"

Gan put his left eye in the line of flight of an egg that was travelling through the air, and stopped another with the bridge of his nose. A third egg alighted on his right ear, and another flattened itself on the wall behind him.

He was fond of eggs, but not when outwardly applied, but he could only utter one yell of protest before a rolling-pin rapped him over the ribs. This woke him up completely, and he clutched out wildly for a weapon, and felt the handle of the egg-basket. Not troubling to look what was in it, for he was very busy at the time, like the cook, he whirled upwards, and smote at his foe, whirling half-a-dozen eggs into the air.

"Go it, cooky!" said Prout. "Give him beans! Ow! Ow! By hokey, wha— Ow!"

Eggs, like other articles, are subject to the laws of gravity. When they go up, they do not stay up, but come down again. Prout had barely got the words of encouragement out of his mouth before five warranted "new-laid" from Siberia descended upon his bald head with five distinct and tuneful "plops." Prout's head was an extraordinarily hard one. The eggs broke, naturally, and their contents began to steeply-chase down the steersman's rugged features and down the back of his polished head. Prout danced, but not with glee. Oh, no, not with glee!

Meanwhile, the omelette-stealer had made an excellent shot at the very first attempt. The basket was not a weapon likely to inflict a fatal wound, but it could hurt. With a shrill squeak, Herr Schwartz dropped the rolling-pin, and danced about nursing his stinging knuckles. But he did not dance with glee. Oh, not with glee! All the same, he daped on Gan-Waga's toe, and then Gan joined in the performance.

It seemed to strike Gan Waga and the cook—for great brains, they say, think alike—that waltzing would be much more amusing than common, or garden jigs. As it takes two people to waltz properly, they caught hold of each other. By some mistake, they caught hold of each other by the hair at first, but they remedied that later on. And they were also their own band. They grunted and squeaked beautifully, while the wrathful steersman was trying to rid himself of his unwelcome gift by means of the table-cloth.

"B-r-r-r-r!" shrieked the chef. "Led me go-o-o-o, you vicket rascal! Ach, I vill spods knock off you! Himmel, vat are you toing to mine neck? Ow! G-r-r-r-r!"

"Ow! Bad 'nough! Ow! Orfulness!" wailed Gan. "Chingy!"

He trod on an egg, and, his feet shooting from under him, he fell to the floor, bringing the cook down with him. They lay there panting for breath, still holding each other tightly.

"By hokey!" hissed the steersman, glaring at them. "I'll give yer homlettes!"

And then Thomas Prout picked up the jug containing the beaten eggs, poured the yellow mixture over Herr Schwartz and the Eskimo, taking good care to divide the contents of

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the jug as equally as possible in case one should be jealous of the other, and strode away.

A little later a sadder, if not a wiser Eskimo might have been descried making his way painfully from Herr Schwartz's domains. Let us draw the curtain over the pathetic scene.

After the Explosion—All Ready for the Dawn—Prout Still in Trouble.

Morning showed that the explosion, although it had apparently been a partial failure, had caused more havoc than anyone had imagined. Great gaps showed in the roof of the forest, where the matted leaves had been shaken down, and the path they had made was buried and obliterated.

Mysteria, too, was deeper in the water, and the waves rolled masses of floating rubbish against her shores. The mist was longer than usual in clearing away, and it was almost ten o'clock before they were enabled to obtain a fair knowledge of what had occurred even at close quarters.

"If Mysteria didn't get broken," said Ching-Lung, "she got a trifle bent. It'll be a fagging job to scramble over that rubbish. I shall take a sunshade with me to protect my baby brow, in case any trees fall on me."

"I can see the hole distinctly, Ching," said Ferrers Lord. He examined the triangular fissure through the binoculars. It was about thirty feet in length, and about half that at the base. A wide, sinuous crack ran towards the centre of the base over the crown of the hill.

"Natural," said the engineer, who was standing beside Ferrers Lord.

"The crack, Honour?"

Hal Honour nodded.

"That happened, then, before the charge was exploded?"

Again the engineer nodded, and turned away. If a natural subsidence had caused the crack, the half failure of the explosion was explained. The charges—some of them, at least—had been dragged clear of the electric wire, and had either not exploded at all, or had hung fire badly.

"I propose that we go and look into things in general, and into that hole in particular," said Ching-Lung. "What joy if there's an oleaginous bogsnatch at the bottom to shy bricks at! You don't know what you'll miss, Mister Eskimoses, by staying at home. But I forget. You're a custard, aren't you?"

"I makes dat bad 'nough ugliness Tommy Prout's custards!" grunted Gan viciously. "I gives him pours egges on me! I punches his bad 'nough heads off, Chingy!"

"Who stole the homlette, souse me?" shouted the boatswain, as he passed. "Yah! What-ho, custard!"

"What's the price of heggs, cocky? inquired Joe. "How do, custard?"

"Yo' goes and eats sawdust!" retorted Gan-Waga. "I makes a nommy lettes ob yo' when I getses my spears!"

Joe laughed, and sprang into the launch.

"Aren't we going yet, Lord?" asked Thurston.

"You may go if you choose," answered Ferrers Lord, "but I have a little work to do. I shall send a few drafts ashore to make something in the shape of a path. Exercise will do the men no harm. Please yourself about what you do. At any rate, make this abomination of idleness do something for his living!"

"Do you hear what he calls me, Gan?" chuckled the prince. "That's worse than custard. Trot away for that spear, and avenge the dreadful insult. So I must work, must I? Get ready to watch me work, and mind the tableaux doesn't strike you stone blind. We're going to be totessional protographers now, Wagtail."

Forty men were landed to clear a path, and Ching-Lung brought his camera on deck. As the Lord of the Deep slowly skirted Mysteria, Ching-Lung exposed plate after plate.

"This is a nice job, this is," he said, "and all for a silly book called 'Rot by Rupert; or, the Mysterious Mud Heap'! The pictures will be the only thing in it worth reading. Take your great head out of the daylight, Gan!"

"You'd better take a few groups," said Rupert. "I want some of the old faces."

"Great ginger! He calls 'em faces, Wagtail!" said Ching-Lung. "I call 'em daylight nightmares. Poor old camera! If you can stand what's coming without breaking in halves you're a wonder! All right, Ruperto. Rake your fossile together, and I'll do the deadly deed. Pull her nose round, Tommy, and we'll use the island for a backyard—I mean background! Whistle 'em up, Benjamin, with your little squeaker."

The boatswain's whistle sounded, and the grinning sailors packed themselves forward.

Prout, Maddock, Joe, Barry, Gan-Waga, and the cook

"CHUCKLES!"

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took posts of honour, and Ching-Lung put his head under the cloth.

"Good gracious!" he cried. "What's that great hole right in front?"

"That's only O'Rooney's mouth, souse me!" explained Maddock.

"I thought it was an earthquake at first!" said Ching-Lung. "Do you mind closing it, Irish, please? Thanks! It's quite light again now. Ah, those tender blue eyes I see! Those must belong to Tommy Prout. Bless my life, it's just like the Zoo! What's that shiny ball affair in the middle?"

"Ut's sunshoine on Prout's impty head, sir!" said Barry. "That thing nixt to ut that looks loike an ourang-outang wid a bad attack o' mumps, bedad, is the blubber-chewin' Iskimo! The remarkably beautiful face behoid it, wid the swato ixpression of intelligence, the deep, intellectual brow, the chiselled nose, the ruby lips, and sthrong, well-developed chin, not to mintion the swan-loike throat, the curly hair, and clear, honest, sparrklin' oies, belongs to a famous Oirrish gintleman named O'Rooney!"

"Oh, does it?" said Ching-Lung. "I thought it was a microbe! Now try to look happy, if possible. Think of something nice, like me, and smile."

"By hokey, a cat would smile if it thought of him!" remarked the steersman. "It couldn't 'elp it. Is my 'at on straight, Irish? If I'd know'd about this in time I'd ha' parted my 'air in the middle. Har, har!"

The shutter clicked, and the deadly deed was done.

"Dere vas ein dime ven the votographs dake mineselluf, Maddock," Herr Schwartz said to the boatswain. "I haf der gamera mit me got, und I shall pring him oop und dake some snabshode. Ach, I vas mosdt goot at der game. Der gamera vas cosdt dree kinees."

"It cost dree kinees, did it, souse me?" said Maddock. "You do sling your money about, Dutchy. I'll 'ave myself took as a landscape, and put on a picter postcard to send to my uncle, the Earl of Pottleberry-on-the-Slop. Bring the thing wi' you when you go ashore, and I'll put on a clean collar for the occasion."

There was no time for any more remarks, for Ferrers Lord suddenly appeared.

"I am going ashore!" he said. "Prout, get the launch round!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" said Prout, saluting, and hurried away.

The millionaire quickly made up a landing-party, and the launch was manned.

"These with care, Prout!" said Ching-Lung, handing down his camera and plate-bag. "It will be a nice little job for you to carry them. Good-bye, Gan-Waga, the fairest flower that blows! If I'm eaten by a furious toggleslob, you'll put a tombstone on my grave, I know. You may have to chase the toggleslob somewhat to do it; but that's a tail—or, rather, to be accurate, a detail. Good-bye, and I hope I sha'n't be seasick crossing."

"Who pinched the hom'lette, souse me?" said Maddock.

And fifty voices answered:

"Custard!"

"I knocks yo' bad 'nough ugliness faces off when yo' come back!" roared Gan-Waga. "I teaches yo' calls me custards! Not let nobodys calls me custards! Yo' a bad 'nough no goodfulness lots! Yah-h-h-h!"

"Our fat friend is getting somewhat excited, Ching," said Rupert Thurston. "What is the joke about custard?"

"Ask Tommy P.; he knows better than I do, sonny," said the prince. "He was there."

Prout's recital of what had occurred in the galley evoked loud laughter from everyone except Herr Schwartz, who had

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still a good many tender bumps and painful bruises left on hand as souvenirs of that cheerful event.

"M'yes," said Ching-Lung, "would I had been there to see the merry game! It was somewhat of a waste of eggs, though. And what did they say when you poured it over 'em, Tom? Did they thank you kindly, or what?"

"By hokey, I reckon it was a good thing for me as I didn't larn neither German or Eskimo when I went to school, sir," said the burly steersman. "I dunno what they said exactly, but I do know 'ow it sounded. I don't think as they was callin' me anything pretty. It was summat like crackers goin' off. They're a bad lot, them two—a brace o' desperate scoundrels, clean beyond reformation. 'Angiu' would do 'em good."

The explosion had caused no injury to the ropes and bars put up by Hal Honour to make the ascent easier. The black pool, however, had been utterly smothered by a tremendous fall of branches and vegetable ivory, that had brought down with them many trees.

"Av the baste is under that lot, bedad," was Barry's comment, "Oi reckon he'll smother. Ut's sad to think of the purty crayer all alone down there in the dreadful darrk, isn't ut?"

"Sad, sad!" sighed Ching-Lung. "And I was just going to set a mouse-trap to catch him. Do you mind carrying the plate-bag a bit, Irish? It's about as light as it is down there. I thank thee, gentle Barry!"

They reached the summit of the hill, and approached the gaping hole. Honour was lying flat on his chest, paying out a weighted line, and gazing downwards. Ching-Lung and the millionaire crawled to his side. The light, pouring in, gleamed white on the bottom of the cavern in a circular patch.

"I suppose there is no danger of a general collapse, Harold?"

The engineer pointed to the fissure.

"Widening!" he answered laconically.

"And the depth?"

"Four hundred and eighty feet."

"Fix the cradle," said Ferrers Lord.

All set to work. A scaffolding was built across the narrowest portion of the triangular gap. To this the windlass was made fast. The cradle was woven of stout osiers, and was slung in a way that rendered an upset almost impossible. The millionaire took off his coat, and placed a rifle and electric lamp in the basket.

"Take care of yourself, old chap," said Ching-Lung. "If you're chased, we'll soon haul you back again."

Hal Honour raised his hand, and the basket swung downwards. The figure of the millionaire grew smaller and smaller as the rope ran out from the drum.

"Easy!" cried Rupert, as he saw the flash of the electric lamp.

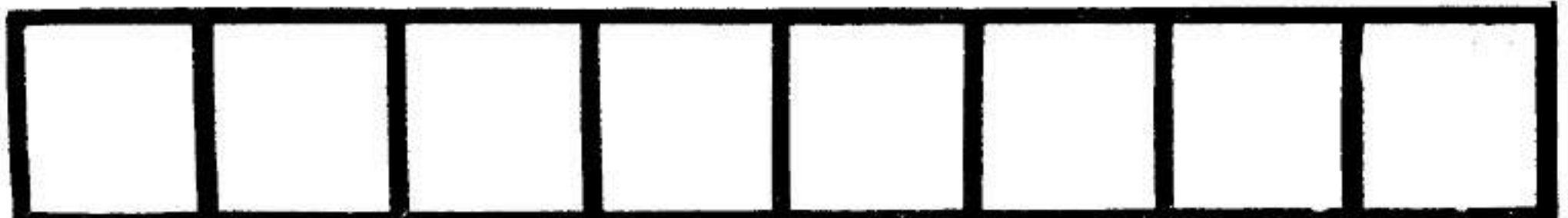
Ferrers Lord was swinging thirty feet above the ground. The light was feeble, and the air felt damp, musty, and cold. He put on his coat again, and began to peer about him. The light that struck the moist floor of the cavern was reflected back, but its rays were too weak to penetrate far. Whatever the creatures were that dwelt in these hollow solitudes of mystery, they would love the gloom, he thought, and shrink back into the darkest recesses. His lamp flashed twice.

(This grand serial will be continued next Monday. Order early.)

GRAND NEW FEATURE. No. 12.

OUR WINTER EVENING PROBLEM CORNER.

Below will be found eight plain squares, arranged in a row. By adding to these squares only *fifteen straight strokes* of the pen, it is possible for ingenious readers to pick out the name of our latest companion paper, "CHUCKLES." Every square must be utilised, that is to say, at least one stroke must be added to every square. If the strokes are correctly placed in the squares, the name "CHUCKLES" can be made to stand out plainly for all to see. This problem will provide an interesting fireside occupation for my chums until next Monday, when the solution of the problem will be published in No. 311 of THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY.

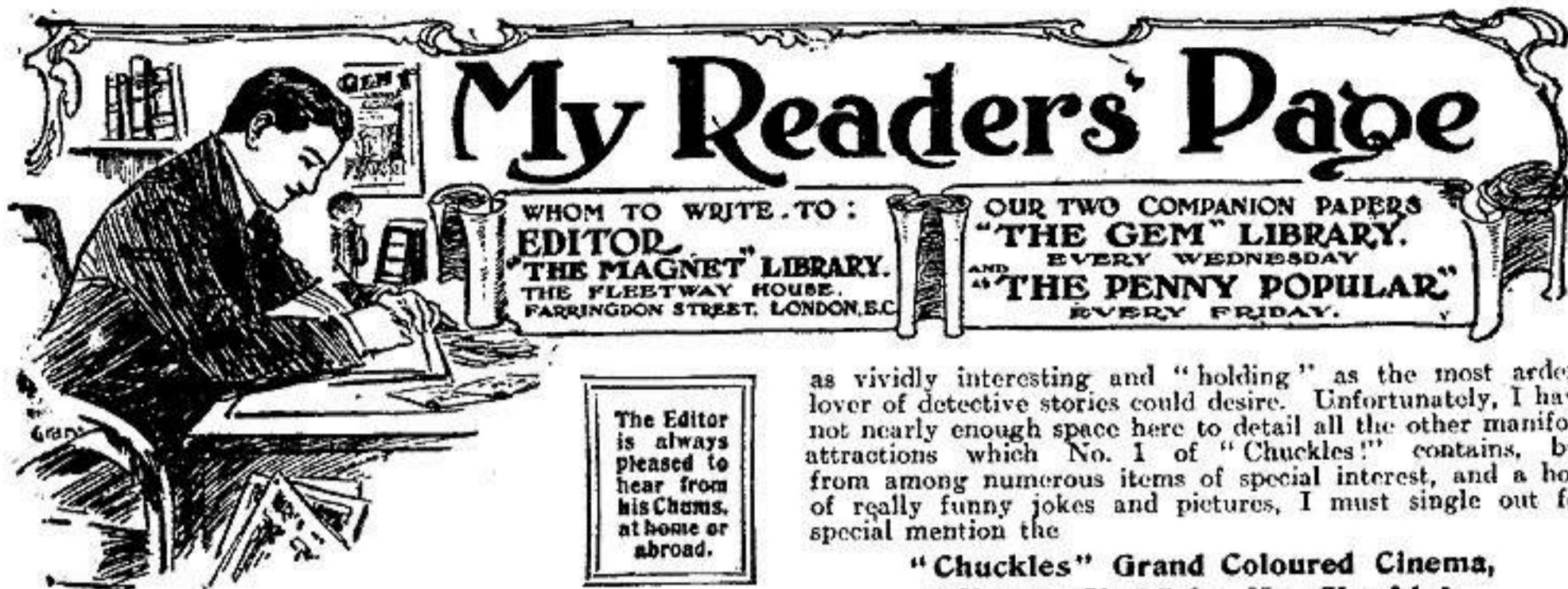


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In the grand, long, complete tale of school life Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars go on the warpath once again against their old enemies of Highcliffe School. Ponsonby, Vavasour & Co. are bearded in their own quarters, where Johnny Bull upholds the honour of Greyfriars in single combat with the Highcliffe leader. The elegant youths of Highcliffe, however, are unable to "play the game" fairly, and in due course an emissary arrives at Greyfriars to complain to Dr. Locke.

Harry Wharton & Co. come in for a warm time then. But the trouble by no means ends there. Mr. Mobbs, of Highcliffe, comes in for some rough handling, and the Chums of the Remove are "hauled up" again, this time upon a more serious charge.

Before the matter is eventually cleared up, the Removites feel that for the time being they have had quite enough

"TROUBLE WITH HIGHCLIFFE!"

THE EVENT OF THE WEEK.

The event of this week, without a shadow of doubt, is the appearance of No. 1 of our Grand New Coloured Companion Paper.

"CHUCKLES!"

On Saturday thousands and thousands of my old chums, and thousands and thousands of new friends, I hope, had the pleasure of meeting

Breezy Ben and Dismal Dutchy—

two of the quaintest mirth-makers ever known—for the first time. These two characters would make even a stone image smile, and form a perfect set-off to the magnificent stories which are a special feature of our new companion paper. Frank Richards, whose popularity was never so high as it is at present, contributes a magnificent complete school story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars and Trumper & Co. of Courfield Council School, entitled:

"THE FOUNDER OF THE FEAST!"

The author's never-failing humour and inimitable style have full play in this grand schoolboy yarn. Then in

"FIGHTER AND FOOTBALLER!"

ever-popular Arthur S. Hardy invests his hero, Jim Lancaster, with that fascinating, manly personality which is the type of true British boyhood. No one can help following Jim Lancaster's varying fortunes with absorbing interest, and for a real, rousing tale of football and the boxing-ring it would be hard to surpass Mr. Hardy's latest and best effort. Another extra-special "good thing," which I am relying on to create quite a sensation, is the series of wonderful stories beginning in "Chuckles!" No. 1, in which are related for the first time the fascinating adventures of

Ferrers Locke, Detective.

This famous investigator's name will be familiar to most readers of "The Magnet" Library, and he has more than once proved himself a good friend to Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's College.

"THE STOLEN DOCUMENT!"

is the title of the first of this grand series of complete stories, and the narrative of this extraordinary case will prove

as vividly interesting and "holding" as the most ardent lover of detective stories could desire. Unfortunately, I have not nearly enough space here to detail all the other manifold attractions which No. 1 of "Chuckles!" contains, but from among numerous items of special interest, and a host of really funny jokes and pictures, I must single out for special mention the

"Chuckles" Grand Coloured Cinema, "Cheery Chat," by Mr. Chuckles,

and a **Grand Competition** in which is offered no less than **£10 in Cash Prizes.**

In addition to this—which I venture to say is the finest programme ever offered by any paper for the sum of one halfpenny—the first number of "Chuckles!" contains a grand

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when you open your copies of "Chuckles!" With this surprise gift I will ask you all to celebrate the first issue of your own companion paper—

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NOTE!—Your Editor thanks all his readers at home and abroad for their hearty Christmas greetings.

II.—HOW TO ENTER A BANK.
 By a Bank Manager.

Most banks insist on a medical examination by a doctor specially retained. The candidate will afterwards be interviewed by one more or less in authority; and it is a fact that more depends on this interview than on the actual result of either "examination." He will find the great men amiable, courteous, and compliant. Later, when he is no longer a prospective candidate, but a salaried servant of the bank, their manner towards him will change considerably!

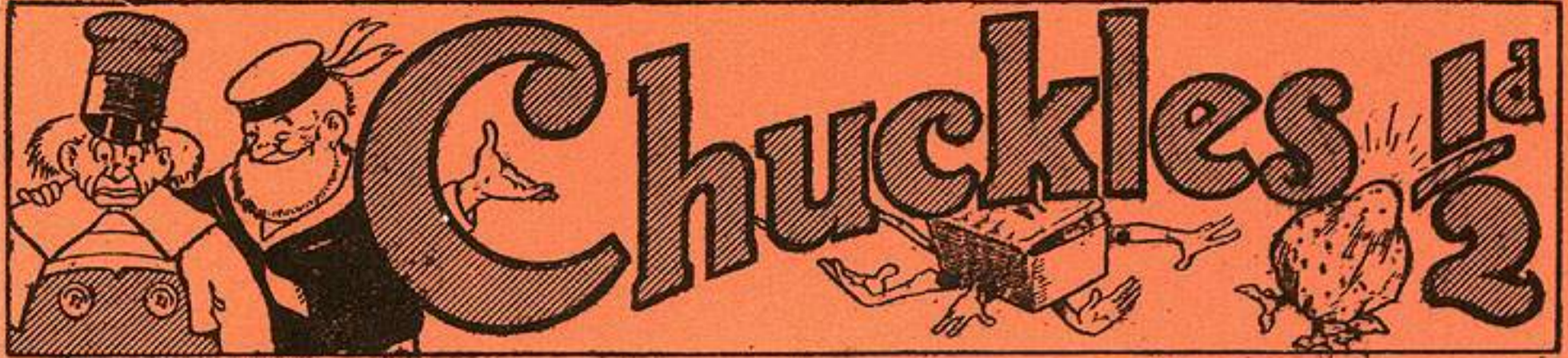
There is a rule stringently enforced by most banks, that the beginner must start his career away from his native town; indeed, it may be taken as an axiom that this regulation is put in force in every bank worth entering, and those who do not insist upon it should be carefully avoided. It is considered by competent authorities to be in the interests of the bank; and the removal of the restrictions usually implies that the bank is a "sweater," and is only too glad to get clerks on any terms.

Settled For Life.

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As regards his prospects, if his ambition is merely to earn a large income, he must either be prepared to wait a considerable time, or resign his appointment, and choose a more lucrative occupation. If on the other hand he is content with a small, but progressive salary, he will find his prospects by no means so meagre as many people suppose.

(Another of these splendid articles next week.)



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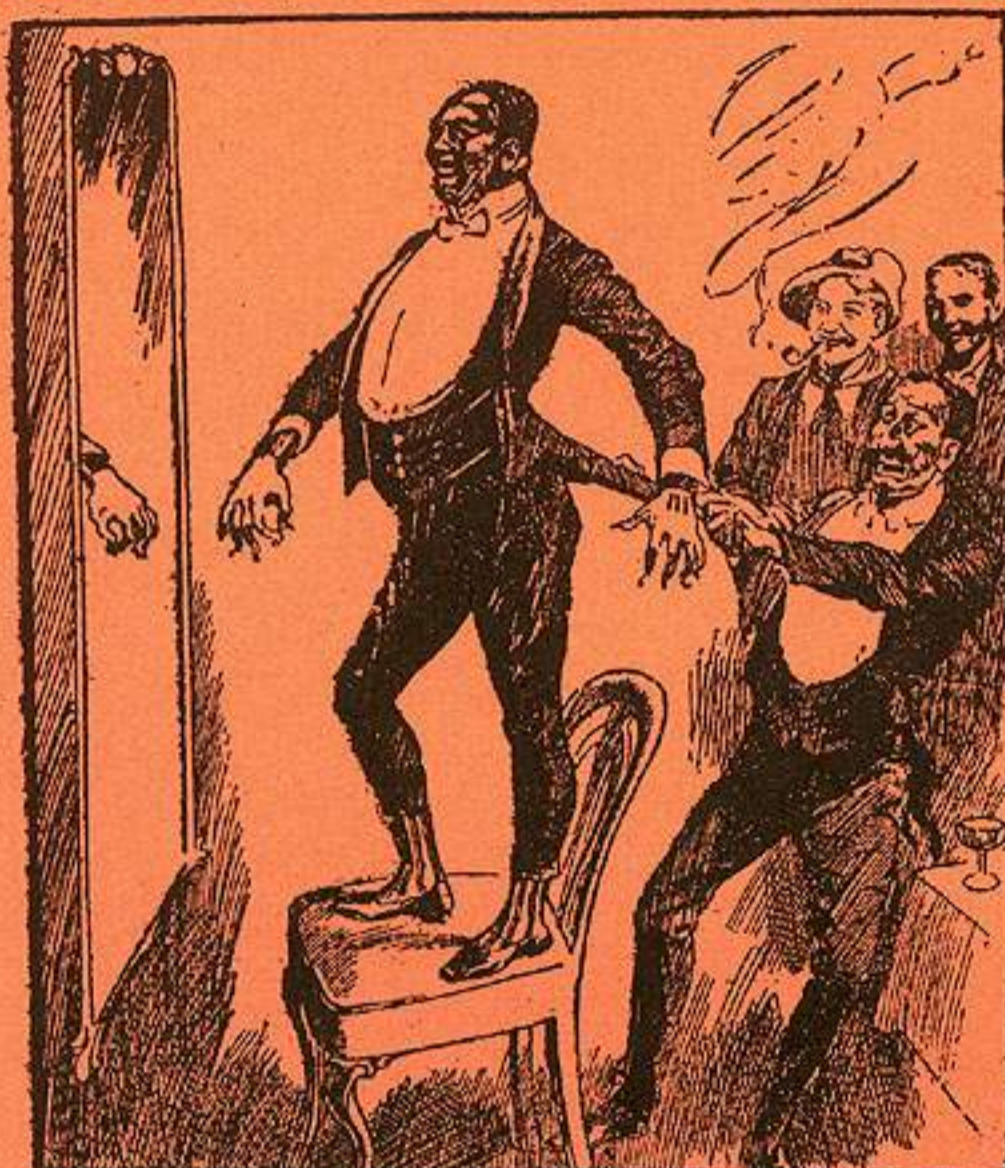
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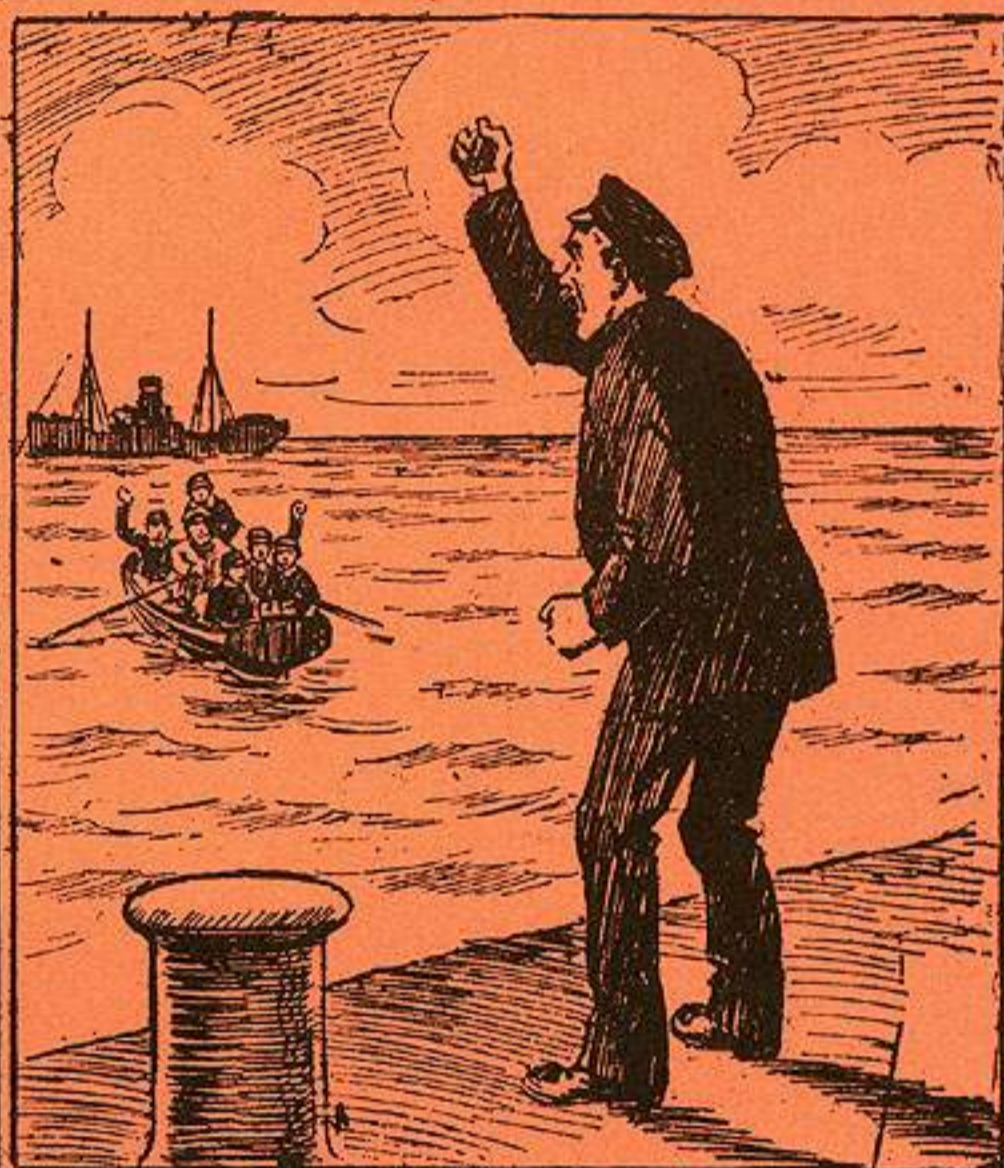
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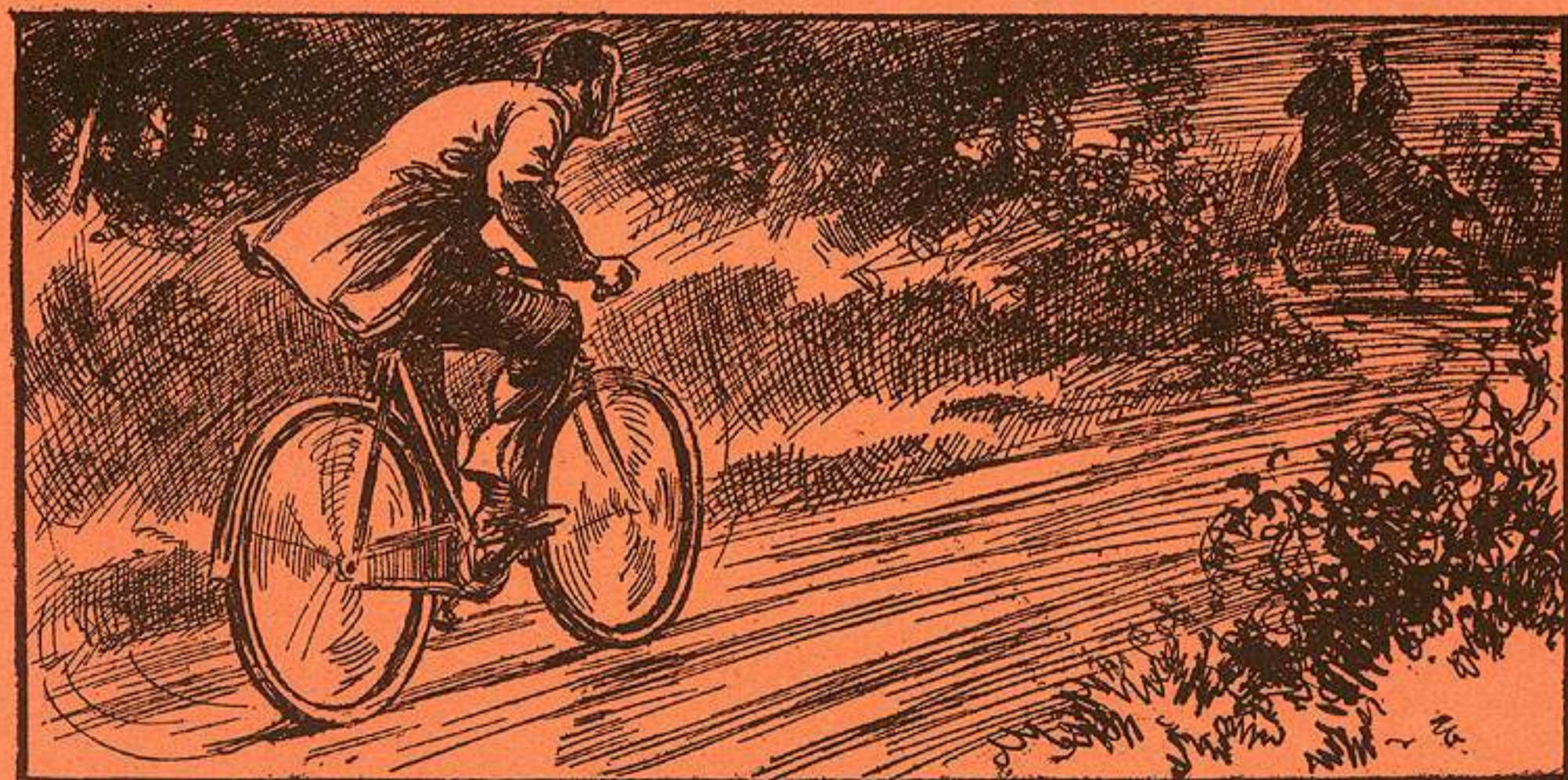
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