

**MAGNIFICENT LONG COMPLETE
TALE OF SCHOOL LIFE INSIDE.**

**The
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No 420 Vol. 10. February 26th, 1913.



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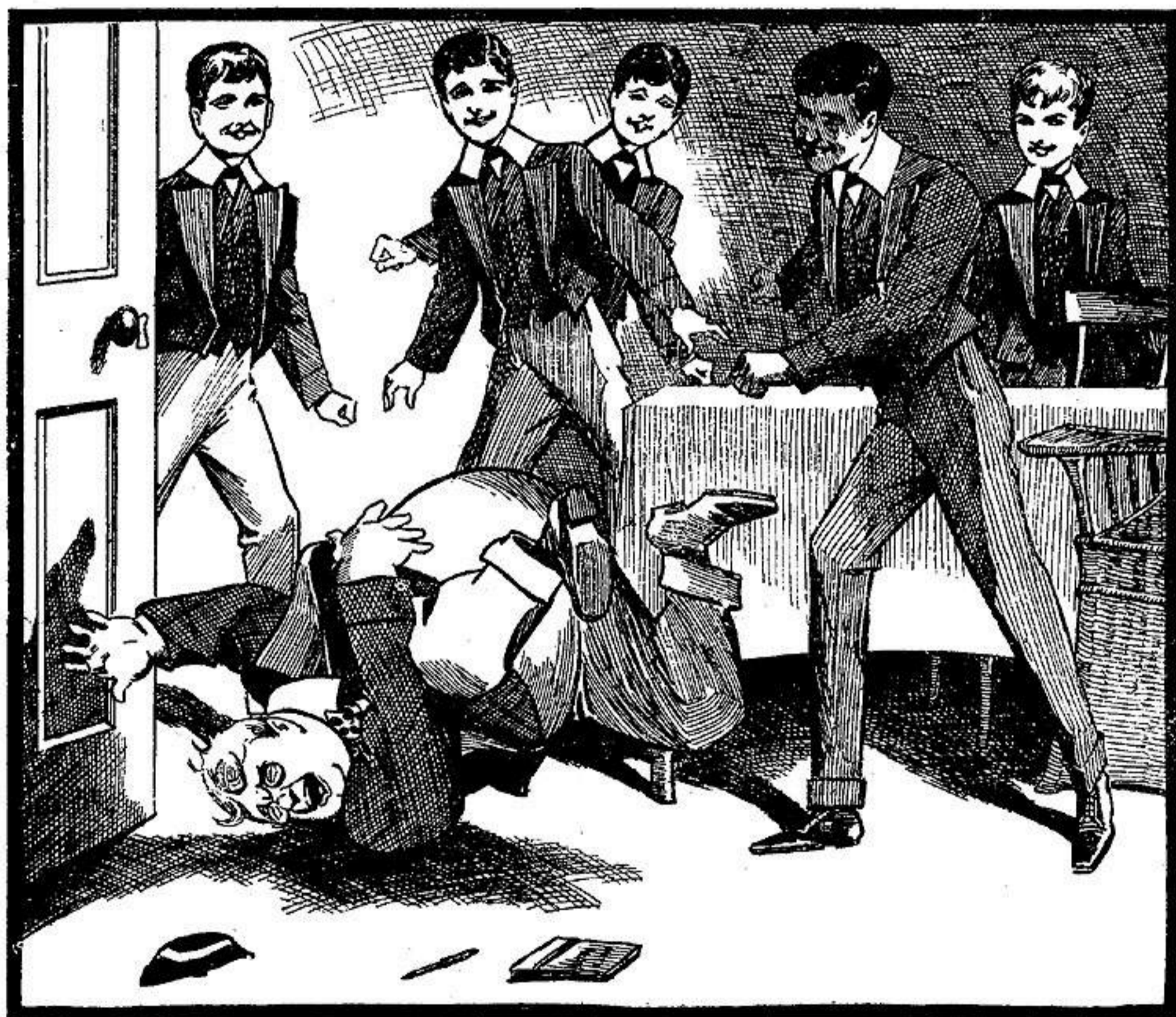


 The Editor will be
 obliged if you will
 hand this book,
 when finished with,
 to a friend. . . .

FLOORING FISHY!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Bump! Billy Bunter descended on the floor, and Hurree Singh proceeded to roll him out of the study. "Yaroooh! Leggo! Leave off! Oh, my hat! Draggimoff!" yelled Bunter. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors. (See Chapter 8.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Not Nice for the Remove!

"KEEP your weather eye open!" Bob Cherry whispered that warning as Mr. Quelch entered the Remove Form-room at Greyfriars.

The Remove were there for afternoon lessons, and they had had to wait several minutes for their Form-master,

a very unusual circumstance. Mr. Quelch was generally the soul of punctuality.

The juniors had all taken their places, but as the Form-master was not there, naturally there was a buzz of voices. Harry Wharton took another look at a football list for a certain fixture that was coming off shortly. Billy Bunter improved the shining hour by munching a huge chunk of toffee. Bull added a few finishing

touches to a cartoon for the "Greyfriars Herald." Skinner manufactured an ink-ball, destined for the back of Billy Bunter's neck. Peter Todd made a few improvements in his "copy" for the "Herald," dealing with the weird adventures of that wonderful detective, Herlock Sholmes. Bob Cherry buzzed "Tipperary" through a comb and paper. While the cat is away, the mice will play, and the Removites of Greyfriars were no exception to the rule.

But when Mr. Quelch strode in, with thunderous brow and rustling gown, all those various occupations ceased suddenly, and Bob whispered his warning as the comb and paper disappeared under his desk.

All eyes turned on the Remove-master, and the juniors realised that it would indeed be judicious to keep their "weather eye" wide open.

Mr. Quelch looked simply thunderous.

Evidently something had occurred to ruffle his serenity, and to ruffle it very seriously. The juniors sat as still as mice, with the exception of the unfortunate Bunter who was in difficulties with the toffee. Unwilling to relinquish the tasty morsel, Bunter had made a tremendous effort to bite it in twain, so as to dispose of it internally. He had succeeded in getting his teeth fairly into it; but, unluckily, he could not get them out again, neither did the toffee part in twain. Bunter, suffering from temporary lockjaw, sat crimson and grunting.

Mr. Quelch's eyes swept over the class grimly. Apparently, he had heard the busy buzz as he came along the passage.

"It is a remarkable thing," said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice, "that this Form cannot be left to itself for a few minutes without disorder resulting!"

No reply from the Remove, save a faint grunt from Billy Bunter.

"Skinner!"

Harold Skinner jumped.

"Ye-es, sir!"

"What is that in your hand?"

"Mum-mum-my hand, sir?"

"Yes. Show it to me at once!"

Skinner reluctantly disclosed the ink-ball. Mr. Quelch surveyed it, and the inky hand that held it, with ineffable disgust.

"Put that in the fire at once, Skinner, and then go and clean yourself! You will take a hundred lines, Fish!"

Fisher T. Fish, the Yankee junior, started.

"Yep!" he gasped.

"You had your feet on your desk when I came in."

"D-d-did I, sir?"

"You did! You will take a hundred lines!"

"Oh, Jerusalem!" murmured Fisher T. Fish.

"What did you say, Fish?"

"Nun-nun-nothing, sir!"

Fisher T. Fish made himself look as small as possible, though his eyes were gleaming. Fish had been in hot water the day before, and his hands were feeling too tender for a fresh application of the cane. The previous day he had had a tremendous licking in the Form-master's study, which he had, indeed, thoroughly deserved. Mr. Quelch had discovered that Fishy had lent ten shillings to Snoop at sixpence a week interest on the loan. This was what Fisher T. Fish called a business deal, and he was surprised and pained by the view his Form-master took of it. Mr. Quelch gave Snoop two cuts for paying the interest, and Fishy six terrific swipes for taking it. And the enterprising business-man of the Remove had groaned and moaned for hours afterwards, and "guessed" that he would pay the old "galoot" out—some!

Mr. Quelch's sharp eye lingered on Fisher T. Fish as if he were inclined to call him out before the Form; but he refrained. Besides, a loud and anguished grunt from Bunter attracted his attention. His eyes glittered at the Owl of the Remove.

"Bunter!" he rapped out.

Grunt!

"Stand up!"

Bunter stood up.

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"Why are you grunting in that ridiculous manner, Bunter, as if you wish to give the impression that there is a pig in the room?"

Grunt!

"Answer me, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter made a great effort to answer. But his teeth were fairly nailed in the sticky toffee, and he couldn't. The only sound he could utter was:

"Mum-mum-mmoooooh!"

"Bunter," thundered Mr. Quelch, "what is the matter with you? Why do you not answer me?"

"Mmmmmmmmmmm!"

"Have you taken leave of your senses, boy?"

"Mmmmmmm!"

"Stand out here, Bunter!"

"Mmmmmmm!"

There was a faint giggle from the class, but Mr. Quelch's fiery eye quelled it at once. The Remove sat as quiet and prim as a Quaker meeting. Billy Bunter rolled out before the class apprehensively.

"Come here, Bunter!" Mr. Quelch picked up the cane from his desk. "Now, answer me!"

"Mmmmmmm!"

"Why do you not speak?"

"Mmmmm!"

"This is impertinence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Hold out your hand, Bunter!"

"Mmmmm!"

Harry Wharton rose in his place.

"If you please, sir, may I speak?"

"No, Wharton, you may not! Sit down!"

Wharton sat down, looking rather red. Then the angry Form-master bestowed all his attention upon William George Bunter.

"Hold out your hand at once, Bunter!"

"Mmmmmmm!" mumbled Bunter desperately.

"Grooogh! Hoooh! Googgh! Mmmmmmm!" Bunter's face was crimson with the effort to get rid of the toffee; his little round eyes almost bulged through his spectacles, and the perspiration rolled down his fat brow. Mr. Quelch gazed at him in surprise mingled with alarm.

"Are you ill, Bunter?" he snapped.

"Mmmmmmm!"

"Goodness gracious! What is the matter with the boy? Speak!"

Mr. Quelch grasped the fat junior by the shoulder and shook him. Bunter's glasses slid down his fat little nose, and he blinked over them in anguish. But the shake helped him, and the toffee parted at last. He found his voice.

"Ow! Ow! Grooogh! Yow! Woooop!"

"Ah! You find you can speak?" said Mr. Quelch sarcastically. "Now hold out your hand!"

"M-mmmmm! Oh, dear! If you pip-pip-please, sir, it wasn't my fault! It was the tut-tut-toffee!" stuttered Bunter. "It was st-st-stuck, sir!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "How dare you laugh! Bunter, you greedy and disgusting boy, have you been devouring toffee in the Form-room?"

"Nunno, sir!"

"Then what were you doing?"

"S-s-sucking it, sir."

Swish! Swish!

"Yaroooh!"

"Cease that ridiculous noise at once, Bunter! Go to your place!" Mr. Quelch breathed hard through his nose. "If there is any more disorder in this class, the Remove will be detained two hours after lessons."

And that afternoon the Remove were as good as gold, if not a little better.

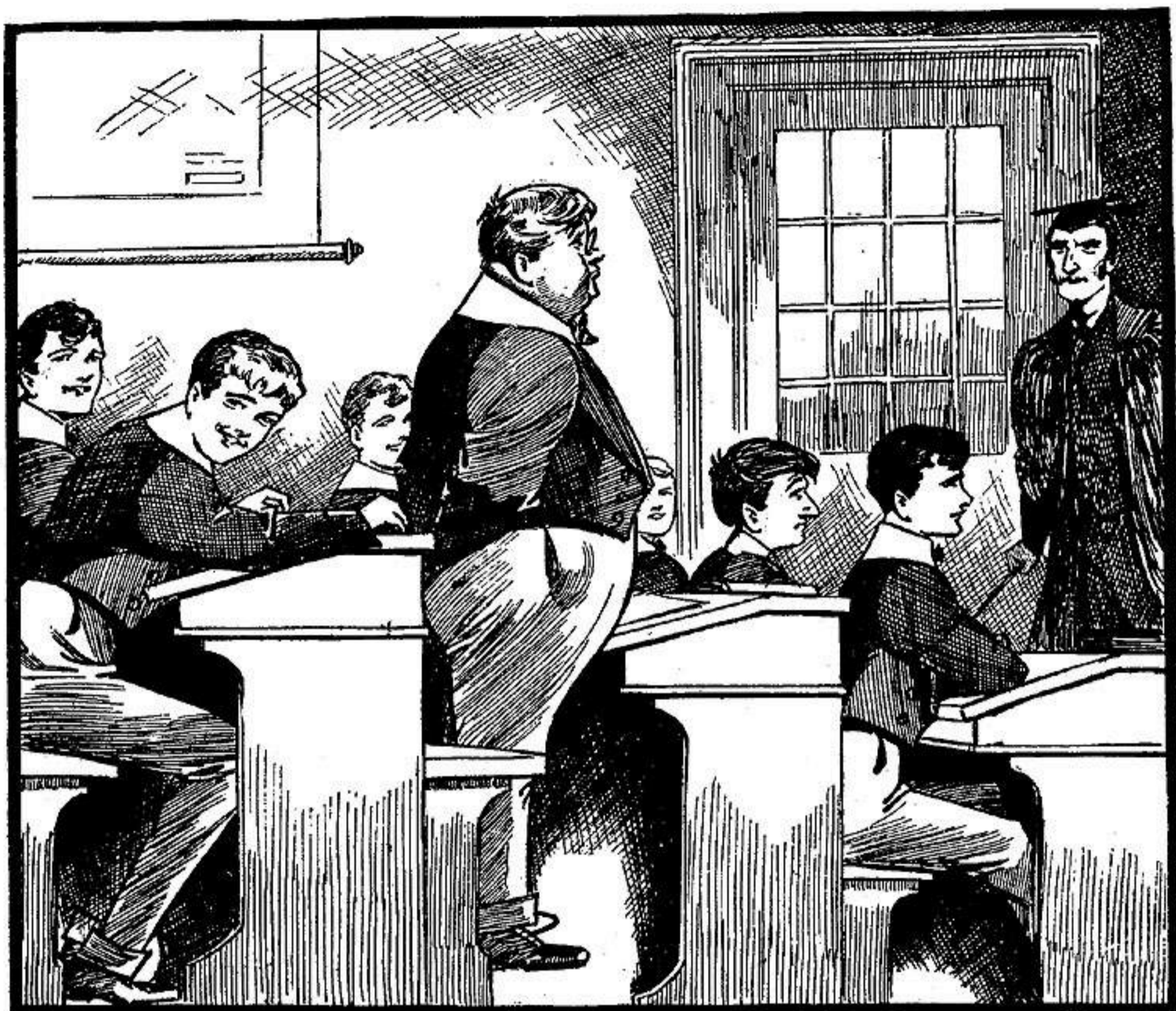
THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Mystery of Mr. Quelch!

AFTER NOON lessons passed off in a thundery atmosphere in the Remove Form-room.

Glad enough were the juniors when the welcome word, "Dismiss!" came at last.

The "chopper" had not come down again; but Mr.



"Why are you grunting in that ridiculous manner, Bunter, as if you wish to give the impression that there is a pig in the room?" Billy Bunter made a great effort to answer, but his teeth were fairly nailed in the sticky toffee, and he couldn't. The only sound he could utter was: "Mum-mum-mmooooh!" (See Chapter 1.)

Quelch had been decidedly tartaric, and it was a relief when lessons were over. It was plain enough that something was worrying Mr. Quelch, apart from the unruliness of the Removites. Mr. Quelch was a just man, and certainly did not intend to "take it out" of his class for the worry, whatever it was, that was on his mind. But it had worked out like that.

"What the dickens has been biting Quelchy?" said Bob Cherry, as the Removites streamed out of the Form-room. "There's something up!"

"The upfulness is terrific!" Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remarked. "The esteemed and ridiculous Quelch is ratty. Something has occurred to ruffle his sublime serenity."

"Perhaps it's Fishy," said Johnny Bull. "Quelchy was awfully waxy yesterday when he caught him money-lending."

There was an emphatic snort from Fisher T. Fish.

"I guess Quelchy was a jay—a silly jay!" he said. "Why shouldn't I lend Snoop two dollars and a half if I liked?"

"No harm in that," said Harry Wharton. "But charging interest on it was a dirty trick, and just like you, Fishy!"

"I reckon it was business."

"Quelchy didn't reckon it was!" chuckled Squiff. "And THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 420.

now he knows you, and has his eye on you, you'd better chuck it for good, Fishy!"

Fisher T. Fish sniffed.

"I guess Quelchy will be sorry for that licking yesterday," he said. "I calculate I'll get him by the short hairs!"

"Going to lick him?" grinned Squiff.

"There's more ways of killing a cat than choking it with cream," said Fisher T. Fish. "You watch out, and see if Quelchy ain't made to feel sorry for himself. I guess he didn't look so chippy this afternoon as usual—just a few!"

The juniors stared at the Yankee schoolboy.

"Have you been japing him?" demanded Wharton.

Fisher T. Fish looked mysterious.

"I guess that's my bizney," he replied. "I guess I'm not letting any cats out of the bag. No, sir. But I reckon I'm after Quelchy's old scalp! I'll show him whether he can wallop a free American citizen for a little business deal! You jest watch out!"

And Fisher T. Fish walked away, frowning.

"Gas!" said Bob Cherry sententiously. "Fishy wouldn't have the nerve to jape Quelchy! But there's something up! I've never seen Quelchy such a Tartar before!"

"I say, you fellows"—Billy Bunter's voice was

pathetic—"I say, isn't it rotten? I've been licked just because Quelch had indigestion—I suppose it was indigestion. I've a jolly good mind to complain to the Head! I say! I wonder what there was in that letter to worry him?"

"Eh? What letter?"

"Quelch's had a letter," explained Bunter. "I saw it when the postman brought it at midday. It was addressed in typewriting. He looked as black as thunder when he opened it, and bolted into his study. I happened to pass his study door, and heard him say 'Cheese it!'"

"No, he didn't say 'Cheese it!' He was alone there," said Bunter. "He said, 'Good gracious! Bless my soul! What astounding impertinence!'"

"What on earth did he say that for if there was nobody with him?" exclaimed Rake.

"It must have been the letter, of course—a bill, very likely! Perhaps somebody's dunning him for money. I hope so. I hope he'll get a summons, or a writ, and be arrested for debt and sent to penal servitude," said Bunter, rubbing his fat hands. "I hope—I say, you fellows, don't walk away while I'm talking to you! Beasts!"

But Harry Wharton & Co. did not stay to listen to Bunter's charitable hopes concerning his Form-master. It was still light enough for footer practice, and they hurried out of the School House. Skinner and Fisher T. Fish had to write lines, and they wrote them in a very bad temper. They gave each other sympathetic looks when they met in the passage an hour later with "impots" in their hands.

"Rotten, isn't it?" growled Skinner.

"Rotten ain't the word!" said Fisher T. Fish savagely. "Quelch's got a down on me. Fancy hauling up a galoot for lending a chap a couple of dollars and a half! Then giving me lines for putting my feet on a desk—me, you know! And he's licked me for spitting in the Form-room!"

"Serve you jolly well right!" said Skinner. "Only a horrid beast would do such a thing!"

"Waal, I swow! A free American citizen spits where he likes," said Fish. "In the Yew-nited States expectoration is considered one of the greatest rights of a free American—anywhere he chooses, sir, and any time he chooses! You're behind the times in this old island! You don't know what freedom is. But the old galoot will be sorry for it! You watch out."

And Fish frowned and took in his lines with Skinner at his heels. The click of a typewriter sounded from Mr. Quelch's study. Apparently, the Remove-master had recovered his equanimity, and was at work again upon that celebrated "History of Greyfriars," which occupied most of his leisure time.

"Come in!" rapped out Mr. Quelch, as the Yankee junior knocked at the door.

The two Removites entered.

Mr. Quelch was seated at the typewriting-table. He looked round as the two juniors came in with their impositions in their hands.

"That will do, Skinner," he said, glancing at Skinner's lines. "You may go!"

Harold Skinner had been very careful with his lines in consideration of the Form-master's tartaric humour that day. Fish had not been so careful. Mr. Quelch frowned as he glanced over the scratchy, smudgy sheets.

"Fish, your imposition is disgracefully written!" he said.

The Yankee junior looked sullen.

"You have made no fewer than seven blots and four smudges," said Mr. Quelch. "I wonder you are not ashamed to bring me such a paper! You will take this away, and bring me your lines properly written at once!"

"I guess—" began Fish.

"You may go!"

Mr. Quelch turned to his typewriter again. Fisher T. Fish, with feelings too deep for words, walked out of the study. Skinner grinned at him in the passage.

"You duffer!" he said. "You ought to have been specially careful this time! I was. You know he was ratty to-day!"

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Fisher T. Fish breathed hard through his long, thin nose.

"I guess he's got a down on me," he said. "And I guess I'll make him sorry for this! You watch out!"

"Gas!" said Skinner.

"You watch out!" said Fish savagely. "I got my eye-teeth cut in Noo York, I can tell you! I calculate I know how to handle a jay like that! You watch out!"

And Fisher T. Fish carried away his rejected manuscript to his study, and laboured on it afresh with many grunts and complaints. He was still busy on it when Squiff and Johnny Bull, who shared No. 14 with him, came in to tea, ruddy and hungry, after football practice.

"Still going it?" asked Sampson Quincy Ifley Field sympathetically.

"I guess this is the second edition!" groaned Fish. "Too many blots and smudges for his lordship on the first lot!"

"Why couldn't you be careful?" said Johnny Bull. "Buck up! We want that table for tea!"

"I guess I'm nearly done!" groaned Fish. "The jay's got a down on me! But I guess I've got a down on him, too, and he'll be made to sit up and take notice! You watch out!"

Squiff looked at the Yankee junior curiously.

"Do you mean to say that you had anything to do with upsetting Quelch this afternoon?" he demanded.

"I guess I'm not giving anything away!"

"Well, if you did it, don't do it again, that's all!" said the Australian junior. "We all get mustard when Quelch's ratty!"

"I reckon he'll be rattier to-morrow," said Fisher T. Fish mysteriously. "And I kinder reckon he'll be rattier still the next day! You watch out!"

And with those mysterious words, Fisher T. Fish collected up his impot, and took it away to Mr. Quelch's study once more. Squiff and Johnny Bull exchanged glances.

"What is the silly duffer driving at?" said Squiff.

"Gas!" said Johnny Bull laconically.

And Squiff nodded assent. Most of Fisher T. Fish's utterances were regarded as "gas" in the Remove, and the Remove were usually right. But, as it happened, this time the Yankee junior was in deadly earnest. As he would have expressed it in his native language, his "mad" was up. And—according to Fishy, at least—when his "mad" was up, he was a dangerous "galoot."

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Very Mysterious!

"HALLO! Hallo! Hallo!"

It was very dusky in the old Close of Greyfriars. The Famous Five were "trotting" round the Close for exercise before going to bed. As they came by the school-wall, still on the trot, the sound of boots scraping on the wall drew that ejaculation from Bob Cherry.

The chumps of the Remove stopped. Someone was climbing out over the school-wall within a few yards of them.

"Some silly ass breaking bounds," said Harry Wharton. Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Let's teach him the giddy error of his ways," he said.

"It might be Loder of the Sixth. Come on!"

Bob ran towards the wall.

In the deep dusk, under the shadow of the trees, a figure was seen clambering over the school wall with the aid of a tree-trunk that grew close to the old stone. Bob Cherry promptly reached up and grasped the dangling ankles.

There was a startled exclamation above.

"Ow! Oh, Jerusalem!"

"Fishy!" ejaculated Bob.

"Oh, scissors! Is that you, Cherry, you jay? I guess you startled me!"

"What are you breaking bounds for, Fishy?"

"I guess I'm going out for a little trot."

"But it's bed in half an hour."

"I reckon I shall be back by then."

"Don't be an ass, Fishy!" said Harry Wharton. "You know it means a licking if you're spotted."

"I suppose you jays ain't going to sneak?" growled Fisher. "Leggo my legs, Cherry, you blithering jay!"

"Why can't you have your trot inside the walls?" demanded Nugent.

"The trotfulness would be safer within bounds, my esteemed Fishy," said Hurree Singh. "Descend jumpfully, and don't play the giddy ox!"

"Lemme alone, you jays! I'm going out!"

"What the thunder is the little game?" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "You're not going out for a trot; that's all rot! What are you up to?"

"I guess that's my business!" growled Fish. "Are you going to let go my legs, you slabsided mugwump! Look hyer! I've got to get down to Friardale to catch the post. Now let me go!"

"Not calling in at the Cross Keys?" chuckled Bob.

"Nope, you galoot!"

"Well, it's your own business, I suppose," said Bob, releasing the Yankee junior. "But you're a silly ass to run that risk to post a letter. It would catch the first morning collection if you put it in the box here."

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

"I guess that wouldn't fill the bill," he remarked. "So-long, and don't say anything about this!"

"We sha'n't sneak, if that's what you mean," said Harry Wharton. "But you're an ass, Fishy! Quelch is down on you already."

"I guess I'm down on him, too."

Fisher T. Fish clambered over the wall, and dropped into the road. The Famous Five resumed their sprint round the quadrangle. Fisher T. Fish's action puzzled them, but, as Bob said, it was no business of theirs, and Fish knew the risk he was running.

At half-past nine Wingate of the Sixth looked into the junior common-room, to shepherd the Remove off to their dormitory. Fisher T. Fish was not there. The captain of Greyfriars did not notice his absence till the juniors were turning in. Then he glanced at Fishy's empty bed.

"Hallo! Where's Fish?" he exclaimed.

"Well, he isn't here," said Bolsover major.

Wingate frowned.

"Why hasn't the young ass come up to bed? I'll warn him. Anybody here know where he is?"

Harry Wharton & Co. avoided meeting Wingate's inquiring glance. They knew where Fish had gone, at all events; but it was not their business to say. There was a hurried step in the passage, and Fisher T. Fish came breathlessly into the dormitory. He looked as if he had been running, as indeed he had.

"Where the dickens have you been, Fish?" exclaimed Wingate angrily.

"Sorry! I guess I've been mending my bike, and I didn't notice the time," said Fisher T. Fish. "I'll be in bed in a jiffy."

"You'd better!" snapped Wingate.

Fish turned in, grinning to himself, and the prefect turned out the light and left the dormitory. Then Bob Cherry's voice was heard.

"Fishy, you George Washington!"

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

"You haven't been mending your bike," said Bulstrode. "I've been in the bikeshed, and you weren't there."

"I guess it's necessary to be diplomatic sometimes," said Fisher T. Fish, with another chuckle.

"To tell rotten lies, you mean?" said Harry Wharton disdainfully.

"Oh, rats! I calculate I'm not looking for a licking!"

"Where have you been, then?" asked Bolsover major.

Fisher T. Fish did not seem to hear the question. He began to snore emphatically.

"What are you keeping fatheaded secrets for, Fishy?" called out Hazeldene.

Snore!

"He's been out of bounds, and he's lied to Wingate about it!" growled Bob Cherry. "I suppose that's what Fishy would call business. Fishy, you're a worm!"

Snore!

"The wormfulness of the esteemed Fishy is terrific! He is like the esteemed George Washington, who could not tell anything but a lie."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"SKINNER THE SKIPPER!"

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

"What's the little game, Fishy?" bawled Rake. Snore!

Fisher T. Fish evidently did not intend to enlighten his Form-fellows as to his mysterious expedition. He did not speak another word, and the Remove soon dropped off to sleep and forgot all about Fisher T. Fish.

The next morning some of the Remove fellows eyed Mr. Quelch a little nervously when they went in to breakfast. But the Form-master's brow was placid. It appeared that the "tantrums" of the previous day had passed away completely.

There were several letters at the Remove-master's elbow on the breakfast-table. Mr. Quelch sometimes opened his letters during breakfast, to save time. Harry Wharton, who happened to be sitting nearest the Form-master, could not help seeing that the top letter of the pile was addressed to Mr. Quelch in typed letters, and he remembered Bunter's remark of the day before. It was not unusual for Mr. Quelch to receive typed letters on business matters, of course. Mr. Quelch picked up that letter first, and glanced at it, and his brows contracted slightly. He was not looking so much at the typed address as at the postmark, which was the local one of Friardale. From the village it was odd enough that a type-written communication should have come. Typewriters were certainly not common in the sleepy little village.

Mr. Quelch slit the envelope, and drew out a letter, typed, also, on thin paper. He unfolded the letter.

"Goodness gracious!"

Several of the juniors glanced round as the Form-master made that sudden, startled remark.

Wharton kept his eye on his teacup.

What he had seen he could not help seeing, and he had no desire whatever to pry into any of Mr. Quelch's private affairs.

The Form-master was staring blankly at the letter. But he recovered himself in a moment, and thrust the letter into his pocket. Then he proceeded to open the other letters. But his brows were knitted, and his lips were set tight. Evidently the typewritten missive had had an effect upon him.

Billy Bunter caught Wharton's eye, and winked. The captain of the Remove frowned at him. Bunter grinned. The Owl of the Remove was not too short-sighted to note things that did not concern him. He had spotted the typed letter and its effect on Mr. Quelch. Billy Bunter was quite convinced that it was a dunning letter, and, remembering his latest licking, he hoped it was a very severe one, and that it contained a "writ." Mr. Quelch quitted the Remove table before breakfast was finished, and went directly to his study.

If Billy Bunter had not been detained with the important business of finishing his breakfast, he might have had an opportunity of hearing Mr. Quelch using the telephone, and speaking into it in agitated tones, which would have given him still further food for thoughts, and furnished him with fresh reasons for minding anybody's business but his own!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. Startling News!

"I SAY, you fellows—"

Morning lessons were over. Mr. Quelch had been very quiet and subdued in the Form-room.

He had not been irritable, but he had been plainly worried, and two or three careless juniors had earned the sharpest edge of his tongue. Fisher T. Fish had been among them. Fishy persisted in construing Latin with his usual slovenliness, having indeed a profound contempt for dead languages, which, added to the fact that he was a duffer, made him almost the biggest dunce in classics that the Lower Fourth contained. And when Fishy had to read Latin, he did it with a nasal twang that would certainly have made "Quintilian stare and gasp," and which had a bad effect on Mr. Quelch's nerves that morning.

Bunter had been another fellow to "catch" it. Bunter

hadn't done his prep the evening before, and it was useless to explain to Mr. Quelch that he had been too busy making toffee. Even Mark Linley, the best scholar in the Form, had been snapped for a slight slip. The best fellows in the Remove, realising that Mr. Quelch was out of sorts, were patient and attentive; but the slackers grumbled under their breath, and felt extremely injured. As Bob Cherry remarked good-naturedly, after the ordeal was over, if a Form-master couldn't rag his own Form when he was waxy, whose Form could he rag?

Harry Wharton & Co., though they felt no resentment for the unusual "rattiness" of a master who was generally kind and just, were glad to get out of the Form-room. They sauntered out into the Close, Bob remarking that he needed some fresh air to buck him up after Quelchy.

The chums were chatting in the quad, when Billy Bunter came up, breathless, red, excited, his eyes almost bulging through his glasses. Bunter was simply bursting with news.

"I say—I say, you fellows—he's come for him!" gasped Bunter.

"Has he?" said Bob cheerily. "Who's come for him, tubby? Get your second wind, and tell us all about it!"

"Quelchy! Grimes! He's come! And I'm jolly glad!" gasped the fat junior. "I say, do you think he will handcuff him?"

"Who? Which? What?" roared Bob.

"Him, you know—he's come, and he's gone to his study—he has really, and he's there; he was there when he came, and he was taken in to him at once."

"What on earth are you burbling about?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Who's he, and who is him?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Make it a bit clearer, old chap!" said Bob encouragingly. "Now, let's have it straight. He came for him, and he was there when he came, and he saw he, and he saw he, and both saw him, and he and him, and him and he—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! You know what I mean. Those typed letters, you know—didn't I tell you Quelchy was being dunned for money?" said Bunter triumphantly. "I guessed he was in debt; it couldn't be anything else, you know. When a man gets a typed letter, and goes into tantrums, and licks a chap for nothing, you can bet he's being dunned. I knew it. You fellows will have to admit that I found it out first of all!"

"Nobody's likely to dispute your claim of being the first to shove a fat nose into what doesn't concern you," said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull. But he's come for him!" shouted Bunter. "Old Grimes, you know—Inspector Grimes of Courtfield."

"Has old Grimes come here?" asked Frank Nugent.

"What-ho!" chirruped Bunter. "He's come for Quelchy!"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Nugent! I tell you Inspector Grimes came in a few minutes ago, and asked for Mr. Quelch, and Trotter took him to his study at once," said Bunter excitedly. "He was jingling the handcuffs in his pocket."

"Ass!"

"Well, he had his hand in his pocket, anyway; I saw it—"

"How could you see it if it was in his pocket?"

"Oh, really, you know! I saw that he had his hand in his pocket. And he was looking as stern as—as—"

"As the stern of a ship?"

"Oh, don't be funny, you fathead! He's come for Quelchy, I know that. Quelchy's got into debt, you see, and he can't pay up, and Grimes has come to arrest him, and I'm jolly glad!" chirruped the cheerful Owl. "I say, you fellows, do you think he'll be handcuffed? After the way he's treated me, I should be glad to see him handcuffed. I think he deserves it, don't you?"

"You silly ass!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! Look here, why don't you come and see him taken away. You don't often see a Form-master marched off by a copper."

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And Bunter rushed back to the School House, determined that, for his part at least, he would not miss that interesting sight of a Form-master being marched off by a "copper."

"The fat idiot!" growled Bob. "I wonder what Grimes has come for, though? He don't often call here."

The Famous Five strolled towards the House. Hazeldene and Tom Brown met them, looking somewhat excited.

"What's this yarn Bunter's spreading?" asked Hazel. "There can't be anything in it—about Quelchy being arrested—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter says he saw the warrant," said Tom Brown.

"Bunter improves as he goes along," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "He didn't tell us about the warrant. We only had the handcuffs."

"But what does Grimes want, anyway?" said Hazel. "I saw him come, and he was looking solemn enough, and he was shown straight to Quelchy's study."

"Heard the news?" exclaimed Skinner, dashing up. "Bunter says—"

"Ha, ha! What does he say now?"

"About Quelchy being arrested. Bunter says the inspector's got a warrant for him, and took out his handcuffs as he went into his study."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I hope there's something in it," said Skinner. "We should be without a Form-master for a bit, and that would be ripping. No prep, you know."

"Jolly ripping for a slacker!" agreed Bob Cherry.

"Well, I'm going to see him taken, if he is taken," said Skinner. "Come on, you don't want to miss a sight like that. I wonder what old Quelch has been doing?"

A good many fellows shared Skinner's view, and half the Remove was wondering what Quelchy had been "doing." Bunter's amazing yarn had spread like wild-fire.

Bunter's yarns, it was true, generally had little or no foundation. But this time there was evidence. Inspector Grimes, of the Courtfield Police, certainly had come; he had asked for Mr. Quelch, and had been shown at once into that gentleman's study. And the worry that had lately been on Mr. Quelch's mind, which had been observed by all the Remove, was corroborative evidence. What could be more probable than that Mr. Quelch's tartness and troubled looks had been caused by the affair, whatever it was, that had led to the police-officer's visit?

Then the typed letters—which Bunter knew all about, and had told everybody about? Quelchy was being dunned for money—according to Bunter's theory—and, indeed, it looked probable. So the Removites, thrilling with excitement, gathered round as near Mr. Quelch's door as they dared, waiting for eventualities. They simply thrilled at the idea of seeing their Form-master led forth, like Eugene Aram, with gyves upon his wrist. It was a little excitement that did not often fall to the lot of schoolboys.

There was a buzz of excited voices, in the crowd in the passage. Billy Bunter being called upon for details, supplied them, with an inventiveness and imagination that would have done credit to a war correspondent.

"Handcuffs? Yes, rather! I distinctly heard them clinking—in fact, I—I saw them—gleaming like anything. And he had the warrant in his hand. And he said to Quelchy, when he went into the study—he—he said—"

"Well, what did he say?" demanded Wibley.

"He said, 'Anything you say may be taken down in evidence!'" said Bunter, with a really brilliant flight of imagination. Billy Bunter was so excited, and so sure that he was on the track, that he hardly knew he was lying.

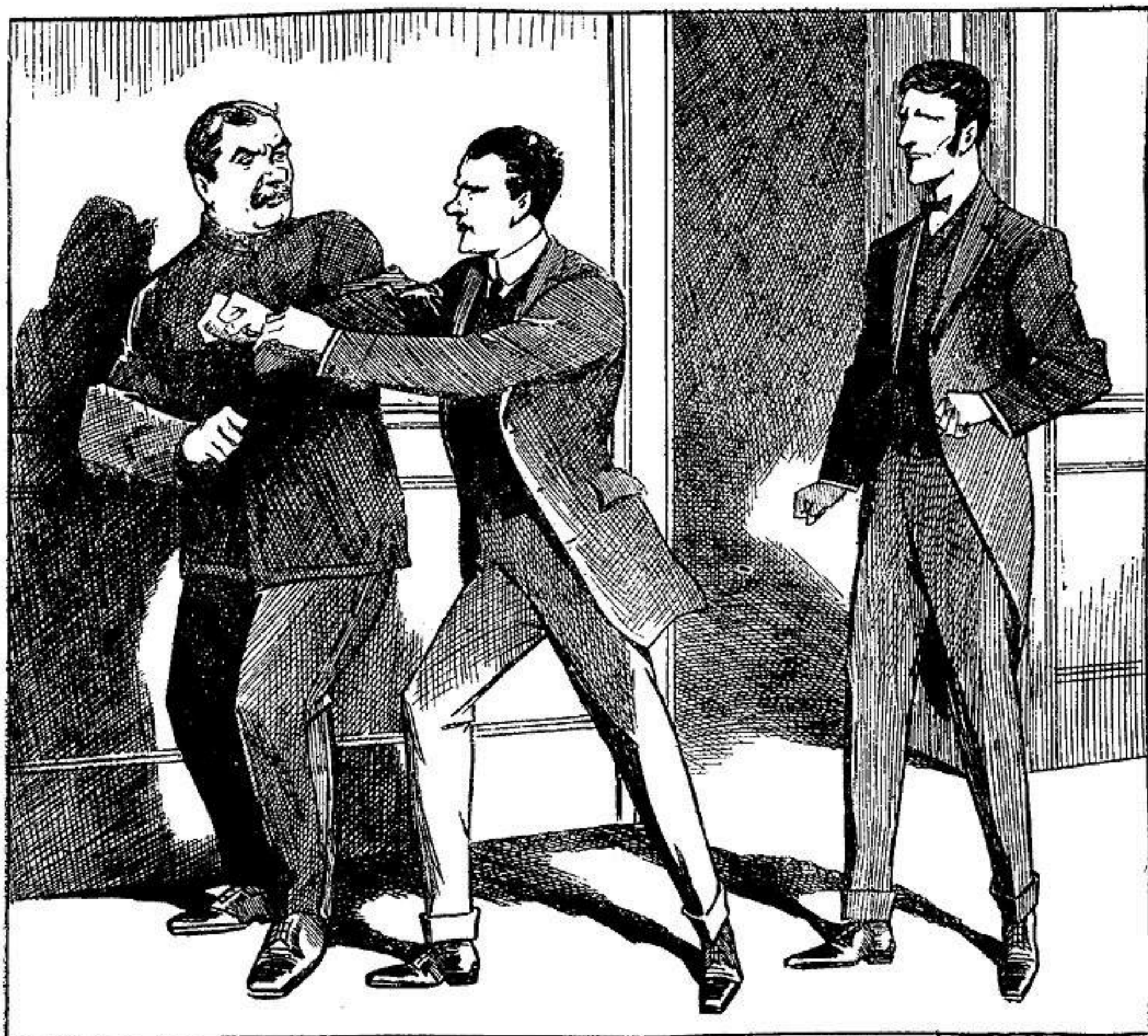
"Great Scott! He said that!" exclaimed half a dozen voices.

"You heard him, Bunter?"

"Of course I did—quite plainly. His voice was awfully deep and stern. Quelchy turned as white as a sheet."

"My word!"

"He staggered back, and fell into his chair," continued Bunter, "and he said, in a gasping voice—"



The portly form of Mr. Grimes stepped forth, accompanied by Mr. Quelch. Coker made a stride forward, and his powerful grasp closed upon the inspector, and the astounded officer was backed up against the wall in a twinkling. "No, you don't!" said Coker grimly. Mr. Quelch stood transfixed. (See Chapter 6.)

"Rats!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Ogilvy! He said, 'It's come at last! I'll go quietly!'"

"By Jove!"

"Poor old Quelch!"

"Hard cheese!"

"Well, if it's true, we're not going to miss this!" said Snoop. "I'd give a term's pocket-money to see it."

"Rotter!" said Ogilvy. "If it's true, I'm jolly sorry for Quelch!"

"It isn't true!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, really, Smithy! I tell you Quelch was as white as—as—as——"

"As the liver of a conscientious objector?" chuckled Rake.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he said, 'Oh, heavens!'" went on Bunter. "He said, 'Oh, heavens! Alas!'"

"Draw it mild!" growled Peter Todd.

"I heard him!" shouted Bunter. "And he looked quite blue."

"You said white just now."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Shush!" said Skinner. "I can hear 'em moving—they're coming!"

And the crowd of excited juniors "shushed," watching Mr. Quelch's door with all their eyes, breathless.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Quelch's Trouble!

QUITE unconscious of the thrilling excitement he was causing in the ranks of the Removites, Mr. Quelch was seated in his study, facing the portly inspector. From Inspector Grimes' manner it would not have been supposed that he had come with hostile intentions. He was very respectful, and very interested.

"Thank you very much for answering my telephone-call so promptly," said Mr. Quelch. "I am greatly in need of your advice, and perhaps assistance."

"A matter of threatening letters, sir, you told me on the 'phone," remarked the inspector. "Depend upon it, it won't take long to nail the rascal. Let me have the details of the matter."

"It is really most extraordinary," said the Remove-

NEXT
MONDAY—

"SKINNER THE SKIPPER!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

master, with a harassed look. "I have not, so far as I am aware, an enemy. Certainly not one in this neighbourhood, where, I believe, I am respected. I am amazed, and quite perplexed. I received the first letter yesterday, by the midday post. Another was delivered to me this morning, in much the same tenor. Then I resolved to communicate with the police without further delay, and I rang you up."

"And do you know from whom the letters came?"

"I have no idea."

"The handwriting—"

"They were typed," said Mr. Quelch. "There is, so far as I can see, no clue to the sender. But possibly you may detect things that are hidden from my eyes."

"Quite possibly, sir," smiled the inspector. "That is my business. Have you consulted anyone else, so far?"

"I have acquainted Dr. Locke with the matter. He suggested sending for his relative, Ferrers Locke, the celebrated detective. But—but I naturally wished as little fuss to be made as possible."

"I think you may rely on the local police, sir," said Mr. Grimes, a little stiffly. "I scarcely think Ferrers Locke would be likely to have more success in the matter than myself, for instance. Pray let me see the letters."

"They are here."

Mr. Quelch opened his desk, and took out two envelopes. They were addressed to himself in type. The inspector scanned the envelopes.

"Typed on a machine using a purple ribbon," he remarked. "Of course, there are probably some thousands of such machines in the county."

"But the postmark is Friardale," said Mr. Quelch. "I am not aware that anyone in the village uses a typewriter."

The inspector smiled.

"True; but there are dozens used in Courtfield. The writer of the letter might choose to post it in another place, in order to cover up his tracks."

"Yes, that is very true. This is the first letter I received."

The inspector examined the letter. It was typed in purple on ordinary typewriting-paper. There was no heading. It ran:

"HENRY QUELCH, BEWARE!

"Tyrant, an enemy is on your track! When you least expect it, the blow will fall! Prepare to meet your doom! NEMO."

"Extraordinary!" said the inspector.

"And this is the second letter, which I received this morning."

The second letter ran:

"TREMBLE!

"This is the second warning!

"Seven warnings will be given, and then the blow will fall! Tyrant, your days are numbered! Prepare to perish! NEMO."

Inspector Grimes examined both the letters very attentively. He was looking somewhat perplexed.

"Well, sir, what conclusion do you draw?" asked Mr. Quelch at last. "Is it some incredibly foolish joke, or does some danger in reality threaten me?"

"That it is scarcely possible to say at this stage," said the inspector gravely. "You say that you have no personal enemy?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"There is no one who—excuse me—may consider that you have injured him?"

Mr. Quelch shook his head.

"I cannot recall anyone. Of course, I have not passed through life without some little differences with various persons. But I can conceive of no reason why anyone should threaten my life. Unless the letters are a foolish practical joke, they seem to me the work of a lunatic."

"That is possible," said the inspector. "A man of unsound mind might nourish a sense of injury for a wholly imaginary cause."

Mr. Quelch shuddered.

"It is not pleasant to suppose that some lunatic has marked me down as his victim!" he exclaimed. "I should prefer to look upon the letters as a foolish joke."

"If that is the case, it will cost the joker dear, when he is discovered," said the inspector. "The writing of threatening letters, even for a joke, is punished by imprisonment. With your permission, I will take these letters with me, and if you receive any more communications of the sort, please telephone me at once."

"I will certainly do so."

"I will leave no stone unturned to discover the writer," said Mr. Grimes. "Meantime, I should recommend you to remain within the school walls. It is useless to run unnecessary risks."

"You think there is risk?"

"If these letters are seriously written, there is very decided risk. And I fail to see why anyone should perpetrate so cruel a joke upon you, sir. You should be aware whether you have made enemies in the neighbourhood. Someone who dislikes you might play such a prank, to cause you uneasiness."

"I can think of no one. Some tramp, perhaps, whom I have ordered off the premises—there was one a few weeks ago—"

"A tramp could not be responsible for these letters. Whoever has written them owns a typewriter, or at least has access to one. It points to some man of business habits."

"Yes, that is true. Some irresponsible lunatic, with a fancied grudge against me," said the Remove-master, with a shiver. "It is a terrible thought. I shall certainly not go out till you have investigated the matter, Mr. Grimes. I was going this evening to play chess with the vicar—"

"I should advise you to cancel that."

"Yes, yes; I will do so. I need not say that I am very anxious for the matter to be cleared up."

The inspector rose.

"You may safely leave it in my hands, Mr. Quelch." He put the letters in his pocket-book. "I will take these letters, with your permission. By consulting an expert, I shall soon ascertain upon what make of machine they were written, and that will narrow down the field of search. Rely upon me."

"Thank you!" said Mr. Quelch. "I shall wait very anxiously to hear from you."

And he opened the door for his visitor.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Coker to the Rescue!

"WHAT are you fags doing here?"

Coker of the Fifth asked that question in a peremptory voice, as he came striding along the passage.

It was no concern whatever of Coker's what the Remove fellows might be doing there. But that was just like Coker. Horace Coker was a senior; but he was only in the Fifth, and not a prefect, though he might have been two or three prefects rolled into one, judging by his manner.



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"Go and eat Coke!" said Bolsover major independently. But Billy Bunter, too full of the great news to keep it dark, blurted out immediately:

"We're waiting to see Quelch arrested, Coker."

Coker jumped.

"Mr. Quelch! Arrested!"

"Yes, rather!" chortled Bunter. "He's in debt, and he's been dunned for the money, and Inspector Grimes has come to arrest him at last. Quelch's simply squirming with terror, begging and praying Grimes to give him a chance."

"Good heavens!" said Coker.

"He was weeping just now," said Bunter veraciously. "We distinctly heard him—I mean, I distinctly heard him—weeping with anguish. Of course, it's a come-down for a Greyfriars master to be imprisoned for debt. But the inspector is as hard as nails. He's handcuffed him."

"Handcuffed Quelch!" gasped Coker.

"Yes; I heard the handcuffs clink. Didn't you, Skinner?"

Skinner, the practical joker of the Remove, closed one eye at Bolsover major, unseen by the startled Coker.

"Yes," he said solemnly. "And Quelch shrieked, and said, 'Give me time—oh, give me time to pay!'"

"I heard him," said Bolsover major, wondering what Skinner was driving at, but realising that he was pulling Coker's leg for some humorous reason.

Coker of the Fifth was popularly supposed to be every kind of an ass; but he was not ass enough to take Bunter's statements without corroboration. But here was corroboration enough. Skinner and Bolsover looked as solemn as owls, and the other fellows, quite willing to see Coker's leg pulled, assumed an equally owl-like solemnity. Wibley even cried a little into his handkerchief.

"Good heavens!" repeated Coker aghast. "What an awful state of things! Quelch has his faults—he interferes with a senior keeping the fags in order sometimes—but this is too bad! Are you sure?"

"You should have heard him sobbing!" said Snoop. "I don't like Quelch, but it's made me simply cry!"

"It was touching," said Bolsover. "It's hard lines on Quelch. I suppose he's had losses through the war, and can't pay up."

"And he said he could pay if they gave him time," said Skinner mournfully. "If I were a senior I should interfere and prevent Grimes from taking him away. But a junior couldn't. I wish I were in your place, Coker."

"Coker might do it," said Bolsover, catching on. "Coker's as brave as a lion, and he's big enough to knock Grimey into a cocked hat."

Coker started.

"A—a chap can't interfere with the law," he said slowly.

"I wish I were a senior!" sighed Skinner. "I wouldn't see a Greyfriars master marched off by the neck by a blessed copper! But, of course, if you're afraid to rescue Quelch—"

"Afraid!" shouted Coker.

"Well, a conscientious objector, then," said Skinner. "But if I were a big, brave chap like you, Coker, I know what I'd do."

"We'll back you up, Coker!" said Rake.

"Yes, rather! We'll all stand by you!"

"I don't want backing up by fags!" said Coker disdainfully. "But blessed if I don't chip in. You're sure Quelch said he could pay if they gave him time?"

"Yes, rather! His words were: 'Two hours will be enough. Spare me for two hours, and all shall be paid!'"

"Well, if two hours is all he wants, he's going to have it!" said Coker determinedly. "I'll lend him a fiver myself, if it's so bad as that. Grimes isn't going to take him away!"

"Bravo, Coker!"

"Collar the brute as he comes out," said Skinner. "Make him promise to give Quelch time. A master naturally expects to be backed up by a prominent and influential fellow like you, Coker."

"Of course," assented Coker. "I'll show Grimes whether he can come swanking here and arresting a Greyfriars master! Rather!"

"Here they come!" murmured Snoop.

Coker strode towards the study door.

The juniors were trembling with excitement now. Whether or not Mr. Grimes had come to arrest the Remove-master was a question; but there was no doubt

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No 420.

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

at all that there would be a sensation if the great Coker "went for" Mr. Grimes.

The door opened.

The portly form of Mr. Grimes stepped forth, accompanied by Mr. Quelch. Coker made a stride forward, and his powerful grasp closed upon the inspector, and the astounded officer was backed up against the wall in a twinkling.

"No, you don't!" said Coker grimly.

Mr. Quelch stood transfixed.

Inspector Grimes bumped on the wall, in such a state of surprise that he simply collapsed. He slid down the wall, and sat at Coker's feet. Coker, still grasping him in his powerful arms, rolled him over on his back, and set a heavy knee on his chest.

"Run for it!" he shouted.

"Coker!" stuttered Mr. Quelch.

"What—what does this mean?" roared the inspector, beginning to struggle violently. "Is this boy mad? Release me! Why, I will—I will—"

"Run for it!" yelled Coker. "Cut off while I've got him down!"

"Coker! Coker!"

"Why don't you cut?" shouted Coker, grappling with the struggling inspector. "Hook it, sir!"

"Hook it!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Are you insane, Coker?"

"Release me!" shrieked the inspector. "I will take you into custody for this! Mr. Quelch, command this lunatic to release me!"

"Do you hear, Coker? How dare you assault Inspector Grimes! Are you out of your senses? Release that gentleman at once!" roared the Remove-master.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Removites.

There was no sign of handcuffs, and it was perfectly clear by this time that Mr. Quelch was not under arrest. Evidently the inspector's call had been of a harmless nature.

The juniors enjoyed the scene immensely. Even Coker began to think that there must be a mistake.

He could not have much further doubt of that when Mr. Quelch rushed at him, grasped him by the shoulders, and dragged him bodily off the inspector.

Mr. Grimes scrambled up, very dusty, very ruffled, and very furious.

"The boy is mad!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Inspector Grimes, how can I apologise for this unparalleled outrage? It is unheard of! I assure you that Coker shall be severely punished!"

"Pip-pip-punished!" stammered Coker.

"Flogged, sir!" shouted the Remove-master. "How dare you! I repeat, Coker, how dare you?"

"B-b-but I was—was helping you, sir!"

"Helping me! What do you mean?"

"I—I thought I ought to interfere, sir, if you required only two hours to pay the money—"

"The money! What money? Are you insane?"

"The—the money you owe, sir. What Grimes has come to arrest you for!" stammered Coker.

"Arrest me!" shrieked Mr. Quelch. "Is it possible, Coker, that you were so utterly stupid as to suppose for a moment that Mr. Grimes had come to Greyfriars to arrest me?"

"Did-did-didn't he, sir?" stuttered Coker.

The inspector burst into a chuckle; he could not help it. Mr. Quelch did not chuckle. He was crimson with wrath.

"Mr. Grimes, pray excuse this stupid boy! You can see that he is not in his right senses!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"No harm done, sir!" said the inspector, chuckling.

"I suppose the young gentleman thought I had come to make an arrest—ha, ha!—and he was going to rescue you, sir. Ha, ha! No harm done, sir, not at all."

And Mr. Grimes walked away, still chuckling.

Coker stood rooted to the floor.

"Now, Coker," said Mr. Quelch, in a rasping voice, "explain yourself!"

"I—I thought the inspector was arresting you, sir," stuttered the unfortunate Coker, "so I—I chipped in!"

"Do you mean to say that you would have had the audacity to interfere with a police-officer in the execution of his duty, Coker?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" said Coker.

"You—you senseless boy!"

"I—I was only backing you up, sir," said Coker feebly. "I—I felt called upon to do it, as—as you only required two hours to raise the money."

"Has someone told you I am in debt, Coker?"

"Ain't you, sir?"

"Coker! This stupidity— Who told you that extraordinary falsehood?" thundered the Remove-master.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Coker. "The young villains! I—I suppose they were taking me in! I—I thought—"

"You incredibly stupid boy! I suppose you have been deceived by some practical joker. Go! I shall report this conduct to your Form-master, and request him to administer a severe punishment!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What are you juniors doing here?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "What—"

Before he could finish there was not a junior in the passage.

Mr. Quelch went back into his study and slammed the door. Horace Coker almost limped away. He went to look for Skinner and Bolsover and Bunter. But those three cheerful youths were not to be found. They had no desire whatever to meet Horace Coker just then.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Quelch is Alarmed!

MR. QUELCH was looking very grim when he appeared at the dinner-table. The Removites did not dare to smile.

The Lower School had chuckled gleefully over the way the great Coker had put his foot in it. In spite of Bunter's fertile imagination, it was evident that Inspector Grimes had not come to Greyfriars to arrest the Remove-master. But the juniors could not help wondering what he had come for. Some of the fellows, too, had no doubt that Mr. Quelch was really being dunned for money; for it was not difficult to deduce a connection between those typed letters and the tartness of the Form-master's temper. Various theories were started to account for it, Skinner favouring a theory that Mr. Quelch had been backing "geegees" on the strict "Q.T." Skinner would have had short shrift if his precious theory had come to the ears of the Remove-master.

Fortunately, Mr. Quelch was not aware of the deep interest his personal affairs were exciting in the Form.

His scanty hair would probably have risen on end if he could have heard the Removites debating how much he probably owed, and to whom he owed it, and what he owed it for. It was Bunter who had started the story of the Form-master's indebtedness; but, really, the typed letters and Mr. Quelch's evident preoccupation and tart temper seemed to bear it out. In the absence of a more probable theory, the juniors concluded that the unfortunate gentleman was being dunned for money.

Billy Bunter was thinking it over very seriously. His fat brow wore an expression of unusual gravity during afternoon lessons. He whispered to Squiff that it would be only right to back up old Quelch, though he was a beast. This laudable sentiment really did Bunter credit; but, unhappily, the gimlet eyes of Mr. Quelch were upon him, and he was given fifty lines for talking in class.

Fisher T. Fish might have been observed to grin several times during lessons, as if considerably pleased with his own thoughts, whatever they were. He watched the Form-master very keenly, and appeared to derive comfort from his state of worry. After lessons the Yankee junior hung about the passages, apparently on the watch. That evening was one of the regular occasions when Mr. Quelch walked down to the vicarage to play his evening game of chess with Mr. Lambe. But when the usual time came Mr. Quelch did not appear.

"By gum!" murmured Fisher T. Fish, to himself. "He's not going! By gum!"

It was clear that Mr. Quelch was not going, for the click of his typewriter could be heard in his study. He was putting in the time at the "History of Greyfriars."

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Fisher T. Fish indulged in a prolonged chuckle, which suddenly changed to a gasp as he received a terrible smack on the back.

"Yaroo!" gasped Fish. "Yow! You silly mug-wump—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "What's the little joke, Fishy? What are you going off like an alarm-clock for?"

Fisher T. Fish rubbed his shoulder and snorted.

"I guess you might do Quelch a good turn," he remarked.

"Eh? How?"

"You know he's booked for chess at the vicarage this evening?"

"Is he?" said Bob carelessly. "Yes; now I remember. What about it?"

"Waal, he's forgotten. It's past his time for going."

"What the dickens does it matter?"

"Waal, it would be only a good turn to remind him," said Fish. "Pop into his study and remind him."

"Rats!" said Bob. "He may have changed his mind about going. Hallo! What are you gurgling about again?"

"He, he, he!"

"Blessed if I can see the joke!" said Bob, mystified. "Nothing funny in Quelch changing his mind about playing chess, is there?"

"He, he, he! I calculate I'll give him the tip myself," said Fisher T. Fish. "I want to see his face, anyway."

Fish walked away to the Form-master's door, leaving Bob staring. He tapped very respectfully at the door, and Mr. Quelch's voice answered somewhat snappishly:

"Come in!"

Fisher T. Fish went in.

"Well, what is it, Fish?" asked the Remove-master tartly.

"Excuse me, sir! I guess you've forgotten an appointment, and I reckoned I ought to remind you," said Fish.

"What?"

"As you usually go down to the vicarage Thursday evening, sir, I calculated it might have slipped your memory."

"Thank you, Fish! It has not slipped my memory. You may go!"

"Yep. But—but there's something I think I ought to tell you, sir," said Fish respectfully.

"Kindly make haste, then! You are wasting my time!"

"It's about a man, sir, I saw lurking about the school," said Fish. "He looked to me like a dangerous character, sir."

Mr. Quelch started.

"Indeed! Describe the man, Fish!" The Form-master thought of the mysterious letter-writer at once.

"I guess I didn't see him very clearly, sir, as it's dark. He was lurking about outside the gates, as if waiting for somebody, and he had a knife—"

Mr. Quelch jumped.

"A—a knife, Fish?"

"Yep. He had it hidden under his coat; but—but I saw it. I thought it very strange that a man should be hanging about the school with a knife in his hand, sir, so I thought I ought to tell you."

"Quite right, Fish," said Mr. Quelch, in an agitated voice. "You did quite right to tell me. Is—is the man still there?"

"Nope. He sheered off when he saw me looking at him, sir."

"What was he like?"

"A man muffled up in a big coat, sir. I couldn't see any more."

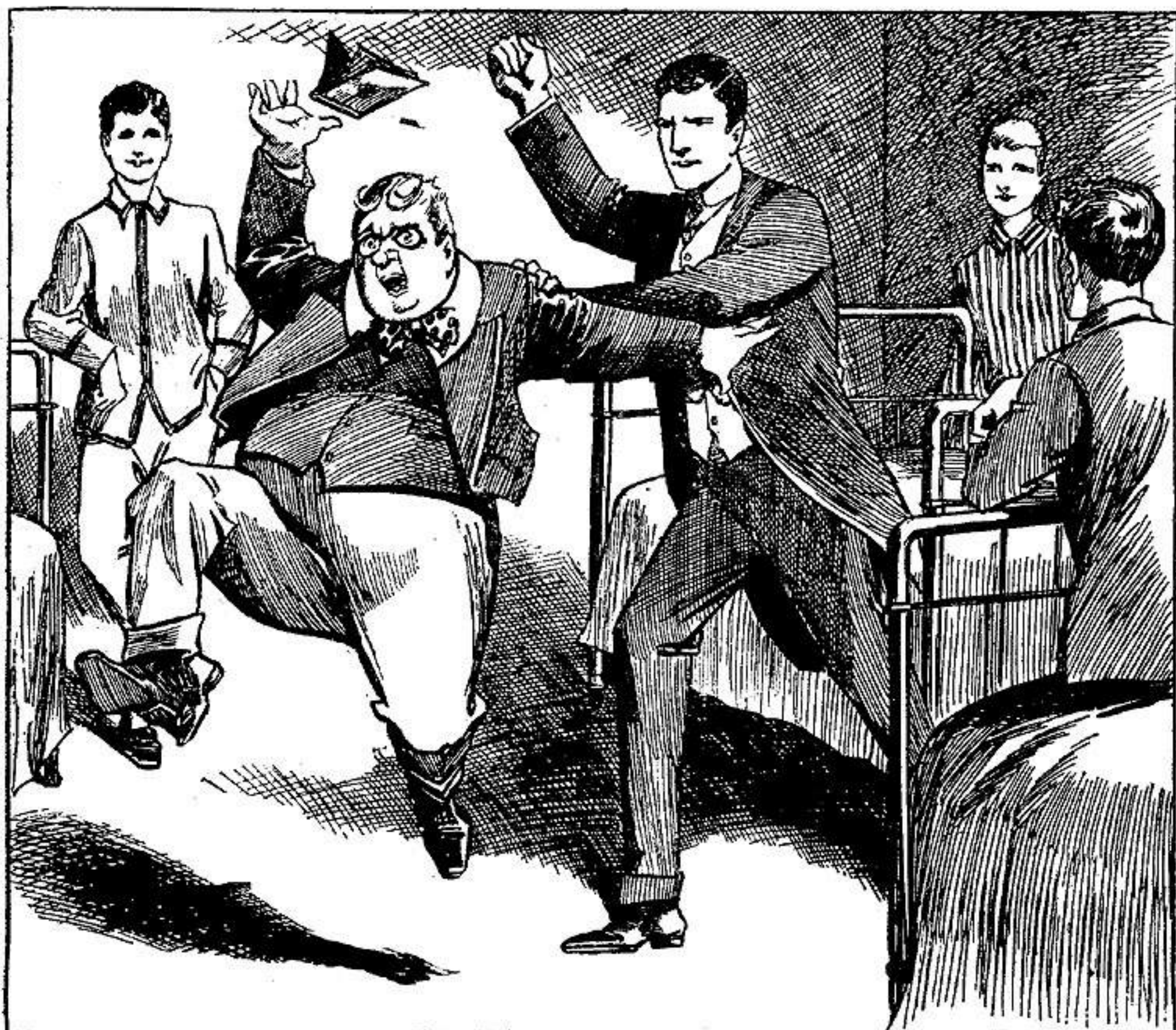
"How long ago was this?"

"About a quarter of an hour, sir."

"Very good, Fish. You may go!"

"Yes, sir."

Fisher T. Fish quitted the study and closed the door. The next moment his ear was glued to the keyhole. He heard Mr. Quelch rise hastily, and take the receiver from the telephone, and call the number of the Court-



You cheeky young rascal!" roared Wingate. "How dare you say such things about your Form-master!" "Oh, really, you know— Leggo! Wharrey you at, Wingate? Oh, you beast!" Spank—spank—spank! "Ow! Help! Fire! Murder! Yooo!" roared Bunter. (See Chapter 9.)

field Police-station. Then his voice, in agitated tones, was audible:

"Inspector Grimes! Is that Mr. Grimes speaking?"

Fisher T. Fish had no time to hear any more. A grip of iron was laid on his collar, and he was wrenched away from the door. He whirled round, spluttering, and found Bob Cherry looking at him with blazing eyes.

"Leggo, you jay!" gasped Fish.

"You spying worm!" said Bob Cherry angrily. "Listening at a keyhole—"

"Leggo! Quelchy's on the telephone, and I guess I want to hear—"

"You can guess till you're black in the face, but you're not going to hear!" said Bob grimly. "Kim on!"

Fisher T. Fish was marched down the passage, with a firm grip on his collar. He glared furiously at Bob Cherry, wriggling in his grip.

"You silly jay!" he hissed. "I tell you I want to hear—"

"Rats!"

"I guess—"

"Shut up!"

"I calculate I'll make potato-scrappings of you, Bob Cherry—"

"Right-ho! Come out into the quad and do it!"

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"SKINNER THE SKIPPER!"

Bob Cherry marched the Yankee junior into the quadrangle, and released him there. Then he pushed back his cuffs.

"Go ahead with the potato-scrappings!" he said.

Fisher T. Fish panted with wrath.

"You slabsided jay! I guess you ain't worth licking!"

"Ha, ha, ha! Too proud to fight—what?" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Then you'd better send me a note, Fishy!"

"What?"

"That's the usual Yankee game, you know. You send me a note, telling me what you'll do next time."

"You mugwump—"

Bob Cherry walked away, chuckling, and Fisher T. Fish put his collar straight, and scowled.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Hurree Singh Starts the Ball Rolling!

"I HOPE you fellows are flush with tin!" Billy Bunter expressed the hope in No. 1 Study. The Famous Five were there, chatting over the football match with Highcliffe, and disposing of baked chestnuts at the same time. Billy Bunter rolled

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into the study, with a little notebook in his fat hand, and a pencil behind his fat ear. He blinked at the chums of the Remove, with an expression of unusual importance.

"Don't say you're hard up!" he went on. "That won't do for me!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Your postal-order want cashing again?" asked Bob Cherry. "Don't say it's come at last! Break it gently!"

"The news would be astoundfully surprising!" remarked Hurree Singh. "The esteemed postal-order should be hung framefully in the study."

"I'm not talking about a postal-order," said Bunter. "I'm talking about the Quelch subscription."

"The what?" shouted the juniors.

"The Quelch subscription," said Bunter importantly. "As a leading member of the Remove, I have decided to take the matter into my hands. I suppose you fellows agree with me that we ought to back up Quelchy?"

"You told me so in the class-room, and got lines," grinned Bob.

Bunter coughed.

"Well, I—I forgive Quelchy," he said. "Of course he's a beast. All masters are beasts. But, upon the whole, I forgive him, and I'm going to try and get him out of his scrape."

"That's very generous of you, Bunter."

"I'm a generous chap," said Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at! Look here! Quelchy is in debt, and I'm raising a subscription to get him out. How much are you fellows going to contribute?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "You won't have any of my tin to blue in the tuckshop!"

"Tain't for the tuckshop, you duffer, it's for Quelchy, to help him out of his awful scrape. Fancy a Form-master being dunned for money, and taking it out of his class! The sooner we get it settled, the better it will be for the Remove. As captain of the Remove, Wharton, you ought to stand something handsome."

"Rats!"

"Look here! I expect you to support this subscription. Quelchy ain't so bad, considering—not nearly so bad as old Hacker, for instance. Well, we ought to get him out of his scrape," said Bunter persuasively. "My idea is to raise the money, and—and present it to him, you know, with a little speech."

"I can see Quelchy taking it!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"I don't see why he shouldn't. I suppose he would like to get out of debt, wouldn't he?"

"You don't know that he is in debt yet," said Harry Wharton.

"It's as clear as daylight. Those typed letters, you know, and Quelchy being so ratty, and old Grimes coming, and all that. He may be getting a summons next, if we don't rally round and rescue him. In fact, I think very likely old Grimes came to serve a summons on him. Fancy old Quelchy up at the County Court, asking the judge for time to pay! It would be a disgrace to the school!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think it's very unfeeling to laugh at poor old Quelchy being in such a fix, though he is rather a beast about the prep. But that's just like you fellows, you're unfeeling!" said Bunter indignantly. "As captain of the Remove, Wharton, I expect you to head the list. Say a sovereign."

"Oh, my hat! Why not say a fiver?"

"Well, if your uncle has dubbed up to that extent, Wharton, it would be only decent to stand the whole fiver," said Bunter, his eyes glistening. "You can rely upon me to keep strict account of the cash."

"Mrs. Mumble would do that," remarked Nugent.

"Look here, Nugent, if you mean to insinuate that I should spend this money in the tuckshop—"

"Bless you, I don't insinuate it. I say it out plain!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ahem! Shall we say a fiver, Wharton, to head the list?"

"You can say what you like, Bunter—say a tenner, if you like."

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"Have you got a tenner?"

"Oh, no!"

"Then what do you mean, you silly ass?"

"I mean you're as likely to get a tenner as a fiver, or fivepence, for that matter," said Wharton, laughing. "Run along and try some other study, Bunter. We've known you too long."

"If you doubt my personal honour, Wharton, I decline to discuss the matter with you further."

"Thanks!"

"Bob, old chap, you had better head the list. Everybody knows that you're a better footballer than Wharton."

"It isn't a football list, is it?"

"No, you ass—I mean, as you could play Wharton's head off, you ought to be captain of the Remove. Therefore—"

"Call another day."

"Well, the list will remain open some time," said Bunter. "What day shall I call?"

"Say February 32nd or April 1st, 1990."

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, Frank, are you going to head the list? You ought really to be captain of the Remove, if everybody had his rights. I shall vote for you when we have another election. What shall I put you down for?"

"Well, you could put me down for a silly ass, if I shelled out any tin," said Nugent. "But I'm not going to."

"I say, Johnny, old fellow—"

"Not so much of your 'Johnny old fellow'!" growled Johnny Bull. "And don't ask me for any tin, you spoofing porpoise!"

"On second thoughts, I should like to have an aristocratic name at the head of the list," said Bunter. "Can I put your name there, Inky?"

"With pleasurefulness, my esteemed fat Bunter."

"Good! It makes a list look well to head it with a title," said Bunter. "Prince Hurree Jampot Ram Singh—there you are! Of course, a prince is expected to hand out something handsome."

"The princeliness is terrific, but the handoutfulness is not great," said Hurree Jampot Ram Singh, shaking his head.

"Now, look here, Inky, don't be mean. You've lots of money, and you don't want to leave poor old Quelchy in the lurch," said Bunter, in his most persuasive tones. "Somebody must start the ball rolling, you know. Are you going to shell out a quid?"

"The ratfulness is terrific!"

"Look here, you nigger—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter glared at the Famous Five.

"You're a set of mean rotters, and I'd jolly well lick you all round, if—if I had the time!" he snorted. "As for you, Inky, I don't believe you're a prince at all, but a nigger, and my belief is that you're a coolie or something, or a Thug. Yah!"

Hurree Jampot Ram Singh rose to his feet.

"Does the esteemed Bunter really wish to start the ball rollfully?" he asked politely.

Bunter's truculent manner changed at once.

"Yes, rather! I—I take back what I said about your being a nigger—I was only joking, you know."

"The jokefulness was terrific," assented the Nabob of Bhanipur. "'Hard words butter no parsnips,' as your English proverb says. I shall be delightfully pleased to start the ball rollfully."

"Inky, you ass, don't hand out anything!" exclaimed Nugent. "It's only a dodge to get a raise for the tuckshop."

"You shut up, Nugent! Don't you presume to interfere with a prince!" said Bunter. "Inky's jolly well the only decent chap in this study! I say, Inky, could you make it a quid to start the ball rolling?"

"I could, my esteemed fat Bunter; but I preferfully choose to start the ball rollfully in another way."

"Well, half-a-quid would do, you know— Hallo! Wharrer you at?" roared Bunter, as two dusky hands grasped him forcibly.

"I am starting the ball rollfully."

"Yaroooh!"

Bump! Billy Bunter descended on the floor, and

Hurree Singh proceeded to roll him out of the study. There was a burst of laughter from the Co., as they realised in what manner Inky intended to start the ball rolling. Bunter was the ball, and the nabob was rolling him with great energy.

"Yaroo! Leggo! Leave off! Oh, my hat! Drag-gimoff!" yelled Bunter.

The juniors roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled through the doorway, gasping and grunting. Then Hurree Singh's boot was applied to his fat person, and he rolled along the Remove passage as if he was rolling for a wager. His roars rang through the passage, and Peter Todd put his head out of No. 7.

"What the dickens are you doing with my porpoise?" he demanded.

"The esteemed Bunter requestfully asked me to start the ball rolling. I am obligefully complying with the esteemed request."

A final shove of Inky's boot sent Bunter rolling into No. 7 Study. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh returned to No. 1, his dusky face wreathed in smiles.

"The esteemed ball has been rolled," he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hurree Singh sat down with a smile of satisfaction. The Owl of the Remove did not return to No. 1 Study for subscriptions. It was evident that, in that direction, there was nothing doing.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

No Takers!

PETER TODD stooped, and grasped Billy Bunter by the collar, and jerked him breathless to his feet. Bunter plumped into the armchair, and gasped. Tom Dutton and Alonzo Todd were at work on their preparation, and they both looked at him inquiringly.

"What's the little game?" asked Dutton.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"What have you been up to?" demanded Peter Todd.

"Groogh! I—I say, you fellows, you might back me up, if those rotters won't!" said Bunter. "I'm raising a subscription to pay Quelch's debts—"

"Spoofing again?" said Peter, with a frown.

"Oh, really, Toddy, you shouldn't be a suspicious beast, you know. How much are you going to contribute?"

"A thick ear, if you don't chuck it!"

"I say, Alonzo, you might start the list," said Bunter persuasively. "Think how nice it would be to help Quelch to get out of debt."

"I fear that Mr. Quelch would not accept financial help from the members of his Form, Bunter."

"Fathead!" said Peter. "Bunter knows that as well as you do. It's a dodge to raise the wind."

"Don't mind him, Lonzy. He's a suspicious beast," said Bunter. "How much can you shell out, old chap?"

"I fear that I could not place sufficient faith in you, Bunter, to entrust pecuniary contributions in your hands," said Alonzo, shaking his head. "Moreover, I have sent my allowance to the mission at the Goody-Booby Islands, and it is already, I trust, being expended in tracts and trousers for the benighted heathen. Therefore—"

"If you're stony, you silly ass, you needn't be so jolly long-winded about it!" snapped Bunter. "I say, Dutton—Tom, old fellow! Are you going to put your name on the list?"

"Highcliffe," said the deaf junior.

"Eh! What do you mean—Highcliffe?"

"That's the next game on the list."

"Oh, you fathead! Look here, I'm raising a subscription to get old Quelch out of debt," roared Bunter.

"Well, stay indoors, then."

"Eh?"

"No need to go out if it's wet."

"Not wet, you dummy—debt! Old Quelch, you know."

"Rot! It may be raining, but there's certainly no snow. What are you telling such silly whoppers for?"

"Look here, will you shell out a few bob?" bawled Bunter desperately.

"No, it isn't on the hob; it's in the grate, if it's the kettle you're talking about."

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"Oh, my only hat!" groaned Bunter. "I'm not talking about a kettle. I'm talking about a subscription for Quelch."

Tom Dutton looked round the study floor.

"Is it a beetle?" he asked.

"A beetle! What do you mean?"

"Then what do you want me to squelch?"

"Not squelch!" shrieked Bunter. "Quelch!"

"Oh, Quelch! Well, if Quelch's got beetles, he can squelch them himself."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter, while even the solemn Alonzo grinned. "Give it up, Bunter. Chuck it till you get a megaphone."

"I don't believe he's so jolly deaf as he makes out!" growled Bunter. "Well, if you fellows are too mean to help your Form-master out of a scrape, I'll go and see about it somewhere else. And Bunter departed and slammed the door."

Tom Dutton looked very perplexed.

"My belief is that that duffer's going off his onion," he said. "Talking about the Highcliffe match, and then the kettle, and then beetles. There's no connection in it that I can see. What are you cackling at, Toddy?"

Toddy did not explain what he was cackling at. He felt that his lungs were not equal to the strain.

William George Bunter rolled discontentedly along the passage. Funds were low with William George, and that idea of a subscription to rescue the Remove-master from his supposed scrape had come like a flash of light in the darkness. The subscription—if it had materialised—would have come like corn in Egypt in the lean years. But it did not look like materialising.

The fat junior rolled into Vernon-Smith's study, and explained to the Bounder and Skinner. Skinner only said that if Mr. Quelch was in debt, he hoped he would get arrested for it. The Bounder added that he hoped it would be a good long term, and that Bunter would go with him.

The next study was Rake's; and Rake and Wibley, Micky Desmond and Morgan, were all at home. But the Quelch subscription was only greeted with a howl of laughter in that study. With falling hopes, Bunter looked in at No. 2, where he found Bulstrode and Hazeldene and Tom Brown. But those three youths only cackled, and Bulstrode helped Bunter out of the study in the midst of his explanations. He used his boot to help him with, and Bunter departed rather hurriedly.

"Well, of all the beasts!" growled Bunter. "I—I suppose I may as well chuck it—mean rotters! And I'm jolly hungry, too. No—there's Squiff and Fishy!"

Bunter toddled along to No. 14, the end study in the passage. Sampson Quincy Ifley Field was there, at work on his prep. Bunter came in with an ingratiating smile, and without waiting for him to speak, Squiff shook his head. He knew that smile.

"Nothing doing!" he said. "Buzz off!"

"Oh, really, Field! Look here, I want to put it to you. You know the splendid way the Australians have bucked up in the war—"

The Australian junior stared.

"Yes, I know," he said. "What about it?"

"They've done some of the hardest fighting," said Bunter. "They've done everything except send over some statesmen to take the place of our duffers. And p'raps they'll do that later."

"Well, it would be an improvement," admitted Squiff. "But what the thunder are you driving at?"

"Then the way they've backed up the funds, you know," said Bunter enthusiastically. "It's top-hole—simply top-hole. Now, you being an Australian, you're the very fellow to head this list. I've come to you first of all, because—because it's proper for an Australian to take the lead, you know. What Australia thinks to-day, the British Empire thinks to-morrow, you know."

"I may have an odd tanner about me," said Squiff. "But what's it for?"

"Ahem! I'm getting up a subscription to pay old Quelch's debts—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Squiff.

"There's nothing to cackle at. If you care to head the list with a sovereign—"

Squiff went on with his work.
"If you like to make it half-a-sovereign, Field——"
"I'll make it a football-boot, if you don't buzz off," said Squiff. "Don't keep on buzzing at me like a bee. Buzz out!"

"If you're going to be mean, Field, I decline to discuss the matter with you. Where's Fishy?"

"Blessed if I know. Poking his Yankee nose into something, I expect. Are you going to stick Fishy for a subscription?" grinned Squiff, greatly tickled with the idea. Fisher T. Fish was never known to part with any money if he could help it.

"Well, Fishy ought to hand out something, for old Quelch's sake, you know."

"On account of the lickings Quelch has given him, I suppose?"

"Well, I don't see why not. Fishy's a Yankee, and they believe in licking the hands that slap them, and all that. The harder a Yankee is kicked, the more he talks about brotherly love and the blessings of peace. Fishy is the very chap to head this subscription. Where is the beast?"

"Buzz off and find him—and see here! I'll give you a bob for every tanner you get out of Fishy!" chuckled Squiff.

Billy Bunter grunted and rolled away. It was not probable that he would receive many "bobs" from Squiff on those terms. But there was a faint hope—ever so faint—and Bunter proceeded to look for Fishy.

But Fisher T. Fish had disappeared.

The Owl of the Remove sought for him, high and low; but the American junior was not to be found. It was not till nearly bed-time that Fisher T. Fish came in, looking wet and muddy. It was raining. Billy Bunter spotted him, and bore down on him at once.

"Where have you been all this time?" he said peevishly.

"Oh, just taking a trot round the Close," said Fish airily.

"Gammon!" growled Bunter. "You've been out over an hour. Breaking bounds after locking-up again, I suppose?"

Fisher T. Fish walked away without replying. Bunter ran after him.

"I say, Fishy, hold on a minute—look here! I'm starting a subscription to clear off Quelch's debts——"

"Well, start it, and don't bother me, you jay!"

"I want you to head the list."

"Oh, come off!"

"Now, do be reasonable, Fishy. Make it a half-quid. You being a Yankee, you ought to like Quelch no end for thrashing you—— Yaroooooh!"

A shove on the chest caused Billy Bunter to sit down suddenly, and Fisher T. Fish went upstairs.

Billy Bunter was looking quite disconsolate when he turned up in the dormitory that night.

"How's the Quelch fund going on?" asked Bob Cherry. Bunter snorted.

"I haven't had any subscriptions yet. I'm going to try among the seniors to-morrow," he said. "I dare say Coker or Loder will shell out."

"Try Wingate, when he comes in!" chuckled the Bounder.

"By gum, so I will!"

Wingate of the Sixth came in to see lights out. Billy Bunter rolled up to the captain of Greyfriars, pencil and notebook in hand.

"I say, Wingate, would you care to subscribe——"

"No, I wouldn't. Tumble in!"

"It's for Quelch, you know."

"For Mr. Quelch?" ejaculated Wingate.

"Yes. Old Grimes came to serve a summons on him to-day for debt——"

"Wha-a-at!"

"And we're getting up a subscription to pay his debts. As captain of the school, you ought to head the list. Shall I put you down for a sovereign?"

"You cheeky young rascal!" roared Wingate. "How dare you say such things about your Form-master?"

"Oh, really, you know—— Leggo! Wharrer you at, Wingate? Oh, you beast!"

Spank—spank—spank!

"Ow! Help! Fire! Murder! Yooop!"

THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD" 1/2d.

Edited by the Chums of the Remove Form.



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"I'd like you to head the list, Coker, as—as the head of the Fifth Form," said Bunter. "You see, Quelch's being dunned right and left. What are you making faces at me for, Bob Cherry? Quelch's head over ears in debt, and old Grimes brought him a summons yesterday, and——" "BUNTER!" Billy Bunter jumped. It was Mr. Quelch's voice. The Owl of the Remove understood now why Bob Cherry had been making faces at him. (See Chapter 10.)

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now turn in," said Wingate, breathing hard, "and if there's any more of this rot, Bunter, I'll report it to Mr. Quelch!"

Billy Bunter turned in, with feelings that could not have been expressed in mere words.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Grimes on the Track!

THE next morning, Mr. Quelch's letters were taken into his study, and did not appear on the breakfast-table. In his study the Remove-master looked over them with a puckered brow. He started, and his lips set tightly, as he picked out an envelope addressed to him in typewriting.

"Another!" he murmured.

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He cut open the envelope, and drew out the letter. Like the previous missives, it was typed on ordinary typing paper. It ran:

"Tyrant! Tremble! This is the third warning! Last night you escaped me! You dared not come forth. But the hour will come! Tremble! NEMO."

The letter shook in Mr. Quelch's agitated hand.

"Bless my soul!" he murmured. "Then—then Fish was not mistaken—the man he saw lurking by the gates was undoubtedly a dangerous character—the knife—oh, dear!—that dreadful knife was intended for me! It is some lunatic—some fearful, irresponsible lunatic who fancies that I have wronged him—else why does he allude to me as a tyrant—a really absurd and melodramatic expression. The letters, indeed, might be written by some foolish person whose mind has been perverted by

reading newspaper reports of crimes. Dear me! Bless my soul!"

Buzzzzzz!

Mr. Quelch hurried to the telephone as the bell rang. He took up the receiver with an agitated hand.

The deep voice of Inspector Grimes of Courtfield came over the wires.

"Is that Greyfriars School?"

"Yes, yes—Mr. Quelch speaking."

"I am Inspector Grimes. I have news for you, sir."

"Thank goodness!"

"Immediately upon receiving your telephone call last evening with reference to the information given you by the junior Fish, I lost no time," said the inspector. "I think I may say we are on the track. Have you received any further communications?"

"Yes, by this morning's post."

"The same kind as before?"

"Precisely the same. I will read you the letter."

"Please do so."

Mr. Quelch read "Nemo's" letter into the receiver.

"By Jove!" came the inspector's voice, when he had finished. "There is no doubt about it, then. The man whom Fish saw lurking outside the school gates last evening was undoubtedly waiting for you."

"Undoubtedly! And he had a-a-a-a-a knife!" stammered Mr. Quelch. "The dreadful person must have intended to inflict serious bodily injury."

"It certainly looks like it."

"But you say you are on the track, inspector?"

"I think I may say so. I sent two of my best men off immediately on receiving information from you last night. They discovered a man lurking on the Friardale Road, within a short distance of the school. His manner was most suspicious. He was lurking in the road, keeping in the shadows as much as possible, and at sight of them he darted into the wood. They lost track of him there, in the dark. But his actions speak for themselves. I have very little doubt that he will be found to-day."

"Good—very good!"

"He will then be obliged to give an account of himself, and if he is the writer of the threatening letters, I have not the slightest doubt that the fact will come to light. Either upon his person, or in his lodgings, some evidence will be discovered."

"I trust so, inspector. I am in a state of great uneasiness."

"Rely upon us, sir!"

Mr. Quelch felt a little relieved after that talk on the telephone. The police, with their usual activity and perspicacity, were already on the track of the mysterious "Nemo." Probably he would soon be laid by the heels. But if they did not capture him—what then? Mr. Quelch could not forget the knife! Suppose—suppose the awful ruffian should lose patience, and, instead of waiting for him to come forth, should attempt to penetrate into the school under cover of darkness? Mr. Quelch resolved to lock his bed-room door that night.

He was late to breakfast, and his pale and harassed

look did not escape the attention of his Form. Fisher T. Fish watched with a subdued grin. The Yankee junior seemed to feel that he was getting "his own" back. Harry Wharton was a little concerned. He really liked and respected his Form-master, and he was sorry to see him looking so harassed.

Billy Bunter gave the Famous Five a reproachful blink as they came out after breakfast.

"I say, you fellows, Quelch looks awfully queer," he said.

"He does—he do!" said Bob Cherry. "Looks as if he's going to be ill. I wonder what's the matter."

"It's his pressing debts, of course."

"Fathead!"

"If you fellows like to do the decent thing, the subscription-list is still open," said Bunter with dignity. "For Quelch's sake, I will overlook your conduct of last night."

The Famous Five grinned and walked away. They were a little concerned for their Form-master, but they were not disposed to swell Bunter's subscription-list. That list still presented a beautiful blank.

Bunter grunted discontentedly. It had seemed such a ripping idea, and he had revelled in such visions of free tuck, that it was hard to give it up. But it certainly looked as if there was nothing doing.

"I say, Coker!" The Owl of the Remove bore down on Coker of the Fifth in the passage. "Coker, old man!"

"Cut off, you cheeky fag," said Coker tersely.

"I say, Coker, as—as a prominent fellow in the school—a fellow who ought really to be head prefect—you ought to help in this," urged Bunter.

Coker paused, thawing. "Soft sawder" was never applied in vain to the great Coker.

"What is it?" he asked, more graciously.

"It's a subscription for Quelch. He's head over ears in debt, and we're trying to raise a fund to get him out of the scrape."

"Great Scott!"

"I'd like you to head the list, Coker, as—as the head of the Fifth Form," said Bunter. "You see, Quelch's being dunned right and left. What are you making faces at me for, Bob Cherry? Quelch's head over ears in debt, and old Grimes brought him a summons yesterday, and—"

"BUNTER!"

Billy Bunter jumped. It was Mr. Quelch's voice. The Owl of the Remove understood now why Bob had been making faces at him.

"Bunter, how dare you?"

"Oh, my hat!" groaned Bunter.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Reward!

MR. QUELCH glared at the quaking Bunter, almost at a loss for speech.

His face was pale with anger.

Bunter stood trembling like a jelly.

The fellows near at hand stood as silent as graven images, quite awed by the expression upon the Remove-master's face.

"Bunter! You utterly stupid and impudent young rascal, how dare you make such statements respecting your Form-master?"

"I—I—I didn't sir!" stammered Bunter.

"What! I have just heard you!"

"I—I—I mean, I—I—I—"

"You have invented a story that I, your Form-master, am in debt, and dunned for money, and summoned for the same."

"Not at all, sir. We're all very sorry indeed to know that you are hard up, and we're raising a subscription for you," stammered Bunter.

"How dare you?"

"I—I thought you'd like it, sir!"

"Are you insane, Bunter? If I were in need of money, do you think I could accept monetary aid from the boys of my Form?"


"I—I suppose so, sir. I would!"

"You have actually been collecting money, and using my name?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "Good heavens, I

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have never heard of such insolence! How much money have you collected?"

"N-n-n-none, so far, sir. The—the fellows were so jolly suspicious, and they—they thought I should blue it on grub!"

"I have very little doubt that their suspicions were well founded, Bunter."

"Oh, really, sir——"

"You have dared to use my name, and to represent me as being in debt."

"I'm sure I'm awfully sorry you're in debt, sir," gasped Bunter. "When—when my postal-order comes, I'd be very pleased to lend——"

"BUNTER!"

"Ye-e-s, sir. I—I mean——"

"I must sift this matter to the bottom," said Mr. Quelch. "Kindly tell me who informed you that I am in debt, Bunter."

"Nun-nun-nobody, sir!"

"Then what gave you the impression?"

"Be-because it's true, sir!"

"It is not true, Bunter."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"Now tell me what put such an incredibly absurd and insolent idea into your foolish head!" thundered the Remove-master.

Bunter's knees knocked together.

"I—I—I—— Those dunning letters, sir!" he gasped.

"What letters? Is it possible that you have been prying into my correspondence?" gasped the Form-master.

"Nunno, sir—oh, no! I'd scorn such an action, sir, and I never had any chance! I mean, I wouldn't have done it if I'd had a chance. But those typed letters, sir, as they were dunning letters——"

"They were not dunning letters, Bunter."

"Oh, I—I see, sir."

"And why," said Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice—"why should you suppose that they were what you call dunning letters, Bunter?"

"Bub-bub-because you were so waxy after getting them, sir!" stammered Bunter.

There was a chuckle, instantly suppressed as Mr. Quelch glanced round with a freezing eye.

"Bunter, I hardly know how to deal with you," said Mr. Quelch, after a pause. "I must conclude that you have spread this ridiculous story through the school."

"Oh, no, sir; I—I haven't mentioned it to anybody, sir."

"What! Yet you have been attempting to raise subscriptions! Don't prevaricate, Bunter!"

"Certainly not, sir. I—I couldn't if I tried."

"Boys," said Mr. Quelch, looking round, "I think I hardly need say that this utterly foolish lad is completely mistaken. The letters he alludes to had no connection whatever with monetary matters. I make this statement to remove the false impression Bunter's stupid folly may have created. Bunter, you will follow me to my study!"

"Oh, lor'!" groaned Billy Bunter.

He had reason to groan when he entered the Form-master's study. Sounds of anguish proceeded from that apartment, accompanied by the swishing of a cane. When Billy Bunter came out he looked as if he were trying to tie himself into a sailor's knot.

He blinked at Harry Wharton & Co. in deep anguish.

"Had it hot?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Three on each hand!" moaned Bunter. "Oh, dear! Did you ever hear of such an ungrateful beast! When I was trying to rescue him from debt, you know——"

"Serve you jolly well right, you cheeky fag!" said Coker.

"Oh, really, Coker! I—I say, Coker, if you care to make that subscription, after all——"

"What?"

"I forgive Quelch," said Bunter, rubbing his hands. "I forgive him, and I'm willing to raise a subscription for him, all the same. If you'd care to head the list with a sovereign, Coker—— Yow-ow—leggo my collar, you beast! If you shake me like that—— Yow! My glasses will fall off! Yoop! And if they get broken—— yaroooh! You'll have to p-p-pay for them! Yoooooop!"

Coker shook Bunter till his teeth rattled, and then sat him down on the floor with a bump and walked away grinning. Evidently the great man of the Fifth did not

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intend to head the subscription list, in spite of Billy Bunter's magnanimous forgiveness of Mr. Quelch.

Bunter blinked wrathfully at the chuckling juniors.

"Yow! You rotters! Why don't you bump him?" he gasped. "You beasts! Why don't you stand by a chap in your own Form? Yow! Yah, you're afraid of Coker! Yah!"

"We'll bump you instead," said Bob Cherry cheerily. "We're fed up with your subscription list. Collar him!"

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

Bump! Bump!

"Oh, crumbs! Help! Yoop!"

"You'll get that every time we hear you asking for a giddy subscription," said Harry Wharton. "Chuck it!"

Billy Bunter crawled away glowering. But he was not heard asking for any more subscriptions to the Quelch fund. He had reluctantly to admit that it was N.G.—N—decidedly-G.

In the Form-room that morning the juniors expected Mr. Quelch to be "ratty" again. They were agreeably disappointed. Mr. Quelch was very quiet, but he was quite good-tempered.

As a matter of fact, he had discovered from Bunter that he had been showing the harassed state of his mind a little too plainly, and that the juniors were commenting upon it. And, being a just man, he was troubled by the thought that he had, perhaps, been a little too sharp with his class on account of the worry that was on his mind.

That morning, to the surprise and delight of the Remove, he was perfectly gentle. Indeed, Bob Cherry said he was so tame that he could really have been fed by the hand.

Which was a great relief to his dutiful Form.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Inspector Grimes Makes a Capture!

SUNDAY was the next day. There was an early morning delivery of letters at Greyfriars that day, and Mr. Quelch received one. He was not surprised to see that it was typed. It was a threatening letter, in much the same strain as the previous ones, and Mr. Quelch wiped his perspiring brow as he read it. It proved clearly enough that the letter-writer had not yet been captured by the enterprising inspector.

The matter was getting on Mr. Quelch's nerves seriously.

All the Greyfriars fellows could see that he was worried and anxious, and could not help wondering what was the matter with him.

Bunter's absurd theory of debts and dunning letters having been disposed of, the Removites were left quite in the dark, but they could not fail to see that there was something troubling their Form-master seriously.

Most of them were sorry to see it, for they liked their Form-master very well. Three or four fellows, like Skinner and Snoop, were glad to see it. Fisher T. Fish positively rejoiced in it. He "guessed" that Quelch was being made to sit up at last, as he told the Famous Five. Harry Wharton looked at him hard when he made that accurate "guess."

"Do you mean to say that you have nothing to do with it, Fish?" he asked.

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

"I guess I don't mean to say anything," he answered. "We learn to keep our yaup-traps shut in Noo York, sir."

"I don't see how you could be the cause of it."

"I guess there's heaps of things you don't see, you galoot! Didn't I tell you I'd make Quelch sit up for being down on me?"

"Yes. But——"

"And isn't he sitting up?"

"Well, yes; but——"

"Then I calculate you can put two and two together," chuckled Fishy. "Put it down to me, sir. But I'm not

letting anything out. We cut our eye-teeth early in the Yew-nited States, sonny. But I kinder reckon that by this time Quelch is feeling rather sorry for himself—some!"

"If I believed that was anything but gas I'd take you by the neck and rub your face in the coal-locker," said Wharton quietly. "But I believe it's only gas!"

Fisher T. Fish sniffed.

"You can believe what you like, and go and chop chips!" he said. "But I guess I'm after his scalp—just a few!—and I'll worry him till his last hairs turn grey—some! I guess I'll teach him not to wallop a free American citizen."

"If you've been playing a trick, what is it?" demanded Nugent.

"I guess that's telling!"

And Fishy sauntered away chortling.

On Monday morning there was another letter for Mr. Quelch. It was typed as before, and it ran:

"This is the fifth warning. Prepare for death! In the dead of night the blow will fall. Beware!"

"NEMO."

"Good heavens!" murmured Mr. Quelch. "I—I really shall be ill if this continues much longer. Really, I should have expected that Inspector Grimes would have had some success before this!"

Later in the morning he encountered the Head, and Dr. Locke glanced at him quite anxiously.

"You are not looking well, Quelch," he said.

Mr. Quelch passed his hand across his brow.

"I am not feeling well, sir," he said. "I confess that that mysterious matter is affecting my nerves. Every morning regularly I receive a letter containing the most savage threats."

"If you wished, I would ask Ferrers Locke to come here—"

"I am sorry I did not accept your offer to do so before, sir. But now I have placed the matter in Inspector Grimes' hands I cannot very well withdraw it."

"No; that would naturally be a slight to the inspector. I sincerely trust that he will be successful in finding this unscrupulous wretch."

After dinner there was a call on the telephone for Mr. Quelch. It came from Courtfield Police-station.

"Mr. Quelch?"

"Yes, yes. You have news for me?"

"Good news, sir! The man has been arrested."

"Thank goodness!"

"The arrest was made yesterday afternoon. The man is a tramp, and cannot give a satisfactory account of himself. He has been lurking about the neighbourhood for a week, and is evidently a suspicious character. Unless some proof is forthcoming to connect him with the threatening letters we cannot detain him long; but I hope to clear up the matter—"

"One moment!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "You say that this—this suspicious character was arrested yesterday afternoon?"

"Yes, on Hayes' Farm, on a charge of frequenting with felonious intent."

"But—but I received another of the threatening letters this morning!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"The postmark was Friardale; the hour last evening."

"Great Scott!"

"This letter must have been posted while you had the man in custody."

There was a long pause before the inspector replied. His tone was quite altered as it came over the wires at last.

"Ahem! Hum! H'm Under the circumstances, it appears that—that this suspicious character cannot be the—the person in question. I—I shall question him—ahem!—before he is released; but—but—it is true that he had denied any knowledge of the letters—ahem!—ahem!"

"The letter-writer is evidently still at liberty, Mr. Grimes," said the Remove-master drily. "Would you—ahem!—have any objection to my consulting Ferrers Locke, the detective, on the subject?"

"Oh, none at all—none at all!"

"Thank you!"

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Mr. Quelch hung up the receiver, and hurried to the Head's study.

"Dr. Locke, will you have the kindness to telephone for your young relative? If Ferrers Locke could come—"

"Certainly, Mr. Quelch. But the inspector—"

"The inspector arrested a tramp upon suspicion yesterday afternoon."

"Then—"

"And while the man was in custody, another letter was posted to me in Friardale."

"Oh!"

"I think, therefore, that I am justified in calling in Mr. Locke. At this rate, Mr. Grimes may cause a great deal of inconvenience to perfectly innocent persons."

The Head smiled.

"I will telephone at once," he said.

And he did; and Ferrers Locke replied over the wires that he would be at Greyfriars by the early evening train.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Light on the Subject!

"FERRERS LOCKE, by Jove!"

Bob Cherry spotted the famous detective as he stepped out of a taxi before the School House in the dusk of the evening.

Mr. Locke nodded kindly to Bob as he came in. He proceeded directly to the Head's study, and a few minutes later was seen tapping at Mr. Quelch's door. The door opened, and closed again behind the detective.

"He's come for him!" said Billy Bunter, in a whisper.

"Fathead!" said Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton! What's he come for, if it isn't for Quelch. I dare say it isn't debt after all—something more serious most likely. I wonder whether Quelch will be arrested this time?"

"Shut up, you silly ass!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Bob—"

"I—I say, you galoots"—it was Fisher T. Fish—"is that Ferrers Locke, really? What's he come for?"

"Better ask him!" grinned Johnny Bull. "He's in Quelch's study now."

Fisher T. Fish looked uneasy.

"I guess I'm going to know what's on," he muttered, and he started down the passage. Then he gave a yelp as Bob Cherry's finger and thumb closed on his ear.

"Leggo, you mugwump!"

"I'm holding on," said Bob coolly. "Keyholes are Bunter's province, Fishy—you're not going to poach on Billy's preserves."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here!" panted Fisher T. Fish. "I tell you it's important. I guess I've simply got to know what's going on. That galoot Locke is sharper than a fat-headed inspector. Why, he might tumble to—"

Fish paused abruptly.

"To what?" asked Bolsover major.

"Never mind what. Leggo my ear, Cherry, you jay!"

Bob Cherry grinned, and held on; and the Yankee junior, being too proud—or too something else—to fight, had no choice about the matter. He stayed with Bob.

In Mr. Quelch's study, Ferrers Locke was greeted warmly by the Remove-master.

"I cannot say how glad I am to see you, Mr. Locke," said the worried gentleman. "I hope you will be able to help me."

"I sincerely trust so," said Ferrers Locke, as he sat down. "It is a matter of threatening letters, I understand from Dr. Locke."

"Exactly!"

"Please give me the details."

Mr. Quelch explained, the detective listening attentively.

"A very remarkable matter," said Mr. Locke. "You have some of the letters here?"

"The first two are in Inspector Grimes' hands, but I have received three since then. They are here."

"I shall be glad to see them."

Mr. Quelch laid the letters on the table. Ferrers

Locke glanced over them, and then picked up the latest arrival, and examined it closely.

The Form-master watched him anxiously. Whether the detective would discover anything that had been hidden from Inspector Grimes, he could not guess; but he had faith in Ferrers Locke, and he hoped. He was surprised to see a smile flit over the grave face of the detective.

"This is a very curious letter," said Mr. Locke.

"A very alarming one," said the Remove-master.

"I hope not."

"You think there is nothing to fear?"

"I trust not. But we shall see. In almost every one of these letters, sir, you are alluded to as a tyrant."

Mr. Quelch flushed.

"A most unjust accusation," he exclaimed, "and a most absurd one, from a person who has never come in contact with me. How could my conduct have been tyrannical towards an individual I do not know?"

"How, indeed?" said the detective. "The inevitable conclusion is, that you do know him, sir."

"What!"

"And that you have been at some time or other in a position of authority over him, and doubtless treated him—or he supposed so—with severity."

Mr. Quelch drew a deep breath.

"Some discharged servant, you think? That would certainly narrow down the field of inquiry."

The detective shook his head.

"I scarcely think, Mr. Quelch, that a discharged servant would cherish such animosity towards you. I am quite sure that your treatment of any dependent would never merit that. Moreover, does it not strike you that there is a certain youthful air about these very peculiar epistles?"

"Youthful!" repeated Mr. Quelch.

"Decidedly. The wording of them shows a juvenile imagination, to my mind—the imagination of a young person who has fed upon newspaper reports of crimes, and stories of Anarchists—such rubbish as the cheap and nasty stories for boys which are published in America."

"Certainly that occurred to me!" confessed Mr. Quelch. "I attributed the absurd expressions in the letters to the state of the man's mind. I consider that he must be insane."

"If it is a man—yes."

"You do not suppose that a boy would, or could, write such letters?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"A foolish and revengeful boy might do so, borrowing the melodramatic expressions from his favourite literature. But we shall see. Whoever wrote these letters had access to a typewriter."

"Yes, and it is unlikely that a boy would possess such a machine. True, a lad in a business office might have access to one, but such a lad could not be supposed even to have heard of me, much less to cherish animosity towards me."

"True. I understand that you possess a typewriter yourself, Mr. Quelch."

"Yes, it is here!" said the Remove-master, astonished by the remark.

"What colour ribbon do you use?"

"Purple record."

"These letters have been typed with a purple record ribbon," said Ferrers Locke.

"Yes, I observed that."

"Will you hand me a sheet of the typing paper you use?"

"Certainly."

The amazed master did so, and Ferrers Locke smiled slightly again.

"You use exactly the same paper as your mysterious correspondent, Mr. Quelch. You observe the quality, the thickness, and the water-mark are the same."

"I had not observed it, but it is certainly the case," assented Mr. Quelch. "Such paper, however, is used everywhere."

"Quite so. May I try your machine?"

"Try my machine?"

"Yes."

"Certainly, if you wish. But I fail to see——"

"Patience a few moments, my dear sir."

Mr. Quelch, in utter astonishment, removed the cover from his typewriter. Ferrers Locke slid the blank sheet on the cylinder, and proceeded to type. He made a copy of the latest missive received by the harassed Form-master.

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master. A slightly impatient expression was appearing upon Mr. Quelch's face. Ferrers Locke's action was utterly incomprehensible to him.

Ferrers Locke drew the written sheet from the machine, and compared it carefully with the threatening letter.

"Well?" said Mr. Quelch, at last.

The detective looked up.

"It is exact," he said.

"But—but I do not understand——"

"The explanation is simple, Mr. Quelch, and I do not think you will have far to look for your mysterious correspondent. The threatening letters were written here——"

"Here?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"In this study, on your typewriter," said Ferrers Locke calmly.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Dangerous Character!

MR. QUELCH gazed speechlessly at the detective. For some moments he could not find his voice.

"Mr. Locke!" he gasped, at last. "Is—is this a jest?"

"Nothing of the kind."

"You—you imagine that I—I wrote those letters myself——"

Ferrers Locke laughed.

"Not at all. I should scarcely suspect you of playing such an absurd trick. The letters were written on your machine, and it remains to find the person who wrote them. That is all. And I do not think it will be difficult."

"But—but—how could this man—or boy—obtain access to my study, and use my typewriter?" exclaimed the astounded Form-master.

"I should not suppose it was difficult. You are not always in the study. But I see that you are doubtful, and I had better point out the circumstances which have caused me to come to this conclusion."

"I—I should be glad——"

"Look at these two letters—one written by 'Nemo,' the other a copy taken by myself on your machine."

"I confess that they tell me nothing."

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"You have had your typewriter a considerable time, Mr. Quelch?"

"Some years, sir."

"Just so. A typewriter in use for a considerable time shows the natural effects of wear and tear. Some letters fall slightly out of alignment—not sufficiently to make it necessary to attend to them, but sufficiently to be observed on a close scrutiny. Some letters, such as the vowels, receive more usage than the others, and show a flatter and heavier expression. Every typewriter, like every other machine, develops an individuality of its own after a certain period of wear."

"I—I suppose so."

"Now observe this letter from your unknown 'Nemo.' Take the letter 'f,' which occurs more than once. The letter 'f' is slightly inclined to the right. You observe that?"

"Now that you point it out, certainly."

"Take the letter 'g.' The tail of the 'g' is slightly broken. That letter on your machine has suffered a little."

"It is so."

"Take the capital 'N,' in 'Nemo.' The right-hand stroke is slightly chipped."

"True."

"Now look at the copy of the letter I have made on your machine. You will see that the 'f' is slightly inclined to the right; that the 'g' is broken slightly; that the capital 'N' is chipped on the right-hand line. There are a dozen or more indications of the same sort, which I need not enumerate. Now, although every typewriter in use varies from the original standard, it is practically impossible for two typewriters to vary from that standard in precisely the same way; the coincidence would be too great. From the indications in

the type there is not the slightest doubt that these threatening letters were written on your machine."

Mr. Quelch drew a deep breath.

"It seems clear enough," he said. "Quite clear, Mr. Locke. But—but how in the name of wonder has that wretch obtained admittance to the school? How did he know that I possessed a typewriter, that he came here to use it? Mr. Locke, it seems incredible that any outsider should have been able to obtain access to the House, and to my study, unseen!"

"It is incredible," said Ferrers Locke, with a nod. "And the explanation is, that these letters were written by some inmate of Greyfriars!"

Mr. Quelch jumped up.

"A Greyfriars boy?" he shouted.

"Undoubtedly."

"Good heavens!"

"The threats contained in the letters are mere nonsense, and there never was, of course, any intention of carrying them out," said Ferrers Locke. "The letters were designed to worry and harass you, doubtless in revenge for some punishment inflicted by you in the course of your duties here."

"Then—then the unscrupulous rascal must be a boy in my own Form!" the Remove-master exclaimed.

"I should say that that was quite certain," said Ferrers Locke. "That accounts for the revengeful action, and for the ridiculous appellation of 'tyrant' addressed to you."

"Good heavens!"

Mr. Quelch sat down again, almost gasping.

He could not doubt the detective's conclusions, and the discovery was a great relief to him. That lurking, desperate figure of a lunatic with a big knife faded into the background. Instead of a mysterious and threatening enemy, it was only a spiteful and unscrupulous schoolboy he had to deal with.

He blushed to reflect how his nerves had been worked upon by the trick. His whole Form had seen his state of nerves—the letter-writer among the rest. Doubtless, all the time, he had been grinning over the success of his scheme for harassing the Form-master. Mr. Quelch coloured at the thought.

"You need not blame yourself for having been deceived, sir," said Ferrers Locke, who easily read the Remove-master's uncomfortable thoughts. "Naturally, you could not guess. Inspector Grimes, apparently, took the letters seriously, even to the extent of arresting a person on suspicion. You need not blame yourself; but I should recommend you to find out the young rascal concerned, and make him understand clearly that this is not a safe game to play."

Mr. Quelch's eyes gleamed.

"But—but there are a large number of boys in my Form, Mr. Locke. Most of them, I am sure, would be incapable of such an unfeeling and rascally action. But how to discover the guilty party—"

"I do not think that will be difficult. In giving me the details of the matter, you mentioned that a boy of your Form informed you that a man, wrapped in a large coat, was lurking about the gates one evening—"

"Yes, that was Fish, the American boy. Acting on his information, I telephoned to Inspector Grimes, who consequently—ahem—"

"This boy—Fish—described the mysterious lurker as having had a knife hidden under his coat—"

"Exactly."

"From that you concluded that he was the writer of the mysterious letters, and was lying in wait for you. It was natural. But now that you know that the letters were written here, by a Greyfriars boy, what becomes of Fish's statement concerning a mysterious figure with a knife? It is pretty clear that the individual had no existence outside the imagination of Master Fish."

"Then—then he lied?"

"Apparently."

"But why—why should he do so? For you will understand, of course, that he knew nothing of these letters. The whole matter was a secret between the Head and myself."

"His story could only have been told in connection

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with the letters, however. He could have had no other motive for telling it. As his story is evidently a falsehood, it shows a knowledge of the letters on the part of Master Fish."

"Oh!"

"May I ask whether you have lately had occasion to administer severe punishment to this particular boy?"

"That is the case. I discovered him engaged in unscrupulous transactions—nothing less than lending money at interest among his schoolfellows—and I considered it my duty to make an example of him. I have often, too, had occasion to find fault with him for idleness and slovenliness."

"Hence the appellation of 'tyrant,'" said Ferrers Locke, with a smile. "I do not think you need look much further for the culprit."

Mr. Quelch started to his feet.

"I will send for him at once—"

"One moment! There is practically no doubt in the matter, but you cannot charge him with so serious an offence as this without absolute proof. He has lied to you, certainly, but the lie cannot be proved absolutely; for it is at least within the bounds of possibility that he saw such a lurking figure outside the gates as he described to you."

"Then what would you recommend?"

"Let the young rascal convict himself by being caught in the act."

"Ah! You mean, he may be caught in my study the next time he indites a letter upon the typewriter. By watching the study at night—for he must certainly have used the machine at night—"

Ferrers Locke shook his head.

"It is possible that he might be caught in that manner," he replied. "But it is very probable that he typed a number of the letters at once, having found a favourable opportunity of using your machine without your knowledge. That course would be a safer one for him to follow."

"Then, if he is searched, the letters will be found in his possession!" exclaimed the Remove-master.

"Very probably, but not certainly; for he may not have adopted that course," said Ferrers Locke. "But one thing is certain, these letters are posted at Friar-dale, to catch the last collection. To catch that collection Master Fish must leave the school after locking-up."

"It is true."

"I shall leave Greyfriars at once," said Ferrers Locke. "Nothing will be said to Fish. He will, therefore, have no cause for uneasiness. If he is the guilty party, he will steal out this evening, as usual, to post his letter in the village. It has doubtless been easy enough for him to do so hitherto without discovery. But on this occasion the village post-office will be watched. If a Greyfriars boy, of the Remove, whether Fish or another, comes there to post a letter, he will be seized before he can place the letter in the box. If it is a typed address, to yourself, on the envelope, I will bring him back to school with the letter. There will, in that case, be no possible doubt."

"Thank you, Mr. Locke! Such a plan cannot fail—unless, indeed, he should miss this evening—"

"That will not be material. I am quite willing to take a few days of rest in the country, if necessary, and devote a few evenings to Master Fish," said the detective, with a smile.

And after a few more minutes Ferrers Locke took his leave.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bowled Out!

FISHER T. FISH glanced at Ferrers Locke as he left the School House and stepped into the taxi. Harry Wharton & Co. saluted the detective, who gave them a kindly nod. The taxi whirled away in the dusk.

"I guess he's vamoosed," said Fisher T. Fish, with much satisfaction—"I guess he's no yearthly good, after all!"

"What were you scared about, you ass?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I guess I wasn't scared!"

"You've been playing some trick to worry Quelch, and you were afraid Ferrers Locke would find it out," said Harry Wharton, knitting his brows.

"Waal, I guess he's slipped up on it, anyway!" grinned Fish.

Mr. Quelch came out of his study, and passed the group of juniors. Fisher T. Fish drew a quick breath for a moment. But the Remove-master did not glance at him.

The Yankee junior breathed more freely when he was gone.

"All O.K., I guess!" he muttered.

And he strolled away whistling.

"Is he up to some dirty trick, or is it only his Yankee gas?" said Bob Cherry.

"Blessed if I know!" said Wharton. "But if it's something serious enough for Ferrers Locke to be called in about it, I should say Fishy's number is up."

"He's been jolly mysterious lately," said Frank Nugent. "Breaking bounds in the evening—what for he won't say. It looks to me as if he's going off his rocker."

Fishy's latest habit, of breaking bounds in the evening, was considerably surprising to the juniors who knew of it, as no reason could be assigned for it. Fishy was too "cute" to waste his money at the Cross Keys, as some of the "blades" of Greyfriars did. As for wanting to post a letter in the village-box, that did not seem reasonable, unless he chose the lateness of the hour to conceal the fact that he was posting letters at all; but why he should wish to keep the circumstance dark was a puzzle. If the Removites had known about "Nemo's" threatening letters, they would not have been so puzzled. But, naturally, Mr. Quelch had not taken his Form into his confidence on that point.

Fisher T. Fish was missing again that evening, and Harry Wharton & Co. could guess easily enough that he was out of bounds. There was little danger of discovery in the ordinary course, as Fish went out after calling-over, and returned in time for bed. But events out of the ordinary course were destined to happen that evening.

The chums of the Remove were in the common-room later in the evening, when Billy Bunter burst in, his eyes almost bulging through his spectacles.

"I say, you fellows," he gasped—"I—I say——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Grimey come for Quelch again?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I say—it's Fishy! He's arrested!" shrieked Bunter.

"Fishy this time, is it?" yawned Bob Cherry. "You'll make it the Head next, Bunter, I suppose. Why don't you make it the Head?"

"It's true!" yelled Bunter. "Ferrers Locke has come back, and he's got Fishy by the collar——"

"What?"

"He rang Gosling up, and had the gates opened, and they're coming across the quad now," panted Bunter. "Come on! I tell you Fishy's arrested!"

And Bunter dashed off again, to witness the thrilling sight of Fisher T. Fish being marched in with Ferrers Locke's hand on his collar. A crowd rushed after him in great astonishment.

Unlike a great deal of Bunter's news, it was true this time. A crowd of excited juniors reached the Hall, just as Fisher T. Fish came in, with the grip of Ferrers Locke on his collar. Mr. Locke was looking quiet and grave, and Fisher T. Fish was white as a sheet, and looking as scared as a rabbit.

"What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "What has Fishy done, Mr. Locke?"

"You will know soon," said Ferrers Locke quietly.

"I—I calculate it was only a joke," grinned Fisher T. Fish, utterly down in the mouth. "I—I guess——"

Mr. Quelch came hurriedly out of his study.

"Mr. Locke——" he exclaimed.

"I have brought this boy to you, sir," said Ferrers Locke. "He came to the village post-box, and I caught him as he was putting the letter in. The letter is here."

Mr. Quelch took the letter. Half Greyfriars had gathered round in the Hall, in wonder and amazement.

The Remove-master gave Fisher T. Fish an expressive glance, and cut open the envelope, which was addressed to himself in typewriting.

The letter inside ran:

"TYRANT! The hour of doom approaches! Beware of vengeance! In the dark hours of night the blow will fall! You are doomed!
NEMO."

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ONE
PENNY.

Mr. Quelch read that precious letter, with a grim brow. Then his eyes were fixed upon Fisher T. Fish. Ferrers Locke had released the unfortunate Yankee junior. Fish seemed to curl up under Mr. Quelch's glittering eye.

"So, Fish," said Mr. Quelch, in a voice like a rumble of thunder—"so, rascal, your guilt is proved!"

"I—I—I guess——" stammered Fish.

"Mr. Locke, I am extremely obliged to you—more obliged than I can say. Fish, you know what to expect, I presume?"

"I—I reckon it was only a joke, sir," muttered Fisher T. Fish, licking his dry lips. "I—I guess I never meant any harm, sir. I—I shouldn't have done anything, of course; it—it was only a matter of writing the letters, sir."

"Unscrupulous young rascal! And what was your motive in attempting thus to trouble and harass your Form-master?"

"I—I guess——"

"In revenge, I presume, for a well-deserved punishment, administered on account of other rascally and unscrupulous actions!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

Fisher T. Fish mumbled.

"May we know what Fish has done, sir?" asked Harry Wharton, respectfully.

"You may, Wharton. All Greyfriars will know, and will be able to treat this wretched and wicked boy with the contempt he deserves. Fish has written me a series of abusive and threatening letters——"

"Oh, my hat! I—I mean——"

"I do not wonder that you are surprised, Wharton. I hope every boy here is surprised and shocked. Doubtless in order to secure his own safety by avoiding the use of handwriting, Fish used my own typewriting machine for the purpose, and through that action he was detected by Mr. Locke."

"Good old Sherlock Holmes!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"You may read this letter," continued Mr. Quelch. "Having read it, you will fully understand why Fish is going to be punished with unexampled severity."

"Ow-yow!" mumbled Fisher T. Fish, in dire apprehension.

There was a murmur of indignation as the letter was read. Glances of contempt were turned on the wretched Fish from all sides.

Fisher T. Fish stood limp and quailing. The first-rate, gilt-edged "stunt," as he would have called it, for making his Form-master "sit up," had recoiled on his own head. That there was anything specially unscrupulous and rascally in writing anonymous and threatening letters Fisher T. Fish could not see. But it was certain that the Head's birch would assist in making it plain to him.

"Follow me, Fish!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "It rests with the Head whether you are flogged or expelled for this rascality. Follow me!"

Fisher T. Fish limped away after Mr. Quelch to the Head's study.

He left the crowd in a buzz. Fishy's mysterious conduct of late, his weird and mysterious hints, were explained. And the general opinion was that Fishy was going to get a record flogging, and that he deserved it.

And he did.

The next morning Fisher T. Fish was called out before the assembled school, and hoisted upon Gosling's broad shoulders, and for some time Dr. Locke was very busy with the birch. The yells of Fisher T. Fish rang through the Hall, and when the infliction was over, he was quite limp. The Head told him he trusted that that would be a lesson to him. He was not likely to write any more anonymous letters.

And he did not receive any sympathy in the Remove. Even Billy Bunter told him he was disgusted with him, and all the Remove agreed that it was jolly lucky he had been "bowled out."

THE END.

(Do not miss "SKINNER THE SKIPPER!" next Monday's Grand Story of the Chums of Greyfriars, by FRANK RICHARDS.)

THE OPENING CHAPTERS OF OUR GREAT NEW ADVENTURE SERIAL STORY. START TO-DAY!



: : By : :

T. C. BRIDGES.

The First Instalment Told How:

DICK DAUNT and DUDLEY DREW, two chums, discover a letter in a bottle which they have extracted from the body of a shark.

They are informed by its contents that a certain Matthew Snell is marooned on an unnamed island in the Keys, and he offers a substantial reward to any persons effecting his rescue.

On going to the island, however, they find that Mr. Snell is not there.

"This beats all!" said Dudley. "The old boy's vanished into thin air!"

(Now go on with the story.)

Hidden Bay.

It seemed that Dudley must be right. Old Snell was gone, and as Dudley and Dick together walked slowly back to the little house by the creek they discussed his disappearance in hushed voices.

"He was ill when he wrote that letter and set it afloat," said Dick. "He may have died."

"That's so," replied Dudley. "But if that's the case, where's his body? You'd reckon to find it in the hut, wouldn't you?"

Dick nodded frowningly.

"Yes, I suppose you would. But it's not a sure thing, by any means. He'd have been watching the sea, very likely, and would have been too bad to get back. Or he might have fallen over a cliff or into one of these big ravines which run inland from the sea."

"Yes, I guess that's possible," Dudley answered. "Or he might have been bitten by a snake. Say, Dick, there are more snakes on this island than I've got any use for."

"There'll be worse than snakes when Cray and his crowd land," said Dick grimly. "Which reminds me—we'll have to keep a watch to-night."

Dudley groaned.

"I could sleep a week," he said ruefully. "But you're right, Dick. It's a sure thing we'll have to watch."

"There's always the chance that the beggars came to grief in that blow," Dick suggested hopefully. "Or they may have missed the island altogether, and be messing about out in the Gulf miles away."

"I'd give a bit to know they had," smiled Dudley. "But it's a case of hope for the best, and expect the worst."

"Well," he added thoughtfully, "whatever comes along, that gold's worth a bit of risk. Gee! but we wouldn't need

much more than a clear week of digging to put us on the right side of everything."

"I'm with you there," said Dick heartily. "Whatever happens, we're going to stick to the game until we've got our pockets full."

"Shake on that!" replied Dudley. "I'm with you all the way."

Dusk was falling as they reached the little house. At their first visit, earlier in the day, they had not wasted much time exploring. Now they had a good look round.

"Snell must have been a dodgy old chap," said Dick. "He's got everything here top-hole."

"And I don't reckon he was very near starving, either," replied Dudley, rummaging in a cupboard. "Here's grub for a month!"

He began digging out tinned stuff of all sorts, with various packets of rice, sugar, coffee, and hominy.

"And, say!" he added. "He hasn't been gone a great while. Here's a tin of roast beef opened, and fresh yet."

"Well, I'm blessed!" exclaimed Dick, sniffing the meat. "In this weather that would have gone as high as Haman inside forty-eight hours. You're just about right, Dudley. Snell's been here within the past two days."

"Snell or somebody, with a tin-opener," added Dudley.

"I wish we could find the old chap," said Dick seriously. "It's poor luck his going under just before we turn up to rescue him."

"And, incidentally, to take the little bag of dust," put in Dudley. "Well, see here, Dick, there's lots of stuff here, so there'll be no need to go back to our cache for stores. Let's make a good supper, and toss for who takes first watch."

This seemed good to Dick; and Dudley, who was a top-hole cook, set to work with his pots and pans, while Dick got a roaring fire in the stove. In little more than half an hour all was ready.

There was a great pile of waffles, or flapjacks, hot from the frying-pan, a dish of dry hash made of corned-beef, onions, and potatoes all fried together, and a pot of excellent coffee.

They were both starving hungry after their long tramp, and made short work of the good things. Then they drew straws, and it fell to Dick to take first watch.

Dudley lay down at once, and had hardly stretched himself out before he was asleep. Dick watched him.

"Poor old chap! I'm glad he got first nap," he muttered. "He's absolutely dead beat."

Dick was none too fresh himself, for the previous day and night had taken it out of him pretty severely. He hardly

DELICIOUS TUCK-HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD," ½D.

dared sit down for fear of dropping off, so went out and strolled about the place.

It was a wonderful night, clear and calm, but rather dark, as there was no moon. Myriads of fireflies flitted over the brook, making sparks of bluish fire in the gloom. The only sounds were the murmur of the brook and, in the distance, the slow wash of the surf on the cliffs.

Dick kept his rifle handy. He did not know at what moment Ezra Cray and his pack of rascally moonshiners and beachcombers might turn up.

Up and down he tramped, now and then resting for a few minutes on a fallen log, but always listening keenly for any suspicious sound. None came; and at last, by the light of a firefly which he caught and imprisoned, he saw that the hands of his watch were almost together at the top of the dial.

He turned towards the house, and was close to the door, when he pulled up short, listening keenly.

A low, moaning roar had suddenly broken the stillness—a most strange and eerie sound, coming as it did through the calm darkness. It was not quite like anything that he had ever heard before, and, for the life of him, he could not place it.

It rose from a moan to a sort of bellow, then slowly died away.

He went quickly in, roused Dudley, and told him. The two came out together. Three or four minutes passed in absolute silence, then again the extraordinary noise broke forth.

"What do you make of it, Dudley?" Dick asked anxiously.

"I'll be blamed if I know! It's the right-down queerest thing I ever did hear. Only time I ever remember hearing anything like it was when I was over in the Yellowstone Park with my dad, when I was a kid. A geyser broke loose, and shot a great cloud of hot water and steam up into the air."

"A geyser—eh? But we've seen nothing like that on this bit of an island. And if there had been one, we'd surely have heard it before now."

"That's so. It beats me, Jim. Still, it don't seem to be anywhere very near, and it isn't the sort of row that Cray and Co. could make, even if they wanted to."

While they talked the thing came a third time, sounding just as before.

"I believe it's out at sea," said Jim. "It's not unlike a foghorn."

"Foghorn! Great Caesar! It would take six foghorns to make a noise like that! Besides, the night's as clear as a bell. I guess you'd best go and take your sleep, Dick. Noise ain't going to hurt us any, and if anything shows up—why, I'll have you out in about half a shake!"

The advice seemed good to him, and so utterly weary was he that, in spite of the weird trumpeting which still continued at intervals of three or four minutes, his eyes closed, and he was very soon as sound asleep as Dudley had been a few minutes earlier.

When he awoke, the pink flush of dawn was visible through the open shutter, and he jumped up in a hurry.

Dudley was collecting kindling-wood just outside.

"You rotter!" exclaimed Dick. "Why didn't you wake me?"

"That's all right," smiled Dudley. "You haven't had any more than your share."

"What about that noise?" demanded Dick.

"It stopped along about two. Haven't heard it since."

"Wish I knew what it was," said Dick, rather uneasily.

"Now you stretch out, Dudley. May as well have another short nap while I get breakfast."

Dudley obeyed, but was quite ready for his meal when Dick roused him. They freshened themselves with a dip in the pool behind the dam, then while they ate their food discussed the business for the day.

"Seems to me we'd better rake in all the gold we can," said Dick, "and be sure of something for our trouble, before Cray and his outfit turn up."

Dudley shook his head.

"No, sir. First thing we've got to do is to fix up some place we can hide in. Pretty sort of idiots we'd look if Cray's crowd dropped on us when we were down there in the middle of the brook! There wouldn't be a dog's chance for a getaway."

Rather reluctantly Dick had to admit that his partner was right. They started out, and first of all climbed the hill and had a look round. But the sea stretched empty to the blue horizon.

"Cray's missed it!" Dick declared cheerfully.

"Don't you get too gay," returned Dudley. "He'll make this place sooner or later if he's still above water. There isn't anything would keep that fellow away where gold's in the question. He'll smell it out like a terrier does a rat."

"I guess we'll go right ahead, and fix ourselves up against a surprise," he continued.

They soon reached the rocky cove where they had beached the boat. Dudley was of the opinion that she was not well enough hidden, and they searched for a safe place.

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ONE
PENNY.

They found it, too. A little to the west was a queer little inlet, which ran deep into the cliff, with a mouth so narrow and shallow it hardly looked as if there was room to push any sort of a boat in. They waded up the channel, and found inside a regular rock-bound harbour. It was hardly fifty yards across, but the water was deep and clear, and still as a pond.

"Couldn't have been better if it was made for us!" declared Dick, glancing up at the tall and almost perpendicular cliffs, which rose to a height of a hundred feet or more on every side, and the shaggy, hanging creepers at the top. "But we'll have to wait till the tide's risen a bit before we can put her in."

"Meantime, I guess we'll hunt for something as good for our own selves," answered Dudley. "Some sort of a cave is what I'm reckoning on."

On both sides of the entrance to the hidden pool the cliffs were broken in the strangest fashion. Great slabs had fallen away, and lay in tumbled masses upon the beach. Dark crannies yawned in every direction. This was the side of the island exposed to the north-westerly gales, which are the worst in this region, and the waves had certainly done terrible work upon the rock-bound shores of Golden Key.

Starting from different points, the two began to climb upwards, and presently met on a ledge some fifty feet up.

"I've struck a place," said Dick.

"Guess I've got one, too," replied Dudley. "Let's see yours first, then we can have a look at mine."

Dick's was a shallow cave with a wide entrance. Dudley's was smaller, and less convenient; but the entrance was narrower and easier to hold against attack. Dick willingly agreed that the latter was the better, and they set to work to carry their stores and ammunition up, and hide them. By the time they had finished this job, there was water enough to get the boat into the cove.

"Good work!" said Dudley, as he swept the perspiration from his forehead with the back of his hand. "Now, I feel kind of happy. Whatever comes along, we've got a right nice place to hide in. It'll take Cray's crooks quite a while to nose out that hidden bay."

"Good name for it," put in Dick, with a laugh. "Hidden Bay, we'll call our harbour, and Crooked Cliff would be about right for this old tangle of rocks."

Dudley nodded, and glanced up at the sun.

"Dinner-time, Dick. And what price washing out a bit of pay-dirt this afternoon?"

A Dollar a Minute.

Dick stood in the blazing sun, in the middle of the dry creek bed, and stared at something which he held in the palm of his open left hand.

"Talk of little Jack Horner!" he remarked, in a voice which had a note almost of awe.

"Never heard of the gentleman," responded Dudley flippantly, as he came across. "What have you got there?"

Then, as his eyes fell on the object in Jack's hand, he gave a sharp start.

"Holy smoke! Where did you get that?"

"Just picked it out of the last shovelful of gravel, like Jack Horner did out of his Christmas-pie, you ignorant American!" retorted Dick, with a grin.

It was a dull yellow object, the size and nearly the shape of a large-hazel-nut, which Dudley took from the other and examined carefully.

"Ten dollars' worth of gold in that," he said, in a voice that was not quite steady. "Either you're in big luck, Dick, or this gravel is as rich as the original Sutter's Creek claim in California."

He stooped swiftly as he spoke, and lifted a second nugget nearly as big as the first, which his quick eyes had detected lying among the disturbed gravel.

"Here's another! Dick, give me a month right here, and we won't either of us need to grow any more oranges or coconuts than we want to eat for the rest of our little lives."

Dick's eyes shone. Small wonder. In all the world there is no experience more exciting than digging for gold and really finding it.

"Then, by Jove," he said, "we'll make the most of the time we have, Dudley!"

And, grasping his shovel, he set to work with furious energy.

Dudley knew something about washing gold, Dick nothing at all. But under Dudley's tuition, the young Britisher developed a really marvellous aptitude, and within an hour was whirling his tin pan with a skill quite equal to that of the American boy.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"SKINNER THE SKIPPER!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

Rich! Rich was no word for it. They had struck a regular treasure hole, and besides occasional nuggets, every pan ran from three or four shillings up to three times that worth of dust.

Snell, Cray—everything else was forgotten, and it seemed no time at all before the quick dusk swooped down, and night put an end to their feverish activity.

They stuck to it till it was too dark to see, then, stiff and aching, limped back to the hut. There they lit the lamp, and turned out the contents of the two old meat cans in which they had been stowing their treasure.

The size of the pile of heavy yellow stuff made them gasp. They stood and stared, gloating over it.

"I reckon we've a pound weight," said Dudley at last. "About three hundred dollars' worth, I'd say."

Dick drew a long breath.

"Sixty quid for five hours' work! Four shillings a minute! My only aunt! You're right, Dudley! If we can only hang on here for a month or two, we'll be able to retire all right."

Then his hard common-sense came to his rescue.

"The sooner we hide this the better. We can't tell what minute Cray's gang may happen along. And it's up to us to feed well and sleep well if we're to carry on at this game again to-morrow."

Dudley nodded.

"That's good goods, Dick. Light the fire while I stow this. I'll bury it under that old log outside."

"That's a good notion. Put it down deep, and cover it up well. Then come and fix up some flap-jacks."

They made an immense supper, then arranged three-hour watches, each promising to wake the other punctually.

This time Dudley took first watch while Dick slept. The three hours passed like so many minutes, and he could hardly believe that he had closed his eyes before Dudley was shaking his shoulder.

"Just on eleven, Dick. And that queer noise has just started up afresh. 'Tisn't as loud as last night, but it comes every four or five minutes, just as before."

"It didn't do us any harm last night," replied Dick, rubbing his eyes. "So I'm not going to worry about it."

As before, the queer moaning went on at intervals for about an hour, then gradually died away. The night passed quietly, and next morning when the two visited the top of Look-out Hill the sea was as bare as it had been twenty-four hours earlier.

"Another day's work for us," said Dudley joyfully. "Come along, Dick! Every minute's worth a dollar!"

Strenuous was no word for the way in which the pair worked that morning. The gravel was as rich as ever, and they picked out no fewer than five nuggets, one of which was twice as big as that which Dick had got the previous evening.

It was long past midday before they broke off for a hurried meal, and by then they had another fourteen or fifteen ounces of dust to cache under the log.

"My word, but I'm stiff!" groaned Dudley, as he got up to put the plates aside. "I'll bet I never worked so hard in all my life before!"

"Nor I, either," replied Dick, going to the door.

Crack! Phut!

Dick ducked like a dabchick, and leaped back into the house. As he did so a second bullet came ping! through the open door, and buried deep with a heavy thud in the wall opposite.

"The window, Dick!" cried Dudley, as he snatched up his rifle.

Dick slammed the door, picked up his gun, and followed Dudley like a flash through the window.

This put the bulk of the shanty between them and their assailants, and, stiff as they were, they both broke records in crossing the little patch of open ground behind, and gaining the shelter of the trees.

Dudley was streaking straight away, but Dick overtook him, and caught him by the arm.

"The beach!" he panted. "Crooked Cliff! Here, round to the left!"

He swung in a half-circle, which brought them presently into the very thickest of the scrub. In this running was out of the question, and they were forced to moderate their pace. Presently the ground began to rise, and here Dick stopped.

"Wait a jiffy!" he whispered. "I want to know if they're on our track."

A distant cracking and swishing sound reached their ears.

"You bet they are!" replied Dudley, in an equally low tone. "It's up to us to scoot for all we're worth. Remember, the beach is all open! We want a long lead or they'll drill us as we cross it on our way to the cave!"

Dick nodded, and they were off again, making as little sound as they could. But the brush was thick and close, and tangled in places with long bamboo vines, tough as cord and covered with sharp, crooked thorns.

The sound of pursuit came closer, and—worst of all—came from more directions than one.

"They're spreading out!" muttered Dick. "There must be a lot of 'em. Watch out they don't get a sight of us!"

The brush began to thin again. It was lower, and there was more palmetto. By this they knew that they were getting near to the sea. But although Dick was aware that the general direction was right, he was not by any means certain whether they were going to hit off the break in the cliffs above the beach, and he knew that if they failed to do so they were absolutely enclosed. They would be caught between their enemies and the top of the cliff, and shot down at leisure.

A glance at Dudley's face showed it grim and set as Dick had never before seen it. Clearly he, too, realised how tight a place they were in.

Dwarfed by the strong sea winds, the palmetto became lower. It was hardly high enough to hide their heads. Their pursuers seemed to be gaining. They could be plainly heard, crashing through the harsh fronds of the palmetto, and cursing as they stumbled over the knotted rootstalks which seamed the ground in every direction.

"Duck!" whispered Dudley suddenly, and seizing Dick by the arm, dragged him down. "A nigger!" he said. "I saw a nigger's head above the brush, away over to the right. That ugly beggar Rufo Finn!"

"Over there?" repeated Dick, in dismay. "Then he's between us and the beach. We're done in!"

"There's only one thing for it," said Dudley firmly—"creep the rest of the way. They don't know where we are making, and if they come close we can hear them, and hide up in the thick."

Dick nodded.

"I suppose that's the only thing to do. But if they do happen to tumble across us—"

He did not finish his sentence, for at that moment the very catastrophe he had been fearing almost happened. A pair of legs, cased in rough high-boots, came crashing into view in a tiny open space not more than half a dozen yards away.

Dick and Dudley together dived in right under the nearest bush, and lay quiet as two rabbits in a gorse-clump. For some moments they hardly dared to breathe. Then the crashing, pounding feet passed on, and disappeared.

"That was Bent—Ambrose Bent," whispered Dudley.

"What—the moonshiner?"

"That's him. Great big brute, and ugly as sin."

"Ugly inside and out," added Dick. "Strikes me we're right up against it, old son."

"I could have drilled him all right," said Dudley regretfully.

"Just as well you didn't shoot. You'd only have brought the rest of the bunch on us. There don't seem to be any very close. Let's push on while we can."

They crept forward. The heat down here near the ground was almost intolerable, and the air was full of sandflies and midges. Also, there was more than a little danger of snakes. But to these trials they hardly gave a second thought. Their enemies—some of them, at least—were now between them and the sea. Both knew that they were in about as tight a place as they well could be.

They could not choose their direction: they had to go wherever the bush was thickest. And they dared not raise their heads in order to see where they were going. It was only by the slight slope of the ground that they could tell that they were slowly approaching the sea.

Dudley stopped.

"I see daylight," he whispered.

Pushing the bushes aside, they found a yard or two of bare rock; beyond it, sheer cliff, with the waves breaking against its foot.

"Missed it!" groaned Dick.

"Yes; the cave's away to the right," said Dudley, peering out. "But, say, Dick, there's one good thing. Not one of 'em is anywhere near us. See there! They are right down on the beach."

"And right between us and where we want to go," added Dick.

"Gee! but they're a tough-looking crowd!" remarked Dudley. "I can see Cripps, plain as plain, just like an old

ANSWERS

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DELICIOUS TUCK-HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD," ½D.



Step by step Wilding decreased the distance separating him from the crouching boys, and all the time the black muzzle of his rifle threatened the first that stirred. (See page 26.)

buzzard hopping along. And there's Ambrose Bent and Rufe the nigger, and two more—five in all."

"And likely one or two more back in the scrub," growled Dick, pushing forward a little to get a better view. "Long odds any way you look at it."

"Might have been worse, I reckon," replied Dudley drily. "Say, Dick, they're looking for our boat!"

"I expect they'll look a while before they find it. Tide's high, and they can't get along the foot of the cliff. Just where are we, Dudley?"

"Right above our caves, I guess." He crept out a little farther, then came back. "That's it. We're right on top of Crooked Cliff, and there's Hidden Bay over to the left, where the bushes hang over the edge."

"If there was only some way down from the top!" said Dick longingly. "This is no sort of a place to lie out. They're liable to find us any time if they beat the scrub through."

Dudley turned quickly.

"I reckon there is, Dick. Remember that deep little cleft that came down right on to the ledge?"

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"Can't say I do."

"Well, I spotted it all right, and I wish I'd only had the horse sense to climb it and see if it was anyways possible."

"We might have a shot at it," said Dick eagerly. "It can't be very far off, either."

"No, the head of it can't be a great way off. But I guess if we're going to try it we've got to do it right now. Those fellows will be right back again as soon as they see there are no tracks on the beach."

Dick's jaw set.

"Right!" he said briefly. "Keep low, Dudley. They won't spot us unless they happen to look this way."

"No need to go outside at all," replied Dudley. "Not at first, anyway. Keep right along, inside the palmetto."

It was good advice, and Dick took it. But the scrub was thick as a hedge, and it was terribly slow work wriggling along through the tough, saw-edged stems.

At last Dick, who was leading, came to a sudden stop.

He turned to Dudley.

"Here's your cleft," he said.

Dudley came up alongside. Dick's head was over the edge

NEXT
MONDAY—

"SKINNER THE SKIPPER!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

of a wall of sheer rock. It was the cleft all right, but it was between twenty and thirty feet deep, and the bottom one mass of loose boulders, while the cliff-face itself was smooth, and sheer as the wall of a house. A monkey could not have climbed it. Worst of all, it ran inland, as far as they could see, until it grew so narrow that the palmettoes arched over it.

"A nice trap we've run into!" said Dick bitterly.

Up Against It!

"Guess there's nothing for it but to work inland and try and make the end of it," said Dudley.

Dick nodded, and the heart-breaking crawl through the palmetto began all over again.

It seemed endless, and every minute they expected to hear their pursuers crashing on their track. At last Dick ventured to peer out again. He gave a sigh of relief.

"We can make it here, Dudley."

As he spoke he slipped out, and, catching hold of a palmetto-stem which projected over the edge of the narrow ravine, lowered himself slowly. There was a slight rustle and a grating of loose stones.

"All right!" came Dick's voice; and Dudley, looking over, saw him safe at the bottom of the cleft, which here was no more than ten feet deep. Next moment he was beside him.

"Now I guess we've slipped them," said Dudley, with a sigh of relief.

The words were hardly out of his mouth before a rifle rang out, and his soft felt hat went whirling off his head.

For the moment he was confused, but Dick dragged him down behind a boulder big enough to shelter them both.

"It's Wilding!" he hissed in Dudley's ear.

Step by step Wilding decreased the distance separating him from the crouching pair, and all the time the black muzzle of his rifle promised death to the first that stirred. Now he was only twenty yards away, and the boys were forced to almost crush themselves against the ground.

Then, without the slightest warning, there burst out a strange, hooting roar—the selfsame sound that the boys had heard last night and the night before. Only now it sounded infinitely louder than on either of the previous occasions.

Badly startled, Wilding's head jerked round, and for an instant the barrel of his rifle dipped. It was all the chance Dick wanted. Quick as a flash up came his gun, and he fired both barrels almost at once.

The roar of the reports filled the rocky cleft with a deafening bellow, which echoed and rolled like thunder, and two charges of heavy duckshot, tearing through the air, struck Wilding at point-blank range.

With a yell, he jumped straight up into the air, to pitch, with a sickening thud, right down into the ravine, full on the masses of broken rock which littered the bottom.

For an instant Dick stood staring. His face had gone suddenly white, and he was shaking all over.

"Brace up!" said Dudley sharply. "Brace up, Dick! It was him or us. You had to do it. Run! There'll be more of 'em in two twos."

With an effort Dick pulled himself together, and they started down the ravine. They had to pass close by the shattered body of the man Wilding. It was not a pretty sight, and even Dudley, in spite of his brave words, shuddered as he glanced at the twisted face of the dead man.

As they struggled frantically forward over the heaped-up masses of rocks again came the goyserlike boom and hoot. But this they hardly noticed. They were both too busy in their wild struggle for life.

The slope became steeper. The walls on either side were so lofty that they cut off the sunlight. The two moved in a shadowy gloom, so deep that they could hardly see.

Of a sudden they came to a monstrous rock which seemed to bar further progress, for it lay right across the ravine like a huge gate.

"Get on my shoulders, Dudley," said Dick, as he braced himself, with his hands against the rock.

Dudley clambered swiftly up, and stood on Dick's shoulders. He reached up.

"I can make it!" he panted.

Next moment his weight was gone, and Dick, looking up, saw him safe on top of the boulder.

Flinging himself on his face, Dudley stretched down, and Dick, with a leap, caught his outstretched hands. A frantic scramble, and he was beside his friend.

"The sea!" gasped Dudley.

And, sure enough, through the gap at the bottom of the gorge, the blue rollers of the gulf were visible, gleaming in the hot afternoon sun.

The rest of the way, if steep, was comparatively easy, and

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within another two or three minutes they were on their ledge, and had dashed into their cave.

Both flung themselves down. They were dripping with perspiration and panting with the fearful strain of the past half-hour.

Dudley was the first to recover himself.

"First trick to us, Dick. We've bagged one of them, and got off without a scratch."

"Speak for yourself!" growled Dick. "I haven't a sound inch of skin on my carcass."

Dudley laughed. It did him good to hear Dick joke. He had been afraid of the effect of the killing of Wilding, for he knew that Dick had never before fired a shot in anger. For himself it was different. He had seen rough work in the Far West before coming to Florida.

He struggled to his feet.

"Dick, we've got to get busy," he said. "Cray ain't going to waste any time over getting square. He and Bent'll be mad as hornets when they find Wilding. From now on, it's them or us!"

"It's been that from the first," answered Dick. "The swabs! Plugging at us without a word of warning! I tell you, Dudley," he continued, with a grim quietness that was rather impressive, "it will be shoot on sight from now on! We've got to rid the earth of this crowd, and I'll do it with as little pity as I'd blow out a nest of rattlesnakes!"

"That's right, old son; I'm with you!" agreed Dudley. "But our job now is to make sure they don't get first chance of plugging us. So I guess we'd better get busy, and make some sort of a breastwork. You've got to remember that, when the tide goes down, they can get along the beach just like we could, and then there's always the chance of their rushing us."

Dick nodded.

"You're right, Dudley. The sooner we start in the better."

There was any amount of loose stuff about, and they soon had formidable walls piled across the ledge at points which they could command from the cave-mouth. Anyone trying to reach the cave would have to climb one or the other. In the daytime they would be in plain sight; at night they would certainly make themselves heard by the fall of the small, loose stones which the boys had heaped on top of each barrier.

While they were at work the moaning roar was heard at its usual regular intervals, but after about an hour died away.

Dick and Dudley, however, had become so accustomed to the sound that they hardly paid any further attention to it.

The barriers finished, the two returned to the cave. What with their long morning at gold-digging, the chase, and the strenuous shifting of rocks, they were both pretty well done.

Dick looked round.

"I think we're all right for the present, Dudley."

"Yes, I reckon so. But what about it if they find where we are, and settle down to starve us out?"

"Take them quite a while," responded Dick, glancing at the comfortable-looking pile of tinned stuff and biscuit. "Old Ladd did us pretty well."

"I'm not thinking so much about grub," said Dudley. "Water's the question."

Dick's face fell.

"You're right, Dudley. I never thought of that. Well, we've got a keg full, anyhow. That'll last us till we can think the thing out. After all, we could surely make a sally by night, and fill up at the creek-mouth?"

Dudley shook his head.

"Cray's no fool, Dick. The water question is the very first that he's going to think of. Before he's twenty-four hours older he'll know, like we do, that the creek is the only drinking water on the island, and he'll take his measures accordingly."

"I must say you're jolly encouraging!" growled Dick. "If it's that bad, we'd best take our boat while we can, and sail back to Lemon Bay, and get help."

"I guess that's just exactly what Mr. Ezra Cray's figuring on," drawled Dudley, and pointed as he spoke.

Round the tall cape to the left a large sail-boat with a crew of half a dozen men had just come into sight. As they watched her the sheet was hauled, and she stood in towards the land.

Dick seized his gun.

"They're making right for the mouth of Hidden Bay," he said sharply. "Surely to goodness, they haven't got on the track of our boat already!"

(Another long instalment of this splendid new serial story next Monday. To avoid disappointment, order your copy early.)

DELICIOUS TUCK-HAMPERS ARE GIVEN AWAY TO READERS OF THE "GREYFRIARS HERALD," 1^d.

UNIQUE FOUR-FOLD HAIR GIFT.

SPLENDID NEW ADDITION TO "HARLENE HAIR-DRILL."

Every Reader to Receive Valuable Hair Culture Parcel—FREE.

1,000,000 OUTFITS NOW READY.

SINCE the first day that Mr. Edwards gave to the world his wonderful plan of Harlene Hair-Drill; millions of people the world over have accepted what up to now has been described as his Triple Gift for Hair Beauty.

To-day he announces the astonishing fact that he yet further adds to the value of his Hair-growing Gift, and from henceforth everyone who desires to cultivate Hair Beauty may, simply by filling in and posting the Form below, secure the Harlene Hair-Drill Outfit of Four-Fold value.

It is the simplest thing in the world to encourage Hair Beauty, and no matter what the present state may be, whether you are suffering from scurf, dandruff, splitting hair, hair falling from the scalp, etc., you may by accepting this gift immediately eradicate all these troubles and grow hair in magnificent abundance.

THE NEW HAIR BEAUTY GIFT.

Just think for a moment of the contents of the wonderful parcel that you will receive:

(1) A Trial Bottle of "Harlene," the wonderful Hair Grower, which has been proved to grow hair at any age in the rich and lustrous abundance of health.

(2) A Packet of "Cremex" Shampoo Powder, the most wonderful hair cleanser and scalp refresher in the world, which prepares the head for "Hair-Drill."

(3) A generous trial bottle of "Uzon" Brilliantine that gives a wonderful "final" touch to hair beauty.

(4) A copy of the specially written "Harlene Hair-Drill" Manual, giving full directions for carrying out this delightful hair-growing Toilet Exercise.

If you are one of those who have not yet tested this marvellous method of growing healthy hair, you cannot appreciate what a simple yet perfectly delightful toilet task this is, and in addition it must be remembered that behind "Harlene" and the famous "Hair-Drill" method there is concentrated the science and a knowledge of a lifetime given to the study of hair culture.

WHAT "HARLENE HAIR-DRILL" REALLY IS.

"Harlene" itself is a wonderful Tonic Stimulant preparation which, sinking to the hair roots and being absorbed by the hair shafts, at once overcomes those

hundred and one evil conditions that make the hair weak and eventually fall out.

"Harlene" supplies just that perfect natural food that the hair needs, and immediately it is applied to the hair one can see how true this is by the fact that where previously the hair was dull and lifeless, with the use of "Harlene" it takes on a new brilliancy, a sparkle and snap that is its true natural condition.

To secure your Four-Fold Hair Beauty Parcel and commence your course of hair rejuvenation, which will incidentally take years from your appearance, simply fill in and post the form below.

If you have never tried the Harlene "Hair-Drill" method you will be delighted with this morning and evening task. Not only does it give Hair Beauty, but it gives a sense of freedom, elasticity to the scalp, and it is indeed a wonderful pleasure to see how day by day the hair takes on a new vitality and "snap" which perhaps it never before possessed.



A PLEASANT DAILY TASK.

When you have tested, by sending for the Four-Fold Harlene Gift, the wonderful results Harlene "Hair-Drill" will produce, you can always obtain larger supplies of Harlene in bottles at 1s., 2s. 6d., and 4s. 6d.; "Uzon" Brilliantine, 1s. and 2s. 6d.; and "Cremex" in 1s. boxes of 7 Shampoos, or single 2d. from any chemist, or direct post free on remittance from Edwards' Harlene Co., 20-26, Lamb's Conduit Street, London, W.C. Postage extra on foreign orders.

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"HARLENE HAIR-DRILL" GIFT.

Fill in and post to Edwards' Harlene Co.,
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Dear Sirs,—Please forward me free of all charge your "Harlene Hair-Drill" Four-Fold Outfit and all materials. I enclose 4d. stamps to pay postage to any address in the world. (Foreign stamps accepted.)

Name.....

Address.....

MY READERS' PAGE

OUR COMPANION PAPERS: "THE BOYS' FRIEND," 1d., Every Monday. "THE GEM" LIBRARY, 1d., Every Wednesday. "THE BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. COMPLETE LIBRARY. "THE PENNY POPULAR," 1d., Every Friday. "CHUCKLES," 1d., Every Saturday.

The Editor is always pleased to hear from his chums, at home or abroad, and is only too willing to give his best advice to them if they are in difficulty or in trouble. . . . Whom to write to: Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

For Next Monday:

"SKINNER THE SKIPPER!"

By Frank Richards.

"Magnet" readers will be given a rare treat next Monday, when another magnificent, long, complete story of Greyfriars will appear, featuring many favourite characters. Quite a sensation spreads through the school when Harry Wharton suddenly and unaccountably resigns from the captaincy of the Remove, and Skinner, the bold, bad blade, takes over the reins of office. Naturally enough, strange and startling things begin to happen—incidents in which Ponsonby & Co. of Highcliffe, Temple & Co. of the Fourth, and Phyllis Howell and her girl chums of Cliff House play a prominent part. The story is also enlivened by the introduction of Teddy Baxter & Co., the heroes of Claremont. Every British boy and girl should make a special point of reading of the amazing reign of

"SKINNER THE SKIPPER!"

"THERE'S A GOOD TIME COMING, BOYS!"

Three Cheers for Friday Week!

In further reference to my remarks of last week, I have extreme pleasure in informing all my chums that the new Frank Richards threepenny book, entitled

"RIVALS AND CHUMS!"

will appear on Friday, March 3rd.

I suppose that many of you racked your brains in vain last week for a solution to the acrostic containing the title of the story. Here it is:

R	o	u	e	N
I	r	e	l	a
V.				C.
A	s	q	u	i
L				H
S	u			M
A	s			S

"RIVALS AND CHUMS" is a worthy successor to "SCHOOL AND SPORT," and even better, if possible, than that masterpiece of boys' literature. Of course, the subject-matter is different, but the interest and excitement never flag, and everyone will vote it a top-hole story.

Now for a word of warning. Unlike some of its predecessors, "RIVALS AND CHUMS" will be

VERY HARD TO OBTAIN.

In consequence of the shortage of paper for printing purposes, only a very limited number of copies can be produced, so it will be a case of "first come, first served." Order today from your newsagent, and you will put yourself on the safe side. Neglect to order, and you will be grievously disappointed.

"SCHOOL AND SPORT" practically sold out on the day of issue, but this was a state of affairs easy of remedy by printing another quarter of a million or so copies. This time, however, there can be no question of reprinting, as the supply of paper will not run to it. Those who do not order at once will have very long faces on March 3rd. The moral is obvious. Go to your newsagent now, and insist upon having a copy of

THE "BOYS' FRIEND" 3d. LIBRARY, No. 328, specially reserved for you!

MORE "HONOURABLE MENTIONS."

Appended is an additional list of competitors who have been awarded consolation prizes in connection with the recent "Magnet" Story Competition:

Joe Francey, 45, Ballymagee Street, Bangor, co. Down.
 Jim Irwin, 124, My Lady's Road, Belfast.
 S. H. James, 113, Bramber Street, Pittsmoor, Sheffield.
 Miss Rosa Rossi, 19, Penton Grove, Penton Street, Islington, N.
 Miss Margaret Brooking, 31, Wellington Street Gloucester.
 Gerald Johnston, 35, Parade Street, Limerick.
 William Gibbons, 7, Paisley Street, Manchester Road, Bradford.
 E. L. Rosman, 44, Abbotts Park Road, Leyton, Essex.
 J. H. Inglis, 6, Fosse Road South, Leicester.
 Watson J. Adams, 190, Manchester Road, Burnley.
 Miss Gladys Onion, 178, Grange Road, Ilford, Essex.
 W. Lovett, 19, Elcho Street, Battersea Park Road, S.W.
 Stanley Lake, 2, Evelyn Terrace, Paignton.
 Miss Ruby Tilley, 35, Grove Road, Wimborne, Dorset.
 Wilfred H. D. Tilley, 35, Grove Road, Wimborne, Dorset.
 Miss Iris Bellingham, 2, Leopold Street, Cowley Road, Oxford.
 Arthur D. Talbot, 42, Grove Place, Leamington Spa.
 L. J. Mayes, 21, Clapham Court, King's Avenue, Clapham, S.W.
 William Stringfellow, Pleasant View, Cathurst Lane, Sherrington, near Wigan.
 H. L. Bradley, Field Head, Ouchthorpe Lane, near Wakefield.
 E. E. J. Eades, 35, West Street, Farnham, Surrey.
 N. E. D. Pocock, 34, St. Mark's Road, North Kensington, W.
 W. T. Lintern, 2, Blyth Street, Abertillery, Mon.

NOTICE!

Will all readers of the "Magnet" Library and its companion papers who have received offensive letters and postcards from a person signing himself W. B. (Monmouth), please forward the abusive communications to me at once, as I wish to place the matter in the hands of the police?

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

G. O. and S. K.—I do not know of a Gloucestershire boy at either St. Jim's or Greyfriars. Leigh is no longer at Greyfriars. Wingate will play a prominent part in some story before long.

F. Barlow.—"Hazel" is a kind of nickname. Marjorie never speaks of her brother as Hazeldene. It seems rational enough that she should call him by the name used at Greyfriars.

W. M. (High Barnet).—Don't be too sure! "Tom Merry's Weekly" is not out yet, and the Terrible Three say that when it does appear the Greyfriars rag will be simply left standing.

H. F. (Southall).—Glad you appreciated the Christmas numbers so thoroughly. In spite of my excessive modesty—ahem!—I quite agree with you that they were glorious.

W. C. (Plumstead).—"The Greyfriars Gold-Miners" is quite out of print. The "Magnet" started in 1908, so H. W. must be considered to have put in rather more than seven years at Greyfriars.

F. M. R. (Ipswich).—Kildare is probably the best foot baller at St. Jim's. Not sure who is the best jumper.

(Continued on page 14 of Cover.)



W. H. WATTS,
Great Yarmouth.



ARNOLD ASTON,
Birmingham.



W. L. GRAY,
Saxmundham.



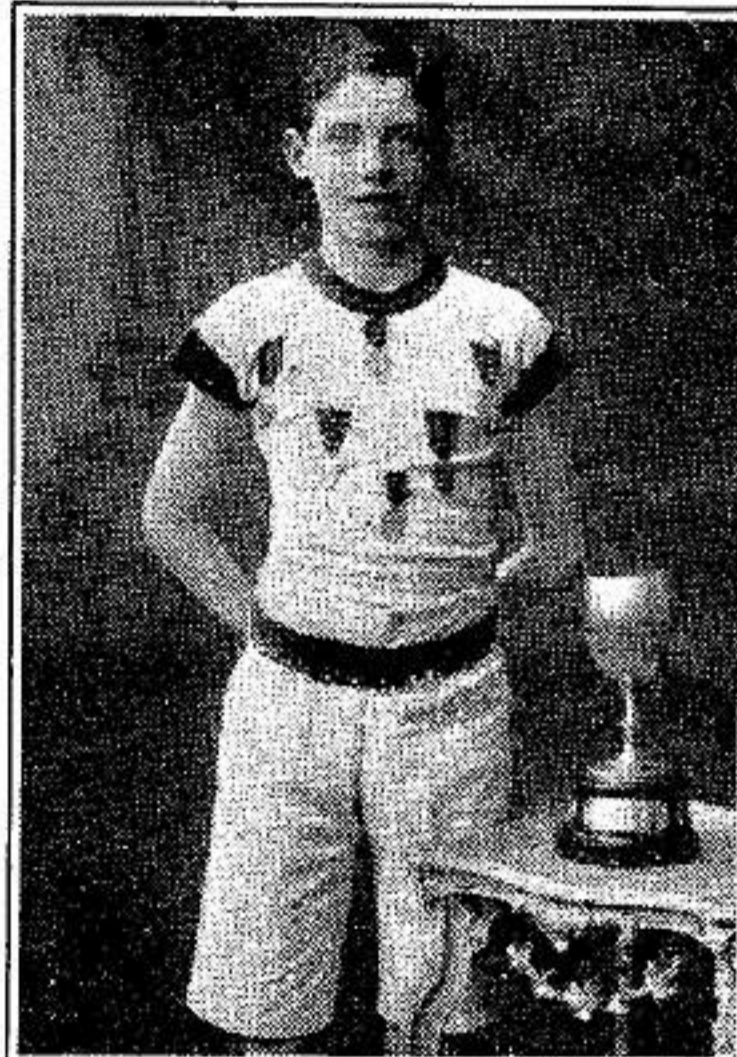
PERCY HOLLANDS,
Streatham.



F. O. RALPHE,
Conway.



LESLIE ROTHWELL,
Eccles, Lancs.



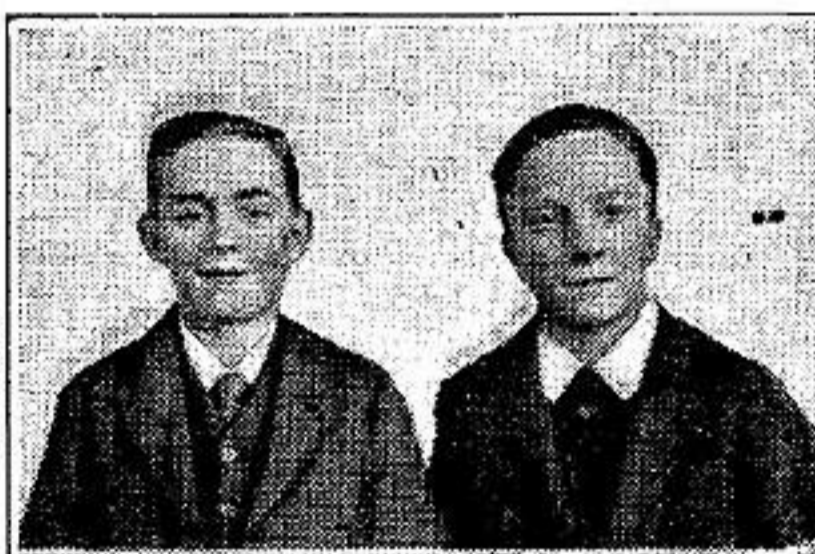
A. E. PETERS,
Birmingham.



ARTHUR FREESTON,
Rhuddlan, N. Wales.



PERCY A. HARRISON,
Tottenham.



LEONARD PORTER and E. HIBBS,
Chelmsford.



A. MOORE,
Douglas, Isle of Man.



W. BULLOCK,
Bradford.



"AN OFFICER READER."



NAT SAPIRO,
Liverpool.



PTE. J. SCOTT,
Halton West Camp, nr. Tring.



REGGIE PARTON,
Cleethorpes.

REPLIES IN BRIEF—continued.

"Imperator," etc.—I don't give your assumed name in full because the second word happens to be a bad bloomer! You say you can count up to full a hundred slang expressions in common use in your school, and I can easily believe it. On the whole, I am inclined to think that Rugby football exercises a greater variety of muscles than Association. But I don't necessarily mean that I consider Rugger the better game.

C. P. (Portishead).—More stories by Dicky Nugent? We'll see later on. At present he is taking spelling lessons, some youthful readers having raised strong objections to his weird methods. Thanks for your efforts to get new readers. Of course, I know it is difficult in a small place.

Will "Magnet" readers who have books or papers to spare send them along to Private Reginald G. Gilbert, No. 18254, R.M.L.I., 14 Mess, H.M.S. Neptune, 1st Battle Squadron, care of G.P.O., London?

P. J. C. (Dalston).—Bob Cherry or Neddy Welsh? Can't say. Mark Linley might know, but it wouldn't do for him to say Welsh, as he shares Bob's study.

"Curious" (Perth, W. Australia).—Some dyes for paper happen to be easier to get than others, that's all. Or it may happen that a larger stock is in hand.

F. E. J. E. (Farnham).—No, I know you weren't "buttering me up." As you say, it would be no go, in any case. Glad to hear you are so pleased with the "G. H."

S. C. W. S.—Glad to hear the "Magnet" is so much appreciated in your camp. A reader from No. 1, and you have never written before! Well, better late than never.

"A Corporal of the Girl Guides."—Thanks for suggestion. Will see what Mr. Richards says. But don't bank on his saying "Yes," for he knows how to say the other thing when ideas don't appeal to him.

"Frank Nugent" (Cranbrook, W. A.).—Your introduction to the "Magnet" was rather a queer one, as you found a copy lying out in the bush. Since then you have read it regularly. Good! Afraid I can't tell you the average height of the Remove. You can only get an average height by a long process of taking individual measurements, and life's too short for that.

W. G. K.—Hope you have been able to use patience. Results cannot be announced very soon for reasons many times explained.

"A True Cardiff Magnetite."—You say "a reply by post is preferred," but give neither name nor address! See reply above.

T. H. B. (Clacton-on-Sea).—Your cipher is much too easy for competition purposes. A sixpenny book each month? What next? A daily paper, I suppose!

F. W. (Leigh, Lancs).—Linley will get his turn again some day.

L. W. (Birmingham).—And so will Newland. He gets his meals with the rest, no doubt. I haven't heard of any special "Kosher" table spread for him.

"A Loyal Chum."—No, I should not advise the music-hall stage as a profession. It has many trials and disappointments.

G. B. (Whitstable).—Cannot give you distance, as the place you name is imaginary. Bunter is sure to be ventriloquising again before long.

R. H. E. T. (Grays).—This yarn that Messrs. M. C. and F. R. are one and the same seems to be having quite a run. What do you think? Two 30,000-word stories a week, a double number now and then, a 3d. book once in a while—he must eat sometimes, and sleep for an hour or two at nights. But when?

"An Australian Reader" (Melbourne).—Wun Lung is sure to be in the front row some time before long.

T. J. M. (St. Kilda).—Offend me? Not a bit of it! I like honest criticism. You think it's a pity to make Fatty Wynn do anything for a feed. But is it a fact that he will? Fatty is a sound, good fellow, if he is a bit greedy. As for Bunter—you have not words enough to express your loathing of him. You want him cast forth, never again to appear in the "Magnet." But what a terrible gap it would leave! Try to take Bunter as Greyfriars takes him. He is more fool than knave.

"A Loyal Reader" (Albert Park, Melbourne).—There will be a story before long about Bunter and Cora Q. You will find the ages in the Christmas Supplement.

"Six Loyal South Australians" are also referred to Christmas Supplement. Glad to hear they are so keen on the companion papers.

A. M. (West Australia).—Have not room to publish your letter. After all, the extra halfpenny is not much for carrying copies half round the world. You must consider things like that. The agents get it; we don't. But they do the sending out; we don't. Sick of Tom Merry, are you? Sorry, but others are not. Will try to get Mr. Clifford to give Kangaroo a better show, however. Competition under consideration.

"Cripple" (Port Pine).—Sorry that you are so afflicted. I can quite understand your liking for tales with plenty of real go in them.

W. F. (Manchester).—Thanks for promise to recruit for the "Herald."

R. R. (Rodmersham).—You are no poet, my friend! Never mind. Lots of other people are in the same boat.

C. E. G. (North Fitzroy).—No, Cherry's a trifle better than Russell. Twenty-six numbers should make a "Magnet" volume, but through a mistake the last volume ran on for a year.

Private D. G. (Somewhere in France).—Best of good wishes! Your letter interested me very much, and I guess that every time your mother sends you along the papers she thinks of the winter evenings when you read to her of Bunter and the rest. It is the sort of memory a mother always cherishes. Shall be glad to hear from you again.

E. H. R. G. (Grays).—If I could only get Mr. Richards to let himself be photographed for the paper a page would not be too much. But he is such a very modest man!

G. R. (Tain).—Afraid I cannot help you to get a munition-making job. There seems to be plenty of unskilled labour near the factories. Yes, our motto is "Play the game."

E. G. (Leeds).—The supplement in the Christmas Number should answer your queries. Thanks for good wishes.

G. L. (Bournemouth).—Hope you are better now. Another reader from the first, with a clear recollection of how Wharton came to Greyfriars and met Bob Cherry.

"Sparks" (Glasgow).—There is a good deal in what you say about Christmas numbers coming out so early. But there are reasons for it which are not easy to give here. And what about us, preparing them some time in—well, say October? I don't want to stretch it by an inch!

L. P. McD. (Plymouth).—Can quite understand that, as you left school at twelve, you had not properly finished your education. But your letter is quite all right. Hope you will win a tuck-hamper sooner or later.

J. W. F. (East Molesey).—I hope you have got the post you wanted. It takes a good deal more than a fortnight to get a picture puzzle result out. Before the closing date the number for four weeks at least ahead is with the printers, and after the closing date the judging has to be done.

J. H. R. (Hasland).—You have me fairly beaten. I don't know the names of all the boys in the Remove, or the make of typewriter Mr. Quelch uses. There are several other things I don't know, such as Dr. Locke's bank balance, the surname of Squiff's great-great-grandmother before she was married, whether Bob Cherry cried when being christened, and the number of dough-nuts William George Bunter could consume, starting from scratch, with a half-holiday before him. Perhaps I ought to know, but I don't.

"A Loyal Reader" (Topsham).—You are making really good use of your back numbers in sending them to the hospital.

"Cooee Minor and Minimus" (Adelaide).—Many thanks for a most interesting letter. Sorry about the competitions, but the difficulty is a bigger one than Colonial readers think. To extend them to Australia would mean fully three months longer, and that would cause the many impatient readers here to lose interest. You would like more in the way of description of the scenery around Greyfriars and St. Jim's? But most of our readers simply can't bear anything of the sort. Personally, I know too much about Australia to make such bloomers as you tell of; but there is a lot of ignorance here concerning your great country. I don't think there will be quite so much in future, however. Anzac is going to teach people things.

J. P. (Christchurch).—Very pleased to hear from a New Zealand girl who is such a keen supporter of the "Magnet." Write again.

A. A. (Birmingham).—Thanks for photo. Bunter weighs somewhere in the neighbourhood of 14st., and is increasing.

"A Chum."—Thanks for suggestion re Remove Volunteer Fire Brigade. Will see if Mr. Richards cares to tell any more about it.

"Loyal Reader."—Yes, you are "fairly short" for your age. Try simple exercises, such as you can easily find in a cheap handbook, and as much fresh air as possible.

G. R. S. (Wakefield).—Rather too many questions. Some of them can be answered by close study of the stories. Rake is a spirited sort of fellow, with lots of go, and just the sort to lead the opposition. Have referred to the great Hazeldene v. Bulstrode controversy in another reply. You will find names and addresses of soldiers wanting correspondents and back numbers both in this paper's "Replies in Brief" and in the "Gem's."

A. J. B.—Photo shall be used. Thanks!

G. A. N. (Holmfirth).—Certainly I approve. Accept my blessing, and get along with the league.

Your Editor