

ARE YOU TRYING OUR EXPERIMENTS? (See page 16.)

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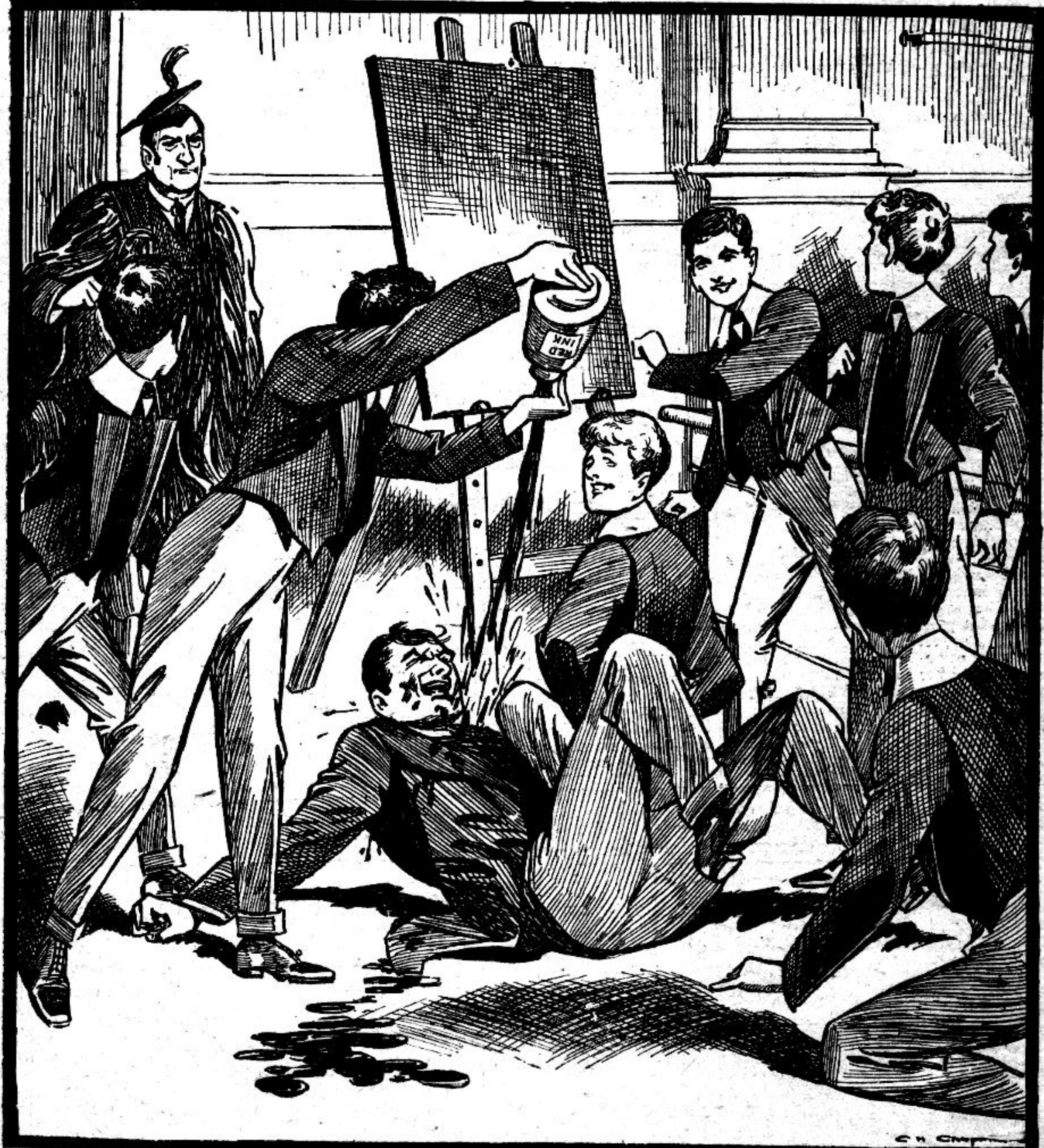


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THE PREFECT'S PREDICAMENT!



MR. QUELCH APPEARS AT AN AWKWARD MOMENT!

(An Exciting Scene in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.)



For Next Monday :

"THE SCHOLARSHIP COMPANY!"

By Frank Richards.

is the title of next week's splendid long complete story of the chums of Greyfriars. Mark Linley, Dick Penfold, and Tom Redwing are the scholarship company, and they are all competing in an essay examination.

Temple, the captain of the Upper Fourth, is also competing, but he is under the thumb of Angel, the rotter of the Form, and he is nearly, but not quite, persuaded into committing a most treacherous action. His honour triumphs, and the story ends happily—for all but Angel.

"THE SCHOLARSHIP COMPANY!"

is certain to appeal to you all, so order your copy of next Monday's MAGNET at once.

FAVOURITE CHARACTERS.

Decidedly Bunter figures as one of the first favourites of the stories by Mr. Frank Richards. He is often abused—in fact, as often as he is bumped—but the porpoise remains in the front rank all the same. He is greedy; he forgets sometimes what meum and tuum signify; but Bunter, though not renowned for generosity and great nobility of character, is still—well, he is Bunter, and he raises a laugh, and that's all about it.

He is irritatingly stupid, but with it all he shows qualities not wholly bad. This is faint praise, but we can let it go at that. I expect if we had an election as to who came in as No. 1, William George would head the poll. Or perhaps it would be a dead-heat between the Owl of Greyfriars and Harry Wharton.

If possible, Wharton has added to his popularity since he took over the editorship of the "Greyfriars Herald," Second Edition. Harry Wharton has done better this time than he did in 1915, when the "Herald" had a run of eighteen weeks before having to be shut down as a

result of the worrying paper shortage. He has developed statesmanlike qualities.

Of course, it was all nonsense about a better captain of the Remove being found. Wharton is cut out for the job, and he shows tact. An editor has to deal very largely in tact.

But, as to some of the characters who get more talked over than others. There is Snoop. Some readers are worried because Snoop has not turned out altogether good. He showed signs of reformation at the period that his father turned up at Greyfriars. Snoop is never likely to be the same kind of straight fellow as Wharton. It is not in him.

It is surprising to find readers standing up for Skinner as a real, go-ahead sportsman. It is a fantastic misuse of the word. Our understanding of the term sportsman is a man who plays the game and shows himself a good loser in sport and in the game of life. Skinner cannot be so described. Another reader is dissatisfied because Bulstrode and Smithy do not go the pace. This correspondent would like the Bounder to form what he calls a "Gentleman's Club," and go the pace. It is a funny thing, this term gentleman—soiled by all ignoble use, as the poet says.

"The fine old English gentleman, all of the olden time," is a type which has nothing whatever to do with going the pace. The Bounder shows that he is on the road to the ideal by throwing himself into sensible sport, as he has been doing of late.

Of course, Vernon-Smith has a strain of independence in him which creates sudden surprise. You never quite know with him. He would kick over the traces out of sheer defiance at being reckoned goody-goody, or because he was complimented on his new mode of life. He is not a fellow who can tolerate patronage, mealy-mouthed or honest, no matter which. He would mock such tributes, and do something off the line just to show that he did not care.

Now, is there any rivalry between Bob Cherry and Wharton? I scarcely think

you can call it that. The two get compared, more's the pity. Comparisons are never much good to anybody. Cherry and Wharton are both admirable in their different ways, but what different ways those are! Bob is more of a humorist—he is lighter built, as it were, in character. He is a judge of other fellows' motives; perhaps, too, he is keener, a shade more subtle than Wharton; but the latter has had a fairly big responsibility on his shoulders, thanks to his position as captain of the Remove.

Cherry is a free lance. Wharton has to think of what is the best course to follow in the score of little troubles which come to him for consideration and settlement. You could not have a better chief of the Remove than Wharton. He shows dignity when necessary, but he never exceeds his rights as controlling authority, and he is straight as a die.

I often wonder which character my readers like best. I know some of them despise the Todds, but that is a mistake. There should be no despiery in that quarter. Personally, I appreciate Peter Todd's attitude with Dutton. Todd does nice, acceptable things in a quiet way and thinks nothing of them. He does not make a song of a good action. He would never dream of writing home, say, to Uncle Benjamin, on the subject.

All these characters have their devotees. I know that any number of my readers are keener to hear something about them and what they do than about the actual yarns themselves, though you cannot, of course, have one minus the other. Hundreds of interesting letters that I read week in and week out refer to certain little idiosyncrasies of this character or the other. It is points of temperament which readers are eager to get put before them.

Your Editor



MONEY
isn't everything

BUT the Grand New Serial, entitled "MONEY," the first instalment of which appears in TO-DAY'S issue of the "Butterfly," **IS EVERYTHING** a lover of good fiction can desire. DO NOT MISS IT in

The Butterfly

The Celebrated Comic.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Squalls in the Form-room!

"QUELCHY'S late!" Bob Cherry uttered that remark quite cheerfully.

The Remove Form were congregated in the Form-room, awaiting the coming of Mr. Henry Quelch, their master.

Mr. Quelch was a very punctilious gentleman, and was not often late for lessons. Indeed, the Remove had often complained that Mr. Quelch's views regarding punctuality were too exacting, and he did not give a fellow the chance of a minute's grace.

But this particular Wednesday morning Mr. Quelch was unusually late in arriving to take his long-suffering class through their lessons.

"Perhaps he's ill," suggested Snoop hopefully. "Serve the old bird right!"

"Rats!" retorted Bob Cherry good-humouredly. "Quelch's not ill; he's as lively as ever—I know that jolly well! He gave me a hundred lines for jawing at breakfast!"

"I expect he's busy," said Harry Wharton, the sturdy, curly-headed captain of the Form. "He was jolly busy last night, you know, on his cherished 'History of Greyfriars.' That must be the explanation, for he's not been late for terms!"

"I hope he doesn't come at all!" said Billy Bunter, the Owl of the Remove. "It's Latin and Euclid this morning—groceries!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We're not actually pining for lessons to begin, are we, chaps?" grinned Peter Todd. "For my part, Quelch could stay away all the morning—and it's a half-holiday this afternoon!"

"What ho!"

A merry buzz of conversation soon

arose in the Form-room. Billy Bunter extracted some toffee from his pocket, and commenced to eat. Skinner, Snoop, Stott, and Bolsover major held a confab on their own; whilst Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh—the Famous Five—and Squiff, Tom Brown, and Hazeldene discussed their arrangements for the afternoon.

Footer was "off," but the chums of the Remove had another very important engagement to fill. Marjorie Hazeldene and her girl chums of Cliff House School had invited her brother and Harry Wharton & Co. to tea that afternoon; and, of course, the Greyfriars juniors were looking forward to the event with much eagerness.

Everybody was talking, and many were out of their seats, when the door opened suddenly and the gowned figure of Mr. Quelch strode into the Form-room. Behind him came Loder of the Sixth, the most unpopular prefect at Greyfriars.

"Boys!" rapped Mr. Quelch, his steely eyes roving comprehensively round the Form-room. "Silence! Take your places at once!"

Immediately the buzz of conversation ceased, and there was a hurried scramble for seats.

The Remove sat very still in their seats, and looked first at Mr. Quelch and then at Loder, whose eyes were gleaming, evidently with a certain relish.

"Boys," said Mr. Quelch, "I expect to be very busy this morning and afternoon, upon work which cannot be left. So I have requested Loder to take charge of you, and he will supervise the morning's work. You will all maintain the same diligence and respect towards him that—ahem!—you give me; and, Loder, if there are any complaints, you must communicate with me at once!"

"Yes, sir!" said Loder readily.

The Removites looked askance at each other.

To have a prefect in command of them was not a usual circumstance, but Loder was—well, they thought that Mr. Quelch might have made a better choice.

Mr. Quelch, however, seemed quite satisfied with his arrangements, and, bestowing a severe look upon his Form, he rustled from the Form-room, leaving the Removites flustered with the news, and Loder, standing in front, looking spitefully at them.

The heroes of the Remove and Loder of the Sixth had often clashed in the past. Loder was a cad and a bully of the first water, and Harry Wharton & Co. in particular were "down" on him.

There was no love lost between the Removites and Gerald Loder. If he could ever do them a bad turn, Loder always did it with a cheerful spirit, and he exercised his authority as a prefect to the full.

As he gazed at the Removites that morning Loder's eyes gleamed with satisfaction, and he mentally resolved to "put them through it."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry, in an undertone, to Harry Wharton. "What a giddy go!" Loder in command! We'd better look out for squalls!"

"Cherry!" Loder's voice rang out harsh and spitefully. "Cherry, you were speaking!"

"Were I?" asked Bob Cherry innocently.

A faint snigger went round the Form, and Loder's brows lowered.

"Yes, you were speaking!" he yelled furiously. "What were you saying?"

"What were I saying?" said Bob. "I were talking about squalls, Loder."

"Squalls!" ejaculated Loder.

"Yes, Loder," replied Bob sweetly.

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"Haven't you ever heard of squalls at sea? They happen in rough weather, you know!"

Most of the Removites chuckled. Harry Wharton, however, looked warningly at Bob, for he saw the fury glinting in Loder's eyes.

"You young sweep!" hooted Loder, glaring homicidally at Bob Cherry. "You—you're trying to make me look a fool before the Form!"

"Oh, Loder," exclaimed Bob innocently, "it wouldn't be much use me trying to do that, would it?"

Loder choked.

Harry Wharton nudged Bob Cherry. "Chuck it, Bob, you ass!" he murmured. "Loder's getting his rag out. There will be squalls in a minute!"

Unfortunately for Harry, Loder's quick eye sought him out.

"Wharton!" rapped Loder. "You were talking also! What were you talking about?"

"Squalls!" replied Harry, with a faint grin.

"Wha-a-at?"

"I was talking about squalls, Loder," said Harry Wharton simply. "You asked me."

Loder gritted his teeth as a faint chuckle arose from the Remove.

"Come out here, both of you!" he snapped, reaching for a cane. "I'll teach you to make fun of me!"

Harry and Bob looked ruefully at each other. Loder was empowered to cane them, and they could not "ruck" against it.

They left their seats and went to the front. Loder gave them two cuts on each hand, which they bore without a murmur.

"There!" hissed the bullying prefect, laying down the cane. "Let that be a warning not to get saucy again. Bunter, you were laughing! Come out here, and I'll give you something to laugh for!"

"Oh, really, Loder—" protested Billy Bunter indignantly.

"Come out here, I say!" bellowed Loder. "Or shall I fetch you?"

Bunter rolled disconsolately from his seat to the front. Loder took up the cane and gave Bunter two stinging cuts on each flabby hand with it.

"Yarooooogh!" moaned Bunter, crawling back to his seat. "Ow-ow-ow-ow!"

The Removites looked grimly at Loder. The prefect grinned maliciously, and sat at Mr. Quelch's desk.

"The lesson will commence!" he rasped bad-temperedly. "Take up your books, and mind, if I find any slacking, there's going to be trouble!"

With glum looks the Removites took up their books, and the Latin lesson commenced.

Latin was not one of the Remove's strong points, and they looked forward to a gruelling time with Loder.

Within half an hour, Loder had caned five more fellows, and distributed lines galore.

"Todd!" rapped Loder, fixing his eyes on Peter Todd. "Come out here and write me a Latin sentence on the board!"

Peter arose, walked to the front, picked up the chalk, and stood before the blackboard, considering.

"Buck up!" snapped Loder.

There was a gleam in Peter Todd's eyes as he commenced to write on the blackboard.

When he had finished, he stood back, and Loder and the Removites gazed at what Peter had written.

His Latin sentence ran thus:

"Cæsar adsum iam forte."

Loder stared hard at that sentence.

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"Cæsar adsum iam forte!" he exclaimed bewilderedly. "What the dickens does that mean, Todd?"

"Cæsar had some jam for tea!" replied Peter Todd innocently.

"Eh?"

"Cæsar had some jam for tea!" repeated Todd cheerfully. "You know, Loder, 'j' is as good as an 'i' in Latin, isn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove, immensely tickled.

"You—you—you—" gurgled Loder, glaring first at the blackboard, then at Peter Todd. "You're trying to be funny, aren't you? Take a hundred lines for your funniness, Todd! Cherry, come here!"

As Peter Todd smilingly went back to his place, Bob Cherry sallied forth to the front.

"Take up that chalk, and write a Latin sentence!" snapped Loder. "Do it properly, you bound!"

"Yes, Loder," said Bob demurely.

He pondered for a moment, then scrawled four lines upon the blackboard. They ran thus:

"Is ab ille, ca res ago, fortibus ea in aro;

Fortibus ea, fortet rux, votis inem, pesen dux."

Loder gazed blankly at Bob's effort, and tried in vain to translate it.

"That doesn't make sense, Cherry!" snapped Loder. "Translate it yourself!"

"Certainly, Loder!" grinned Bob:

"I say, Billy, here's a go, forty buses in a row;

Forty buses, forty trucks, what is in 'em?—peas and ducks!"

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

Loder's face went pale. He jumped from his seat and grasped Bob Cherry by the coat-collar.

"You cheeky young sweep!" roared the prefect, whirling Bob around. "You dare to make a joke of the lesson! I've come here to keep you in order, and, by Jove, I will! Take that!"

He aimed a blow at Bob's head, but Bob didn't take it. He ducked neatly, and Loder's fist smote the desert air.

Bob's foot shot forward, and Loder went backwards.

He happened to be standing behind the wastepaper-basket, which was a commodious one, and a howl of laughter from the boys arose as Loder sat down in the basket—and became jammed.

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

"Groooooogh!" gasped Loder, struggling to get out of the basket. "You young villain, I—I—"

"What did you do that for, Loder?" inquired Bob Cherry, staring with a comical look of surprise at the luckless prefect. "You'll bust that basket, if you're not careful!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Form.

Cr-r-rack! Thud!

Loder wrenched at the basket, and, by dint of tearing its sides asunder, he managed to force himself from it, and he landed on the floor with a bump.

He was up in a moment, and he made a spring for Bob Cherry.

Bob promptly darted back, and ran up the gangway to the back of the Form-room.

"Half-time, Loder!" he yelled. "You're not going to wallop me again, you know! 'Nuff's as good as a feast!"

"I'll flay you alive!" hissed Loder, stamping furiously after Bob. "You

impertinent young brat! I'll teach you to play tricks on me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Remove, as Loder chased Bob Cherry round the Form-room.

"Go it, Bob!" yelled Peter Todd. "He won't catch you if you hustle!"

"Take a hundred lines, Todd!" hooted Loder, diving after Bob, and nearly falling over Trevor's desk in his hurry. "Cherry, you young sweep, it will be the worse for you if you don't stop!"

"Rats!" retorted Bob Cherry, cheerfully. "Go and eat coke, Loder!"

"Wh-a-at?"

"Go and chop chips, old sport!" said Bob cheerfully. "Can't catch me, can you?"

Bob dashed down the gangway to the front again, and darted behind the blackboard just as Loder came up.

Loder also made a dive behind the blackboard, but Bob dived round to the front again at precisely the same moment.

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

Loder emerged from behind the blackboard, and Bob promptly scuttled round there again. Then began a wild and whirling chase round the blackboard, but Loder could not catch the elusive Bob.

At last he halted, panting, in front of the blackboard. Bob was standing behind.

"You young scoundrel!" hooted Loder, passionately. "Will you come out and take your gruel? I'll call Mr. Quelch in a minute!"

"Sorry, Loder, old sport!" retorted Bob, behind the blackboard. "Promise you won't hurt me!"

"I—I—I—" choked Loder.

He did not notice the pegs of the blackboard moving outwards. Bob, behind there, was gently pushing the pegs forward.

Suddenly, out they came, and the blackboard fell to the floor with a thud. It encountered Loder's toes before it hit the floor, however, and Loder, uttering a fiendish yell of agony, clasped first one foot and then the other, and hopped about in a truly remarkable manner, causing the Remove to roar with merriment.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry emerged from behind the easel of the blackboard, and surveyed the prancing Loder in elaborate wonder.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" he exclaimed. "That blackboard was jolly loose, Loder!"

"Yarooooogh! Yow-ow!" wailed Loder, whose feet had been severely hurt. "You little beast! Take that!"

He picked up a large dictionary, and, in the excess of his fury, he aimed it at Bob Cherry. The book missed Bob, but whirled across the gangway and struck Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, on the nose.

"Hyer!" roared Fish. "Mind what you're doing, Loder, you jay! I kinder reckon you can have this hyer book back!"

And Fish, taking aim, sent the book whizzing back at Loder.

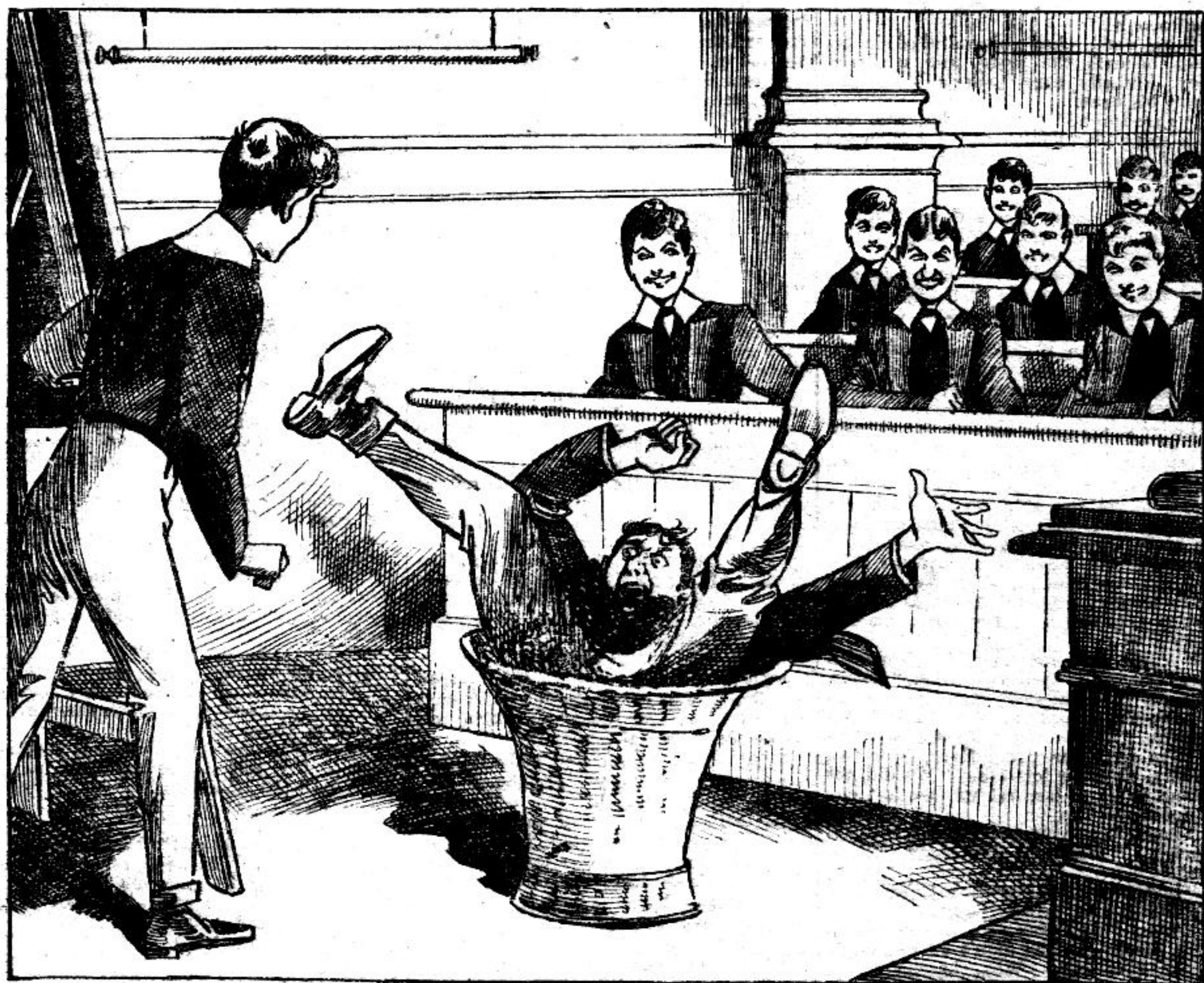
Fish's aim was better than Loder's, for it struck the prefect in the back of the neck.

Loder didn't expect it. Besides, he was at the moment hopping on one foot. He was bowled completely over, and landed on his back with a resounding bump.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chortled the amused Removites.

Bob Cherry took this opportunity to dart back to his seat.

Loder scrambled up, grasped a stout cane, and dashed over to Bob Cherry.



"Groooogh!" gasped Loder, struggling to get out of the basket. "You young villain, I——I——"
 "What did you do that for?" inquired Bob Cherry, staring at the luckless prefect. (See Chapter I.)

Anger and fury glinted from Loder's eyes, and his face was grim and resolute. In this encounter, Bob was less fortunate, for Loder took him unawares, and struck him a cruel blow with the cane across the forehead.

With a cry of pain Bob fell back, and with a spring the angry prefect was upon him, and Loder belaboured Bob most severely with the cane.

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

"Yarooogh! Yoop!" cried Bob Cherry, jammed in his desk and now quite at the mercy of Loder. "Rescue, Remove! Yah! Ow! He's murdering me!"

Harry Wharton darted forward and grasped Loder by the arm.

"Chuck it, you cad!" he exclaimed. "You'll do Bob some serious injury, if you beat him like that!"

"Mind your own business, hang you!" panted Loder, still beating Bob unmercifully with the cane. "I'll flay the young rotter within an inch of his life! I'll teach him to defy me!"

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

Bob Cherry, though the toughest fellow in the Remove, could not stand those cruel blows, delivered with all the fury that Loder was capable of. Bob's cries of agony arose as the cruel cane descended, and the laughter died down in the Form-room.

"Loder!" cried Harry Wharton. "Stop, you bully!"

Thwack, thwack, thwack!

Harry Wharton's jaws set grindly, and he turned to his Form-fellows.

"Rescue, Remove!" he cried. "Drag the rotten bully away from Bob, and give him a taste of his own medicine!"

"Hurrah!"

The boys, excited and angry, surged forward, and Loder was seized in many hands.

Struggling and roaring wildly, he was dragged away from his victim.

"Give him socks!" roared Peter Todd lustily. "We won't be tyrannised by a bully like Loder! He's a rotter and a cad, and deserves a jolly good thrumping!"

"Hear, hear!"

Harry Wharton was quite carried away by his indignation at Loder's unwarranted treatment of Bob, and he became reckless.

"Bump the cad, chaps!" he cried. "Rag him baldheaded! Britons never shall be slaves!"

"Hurrah!"

Loder was dragged to the front, yelling frantically.

"Yarooogh! You young scoundrels, I'll call the Head——"

"Bump him!" cried Harry Wharton recklessly. "Let him call the Head!"

Crash!

Loder was on the floor, and many hands grasped his arms and legs.

Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent,

Johnny Bull, Inky, Squiff, Tom Brown, Micky Desmond, Vernon-Smith, and Peter Todd, with grim resolution, heaved Loder up between them, and let him down again to the floor with a bump.

"Yarooogh!" yelled Loder. "Oh, help! Yoooop!"

"He, he, he!" sniggered Billy Bunter, who, with Snoop and Stott, and other fellows of like kidney, preferred to stay behind and view the fun. "Give him beans, you fellows!"

Bump, bump, bump!

Harry Wharton & Co. were thoroughly excited. They bumped Loder well and truly, not thinking of the consequences of such folly.

Loder was a prefect, and could not be bumped with impunity. But Harry Wharton & Co. were thinking of his merciless treatment of Bob Cherry, who still sat limply on his desk, gasping and rubbing his many sore places. Loder had lost his head, and now the Removes lost their heads.

Bump, bump, bump!

The windows of the Form-room fairly rattled as Gerald Loder smote the floor.

Micky Desmond, the hot-blooded Irish junior, rushed over to the master's desk, took a bottle of red ink, and poured it over Loder's head.

"Yerrugh!" spluttered Loder, as the ink went not only into his hair, but all over his face and into his mouth as well.

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"Gug-gug! You young villains—Yarooogh!"

Peter Todd raked a shovelful of cinders from beneath the grate, and plastered them liberally over Loder's head and down his neck.

"Yarooogh!" yelled Loder, who was in a sorry plight indeed. "I'll have the lot of you flogged for this! You—you young—"

"Boys!"

The word came like a thunderbolt in the Form-room, and everybody started in dismay and horror.

For Mr. Quelch, awe-inspiring and majestic, stood in the doorway, gazing with amazed eyes at the scene of chaos before him.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, in a terrifying voice. "What does this—this disgraceful scene mean? Loder—My goodness, you are covered in blood!"

Loder struggled to his feet, ink streaming all down his face and neck.

He looked a wreck—and no doubt he felt a wreck, too.

His jacket was split up the back, his trousers torn, his collar wrenched from its stud, and half his waistcoat-buttons missing. His head was plastered with red ink and cinders. He had cinders down his neck. Loder's face was flaming red, and he was truly a sight to see and wonder at.

"What has happened?" demanded Mr. Quelch, in horrified accents. "Loder, you are wounded—"

"It—it's ink, sir!" muttered Loder thickly. "These young rascals—"

"I'm sorry, sir," said Harry Wharton quietly, stepping forward. "We did not intend to go so far, but we—we lost our tempers—"

"Lost your tempers!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "What do you mean, Wharton?"

"Loder was beating Bob Cherry unmercifully, sir!" cried Harry, with flashing eyes. "It's true Bob was—ahem!—a bit cheeky, but he didn't deserve what Loder gave him. Why, he—he might have seriously injured Bob if we hadn't chipped in! We—we bumped Loder, sir, for being such a brute, and—well, you can see the result! We don't think Loder is suitable for the job you gave him, sir!"

"Hear, hear!" roared the Remove manily.

Loder's face was contorted with rage and passion.

"They're telling lies, sir!" he cried. "From the first they all set out to cheek me, and they purposely gave me as much trouble as they could. Cherry assaulted me, and I went to cane him. He ran away, and when I caught him I—I canded him—"

"You rotter!" panted Bob Cherry, striding up. "You piled into me like the cad and bully you are! I sauced you, but I didn't ask for what you gave me!"

"Look here, sir!" hooted Loder furiously. "They're a set of lying young scoundrels—"

"Silence!" cried Mr. Quelch angrily. "I have never seen such a disgraceful scene in all my life. Such an affair is unprecedented! Loder, I am afraid you have not succeeded very well in keeping these boys in order. They were, however, not justified in causing all this commotion. You will all be detained, and spend the afternoon in the Form-room here, to pursue the studies you have neglected this morning!"

The faces of the Removites fell at once.

Billy Bunter strode forward, a look of indignation on his fat countenance.

"Look here, sir; that's not fair!" he piped. "I had nothing to do with it—"

"Nor had I, sir!" cried Skinner.

"Nor me, sir!" exclaimed Snoop and Stott simultaneously.

Mr. Quelch waved his hand.

"That matters not!" he rasped angrily. "You have missed your lessons this morning, and the whole Form will be detained this afternoon!"

"But sir—" protested Billy Bunter.

"Silence, Bunter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch testily. "Loder, you will depart from this room and clean yourself."

"Ye-es, sir!" muttered Loder, and, darting a look of venom upon the Remove, he strode from the room.

Mr. Quelch looked round him angrily, and went over to his desk.

"I will personally supervise you boys until the bell rings," he said. "I need hardly say how ashamed of you I am, and detention this afternoon is all too light a punishment."

"Excuse me, sir," said Harry Wharton, stepping forward, "cannot you give us some other punishment? We—we've got an important engagement this afternoon, and—and—"

"That is immaterial to me, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch icily. "The whole Form

will remain in the Form-room! Boys, proceed to your seats!"

The Remove, feeling decidedly glum, and ruing that they had allowed their excitement to get the better of them, took their seats again, and the remainder of the lesson was spent in oppressive gloom.

Harry Wharton & Co., and Hazeldene in particular, were dismal, for detention meant that they would be unable to go over to Cliff House to tea.

They inwardly chafed, and for the remainder of that morning there was much unhappiness in the Remove Form-room.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

"O H, it's beastly!" Harry Wharton spoke these words bitterly, and looked, with an extremely glum countenance, at his chums, who were standing with him on the steps.

Lessons were over for the morning, and the boys of Greyfriars were free till dinner-time. After dinner was a half-holiday for all but the Remove.

The Removites felt their misfortune keenly, and their hearts were much embittered against Gerald Loder of the Sixth.

"Hang the blessed luck!" growled Bob Cherry, his usually sunny face clouded. "What will Marjorie and Clara say? Detained on the very afternoon they have invited us to tea!"

Harry Wharton & Co were decidedly glum at the prospect of having to stay indoors all the afternoon.

Hazeldene came up, and his face, too, was moody.

"Quelch's a beast!" he exclaimed, as he came up. "I've just asked him to let me off, and he gave me fifty lines! Marjorie will be no end wild, and—and it's all your fault, Cherry!"

Bob Cherry went red.

"No; it wasn't all Bob's fault!" interposed Harry Wharton quietly. "If Loder hadn't lost his temper we shouldn't have ragged him like we did. Why couldn't Quelch leave us on our own if he was too busy to take us—or put a decent prefect, like Wingate or Courtney, in charge?"

"Well," growled Hazeldene bad-temperedly, "it's jolly hard luck, and I've a good mind to bunk, and chance it!"

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"That can't be done, Hazel," he said.

"We shall have to send a note over to Cliff House, and—and grin and bear it, I suppose."

Johnny Bull growled.

"Loder ought to be boiled in oil!" he said.

The Famous Five nodded.

At that moment Skinner, Snoop, and Stott, the cads of the Remove, came up, and behind them trotted Billy Bunter.

Skinner's face was savage as he approached the chums on the steps.

"Look here, Wharton," began Skinner abruptly, "we're jolly well not going to be detained! We did nothing! It was all your fault, and as captain of the Remove you've got to get us out of it!"

"Sorry," replied Harry Wharton curtly, "but there's no way out, Skinner. If Quelch wants to detain us, we've got to knuckle under. I've already tried to persuade him to give us some other form of punishment, but he's obstinate. Worried with work, I expect."

"I call it a rotten shame!" cried Bunter indignantly. "Why should a well-behaved chap like me be done out of a half-holiday, just because a set of unruly beasts like you chaps can't behave?"



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Billy Bunter received a violent push from behind, and he went sprawling, head-first, into the ditch. **Splash!** "Yerrugh!" he roared, as he disappeared beneath the surface. (See Chapter 6.)

"Look here, you cheeky young toad! If——" began Bob Cherry warmly.

"I don't care!" hooted the Owl of the Remove. "It isn't fair, and I'm jolly well not going to stand it! Cherry, you ought to have a jolly good licking!"

"Eh?" exclaimed Bob.

"You ought to be scragged, you beast!" howled Bunter, swelling with indignation. "Wharton, I call upon you to bump him—— Yah! Ow-ow! Yarooooogh!"

Billy Bunter broke off as Bob Cherry's heavy hand descended upon him, grasped him firmly, and bowled him over.

Bump!

Bunter sat down heavily on the hard steps and rolled to the bottom.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chortled Harry Wharton & Co.

"Yow-ow!" moaned Bunter, scrambling slowly and painfully to his feet. "You rotter, Cherry! I—I—I——"

"You'd better vanish, Bunter," said Bob Cherry darkly, "or I shall dribble you across to the fountain and duck you in! That might simmer you down a bit."

"Yah!" hooted Billy Bunter, limping away and glaring at Bob as he departed. "You're a gang of beastly, mouldy rotters! Yah! Beasts!"

Harry Wharton & Co. smiled as the corpulent Owl of the Remove rolled away, and then continued their gloomy

discussion of the unfortunate events of the morning.

Skinner & Co. were very savage, but were as helpless as Harry Wharton & Co. in the matter. Feeling greatly aggrieved, they strode indoors to indulge in the consolation of a cigarette in the privacy of Skinner's study.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter rolled disconsolately into the cloisters, brooding upon his lot.

Work in any shape or form did not appeal to the fat youth of the Remove.

Billy Bunter was the biggest dunce and slacker in the Remove, and the prospect of a half-holiday spent in the Form-room almost brought tears to his eyes.

"Beasts!" he muttered. "They're all beasts! Quelch especially—and Loder! I'm jolly well not going to stop in this afternoon!"

Just then Bunter espied Gerald Loder striding beneath the elms, and, with a ray of hope, Billy Bunter trotted over to him.

"I say, Loder," he said, tugging at Loder's coat-sleeve and running behind him breathlessly. "I say, I want to speak to you!"

"Run away, Bunter!" snapped Loder irritably. "I'm in a hurry!"

"But look here, Loder!" bleated Bunter, still keeping pace with the prefect. "About that detention this afternoon, you know. I wasn't in the rag

this morning, was I? I didn't bowl you over, and bump you, and shove ink and cinders over your napper, and—— Yow-ow! Hi! Wharrer you at?"

Loder had turned, grasped Bunter's nose, and tweaked it viciously.

"Take that, you cheeky young sweep!" hissed the prefect bad-temperedly.

"Yarooooogh! Oh, crumbs!" wailed Bunter, writhing in Loder's grasp. "Leggo by dose, you rodder! Yooooop!"

Loder let go of Bunter's snub little nose, and, giving him a shove, sent that unfortunate youth spinning to the ground.

Bunter smote the hard stones with a loud thud, and Loder strode on his way, leaving Billy Bunter howling.

Harry Wharton & Co. were still standing on the steps as Loder walked up. He darted them a venomous look as he passed, but the chums of the Remove did nothing but return his look with glances of scorn.

Loder made his way indoors and up to Mr. Quelch's study.

"The rotter!" growled Bob Cherry. "He's currying favour with Quelch lately. Haven't you noticed it? He thinks that if he gets into Quelch's good books he'll be made dormitory prefect in place of Courtenay. Then, my word, wouldn't we have a high old time!"

"Rather!" granted Frank Nugent

glumly. "Loder's down on us like a hundred of bricks, and he'll move heaven and earth to get more influence over us. Oh, wouldn't I like to give him a few dots on the boko, just to show him how I love him!"

"I got in a few this morning!" grinned Squiff. "Where's Loder off to now, I wonder? Up to see Quelch, I suppose."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as a fat form rolled up the steps. "Here's old Buntie again! Come back to give me that jolly good licking, old scout?"

"Rats!" snapped Bunter crossly. "I'm fed up! I'm going to complain to Quelch!"

"Oh, are you?" said Harry Wharton. "Well, take my tip, Buntie, and keep off the grass. There'll be ructions if you beard the Quelch lion any more. He's not in a very good temper."

"I don't care!" snorted Bunter. "I'm not going to stand this treatment! I'm going to complain. Beasts!"

And Billy Bunter rolled indoors.

"Good-bye-ee, Buntie!" called Bob Cherry after him. "We'll come along in ten minutes to help you into the sanatorium!"

Billy Bunter growled and climbed upstairs.

He made his way to Mr. Quelch's study.

Arriving outside the door, he heard the sound of voices proceeding from within.

The voices were those of Mr. Quelch and Loder.

"I wonder what they're jawing about?" murmured Bunter, pausing outside the door. "I—I'll listen."

Billy Bunter bent down and applied his ear to the keyhole. In the matter of eavesdropping Bunter had no scruples. He was well known as the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars, and it was from keyholes that he derived much of his information.

"Well, Loder," Mr. Quelch was saying, "I should be much obliged if you will stay in and help me this afternoon. As you know, I have arrived at a very important stage of my 'History of Greyfriars,' and I must spend the afternoon in the library. If you have nothing more important to do—"

"I'm quite free this afternoon, sir!" said Loder. "I shall be pleased to supervise the Remove during their detention."

"Ahem!" coughed Mr. Quelch. "I—I think the Remove had better be left as much alone as possible, Loder, after the disgraceful incidents of this morning. However, if you will be so good, perhaps you will look in at the Form-room occasionally during the course of the afternoon, to see that the Remove are behaving properly. If there is any complaint you must summon me at once."

"Yes, sir," said Loder. "And is there anything else I can do to assist you?"

"Yes, Loder, thank you!" said Mr. Quelch in a gratified tone. "There are a number of old files up in the top attic which I should like searched. Would you search them for me up there, and come down periodically to the Form-room to see how the juniors are behaving?"

"Yes, sir, with pleasure!" said Loder ingratiatingly. "And I will release the Remove from detention at five o'clock."

"Precisely!" replied Mr. Quelch. "I am much obliged to you, Loder, for I shall be extremely busy myself this afternoon in the library, and I do not wish to be disturbed. You will render me a great service by keeping an eye

on the Remove during their detention; and, meanwhile, search those old files for me. Will you call in here at half-past two?"

"Yes, sir!" replied Loder willingly. "Rely on me to keep a good eye upon the Remove, sir. There will be no repetition of what happened this morning."

"I hope not, Loder," said Mr. Quelch drily. "I am afraid that my Form is—ahem!—the most unruly in the school. But although strictness and severity should be exercised over them, Loder, justice and equity should always be maintained."

"Yes, sir," said Loder meekly.

As the door-handle rattled, indicative of Loder's departure, Billy Bunter stepped back into the next doorway.

The door of Mr. Quelch's study opened, and Gerald Loder walked out.

There was a look of satisfaction upon his face. He was gradually worming himself into Mr. Quelch's favour. Influence with the Remove-master meant a great deal to Gerald Loder in his campaign of frightfulness against Harry Wharton & Co.

Billy Bunter passed Loder, and tapped at Mr. Quelch's study door.

The curt voice of the Remove-master bade him enter.

"Oh, it is you, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, peering grimly at Bunter over the top of his spectacles. "What is your trouble?"

"I've come to protest against being detained this afternoon, sir," piped Billy Bunter, unheeding the glint in Mr. Quelch's eye. "It's a shabby, unfair trick, sir—"

"What?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"It's beastly tyranny, sir—that's what I call it!" went on Billy Bunter glibly. "I don't mean to be disrespectful to you, sir, but I really think you ought to be shown how unreasonable you are in detaining the whole Form—"

"Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

There was no mistaking the anger in the Remove-master's voice, and Billy Bunter gave a jump.

"Ye-es, sir?" he asked nervously.

"How dare you, Bunter—how dare you!" fumed Mr. Quelch, rising from his chair and grasping a cane. "You have the effrontery to criticise my decisions, and accuse me of tyranny and unreasonableness—"

"Look here, sir," began Bunter, blinking apprehensively at the master through his spectacles. "I didn't mean to—"

"You are an impertinent young rascal, Bunter!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "How dare you!"

"I only came to point out that I don't deserve to be detained, sir," protested Bunter eagerly. "It's a shame, sir—everybody says so!"

"Do they?" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "I don't think I am in the habit of being dictated to by my own pupils, Bunter. I shall chastise you severely for your impertinence! Hold out your hand!"

"But, sir—"

"Hold out your hand, Bunter!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

Quivering with dismay, Billy Bunter extended a fat and dirty paw. Mr. Quelch raised the cane, and it descended upon Bunter's palm with a stinging cut.

"Yarooooogh!" wailed Bunter. "Oh crumbs! Yooooop!"

"The other hand, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch relentlessly.

Whack!

"Ow-wow-ow-ow!" moaned Billy Bunter, tucking his hands beneath his armpits and doubling his fat body up

as far as it would go. "Oh, my hat! I'm hurt! Yooooogh!"

"I intended that you should be hurt, Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, laying down the cane. "You will take your place with the rest of the Remove at half-past two, Bunter, in the Form-room. If you disobey me, the consequences will be drastic."

"Yow-ow-ow!" moaned Bunter.

"You may go, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch acidly.

And Billy Bunter went.

He crawled down the passage, moaning most dismally.

His visit to Mr. Quelch had been far from a success. He had gone there with a complaint, and left with a complaint.

And the burden of this complaint was: "Ow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Plotting a Plot!

"WHAT'S the matter, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter was rolling down the Remove passage, gasping and moaning in a heart-rending manner, when the door of Study No. 11 opened and Harold Skinner looked out.

The cad of the Remove grinned when he saw the suffering Owl, but his tone of voice as he asked that question was quite sympathetic.

"Yow-ow!" moaned Bunter, blinking dismally at Skinner. "I've been licked! Yow-ow!"

"Poor chap!" said Skinner. "Come in and tell us what Quelch said."

Bunter rolled into the study. Snoop and Stott, Skinner's cronies, were there. There was a faint haze of tobacco-smoke in the room.

"What did Quelch lick you for, Bunter?" inquired Skinner. "Were you cheeky?"

"No, I wasn't!" groaned Bunter. "I merely tried to point out to him how unfair it was of him to keep the whole Remove in when some of the chaps—me among 'em—hadn't done anything. The rotter got his rag out over something or other, and gave me a couple!"

Snoop and Stott chuckled.

"Shame!" said Skinner, winking at his study-mates. "I say, Bunter, what did you hear outside Quelch's study door before you went in?"

"Eh?" exclaimed Bunter, blinking at Skinner. "Nothing, Skinner. I wasn't—"

"You were listening at the keyhole, you spying worm!" said Skinner cheerfully. "Now, Bunter, what did you hear?"

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Cut that out!" said Skinner curtly. "We saw you listening at the keyhole, and if you heard anything interesting we want to hear it!"

"Oh, really, Skinner, you beast!" mumbled Bunter petulantly. "I only heard Quelch tell Loder that he would be busy in the library all the afternoon, and wants him to look in at the Form-room now and again to see if we are behaving ourselves. Loder's going to search through some old files for Quelch up in the top attic."

"Oh, is he?" exclaimed Skinner, his eyes opening. "So Loder's playing up to Quelch—eh?"

"Yes—the cad!" growled Billy Bunter, rubbing his aching palms. "Wouldn't I like to get my own back on him—and on the lot of 'em!"

"Same here, Buntie!" grinned Skinner. "Now, let me think of a wheeze to get out of detention this afternoon. Snoop and Stott and I have a very important engagement

down at the Cross Keys, and we can't afford to spend the afternoon mugging lessons in the Form-room. You say Quelchy will be busy in the library all the afternoon?"

Billy Bunter nodded, and rubbed his palms gloomily.

Skinner dug his hands into his trousers-pockets, and thought deeply for a few minutes. Snoop and Stott waited expectantly.

"I've got it!" exclaimed the cad of the Remove suddenly. "Bunty, old son, we'll all get off for the afternoon. We'll have some revenge on Loder, and lead those rotters, Harry Wharton and his gang, up the garden properly, if you'll do as I suggest."

"What's the wheeze?" asked Bunter.

"You've got to work some ventriloquism, for a start," said Skinner cunningly. "We shan't see Quelchy all the afternoon, for he's left Loder in charge of the Remove. Well, Loder's going to spend some of his time in the top attic, isn't he—searching files?"

"Well?" demanded Billy Bunter, blinking at Skinner.

"Well, suppose we lock Loder in the attic?" said Skinner triumphantly. "The Remove will be free for the afternoon, for Loder will never make himself heard up there when he yells to be let out."

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Bunter. "It's too risky, Skinner! Why, Loder would be in no end of a rage when he did get out! We'd all be licked!"

"No, we needn't be," grinned Skinner softly. "Look here, Bunty, my idea is to shift all the blame on to Harry Wharton. We'll all assemble in the Form-room at two-thirty, ready for our detention. Loder will come in, say a few nice words to us, and then hook it up to the attic—won't he?"

"I suppose so," said Billy Bunter.

"Well, just as Loder gets out of the Form-room door, throw your voice outside, in an imitation of Loder's voice, and say, 'Bunter, follow me!'"

"What for?" demanded Billy Bunter.

"Well, you'll get up and follow Loder—see?" chuckled Skinner. "But don't let Loder see you following him, Bunter. Follow him up to the attic, and as soon as he's inside lock the door and pocket the key. Got that?"

"H'm!" mumbled Billy Bunter. "I could do that all right, but what about afterwards?"

"Listen, old son!" grinned Skinner. "When you come down from the attic, lock Quelchy's study door on your way back to the Form-room. Then spin the yarn that Quelchy's let us all off detention, and—"

"The chaps won't believe me!" said Bunter.

"Perhaps not," said Skinner. "But Harry Wharton is sure to go up to Quelchy's study to see. You'll go up with him, of course. Quelchy's study door will be locked, but you can work the necessary ventriloquism, can't you? Harry Wharton will come back and tell us all we're let off, and we'll clear out of the Form-room for good. Harry Wharton and his set will clear out, too. Quelchy will be busy in the library, and Loder will be bottled up in the attic—see? If there's a row afterwards, Harry Wharton will get the blame. Nobody will dream you worked the ventriloquism wheeze. You're a clever chap, Bunter, and I'm sure you could pull it off!"

"B-b-but—" said Billy Bunter dubiously.

Skinner winked at Snoop and Stott.

"Look here, Bunter! You're the only chap who can do it!" he said earnestly.

"You're a clever chap, Bunter, and we rely on you—eh, chaps?"

"Rather!" said Stott. "Bunter's the man for the job! With his brain and marvellous power of ventriloquism, nobody could work the trick better than he!"

"I've always said Bunter was a brainy chap!" said Snoop solemnly. "Why, he ought to jump at the chance of getting off detention this afternoon, and at the same time get his own back on Loder and Harry Wharton & Co."

These words of praise roused Billy Bunter's vanity. He always had had a high opinion of himself, but, unfortunately, he was the only fellow at Greyfriars who seemed to hold that opinion.

Bunter could be cunning and crafty at times, but his wits were generally dull, and these words of flattery easily "spoofed" him.

No. 69.—JAMES WALKER.



A member of the Sixth Form and a prefect. Is a better type of fellow than Valence, but has associated too much with Carne and Loder to escape their taint. Not altogether bad, and has shown from time to time that he has good impulses.

"You'll do it, won't you, Bunty?" asked Skinner. "It will be as easy as falling off a log, and you are the only chap who can do the job!"

"I'll do it!" said Bunter, his little round eyes gleaming behind his spectacles. "I'll spoof 'em all with my ventriloquism, and we'll all get off. Then, when Loder gets out and catches Wharton, he'll give Wharton a licking. He, he, he! Oh, I'm deep, I am!"

"Yes, you're deep!" grinned Skinner. "You'll be doing the whole Form a service, Bunty, and you'll be as safe as houses! We'll stand you a feed afterwards, Bunter, if you work the trick all right!"

"Oh, good!" said Billy Bunter, in great satisfaction.

Just then the dinner-bell rang, and the four conspirators left Study No. 11, and went to dinner.

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott chuckled hugely over the manner in which they had duped Billy Bunter.

Whether Bunter was found out after-

wards or not did not matter to them. All that concerned them was how to evade detention that afternoon.

And Billy Bunter, with those words of praise and flattery still ringing in his ears, felt, like Gideon of old, that he was going to render his brethren a great service, and he inwardly rejoiced.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Does the Trick!

WHEN the clock in the old clock-tower at Greyfriars indicated half-past two, the Remove Form trooped disconsolately into the Form-room.

It was a nice, sunny day, and the thought of having to stay indoors when the other fellows had their freedom was like gall and wormwood to them, especially to Harry Wharton & Co. and Hazeldene, who had been invited over to Cliff House for tea.

Harry Wharton had sent a note to Marjorie Hazeldene, explaining that the whole Form was detained, and that, unless they were reprieved at the last moment, they would be unable to take tea at Cliff House that afternoon.

"Oh, I could kick Loder!" growled Frank Nugent, as he took his place with the others. "I wonder if he's going to look after us this afternoon?"

"Talk of angels!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Here is the rotter!"

Gerald Loder, a most unpleasant look upon his features, strode into the Form-room, and gazed round upon the Remove.

"All here?" he growled. "Well, you're jolly well going to stop here till five, you young rascals! Mr. Quelch is busy this afternoon, and has asked me to keep an eye on you. Now, get your books out, and start work at once! Bunter, you were talking to Snoop. Take a hundred lines!"

"Oh, really, Loder—" protested Billy Bunter indignantly.

"Take two hundred lines, Bunter!" rapped Loder. "If you jaw any more I'll give you a licking, you fat toad!"

Billy Bunter's eyes glimmered behind his spectacles, but he subsided.

Looking ruefully at each other, the Removites took out their books and composed themselves to study.

"I'll come back in a short time," said Loder, looking grimly at the luckless Form. "Let me find any of you slack-ing, and there'll be a row! Mind, I mean to discipline you, you gang of young hooligans!"

"Look here, Loder; that's enough of your slang!" broke in Harry Wharton sharply. "We're not in the mood to stand any of it, so you'd better hold your tongue!"

"Hear, hear!" murmured one or two fellows.

"Why, you—you impertinent rascal!" blurted Loder, glaring homicidally at Harry Wharton. "For two pins I'd give you a licking. Take a hundred lines, and don't let me hear your voice again! Bunter, I'll make your impot five hundred lines if you don't get on with your work, instead of glaring at me like an ape!"

Dark looks were cast at the unpopular prefect as, with just another grim look at the Remove, he strode towards the door.

A faint hiss arose as he passed out into the passage. He half-turned on his heel, and then, thinking better of it, he strode down the passage.

As Loder disappeared through the

doorway Harry Wharton & Co. looked glumly at each other.

Then, from the passage outside, came Loder's voice:

"Bunter!"

"Yes, Loder?" answered Billy Bunter loudly.

"Come here!"

Bunter rolled from his seat, and, giving Skinner an artful glance, he disappeared through the door of the Form-room.

He walked stealthily up the passage, and stalked Loder upstairs. Loder did not look back, but went straight up, past the box-rooms, to the attic at the top of the house.

He opened the door of the attic, entered, and slammed it behind him.

Loder did not relish his afternoon's task, although he had voluntarily taken it upon himself. He wished to ingratiate himself with Mr. Quelch, and thus gain more influence over the Remove. Once having gained that influence, Loder could exercise his spite and hatred against Harry Wharton & Co. to the full.

Billy Bunter crept silently up the stairs to the attic.

The key was in the door, and Billy Bunter, grasping it firmly in his fat hand, silently turned it, and slipped the key into his pocket afterwards.

Loder was shifting boxes in the attic, so that the click of the lock was unheard.

"Good!" breathed the Owl of the Remove, as he crept downstairs again. "That's bottled Loder up for a few hours. He, he, he! He can yell as much as he likes; he'll never be heard!"

Arriving on the landing below, Billy Bunter paused to listen. Evidently Loder had not yet discovered he had been locked in the attic.

Chuckling softly to himself, Billy Bunter descended to the next floor, and as he passed the library he paused to listen.

Click, click, click!

"Quelch's got his old typewriter going!" grinned Bunter, as he trotted away silently. "He's safe for the afternoon, anyway!"

He made his way along to the Form-master's study. The door was unlocked, so Bunter turned the key in the lock, removed it, and placed it in his pocket with the other key. Then he paused to consider.

"Nunno!" he murmured. "I'd better leave the key in the lock, in case old Quelch returns for something. He won't notice it's on the outside, instead of on the inside."

Bunter groped in his pocket, withdrew a key, and placed it in the lock. Being very short-sighted, he did not notice that he had placed the wrong key in the lock.

Grunting with satisfaction, William George Bunter rolled along to the Remove Form-room. A hum of conversation proceeded from thence.

He rattled the door-handle before he entered, and immediately there was a hush.

A great sigh of relief arose as the Removites saw Billy Bunter roll in.

"It's only Bunter!" said Peter Todd. "Why, Bunter, we thought you were Loder returning. How is the rotter?"

"Oh, he's wild because he thinks Quelch's going to let us off this afternoon!" replied Billy Bunter, with a grin. "You've got to see Quelch in his study, Wharton!"

The faces of the Remove juniors lit up with hope as Billy Bunter uttered those words.

"Oh, good!" exclaimed Harry Whar-

ton, rising with alacrity to his feet. "Perhaps he's relented, and is going to let us off."

"I think that's about it," said Billy Bunter slyly. "Loder's upstairs in the attic, so I hear, doing some work for Quelch. He's awfully busy on his blessed 'History of Greyfriars,' you know."

"Good egg!" chortled Bob Cherry, leaping to his feet. "Let's go with you, Harry, and hear the good news—for something seems to tell me that we're going to hear good news. I feel it in my bones!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Instantly every fellow was on his feet, and a general exit was made from the Form-room.

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott grabbed Billy Bunter gleefully.

"Bravo, Bunter!" chuckled Skinner. "You've worked it fine, so far. Kim on! You've got to work the last giddy act now!"

"What-ho!" said Bunter, with a smirk of self-importance. "I've locked the door, Skinner!"

"Shush-sh!" cautioned Skinner. "Come on, Bunter!"

They hurried forward to Mr. Quelch's study.

The Removites waited at the end of the passage, whilst their captain approached Mr. Quelch's door.

Harry Wharton tapped, but received no reply at first.

Billy Bunter pushed his way forward.

Tap, tap!

"Go away!" came Mr. Quelch's voice, in an irritated tone, from behind the closed door. "I'm busy, and cannot be disturbed!"

"But it's me, sir—Wharton!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "May I come in, sir? You sent for me!"

"Oh, is that you, Wharton?" said Mr. Quelch's voice. "You cannot enter, Wharton, for I have locked the door. You may tell the Form that they are excused this afternoon. On second thoughts, I have decided to cancel the detention."

"Oh, thank you, sir!" cried Harry Wharton delightedly.

As no further words proceeded from the master's study, Harry Wharton deemed the conversation at an end, and he walked back to his chums at the end of the passage with a radiant face.

"It's all serene, chaps!" he said cheerfully. "Quelch's relented, and let us off!"

"Oh, good!" cried Bob Cherry. "Quelch's not a bad old stick, after all, is he? Let's give him three cheers!"

"No; don't make a row, he's busy!" said Harry Wharton hurriedly. "Let's hop off over to Cliff House as soon as possible. We sha'n't be very late, after all!"

"No, fear!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Getting Rid of Bunter!

WITH joyful hearts Harry Wharton & Co. and Hazeldene donned their caps and overcoats, and prepared to start out for Cliff House.

Billy Bunter rolled down into the quadrangle, and, seeing Skinner & Co. chatting together, he went up to them.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, Bunter!" said Skinner, turning on Bunter. "What's the trouble?"

"I've unlocked Quelch's study door, and—"

"You haven't let Loder out, have you?" demanded Skinner quickly.

"Nunno!" said Bunter. "I've still

got the key, Skinner. You can have it, if you like!"

"No, thanks!" said Skinner flatly. "You locked the door, Bunter, so the key's in your charge. For goodness' sake, don't lose it!"

"Look here!" began Billy Bunter, a feeling of alarm beginning to creep over him. "How am I to let Loder out?"

"That's your business, Bunter!" said Skinner, shrugging his shoulders. "Better think that problem out yourself!"

"Eh?"

"I've got nothing at all to do with it!" said Skinner. "We chaps have been told by Harry Wharton that Quelch's let us off, and we're going out. Wharton's captain of the Form, so he stands responsible."

"Ye-es!" murmured Bunter, blinking nervously at Skinner. "But do you think Quelch will find out?"

"He may not," said Skinner carelessly. "It's all according to whether Loder gets out of the attic before five o'clock."

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Billy Bunter.

Chuckling softly to themselves, Skinner, Snoop, and Stott ambled away. Bunter blinked after them, feeling rather despondent.

Inward qualms were beginning to assail him. He thought of Loder, locked up securely in the top attic, and Billy Bunter trembled.

"I—I wish I hadn't done it!" said the Owl of the Remove, turning the key over in his pocket. "I—I shall have to palm this confounded key off on somebody, and let them get the blame. Why should Loder suspect me? He'll think somebody else locked him in, because I was supposed to be in the Form-room, and none of the other chaps would tumble. Oh, I know! I'll palm the key off on Harry Wharton! I'll go over to Cliff House with him, and work the trick there!"

Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Nugent, Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh, Squiff, and Hazeldene of the Remove descended the steps into the quadrangle at that moment, and Billy Bunter rolled over to them.

"I say, you fellows!" he said. "I'm coming!"

"Oh, are you?" said Bob Cherry, staring hard at Bunter. "Who said so, porpoise?"

"I said so!" grunted Bunter. "I—I intended paying Bessie a visit at Cliff House this afternoon, you know. I might as well come along with you fellows."

Harry Wharton & Co. looked ruefully at each other.

Bessie was Billy Bunter's sister, a member of Cliff House School. There did not seem to exist much affection between Bessie and Billy, but Bessie was Billy's sister, and no law could stop Bunter paying his sister a brotherly visit at Cliff House if he chose. Whether he would be welcomed there was another matter.

"Look here, Bunter, you'd better keep off the grass!" said Bob Cherry gruffly. "Last time you saw Bessie she chased you over the cliffs because you raided her lunch-basket. I don't suppose she'll be very pleased to see you, and I'm jolly sure the other girls won't!"

"Oh, really, Cherry!" protested Bunter, glowering. "You're jealous of my popularity—that's what it is! You know Marjorie and Clara are awfully sweet on me, and— Yaroooogh!"

Bob Cherry, losing all patience, grasped Bunter's ear and gave it a twist.

The Owl of the Remove yelled and squirmed.

"Yow-ow-ow!" he wailed. "I'll tell Clara what a beastly bully you are, Cherry! Does Cliff House belong to you? I'm jolly well going there—see!"



"Good gracious!" exclaimed Miss Primrose, gazing in horror at Bunter. "Boy, how dare you enter the precincts of this establishment in this—this disreputable condition?" (See Chapter 8.)

Harry Wharton turned, with a shrug, to his chums.

"Let him go to Cliff House if he likes," said Harry curtly. "He'd better not tack on to us, though. We're biking it—er, what?"

"Rather!"

Billy Bunter glared at the chums of the Remove.

"Oh, really, you selfish beasts, you might as well walk, and let me come with you—"

"No fear!" said Bob Cherry. "Come on, boys! Let's get our bikes!"

"What-ho!"

The seven Removites strode away towards the cycle-shed.

Billy Bunter growled, and trotted after them as fast as his fat little legs would go.

"I say, you fellows—" he began, as the cycle-shed was reached. "Let me get on the back of your bike, Nugent?"

"Rats!" said Frank Nugent cheerfully, wheeling his machine out into the Close. "Go and eat coke, Bunter!"

Harry Wharton & Co. took their machines out of the shed and mounted.

Billy Bunter stood there, blinking wrathfully at them. He was fully determined to visit Cliff House—for the prospect of a tea such as Marjorie Hazeldene & Co. provided was sufficient attraction, besides his plan of foisting the attic key on Harry Wharton.

"Good-bye, Bluebell!" trilled Bob Cherry, as he and his chums pedalled away. "I'll give your love to Bessie, if you like!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on, you beasts!" yelled Bunter desperately, clutching a cycle near him and dragging it forth. "I'm coming, I tell you!"

"Oh, great pip!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as he saw Billy Bunter scramble hastily on to the cycle he had appropriated without its owner's permission. "The fat toad's pinched somebody's jigger, and he's going to chase us to Cliff House! He'll hang on like a limpet now!"

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"Let him follow us," he said quietly. "When we are half-way to Cliff House we'll run into him, bowl him over, and strand him in some way. That will put the stopper on his little game!"

"Good egg!"

Billy Bunter, mounted on the borrowed cycle, pedalled furiously after the chums of the Remove, as they sped through the gates of Greyfriars and out into the Friardale Lane.

The Owl of the Remove was not an expert cyclist, and, besides, he had a great weight to carry.

"Make the beggar work!" grinned Frank Nugent, looking back, to see Bunter labouring hard behind. "He'll

lose some of his fat by the time he's finished!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hi! Wait for me, you beasts!" yelled Bunter, his fat little legs going like clockwork as they manipulated the pedals of the borrowed cycle. "I c-c-can't keep up with you—Groooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the cyclists ahead.

Labour as he would, poor Bunter could not catch up to them.

He clutched his handle-bars tightly, and dug with all his might at the pedals, so that he puffed and gasped like a grampus.

Harry Wharton & Co., riding easily and smoothly, grinned at the sight of Bunter's strenuous efforts to catch up to them.

Soon Harry Wharton gave the signal to slow down.

"Let him come up," he said, grinning; "and, Bob, you can barge into him and send him spinning into the bank. He might fall into the ditch, but we can't help that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

They relaxed speed, and gradually Billy Bunter drew level with them. He struggled up alongside Bob Cherry, on the extreme edge of the lane.

"Groooogh! You beasts!" he gurgled, puffing like a pair of very old bellows.

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"You're trying to get rid of me—I can see through it! I'll tell Marjorie when I get to Cliff House, and— Yowp! Yarooooogh!"

Bob Cherry's handle-bars suddenly went round in Bunter's direction, and his front wheel crashed into the bicycle that Bunter was riding.

As Bob's machine lurched into his, Billy Bunter gave a fiendish yell, lost his balance, and floundered sideways.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob Cherry, in evident alarm. "Look out, Bunter!"

"Yoooooogh!" wailed Bunter, collapsing on the grassy bank, which he had struck with a loud thud. "You clumsy rotter, Cherry! You did that for the purpose!"

"Go hon!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Sorry, Bunter, and all that, you know! Being strictly honourable youths, it grieves us much to see you riding a bike which doesn't belong to you, without permission. So lest the jigger should come to further harm, Bunt, we're going to take care of it."

"Oh, you—you rotters!" howled Bunter, leaping to his feet. "Don't take that bike! I—"

But Bob Cherry had already dismounted, dragged the fallen machine upright, mounted his own jigger, and was now riding both machines away.

Billy Bunter glared furiously at Bob, and the others chortled with merriment.

"Gimme that bike back!" yelled Bunter furiously. "I'll give you a good hiding, Cherry—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't waste time on that fat clump!" said Hazeldene impatiently. "Let's get on to Cliff House as soon as possible."

"Right-ho!" said Harry Wharton. "It's no go, Bunt; you can't come with us to Cliff House. Farewell!"

"You rotters—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were soon spinning merrily up Friardale Lane towards Cliff House, taking Bunter's borrowed bicycle with them.

"The rotters!" mumbled Bunter, ramming his hands into his trousers-pockets and blinking furiously after the fast-disappearing Removites. "Wait till they get back to Greyfriars; they'll cop it from Quelchy! I— Oh, lor'!"

Billy Bunter suddenly made a great discovery.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Artful Bunter!

"OH crumbs!" gasped Bunter, in dismay. "The—the blessed key's gone!"

He groped desperately in his pocket, but the key which he had placed there was gone.

Billy Bunter blinked around him in dismay.

"My word, what a go!" he murmured dolorously. "I—I must find it! Oh dear! It must have fallen out of my pocket when that beast Cherry bowled me off the bike!"

Billy Bunter went down on hands and knees in the grass, and blinked about him for the key.

If he failed to recover that key he would be in a sorry plight indeed. There was only one key to the attic in existence. Bunter shivered at the contemplation of the attic door being broken in before Loder could be released.

"I—I'll find it, and shove it back in the lock at once!" gasped Billy Bunter, crawling down the bank and gazing at the waters of the ditch at the bottom. "I—I wonder if it fell in the ditch? Oh crumbs! I hope not!"

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The ditch was full of green slime and murky water. Billy Bunter knelt on the brink and blinked dismally at the ditch.

So engrossed was he with his dismal thoughts that he did not notice a quartette of stylishly-dressed schoolboys, wearing the Highcliffe school cap, approach the bank from Friardale Lane.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Cecil Ponsonby, turning to his satellites, Gadsby, Monson, and Vavasour. "This looks like the worthy Bunter of Greyfriars. What the dickens is he squatting down there by the ditch for? He's simply asking to be shoved in!"

"Oh, absolutely!" grinned Vavasour.

The nuts of Highcliffe chuckled.

They were out for a "lark," and in Billy Bunter they saw a ready subject for their humour.

"Shush-sh!" whispered Ponsonby, creeping down the grassy slope towards Bunter, whose back was turned. "I'll tip the beggar in and give him a bath. All these Greyfriars fellows could do with a little extra water, applied externally!"

Gadsby, Monson, and Vavasour chuckled hugely as they watched their leader approach Billy Bunter from the rear.

Bunter's eyes were roving amongst the weeds of the ditch, in search of the missing key, when suddenly he received a violent push from behind, and he went sprawling, head-first, into the murky water and slime of the ditch.

Splash!

"Yerrrrugh!" roared Bunter, as he disappeared beneath the surface.

The nuts of Highcliffe chortled mightily. Bunter's head reappeared soon afterwards, covered in green slime and muddy weeds.

"Yoooooogh!" moaned Bunter, gouging mud out of his eyes. "Gerrugh-gug-gug!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Cecil Ponsonby & Co.

Bunter glared at the Highcliffe fellows and gurgled.

"Yerrugh! You rotten Highcliffe beasts!" he moaned. "Oh dear!"

"How did it feel, Bunter?" chuckled Ponsonby. "Wet?"

Billy Bunter struggled to get out of the ditch. He was almost out, when Ponsonby raised his elegant foot, gave Bunter a push in the chest, and sent him floundering back again.

"Yarooooogh!" roared Bunter.

"Rescue, Greyfriars!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" howled the nuts of Highcliffe. "Poor old Bunter!"

"Yow! You beastly rotters!" moaned Bunter, standing waist-deep in the ditch.

"Lemme out!"

"What were you looking for, Bunter?" inquired Ponsonby amiably. "Anythin' worth findin'?"

"Yes, it was, you rotter!" spluttered Bunter. Then a cunning gleam came into his eye. "I was looking for my pocket-book!"

"Your pocket-book!" said Ponsonby, in surprise. "That's a fat lot to look for, Bunter!"

"Yes, a jolly fat lot!" said Bunter warmly. "Why, the five-pound note that my pater sent me this morning was in it!"

The eyes of Cecil Ponsonby & Co. opened wide.

"A fiver in your pocket-book!" exclaimed Ponsonby, looking hard at Bunter. "Don't tell fibs, Bunter; we can't swallow that!"

"I tell you it's true!" said Bunter calmly. "My pater sent me a fiver, and it's in the ditch somewhere. That beast Bob Cherry bowled me off a bike, and the pocket-book fell out of my pocket into the ditch!"

"Oh, by gad!" exclaimed Monson, nudging Ponsonby. "You'll never find it, Bunter!"

"Why not?" demanded Bunter artfully.

"Well, we saw a tramp pick a pocket-book up from behind that bush over there, didn't we, Pon?" said Monson.

"Yes, rather!" said Ponsonby. "Your pocket-book must have flown out of your pocket and over to that bush, Bunter. No good lookin' in that ditch—your giddy pocket-book's gone! We saw a tramp run off with it just as we came up!"

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter, concealing his merriment at his own game of "spoof," and the way in which Ponsonby & Co. imagined they were "spoofing" him. "Are you certain, Ponsonby?"

"Positive!" grinned Ponsonby.

"Oh, absolutely!" chimed in Vavasour.

Billy Bunter scrambled up out of the ditch, and this time Ponsonby & Co. did not deter him.

Billy Bunter was in a most frightful condition, for he was covered from head to foot in green slime and weeds and mud, and the nuts of Highcliffe staggered away from him.

"I should advise you to get back to Greyfriars and clean yourself up!" chuckled Ponsonby.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter growled and shivered.

"I'm going to find P.-c. Tozer, and put him on the track of that tramp who's run off with my pocket-book," he said sullenly. "Did you see which way he went, Ponsonby?"

"Towards the village, dear boy!" grinned Ponsonby. "You'll never find that pocket-book, I'm afraid!"

"Groooooogh!" gasped Bunter, shivering in his wet and muddy garments. "I'm going to have a jolly good try. You rotter, Ponsonby, I'll get my own back on you for ducking me in that ditch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Cecil Ponsonby & Co.

Billy Bunter glared at them, and, growling under his breath, he squelched away.

Ponsonby turned to his companions with a chuckle when Bunter turned the bend.

"Good idea of yours, Monson!" he said. "We'll find that giddy pocket-book, eh?"

"Oh, rather!" said Vavasour, with a vacant grin. "Goin' to search the ditch yourself, Pon, old fellah?"

Ponsonby glared at his chum, and the other two chuckled.

"We'll hurry back to Highcliffe and get some old nets," he said sullenly. "If we drag that ditch, I reckon we'll soon find Bunter's missin' pocket-book. As we're rather on the rocks at present, a fiver would be worth the trouble, eh, dear boys?"

"Yes, rather!" grinned Gadsby.

So, chuckling mightily over the manner in which they had hoodwinked Bunter—or, rather, how they thought they had hoodwinked Bunter—the nuts of Highcliffe ambled down the lane in the direction of Highcliffe School, in order to get some nets with which to drag the ditch.

Meanwhile, Billy Bunter squelched on his way up the lane, but instead of bearing for the village, he took the pathway which led to Pegg, where Cliff House School was situated.

"Groooooogh!" he gasped, shivering in his clammy garments. "I'll pay Ponsonby out for this! He swallowed my yarn about the pocket-book in the ditch. He, he, he! I'll go over to Cliff House, and arrive in time for tea."

When the girls see me in this condition they're sure to take pity on me, and— and make a fuss of me. Then I'll tell Harry Wharton that Ponsonby and his gang are looking in the ditch for my pocket-book, and get him and the others to set about those Highcliffe cads. Br-r-r-r! Goodness knows how Loder will get out of the attic. Serve the cad right if he stopped there all night! He's a beast, and Quelch's a beast, and Wharton's a beast, and Ponsonby's a beast—they're all beasts! Br-r-r-r!"

And, thus soliloquising, William George Bunter squelched on his weary way to Cliff House.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Startling Discoveries!

"**D**EAR me!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "How extraordinary!"

The Remove-master was standing outside his study. He had just come down from the library in order to fetch some more manuscript-paper. He had found his study door locked, but, seeing a key in the lock, had tried to turn it.

But the key would not turn. Greatly perturbed, Mr. Quelch withdrew the key from the lock and looked at it.

"Good gracious!" said Mr. Quelch. "It is not the key of my study at all. It appears to resemble the key of the attic. I wonder if Loder is still up there? He must have locked my study, and left this key in mistake; although I can imagine no motive for such procedure. However, I will first of all visit the Form-room to see if the boys under detention are behaving."

Mr. Quelch, pocketing the key, strode away to the Remove Form-room.

As he approached he listened for sounds of chatter, but heard none.

"They are very quiet—ahem!—unusually quiet!" murmured Mr. Quelch. "Perhaps Loder—Dud-dear me!"

He opened the door of the Form-room and gazed within.

It was empty.

A grim expression crossed Mr. Quelch's face.

"They are gone—they have disobeyed orders, and absconded!" exclaimed the Remove-master, his eyes glinting with anger. "Loder could not have given them permission to leave. I will go upstairs and interview Loder."

Gritting his teeth with rage, Mr. Quelch strode upstairs to the attic, where he realised Loder must be.

As he gained the top landing a wild commotion assailed his ears, coming from the region of the attic.

Thump, thump, thump!

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, hastening his footsteps forward. "What ever can be the matter? Can that be Loder shouting?"

"Help!" yelled the voice of Loder from behind the closed door of the attic.

"Lemme out!"

Thump, thump, thump!

Mr. Quelch grasped the handle of the door and shook it.

The door, he found, was locked.

Loder evidently heard somebody at the door, for his yells increased.

"Lemme out!"

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Loder, is that you?"

"Yes, you idiot, it's me!" booted Loder, forgetting Mr. Quelch in his blind rage and fury. "Buck up and open this confounded door, will you?"

Mr. Quelch, setting his teeth, withdrew the key from his pocket, inserted it in the lock, and opened the door.

When the door was opened Loder con-

fronted him, his face red and angry, his eyes gleaming.

He fell back when he saw Mr. Quelch. "Loder!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "What has happened? Have you been locked in?"

"Yes, I have, sir!" snarled Loder passionately. "Some young rascal must have come up here and locked the door. I've been thumping on the door and shouting for over half an hour."

"Good gracious!" said Mr. Quelch, his jaws setting hard. "Is it possible that this is a trick of one of my pupils? Are you aware, Loder, that the whole Form has absconded from the Form-room?"

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered Loder.

"Not one single boy remains under detention, Loder!" said the Remove-master tartly. "Do you know anything about it, Loder?"

No. 70.—EDWARD WILLIAM SMITH.



Smith major. Has a brother in the Remove. Not one of the shining lights of the Fifth, but quite a decent fellow in every way, and just the sort to distinguish himself in one way or another at some future date. Shares Study No. 2 with Terence Fitzgerald, with whom he is on excellent terms.

"No, sir; I've been locked up here all the time!" said the enraged prefect. "Those young rascals have played this trick right enough. They must have known that you were going to be in the library all the afternoon, so they hit on the idea of locking me up here and absconding. They would have let me out at five, I expect, when they would all have returned, and taken their places in the Form-room again!"

Mr. Quelch started as the possibility of what Loder suggested dawned upon him.

"Dear me, you must be right, Loder!" he said. "The unmitigated young scoundrels! Loder, you must go out and find them, and bring them back again. Then I shall have a reckoning with the whole Form."

"Yes, sir!" said Loder, nothing loath. Together the master and the prefect descended the stairs.

Mr. Quelch went in search of another key to his study, whilst Loder, after putting on cap and overcoat, strode forth

from Greyfriars on a hunt for Harry Wharton & Co.

His heart was furious and angry within him, and he longed for the time when he should find the wayward Removeites, bring them back to Mr. Quelch, and watch them being punished for their delinquencies.

For Loder was quite under the impression that Harry Wharton & Co. had locked him in the attic in order to abscond for the afternoon.

And he swore dire vengeance upon them.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Catching it Hot!

"**M**Y hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What's this coming?"

"Bunter!" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

In the sitting-room at Cliff House School a merry party was congregated. Harry Wharton & Co. and Hazeldene were there, with Marjorie Hazeldene and her girl chums. Tea was over, and the chums of Greyfriars and the Cliff House girls were chatting merrily.

Happening to look out of the window, which overlooked the gate, Bob Cherry's startled eyes beheld a fat figure, dripping wet, and plastered with weeds and slime and mud, enter the gate, and roll up the pathway.

"Bunter!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, frowning. "My hat! He looks as though he's been taking a header in the duck-pond!"

Marjorie Hazeldene, Clara Trevlyn, Phyllis Howell, and "Flap" Derwent crossed to the window, and they gave little gasps of surprise and horror when they beheld Billy Bunter.

"Good gracious!" cried Marjorie. "It is really Bunter! Poor boy! He's wet, and completely covered with horrid mud and weeds!"

Clara Trevlyn sniffed emphatically.

"I expect the young chump has been up to some sort of mischief!" she said. "What a nuisance he is!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked worried. They had imagined that they had got rid of Bunter for good. They had not bargained for him turning up again, and in this horrible condition!

"Excuse me, Marjorie!" said Harry Wharton. "I'll go out and interview Bunter, and see what's the matter with him."

"So will I!" said Bob Cherry grimly.

"Same here!" said Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent, and Squiff.

"The same horfulness of my esteemed and ludicrous self is terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh, in his weird and wonderful English, following his chums to the door.

Hazeldene turned with a grin to his sister.

"It's all right, Marjorie!" he said. "We'll settle with Bunter. We don't want him here, do we?"

"Ahem!" coughed Marjorie. "You are too candid, aren't you, Hazel?"

Clara Trevlyn and Phyllis Howell smiled.

Outside, Harry Wharton & Co. accosted Billy Bunter.

"Well, you fat worm!" said Harry Wharton grimly. "What's the matter?"

"Oh dear; I'm dud-dying, I believe!" moaned Billy Bunter pathetically. "I've been nearly killed by those rotters, Ponsonby and his gang!"

Harry Wharton started.

"Ponsonby!" he exclaimed. "Do you mean to say that you've been set about by Ponsonby & Co. of Highcliffe?"

"Yow! You don't think I'm telling

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lies, do you, Wharton?" growled Bunter. "Soon after you rotters left me in the lane, Ponsonby and his gang came up and chucked me in the ditch! Grooogh!" Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Poor old Bunter!" he said. "Didn't you set about 'em?"

"I—I had a fierce struggle with Ponsonby!" said Bunter, glowering. "But, I say, you fellows, I spruced 'em up properly. He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at, you duffer?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"He, he, he!" giggled Bunter, in quite a cheerful manner, considering that he was supposed to be dying. "Pon asked me what I was doing down there by the ditch, and I told him I had dropped my pocket-book, containing a fiver, into the ditch, and I was looking for it! Pon said he'd seen a tramp run off with it, just to get me out of the way. I left the cads there, and they're going to hunt for my fiver. He, he, he! Oh, I'm deep, I am!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked in astonishment at Bunter.

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"You artful little bounder, Bunter! You say Pon and his gang are still there?"

"Yes. He, he, he!" giggled Bunter.

"Look here, Wharton: it's up to you to go down there and give Ponsonby & Co. a jolly good licking! Look what they've done to me! Defend the rights of Greyfriars, you know!"

Harry Wharton & Co. looked grimly at one another.

Fierce warfare existed between the chums of Greyfriars and Cecil Ponsonby & Co. of Highcliffe. Many times of late had Ponsonby and his troupe of young rascals sallied forth against Greyfriars fellows, and maliciously ragged them. And Harry Wharton realised that if an opportunity now presented itself for him to retaliate on the Highcliffe nuts he must seize it.

"Are they still searching that ditch, do you think, Bunter?" asked Harry.

"Yes, the rotters!" said Bunter.

"They're sure to spend a jolly long time looking, too, for they'll never find the fiver. It was only my little joke. He, he, he!"

Harry Wharton turned swiftly to his chums.

"I say, chaps," he said, "if we can cop those Highcliffe cads on the hop, now's our chance. I—I suppose Marjorie will excuse us if we run off in a hurry?"

"Oh, she'll do that all right!" said Hazeldene. "Come inside, and I'll explain!"

"I'll come, too!" said Billy Bunter eagerly. "I say, you fellows, is tea over?"

"Yes, it is, you greedy chump!" said Bob Cherry grimly. "Look here, Bunter! Just you wait out here. You must not pollute the atmosphere of Cliff House with that horrible-smelling weed you are covered in!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter glowered, and scuttled up the path after Harry Wharton & Co.

"You beasts!" he roared. "I'm coming in, and— Oh crumbs!"

He stopped, as a tall, angular female strode up the garden path, regarding him through a pair of large lorgnettes.

It was Miss Penelope Primrose, the austere mistress of Cliff House.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Miss Primrose, gazing horrified at Bunter. "Boy, how dare you enter the precincts of this establishment in this—this disreputable condition!"

"I—I—I—" gasped Billy Bunter, quavering under the glinting eyes of Miss Primrose.

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Harry Wharton & Co. and Marjorie Hazeldene & Co., now together in the sitting-room, looked through the window, and smiled when they saw the angry mistress confronting Billy Bunter.

"You dirty, offensive little creature!" rapped Miss Primrose, in a sharp voice. "Remove yourself from this garden at once! Do you hear, boy—at once!"

"Look here, Miss—" began Billy Bunter.

"Silence!" shrieked Miss Primrose, in a voice which inspired fear in Billy Bunter's breast. "Depart immediately, you disreputable young rascal!"

Glaring in the direction of the window, Billy Bunter turned and rolled disconsolately away. Miss Primrose slammed the gate behind him, and followed him with her eyes until he had crawled from sight.

"Well, that's got rid of Bunter!" laughed Harry Wharton, turning to his girl chums. "Will you please excuse us, Marjorie, for we have—er—important business to attend to?"

"You see," broke in Hazeldene, with a grin, "those beasts, Ponsonby and his friends, are lurking about here, and we must be after them. They've just ragged Bunter, as you see, and we're going to rag them. You don't mind us scooting off, do you, sis?"

Marjorie Hazeldene gave a merry laugh.

"By all means go out and find Ponsonby," she said. "He is a horrid boy, and—"

"And I hope you give him and the other little rascals a jolly good licking!" said Clara Trevlyn emphatically. "If I had Ponsonby here, I'd give him a hiding myself!"

"Oh, Clara!" remonstrated Marjorie Hazeldene, and the chums of Greyfriars grinned.

"I mean it!" said Clara. "Bob, you'll give Ponsonby one for me, won't you?"

"What ho!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton & Co., thanking Marjorie Hazeldene and her friends for the tea and the pleasant time they had had, donned their caps, and left Cliff House.

"We'll soon find Pon & Co.," said Harry Wharton, as they mounted their cycles and pedalled swiftly down Redclyffe Lane. "You find that extra bike a bit of a nuisance, don't you, Bob?"

"Somewhat," replied Bob Cherry, who guided the bike that Bunter had borrowed. "Anyhow, we'll overtake Bunter, and allow him to ride it back to Greyfriars, shall we?"

"That's not a bad wheeze," said Harry Wharton.

Round the next corner they came upon Billy Bunter, plodding along, a melancholy look on his fat and dirty features.

He brightened up when the chums of the Remove stopped and allowed him to mount the cycle they had taken away from him earlier in the afternoon.

Together they sped on their way in search of Ponsonby.

They left Pegg behind, and whizzed up Friardale Lane.

Suddenly Bob Cherry gave a shout.

"I see the rotters!" he cried. "Ha, ha, ha! There are four of 'em, in their shirt-sleeves, dragging the ditch with an old footer net!"

In the distance they could see Ponsonby, Gadsby, Monson, and Vavasour dragging the ditch with a net.

"He, he, he!" sniggered Billy Bunter. "My little joke worked fine, didn't it, Wharton? He, he, he!"

Ponsonby & Co. were by now feeling extremely savage. Dragging the dirty, slimy ditch was not a nice job, even for a reward of five pounds. But so far Bunter's pocket-book had not been

forthcoming, and the nuts of Highcliffe were feeling savage and "fed up."

Ponsonby, happening to look up, saw the Greyfriars party speeding towards them on their cycles.

"Ware Greyfriars cads!" he exclaimed. "That fat chump Bunter is with 'em. Oh, by gad, I see it now! He's fetched 'em over here, and they're going to rag us!"

"Oh dear!" gasped the other three nuts.

Ponsonby looked swiftly round him, and his eyes lit up with a gleam of inspiration.

"Pull up some of those wet turfs!" he said. "They'll make fine ammunition, and we'll keep Harry Wharton and his set off!"

"Oh, fine!"

As Harry Wharton & Co. pedalled up, Ponsonby, Gadsby, Monson, and Vavasour donned their coats and proceeded to pull up a number of turfs from the wet bank of the ditch.

Harry Wharton and his chums dismounted, placed their cycles against the hedge at the side of the lane, and proceeded to reconnoitre.

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "The rotters are pulling turfs, and— Yow-ow! Yerrrugh!"

Bob broke off as a dank turf, propelled from Ponsonby's hand, whizzed across from the ditch at the other side of the lane and struck him well and truly in the mouth.

"Yah!" came the voice of Ponsonby, raised in defiant tones. "Keep away, you Greyfriars rotters, or you'll catch it hot!"

Whiz!

A perfect hurricane of turfs sailed through the air, and the Greyfriars fellows had to seek shelter behind the hedge.

"Oh, crumbs!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Don't give in, you fellows! Two can play at that game, and we'll pull a few turfs. Buck up!"

"What ho!"

The Removites set to work with a will, pulling turfs from beneath the hedge, and as Ponsonby & Co. deluged them they returned the fire.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Gives the Game Away!

WHIZ! Flop! Thud!

The air was soon full of whirling missiles, and in the battle of turfs Ponsonby & Co. came off second best.

The aim of Harry Wharton & Co. was deadly and true, and Ponsonby & Co., uttering yells of anguish, were forced from their vantage point by the ditch, and they retreated in disorder behind the hedge at the side of the lane.

"Hurrah! Keep it up, lads!" roared Bob Cherry lustily, aiming a turf at Vavasour, which caught that youth in the back of the neck, and caused him to howl dismally. "Give 'em beans! Greyfriars for ever!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby & Co., ducking their heads to avoid as much as possible the hurricane of turfs that whirled upon them, dashed down the lane. A fusillade of turfs followed them.

Harry Wharton & Co. were still hurling turfs when Ponsonby spotted Gerald Loder striding up the lane, his brow as black as thunder.

"Here's Loder, one of their prefects!" gasped Ponsonby. "Yow-ow! We'll get our own back! Get behind that bush and pelt Loder with those turfs!"

He'll think Wharton & Co. are chucking them, and they'll get into no end of a row!"

"Oh, good!" breathed his followers.

The air was still full of whirling turfs, for Harry Wharton & Co. were warming to their work. Ponsonby and his three companions sought shelter behind a bush, picked up some turfs which had fallen there, and sent them whirling at Loder, who was striding up the lane in search of the missing Removites.

Whiz! Thud!

"Yarooooogh!" roared Loder, as a murky turf struck him in the eye. "Oh crumbs! Wh-what the— Yooooop!"

Another turf, proceeding from somewhere behind the hedge, hit Loder in the mouth, and caused him to stagger back, gasping.

"Gerrrugh! Yooooogh!" moaned Loder, struggling to his feet and mopping mould out of his mouth and eyes and ears. "I'm being pelted, and— Oh, the young sweeps!"

For Loder at that moment caught sight of Harry Wharton & Co. hurling turfs.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came the voice of Bob Cherry. "Keep it up, boys! One for his nob! Ha, ha, ha!"

And Ponsonby, hiding behind the hedge, sent a turf at Loder, which struck him behind the ear and made him bellow like a bull.

Loder strode down the lane, gouging dirt out of his ear.

"Wharton!" he howled, coming full upon the chums of the Remove. "You little hounds! I'll murder you for this!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Nugent. "Half-time, chaps! It's Loder!"

Loder's face, where dirt did not conceal it, was suffused with fury.

"You young scoundrels!" he hissed. "You dare pelt me with turfs—me, a prefect! I—I—"

"We weren't pelting you, Loder!" said Harry Wharton calmly. "We were chucking in the opposite direction, at some Highcliffe fellows."

"Don't tell lies!" panted Loder. "You deliberately pelted me! You'll pay for this, you rascals, when you get back to Greyfriars! Who locked me in the attic?"

"Eh?"

"Somebody locked me in the attic!" howled Loder furiously. "I know it was one of your set, Wharton! You locked me up and broke detention—"

"We didn't break detention!" exclaimed Harry Wharton hotly. "Mr. Quelch gave us permission to go!"

"Why you—you young liar!" panted Loder, convulsed with fury. "Mr. Quelch did no such thing! He's been in the library all the afternoon, and was astounded when he came down and found the Form-room empty! I—I was locked up in the attic all the time, and—and—and—"

Loder choked. In his excess of anger he could find no words with which to give utterance to his feelings.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged wondering glances.

Suddenly a heavy, hasty step sounded on the lane, and, looking round, they beheld Mr. Quelch striding towards them, fury and rage glinting from his eyes.

"Ah," said Loder, gritting his teeth, "now you'll catch it, you young rascals! Mr. Quelch didn't give you permission to leave the Form-room, and you know it!"

Billy Bunter blinked apprehensively at the Remove-master as he approached.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes swept the whole assembly, and then became focussed on Billy Bunter.

"Bunter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, fixing that nervous youth with his steely eyes. "Bunter, you—"

"It wasn't me, sir!" wailed Bunter, going pale. "Please, sir, it wasn't my fault!"

Mr. Quelch looked amazedly at the fat Removite.

Bunter, overwhelmed with nervous apprehensions, and his guilty conscience pricking him, mistook Mr. Quelch's severe looks. He quite forgot that he was in a condition warranted to make any human being stare, and imagined that Mr. Quelch had found him out, and was now about to seek vengeance.

"It was all Skinner's idea, sir!" wailed Bunter, his fat knees knocking together with fright. "I didn't ventriloquise! It wasn't me!"

"Bunter," rapped Mr. Quelch in a thunderous voice, "what are you talking about?"

"Yow-ow-ow!" wailed the Owl of the Remove, visions of fearful wrath to come floating before his inward eye. "Please, sir, it wasn't my idea! It was Skinner's, honour bright! He told me to lock Loder in the attic—"

"What!" shouted Loder, striding forward.

"Yow! Keepimoff!" wailed Bunter, scuttling back and grasping Harry Wharton's arm. "It wasn't my fault! Skinner suggested it! He planned it all! And I didn't ventriloquise! Wharton imagined it!"

Harry Wharton gave a start. He began to realise now what it all meant.

As for the others, they gazed open-mouthed at Bunter. They thought he must be rambling. Mr. Quelch strode forward, took Billy Bunter by the scruff of his neck, and shook him.

"Bunter! You miserable youth!" he exclaimed. "What is this you are telling me? You locked Loder in the attic—"

"Yow-ow!" howled the terror-stricken Bunter, blinking fearfully at the master through his spectacles. "Skinner suggested it! He made me do it—"

"Skinner made you do it!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "What else did he make you do, Bunter?"

"Nothing, sir!" howled Bunter, contradicting himself. "I've done nothing! It was all Wharton's fault! He—he said—"

"Excuse me, sir," said Harry Wharton quietly, stepping forward. "Did you tell me this afternoon that the Remove was excused detention?"

"Certainly not, Wharton! I did no such thing!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "How was it that you came to receive such an intimation?"

"I—I don't know, sir," said Harry. "Bunter gave me a message that you wanted me in your study, and when I got there, the door was locked, but you—you told me that the Remove was excused detention."

"I certainly do not remember doing so, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch tartly. "Bunter, you miserable boy, can it be possible that you are at the bottom of this? I heard you mention ventriloquism just now, and I recollect that you are imbued with—er—the propensity for ventriloquism. Did you—"

"Yow-ow! Skinner put me up to it, sir!" wailed Bunter, going pale. "He wanted to get off for the afternoon, and shift the blame on Wharton. He asked me to work the trick, and said I'd never be found out—"

"The young rotter locked me in the attic!" hissed Loder, clenching his fists. "He worked the whole trick himself—"

"I didn't!" wailed Billy Bunter.

"Silence, Bunter!" rapped Mr.

Quelch. "I see the whole miserable plot now. Skinner inveigled you into his scheme to evade detention this afternoon, and you, foolish and unscrupulous youth—collaborated with him. Bunter, I shall punish you most severely when we reach Greyfriars. Loder, you will kindly continue your search, and find Skinner!"

Loder looked malevolently at Harry Wharton & Co.

"I believe these young rotters put Bunter up to it, sir!" he snarled. "They've all escaped detention—"

"It's not our fault, sir!" spoke up Wharton, flushing. "We left the Form-room fully believing that we did so with your permission. We had no idea—"

"I do not blame you, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch tartly. "Loder, I am not at all satisfied with the manner in which you have managed the Remove to-day. I am more than sorry that I placed you in charge of my Form this morning, for, had I not done so, this unfortunate affair would not have taken place. You appear to bear animosity towards certain members of the Form which I do not at all agree with. It is a wrong spirit, Loder, and not worthy of a prefect!"

Loder ground his teeth and fairly squirmed.

"Please find Skinner, and bring him in!" said Mr. Quelch. "You other boys will follow me to Greyfriars. Bunter, cease that snivelling!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" moaned Bunter. "It wasn't my idea, sir! I pointed out to Skinner how risky it was, and how wicked it was to do such a thing—"

"Silence, miserable boy!" rapped Mr. Quelch. "Follow me to Greyfriars!"

Harry Wharton & Co. took their bikes, and followed the Remove-master to the school.

Arriving at Greyfriars, Mr. Quelch ordered Bunter to follow him at once to his study.

Billy Bunter went, and the ten minutes which followed were extremely painful ones for him.

When he emerged, he was bent almost double, and his groans and gasps of pain were truly heartrending to listen to.

And ten minutes later Harold Skinner was marched upstairs by Loder.

Skinner's face was pale and haggard, and Loder had to push him along.

Inside Mr. Quelch's study the cad of the Remove received the severest caning he had had for weeks, and when he came out of that dread apartment, he was as limp as a rag, and could hardly crawl away.

The Removites discussed the matter animatedly. They chuckled over the affair, and voted it the best joke of the term, inasmuch as they had not been detained, after all, and Gerald Loder, their old and bitter enemy, had fallen from his high estate with a bump.

That evening sounds of turmoil and strife proceeded from the interior of Study No. 7 in the Remove passage. Upon inquiry being made, it was discovered that Harold Skinner was seeking vengeance upon Billy Bunter. Harry Wharton & Co. humanely rescued Bunter from the grasp of his adversary, and bumped Skinner well and truly.

Gerald Loder's soul was black with fury against the heroes of the Remove, but he was powerless to seek the vengeance that he craved.

His influence with Mr. Quelch was gone, and, in the days that followed, he ground his teeth with bitter fury whenever he thought of it.

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled: "THE SCHOLARSHIP COMPANY!" Order your copy EARLY.)

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INTERESTING EXPERIMENTS.

AMUSING TRICKS WITH SIMPLE APPARATUS.



Here is a very simple way of obtaining coal-gas.

Procure an ordinary long clay tobacco-pipe, the bowl of which should be filled with very small pieces of coal. Carefully cover the top with soft clay, and put the bowl in the fire, with the long stem protruding through the bars. Now watch this end of the pipe very closely, and see what happens.

Very soon you will notice a light-coloured smoke issuing from the mouth-piece, but after a time this smoke disappears. But what happens if you hold a lighted match to the mouthpiece of the pipe? Immediately a bright yellow flame appears (Fig. 1).

The gas now burning is the same gas as is burnt in your house, although this latter, of course, is much purer.

If you now take the pipe from the fire, allow it to cool, and then break it, you will be surprised to find that its contents have changed in appearance, for in place of the coal, you will see what looks like

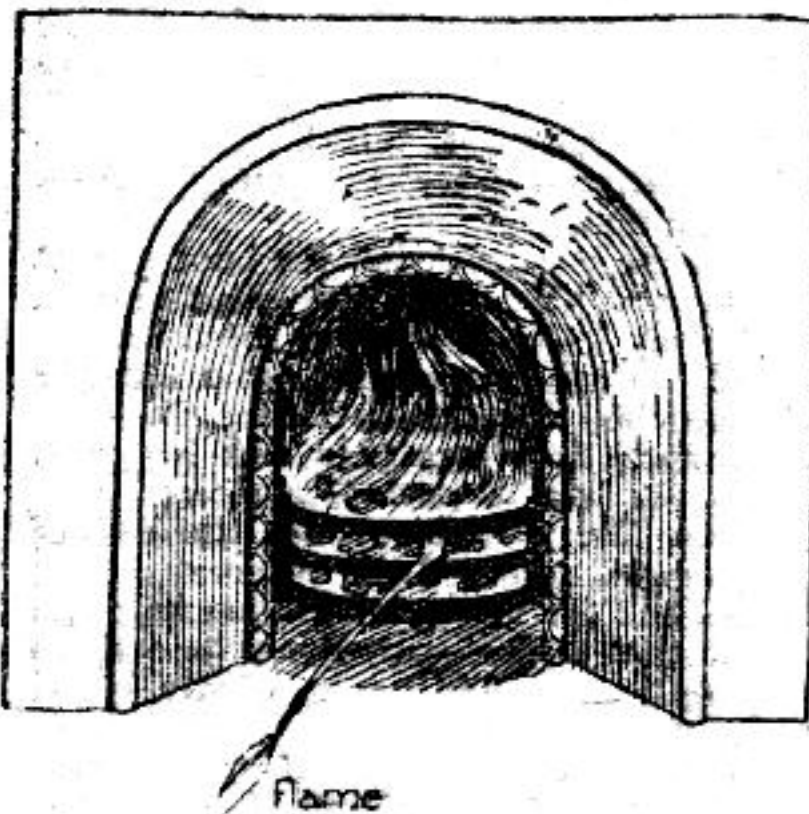


Fig. 1.—Simple Gas-making.

a cinder. This is the coke. Thus you have manufactured gas from coal, at the same time producing coke.

EXPERIMENTS WITH CARBONIC ACID GAS.

In a previous chapter, when describing how to make a miniature cannon, it was explained that the "gunpowder" with which the "shell" was fired is in reality carbonic acid gas.

It may not be amiss to show how to generate it, in order that you may discover for yourselves some of its properties.

There are several ways of obtaining carbonic acid gas, but most of these are of a complicated nature. The following, however, is an extremely simple method:

Take a 6oz. or 8oz. flask, and fit it with a cork with a hole, in which may be fitted a piece of glass tubing.

This tubing should be bent twice at

right angles, as shown in Fig. 2, and the longer end should be allowed to dip into a large glass.

Into the flask pour a little lemonade, soda-water, or ginger-beer, and after replacing the cork and tube, heat the flask by means of a gas-burner or spirit-lamp.

You will notice that bubbles of gas

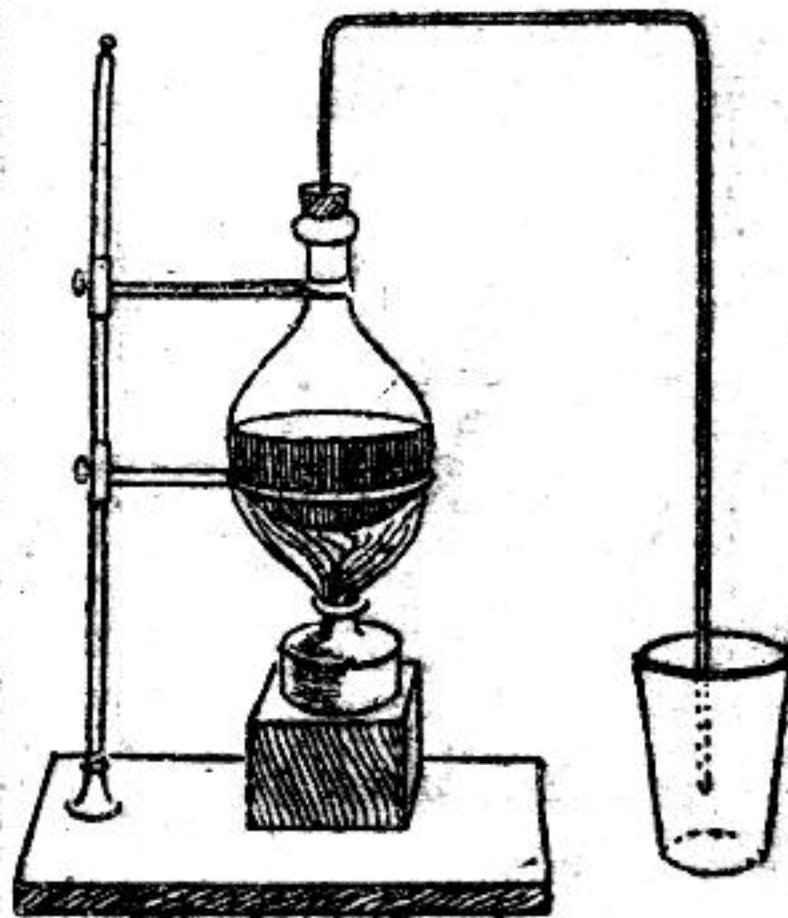


Fig. 2.—A Carbonic Acid Gas Experiment.

are given off, and, as this gas is considerably heavier than air, it will, after being forced up the tube, displace the air in the glass and gradually fill it. To test whether the glass is full, hold a match in the top. If the match is extinguished, the glass, which is full, may be removed. In this way several glasses can be filled, care being taken to cover each with a

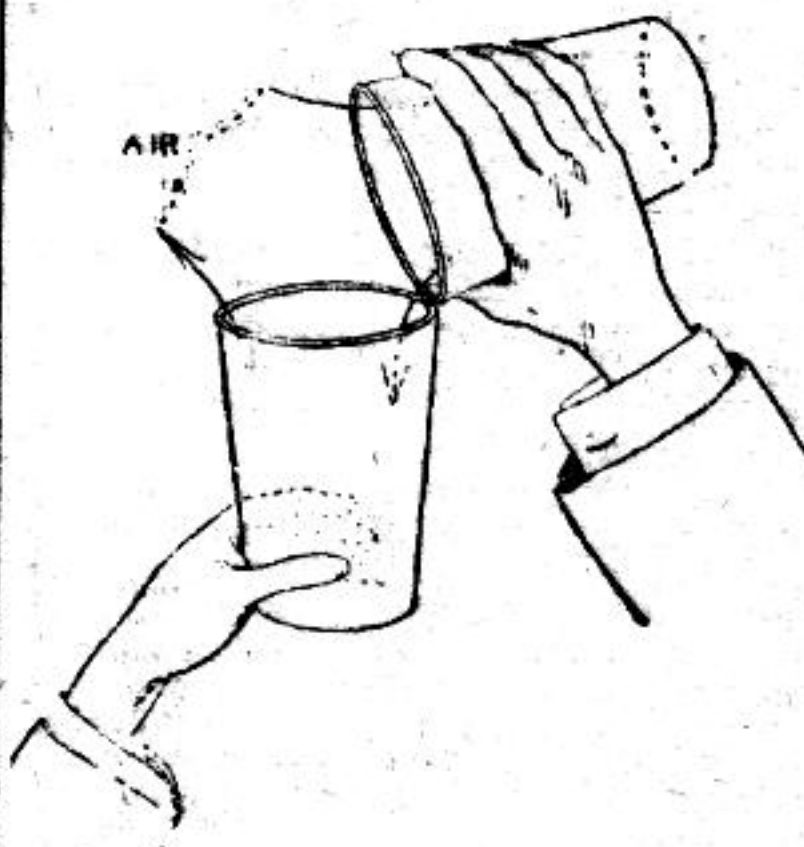


Fig. 3.—Pouring Carbon Dioxide from One Glass to Another.

glass plate or cardboard disc to prevent diffusion.

From this experiment you will have discovered the three main properties of this gas—commonly known as carbon dioxide—that it is colourless, is con-

siderably heavier than air, and will not support combustion. Its high density affords another interesting experiment, which consists of pouring the gas from one glass to another (Fig. 3).

Take two glasses, one full of air, and the other containing the carbonic acid gas, and into each plunge a lighted match. The match, of course, will burn in the glass containing air, whilst it will be immediately extinguished when it comes in contact with the carbon dioxide. You have thus clearly shown which glass contains air and which contains gas. Now take the glass containing the gas and pour its contents into the other glass in exactly the same way as you would pour in water. Again test with a lighted match, and you will find that the gas has passed from one glass to another, thus proving that it is much heavier than air.

Next take two glasses, one containing air and the other carbonic acid gas, and, by means of a clay pipe, blow a soap-bubble into each, carefully watching the different manners in which they behave. That dropped into the glass containing air will sink to the bottom, where, coming in contact with the glass, it will burst. The other bubble, however, as soon as it reaches the gas in the glass, rebounds, owing to the high density of the carbon dioxide; but after a time, when it has settled down, it will float motionless on the surface (Fig. 4).

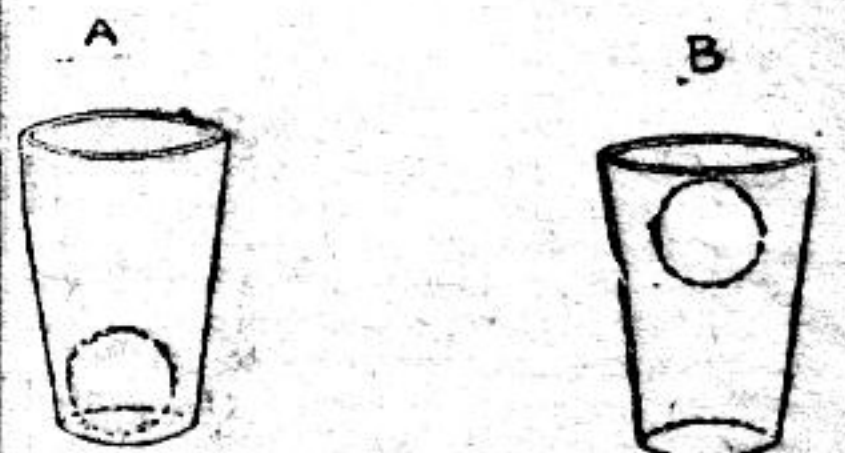
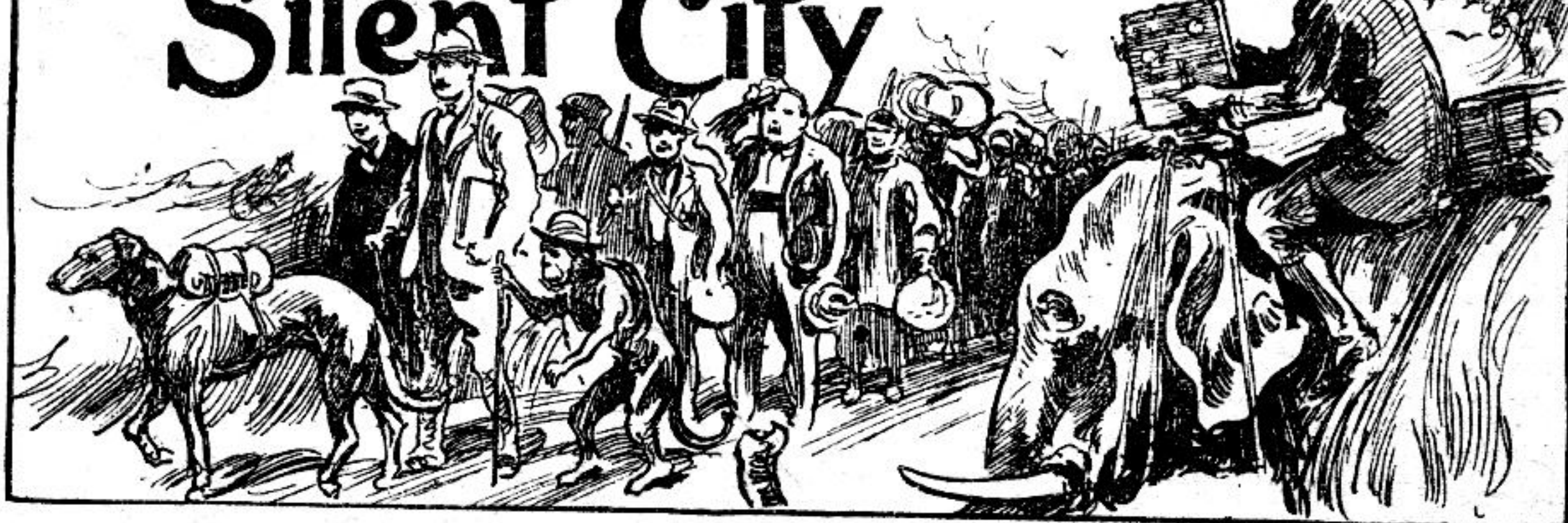


Fig. 4.—Soap-bubbles in A (air) and B (carbon dioxide).

Before you finish experimenting you should know how to detect the presence of carbon dioxide. Take a little lime-water—a pennyworth of which may be obtained at any chemist's—and pour it into a glass containing carbon dioxide. Shake the glass, and carefully observe the change which takes place. The lime-water, which was previously colourless, has assumed a certain milkiness, and if allowed to stand, the white powder causing this milkiness will settle at the bottom of the glass. This powder proves to be calcium carbonate, or chalk, which is always formed when lime-water comes in contact with carbon dioxide, so that you have here a means of detecting the presence of carbon dioxide. Breathe into a little lime-water, and you will learn from the milky appearance it at once assumes, that the air we exhale contains a certain quantity of this interesting gas.

The Secret of the Silent City



Our Grand New Adventure Serial. By DAGNEY HAYWARD.

Boris' Timely Aid.

"THERE is no good lying here," said Mr. Sherwell. "Something has got to be done, and quickly, too. Now then, all of you, jump to your feet and start looking about. We must try and find some other way of getting out of this dreadful place."

It was with some difficulty that they aroused themselves, for the thick fumes of the lava made them drowsy, like the sleepiness of extreme cold. To succumb would mean certain death.

The whole party staggered to their feet, and rather aimlessly began to wander about their death-trap. Larry pushed on a little farther than the others. Almost unconsciously, for he was barely in possession of his senses, he stumbled along the wall, holding to it with one hand for support.

Suddenly, as his hand passed along the uneven surface, something made him stop. In an instant he was fully aroused.

"Come here, Mr. Sherwell!" he called. "I think I have found something!"

With a couple of strides the producer was at his side. At Larry's request he, too, passed his hand over the wall.

"You are right, Larry," he said, after a moment. "There is a slight current of fresh air coming through. We must take turns at getting a breath of air. I don't know where it comes from, but it is fresh." And he stooped down and took in a large draught of the life-giving element.

"Wonga first!" cried Dick. "Give the poor little beggar a chance!"

And he hurried up to the hole with the monkey in his arms. He was only just in time. In a few minutes Wonga would have suffocated, for, like all monkeys, he had delicate lungs, and the stifling air of the lava-stream was certain death to him.

Dick held him to the crack in the wall through which the air was coming, and after a few breaths Wonga lifted his head and showed that he felt better.

One by one the others filled their lungs with air, the whole party clustering round the tiny crack which meant life and hope for them.

In low whispers, to save their breath as much as possible, a council of war was held.

"If we are careful we can hold out here for some few hours," said Mr. Sher-

well. "If only we could let Dr. Harland know where we are, he would come and get us out of this awful place. Have you any suggestions, Rackett?"

"No," said the operator. "We are fairly up a tree!"

"I believe Wonga could help us if he were not so ill," said Dick. "He is such a cute little chap, I know he could find some solution to the difficulty. Couldn't you, Wonga?"

But Wonga was too sick to take any notice.

All the same, it was Wonga who put them on the track of their next discovery. In one of his struggles for breath he slipped from Dick's arms and fell to the ground. Instantly Dick stooped to pick him up, and in doing so his hand struck on something which gave a metallic clink.

"What is that?" asked Mike.

"It is a ring!" cried Dick. "It is a ring in the wall, Mr. Sherwell. Look!" And he flashed his torch on the spot. "It is a small iron ring fastened into a great stone!"

READ THIS FIRST.

Mr. Sherwell, producer of the Southern Film Company, accompanied by his staff, set out in search of the Silent City, which is situated in the wilds of South America.

The staff includes Tom Rackett, the operator; Tubby Bouncer, a comedian; Dick Grainger, Mike Rafferty, and Larry, three boy chums; two servants, Tung Wu, a Chinaman, and Quambo, a nigger; also three animals, Augustus, an elephant, Wonga, a chimpanzee, and Boris, a boarhound.

Mr. Sherwell's chart is incomplete, and he has only a vague idea as to the position of the Silent City.

Tom Rackett obtains many wonderful and interesting films en route. Later it is discovered through Wonga, the chimpanzee, that a rival film company is making for the Silent City.

Later Dr. Harland, an Englishman, who has been masquerading among a savage tribe as a "magic-man," joins the party.

Later they arrive at a walled town occupied by dwarfs, and Tom Rackett secures a film of a chart tattooed on the back of one of them. The party is trapped in a cavern, and is in danger of suffocation from fumes of a stream of molten lava which runs through the place.

(Now read on.)

"It is a chance!" said Mr. Sherwell excitedly. "Come on, all of you, give a hand, and let us pull as hard as we can!"

As many of them as could do so put their hands on the ring, and were about to give a mighty tug, when Mike held up his hand for silence.

"Hist!" he said. "Sure and I thought I heard a noise the other side. If we make a quiet noise, bedad, we may hear it again!"

Dead silence fell on the party, although the vile fumes made them long to cough.

Sure enough, from the other side of the stone they heard a sound. It was a whine, followed by a short, sharp bark which made Tung Wu dance with joy.

"Bollis!" he cried. "Good doggee, he come find us! That is Bollis' voice!"

"I believe the Chink is right," said Tom Rackett. "Boris! Boris!" he called loudly through the air-hole. "Good dog, Boris!"

This time it was unmistakable. With short, sharp barks Boris answered his imprisoned friends, and they heard him scratching frantically as though to get at them. For their part, they tugged at the ring in the wall no less frantically, though shortness of breath robbed them of much of their strength.

Dick and Tom Rackett were throwing all their might into the job, whilst the others were taking a breather at the hole, when suddenly the stone gave way. The next moment Boris was through the gap and nearly knocking them down in his excitement.

"Come along!" cried Mr. Sherwell. "We must not waste another moment in this death-trap. Get through that opening, you boys, and we will follow on!"

What a relief it was to taste pure air once again! The air of the passage was bad enough, but it was invigorating compared with the awful atmosphere of the place they had just left. The three boys and Tung Wu went first, Mr. Sherwell and Tom brought up the rear. Dick carried Wonga, who lifted up his head as soon as the cooler air of the passage entered his lungs.

"I wonder where this will bring us out?" said Dick. "It must lead out into the open, or Boris would not have been able to find us."

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"Yes; good old Boris!" said Mr. Sherwell, patting the faithful hound's back. "You have saved our lives this time, old chap! We owe our lives to you, Boris!"

Boris fawned round his legs, and seemed too delighted to do anything but yap contentedly.

For a few yards they made their way along the passage without any difficulty. Then suddenly Dick stumbled against something, and fell to the ground.

Mr. Sherwell switched on his torch, and flashed it upon Dick. As he did so he started back in surprise.

"Take care!" he cried. "There is a body lying there. It is a native!"

"Yes," said Tom Rackett, who had looked at it more closely. "It is a native, right enough, and Boris has killed him. See, here are the marks of his teeth!"

They turned the body over, and found the marks of Boris' fangs in the man's neck. It was evident that he had been on guard in the passage, and had been attacked by Boris and killed before he could utter a sound. They shuddered, though it was the corpse of an enemy, as they thought of the horror of meeting death in that dreadful place.

Pushing the body to one side, for there was no question of burying it, as there was no time to be lost in getting away as quickly as they could, the whole party hurried on down the passage. After about ten yards, however, the smell of sulphur grew stronger, and by the light of their torches they saw that the lava-stream had reappeared, and was running by the side of their path.

"I have an idea," said Mr. Sherwell, halting suddenly. "We don't want them to find that native guard of theirs lying dead in the passage. Let us fetch the body and throw it into this lava-river. It will be a decent burial for it, and may save us more trouble from the pigmies."

He would not allow any of the boys to take part in this gruesome job, but together with Tom Rackett and Tung Wu fetched the corpse and placed it in the stream of flowing lava.

"Now let us go on," said Dick, when the men returned from their task.

"Wonga still feels ill, and I am not overfond of the stifling smell myself. Shall I lead the way?"

"Ay, lead on!" said Mr. Sherwell. "Be careful how you go, however. We are uncomfortably near this river of lava, and a false step may mean disaster."

Flashing his torch before him, Dick led the way along the path, which grew narrower with every step. The evil-smelling stream rolled slowly and steadily on by their side, and were it not that a breath of fresh air were blowing up the passage they would all soon have been overcome with the sulphurous vapour.

Presently the path stopped completely. Dick flashed his torch across the lava and saw that the path continued on the other side, but to reach it they would have to cross the six feet or so of the deathly river. Could they do it?

"We shall have to," said Mr. Sherwell, when the question was put to him. "We have simply got to get across. There is no going back now, and this is our only chance. Can you jump it, Larry?"

"I think so," was the answer.

As if to set a good example, Boris took a leap and landed safely on the other side, where he stood waiting for them with his tongue hanging from his mouth.

"Me clever man!" said Tung Wu. "Way back in China me jumpee vellee big holes. Me takee Wonga and jumpee now!"



Mr. Sherwell switched on his torch, and flashed it upon Dick. As he did so he started back in surprise. "Take care!" he cried. "There is a body lying there. It is a native!" (See this page.)

"Yes, give him Wonga," said Tom Rackett. "The Chink can carry him over better than you can, Dick."

Clasping the chimpanzee tightly in his arms, Tung Wu took a flying leap and landed easily by the side of Boris. Larry came next, and then Mike, with a terrific shout of "Hurroo!" made a wild spring. But just as he took off from the bank a stone slipped from beneath his feet, he stumbled slightly and barely touched the other bank before he slipped backwards. In another moment he would have been in the stream of flowing lava if Tung Wu had not sprung forward and snatched him back from an awful death.

"By gum, that was a narrow shave!" gasped Larry. "You were nearly in that time, Mike!"

"Yes, begorra!" said the Irishman. "Tung Wu, me bhoys, you have saved my life. Sure, and I don't think my heart will ever start going again! If I was not alive I should be dead, sure!"

"Are you sure you are alive now, Mike?" asked Dick, with a laugh, as he joined them.

"No, bejabbers, it is more dead than alive I am feeling at this moment!"

By this time Tom and Mr. Sherwell had successfully negotiated the stream of lava, and the whole party hastened along the path, which was steadily growing broader, whilst the air was becoming purer with every step they took.

"We ought to be out in the open soon," said Mr. Sherwell. "Thank goodness we have left those terrible sulphur vapours behind. How is Wonga now?"

Wonga was feeling better. As he heard his name he climbed out of Tung Wu's arms and slid to the ground. Running up to Mr. Sherwell, he slipped his arm through that of the producer, and walked along with him quite contentedly.

A sudden turn in the path brought them all to a standstill. Before them was the gleam of daylight for which they had been longing ever since that dreadful moment when the rock had closed behind them. But against this patch of light were the dark figures of a couple of dwarfs, evidently guards, who stood there motionless, spear in hand.

"Have they seen us?" whispered Dick.

"They have probably heard us," was the answer. "We will try and steal close to them. Maybe we shall be able to overpower them before they can give an alarm."

It was a tricky piece of work, to steal up in the darkness, knowing that a single false step, a single crunch of a loose stone, would put them in the hands of these spiteful little men. They were within about ten yards of them when Boris suddenly sprang forward, and with that terrible strength of his, caught one of the dwarfs, buried his fangs in the man's throat, and brought him to the ground before he could utter a cry.

At the same instant, Larry and Dick raised their revolvers, and shooting together, emptied their revolvers at the remaining dwarf who stood at the door.

It had all been the work of a few seconds. The silence of the passage had suddenly echoed with the crash of the pistols, and then silence once more fell upon the scene.

"Quick, and fetch the bodies in," said Tom. "If these dwarfs see their dead men lying there they will know that we are at hand."

"What are we to do now?" asked Larry, when once again they had reached the safety of the passage. "While I was helping Dick with that dead man I had a look around. We are in the city still."

"There is nothing to do but wait until

night," said Mr. Sherwell. "We will hide here until darkness falls, and then we can steal out and try to find Dr. Harland."

"I should think he will be looking for us," said Dick.

"Yes, I expect he is in a rare stew!"

"Talking about a stew," said Mike, "I have not got over the stew I nearly made myself. Begorra, Tung Wu, I'll leave you all my fortune in my will!"

"Me rather have it now," smiled the Chinaman. "Me vellee poor man. Me no want to wait till you die."

Passing the time in low, whispered conversation, they slowly wiled away the day, until presently, looking at the opening at the end of the passage, they saw that the daylight had faded, and that the patch of sky was covered with twinkling stars.

"Thank goodness!" sighed Mr. Sherwell, with relief in his tone that spoke volumes. "Now that night has fallen we shall be able to make for Harland's camp with less misgivings. We have spent longer in this awful prison than I thought. Now let us push on, boys! Boris can go ahead, for he'll scent danger better than we can. I'll follow Boris with Rackett, and you boys and Tung Wu can bring up the rear."

So saying, Mr. Sherwell sent Boris forward. The dog instantly obeyed, and, with his nose to the ground, left the cavern, sniffing every inch of his way. The rest followed very cautiously in single file.

It was a blessed relief to be out in the open again after the choking atmosphere of their prison. Under the influence of the fresh air Wonga very soon completely recovered, and hung on to Dick's arm as the boy walked along.

The night was rather cloudy, but every now and again the moon shone fitfully through the clouds, which was exactly what the party wanted.

Mr. Sherwell, ahead with Rackett, was thankful when he recognised certain buildings which they passed in the morning when in charge of the native guard. The boys also saw that they were covering familiar ground, and knew that, unless they were held up by natives, they would discover Harland's camp.

As the leader and the operator followed Boris, who was now only a few yards ahead, by the light of the uncertain moon they suddenly saw the dog leap into the air, and, with a low, savage growl, the faithful hound set upon a dim form standing in shadow.

Mr. Sherwell and Rackett stood still. The boys and Tung Wu had both heard and seen the incident, and stopped instantly. They also saw a small, dwarfish figure hurled to the ground, with Boris at his throat. Then the dog relaxed his deadly grip, and for a moment stood over and sniffed at his enemy. At the same instant a spear, its poisoned head gleaming in the moonlight as it flashed through the air, hurtled past Mike and Larry as they crouched near deep gloom. For a moment the moon shone brilliantly, and in that second Larry and Mike fired simultaneously at a stunted figure, whose arm was still poised after throwing his missile.

The quick, sharp report rang out with startling clearness in the dead stillness of the night, and went echoing among the great rock temples and buildings. The figure of the dwarf fell prone to the ground.

With hearts beating quickly with excitement and dread, all waited a few seconds, crouching in the friendly shadows.

With revolvers at full cock, they stood breathlessly to see whether any fresh

attack might be made. But nothing occurred.

Just as Mr. Sherwell was about to give a signal for all to advance, a low murmur was heard a long way behind.

"Hark!" whispered Larry. "What's that?"

The murmur was growing to a hoarse roar, the roar of baffled hate and revenge of the savage mind.

"Dwarfee he velly soon see us no longer in cavee!" whispered the Chinaman to Dick. "And he comee plenty quick after us. We better plenty runnee."

"Rush for it, boys! Follow me and Boris!" came Mr. Sherwell's order. "We must make a dash for the camp as hard as we can pelt!"

There was not an instant to lose, and everyone knew it.

Dick snatched up Wonga in his arms without a moment's hesitation.

It was a race for life. Freedom and friends in front of them, but death and perhaps torture behind them if they fell into the hands of the pitiless savages.

Never did the fugitives bless the moon, uncertain as it was, as they did on the night of that frightful pursuit.

Stumbling over one another, tripping up over tree-roots and rocks, they never paused an instant in their dash for freedom.

The hoarse murmur of hate and lust for blood grew more and more distinct as the dwarfs followed hot in their wake.

It seemed to the fugitives that long ago they had passed the spot where Harland had stood to bid them farewell. Surely they could not now be far away from Dr. Harland's camp.

"Come, lads!" cried Mr. Sherwell encouragingly, seeing that Mike and Larry were getting spent. "Keep your peckers up! Just one more little effort and we shall be there. See!" he shouted,

in his excitement. "A light—a light! It's the camp fire, boys! Hurrah!"

And he pointed to where a faint glow among the trees, some few hundred yards away, made the most welcome sight the boys had ever seen.

Mike and Larry were, indeed, exhausted. By ill-luck Larry had fallen and stumbled more than anyone, and had received some nasty cuts and bruises, while Mike had continued to splutter and cough a good deal, owing to the noxious fumes of the cave still causing trouble in his lungs.

The faithful Tung Wu was also nearly at the end of his tether, for, though hardy enough, he was not in training for running, and many a time, owing to his watchful care, he had saved the boys from very nasty falls. Dick was getting breathless, but refused Tung Wu's offer to carry Wonga.

Mr. Sherwell's cheery words and encouragement bucked up everyone for a last final effort. As they ran and stumbled on through the darkness, for the clouds were getting denser and the moon consequently less helpful, they knew the remorseful dwarf savages were slowly but surely gaining upon them.

Suddenly a spear hurtled past them. Then another, and another! One fell in front of the boys and Tung Wu, and missed Tom Rackett by a few inches. And growing closer and closer always were the malignant cries and shouts of their pursuers.

"Stick to it, boys! We shall do it!" gasped Mr. Sherwell. "Only another hundred yards, and we shall be in safety!"

With a desperate effort they all made one last spurt.

At every yard they took the welcome flare of the camp-fire spurred them on. A few more spears came whistling by

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harmlessly. Then, just as Larry thought he could not go another step, Mr. Sherwell gave a shout of joy, and Larry stumbled up against him, and then fell against a stout palisade.

"We're there!" gasped Mr. Sherwell. "At the camp, boys! They've entrenched themselves, so I suppose they expect trouble. The leader then gave a shout. He was immediately answered by Dr. Harland himself, who appeared unexpectedly from an opening in the stockade which had escaped their notice.

"I'm thankful you're back, Sherwell!" said the doctor heartily. "I was very much afraid something had happened to you. Are you all safe? The boys, Rackett, and Tung Wu?"

"Right as rain!" answered the leader. "But we've had to run for our lives! We've been pursued nearly the whole way!"

Very quickly the party entered the camp, and were surprised to see that Dr. Harland had made a small but very strong barricade round the whole of the expedition. Mules, waggons, packages, tents, baggage, men, and animals were all snugly enclosed by a stout pile of cut trees and brambles, which completed a rough circle of about a hundred yards in circumference.

"Why, what is the meaning of all this?" asked Mr. Sherwell, looking round

with approval and wonder at the work Dr. Harland and the men had accomplished.

"To be forewarned is to be forearmed!" replied the doctor. "The behaviour of the natives has been very suspicious. Several of them have been prowling round, showing a very hostile and warlike attitude. A good number of poisoned spears have found their way to our little fort, but no harm's been done. So I got the baggage-men, Tubby Bouncer, and every available man to work, and we built this stockade round the camp. I fear there is going to be trouble, Sherwell. Now tell me all your adventures."

While Mr. Sherwell and Rackett recounted all their doings, Tung Wu and the boys had a rest, and the faithful Chinaman, exhausted though he was, prepared as good and well-cooked a meal as ever the boys had tasted. As they ate, and were shortly joined by Mr. Sherwell and Tom Rackett, the leader told them what had occurred in their absence, and how splendidly Dr. Harland had prepared for a possible attack. Long since, the natives who had been in pursuit had quieted down, and no longer could their howls of execration be heard. Harland was convinced that they were holding a council of war.

"Now, boys," said Mr. Sherwell, when

the meal was over—Rackett had gone to develop his film of the tattooed native, and quiet reigned over the camp—"I think we've all had a most wonderful escape, and I think you'll agree with me that our release in a great measure is owing to Boris."

"Good old Boris!" cried all the boys. "How on earth he traced us at all is a mystery!" said Dick.

"Well," returned Mr. Sherwell, "Dr. Harland says he found him, after we had been taken off, sniffing round the opening from the rock-temple where we made our exit. If you remember, I was standing quite near there when the dwarfs first began to parley with us; and Boris found a small pocket-case of mine, which he brought back to the camp."

"Harland then watched him again leave the camp, and followed him to the temple entrance again. Nothing would induce Boris to leave this spot, so Harland left him alone. We can only assume that Boris somehow or other scented us, for he must have slain the guard and gone up the passage which led to the chink in the wall behind which we were imprisoned. The rest you know."

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