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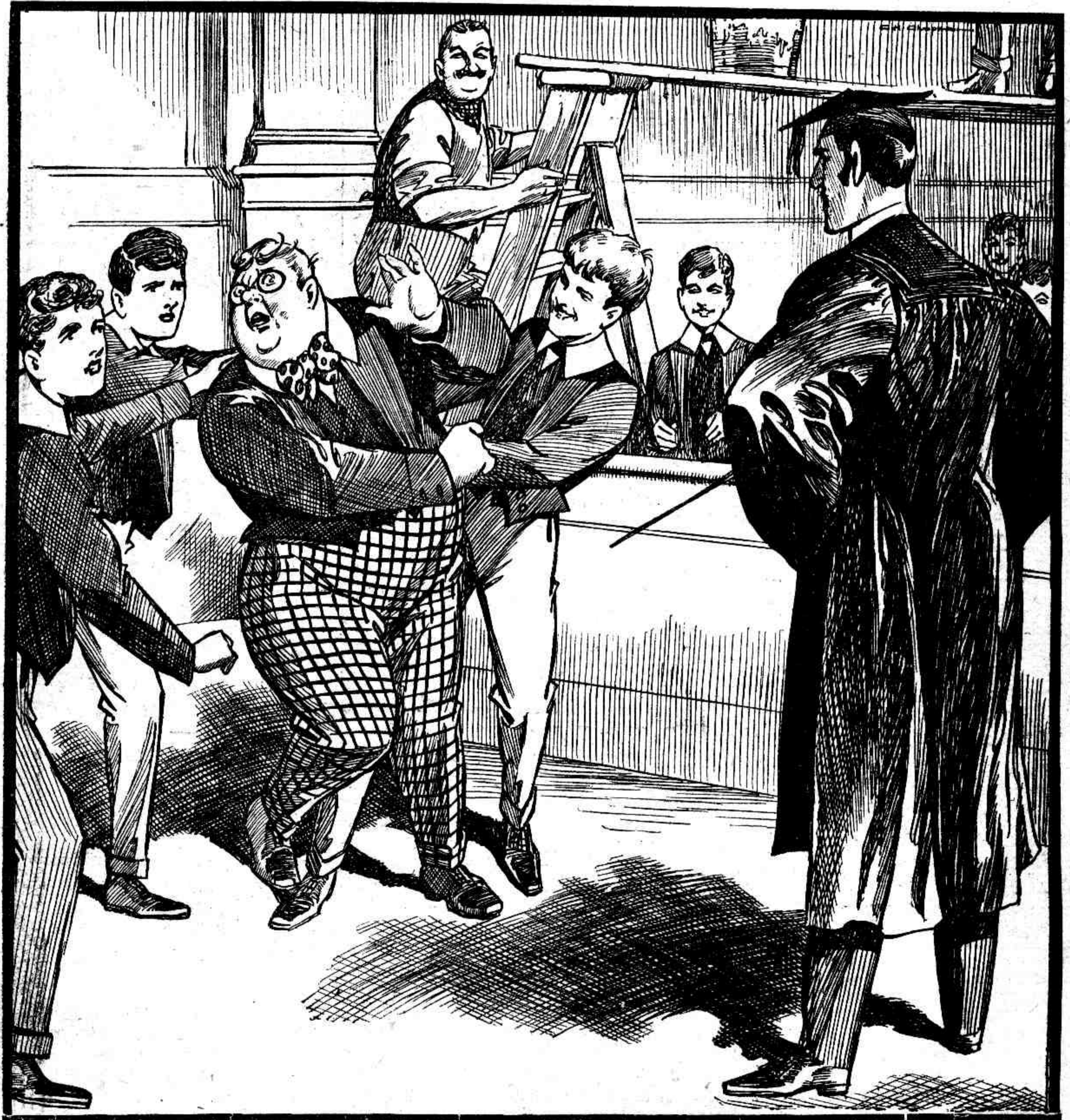
The
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No. 641. Vol. XVII.

May 22nd, 1920.



THE INVASION OF GREYFRIARS!



BRINGING BUNTER TO BOOK!

(An Amusing Scene in the Splendid Long Complete School Tale in this number.)



For Next Monday :

"CHUMS AWHEEL!"

By Frank Richards.

This is the title of the story which will appear in next week's issue of your favourite school-story paper. As the title suggests, the story is full of fun and adventure. Harry Wharton & Co. take full advantage of the surprise holiday offered to them by the Head, and they set off on their cycles. Billy Bunter gets ahead of them in more senses than one, and you will thoroughly enjoy reading

"CHUMS AWHEEL!"

To make certain of your copy, you should place an advance order with your newsagent. This saves disappointment!

A COMPANION PAPERS' CLUB.

It has been suggested to me that we should have one central club for the Companion Papers. The idea has been under consideration for a long time. I wonder what my chums think about it?

We are always being told these are difficult times. They are that; but the fact should not stand in the way of the right sort of development. I should like to see every supporter of the Companion Papers a member of such a club as is proposed. He would be proud to wear a small badge with a portrait in miniature of Harry Wharton or Tom Merry.

There are thousands of my friends who model their conduct on one or the other, and no bad thing either. I have my eye, too, on further competitions which will add to the interest of the papers.

No need to say this cannot be done. There is always more to do. The ideas of to-day are good; but the ideas of to-morrow should be, and will be, better if the right course is taken. It is very few folks who can possibly afford to rest on their oars. There must be fresh effort all the time, more putting your beef into things. We can all benefit by the mistakes of the past and then do better. If you don't bring something fresh and new in the way of ideas to the work of the new day, you are as sure to go down as Sir Isaac Newton's apple.

You will notice here that I have got clear away from the Companion Papers, for they never go down; but the weeklies have inspired so much enthusiasm in the past, and are doing the same to-day, carrying on with a work which is of the first importance, that I want to increase their scope when and where possible.

EMIGRATION.

A correspondent writes to say he is thinking of emigrating to Australia, and he wants particulars as to fares, etc. He

had better apply for this information to the Emigrants' Information Office, 34, Broadway, Westminster, London, S.W.1. There is no flat rate for the journey. My chum will see particulars of fares, etc., in the advertisements of the different shipping companies. He says he is not very big—4ft. 10in.—but height is not everything. It is really quite unimportant.

WINGATE.

A. D. (Kent) complains because we do not hear enough of Wingate. My correspondent asks for a yarn in which Wingate gets into trouble and is nearly expelled. Suggestion is noted. Also, can there be a series of plates of the characters? My chum also wants "Penny Popular" No. 63. It is long out of print; but maybe some other reader could oblige.

A LETTER FROM WEXFORD.

A wonderful letter, signed by fifteen readers, comes to me from this important Irish centre, and from it I learn that the "Gem" is a much better paper than the MAGNET, and that Harry Wharton is consumed with snobbish pride. My chums seem to have got snobbishness on the brain. They see it when it is not there at all. As a solid fact, there is not any of this unpleasant quality in the character of Wharton. I hope this company of supporters in Wexford will write to me again after they have shaken up their ideas a bit. Their letter was most interesting.

MEDALS FOR SCOUTS.

B. S. A. Pountney, 55, Abery Road, Grove Road, Bow, E 3, wants to hear from Scouts on the subject of substituting medals for War Service Badges. Will Scouts who share this correspondent's opinion on the matter in question drop a line to the address given?

THE WELLS TEMPERAMENT.

J. C. Llewellyn, of Sheffield Paul, near Penzance, sends me a first-rate letter about boxing. "The first time," says my chum, "that I took an interest in boxing was when Carpentier defeated Bombardier Wells in 73 secs. in London. Somehow, I felt sorry for poor old Billy, and he has been my Ring hero ever since. In my opinion he has a good chance now of winning the championship. It is things like what is called the Wells temperament, that touch of the true sportsman in all he does, which win him thousands of admirers." I congratulate the writer on his fine way of putting things. He possesses real insight into sport.

INFORMATION WANTED.

C. J. Querny, 21, Agate Street, Canning Town, E. 16, wants very much to hear from correspondents, as he is quite alone. He also asks me whether there is any chance of finding his father out in Canada. There has been no news for fourteen years, but Querny senior is still alive. As the Companion Papers are widely circulated in Canada, perhaps this paragraph will come under the notice of the individual concerned.

A COLLECTORS' ASSOCIATION.

I have been favoured with particulars of the programme of the British and Universal Collectors' Association, 33, Radstock Road, Fairfield, Liverpool. The annual fee is four shillings, and anybody who has at heart some special hobby, whether it takes the form of collecting stamps, or butterflies and moths, flowers, medals, photos, etc., will undoubtedly find many advantages by joining this up-to-date association.

FOR TRAIN, TRAM, OR BOAT.

Mr. M. McGarth, of Petersham, Sydney, writes: "I want to congratulate you on the success the MAGNET has attained, but would it not be possible to issue a hard-covered book with stories of Greyfriars?"

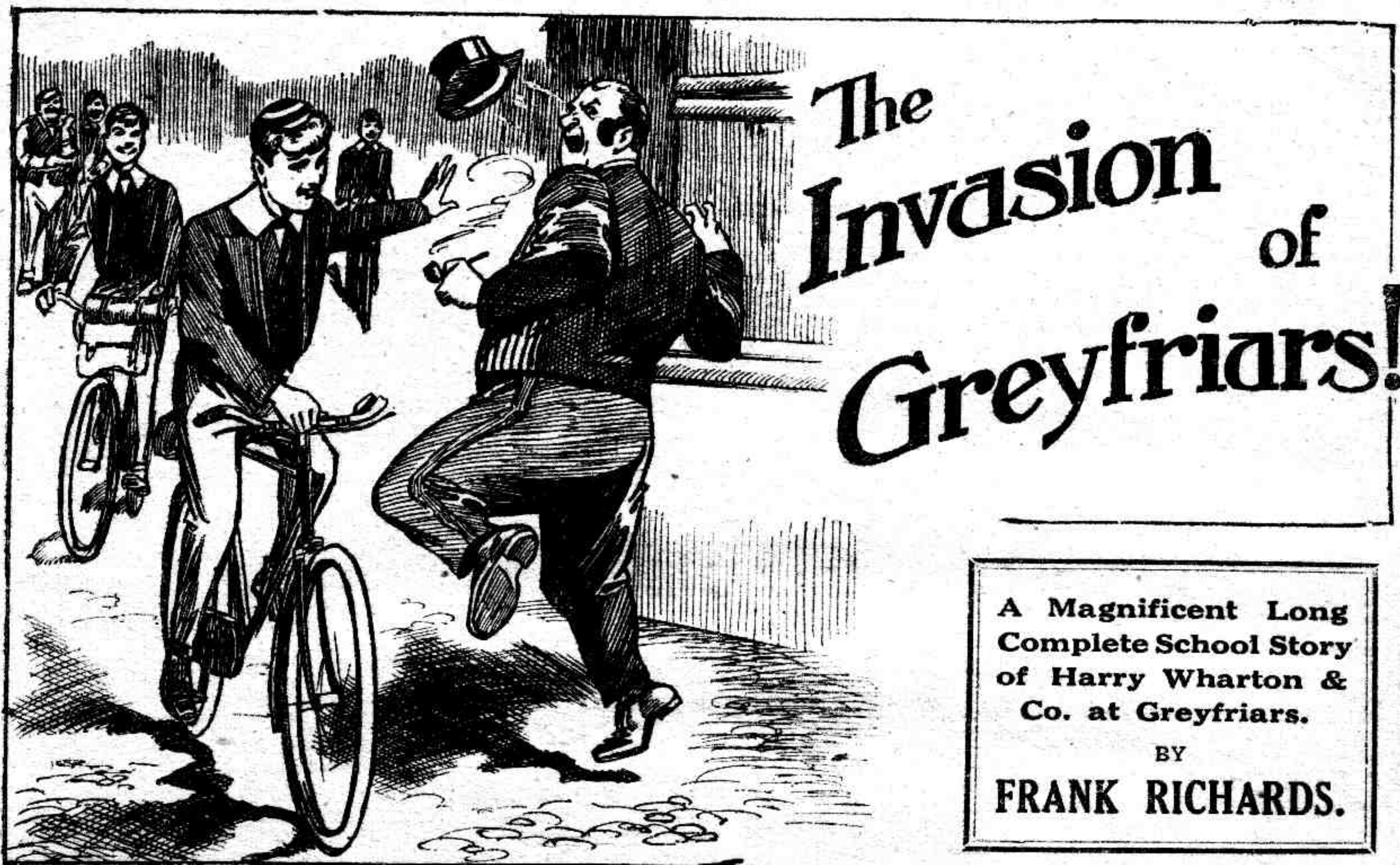
Well, the "Holiday Annual" goes far to meet the request. Moreover, the "Boys' Friend" Library often gives Greyfriars yarns. But the elaboration of the idea requires consideration—and will have it!

TO BE AN AUTHOR:

Just now we were discussing authorship. I received a perfectly admirable letter from a chum to-day who told me that he was determined to be an author. The answer to that remark is easy. Be one!

A famous editor wrote to the papers the other week to the effect that story-writing was simple. You merely wanted a pen and some paper, etc. But there must be the ideas. It rather looks as though the correspondent in question will become an author, but he will not find the path smooth, and he would be well-advised to stick to his present work and write at any odd, old time.

Your Editor



As the party passed through the school gateway Bob Cherry reached out his hand, whisked Gosling's hat from his head, and sent the battered and decayed article of headgear whirling into space! (See Chapter 8.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Invaders!

TAP, tap!

Bob Cherry stirred restlessly in his bed in the Remove dormitory, and awoke.

Bob was a light sleeper, and the sound of tapping, not far distant, had awakened him.

Tap, tap, tap!

"What the thump——" began Bob, sitting up in bed and blinking around.

All the other occupants of the Remove dormitory were asleep, and Billy Bunter's sonorous snore echoed through the long room.

Glancing at his watch, Bob Cherry saw that it was half an hour before rising-bell.

The tapping noise continued. Listening intently, Bob concluded that it came from outside one of the windows.

"Wonder what it can be?" he murmured drowsily.

Bob glanced towards the window from whence the tapping seemed to come, and he gave a violent start.

For a face appeared at the window—the unshaven face of an unpleasant-looking man!

Bob Cherry stared fixedly at the face for a moment, then it was suddenly withdrawn. The tapping noise, however, still went on.

In a twinkling Bob Cherry leapt out of bed.

There was only one conclusion he could come to—namely, that the face he had seen at the window was that of a burglar.

Somebody was about to carry out a raid on the Remove dormitory in the stillness of the early morning!

Bob Cherry reflected that the burglar—for burglar he undoubtedly was—

could not have chosen a better time for his nefarious undertaking.

In the middle of the night a would-be marauder would find it difficult to break into the school without being detected, for several of the masters stayed up to a late hour. But six o'clock in the morning was an ideal time for a raid, because it would be so totally unexpected.

Any light-fingered gentleman who broke into the Remove dormitory, and was sufficiently stealthy in his movements, would be sure of a rich haul.

Lord Mauleverer always kept a substantial sum of money in his wallet, and the same remark applied to Vernon-Smith. The pockets of Hurree Singh and Johnny Bull, too, would yield a rich harvest. And, apart from money, many of the fellows had watches and other valuable articles in the pockets of their clothing.

"It's jolly lucky I woke up when I did!" murmured Bob Cherry.

His next action was to arouse his chums. Bob did this with his usual thoroughness, severely shaking each of the other members of the Famous Five in turn.

"Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Singh sat up in their respective beds, blinking indignantly at their chum.

"What's the little game?" demanded Wharton.

"Burglars!" said Bob Cherry briefly.

"Eh?"

"Burglars!"

"Where?"

"Outside the window."

"Get back to bed, you silly chump!" growled Johnny Bull. "You've been dreaming!"

"Rats! I distinctly saw a face at the window. Look! There it is again!"

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

BY

FRANK RICHARDS.

there, sure enough, was the sinister-looking face which Bob had seen a few moments previously.

"It's somebody trying to break into the dorm!" said Nugent, jumping out of bed.

The others jumped out, too; and the noise they made was sufficient to scare any burglar.

But the face at the window, instead of hastily disappearing, remained.

Meanwhile, the other occupants of the dormitory started out of their slumber, and there was a chorus of inquiry.

"What's up, you fellows?"

"What are you doing out of bed?"

Bob Cherry pointed dramatically to the window.

"Burglars!" he announced.

The word had a magical effect. A dozen juniors promptly scrambled out of bed, and Billy Bunter, quaking with alarm, buried himself beneath the bed-clothes.

"I say, you fellows, don't let them get in!" he pleaded, in muffled tones.

"I think," said Vernon-Smith, who was the coolest junior present, "that the hosepipe will come in handy. We'll soon shift that merchant from the window!"

So saying, the Bounder hurried from the dormitory. When he reappeared a moment later, he carried a length of hosepipe, from the nozzle of which shot a stream of water.

"Be careful, Smithy!"

"Don't swamp us out!"

Vernon-Smith directed the jet of water towards the face at the window.

There was a loud splash, followed by a still louder roar.

The Famous Five clambered up on to the window-sills to see the fun.

The man whose face had been seen at the window was perched on the top of a ladder; but he did not remain there long. Clutching the sides of the ladder, he slid down to the ground at a terrific rate. During his frantic descent he

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shouted to another man who stood at the foot of the ladder.

"Look out, Ned!"

"Why, what's the matter, Jerry?"

"Them young rips 'ave a-turned the hosepipe on me!"

But the hosepipe was not the only weapon of attack.

The Famous Five drew out their peashooters, and Harry Wharton gave the command to open fire. A hail of peas shot down upon the two men in the Close, and they yelled and danced under the stinging bombardment from above.

"Keep it up, kids!" sang out Bob Cherry. "We'll give the merry burglars more than they bargained for!"

"How many of them are there?" inquired Squiff.

"A couple."

"Good! They won't give us much trouble. While you're peppering them, some of us will nip downstairs and collar them!"

And Squiff hurriedly got into his dressing-gown and sped from the dormitory.

Mark Linley, Peter Todd, Dick Penfold, and two or three more followed hard on his heels.

By the time they reached the Close, however, there was no sign of the burglars.

Ned and Jerry had been unable to withstand that terrific bombardment for long, and they had very wisely fled.

"Let's search for them!" said Peter Todd.

"Yes, rather!"

The party of juniors hunted everywhere, but the search proved futile.

"They've got away," said Squiff ruefully.

"Never mind!" said Mark Linley.

"We gave them a warm time, anyway. They won't come near the dorm again in a hurry!"

Gosling, the school porter, came shuffling across the Close, for the purpose of ringing the rising-bell. He stared in astonishment at the Removites.

"Which you young rips will be a-gettin' your deaths of cold!" he growled. "Wot I says is this 'ere—you ain't got no right to be walkin' about 'alf-clad at this time of the mornin'!"

Squiff turned excitedly to Gosling.

"Have you seen them, Gossy?"

"Eh? Seen who, Master Field?"

"The burglars!"

Gosling's eyes opened wide.

"If you're pullin' my leg——" he began.

"I'm not!" said Squiff. "It's a fact that there were two burglars here a few minutes ago. They've just bolted, and I thought you might have seen them shinning over the school wall."

Gosling shook his head.

"I ain't seen no burglars," he growled.

"An' wot's more, I don't believe there is any to be seen. Which you're sufferin' from lacy nations, Master Field!"

"What?" gasped Squiff.

"Ha, ha! Gossy means 'hallucinations'!" chuckled Dick Penfold.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gosling frowned at the laughing juniors, and, crossing over to the bell-rope, he proceeded to tug it savagely.

Clang, clang, clang!

The harsh summons of the rising-bell roused Greyfriars to a new day.

Squiff and his companions went back to the Remove dormitory.

"Any luck?" asked Bob Cherry.

"No," said Squiff. "We hunted everywhere, but the scoundrels have disappeared."

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"Are you quite sure they've gone, Squiff?" inquired Billy Bunter.

"Quite!"

"Then I think it's safe for me to get up."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The sudden appearance, and the equally sudden disappearance, of Ned and Jerry caused considerable excitement in the Remove.

At the breakfast-table all the fellows were discussing the strange affair.

The sudden appearance of Mr. Quelch put an end to the chatter.

The Remove-master was looking very stern.

"My boys," he exclaimed, as he took his seat at the head of the Remove table, "I have received a complaint to the effect that you savagely attacked two men at an early hour this morning! Is that correct?"

"Quite correct, sir!" said Harry Wharton, rising to his feet. "Thanks to our peashooters, and to the hosepipe, we succeeded in scaring the burglars away."

Mr. Quelch stared in amazement at the captain of the Remove.

"The—the burglars, Wharton!" he ejaculated. "What do you mean?"

"Haven't you heard, sir?" said Bob Cherry. "A couple of fellows tried to burgle the Remove dor——"

"Nonsense, Cherry! They were not burglars at all!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"They were workmen, specially employed at the school."

Bob Cherry gave a gasp, and so did the others. The Removites realised that they had jumped to a too hasty conclusion.

"But—but I distinctly heard a tapping noise, sir——" stammered the bewildered Bob.

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"The noise to which you refer, Cherry, was occasioned by one of the workmen repairing a water-pipe."

"Oh!"

"What ever made you think the man was a burglar?"

"I woke up suddenly, and saw his face at the window, sir, so I roused the other fellows, and we drove the burglars—as we thought—away."

"Had we known they were workmen, sir," added Wharton, "we shouldn't have dreamed of interfering with them."

"I can clearly see, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, still smiling, "that you acted under a misapprehension. That being the case, I will say no more about the matter. I might mention that extensive alterations and repairs are about to be carried out on the premises, and the workmen will be here at least a week."

"Why weren't we told about it before, sir?" said Billy Bunter. "I had the shock of my life!"

"Be silent, Bunter!"

"I might have died, sir——"

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"I regret I cannot honestly say that humanity would be the poorer!" he said, with crushing sarcasm. "You will proceed with your breakfast, Bunter!"

And the Owl of the Remove was only too willing to concentrate his attention on the eggs and bacon which had been set before him.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Fun in the Form-room!

"KICK me, somebody!" implored Bob Cherry, as the juniors streamed out into the Close after breakfast.

"And me!" growled Wharton. "What a priceless set of asses we were to mistake workmen for burglars!"

"I don't see that we were to blame," said Mark Linley. "If the fellows had

been wearing aprons we should have known what they were. But they were dressed in the ordinary way."

"And they certainly looked like a pair of scurvy knaves!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Poor old Ned—ditto Jerry!" chuckled Dick Penfold. "They had a warm time while the bombardment lasted."

"Yes, rather!"

"I think we ought to go and tell them we're sorry," said Peter Todd.

"Oh, rats!" growled Bolsover major. "The only thing I'm sorry about is that I ran out of ammunition for my peashooter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

All the decent fellows, in the Remove, however, considered that Ned and Jerry were entitled to an apology. They went in quest of the two workmen, whom they eventually encountered in the Remove passage.

"Ned, old chap——"

"Jerry, old top——"

The workmen halted, glaring at their persecutors.

"We're awfully sorry for what happened this morning," said Nugent.

"Awfully, fearfully sorry!" said Bob Cherry. "Why didn't you explain that you were British workmen? We should have withdrawn our heavy artillery, if only we had known."

"Which you didn't give us a chance to explain!" growled Jerry, whose rapid descent of the ladder had made him feel very sore, both mentally and physically.

"It was your face that caused all the mischief, Jerry," said Bob. "What do you mean by going about with a face like that? It's enough to strike terror into the heart of a hero!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look 'ere——" began Jerry wrathfully.

"If you had to depend on your face for your fortune," exclaimed the humorous Bob, "you'd be perpetually stony-broke!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Still," went on Bob, soothingly, "an ugly face often hides a beautiful mind. And I don't doubt that your mind's beautiful, Jerry. You never use strong language, or anything of that sort, do you?"

Jerry certainly looked capable of using strong language at that moment.

"Anyway," said Harry Wharton, "we're awfully sorry we gave you such a rough time."

"Yaas, begad!" murmured Lord Mauleverer. "It must be awfully dry work, mendin' water-pipes, an' all that sort of thing. Get yourself some refreshment, dear man!"

And Mauly slipped a half-crown into Jerry's horny palm, Vernon-Smith slipped a similar coin into Ned's.

The two workmen brightened up wonderfully. They became quite affable.

"You made a big mistake, young gents, in thinkin' we was burglars," said Ned. "But then, even the best of us is liable to make mistakes. I make one myself sometimes."

"I 'ope your schoolmaster didn't drop on you too 'eavily?" said Jerry.

"He let us off with a caution," said Vernon-Smith.

"Good!" said Ned. "We don't bear no malice, an' we'll make a special point of drinkin' the 'ealths of you young gents this evenin'."

"In nothing stronger than lemonade, I hope?" said Peter Todd.

The workmen grinned, nodded, and passed on. They proceeded to the Remove Form-room, and the juniors followed, for at that moment the bell rang for morning lessons.

There was something of a shock in store for Harry Wharton & Co., for on entering



"Look out, sir!" exclaimed Bob Cherry warningly. The next moment about a quart of whitewash descended to the floor, and Mr. Quelch stepped back with a cry of surprise. (See Chapter 2.)

the Form-room they found Ned and Jerry busily engaged in whitewashing the ceiling.

Jerry was perched on the top of a pair of steps wielding the brush; and Ned also stood on the steps, holding the whitewash-pail.

"My only aunt!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Whitewash, whitewash everywhere, and not a drop to drink!" chuckled Squiff.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's about time they gave that ceiling a fresh coating," said Vernon-Smith. "It hasn't had one since the world was young."

"The last time it was whitewashed," said Dick Russell, "was in the days of the Druids. I cribbed my information from Quelch's 'History of Greyfriars.'"

"I 'ope," said Jerry, peering down from his perch, "that we sha'n't disturb you, young gents?"

"Not a bit!" said Johnny Bull. "We can't answer for Quelch, though. Personally, I don't think he'll approve of the ceiling being whitewashed during lessons."

Mr. Quelch certainly did not approve. He came into the Form-room with a frowning brow, and his frown grew blacker when he beheld the merry antics of Ned and Jerry.

"What are you men doing in here?" he exclaimed.

"Workin'," said Jerry, briefly. And he continued to slap-dash with the brush.

"This ceiling must wait!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "You must whitewash it at a time when the Form-room is not in a state of occupation."

"Scuse me, sir," said Ned, "but we've 'ad orders from the 'eadmaster to get the ceiling done this mornin'."

"I cannot believe that Dr. Locke would be so rash as to issue such an order," said Mr. Quelch. "I command you to leave this room at once—both of you!"

Ned and Jerry refused to budge. They continued their occupations on the ceiling, and the Removites looked on with suppressed merriment.

"Do you hear me?" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"We ain't deaf, Mr. Schoolmaster," said Jerry.

"Then obey me!"

"We was instructed by our foreman," said Ned, "to take no orders from anybody except the 'eadmaster."

"Do you refuse to do my bidding?"

"That 'its it off, guv'nor," said Jerry. "Once again, I command you to evacuate this room!"

"Evacuate" sounds good," murmured Ned. "I'll back it both ways!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Be silent, boys!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Do not snigger at the perverse obstinacy of these rascals!"

"Ere, steady on with your lang-

widge!" said Ned threateningly. "I ain't goin' to be called a raskill by nobody!"

"Quit this room!"

"When our job's done," said Jerry.

"Not before."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"I can see that I shall have to bring pressure to bear!" he exclaimed, striding towards the pair of steps.

Ned saw the Form-master approaching, and in the excitement of the moment he happened to tilt the whitewash-pail.

"Look out, sir!" exclaimed Bob Cherry warningly.

About a quart of whitewash descended to the floor, and Mr. Quelch stepped back just in time to avoid the deluge. But he did not wholly avoid it. Some of the whitewash splashed up from the floor and spurted over his gown;

"Go it, Ned!" said Jerry approvingly. "You'll make a snow-man of 'im in a minute!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch was purple in the face by this time. He looked as if he were about to have an apoplectic fit.

"For the last time," he rumbled, "I command you to remove yourselves and your accessories from this room!"

"Bosh!" said Ned.

"We're hangin' on!" said Jerry.

Mr. Quelch hesitated. He was debating in his mind whether to call upon his

pupils to assist him in ejecting the workmen. And while he hesitated the door of the Form-room opened and the Head looked in.

"Is everything going on all right here?" he asked.

"No, sir; it is not!" said Mr. Quelch vehemently. "I have not yet been able to make a start with the lesson, owing to the presence of these workmen. I have repeatedly ordered them out of the room, and told them to leave the ceiling until afterwards; but they refuse to budge. They tell me, sir, that you ordered them to get the ceiling whitewashed at once."

"That is quite correct," said the Head.

"Sir!"

"Their work must be done strictly in rotation," said Dr. Locke. "If they were to leave this ceiling for a time and proceed to do something else it would cause confusion. They must remain and finish their task, which I am pleased to see is already nearing completion. That part of the ceiling which is immediately over the heads of your pupils has already been whitewashed; so very little, if any, inconvenience will be caused."

"But I cannot conduct lessons with workmen in the room, sir!" protested Mr. Quelch. "Their presence annoys and distracts me."

"You must manage as well as you can, in the circumstances, Mr. Quelch," said the Head.

Mr. Quelch looked far from pleased. He wondered how the Head would like to have to conduct class with a couple of noisy workmen present. However, Dr. Locke's word was law, and the Remove-master had sufficient sense not to prolong the argument.

The Head withdrew; and Mr. Quelch made a start with morning lessons.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Vanishing Trick!

THE juniors were very inattentive, which was, perhaps, only natural. Their eyes frequently wandered from their history books to Ned and Jerry, who seemed to be thoroughly enjoying themselves.

When the lesson had been in progress for half an hour or so, Ned was heard to remark:

"I think we'll 'ave a rest now, mate."

"Right-ho!" said Jerry.

And the two men descended from their perches and lounged against the mantelpiece, grinning cheerfully at the Remove-masters, who grinned back.

Mr. Quelch turned to Ned and Jerry. "If you desire a respite," he said, "pray leave the room until you are ready to resume."

"No, fear!" said Ned. "'Ow do we know that you won't pinch our whitewash while our backs are turned?"

"He seems to 'ave pinched some of it already," observed Jerry, glancing at the splashes of white on the Remove-master's gown.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch rapped furiously on the desk with his pointer.

"Silence!" he thundered. "How dare you laugh at the coarse witticisms of these uncultured men!"

"Talks like a blessed dictionary, don't he?" said Ned.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"If I have any further impertinence from you two men," he said, "I will report you to your foreman!"

This threat seemed to have a sobering effect upon Ned and Jerry, for they relapsed into silence.

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Jerry pulled out his pipe, and proceeded to light up. The pungent fumes of very strong tobacco spread through the Form-room.

Half a dozen juniors started coughing. Half a dozen more joined in. In a couple of minutes the whole class was coughing in full chorus.

Some of the coughing was genuine enough; but a great deal of it was manufactured for the occasion.

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch. "If this noise continues I shall—"

The speaker himself broke off with a violent fit of coughing.

"Seems to be a sort of epidemic broke out!" observed Ned.

Jerry nodded.

"I can't for the life of me think what's causin' it," he said.

"The cause of it," snapped Mr. Quelch, recovering from his outburst of coughing, "is the unwholesome pipe which is depending from your mouth! Stop smoking at once!"

"We're allowed to smoke—" began Jerry.

"You shall not do so in this room! I command you to remove that offensive pipe from your mouth!"

"Yaas, do, Jerry!" pleaded Lord Mauleverer, who was getting the full benefit of the fumes. "You're smoking us out, begad!"

Jerry recognised the schoolboy earl as the fellow who had slipped half-a-crown into his palm.

"All right, sir," he said. "Anythink to oblige!"

And he knocked out his pipe and replaced it in his pocket.

Despite the fact that Jerry had stopped smoking, a thick haze filled the Form-room.

"Open all the windows!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

The fellows in the back row obeyed.

The interrupted lesson was resumed, and after a time Ned and Jerry returned to their task.

Splashes of whitewash descended from the ceiling on to the boots of the juniors who were seated in the front row.

Billy Bunter was one of the victims, and he protested against having his black patent-leather boots converted into cricket-boots.

The fat junior rose in his place.

"Well, Bunter?" snapped Mr. Quelch, whose patience was being sorely tried that morning.

"Look at my boots, sir!"

"Bless my soul! They appear to be smothered with whitewash!"

"Sorry!" said Ned, continuing to wield the brush with great vigour. "These little accidents will 'appen in the best regulated famblies!"

Mr. Quelch saw that the boots of all the fellows in the front row were bespattered with whitewash. He realised that it would be advisable for the juniors in question to be removed from the danger zone.

"The boys in the front row," said Mr. Quelch, "will retire to the back of the room. They may seat themselves on the window-sills, if they wish."

The juniors obeyed only too willingly. It was no catch to sit in the front row, directly under the eyes of the Form-master. At the back of the room they would be able to take things easy.

The lesson was delayed for five minutes or so, whilst the fellows clambered up on to the window-sills.

Not being an athlete, Billy Bunter was unable to manage the feat without assistance, and the fellows in the back row were good enough to hoist him up.

"Groo!" murmured Skinner, who was

one of the window-sill brigade. "It's jolly draughty up here!"

"Silence, Skinner!"

"May I close the window, sir?"

"No, Skinner, you may not! I will now proceed to question the class concerning the Wars of the Roses."

Billy Bunter fidgeted uneasily on the window-sill. He was painfully conscious of the fact that he knew nothing whatever about the Wars of the Roses. And he was afraid he would be caught napping.

And then a brilliant inspiration came to Bunter.

The window behind him was wide open, and it would be a comparatively simple matter, when Mr. Quelch was not looking, to slip out into the Close.

"Quelchy might miss me," reflected the fat junior. "On the other hand, he might not. It's worth risking, anyway."

Mr. Quelch started firing questions at the class and Billy Bunter quaked inwardly. But he was not called upon, and presently the opportunity of escape arrived.

The Form-master turned his back to the class, in order to write something on the blackboard; and Billy Bunter wriggled through the open window and dropped down into the Close.

So swift and sudden was the fat junior's exit that only the fellows who had been seated next to him—Skinner and Bolsover major—knew what had happened.

"The silly ass!" murmured Bolsover. "He'll be collared, sure as fate!"

"I was thinking, old man," whispered Skinner, "that we might do the vanishing trick, too!"

Bolsover gave a grunt.

"No, jolly fear!" he muttered. "I'm not sickening for a licking!"

Mr. Quelch turned from the blackboard and faced the class.

"I have written the names of three battles on the blackboard," he announced, "and I require the class to tell me what other battles were fought at that period. Now, Bunter!"

There was no reply.

Mr. Quelch glanced towards the window-sill on which Bunter had been seated—then he uttered an exclamation of astonishment.

For Billy Bunter had disappeared!

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "Where is Bunter?"

"In the tuckshop by this time, I should think!" murmured Skinner.

And Bolsover major chuckled.

The other fellows were no less astonished than Mr. Quelch.

"The fat idiot must have bolted through the window!" whispered Bob Cherry.

"He's got more nerve than I gave him credit for!" muttered Wharton.

With a dangerous gleam in his eyes, Mr. Quelch strode towards the open window.

Glancing out into the Close, he saw Billy Bunter scuttling away in the direction of the tuckshop.

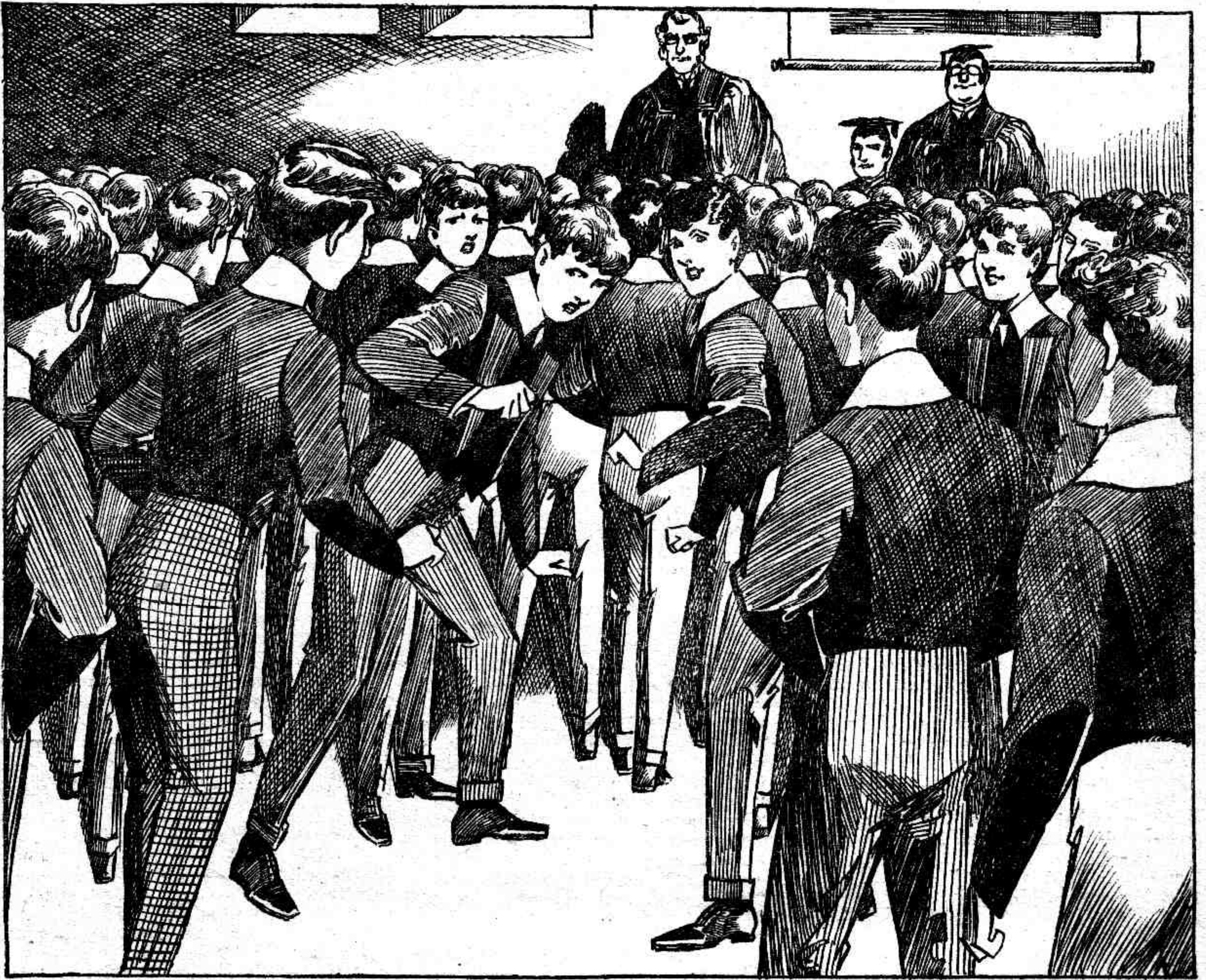
"Bunter!" roared Mr. Quelch. "Come back—come back at once!"

Billy Bunter heard. He could hardly help hearing, for Mr. Quelch's voice resembled the furious bellow of a bull.

But the fat junior pretended to be deaf. He quickened his pace, and disappeared through the doorway of the tuckshop.

Mr. Quelch, with an expression on his face which was almost homicidal, turned away from the window.

"Wharton! Cherry! Nugent!" he rapped out. "Go to the school shop, and bring that impertinent young truant back to the Form-room—by force, if necessary!"



A yell of anguish rang through the crowded hall! (See Chapter 7.)

"Very good, sir!" said the captain of the Remove.

And he quitted the Form-room with Bob Cherry and Nugent.

When the trio returned a few moments later, Billy Bunter—owing to circumstances over which he had no control—accompanied them.

There were suspicious smears of jam on the fat junior's flabby cheeks.

"Bunter!" Mr. Quelch thundered the name with such startling suddenness that Ned and Jerry nearly fell off the steps. "How dare you absent yourself from the Form-room in the middle of the lesson!"

"I—I—"

"You had the unparalleled audacity to clamber out of the window!"

"I—I didn't, sir—"

"What?"

"The—the fact is, I was blown out, sir, by the force of the wind!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was an irrepressible burst of laughter from the class.

"Bunter!" rumbled Mr. Quelch. "How dare you invent such an utterly absurd fabrication! I distinctly saw you walk across the Close—"

"Not walking across, sir," said Bunter. "I was carried across by the gale. I was blown along like—like a leaf, sir, and I couldn't stop myself until I reached the door of the tuckshop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cease this unseemly laughter at once!" roared Mr. Quelch, frowning at

the class. "Do you seriously expect me, Bunter, to believe such a wild and ridiculous story? No wind—not even a cyclone—could possibly blow a boy of your bulk out of the window and the whole length of the Close! You are imposing on my credulity, Bunter, and I shall cane you severely!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Hold out your hand, boy!"

Billy Bunter obeyed, and he received three stinging cuts which made him yelp.

"Now the other hand!" commanded Mr. Quelch.

"Ow! Oh, really, sir, I think I've had enough—"

"I am the better judge of that, Bunter! Do as I tell you!"

Out went Billy Bunter's other hand, and down came the cane.

Ned and Jerry surveyed the scene with interest.

"Lays it on good an' strong, don't he?" said Ned.

Jerry nodded.

"Dessay he's been a carpet-beater in 'is time!" he remarked.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch laid down the cane, ordered the squirming Bunter to his place, and fixed his gimlet eyes on the class.

"If there is any further ribaldry," he exclaimed, "I shall report the entire Form to Dr. Locke!"

That threat had the desired effect. Although several more amusing

incidents took place, the juniors did not even smile. They had no wish to be reported to the Head and deprived of the next half-holiday.

But when the word of dismissal came, and the Removites streamed out into the passage, their pent-up merriment found expression in roars of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What a morning!"

"It was better than a pantomime!"

"We've had plenty of fun!" said Bob Cherry, "and there's plenty more to come, while Ned and Jerry are knocking about!"

"Yes, rather!"

The only person who did not share in the general merriment was Billy Bunter. Like Rachel of old, he mourned, and would not be comforted. And his expressed opinion of Mr. Quelch would not bear repetition.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Talk on the Telephone!

"H A, ha, ha!"

"It's a gilt-edged wheeze!" "Coker, old man, there's nothing wrong with your thinking apparatus, after all!"

These remarks, accompanied, as a reporter might say, with loud and renewed laughter, floated out to Billy Bunter as he rolled discontentedly to and fro in the Close after dinner.

The remarks and the laughter appeared to come from the prefects' room, and Bunter, his curiosity fully aroused, halted outside the window.

"Sounds like Coker, Potter, and Greene of the Fifth!" he murmured. "What are they doing in the prefects' room, I wonder?"

Coker's next words gave Bunter the key to the situation.

"This is about the best brain-wave I've ever had—and I've had a good many," said the great Horace. "It will be one in the eye for those cheeky Remove fags! I'll get on the 'phone to the workmen's hut—they've got a temporary telephone installed there—and I'll instruct the foreman that Wharton's study is to be whitewashed without the furniture being shifted out."

"Ripping!" said Potter. "But do you think you can imitate the Head's voice all right?"

"Of course I can! I'm a born mimic. Besides, even if I did make a blunder, it wouldn't be noticed on the telephone."

"Well, buck up!" said Greene. "We don't want the prefects to come along and catch us in here."

Coker advanced towards the telephone, and took the receiver from its hooks.

After a brief pause a feminine voice came over the wires.

"Number, please!"

"I want Friardale, two-three," said Coker—that being the telephone number of the workmen's hut.

There was another pause, of longer duration this time, and Coker fidgeted nervously. He did not want Wingate or Gwynne to come in and catch him at the telephone.

After what seemed an age, the respectful voice of the foreman made itself heard.

"Who is that, please?"

Coker cleared his throat.

"This is the headmaster speaking."

"Oh, yes, Dr. Locke?"

"With reference to the studies in the Remove passage—have your men started to renovate them yet?"

"Not yet, sir. They'll make a start this afternoon, while the young gentlemen are at lessons."

"They will commence with Study No. 1, of course?"

"Of course, sir."

"Well, I do not wish the furniture to be moved out into the passage beforehand. I require your men to whitewash the study just as it stands."

There was an exclamation of surprise from the foreman.

"My men will make a most unholy mess, Dr. Locke—"

"That cannot be helped."

"Surely it is extremely unwise to allow the furniture to remain inside the study?"

"It is not for you to question the wisdom of my decision!" snapped Coker, whose imitation of the Head's voice was decidedly realistic. "You are here to carry out my commands!"

"No offence meant, sir," said the foreman hastily. "But I can't help thinking—"

"It is your place to act—not to think!" was the tart reply. "I shall expect Wharton's study to be whitewashed before the classes are dismissed this afternoon. The furniture may suffer in the process, but that is of small account."

"Very good, sir," said the foreman.

"You will see that my instructions are carried out?"

"To the letter, sir!"

"Thank you!" said the bogus Head curtly.

And as Coker replaced the receiver on

its hooks, Potter and Greene thumped him lustily on the back.

"Ripping, old man!" said Potter.

"Simply stunning!" said Greene.

"Well, you needn't puncture a fellow!" growled Coker. "I'll own it's a jolly smart wheeze, but this"—the speaker tapped his forehead significantly—"this is the home of smart wheezes! My brain—"

"Your what?" said Potter.

"My brain," repeated Coker, glaring at his chum, "is an active and reliable organ!"

"It's an organ that gets out of tune sometimes," said Greene.

"My head isn't full of sawdust, like yours, anyway!" retorted Coker.

"Look here—"

"Oh, come on!" said Potter. "It isn't safe to hang about here any longer!"

The three Fifth-Formers strolled out of the prefects' room, more than satisfied with their little plot against Harry Wharton & Co.

As for Billy Bunter, he rolled away to Study No. 1.

The fat junior had overheard the whole of the conversation between Coker and his chums; and he saw a splendid opportunity of augmenting his slender supply of pocket-money.

"I say, you fellows!" he exclaimed, bursting in upon the Famous Five.

"What will you give me if I tell you all about a little plot that Coker & Co. have just hatched?"

"Nix!" said Johnny Bull promptly.

"Oh, come, Johnny, don't be ungenerous!" said Bob Cherry reprovingly.

"We'll give you a thick ear, Bunty!"

"And a swollen nose!" said Nugent.

"Plus a sound and esteemed bumping!" added Hurree Singh.

Billy Bunter blinked at the Famous Five through his big spectacles.

"Oh, really, you fellows!" he protested. "The jape that Coker & Co. have planned is against you!"

"Against us?" said Harry Wharton, in surprise.

"Yes."

"Tell us what it is, then!"

"For a consideration," said Bunter.

"What do you mean, porpoise?"

"If you'll advance me a bob, to be paid back when my postal-order comes, I'll tell you all about it."

"You worm!"

"It will be worth much more than a bob to you to know the facts," said Bunter.

Wharton produced a shilling, and tossed it to the Owl of the Remove, who grinned and slipped the coin into his pocket.

"Now," said Bob Cherry, "what's Coker's little game?"

"He's going to wreck this study."

"My hat! How?"

"He rang up the foreman of the workmen, and pretended he was the Head speaking. He said that this study was to be whitewashed this afternoon, without the furniture being moved."

"Great Scott!"

"The foreman swallowed the bait," continued Bunter; "and Coker & Co. are chuckling no end. They're hoping that all your furniture will be smothered with whitewash."

"Then I'm afraid," said Wharton grimly, "they'll be disappointed!"

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent. "We'll soon nip Coker's precious scheme in the bud!"

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter, "I think you ought to give me another bob for warning you."

But the Famous Five thought otherwise. Instead of giving the grasping Owl of the Remove another shilling, they gave him the order of the boot.

Billy Bunter travelled swiftly through the open doorway. He left Study No. 1 in a hurry, propelled from the rear by five well-shod feet.

When Bunter had gone, Harry Wharton & Co. held a council of war, to decide how they should checkmate Coker.

All sorts of suggestions were put forward; but no definite decision had been arrived at when the bell rang for afternoon lessons.

"There's not a second to lose, you fellows," said Harry Wharton. "We must think of a wheeze at once!"

At that moment Ned and Jerry appeared in the doorway. Ned carried a brimming pail of whitewash, and Jerry carried the brush. Both men looked as if they meant business.

"Scuse me, young gents," said Ned, "but could you tell us which is Master Wharton's study?"

"Certainly!" said Bob Cherry promptly. "Follow your uncles!"

And Bob led the way to the Fifth Form passage. The other members of the Famous Five accompanied him, and Ned and Jerry brought up the rear.

"Here we are!" said Bob Cherry at length, halting outside the door of Coker's study. "This is the study you're wanting."

"Thanks!" said Ned.

"Going to do some more slap-dashing?" asked Nugent.

Ned nodded.

"We've 'ad orders to do the ceilin'," he said.

"An' what's more, we 'aven't got to shift the furniture," said Jerry. "It'll get a bit splashed, I'm thinkin'."

"That won't matter," said Johnny Bull. "Wharton won't mind in the least."

"He won't mind a little bit," said Wharton. "In fact, he'll be jolly pleased!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With many chuckles, the Famous Five left the two workmen to their own devices, and went along to the Remove Form-room.

Harry Wharton had been quite sincere when he said that he didn't mind a little bit what happened to the furniture in Coker's study.

But Coker, Potter, and Greene were likely to mind very much!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Ragers Ragged!

MR. PROUT, the master of the Fifth, had three very inattentive pupils that afternoon.

Coker, Potter, and Greene could not concentrate upon the lesson. The first-named never did. He believed in the maxim that a little learning is a dangerous thing; and he therefore contrived to seek as little as possible.

As the lesson proceeded, Coker was observed to be chuckling and rubbing his hands together; and presently he quite forgot where he was, and a loud laugh echoed through the Form-room.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Prout looked as if he could hardly believe the evidence of his ears.

"Coker!" he thundered. "How dare you guffaw in that manner!"

"Sorry, sir," gasped Coker, "but I was thinking— Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why, you have done it again!" said Mr. Prout. "Are you not aware, Coker, that a loud laugh bespeaks a vacant mind? Your behaviour is little better than that of a yokel, sir, and I will endeavour to impress upon you the fact that I strongly object to cachinnations

in the Form-room! You will take five hundred lines!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"And now, Coker, perhaps you will be good enough to explain what you were laughing at?"

"Ahem! Something struck me, sir—"

"Something else will strike you if you cannot control your unseemly merriment!" snapped Mr. Prout. "Such spasms of mirth are totally out of place in the Form-room. Potter and Greene are not blameless, either. I have several times seen them making facial contortions."

Potter tried hard to convert a chuckle into a cough, but he was unsuccessful.

"What are you sniggering at, Potter?" said Mr. Prout irritably. "Is there anything wrong with my appearance?"

"Oh, no, sir!" said Potter. "You look no funnier than usual—I—I mean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You will take five hundred lines, Potter, for studied impertinence!" snapped Mr. Prout. "A boy of your size and age ought to know better!"

Potter promptly subsided, and Mr. Prout made an examination of himself, to see if there was anything wrong with his appearance. He quite thought that he was the subject of Coker & Co.'s merriment. It was more than likely, he reflected, that an insect of some sort was crawling over his clothing.

"Blundell!" he exclaimed. "Do you see anything on me?"

"Yes, sir," said Blundell.

"Ah, I thought so! What is it, my boy?"

"Your gown, sir!" said Blundell calmly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Prout nearly tore his hair—which would have been a pity, as he had not a great deal to spare.

"I am astonished, Blundell, that you, the captain of the Form, cannot comport yourself properly! You, also, will take five hundred lines!"

"Why, sir, I merely stated a fact!" protested Blundell.

"I, too, will state a fact," said Mr. Prout warmly. "You are an unmitigated young rascal, sir!"

"Same to you, you old buffer!" muttered Blundell, under his breath.

"What did you say, Blundell?" demanded Mr. Prout sharply.

"I said it was a shame I was such a duffer, sir," said the captain of the Fifth.

Mr. Prout melted a little.

"I am pleased to observe, Blundell, that you have cultivated a sense of shame," he said. "We will now proceed with the lesson."

Coker, Potter, and Greene were still grinning, but happily Mr. Prout did not notice them.

"What's the joke, Coker?" whispered Blundell.

"It's a jape on the Remove kids," explained Coker, in an undertone. "I rang up the foreman of the workmen, and made arrangements for everything in Wharton's study to be smothered with whitewash!"

It was as much as Blundell could do to refrain from chuckling outright.

"Good!" he murmured. "It's about time we made those cheeky fags sit up!"

The news of Coker's little jape spread through the Form-room. One fellow retailed it to another under his breath, and eventually everybody was "in the know."

The Fifth-Formers waited impatiently for the word of dismissal, and at last

it came. The Fifth was the last Form to be dismissed, Mr. Prout having deliberately detained them an extra ten minutes.

"Come along, you fellows!" said Coker, in tones of triumph. "Follow me to Wharton's study, and you'll see the sight of your lives!"

"The place will be simply reeking with whitewash!" chuckled Potter.

"Absolutely!" said Greene. "It's the jape of the term!"

"You fellows will have to admit, after you've looked inside Wharton's study, that I'm the brainiest chap in the Form!" said Coker.

"Carry on," growled Blundell, "and not so much jaw!"

Coker, Potter, and Greene led the way to Study No. 1 in the Remove passage. The remainder of the Fifth eagerly followed.

An expression of surprise appeared on Coker's rugged face as he drew near the study. He had expected to hear sounds of wild commotion and lamentation from within. But everything seemed perfectly peaceful.

Was it possible that there had been a hitch—that the workmen had not carried out their task?

"Go ahead, Coker!" said Blundell impatiently.

Coker opened the door of Study No. 1 and stepped inside, followed by Potter and Greene.

The remainder of the Fifth-Formers thronged the doorway and the passage.

Coker, Potter, and Greene uttered three distinct exclamations of dismay.

Inside the study the Famous Five were seated calmly at tea. And there was not so much as a splash of whitewash to be seen!

"Come right in, you fellows!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "We weren't expecting the whole of the Fifth to tea, but we'll do our best to make you comfy."

"There's plenty of stale bread, and equally stale sardines," said Nugent. "Make yourselves at home."

Coker, Potter, and Greene were incapable of replying to this kind invitation. They stood goggling stupidly at the Famous Five with expressions of utter bewilderment on their faces.

As for Blundell and the others, they were simply furious.

"Coker's been having us on toast!" exclaimed Hilton.

"Faith, an' this is his idea of a joke!" roared Fitzgerald.

"They tried to pretend it was a jape on the Remove, and all the time it was a jape on us!" said Blundell savagely.

"Slaughter them!"

Coker, Potter, and Greene backed farther into the study away from their incensed Form-fellows.

"If there's any slaughtering to be done," said Harry Wharton, "would you mind doing it in the passage, you fellows? We value our furniture, you know."

The Fifth-Formers swarmed into the study. They laid violent hands on Coker and his two chums, and dragged them out into the passage.

A series of bumpings followed, accompanied by yells of dire anguish.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Chuck it, you rotters!"

"It wasn't our fault!" gasped Coker.

"We've been let down—"

"Then we'll jolly well let you down again!" growled Blundell.

Bump!

The Famous Five went on with their tea, chuckling the while. They were thoroughly enjoying the proceedings.

"Poor old Coker!" said Bob Cherry. "His brain waves always end like this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Having taken their revenge on Coker, Potter, and Greene—and it was a very thorough revenge—the Fifth-Formers dispersed.

Coker and his companions in misfortune sorted themselves out and limped away to their own study.

"This is where we make a move," said Johnny Bull, rising from the table.

"Hope Ned and Jerry have been liberal with the whitewash!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"We shall soon see," said Wharton. "Come on!"

And the Famous Five set off in the wake of Coker & Co.

No sooner had the three Fifth-Formers recovered from one shock than they received another—a much ruder shock this time.

Coker threw open the door of his study, and the expression on his face was, as Bob Cherry declared, worth a guinea a box.

"Mum-mum-my hat!" stuttered Coker.

"Great snakes!" gasped Potter.

"Those confounded workmen have been here!" exclaimed Greene.

They had! Moreover, they had left considerable traces of their handiwork.

The ceiling of the study had been thoroughly whitewashed—and so had the furniture!

There was whitewash everywhere—on the carpet, on the table, on the chairs, on the bookcase, on the mantelpiece. And the window and the fireplace had not escaped. The pictures, too, were smeared with white.

It looked as if there had been an exceptionally heavy fall of snow in Coker's study.

"This—this is awful!" muttered Coker, whose eyes were almost starting from their sockets.

"Simply ghastly!" said Potter.

"It will take us weeks to clear up this beastly mess!" said Greene.

Coker & Co. walked round the apartment surveying the full extent of the defacements. And as they went they gathered quite a collection of whitewash on their clothing.

"Oh, help!" gasped Coker at length.

"This is appalling!"

And he sank limply into the armchair, without noticing that it contained a pool of whitewash.

There was an explosive chuckle from the passage.

Coker sprang to his feet—with a mass of whitewash clinging to his trousers—and strode to the door.

Five grinning faces confronted Coker when he reached the doorway.

"You—you cheeky young cubs!" spluttered Coker. "So it's you that we have to thank for this?"

Bob Cherry bowed.

"Verily, brother Horace, thou hast smitten the right nail on the head!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You must admit that we've turned the tables very neatly," chuckled Harry Wharton.

"You—you—"

Coker, Potter, and Greene were livid with fury. They hurled themselves at the Famous Five, who lined up in a row and withstood the onslaught.

Again Coker & Co. attacked, and on this occasion they were driven back into their study.

Coker was caressing his jaw, which had come into violent contact with Bob Cherry's fist. Potter had landed in a pool of whitewash on the carpet, and Greene rolled over on top of him.

"Say but the word," said Nugent. "and we'll resume hostilities!"

But the Fifth-Formers had had enough.

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They did not venture again from their whitewashed study.

"Ta-ta, you fellows!" said Bob Cherry, waving his hand. "I should advise you not to plan any more japes on the Remove."

"Hear, hear!" said Wharton. "They're likely to recoil on your own heads, like boomerangs. So-long!"

And the Famous Five strolled away, leaving Coker & Co. face to face with the tedious task of removing all traces of whitewash from their study.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Many Complaints!

THE invasion of Greyfriars by the workmen had plunged the school into a state of disorder.

There were workmen everywhere. They swarmed about the place like bees. Painters and plumbers and odd-job men were scattered about the building, and several boards had been displayed, bearing the warning inscription:

"WET PAINT!"

"This is the giddy limit!" declared Bob Cherry. "Why couldn't they have waited till the summer vac. before they let the workmen loose on the place?"

"The cost of labour's going up in June," said Harry Wharton. "That's why the Head's trying to rush the repairs through now."

"Well, I wish they'd give us a special holiday while the work's being done," growled Johnny Bull.

"I can see them doing that," said Nugent, with a grin.

The juniors were "fed up" with the sight and smell of paint.

At first the presence of the workmen had been regarded as a novelty, but it was a novelty that soon wore off.

The school routine was seriously disorganised, and the masters were almost at their wits' end.

Mr. Quelch was the first to make a complaint.

Having finished whitewashing the ceiling of the Remove Form-room, Ned and Jerry had started to paint the walls. And, in consequence of the merry antics of the two irrepressible workmen, Mr. Quelch found it quite impossible to preserve order in his class.

Finally, unable to stand it any longer, the Remove-master called on Dr. Locke. He was looking very agitated as he entered the Head's study.

"Bless my soul, Quelch! You are looking extremely worried," said the Head.

"My looks, sir, are an index to my feelings," said Mr. Quelch. "I am distracted, sir! I am undone!"

"Really, Quelch—"

"It is impossible for me to maintain order and discipline in my class, Dr. Locke, whilst those insolent and uncouth workmen are present in the Form-room!"

"Dear me!" murmured the Head. "Can you not remonstrate with the men?"

"I have already done so, sir, on several occasions, but with no result. Their antics are constantly sending the boys into fits of unseemly laughter. Apart from that, the Form-room reeks with the smell of paint. I feel that I can stand it no longer!"

The Head reflected for a few moments. Then he seemed to be struck with a brilliant inspiration.

"I suggest, Quelch, that you should conduct lessons in the open air. The

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desks can be moved on to the cricket-field, for instance—"

Mr. Quelch snorted.

"I had already thought of that, sir, and I dismissed the idea as soon as it came. The open air would afford my pupils far too many diversions, and they would not concentrate upon their work. Surely, Dr. Locke, there is some other way out of the difficulty?"

"I am afraid not," said the Head. "I have no power to eject the workmen from the premises. It is the express wish of the governors that the repairing, painting, and whitewashing shall be proceeded with as quickly as possible. The cost of labour will soon be almost prohibitive, and it is therefore essential that the work shall be completed before the men begin to clamour for an increase in wages."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"Then this farce is to continue, sir?"

"It is not a farce!" said the Head tartly. "It is merely an awkward but unavoidable state of affairs. I am astonished, Quelch, that you cannot adapt yourself to a temporary inconvenience. In a week's time the workmen will have completed their respective tasks."

"Another week of this, sir," said Mr. Quelch, "will drive me mad!"

"I am sorry," said the Head, "but, as I intimated before, I am quite helpless in the matter. You must carry on as best you are able."

And Dr. Locke bent his head over his papers, signifying that the interview was at an end.

Mr. Quelch, feeling decidedly ruffled, quitted the study.

The Head was not left long in peace.

There was a tramping of feet in the passage, and Mr. Hacker and Mr. Prout stamped into the study. Both gentlemen looked as if they had a grievance. And Mr. Prout had a large green smear on his gown.

"Bless my soul!" murmured the Head, looking up. "What is that substance adhering to your gown, my dear Prout?"

LIGHTING-UP TIME FOR THIS WEEK.



MAY.

17th, Monday	- - -	9.16 p.m.
18th, Tuesday	- - -	9.17 "
19th, Wednesday	- - -	9.18 "
20th, Thursday	- - -	9.20 "
21st, Friday	- - -	9.21 "
22nd, Saturday	- - -	9.23 "
23rd, Sunday	- - -	9.24 "

"It is paint, sir—green paint!" snorted the master of the Fifth. "I have been the victim of an unprecedented outrage! One of the workmen, at present employed in the Fifth Form-room, tilted a tin of paint over me! He did it with malice aforethought, sir—with cunning deliberation—in order to make a laughing-stock of me in the eyes of my pupils! And he had the brazen effrontery to tell me it was a pure accident! I—I am speechless, sir!"

"You appear to be decidedly otherwise!" said the Head dryly. "Is this all you have come to complain to me about?"

"No, sir; it is not! I have to complain of this wholesale invasion of workmen. It is undermining discipline, sir; it is rendering it impossible for me to carry out my allotted duties!"

"I heartily endorse Mr. Prout's statements, sir!" chimed in Mr. Hacker. "With these obnoxious workmen on the premises it is impossible for the routine of the school to proceed smoothly. Law and order are at a discount, and the whole school is in a state of upheaval. I am a man of Job-like patience; Dr. Locke, but I cannot tolerate this state of affairs any longer!"

"Nor I!" added Mr. Prout.

The Head endeavoured to pacify the two irate masters.

"This is but a fleeting inconvenience—" he began.

"It is more than that," said Mr. Hacker. "It is an outrage! It is not to be borne, sir!"

The Head sighed wearily.

"Quelch has already been to me with a similar complaint," he said. "I proposed that he should conduct his Form in the open air, but he did not appear to take kindly to the suggestion."

"I should think not, sir!" said Mr. Prout. "I once tried the experiment of teaching in the open air, and it proved a failure—a ghastly failure! I am not disposed to try it again."

"Then what do you suggest?"

"I suggest, sir, that the army of workmen which has infested the school should be given marching orders!"

"That is quite impossible," said the Head. "The workmen must remain. If they were to depart at this juncture, with the repairs half-finished, it would be nearly a tragedy!"

"It is quite a tragedy already!" said Mr. Hacker. "I—"

At that moment a knock sounded on the door of the study.

"Come in!" groaned the Head.

Mr. Capper and Mr. Twig entered. "I come to complain, sir—" began Mr. Capper.

"I have to make a vigorous protest, sir—" began Mr. Twig.

"One at a time, please!" said the Head. "You are the senior master, Mr. Capper. What is your grievance?"

"These workmen, sir, are a source of perpetual annoyance!" said Mr. Capper. "They have converted my Form-room into a bear-garden! Why, they have actually started taking up the floorboards!"

"Bless my soul!"

"It is impossible for lessons to proceed in such circumstances. I await your instructions, sir."

"I must request you to carry on as best you can under the adverse condition you have just described," said the Head.

"Then I regret to inform you, sir, that I cannot see my way to accede to your request."

"Capper!"

"I am sorry to have to cross your



Coker and Potter threw open the door of their study: "Mum-mum-my hat!" stuttered Coker. "Great snakes!" gasped Potter. The ceiling of the study had been thoroughly whitewashed—and so had the furniture! (See Chapter 5.)

wishes, Dr. Locke, but I really cannot tolerate the existing state of affairs any longer!"

"Are you of the same mind, Twigg?" "Absolutely, sir!" said Mr. Twigg.

The Head looked very distressed. This was mutiny on the part of the masters—respectful mutiny, but mutiny for all that.

"Really, I am quite nonplussed!" said Dr. Locke. "I scarcely know how to act."

"Then pray allow me to make a suggestion, sir!" said Mr. Prout, who had been silent quite a long time. "I propose that the whole school be given a week's holiday. The workmen will thus be able to make better progress, without hindering or annoying anybody."

"Mr. Prout's suggestion has my hearty support," said Mr. Hacker.

"And mine!" said Mr. Capper and Mr. Twigg together.

The Head looked astounded.

"A week's holiday!" he ejaculated. "Why, the governors would never consent—"

"I think they would, sir, if you put the matter sufficiently strongly to them," said Mr. Prout.

"Very well," said the Head, after some hesitation. "There is a governors' meeting to-morrow, and I will take the opportunity of placing the facts before them."

"Thank you, sir!" said Mr. Prout.

And he and his colleague, feeling considerably mollified, left the Head's study.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Joyful Verdict!

TWENTY-FOUR hours later a general assembly was summoned in Big Hall.

With the exception of the masters, nobody had the slightest inkling of what was going to happen. The majority of the fellows concluded—quite naturally, perhaps—that they were about to witness a public flogging.

"Somebody's going to get it in the neck!" said Harry Wharton, as the Famous Five wended their way in the direction of Big Hall.

"Looks like it!" grunted Johnny Bull. "All I hope is that the somebody isn't me!"

"It's more likely to be me," said Bob Cherry ruefully. "I happened to kick a football through the window of the workmen's hut this morning, and I dare say the foreman's reported to the Head."

"I should hardly think so," said Nugent. "The foreman's quite a decent sort."

"Besides, they wouldn't call a general assembly for a trifling thing like that," said Wharton.

"We shall soon know what it's all about," said Johnny Bull, as the Famous Five filed into their places. "Here comes the Head!"

A hush fell upon the huge assembly.

Gosling, the porter, was hovering in the doorway, and that looked as if there was a flogging in store for somebody. For it was Gosling's duty to hoist defaulters on to his shoulders.

Dr. Locke mounted the raised dais and surveyed the crowded gathering.

"My boys," he began, "I have some intelligence of a pleasing nature to impart to you!"

Quite a number of the fellows who had been feeling very ill at ease now breathed freely once more.

"In consequence of the fact that the school has been invaded by workmen," the Head went on, "the governors have agreed to grant a week's holiday to everybody!"

An excited murmur went up from the crowded ranks, and a number of irrepressible fags in the Third started to cheer.

The Head raised his hand for silence.

"Sounds altogether too good to be true!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Stick a pin in me, somebody! I want to make sure I'm awake!"

Peter Todd, who was standing next to Bob Cherry, took him at his word. He

extracted a pin from the lapel of his jacket and jabbed it into the most fleshy portion of Bob's arm.

A yell of anguish rang through the crowded hall.

"Yaroooh!"

"Cherry!" exclaimed the Head sternly. "How dare you utter such a ridiculous ejaculation!"

"Ahem! I—I was feeling jolly pleased, sir, at the prospect of a week's holiday."

"You have a curious way of showing your pleasure!" said the Head. "If you cannot behave yourself, you will be detained at Greyfriars whilst your schoolfellows go home to enjoy themselves!"

That terrible threat quite subdued Bob Cherry. He would not have uttered another murmur even if half a dozen pins had been stuck into him.

"The week's holiday will commence to-morrow," continued the Head. "I should advise you all to make the necessary arrangements by wire, otherwise you may not be able to get away from the school so soon as you might wish."

There was a flutter of excitement throughout Big Hall. This was the most acceptable piece of news that Greyfriars had received for a long time.

"I want you to clearly understand," said Dr. Locke, "that this holiday is a special concession, and I trust it will not be abused. You will be missing a week's tuition, and I shall expect you all, on your return, to devote yourselves industriously to your lessons in order to make up for lost time. I have nothing more to say. The school will now dismiss."

The fellows streamed out into the Close in high spirits.

Even the high-and-mighty members of the Sixth Form were hard put to it to preserve their dignity and decorum. Wingate and Gwynne were actually waltzing round the Close together!

As for Harry Wharton & Co., their delight knew no bounds.

"A week's holiday!" exclaimed Bob Cherry joyfully. "A whole giddy week! Toddy, old man, I freely forgive you for jabbing that pin into my arm! In normal circles I should have dotted you on the nose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The burning question of the moment is," said Frank Nugent, "where shall we go, and what shall we do?"

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "I'm selecting a few choice friends to come and spend the week with my titled relations!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do you mean the duke who keeps the Bunter Arms?" inquired Squiff.

"Or the belted earl who runs a fried-fish shop?" asked Dick Penfold.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors knew, of course, that Billy Bunter's big talk about his titled relations was all moonshine. They knew, also, that the fat junior would soon be angling for an invitation to spend the holiday at Wharton Lodge.

"I think I'll wire to my pater," said Harry Wharton, "and ask him if it will be convenient for me to bring a select party home to-morrow."

"Count me in, Wharton!" said Bol-sover major.

"I said a select party," said the captain of the Remove. "No party can possibly be called select if you're a member of it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come along, Harry!" said Nugent. And the Famous Five obtained their

bicycles, and proceeded to the post-office in the village.

Quite a crowd of fellows were heading in that direction—some awheel, and others on foot.

The little post-office was literally besieged by Greyfriars fellows by the time the Famous Five reached it.

Behind the counter a harassed-looking young woman was endeavouring to cope with about twenty telegrams at once.

"Stand back, there, you fellows!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Give the young lady a chance!"

Wharton's words had the effect of causing the fellows to line up in an orderly queue; and the lady official darted a quick glance of gratitude towards the captain of the Remove.

Harry Wharton wrote out his telegram—with the over-zealous assistance of his chums—and took his turn in the queue.

The wire was despatched at length, and the Famous Five cycled back to the school, eagerly awaiting Colonel Wharton's reply.

It was not until the evening that the expected telegram arrived. Harry Wharton and his chums were in the crowded Common-room when Trotter, the page, appeared with the message.

Wharton eagerly ripped open the buff-coloured envelope.

The colonel's telegram was a lengthy one. It had evidently been despatched regardless of cost.

"Wharton, Greyfriars, Friardale.—Delighted for you to come. Bring as many friends as you wish. Unfortunately, shall be in town, having been summoned to War Office. Domestic staff will, however, make you all comfortable.

"FATHER."

Harry Wharton read that telegram aloud to his delighted followers.

"Bring as many friends as you wish," quoted Bob Cherry. "I suppose you'd call me a friend, Harry?"

"Oh, no!" said Wharton, laughing. "Merely a nodding acquaintance!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm your friend, of course, Harry?" said Frank Nugent.

"Well, if you say you are, I'll take your word for it!"

"I'm your friend, too!" said Johnny Bull. "It would never do to be your enemy at a time like this!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I, too, am prepared to swear an infernal friendship!" said Hurree Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Same here!" said Billy Bunter. "You won't leave me out, will you, Harry, old chap? I've been your pal for donkeys' years!"

"In your case, Bunt," said Bob Cherry, "it's an internal friendship!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was surprising to see the number of fellows who assured Wharton that they had been his friends from time immemorial.

Fellows like Skinner and Snoop and Stott, who had thwarted Wharton's authority at every turn, now came forward and confessed that they loved him like a brother. It was touching to witness their devotion. Some of them almost had tears in their eyes.

"I always did say," said Skinner, "that you were one of the very best, Wharton!"

"You must have said it under your breath, then!" said Harry. "I'm sure I've never heard you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, Harry," said Billy Bunter

anxiously, "I'm coming with you to Wharton Lodge, of course?"

"Thought you were going to spend the week with your titled relations!" said Peter Todd.

"Ahem! I—I've changed my mind, you know!"

"You'd have to change your habits, too, before I should think of taking you home with me!" said Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"How many fellows are you going to take, Harry?" inquired Nugent.

After some deliberation, Wharton decided that a dozen, including himself, would be a good number.

Seven juniors had to be chosen, over and above the Famous Five; and Harry Wharton's final selection—which was not arrived at without a good deal of difficulty—embraced the following juniors:

Mark Linley, Squiff, Dick Penfold, Tom Brown, Vernon-Smith, Peter Todd, and Tom Redwing.

There were others who would have stood a good chance of being amongst the chosen ones, but they had already made arrangements to go to their own homes.

"We shall go by train, Wharton, of course?" said Squiff.

"I was thinking that it would be rather a good wheeze to make a cycling tour of it," said the captain of the Remove.

"Ripping!"

"It will take us a couple of days," Wharton went on. "My pater's place is in Hampshire, and we shall have to go through a couple of counties before we get to it. We'll start off in the morning, and we can take things easy, and put up at a farmhouse, or somewhere, to-morrow night. How's that?"

The others nodded assent, with the exception of Peter Todd.

"My bike's broken down," said Peter. "Unless somebody agrees to take me all the way on his step, I shall have to go by train!"

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry. "Monty Newland will lend you his jigger. You won't be using it over the holiday, will you, Monty?"

"No," said Newland. "Toddy's quite welcome to borrow it!"

"Thanks awfully!" said Peter.

The juniors looked forward to their cycling tour with great eagerness. It was ideal weather for cycling, and they revelled in the prospect of skimming along the open road, past green meadows and shady hedgerows—free as the air they breathed!

"It still seems too good to be true, somehow," said Bob Cherry. "No lessons for a whole giddy week! Seven glorious days in the open air, and not a single blessed care!"

"Bob's getting quite poetical!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Shall we bump the silly nonsense out of him?"

"Yes, rather!" said Nugent.

Bob Cherry backed away in alarm. "Stop it, you ass! Keep off the grass!" he exclaimed.

"There he goes again!" said Dick Penfold. "He's queering my pitch. He seems to forget that I'm the official poet laureate of the Remove."

"We'll let him off," said Wharton, laughing. "This is a time of peace on earth, and good will towards potty poets."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, Wharton," said Billy Bunter, pushing his way to the fore. "I want you to give me a plain answer to a plain question. Am I coming on this biking tour, or not?"

"Not!" said Wharton promptly.

"If it was a tub-race, instead of a biking tour, you could come with pleasure!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter's little round eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. He didn't like being left out in the cold; neither did he mean to accept Harry Wharton's very plain answer.

The fat junior rolled out of the Common-room in high dudgeon. And he resolved that his holiday should be spent, not with his titled relations—that would be impossible, since he had none—but at Wharton Lodge!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Not Lost, but Gone Before!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. were up with the lark next morning. Early though they were, however, they found that they had been forestalled by Billy Bunter.

The fat junior's bed was unoccupied, and of Bunter himself there was no shadow or sign.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "What's become of our prize porker?"

"He seems to have vanished into thin air," said Peter Todd. "But I expect we shall run across him presently. You were sleeping in the bed next to him, Dutton. Did you see him slope off?"

"How can I?" said Dutton, in surprise.

"What!"

"How can I rub the soap off, when I haven't used any yet?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ass!" roared Peter Todd, glaring at the deaf junior. "I wasn't saying anything about soap! Did you see Bunter disappearing?"

"Yes—"

"You did?"

"I admit I'm a trifle hard of hearing," said Dutton, "but I'm not deaf."

"You—you— Why, you're as deaf as a thundering oyster!" spluttered Peter.

"No," said Dutton, with a puzzled frown, "I didn't hear it thunder in the Cloisters. Are you trying to pull my leg, Toddy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd was at the end of his patience by this time. He stepped up to the deaf junior, and fairly bellowed into his ear.

"Did you see Bunter leave the dorm?"

"No, I didn't," said Dutton, comprehending at last.

"Well, he's gone," growled Peter. "Goodness knows where!"

"Don't worry about him, Toddy," said Vernon-Smith. "I expect he's caught an early train, so that he can get home before his pater opens the fried-fish shop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors performed their ablutions hastily but thoroughly; and the "lucky dozen," as Harry Wharton's cycling party was styled, kept up a running fire of conversation on the subject of the forthcoming tour.

Meanwhile, where was Billy Bunter?

The fat junior had risen at a very early hour—six o'clock, to be precise—and, having had his usual apology for a wash, he dressed himself and went down to the domestic regions.

Mrs. Kebble, the house dame, was very busy superintending the kitchen staff. She viewed Billy Bunter's plump person with extreme disfavour.

"Well, Master Bunter?"

"I say, Mrs. Kebble, I've been sent here by old Quelch—I mean, Mr. Quelch. He wants you to make me up a big packet of ham and beef sandwiches. You see, I'm making rather a long

journey—my pater hangs out in the Highlands of Scotland—and I've got to start off at once."

Mrs. Kebble was a fairly simple soul, and she saw no reason to doubt the veracity of Bunter's statement.

"Very well, Master Bunter," she said. "I will have the sandwiches made up, but I am afraid it will take a quarter of an hour."

"I'll wait," said Bunter.

And he did, secretly helping himself to a bag of jam-tarts when Mrs. Kebble's back was turned.

The fat junior slipped the bag of tarts under his jacket, and he looked more corpulent than ever. But Mrs. Kebble knew nothing of his little sleight-of-hand trick. She bustled about and saw to Bunter's sandwiches, which were duly wrapped up in brown paper.

"There are a dozen altogether—six of ham and six of beef," said Mrs. Kebble. "That should prove sufficient, even for you, Master Bunter."

"Thanks!" said Bunter ungraciously.

And he rolled away with the provisions he had obtained under false pretences.

"The next thing to do," he murmured, "is to borrow some cash. And that's going to be a ticklish job, I'm thinking."

As Bunter crossed the Close, he encountered those two energetic labourers, Ned and Jerry. One was carrying a pail of whitewash, the other a tin of red paint.

"Good-morning, my men!" said Bunter condescendingly.

"'Mornin', fatty!" said Ned.

And the two workmen were about to pass on, but Billy Bunter planted himself directly in their path.

"Look here," he said, in a confidential tone, "I'm expecting a postal-order—that is to say, a substantial cheque—from Sir Bruin de Bunter, one of my titled relations."

"Go hon!" said Jerry, who did not seem in the least impressed. Perhaps he had already heard of Bunter's little ways.

"If one of you will advance me a quid on my cheque," continued the Owl of the Remove, "I'll repay it with interest after the holiday."

Ned threw back his head and laughed heartily.

"Ho, ho, ho! I can jest about see you doin' that!" he exclaimed.

"I mean it!" said Bunter. "I'm an honourable fellow, I am! I shouldn't dream of letting you down—"

"You won't get the chance!" growled Jerry. "Stand aside, young shaver! There's work waitin' to be done!"

"Don't be a pair of mean beasts!" urged the Owl of the Remove. "I know for a fact that you unskilled labourers are getting about twenty quid a week; and you can easily afford to lend me a quid."

"We'll lend you something else if you don't get outer the way!" said Ned darkly.

Neither he nor Jerry appreciated being dubbed as unskilled labourers.

Billy Bunter still lingered protestingly in the workmen's path; whereupon Jerry, with a deft movement, withdrew the paint-brush from the tin, and dabbed Bunter on the nose.

The fat junior's snub nasal organ was a flaming red.

"Ho, ho, ho!" chuckled Ned. "Looks as if he suffers from india-gestion, don't he?"

"You—you rotters!" roared Bunter.

And he dabbed furiously at his nose with his handkerchief, which came away red.

"Like some more?" asked Jerry.

"Yow! No!"

"Clear off, then!"

Billy Bunter obeyed, and Ned and Jerry passed on, chuckling.

The Owl of the Remove, blissfully unconscious of the fact that a great deal of red paint still adhered to his nose, rolled away towards a bench which stood beneath the old elms. Here he sat down, in order to think out ways and means of raising the wind.

It was still early, and the other fellows were not yet up. But Mr. Larry Lascelles, the young mathematics master, evidently believed in early rising, for Billy Bunter saw him emerge into the Close in his flannels.

Instantly the fat junior buried his face in his hands, and shook violently, as if he were sobbing.

It was a ruse on Bunter's part to attract Mr. Lascelles to the spot; and the ruse succeeded.

The mathematics master came striding towards the bench on which Bunter was seated, and he laid his hand kindly on the fat junior's shoulder.

"Bunter! What is the matter, my boy?"

Billy Bunter continued to sob convulsively. He did not look up.

"Come, Bunter!" urged Mr. Lascelles. "Tell me what is wrong. You appear to be decidedly down in the dumps. Can I help you in any way?"

The Owl of the Remove dropped his hands from his face, and looked up piteously at his interrogator. Tears stood in his eyes—crocodile's tears, which Bunter had managed to manufacture for the occasion.

"It—it's like this, sir!" he faltered. "We've been given a week's holiday, and—"

Mr. Lascelles looked astonished.

"Surely you are not crying at the prospect of a week's immunity from lessons?" he exclaimed.

"Nunno, sir!"

"Your nose is very red and inflamed," observed Mr. Lascelles. "Has someone struck you?"

Bunter shook his head.

"It's red through crying, sir," he explained. "It isn't often that I give way to grief like this, but I—I really can't help it, sir! Boo-hoo!"

Mr. Lascelles looked keenly and searchingly at the fat junior. But Bunter was playing his part so perfectly that even the shrewd mathematics master was deceived.

"Hush!" he said kindly. "You must not give way to your emotions in this manner, my boy. Tell me the nature of your trouble, and I will see what can be done to alleviate it."

Billy Bunter continued to sob—so violently that he very nearly overdid it.

"It—it's a week's holiday for everybody, sir," he wailed, "and I—I can't go home!"

"Why not?" asked Mr. Lascelles, in surprise.

"I—I'm stony, sir!"

"Do you infer by that expression that you are in a state of penury?"

"Yessir!"

"Then I am sorry for you, Bunter," said Mr. Lascelles sympathetically.

Billy Bunter sobbed with increased vigour. He wanted something more substantial than sorrow and sympathy.

"Surely you can wire to your father for some money, Bunter?" said Mr. Lascelles, after a pause.

"Yes, I could do that, sir. But I should have to wait here till the money came, and it might not turn up for hours and hours, sir—perhaps days!"

Mr. Lascelles nodded.

"I fully understand the position, Bunter," he said. "It is not usual—in fact, it is extremely unorthodox—for a

master to advance money to a junior. But if a loan of ten shillings would extricate you from your present difficulty—"

Billy Bunter brightened up wonderfully.

"That's awfully decent of you, sir," he said. "But it would be better still if you could make it a quid. Ten bob won't be much use—"

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Lascelles. "You only require, so far as I can see, your railway-fare to London, and ten shillings will easily cover that."

So saying, the mathematics master counted out four half-crowns, and handed them to the Owl of the Remove. The coins clinked musically into Bunter's fat palm.

"I shall want some refreshments on the way, sir—" began Bunter.

Mr. Lascelles frowned.

"Do not presume to trespass too greatly upon my generosity, Bunter, or I shall demand the return of the sum I have already lent you!"

That threat was sufficient to silence Bunter. He slipped the half-crowns into his pocket, and rolled away, contenting himself with the reflection that half a loaf was better than no bread.

Instead of proceeding out of gates to the railway-station, however, the fat junior made tracks for the bicycle-shed.

It was a spacious shed, and about fifty machines were stored within.

Billy Bunter ran a critical eye over the array of cycles, and selected the newest-looking machine of the lot. He tied his packet of sandwiches on to the handle-bars, and, having first ascertained that the coast was clear, he pushed the bicycle out of the shed.

"This jigger will suit me a treat!" he murmured. "I don't know whose it is, and I don't much care. There's a puncture outfit in the saddle-bag, and I ought to land at Wharton Lodge without much trouble."

So saying, Billy Bunter mounted the machine, which nearly collapsed under his terrific bulk, and pedalled briskly away.

As the fat junior passed through the school gateway the clanging of the rising-bell greeted his ears.

Billy Bunter chuckled.

"The fellows will be wondering where I've got to!" he muttered. "They'll hunt for me high and low, I expect, but they'll be unlucky!"

The Owl of the Remove had cycled but a short distance along the main road, when he recognised the tall form of Larry Lascelles walking ahead of him.

"This won't do!" murmured Bunter. "Lascelles thinks I'm going by train, and if he spots me he might ask some awkward questions. I think I'll dodge up this side-road."

And Bunter did, unobserved by the mathematics master.

The fat junior was unaccustomed to physical exertion, and he soon had bellows to mend. But he was in high spirits, nevertheless. He had stolen a march on Harry Wharton & Co. And he laughed aloud as he pictured to himself the surprise of the touring-party when they arrived at Wharton Lodge and found their fat schoolfellow awaiting them!

"This is where I smile!" exclaimed Billy Bunter.

And the fat junior's smile was of such a boisterous nature that it startled a couple of cows in a neighbouring meadow.

The Owl of the Remove toiled along the narrow road on the borrowed

bicycle, with four half-crowns clinking in his pocket, and with his fat face beaming like a full moon!

Meanwhile, Harry Wharton and his chums, suitably clad in sports coats and flannel trousers, were seated at breakfast in the dining-hall at Greyfriars. They would not partake of another meal at the school for a whole week.

There was great excitement at the Remove table, of course, and the excitement was heightened by the sudden and mysterious disappearance of Billy Bunter.

"I can't think what's happened to the fat duffer!" said Squiff.

"He must have started on his holiday already," said Wharton.

"Not he!" said Peter Todd. "Bunter would never miss brekker!"

"Mrs. Kebble tells me that she made him up a packet of sandwiches early this morning," said the captain of the Remove.

"My hat! Then it looks as though he really has made an early start."

"He's not on the premises," said Bob Cherry. "We've hunted everywhere for him."

"And his cap's disappeared," said Tom Brown.

"So has my hairbrush!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Then you can bet your life Bunter's disappeared, too!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors scrambled through their breakfast—the excitement adversely affected their appetites—and went out into the sunlit Close.

Some animated scenes were in progress.

The station-hack, chartered by Wingate and Gwynne, had arrived, and as the two seniors were driven away a rousing cheer followed them, proof of their popularity.

No such cheer went up as Loder of the Sixth was driven off in a special car which he had hired from Courtfield. Loder would need to mend his ways very considerably before he was entitled to the cheers of his schoolfellows.

Temple & Co. of the Upper Fourth departed on foot for the railway-station, and they sang out a cheery farewell to the Removites as they went. As a rule, they were at daggers drawn with the Remove, but on such a joyous occasion as this they were only too willing to bury the hatchet.

In a corner of the Close Coker of the Fifth was mounting guard over his celebrated motor-cycle, which had recently been fitted with a side-car.

Potter and Greene were with Coker, and the trio were engaged in earnest conversation. Coker was attempting to induce Potter to travel in the side-car, and Greene to ride on the carrier at the back. But Potter and Greene did not appear to relish the prospect. Their lives were not insured, and they knew Coker!

Harry Wharton & Co. stood together in a group, chatting, until the majority of the fellows had started off on their holiday.

Then, when the biggest portion of the crowd had melted away, Wharton turned to his followers.

"Come along, you fellows!" he said briskly. "Time we made a start."

"Lead on, Macduff!" said Bob Cherry.

Wharton led the way to the bicycle-shed, from which he emerged in a few moments pushing his machine.

The rest of the juniors crowded into the shed, and there was a sudden roar from Vernon-Smith.

"My bike!"

"What's wrong with it?" asked Nugent.

"It's gone!"

"Gone!"

The word was uttered in chorus by Vernon-Smith's companions.

"You're quite sure it isn't there, Smithy?" called Harry Wharton.

"Of course I'm quite sure!"

"Then somebody must have taken it by mistake—"

"By design, you mean!" said Peter Todd. "You can bet your Sunday topper that Bunter's bagged Smithy's bike!"

"Oh!"

"The—the fat marauder!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, clenching his hands convulsively. "Next time I see Bunter I'll strew little bits of him in the roadway!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's no laughing matter!" said the Bounder. "What am I going to do for a bike? There isn't one that I can borrow—"

"Oh, yes, there is!" interposed the cheerful voice of Dick Russell. "You can have mine, Smithy."

"But you're going to use it—"

"I was; but I can easily go home by train. It will be much quicker, as a matter of fact. You're welcome to borrow my boneshaker, Smithy, but mind you don't sell it to an old-iron merchant!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dick Russell had slandered his bicycle, for it was a really good machine.

Vernon-Smith thanked his benefactor profusely, and he quite recovered his good humour.

"Now," said Harry Wharton, surveying his followers, "are you all ready?"

There was a general nodding of heads.

"Off we go, then!"

The twelve cyclists mounted their machines, nodded cheerfully to a group of workmen who watched them depart, and rode away.

As they passed through the school gateway Bob Cherry reached out his hand, whisked Gosling's hat from his head, and sent the battered and decayed article of headgear whirling into space.

"Buy you a new one after the holiday, Gossy!" said Bob cheerfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Without stopping to hear Gosling's flow of expletives, the juniors rode on, and were soon lost to sight along the road.

Their holiday adventures had begun!

THE END.

(Another grand long complete story next week, dealing with Harry Wharton & Co.'s holiday adventures, and entitled "Chums Awheel!" Don't delay—order to-day!)

READERS' NOTICES.

BACK NUMBERS WANTED, ETC.

R. Taylor, the Limes, 84, Dudley Road, Whalley Range, Manchester, wants "Boys' Friends," Nos. 916, 918, 923, and 939. 3d. each offered.

M. Stewart, 6, Butterley Cottages, North Strand, Drogheda, Ireland, will exchange "Holiday Annual" for "Gems" and "Magnets" before 1916.

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Miss D. Morgan, Commercial Bank, Orange, N.S.W., Australia, wants "Gem," entitled, "A Very Gallant Gentleman."

TELEGRAPHY AT HOME.

An Interesting and Instructive Article written in a Simple Style.

THIS WEEK:
A GALVANOMETER ADAPTED.

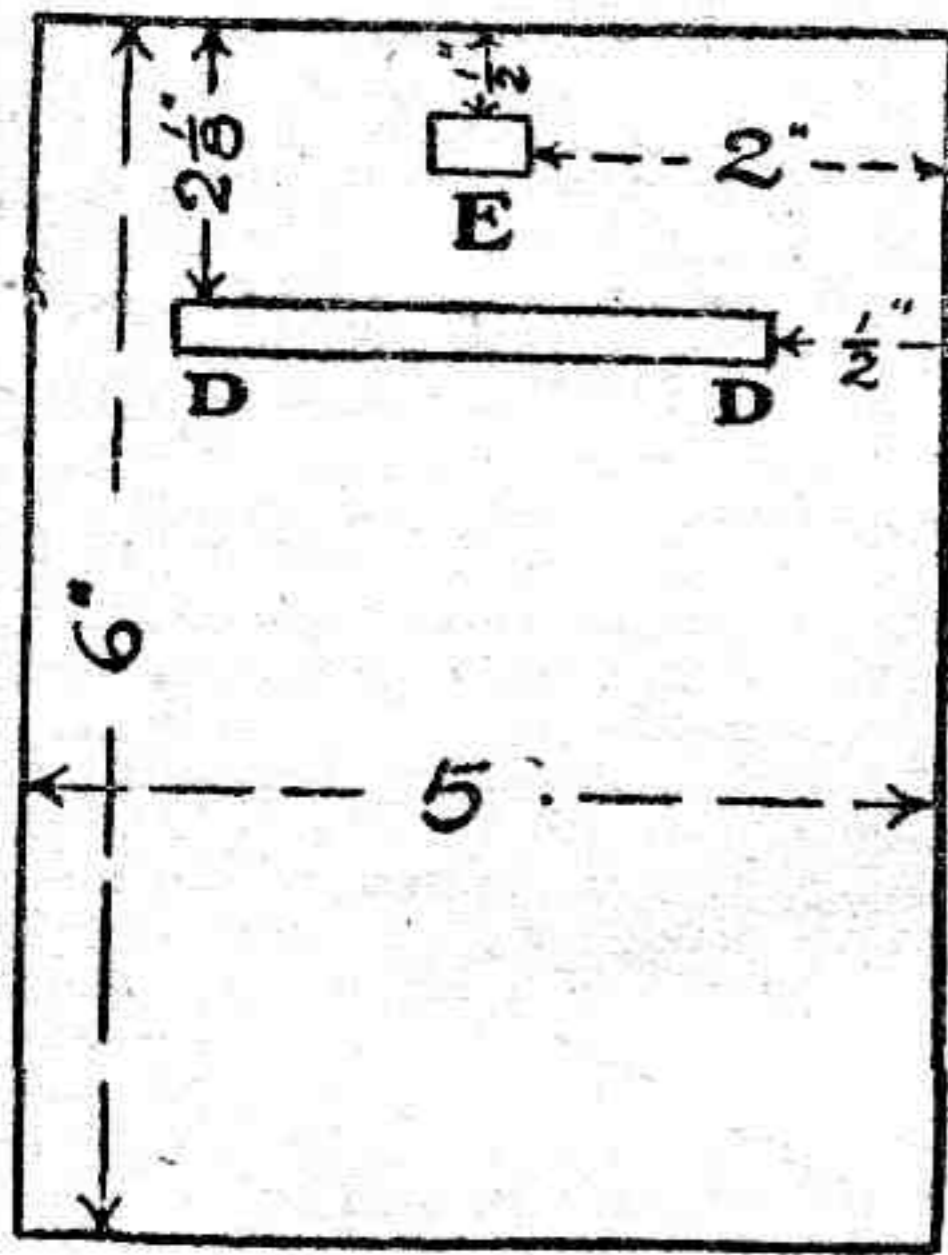
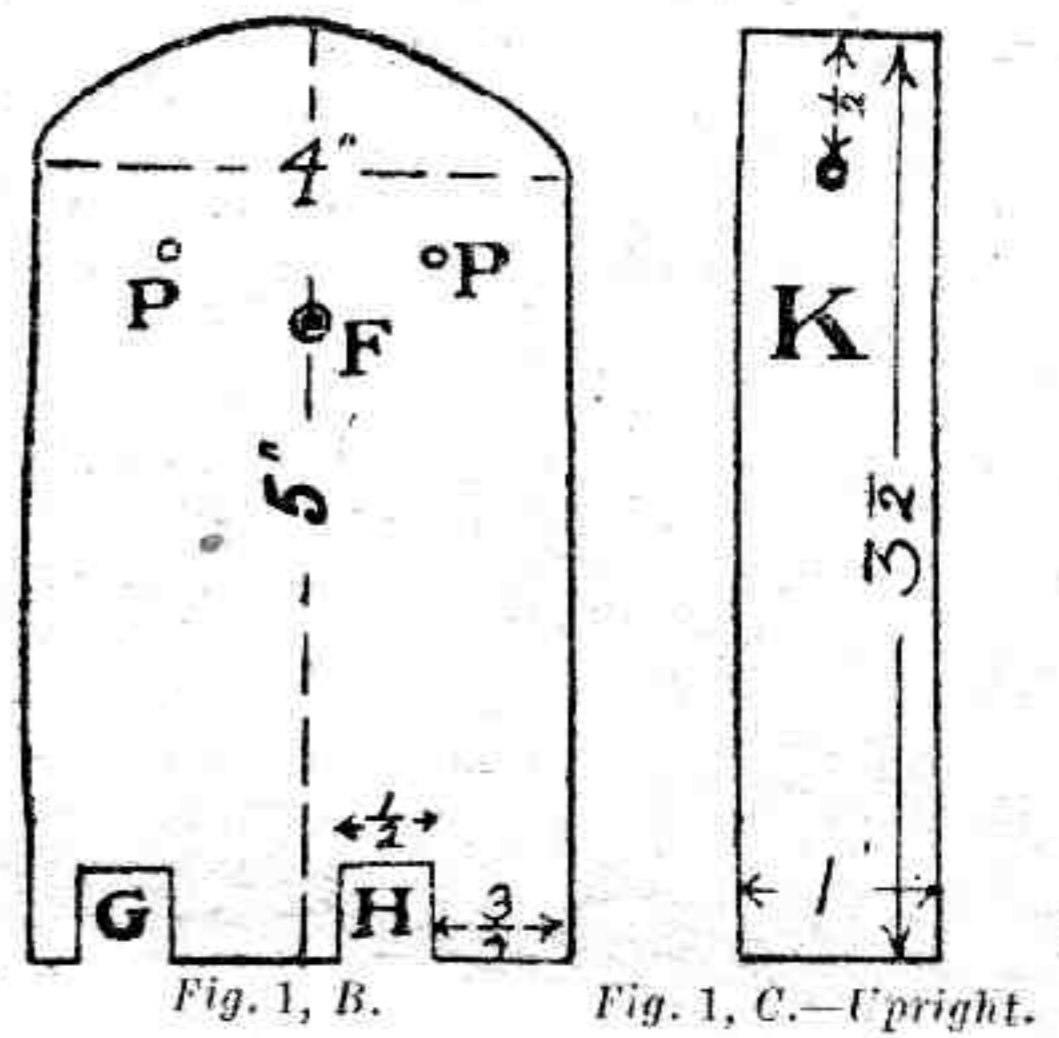


Fig. 1, A.—Base of Instrument.

The telegraph is based upon the following principle: A current of electricity, passed through a hoop of wire within which a needle is suspended, will move that needle from left to right, or from right to left, according as the wires are attached to one or other of the poles of a battery. This simple apparatus is called a galvanometer. A telegraph instrument is nothing but a galvanometer adapted to convenient usage.

Before entering upon the method of construction, it would be as well to inform whoever undertakes this work that the utmost care is necessary in adjusting the various parts. The slightest fault will certainly spoil the whole instrument, and the least carelessness render all the labour expended utterly useless.

Now to describe the simplest way to make a receiver and transmitter.

Three pieces of wood will be required, a cigar-box furnishing the best material for the purpose.

To commence with the base. Cut a piece of wood measuring 6in. by 5in. In this two grooves must be made (D D and E), according to the measurements shown in (A, Fig. 1). The width of these grooves must, of course, depend upon the thickness of the wood, for the dial and the upright will have to be fitted into them.

For the dial you will require a piece of wood similar to the base, but measuring 5in. by 4in. One end of this should be rounded, as shown in (B, Fig. 1). Drill a hole (F) right through this dial, 3in. from the bottom and 2 1/2in. from either side. As a piece of wire will have to revolve easily in this hole, take great care to cut in cleanly. In the lower end of the dial cut out two notches (G H), each according to the measurements in (B, Fig. 1)—i.e. 1/2in. deep and 3/4in. wide. Each notch must be 1/2in. from its side of the dial.

The upright is very easily made, being simply a strip of wood 3 1/2in. by 1in. (C, Fig. 1). In this drill a hole (K) 3in. from the end and 1/2in. from either side, taking

the same care as with the hole in the dial.

Having thus prepared the several pieces of the framework, the dial should be glued into its groove. A small, square block of wood glued into the angle formed by the base and the dial will ensure the latter's being perfectly perpendicular. The upright will be fixed in its place later.

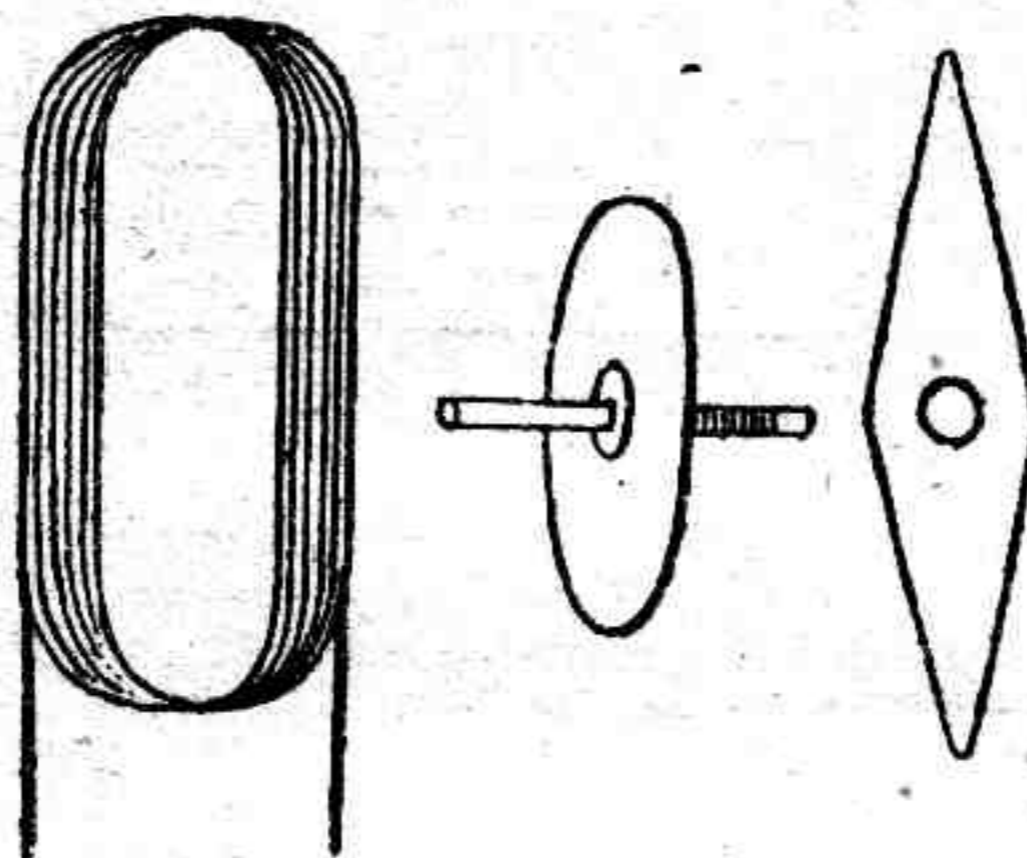
To proceed with the more delicate part of the work. Cut a piece of cardboard,

as follows: Take a piece of ordinary watch-spring, an inch long, and make it red-hot. When in this condition drill a hole through the centre, and when it is cooler round the ends, as in (B, Fig. 2). Heat it once more to a red heat, and then plunge it into cold water to harden. The needle must now be magnetised by being drawn several times firmly across the pole of a strong magnet, care being taken that it is always drawn in the same direction.

The pointer (C, Fig. 2) should be made in a similar manner, except that it must not be magnetised, and should be at least twice as large as the needle. Through the hole in the magnetised needle pass a couple of inches of straight, stout wire, and with a little solder, or even sealing-wax, fasten the needle as shown in (B, Fig. 2).

All these parts can now be fixed together. In the middle of the broad side of the coil of wire you must push aside the strands in such a manner that holes can be made through the cardboard hoop. Pass the two ends of the thick wire to which the needle is attached through these holes, so that the needle is then suspended within the coil. Take care to make these holes large enough to allow the axles of the needle to revolve freely, as the whole success of your apparatus depends upon the needle turning easily within the coil, which should now appear as in Fig. 3.

Fasten the coil upon the back of the dial, one end of the protruding axle passing through the hole you have already made in the wood. Then glue the upright firmly in its groove, with the other end of the axle through its corresponding hole. Take great care that the needle can revolve freely within the coil. Fasten the pointer to the end of the axle passing through the dial, and in this latter drive two pins or wooden pegs (P P) on either side of the pointer, in order that it may only move within a limited arc (B, Fig. 1).



A.—Coil of Wire. B.—Magnetised Needle. C.—Pointer. Fig. 2.

fairly thin in texture, 5in. long and 1in. wide, and bend it into the shape of an oblong hoop. Upon the hoop or bobbin wind about half an ounce of fine, cotton-covered copper wire, Size No. 36. Wind this wire very carefully and evenly, but not tightly, leaving about 4in. free at either end (A, Fig. 2).

The next thing to be made is a magnetised needle, which can be easily done

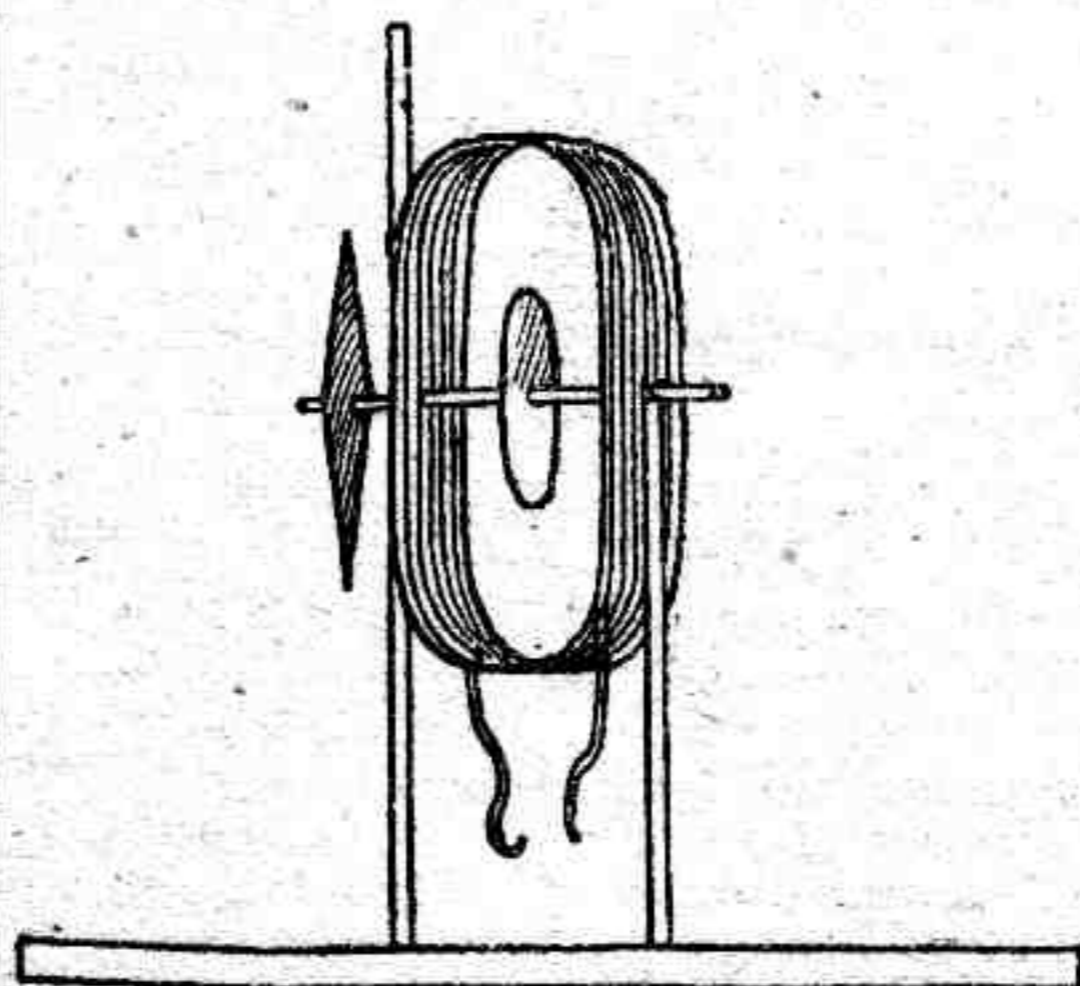


Fig. 3.—Revolving Needle in Coil.

This splendid article will be continued in next week's issue of THE MAGNET LIBRARY.

THE SECRET OF THE SILENT CITY.

A Magnificent New Serial Story of Thrilling Adventure.

By DAGNEY HAYWARD.



The boys swarmed up higher and higher, the giant tree quivering beneath the frantic efforts of the animal to dislodge its horn. (See page 17.)

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 Dr. Harland, 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.

It is discovered through Wonga, the chimpanzee, that a rival film company is making for the Silent City.

After a perilous journey they arrive at a walled town occupied by dwarfs. The party is trapped in a cavern, but escapes, taking a native who has a chart tattooed on his back with them.

(Now read on.)

Perils of the Undergrowth!

THE crossing of the river was entrusted to Augustus, who, with Quambo on his head and Dick on his back, carrying the end of the guide-rope, successfully forded the stream and reached the other side in safety. The rope was made fast to a tree. Mr. Sherwell and the other boys followed across, and in due time most of the carriers and mules had been hauled over in safety. But some evil genius seemed to be possessing the ropes that day, for just as Tom Rackett was slinging a large box of films and apparatus across, the rope broke again, and the whole cargo fell into the river.

"By gum!" he cried in anger. "There's some thousands of feet of valuable stuff gone. Thank goodness it was not a box of negatives!"

"Think yourself lucky it was not you instead of the films, my boy," said Dr. Harland. "Here, catch this rope and make it fast, and get over yourself."

So they all got across in safety eventually, and stood, fairly worn out with the excitement and work of the day, on the farther bank of the river.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 641.

By this time the day had grown old, and the afternoon sun was sinking in the sky. Despite his anxiety to get on, Mr. Sherwell recognised that it would be useless to try and make any further progress that day, so he ordered the camp to be pitched, and recommended all his party to get as long a rest and sleep as they could.

But none of the three boys felt any inclination to rest. They were all worked up with the excitement of the day, and after sitting still an hour or so and having a good meal, they made up their minds to go and look for a little adventure on their own account.

"We won't go far away," said Dick to Mr. Sherwell, "and we will fire a gun if there is any need for help."

"Take Boris with you," said Tom Rackett. "He is the best help you can have."

Boris did not need asking twice. He barked with joy at the idea, and in a few minutes they were all on their way into the undergrowth which lay ahead.

There was no kind of path, but the bushes and trees were not so thick that they could not make their way forward. A few snakes rustled away at their ap-

proach, and a small animal like a rabbit fled into the bush.

Presently Boris lifted up his head and began to sniff and whine.

"What is the matter?" asked Dick. "What do you see, Boris?"

But Boris took no notice, and continued to sniff and lift up his head as though aware that danger of some sort was near. They looked all round, but could see nothing, but they held their revolvers ready for instant action, and pushed forward cautiously.

Suddenly there was a great crashing of the undergrowth in front, and Boris gave a loud, snarling bark. Whatever danger he had scented was close upon them.

The next moment they had a full view of the cause of all the commotion. Stalking through the bush with a rolling, ungainly stride, was a large animal, about the size of a hippo, covered with a large, scaly coat and having a single, ugly horn in the middle of its head. Beady, red eyes glared at them balefully, and a short, stumpy tail lashed angrily to and fro.

"What ever beast is that?" cried Dick.

"Sure, and I don't know at all, at all!" said Mike.

"He's going to attack us," said Larry. "Come, boys, let us run for all we are worth!"

But at this instant the strange creature made a sudden start, and with incredible agility hurled itself at them.

The Monster in Pursuit!

FOR a moment the boys stood almost rooted to the ground.

They seemed incapable of moving. Then, in a flash, Dick shouted:

"Run; run! It's our only chance!"

Seizing Boris, they sprang away with a bound. As they leapt, the great horned monster uttered a snort of rage and charged full-tilt at them. With one accord they dodged at right angles, and the infuriated animal, with head down, its terrible horn lowered towards the ground, crashed on a few yards, then stopped and snorted. For a moment it stood still, raising its head a trifle, and sniffed the air. Then it saw them, and, swinging round with incredible agility for its vast size, charged towards them again, this time emitting a terrible bellowing roar. Boris, although now on a lead, strained to make for the animal. But he was dragged along. The boys, in horror and despair, rushed on in a zigzag course, the great brute thundering after them.

"It's no use!" gasped Larry, his breath coming in great gasps. "I can't go on any longer!"

"You must!" panted Dick, coming up to him. "We shall have to outstrip the brute, somehow, Mike," he yelled. "the nearest thick and high tree. It's our only chance!"

The huge creature was only some few yards behind. They could hear it snorting and crashing its way over every obstacle in its path.

"Run!" shouted Dick. "Run, you two!"

Without a thought for himself the brave boy suddenly turned, and, raising his revolver, fired point-blank at the head of the oncoming monster, aiming just above the eye. The shot took effect. For a moment the brute paused in astonishment and baffled fury, bellowing and snorting and stamping its forefeet on the ground in rage. For a moment it swayed, then, with a savage snarl, it came thundering on again.

By this time Dick had caught up his two friends. Larry seemed as if he really

could not go on, but he was urged and encouraged by Dick and Mike. They were in desperate straits. They did not know the vulnerable part of the brute at which to aim. They had seen that its enormously thick, scaly hide was more impenetrable than that of an ordinary rhinoceros. They could not keep on running much longer. Therefore Dick made for the nearest high and stout tree.

"Quick!" he panted to Larry. "Up with you!" And he and Mike gave Larry a hoist on to the lowest branch. Next to swing himself aloft was Mike, who managed to hoist up Boris. "Climb up, you two! Hurry!" shouted Dick.

The huge, ungainly brute was not ten yards away. With an almost superhuman effort Dick swung himself on to the lowest branch, and drew up his legs just as the monster hurled its enormous weight on to the tree and embedded its horn in the wood. The whole tree shook with the impact.

The boys swarmed up higher and higher, the giant tree quivering beneath the frantic efforts of the animal to dislodge its horn. Then came a splintering, rending sound. It was free.

Well out of harm's way, the boys and Boris lay concealed among the branches. Larry soon regained his wind, and the three looked down with amazement and excitement at their prey below.

It seemed unable to make up its mind what to do, but had evidently not much intelligence. It was in a great rage, and every now and again stamped on the ground with its two forefeet in impotent anger.

The boys had a splendid view of the beast. It was bigger than they had at first supposed—larger than a rhino, with a great, spiky hump in the middle of its back, and a hide like plated armour.

"Phwat is it, the great, roaring brute?" whispered Mike.

"It's one of those prehistoric animals Mr. Sherwell told us might still be lurking in these parts," replied Dick. "I bet you that's it. And now we're going to pot it!"

Dick again took steady aim, and fired at the brute's shoulder. Save for further infuriating him, it did no harm. Then Mike and Larry had a shot. This time the animal gave vent to an awful bellow of pain and fury, swayed for a moment or two, then, sniffing that way and this way, suddenly lumbered off.

Back in the Camp!

THE boys waited in silence, hearing only the crash of the brute as it charged its way through the undergrowth. Presently all was still.

"What a beast!" exclaimed Dick. "I don't believe any bullets would pierce that armour-plate business."

"Bejabers," cried Mike, "if I had a hide like that I'd pawn it and lose the ticket, bedad, I would!"

"I'm glad we're rid of it," said Larry. "Now, I think it's time we were getting back. I haven't the least idea where we are."

"Leave that to Boris," replied Dick. "He'll soon scent the path we came by."

One by one they all descended, giving Boris a good deal of assistance; for, like all dogs, he was not at home up trees. At last they stood upon terra firma, and glad they were to be there. Boris showed his joy by barking loudly and joyfully. He quickly picked up the path by which they had come, and in another hour or so they were back at the camp.

"We were all getting very anxious

about you," said Mr. Sherwell, greeting the boys very cordially.

"We've had a jolly narrow escape," said Dick, and then they told their leader and Dr. Harland their adventure.

Mr. Sherwell and the doctor came to the conclusion that they had certainly seen a descendant of some prehistoric monster, and were very interested in the boys' account of it.

That night they all listened to some splendid stories of Dr. Harland's round the camp-fire.

The most disappointed man of the lot was Tom Rackett, who bemoaned his fate at not being there to film the incident.

They were on the move again early next morning.

Augustus, as usual, was leading the expedition, and Wonga, with Dick and Larry and Mike, were walking near Mr. Sherwell and Dr. Harland.

"While you boys were hunting prehistoric beasts yesterday," began Mr. Sherwell, "Dr. Harland and I were trying to solve the riddle of the map on our captured native."

"Beyond all doubt it's the clue we want, and fills up the part on my chart that is missing. I gave the dwarf another leather pouch, and by his pointing and walking, and drawing a very rough half-circle, I gathered that we were about a half moon's journey—that is, a fortnight—from the Silent City."

"How stunning!" said Dick.

"I gather that the dwarf will be faithful to us, and show us the way," went on Mr. Sherwell, "for without him we might still be in an awkward corner. We shall have to keep a pretty close watch on him."

"If he does escape," chimed in Rackett, who had caught his leader's last remark as he joined Mr. Sherwell, "I have the photo of the map. It came out all right. But whenever I look at it it reminds me of that awful prison and the lava river."

"These native dwarfs are very treacherous," put in Dr. Harland. "I have known them turn round on their own kind. I think they learnt to fear me when I was with them, and our prisoner won't try to play any tricks on us, I fancy. We'll secure him by presents and kindness. I'm sure that will be the best way."

"What I'm anxious about," said Mr. Sherwell, "is some unforeseen delay. We

know that those Americans are on the track, and if they get to the Silent City first it'll dish our plans."

"They'll not get there first," declared Dick. "Anything but that!"

"We'll upset them, somehow," agreed Rackett. "I took a dislike to that Gilead P. Smick. He's got me to reckon with for his base ingratitude."

"Begorra," cried Mike, "I'll show him that the Irish are English as well as the Americans—bedad, I will!"

A roar of laughter greeted the Irishman's sally.

"Good old Mike!" said Larry. "Your Irish wit would save you in any situation."

"Bedad, it would, me bhoys! I'd shout out 'Ould Ireland for ever!' if I hadn't a breath left in my body!"

A New Danger!

THE party were now traversing the edge of a deep ravine. On one side was a sheer rock of some two hundred feet high, leaving a rough path—which was evidently hewn out by Nature's hand by some titanic convulsion of ages ago—of some six feet wide between the precipitous wall and the edge of the ravine. Augustus had only just enough room to make his way, and Mr. Sherwell could see that the pathway was gradually getting narrower.

The sides of the ravine were not sheer, but near the top were broken by thick scrub and jutting rocks.

The leader hurried up to Augustus, and shouted something to Quambo.

"Hi, Quambo!" he yelled. "Can Augustus get along?"

"This fellow he plenty ob go. I tink dis beast get along fine."

Now, whether Augustus scented danger, or whether his unaccustomed position made him nervous, can never be ascertained, but he suddenly came to a dead stop.

In vain did the faithful Quambo urge him on.

The negro never had, under any provocation, used the little steel-pointed prod for goading him on; but, in case of emergency, he always carried it. Now, for the first time in his life, Quambo, loath as he was to use it, did so. But it was all of no avail. The great brute refused to budge an inch.

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Everyone tried to move him, by coaxing, pushes, prods. Even tempting morsels, put at the end of a pole and dangled before his eyes, failed to make him move.

The whole expedition was held up by the faithful Augustus. He would not go on, neither could those behind. Nor could the elephant nor the mules, laden with heavy baggage, turn round.

The plight of the whole party was an awkward one.

Mr. Sherwell was impatient and dispirited.

"It's too annoying!" he cried out. "Every moment is of the utmost value. We simply must not let those Americans be at the Silent City first!"

The party were so taken up with trying to shift Augustus that they had not noticed strong but intermittent little puffs of wind come tearing up the gully. But presently these became so strong that they caused the leader and his followers great concern.

The sky became dark and overcast. Before long the wind had increased to the violence of a tornado, and came swirling and screeching up the ravine. The expedition was in a narrow part which acted as a sort of bottle-neck, and they were getting the full force of this mighty whirlwind.

"Hang on for your lives, boys!" shouted Mr. Sherwell.

Everyone gripped on to animals, baggage, juts of rock—anything they could hold.

When the full fury of the terrible tornado got them in its grip, it was like being in the hands of some mighty, unseen giant which threatened to take them off their feet and whirl them into the abyss below.

All everyone could do was to hang on to whatever hold they could get, and trust to Providence for safety.

Never in their lives did the boys forget this terrifying experience. The tearing and shrieking of the wind was deafening. Its strength and velocity appalling.

It seemed hours before this awful tornado spent itself out. But at last the wind subsided, and the darkening clouds gave way to blue skies and fitful sunshine.

"My golly," said Dick, when everyone had pulled themselves together, "I thought my arm would have been torn from its socket!"

"It was as if heaps of the strongest men were trying to tear me away from my hold!" declared Larry.

"And I never thought I'd see Ould Oireland again," put in Mike. "Bedad, phwat a wind!"

Mr. Sherwell was very anxious to learn

if all the men and beasts were safe. He was glad to find that not a single one had gone over the precipice.

Then they all turned their attention to Augustus, to see whether he would move. As soon as they spoke to him, he raised his trunk as if in answer, and calmly but cheerfully went on his way.

"By gum!" cried Larry. "He scented that wind coming, and knew that to remain still was the only thing!"

"That's it," replied Mr. Sherwell. "Elephants are simply marvellous at scenting winds—or any danger as far as that goes—and take precautionary methods accordingly. And look, boys," he added, pointing towards a slight curve in the pathway—"look how it narrows! If Augustus had stuck there there might have been disaster for all of us. The faithful brute has probably saved our lives!"

The elephant could only just manage to negotiate the narrow part, and presently they were all through the ravine, which opened out into scrub and rocks.

The Silent City at Last!

THE way to the Silent City now lay clear before them, and the path was easily found, thanks to the map, which was singularly correct, considering its age. Led by the dwarf, the party went through the forest paths and along the sides of the river for twelve days without anything of greater excitement happening than an occasional hunt, in which Boris took his part with great gusto.

It was about sunset, and Tom Rackett was seated on the back of Augustus, when a sudden turn in the path brought him in view of a wonderful sight. Standing clear against the red sky of the sinking sun were the massive walls of a great town.

Tom happened to be thinking of home at the moment, and his thoughts were so far away that for a second he looked listlessly at the city, hardly comprehending what it meant. Then he gave a great shout, and, standing on Augustus' head, waved his hat frantically in the air.

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" he shouted. "There at last!"

"What ever is the matter?" asked Mr. Sherwell, who was following closely behind. "What is the matter, Tom?"

"The Silent City!" answered the operator. "Climb up and have a look, Mr. Sherwell!"

Augustus had evidently understood. Before either of them could say a word, he turned, caught Mr. Sherwell round

the waist with his trunk, and hoisted him on to his back.

"Sure enough!" cried Mr. Sherwell. "Boys, we have arrived!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" shouted the three boys, and their cry was taken up by Quambo and Tung Wu, echoed by Tubby Bouncer, passed on by grinning natives, and increased by Boris, until it reached Dr. Harland, far away at the back of the procession, who wondered what it was all about.

"Pitch the camp at once," said Mr. Sherwell. "It would not be safe to go into the place in the failing light; besides, we want to make our first examination in broad daylight."

In a few moments a scene of bustle and hurry ensued.

"Can we make an exploring party this evening?" asked Larry, when things were a little square and ship-shape.

Mr. Sherwell hesitated. "I don't know," he said. "You boys have got yourselves into various scrapes through these little exploring parties of yours. Why not wait until the morning?"

"We will be very careful," said Dick. "Perhaps you would come, too, Mr. Sherwell?"

"A good idea," was the answer. "Yes; I think I will come and see what there is to be seen in a hurried glance."

The party was soon formed. Mr. Sherwell, the three boys, Tung Wu, Boris, and Wonga.

Leaving the camp under the charge of Dr. Harland and Tom Rackett, they pushed forward in the growing darkness. What Mr. Sherwell was most anxious to find out was whether the American party had yet arrived on the scene.

An hour and a half's sharp walking brought them close beneath the shadows of the mighty walls. They had not met a living thing worse than a few jungle-rats. As far as anyone could make out the city was silent indeed—silent and deserted.

There was no appearance of a gate in the wall facing them, so Mr. Sherwell split his party in two; himself, Larry, Mike, and Boris going to the right, Dick, Tung Wu, and Wonga going to the left.

"Whoever first finds a gate will whistle loudly three times," he said, as they separated. "Be careful, Dick, and do not do anything rash, nor try to enter the city until we have joined you."

"Never fear," answered Dick. "I'll be safe enough. Come along, Tung Wu!"

(There will be another instalment of this grand adventure serial next week. Order your copy EARLY.)



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STORYETTES.

A Doubtful Hint.

They had met for the first time since their school days, and were telling each other of their professional careers.

"And how did you come to leave the stage?" asked one.

"I had a hint that I was not suited for it."

"I see. The little birds told you, eh?"

"Well, no; not exactly. But they might have been birds had they been allowed to hatch."

A Credit to His Father.

Sir Augustus Lackcash, looking more seedy than ever, entered the tailor's shop, and was met by the tailor himself, who welcomed him with a beaming smile.

"My son informs me," said Sir Augustus, "that you have allowed him to run a bill for three years. I have come, therefore—"

"Oh, pray, Sir Augustus," interrupted the tailor, bowing with extravagant politeness, "there is really not the slightest hurry, I assure you."

"I know that," returned the impecunious knight serenely; "and, therefore, I have come to tell you that in future I want to get my clothes from you, too."

Striking a Discordant Note.

There is a young lady in Headingley who is still brooding with mortification

and remorse over something she said several evenings ago, when a pianist was one of a number of guests at her house. He stayed somewhat late. As he rose to leave, the lady said:

"Oh, don't go yet, Mr. Thumpleigh; we want you to play something for us."

"Really, you must excuse me, it is so very late," he answered, with becoming modesty, at the same time edging towards the piano. "Besides," he added, "I should disturb the neighbours."

"Never mind the neighbours," his hostess answered, with a good deal of feeling, "they poisoned our dog yesterday."

He has not called since.

Trusted to Their Honour.

The train was making its way into Vauxhall Station, and the familiar "Tickets, please!" resounded all along the platform. The shabby-looking man with his back to the engine rose and addressed his fellow-passengers with dignity:

"Gentlemen," he said, "I trust to your honour!"

And then he got under the seat.

Not What He Meant.

He was a brand-new milkman, and, lacking the wisdom of more experienced members of the species, knew not that on certain subjects he should at all times maintain a frigid silence.

"It looks like rain this morning, mum," he said pleasantly, gazing skywards, as he poured the milk into his customer's jug.

"It always does!" was the curt reply.

And the milkman was so dissatisfied with the remark that he strode away and savagely kicked a lamp-post.

Why Trade was Refused.

"If you please, sir, father says he's going to kill a pig, and can you do with a side of bacon?"

"Yes, my boy," said the schoolmaster. "Tell him to send it as soon as he likes."

A week passed away, and, as the bacon had not arrived, the teacher reminded the boy of his order. "I expect you forgot to tell your father, you young rascal!" said the schoolmaster.

"Oh, no, sir, I didn't!" said the youngster. "My father hasn't killed the pig."

"How's that, Tommy?"

"Please, sir, it's got better."

It Made an Impression.

He was showing a party of ladies through his eight-storey factory.

"Yes, this is a high building," he said; "but to show you how easily we can communicate from one department to the other I will whistle up this tube to the foreman on the top floor."

"Now, Miss Jones, just come and listen here."

The top-floor foreman had recently been pestered with false calls from the office-boy.

"Ye ill-mannered slip of a monkey!" he yelled. "If ye do that again, I'll come right down and spank the life out of ye!"

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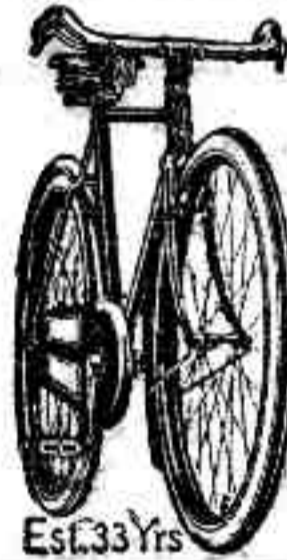


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