

ONLY A FEW LEFT — GET YOURS TO-DAY! — THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL!

No. 831. Vol. XXV.

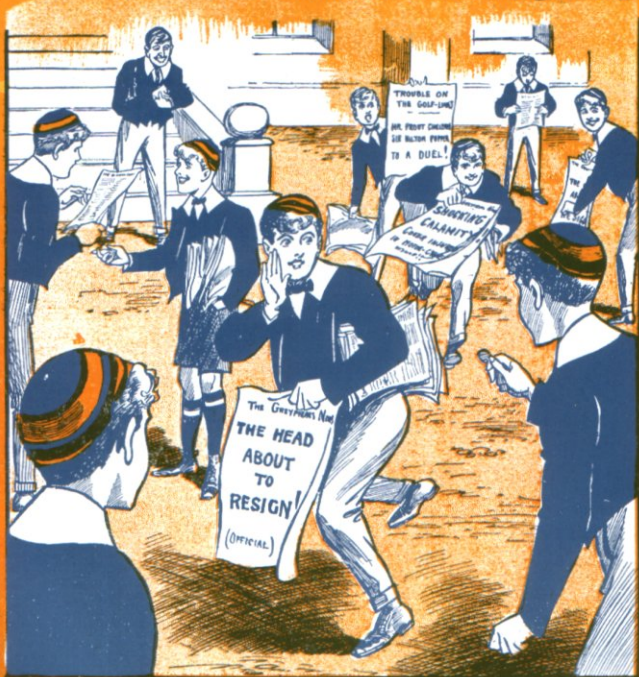
Week ending January 12th, 1924.

The Magnet 2^d

Library

of
School & Detective Stories.

EVERY
MONDAY



"PAPER!"

FISHER T. FISH'S LATEST "STUNT!"

(A sensational scene from the long complete school story inside, featuring Fisher T. Fish—the business man of the Remove.)

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"THE WAYWARDNESS OF WIBLEY!"

By Frank R. Harbs.

YOU will get a clear notion in next week's splendid issue of the **MAGNET** as to why William was wayward. This is a yarn calculated to leave a very definite impression. It will loom large in the annals of Greyfriars, and, so to speak, it sort of puts a new face on things, as the actor said when he opened his make-up box. Like the man who walked off with the ladder which did not belong to him, Wib takes a lot of steps in this surprising yarn.

A THEATRICAL STUNT-MERCHANT.

Now, nobody grudges Wibley his well-earned fame as an actor. You will appreciate next Monday's tale for many reasons, but mainly, it seems to me, because it pays court to the real first-class talent of the fellow who is always putting ginger into the work of the Remove Dramatic Society. All the world's a stage, etc.—pardon this whiskered segment of Shakespeare—but Wibley has appeared in more parts than most, and during the course of his variegated career as a Theatopian he has caused more giddy sensations than anybody.

HOW IT FELL OUT!

But it would be a mistake to explain. I am not sure I could if I tried. You see, Frank Richards has woven such a plot that it cannot be set down in a couple of lines. Moreover, it is not necessary to make the attempt. Wait for Monday. It is enough that Wibley is fairly on the job. When he gets busy with dramatic work he forgets all else. So to speak, his Form duties are blacked out. This makes it bad for Wibley; but was there ever an artist yet, a chap who loved his calling, who did not suffer for sheer love of his calling? The answer is in the negative. Anyhow, H. W. & Co. get a real surprise.

A REAL TREAT!

Anyway, the coming story will make things hum. It has tons of humour in it, and a good share of sympathy as well, for the pathetic figure of a certain old actor, by name Cornelius Mummer, arouses pity, and a dash of admiration. Cornelius is an illustrious antique from the footlights. He has seen better days. Wibley, always eager to help a fallen historian, comes to the rescue, and in so doing falls into a regular sea of adventure.

A STAGE SUPPLEMENT!

The **MAGNET** for next week is a real theatrical issue. The "Greyfriars Herald" will be devoted to the great and inspiring subject of plays and acting. THE **MAGNET** LIBRARY.—No. 851.

scenery, the learning of parts, roles (not and otherwise), and all the things in that department. There could be nothing more appropriate. Thousands of **MAGNET** readers are busily engaged these days in preparing for performances. The curtain is going up on Bunton plays, and all other sorts of plays, including the respected veteran, "Li On Parle Francois," and amateur actors, as well as others, will be glad of the hints conveyed in the new supplement. Of course, William Wibley is to the fore. He put his name to a very special sort of article, one with pep in it; in fact, just what one might expect from Wib.

NO BETTER FUN!

Mention of this Supplement puts me in mind of some of the advantages of assisting at a show. Take the case of that venerable piece, "A Pantomime Rehearsal." I am sure it is being fished out of obscurity this season, and is giving unlimited delight to any number of people. But, as Wibley knows to his cost, there are heaps of difficulties in getting up a show. In "A Pantomime Rehearsal" it may be remembered that that elegant dude, Lord Arthur Pomeroy, would keep chipping in and upsetting the stage manager. Stage managers were born to be upset, but even they, poor fish, ought to be shown some consideration. Actors, amateur and otherwise, will find food for reflection in the "Greyfriars Herald" for next Monday.

"A MARKED MAN!"

By the way, getting back to our **MAGNET** programme, just look out for an extra strong instalment of the serial. This yarn supplies the goods. The interest is piled up in grand style. Jim Blakeney is seen walking into a very carefully prepared trap. How is he to get even once again with his particularly dangerous enemy, the Tiger? That wants finding out. In plot, characterisation, and general fibre, this yarn would take some beating. I have had shoals of letters full of praise of this striking story.

GREYFRIARS FOR EVER!

This is just a hint concerning a tale of the old school for the week after next. I have a big surprise here. The story in question is just one of those important specials which are marked with an asterisk. Look out for it!

A ROMANCE OF THE SEA!

All Magnetites will delight in the brilliant serial now running in our Companion Paper, the "Boys' Friend." This story, by the famous David Goodwin, is called "Topsail Tony," and is the finest yarn of the deep ever penned.

A "MAGNET" FOOTER TEAM!

A correspondent in the south-west of London suggests that there should be such a team. I see no reason why not. But it is not a fact that there are lots of teams up and down the country which could fairly lay claim to the title? Ever since the **MAGNET** first appeared in a world which was waiting for its readers have been keen sportsmen. This is just one of the things which, it seems to me, can be left to work out automatically. Of course, I shall be glad to see any suggestions my chums may care to offer.

A QUESTION FROM CANADA!

When questions are asked, it is always a good sign. A Canadian chum writes as follows: "Who is the best artist in the Remove, and why do you still call Vernon-Smith the Boulder?" The answer to the last query is simply that nicknames die hard. Crowds of the names which are being carried about by the most worthy citizens indicated some special quality of an ancestor. The fancy name sticks like glue. That is the only reason why. When Vernon-Smith first turned up at Greyfriars he was in the Boulder class. It was obvious all the time. His feud with Harry Wharton was proof positive of his right to the title. Since then he has changed in every respect, and is now a very decent chap, and, what is more, nobody attaches any importance to the nickname. It has lost its meaning in his case. But it just shows a name cannot be thrown off. That's all.

ARTISTS!

It is not easy to say who is the best artist. I am inclined to think that Frank Nurent takes the palm. He makes the most ingenious thumbnail sketches on his exercise-books. Wibley, too, is by way of being jack-of-all arts. It is in his blood. As a matter of fact, the ability to sketch is not half as widespread as it should be. It is a most useful thing to be able to dash down an outline of anything—say a tree, or a table—but how few can manage it!

INTERESTING QUESTIONS.

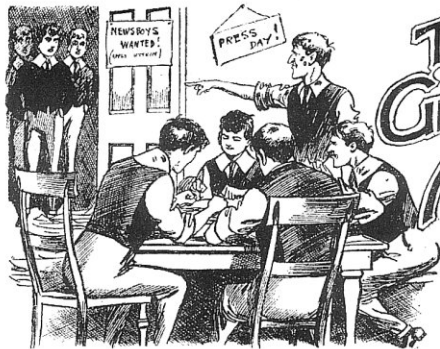
A correspondent at Tinsill asked me the other day whether the parents of Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry are rich. The families of these two favourites are comfortably off—not millionaires, of course. We are always being told that it is a mistake to have a great lot of money. Actually the possession of wealth does not lead to popularity in itself, though lots of individuals fancy it does. But look at Vernon-Smith as he used to be! No luck of money there, but at one time he was about the most disliked fellow at Greyfriars. The languid Maul-ever is far preferable. He is blessed with unlimited money, but he never seems to give the matter a thought!

WHAT ARE "COCKIES"?

This is how they call farmers in Victoria, Australia. Lindsay Hooper, of Leopold Greenlong, says the farmers in his district were going about with faces as long as fiddles before the rain came. Then immediately Jupiter Pluvius, in his kindness, visited the land, the farmers started grouching because there was too much moisture. It sounds as though what the amiable "cockies" really wanted was a tap they could work themselves—then they could turn on a shower as required. But farmers are like that, I believe, all the world over; never quite satisfied with the quality of the weather served out. This correspondent goes on to chat about his year's his Empire Exhibition in London, and he adds that the correspondence column has been of great use to him in finding friends up and down the world.

Your Editor.

Fisher T. Fish has been responsible for a good many "money-making" wheezes in his time, but luck, and alas, the Removites have never seen eye to eye with the cute American junior. His latest "stunt," however, creates a wide-spread interest, and certainly causes a sensation. It takes the form of



The Greyfriars Newspaper!

By
FRANK RICHARDS

A Magnificent Long Complete
Story of Harry Wharton &
Co. of Greyfriars, with Fisher
T. Fish as the central figure.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Very Mysterious!

"IT'S COMING!!!"
Harry Wharton & Co. stopped and stared.

That terse and mysterious announcement appeared on the notice-board in the hall.

The board was completely covered by a huge sheet of drawing-paper, of which the two words, "IT'S COMING," were inscribed in large capitals, with three exclamation-marks to give emphasis to them. Not that any emphasis was needed, for, as Bob Cherry remarked, that announcement might have been seen a mile off.

The Famous Five had just come in from the football-field. Their cheeks were glowing with health, and they had been on their way to Study No. 1 for tea, when that startling announcement had arrested them. Tea was temporarily forgotten as they stood and stared at that mammoth message, which monopolized the notice-board.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "What's it all mean, I wonder?"

Harry Wharton shook his head. "Ask me another!" he said. "Looks as if some tame lunatic has done this for a jape!"

"It's coming!" echoed Frank Nugent, still staring at the arresting announcement. "What on earth does 'it' mean?"

"Christmas, p'haps?" suggested Johnny Bull.

"But Christmas has come—and gone!"

"Then it must mean next Christmas—or the Millennium—or Billy Bunter's postal-order!" said Johnny, with a flash of inspiration. "That postal-order's been on the way ever since the Flood, and p'haps it's really coming at last!"

"Ho, ho, ha!"

The Famous Five lingered in front of the notice-board for a few moments, trying to conjecture what that announcement might mean. They racked their brains to discover a possible solution, but they had to admit themselves beaten.

"Either this is just an empty-headed lark, or there's some deep mystery about it," said Wharton. "Anyway, we won't give ourselves headaches trying to puzzle it out. Let's get along to tea!"

Harree Singh, the dusky member of the Co., nodded approvingly.

"Let us digestively devour the delicious doughnut, and cheerfully masticate the succulent jam-tart!" he said.

The juniors made tracks for Study No. 1. Harry Wharton was the first to enter, and as he did so he gave a sudden shout.

"My hat! There it is again!"

Wharton's chums followed him into the study, and they looked round in wonder.

They hadn't far to look. Suspended over the mantelpiece was a large placard, bearing the now-familiar words:

"IT'S COMING!!!"

"Well, of all the nerves!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Who's been sticking these things up all over the place?"

"Echo answers, 'Who?'" said Nugent.

Harry Wharton strode towards the mantelpiece, and tore down the placard. He screwed it up into a ball, and kicked it through the open window.

But the matter did not end there. It soon became apparent that Study No. 1 was not the only apartment into which that mysterious placard had found its way. Every study mantelpiece in the Remove quarters had been similarly decorated. And nobody had the remotest idea what it was all about.

Even Billy Bunter, who prided himself that he knew everything that was going on, had to confess himself baffled on this occasion.

The strange affair was discussed at every study tea-table, but nobody could throw any light upon it. What the mysterious message meant, and by whose hand it had been distributed, were problems that remained to be solved.

"If I catch the fellow who's going around with these idiotic placards, I'll dot him on the dial!" said Johnny Bull aggressively.

"Well, he deserves it!" said Wharton. "Dashed if I can tumble to his little game! He's been putting up placards all over the school, by all accounts. Bunter says he saw one in the tuck-shop, and Smithy spotted one in the gym, and there was one on the door of Quelch's study, of all places. It's torn down now."

"Every placard's the same, I suppose," said Nugent.

"Yes; they all say it's coming, but they don't say what's coming."

"A thundering good thing for the chap who wrote the placards!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"But we don't know who the merry merchant is—," began Bob Cherry.

"Well jolly soon find out!"

But the juniors, though they kept their eyes and ears open, failed to find out.

Everywhere they went, the mysterious placards greeted their gaze. They were torn down, only to spring up again like mushrooms. Greyfriars was flooded with them. The masters were complaining, and the prefects were complaining, but the unknown billposter remained unknown.

When bedtime came, and the Removites trooped up to their dormitory, it was to find one of the placards in the room. It was pinned to the wall, and the letters were bolder and bigger than ever.

"IT'S COMING!!!"

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped Bob Cherry. "These blessed things haunt us wherever we go!"

Harry Wharton frowned as he wrenched the sheet of paper from the wall.

"Does anybody know who's playing this fool game?" he demanded.

There was a chuckle from Skinner. Wharton spun round sharply upon the cad of the Remove.

"Have you had a hand in this, Skinner?"

"Nunno!"

"What are you cackling about, then?"

"I think it's rather funny," said

Skinner, with a smirk. "There's one of those placards stuck on every pillar and post at Greyfriars, and nobody knows who the giddy hillsticker is!"

"I believe it's you, Skinner!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Skinner shrugged his shoulders. "You're entitled to think what you like," he said. "All the same, this child is not guilty!"

"Well, it's a feeble sort of jape, whoever the japer is!" growled Harry Wharton. "If he only told us what was coming, there might be some sense in it. But to simply say 'IT'S COMING,' why, it's absurd!"

"The absurdfulness of the ludicrous placards is terrific!" said Hurree Singh. The Removites turned in, and dismissed the subject of the mysterious placards from their minds.

Next morning, however, they were reminded of it again in no uncertain fashion.

Most of the placards had been torn down overnight, but they had now been replaced, and walls and doors were simply peppered with them, so to speak.

But the crowning sensation occurred when the Removites flocked into their Form-room for morning lessons.

The blackboard had been placed on the easel, facing the class, and the familiar words were chalked right across the board.

"IT'S COMING!!!"

With a snort of exasperation, Bob Cherry picked up a duster, and took a quick stride towards the blackboard.

"Cave!" muttered Tom Brown. "Here's Quelch!"

Bob Cherry darted back to his place, leaving the words still on the blackboard. The next instant a bulging gown reached the doorway, and Mr. Quelch rustled in.

A hush of expectancy fell upon the class. The juniors glanced first at the blackboard, and then at Mr. Quelch. The hush in the room resembled the calm before the storm. For a storm was bound to break when the Form master's eagle eye lighted upon the blackboard.

"It's coming!" breathed Bob Cherry, almost inaudibly.

And presently it came!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Mystery Solved!

"BOYS!" Mr. Quelch's voice was not loud, but deep. It resembled the low rumble of thunder.

The juniors stiffened in their seats. They could tell from Mr. Quelch's tone that he had already seen what was on the blackboard. Indeed, he could hardly help seeing it, for the chalked message seemed to leap out at him.

"Who has dared to deface the blackboard in this manner?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

Silence! The Remove master frowned, and he gazed searchingly at his pupils, as if he would read their very souls.

"This preposterous announcement has been placarded all over the school!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "It appears to me to be utterly meaningless and nonsensical. It has caused a great deal of annoyance for the owner has one placard been torn down than another has sprung up in its place. I am determined to discover the author of this outrage—for outrage it certainly is! What boy has had the unparalleled audacity to chalk these words upon the blackboard?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 831.

Silence!

Whoever the culprit might have been, he evidently believed in the adage that a still tongue makes a wise head. Possibly he realised that if he admitted the authorship of that announcement, the consequences would be serious and painful!

"I am waiting!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "I am giving the culprit an opportunity to confess!"

But this was one of those occasions when opportunity was not a fine thing. The culprit, whoever he was, seemed in no hurry to confess. He was conveniently dumb.

Mr. Quelch looked at his watch. "I will allow two moments to elapse," he said. "If the culprit does not come forward during that interval, I shall be compelled to question each boy in turn."

There was a low murmur from the class. Everybody looked at everybody else, but no fellow left his seat.

The allotted time elapsed, but still nobody stirred.

"Very well!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "It remains for me to cross-examine each boy individually. Bunter!"

"No, sir! Not at all, sir!" said Billy Bunter promptly.

"What!"

"I assure you it wasn't me, sir, who chalked those words on the blackboard. I shouldn't dream of doing such a thing, sir! I can't think why you should pounce on me like this!"

"I am not pouncing on you, you utterly stupid boy!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I was merely about to question you on the subject, in order to ascertain if you knew anything about it. Your eager and excited denial, Bunter, leads me to believe that you know something of this matter."

"Nunno, sir!" stammered Billy Bunter. "I don't know anything about it, sir—honest injun! I've not been anywhere near the Form-room this morning, sir, until the bell rang for lessons. If you think that I was peeping in at the doorway when those words were chalked on the board, sir, you're quite mistaken!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "So you were prying into the room, Bunter, when these words were written on the blackboard?"

"N-n-not at all, sir! I was in the tuckshop at the time!"

There was a titter from the class, but it died away as if by magic when Mr. Quelch picked up his pointer.

"Silence!" roared the Remove master. "Now, Bunter, I am convinced that you know how these words came to be chalked upon the blackboard."

"Oh crumbs!"

Billy Bunter was standing up in his place, and his knees were knocking together with trepidation. He didn't relish this cross-examination, and he fervently wished that Mr. Quelch would "give over." But the Remove master was determined to sift the matter to the bottom.

"Answer me, boy! You saw these words being chalked upon the board!"

"Nunno, sir!" said Bunter wildly.

"How could I, sir, when I was in the gym at the time?"

Mr. Quelch frowned. "You said a moment ago you were in the school shop, Bunter. Now, you tell me you were in the gymnasium. The fact is, you were here—in this doorway—at the time this offence was committed!"

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "I—I didn't know you were watching me, sir!"

"I was not watching you, you utterly foolish boy!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"You are condemned out of your own

mouth. I am quite satisfied that you were a witness of what occurred, and that you know the name of the culprit. Reveal his identity immediately, Bunter, or I shall cane you!"

Billy Bunter made a despairing gesture. He gave Fisher T. Fish, who sat next to him, a discreet nudge in the ribs. "Ow! now, Fishy!" he muttered. "You can see the old beast is tying me up in knots!"

"Ila, ha, ha!"

The Removites could contain themselves no longer. They roared.

Billy Bunter's agitated appeal to Fish could have been heard all over the room. Mr. Quelch had heard it, and his frown deepened. His gimlet eyes were fastened upon Fisher T. Fish.

"Stand out before the class, Fish!" he commanded.

"Oh jiminy!" groaned the Transatlantic junior. "I guess the fat's in the fire now!"

Giving William George Bunter a withering look, Fisher T. Fish stepped out from his place.

"So it was you, Fish, who indited these words upon the blackboard?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Yep!" murmured Fish.

"You admit the offence?"

"Guess it's no use denying it, sir."

"And it was you, I take it, who placarded the whole school with these preposterous announcements?"

Again Fish answered in the affirmative. There was quite a buzz from the class. The mystery was solved at last, and the amateur billposter was brought to book.

Mr. Quelch glanced sharply at Fisher T. Fish. Like the Ancient Mariner, he held him with his glittering eye.

"Are you in your right senses, Fish?" he demanded.

"I guess so, sir."

"Then whatever possessed you to placard the place in this manner?"

Fish shifted uneasily from one foot to the other.

"It's an advertising stunt, sir," he explained.

"Oh! And what, pray, is meant by the words, 'It's coming'?"

Fish's reply was in the nature of a bombshell:

"The 'Greyfriars News,' sir—a real, live daily newspaper that will knock spots off the school magazine and the 'Greyfriars Herald.'"

A stupefied silence followed that remarkable statement. It was broken at length by Mr. Quelch:

"Do you seriously mean to tell me, Fish, that you have conceived the project of launching a newspaper?"

"Yep. It's the straight goods, sir."

Mr. Quelch gasped.

"I have never heard of such a wildly impossible scheme!" he exclaimed. "In order to launch a newspaper, Fish, you would need capital."

"Not necessarily, sir."

"Then how do you propose to get your newspaper printed?"

"I've got it all cut-and-dried, sir," said Fish cheerfully. "There's a printer fellow in Friarade who has undertaken the work. He's going to publish the paper each day. No. 1 comes out on Monday; and I've agreed to pay the printing expenses as soon as the paper gets into its stride. I guess that won't take long, sir. My newspaper will leap into public favour at a bound!"

"You are an optimist, Fish," said Mr. Quelch dryly. "If you take my advice, you will discard such a ridiculous enterprise. It is doomed to failure at the outset. Listen to me. If the town of Courtfield is not sufficiently large to warrant a daily newspaper, how can you hope to

publish one at Greyfriars, and make it pay? It is a hopeless proposition!"

But Fisher T. Fish didn't seem to think so. He was quite convinced that what Greyfriars needed was a bright, breezy, up-to-date newspaper of its own. He was equally convinced that such a newspaper would sell like the proverbial hot cakes.

The fact that there were only three hundred fellows at Greyfriars, and that no paper could hope to flourish with a circulation of three hundred, did not seem to occur to Fish. Perhaps he hoped that the fellows would not stop at buying one copy. They would take a dozen copies apiece, to send home to their friends and relatives. Fisher T. Fish was not merely an optimist. He was a super-optimist!

Mr. Quelch looked grim.

"I must now punish you, Fish, for your outrageous conduct!" he said. "You had no right to decorate walls and doors, and to carry out an advertising campaign without first getting permission. But that is not the worst part of your conduct. When I called upon the culprit to come forward and confess, you sat silent. Why did you not own up in the first instance?"

"I—I guess—" stammered Fish feebly.

"But for the fact that Bunter happened to see you chalking those words upon the blackboard, you would probably have gone unpunished," said Mr. Quelch.

Fish realised this only too well. And his feelings towards the Owl of the Remove were almost homicidal. It was Bunter who had given him away; and Fish made a mental resolve to make things warm for Bunter after lessons.

Mr. Quelch picked up his cane.

"Hold out your hand, Fish!" he said severely.

Reluctantly Fish obeyed.

Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Ow-ow-ow!"

"Now the other hand, Fish!"

The dose was repeated. And shrill screams of anguish floated through the Form-room. Fisher T. Fish was not of the stuff of which heroes are made. Moreover, Mr. Quelch was on top of his form as a public executioner.

"You will now resume your seat," panted the Remove master. "And do not dare to post up any further announcements without permission. So far as your latest scheme is concerned, Fish, you will be well advised to abandon it. There is no scope whatever for a Greyfriars newspaper. We already have an official school magazine; also the 'Greyfriars Herald,' which is incorporated each week with the MAGNET LIBRARY. If you have a grain of sense, Fish, you will clearly see the folly of launching a newspaper."

Squeezing his bony hands tightly together, Fisher T. Fish went back to his place. He paid no heed to the Form master's well-meant advice. Even in that moment of extreme anguish, Fish's thoughts were centred upon the "Greyfriars News," which would be the biggest sensation of modern times.

Fisher rather fancied himself in the role of newspaper proprietor; and he saw golden visions and dreamed golden dreams. He really imagined that he was well on the way to making his fortune. But, like the people of old, he imagined a vain thing!

Mr. Quelch picked up a duster and wiped the offending words from the blackboard; and then morning lessons began—twenty minutes late!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Subs.!

"FISHY, you fathead!"

"Fishy, you tame lunatic!"

"What the merry dickens do you mean by it?"

Fisher T. Fish found himself surrounded by a crowd of fellows, when the class had been dismissed. They hurled all sorts of epithets at him, and they bombarded him with questions.

Fish grinned cheerfully.

"Guess my latest wheeze has taken your breath away—what?" he said.

"Well, it's certainly a bit of a stager, ger," said Harry Wharton. "But you must be potty to imagine you can run a school newspaper, and make it pay!"

"Mad as a hatter, or a March hare!" said Nugent.

"Our ludicrous friend has the batfulness in his belly!" said Hurree Singh.

Fisher T. Fish warmly resented these imputations.

"I guess I'm as sane as any of you galoots," he said. "I'm on a real winner this time! Greyfriars has been wanting a newspaper for a long time—crying out for one, in fact."

"I haven't heard it!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"A school newspaper will fairly wake things up in this sleepy old show," declared Fish. "It simply needs a fellow of push and go to run it."

"Well, you can push it as much as you like, but it won't go!" chuckled Vernon-Smith.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish frowned upon the bilious juniors. He quite failed to see

any reason for hilarity. His latest "wheeze" was not intended to be a joke; it was a sound business proposition. Fish could not help wishing that his schoolfellows would take him more seriously.

"Stop cackling, you jays!" he said. "I guess the 'Greyfriars News' is going to be the real goods—full of punch and pep! It will be the very best thing in school journalism—the latest and greatest! There won't be anything to touch it. The school mag is much too stilted and stodgy. As for the 'Greyfriars Herald'—waal, I ask you, did ever you see such a feeble production?"

"Feeble!" shouted Bob Cherry. "He dares to call the 'Herald' feeble! Why, it's the best boys' paper in the land, bar none!"

"Hear, hear!" cried the members of the "Herald" staff, in chorus.

Fish gave a snort.

"I kinder guess and calculate that your tame rag will have to take a back seat when my newspaper comes out!" he said. "No. 1 will be on sale Monday evening, and after that it will appear without a break."

"Unless it goes smash," said Mark Lintley.

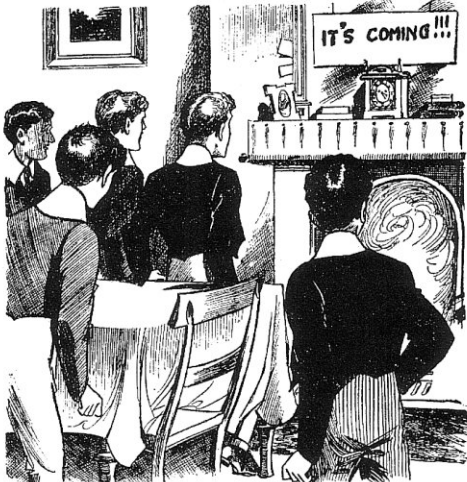
"Which is extremely probable!" chuckled Tom Brown.

Harry Wharton glanced curiously at Fisher T. Fish.

"Are you quite serious about this new venture of yours, Fishy?" he asked.

"Quite!"

"But you'll have to hustle if the first number's coming out on Monday. You haven't engaged your staff yet, have you?"



"My hat!" exclaimed Wharton, as the Co. entered the study. "There it is again!" Suspended over the mantelpiece was a large placard, bearing the now-familiar words: "It's Coming!!!" "Well, of all the nerve!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Who's been putting these blessed things all over the place?"

"Nope. But that won't take long. Would you like to be my chief sub, Wharton?"

"No, I shouldn't," said Harry with a smile.

"I'm going to give a salary to all my sub-editors, you know—"

"How much?"

"Waal, a bob a week to start with."

"Oh, make it tuppence!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish had commenced his quest for sub-editors. But the response was far from gratifying. Nobody seemed anxious to join the staff of the "Greyfriars News," at the princely salary of a shilling a week. What was worse, nobody seemed to take Fishy's new venture seriously.

However, Fisher T. Fish was very determined. Rebuffs of this sort merely acted as a spur, to prick the sides of his intent, so to speak. Staff or no staff, the Greyfriars newspaper was going to be launched, even if Harry had to write the whole of the contributions himself.

Harry Wharton & Co. declined to assist in the new enterprise; which was only natural, for they had a journal of their own to keep going, and it took up most of their spare time. In any event, they would not have associated themselves with any of Fishy's precious schemes.

Failing to get any help from the Famous Five, Fisher T. Fish went further afield. He made strenuous efforts to enlist Dick Penfold under his banner; for Penfold was a wide-awake journalist and a writer of lively verse. But the bard of the Remove informed Fish, politely, but firmly, that there was "nothing doing."

Mark Linsley and Tom Brown and Peter Todd were approached, but they too, washed their hands of the affair.

Nothing daunted, Fish continued his quest. And at last his exertions were rewarded. He bore down upon Skinner and Trevor and Treluce, who were strolling in the Close, and promptly tackled them.

"Say, you galoots! Care for a job on the staff of my newspaper?"

"All depends," said Skinner. "What do you want us to do?"

"Write chatty pars, and sensational articles, and all that sort of thing."

"For nix?" inquired Trevor.

"Nope! I'm going to pay a liberal salary to all my subs. A bob a week to start with, and a substantial increase as soon as the paper gets going."

"Sounds all right!" said Skinner. "I've no objection to becoming your chief sub-editor, Fishy. They've barred me from writing for the 'Herald,' and I feel that my journalistic talents are running to seed. I'll join your staff, with pleasure!"

Fisher T. Fish beamed.

"Good!" he said. "What about you, Trevor?"

"Count me in," said Trevor. "And me," added Treluce. "I don't know much about sub-editing, but I shall soon pick it up."

Fish rubbed his hands together in great satisfaction. He had enlisted three recruits at one fell swoop, as it were. And this, after all the rebuffs he had received, was very cheering.

"You can get busy right away," he said. "Write what you like. I'm not going to tie you down to any particular topic. But see that you put plenty of 'ginger' and 'go' into your stuff! Guess I don't want anything tame, or milk-and-water! Don't be afraid to exaggerate! And mind you serve up some red-hot sensations! That's what

the public of to-day wants. Thrills! Drama! Tragedy!"

"You sound like the merchant outside the Courtfield Cinema!" chuckled Skinner. "By the way, Fishy, where's your editorial sanctum, if any?"

"Study No. 14," said Fish.

"But what about Johnny Bull and Squiff?" said Trevor. "Won't they object to your turning the study into a newspaper-office?"

"They can object till they're black in the face!" said Fish. "But I guess I'm going ahead!"

"That's the spirit!" said Skinner. "Good luck, Fishy! Rely on us to weigh in with some first-class contributions!"

Fisher T. Fish nodded brightly to the trio; then, like Alexander of old, he went in search of fresh worlds to conquer.

Bolsover major was lounging in the doorway of the tuckshop, leisurely consuming a jam-tart. Fish hailed him.

"Say, Boley, old scout, care for a job on my paper? I've just engaged three sub-editors, and I sorter calculate that you'll make a first-class addition."

Bolsover looked thoughtful.

"Would you like to make me your boxing correspondent?" he asked.

"Delighted!" said Fish.

"You'll run a boxing column in every issue?"

"Sure!"

"Then I'm your man!" said Bolsover.

The burly bully of the Remove was eager to see his name in print. For weeks past he had been trying to persuade Harry Wharton to accept a boxing article for the "Greyfriars Herald." Wharton had described the article as "siffle" and "balderdash," and Bolsover had been obliged to tuck his head in another direction. He had taken the article to Billy Bunter, and requested the fat junior to publish it in his "Weekly." But Bunter had had the astounding nerve to reject it, at the risk of getting a black eye from Bolsover.

Fisher T. Fish, however, was likely to prove a less exacting editor than either Wharton or Bunter. And Bolsover at last saw a prospect of getting his boxing article published. He embraced the opportunity with both hands.

"Guess I'm getting along famously!" said Fish. "I've got my staff and I've got my editorial office, and I've fixed everything up with the printer."

"Very accommodating sort of chap, that printer!" said Bolsover. "You wouldn't get many printers to publish a newspaper on tick!"

"Oh, old Smithers is all right!" said Fish. "I told him the tale, and said that the 'Greyfriars News' would sell like hot cakes all through the district, and jolly soon pay its way! So it will, too! With a smart, brainy editor like me bossing the show—"

"Modesty, thy name is Fish!" chuckled Bolsover.

"Waal, it don't do to be humble!" said Fish. "I never was a shy and retiring cove. Nothing like self-advancement, you know! If you want to be a 'big noise' in the world, you mustn't be afraid of blowing your own trumpet! Let's have your boxing column by Saturday, Boley!"

"All serene!"

Fisher T. Fish went on his way rejoicing. He felt that he had made a good start; and a good start was half the battle. This applied to running a newspaper just as much as to winning a football match.

There was no doubt in Fishy's mind that the "Greyfriars News" would be a stupendous success—right from the

word "go," as he would have expressed it. Being the first school newspaper in existence, it would take the world by storm. Money would pour into the coffers of Fisher Tarleton Fish. He would make friends with affluence, and shake hands with prosperity. A golden vista stretched before him as he sauntered back across the Close, dreaming blissful daydreams.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Notice to Quit!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Fishy's going strong!"

Thus Bob Cherry.

Afternoon lessons were over, and Bob and Harry Wharton were passing along the Remove passage. They halted outside the door of Study No. 14.

There was ample evidence that Fisher T. Fish was "going strong." For a large notice appeared on the outside of the study door:

"NEWSBOYS WANTED!"

(Apply within.)

"Looking for a job, Harry?" inquired Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"Not that sort of job, thanks!" said Wharton. "It'll be a bad day for me when I sink to selling papers!"

"Let's take a peep at the giddy newspaper proprietor," said Bob Cherry.

He pushed open the door of Study No. 14, and thrust his curly head round it.

There were signs of great activity within. Five juniors were seated round the table, with their coats off and their hair on end. Five pens were racing over five sheets of paper. And presently five pairs of eyes were turned towards Bob Cherry, and five voices bade him "buzz off."

The editorial staff of the "Greyfriars News" was busy.

"Go it, the ink-splashes!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

Fisher T. Fish raised a bony forefinger.

"Travel!" he said curtly. "Too busy to be bothered. Vamoose!"

"All serene," said Bob Cherry good-humouredly. "Wouldn't disturb 'you for worlds. By the way, Fishy, does Johnny Bull know that you've made his study your headquarters?"

"Guess it's as much my study as Bull's!" growled Fish.

"But Johnny won't like this wholesale invasion. Neither will Squiff!"

"Then they must lump it!" was the reply. "Get!"

Bob Cherry "got." He rejoined Harry Wharton in the passage, and they passed on, leaving the amateur journalists to their labours.

Those labours were not carried on without further interruption. The notice on the door attracted the attention of several members of the fog fraternity. They saw that newsboys were wanted, and they promptly applied within.

Dicky Nugent of the Second was the first to present himself.

"Hallo, Fishy!" he said. "Want somebody to sell your papers for you?"

"Yep."

"Will I do?"

"I guess you're just the gink for the job!"

"How much commission do I get?" asked Dicky Nugent, with an eye to business.

"A penny for every dozen copies you sell."

Dicky gave a snort.

"Philanthropist, aren't you?" he asked sarcastically.

Fisher T. Fish shrugged his shoulders.

"Those are my terms," he said. "Take 'em or leave 'em!"

Dicky Nugent pondered the matter in his mind.

"How many copies should I be likely to sell in one day?" he asked.

"Oh, about a gross!" said Fish confidently. "That will mean a bob in your pocket, kid. And a bob a day isn't to be sneezed at."

After further argument Dicky Nugent accepted the terms, and was duly enrolled on Fishy's staff of newswriters.

Other fags were quick to follow in Dicky's footsteps. Gatty and Myers and Sammy Bunter, Tubb and Paget and Bolsover minor cheerfully offered their services. They were all engaged, and ordered to "stand by" on Monday evening, when the "Greyfriars News" would make its appearance.

After the fags had been interviewed the members of the editorial staff went on with their ink-splashing.

Fisher T. Fish was writing the leading article. Skinner was engaged upon some personal paragraphs, some of them being very personal indeed. Trevor was writing a column of "Greyfriars Gossip." Treluce was writing up the latest football news, and Bolsover major was busy with his boxing column.

Study No. 13 soon presented a very disordered appearance. The editor and his "subs" had no regard for tidiness. There were papers to right of them, papers to left of them, papers in front of them, papers all around them. They waded, so to speak, in a sea of manuscripts.

Ink was profusely splashed upon the carpet and upon the table. Fisher T. Fish had a fountain-pen which evidently believed in prohibition, for it went dry every few moments. It was necessary to give the pen a violent shake to make the ink flow, and then the ink not only flowed—it splurted out in jets!

The amateur journalists were nearing the end of their labours when there was a tramping of feet in the passage, and Johnny Bull and Squiff came in, fresh from the football field.

The newcomers paused on the threshold and glared round the study.

"What the thump——" began Johnny Bull.

"You—you villains!" booted Squiff. "Look at all the mess you've made!"

Fisher T. Fish wiped a blob of ink from his long nose with the back of his hand.

"Guess you can't expect a guy to run a newspaper without making a certain amount of litter?" he said.

"But—but this is our study," roared Johnny Bull. "What are these fellows doing in here?"

"They're my sub-editors," said Fisher T. Fish proudly.

"Well, they can jolly well sub-edit for you somewhere else!" growled the incensed Johnny. "I never saw such an urbhly mess in all my natural! Clear out, all the lot of you!"

Bolsover major thrust his jaw forward aggressively.

"This is as much Fishy's study as yours, Bull!" he said.

"Hear, hear!" said Skinner. "We're not going to take marching orders from you!"

Johnny Bull and Squiff advanced into the study. They were only two against five, but they were quite determined to



"Chuck 'em out!" roared Johnny Bull. "Count on me!" said Squiff. The enterprising staff of the "Greyfriars News" were taken thoroughly by surprise. In less than five minutes Bolsover, Skinner, Treluce, and Fisher T. Fish were sprawling in the passage. "Here, let up!" wailed Fisher. "I guess this is my study—yarooop!" (See Chapter 4.)

eject the intruders by force, since they would not go quietly. The only dangerous person they had to deal with was Bolsover major, and they tackled him first.

Squiff gave Bolsover's chair a quick backward jerk, and the bully of the Remove went sprawling. Before he could recover Johnny Bull seized one of his arms and Squiff the other, and together they dragged him out of the study, and sent him whirling through the doorway.

"Yarooooh!" roared Bolsover, as he struck the far wall of the passage with a sounding concussion.

Leaving Bolsover to sort himself out, Squiff and Johnny Bull turned their attention to the others.

Fisher T. Fish and Trevor offered a feeble resistance, and Skinner and Treluce made no resistance at all. Having seen the summary ejection of Bolsover major, they realised that they would have to share a similar fate.

"Out you go!" bawled Johnny Bull. "Get up!" howled Fish. "I guess this is my study, and I'm not going to be put out."

But even as Fish spoke the deed was done. He was sent spinning through the doorway, and Skinner and Trevor and Treluce followed in turn.

The study door was slammed in the faces of Fish and his staff, and Johnny Bull and Squiff were left in undisputed possession.

"Was, I sww!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Fancy being fired out of my

own study! I guess we ought to go back and slaughter those jays!"

"You can go and do the slaughtering yourself, then!" groaned Bolsover major. "I've had enough!"

The five juniors scrambled to their feet, and limped painfully away.

"We shall have to find fresh headquarters," said Skinner. "Can't we commandeer somebody else's study?"

"Afraid not," said Trevor. And his pessimism was justified.

No fellow in the Remove would relish the idea of his study being converted into a newspaper office. The editorial staff of the "Greyfriars News" would have to do their ink-splashing elsewhere.

After wandering around for some time in search of fresh quarters, they decided that there was nothing for it but to take possession of the woodshed.

Fisher T. Fish would have preferred a more palatial office. The woodshed was hardly a fitting place for a great newspaper to have its birth. It resembled one of the shacks in the Wild West, where the editor of the "Texas Tribune" or the "Mexican Mercury" was in the habit of working, with a loaded revolver on the table and another in his hip-pocket.

However, the woodshed was the only place available, and Fisher T. Fish had to take it and put up with its shortcomings. But he was already beginning to realise that the path of a newspaper editor and proprietor is not strewn with roses!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Now on Sale!

"PAPER! All the latest news! Paper!"

It was Monday evening, and a tuneful chorus of voices floated through the Close at Greyfriars.

Newsboys in Etons darted hither and thither, with bundles of papers under their arms. They had cycled down to the village for the papers, and were now busily engaged in selling them.

No. 1 of the "Greyfriars News" was out at last!

Some of the Greyfriars fellows had predicted that the paper would never appear at all—that Fisher T. Fish would never be able to produce a real newspaper, even with the aid of four subscribers and the local printer.

But the prophets were all wrong. The paper was actually on sale. What was more, the newsboys were doing a roaring trade!

Fisher T. Fish stood on the School House steps, surveying the animated scene with a grin of triumph and satisfaction. He was monarch of all he surveyed, and this was a proud and thrilling moment for him.

To and fro the newsboys scurried in the winter dusk, and there was a ready demand for papers on all sides.

Fisher T. Fish rubbed his hands, and fairly glowed with glee.

"I guess we shall sell out in half an hour!" he chortled. "This is what I call business, with a capital B!"

It did not occur to Fish that the paper was selling solely on account of its novelty. No. 1 of any publication generally goes well. The real test of a paper's popularity comes later. If No. 10 sells to the same extent as No. 1, then the editor can indeed be excused for rubbing his hands and chortling with satisfaction.

Fisher T. Fish saw no farther than his long nose. He could not foresee that the "Greyfriars News" was bound to slump after a time, when the novelty had worn off. And he continued to dream golden dreams as he stood on the School House steps.

Harry Wharton & Co., attracted by the shrill cries of the newsvendors, trooped out into the Close.

"Back up, you guys, if you want a paper!" said Fish. "We shall be sold out in a brace of shakes!"

The Famous Five stopped and stared. "So your paper's really out, Fishy?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Yes! It's going like hot cakes, too! Looks as if I shall have to get a fresh edition printed."

"My hat!"

"I guess your feeble old 'Greyfriars Herald' will have to take a back seat, after this!" said Fish, with a chortle. "You can't compete with a real live newspaper!"

"Rats!"

"I give the 'Greyfriars News' one week to live!" growled Johnny Bull.

"You're an optimist, Johnny!" said Frank Nugent. "Fishy's paper will be dead and defunct in a couple of days."

Fisher T. Fish smiled in a superior manner.

"I guess there ain't a good prospect among you!" he said. "My paper is like the brook—it's going on for ever!"

"What's the price of it?" asked Wharton.

"One penny, sir! I could easily have charged twopenny or threepenny, but I'm not out to profiteer. Small profits and quick returns—that's my motto!"

Johnny Bull made a megaphone of

his hands, and bawled to Dicky Nugent, who was darting to and fro, thrusting papers into fellows' hands, and pocketing pennies.

The fog had started off with six dozen copies. He had only a handful now; and his trousers' pockets were weighted down with coppers.

"Paper!" roared Johnny Bull.

Dick Nugent darted up, handed over a paper, pocketed the penny, and was off like a streak of light.

"Hi!" shouted Johnny Bull. "There's something wrong here! I've only got a quarter of the blessed paper!"

Fisher T. Fish interposed.

"That's all right, Bull," he said. "You've got the complete issue."

"What!" howled Johnny. "One mouldy sheet! Is that what you call a newspaper?"

"I guess—"

"It's a swizzle!" said Bob Cherry. "Fishy's defrauding the public—as usual! He's got the brazen nerve to have one skimpy little sheet printed and call it a newspaper!"

"Well, you didn't expect to get twenty-four sheets for a penny, did you?" asked Fish, with crushing sarcasm. "I'm a newspaper proprietor—not a charitable institution!"

"You're a trickster!" snorted Johnny Bull. "That's straight from the shoulder!"

Fisher T. Fish merely grinned. Contempt, says the Eastern proverb, will pierce the shell of a tortoise; but no amount of scorn and contempt could penetrate the thick hide of the Transatlantic junior.

The Famous Five turned their backs on Fish. They returned to Study No. 1 in order to peruse No. 1 of the "Greyfriars News."

Johnny Bull spread out the miserable sheet on the table, and the Co. gathered round.

"Well, of all the feeble productions!" said Harry Wharton. "It's gross flattery to call it a newspaper! Just look at Fishy's leading article! It's nothing but a self-advertising stunt!"

Wharton was right. The leading article did not refer to current events, or to any pressing topic of the day. It was written in the first person singular, and it concerned one person only—Fisher T. Fish.

The youthful editor believed in beating the big drum and in blowing his own trumpet, and he had some highly complimentary things to say concerning that gifted and talented journalist, Fisher T. Fish, late of New York City.

Then came a column of personal "bars" by Skinner. They were not lacking in wit and humour, but they were very personal indeed—downright rude, in fact!

Skinner took refuge under the non-descript name of "The Scribe," and it was as well that he did so, for there was a very sneering reference to Loder of the Sixth, and another to Coker of the Fifth. And Loder and Coker would have made matters very warm for the writer of the paragraph, had they been aware of his identity!

Bolover major's boxing column was crude and comical. Trevor's column of "Greyfriars Gossip" seemed quite snarking and clever, but there was something strangely familiar about it.

"I've seen this before somewhere!" said Bob Cherry.

"Same here," said Nugent, looking perplexed.

"It is strangely familiar to my esteemed optics!" murmured Hurree Singh.

"And no wonder!" chimed in Harry

Wharton. "Trevor's cribbed all this stuff from back numbers of the 'Greyfriars Herald!'"

"Great Scott!"

"The awful pirate!" growled Johnny Bull. "We shall have to put a stop to this!"

"Yes, rather!"

The Famous Five were righteously indignant. In order to save himself time and trouble, Trevor had calmly "lifted" all his paragraphs from the "Greyfriars Herald," hoping it would not be recognised.

The more the juniors saw of the new paper the less they liked it.

Treluce had written a football column, "slanging" the captain of the Remova eleven for playing duffers like Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, and Frank Nugent, and ignoring such brilliant footballers as Fisher T. Fish, Harold Skinner, and Treluce himself.

"What fearful nerve!" ejaculated Nugent. "Fish and his precious staff badly want squashing!"

Wharton frowned.

"They've no right to run down the footer eleven, and they've no right to crib things from the 'Greyfriars Herald,'" he said warmly. "If Fish is going to run a newspaper, he must run it on straight lines."

"Fear, hear!"

"I vote fully propose that we go and administer the bampfulness to the esteemed and ludicrous Fish!" said Hurree Singh.

"Good wheetee, Inky!" said Bob Cherry, moving to the door.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Nugent. "Here's something we haven't read. Seems to be a puzzle of some sort."

"Any prizes offered for the correct solution?" asked Wharton.

"No."

"Then we won't give ourselves headaches trying to puzzle it out. It looks a queer sort of problem, but we won't waste valuable time over it. Let's go and deal with Fish!"

The Famous Five marched out of the study with grim intent. The first number of the "Greyfriars News" had not met with their approval. On the contrary, it had annoyed and exasperated them. And there was trouble in store for the cute editor.

Fisher T. Fish was run to earth in his editorial sanctum—the woodshed.

The interior of the building was lighted with lanterns, and there was a very smoky oil-tove in the corner, which gave out no heat but plenty of fumes.

Fish was chatting cheerfully with his sub-editors when the Famous Five marched in. There was a seraphic smile on Fishy's countenance, and his assistants were looking merry and bright also. They were very pleased with themselves, and not without reason. Number one of the "Greyfriars News" had gone like hot cakes. It was, in fact, sold out.

On the table in front of Fisher T. Fish were piles and piles of pennies—the proceeds of his sales. Each pile of coppers represented the sum of one shilling; and Fishy's eyes gleamed with satisfaction when he looked at them. It was good business, and the editor and his subs were feeling tremendously "lucked."

The entry of the Famous Five was both sudden and dramatic. And the members of the newspaper staff jumped to their feet in some alarm.

"What do you galoots want?" asked Fish. "Come to congratulate me on our first number?"

"Not at all!" said Wharton grimly. "We've come to ask you what you mean by it, you hound!"

"Oh? Mean by what?"

"Trying to pull our footer team to

pieces, and lifting stuff from the 'Greyfriars Herald.'

Fisher T. Fish glared at the captain of the Remove.

"I guess you're talking through your hat, Wharton! I've not lifted anything from your silly old paper—"

"But Treluec has. And you, as editor, are responsible for publishing it."

"Look here—"

"That newspaper of yours is a 'Fishy' affair altogether!" chimed in Bob Cherry. "And we've come along to give you a jolly good bumping!"

Bolover major gave a snort.

"Like your cheek to interfere!" he growled. "You're only jealous because Fishy's paper is sold out, and you're afraid it will sweep the rotten old 'Herald' out of existence!"

"I guess that's about the size of it," said Fisher T. Fish.

The Famous Five wasted no more time in words. Their wrath and indignation had been steadily accumulating, and it had now reached top pitch.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent hurled themselves upon Fisher T. Fish, and he was soundly bumped on the floor of the woodshed.

Fish felt the indignity almost as keenly as the pain. To think of it! A prosperous newspaper proprietor being bumped on the floor of his own sanctum!

"Yoooop!" roared Fish. "Give over, you jays!"

But the avengers did not "give over" until the scraggy person of Fisher T. Fish had hit the floor three times.

Meanwhile, Johnny Bull and Bob Cherry dealt with Bolover major. They found him rather a hot handful, but he was overpowered in the end, and he shared the fate of his chief.

Skinner and Trevor and Treluec were then put through the mill in turn; and Treluec was given an extra bump for having libelled the Remove football club.

Having carried out their purpose the

Famous Five withdrew, leaving a heap of sprawling figures behind them.

Dire groans of anguish came from those prostrate figures. And the burden of their refrain was:

"Ow, ow, ow, ow, ow!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Shock for Skinner!

FISHER T. FISH awoke next morning in great spirits. He had forgotten all about the bumping he had received overnight. All his thoughts were centred upon his newspaper.

A wonderful dream had gladdened the slumbers of Fisher Tarleton Fish. He had dreamed that the circulation of the "Greyfriars News" soared and soared, until it reached a million. And he had seen himself strutting gaily into the bank at Courtfield, presenting fat cheques to be placed to his credit.

This golden dream was dispersed in the morning light; but Fisher T. Fish remained quite cheerful. No. 1 of his newspaper had been sold out in record time, and Fish hoped that subsequent issues would share the same happy fate.

The "copy" for No. 2 had already been prepared, and Dicky Nugent had volunteered to cycle to the printer's with it after breakfast.

Had Fisher T. Fish overheard some of the comments that were made concerning his newspaper, he might have felt less cheerful.

Lots of fellows were denouncing the single penny sheet as a fraud and a swindle. Their curiosity had prompted them to buy a copy of No. 1, but they declared that they would give No. 2 a miss and wash their hands of the "Greyfriars News" in future.

Having dressed early and gone downstairs, Fisher T. Fish failed to hear these scathing comments. Which was as well for his peace of mind.

Fish did some work after breakfast in the chilly woodshed. And he wished there were no such things as morning lessons, so that he could devote the whole of his time to journalism. It seemed an appalling shame that a powerful newspaper proprietor should have to sit in a Form-room, swotting at Latin and Greek.

"There goes the beauty-bell!" groaned Fish. "Guess I must pack up now and slide along to the Form-room!"

He hastily collected his papers—not wishing to leave valuable manuscripts in the woodshed—and then he sprinted across the Close like a champion of the cinder-path, and darted into the school building. He arrived, panting and breathless, in the Remove Form-room, to find that he was half a minute late.

Mr. Quelch was seated in solemn majesty at his desk. In the ordinary way he would have given the latecomer a "wiggling," for Mr. Quelch was the soul of punctuality, and he expected his pupils to be likewise.

On this occasion, however, the Form master actually smiled at Fisher T. Fish as the latter hurried to his seat.

"You are late, Fish," he remarked mildly. "Your literary labours have doubtless delayed you!"

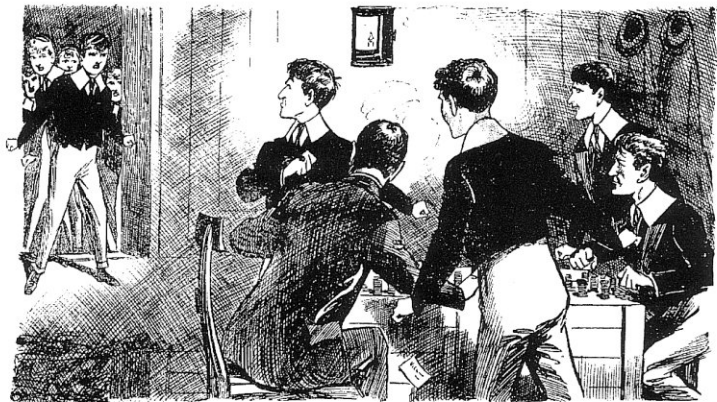
"Yep! I've been fearfully busy, sir," said Fish.

Mr. Quelch nodded, and said no more. But when the first lesson was over he did a very surprising thing. Opening his desk he took therefrom a copy of "The Greyfriars News." Then his eagle eye fell upon Fisher T. Fish.

"I see that you have carried out your intention, Fish, and produced a school newspaper," said Mr. Quelch. "A copy of it came into my hands last evening, and I have perused it."

Fisher T. Fish flushed with pleasure to think that he numbered a Form master among his readers.

"I guess you enjoyed reading it, sir," he said. "'The Greyfriars News' is the



The entry of the Famous Five was both sudden and dramatic. The members of the newspaper staff jumped to their feet. "What do you galoots want?" asked Fish. "Come to congratulate me on our first number?" "Not at all," said Wharton, grimly. "We've come to ask you what you mean by it, you bouncer." "Eh? Mean by what?" "Why, lifting stuff from the Greyfriars Herald!" said Wharton, hotly. (See Chapter 5.)

real goods. Plenty of spice and sparkle in it, sir—a punch in every paragraph and a laugh in every line!"

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"I am sorry I cannot share your enthusiasm, Fish," he said. "Your paper is a long way from being perfect. To begin with, it only consists of one sheet, and I seriously question whether it is quite fair of you to charge a penny for it."

"But—but I couldn't charge less, sir!" stammered Fish. "It wouldn't cover the cost of printing."

"No, I do not suppose it would," said Mr. Quelch thoughtfully. "But you ought to give your readers value for money. Your newspaper, Fish, with the exception of one contribution, is practically worthless."

Fisher T. Fish glanced inquiringly at the Form master. He wondered which was the contribution that Mr. Quelch considered of value.

"I suppose you mean my leading article, sir?" he asked.

"Not at all! I consider your leading

article, as you call it, to be the most absurd thing in the paper!"

"Oh!"

"The other contributions are equally absurd," Mr. Quelch went on, "with the one exception I have already mentioned."

"And what's that, sir?"

"The problem which appears in your Puzzle Corner," was the reply. "I have not attempted to work it out and discover the solution, but it seems to be quite an ingenious puzzle."

Skinner, who was seated in the front row, gave a snicker. Skinner was the author of that puzzle, and he felt proud to think that it was the only good thing in the paper. At the same time he was a trifle uneasy. He did not want Mr. Quelch to pursue the topic of the puzzle, for private reasons of his own.

Mr. Quelch, however, was greatly interested in the puzzle, which he thought might prove instructive to his pupils. He placed the blackboard upon the easel, facing the class, and Skinner watched these preparations with growing alarm.

"Now, my boys," said Mr. Quelch, "we will attempt to solve this puzzle together."

There was a murmur of approval from the class. Solving puzzles was a lot more fascinating than studying Latin.

"I will first of all read the puzzle aloud," said Mr. Quelch. "Pay close attention, everybody."

The Remove-master then recited the problem:

"My first is a large Canadian town,
My second is used when rain pours down.

My third is an animal huge in size,
My fourth is a lesson we all despise,
My fifth is a youth with a curly head,
My sixth a substitute for led.

Next comes an Eastern country grand,
And a fellow who hails from that far land.

My next was worn by knights of pluck,
Then follows a chap who's fond of tuck,
Next is a Prince of world-wide fame,
My next is the Duffer's Christian name,
And my next a person who plays the game.

My last is a place of amusement—backed.

My whole embodies a well-known fact,
"My only aunt!" murmured Bob Cherry under his breath. "What on earth are we to make of that doggerel?"

"I believe it's what they call an acrostic," whispered Harry Wharton. "We ought to get some fun out of this. Better than mugging Latin, anyway!"

"Yes, rather!"

Mr. Quelch called for silence.

"We will now endeavour to solve each line of the puzzle in turn," he said.

"My first is a large Canadian town."

"Has anyone a suggestion to make?"

Billy Bunter jumped to his feet.

"Paris, sir!" he said promptly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Your ignorance, Bunter, is appalling!" he exclaimed. "How can Paris possibly be a large town in Canada when it is the capital of France?"

"Oh, crumbs! I—I didn't mean Paris, sir. I meant Liverpool!"

"Sit down, stupid boy!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "You are merely betraying your ignorance of geography. Now, Wharton, kindly name a large Canadian town."

"Quebec, sir!" said Harry readily.

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch. "I am not certain that Quebec is the correct solution, but I will write it on the blackboard."

Mr. Quelch did so, and Skinner gave an audible groan.

"I—I'm certain it can't be Quebec, sir," he stammered. "It must be Toronto!"

"You may be right, Skinner," said Mr. Quelch; "but we will try Quebec first, and see if it happens to fit in with the other names in the puzzle."

Skinner groaned again, and subsided. For some reason or other he did not seem to relish the turn that events were taking.

"My second is used when rain pours down," quoted Mr. Quelch. "That line will not give us much trouble. It is obviously an umbrella. My third is an animal huge in size."

"Billy Bunter!" suggested Bob Cherry promptly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The class fairly roared, and even Mr. Quelch found it difficult to repress a smile. Billy Bunter had often been likened to an animal, on account of his loutishness; and he was certainly huge in size.

"Pray do not be flippant, Cherry," said Mr. Quelch. "I think we will try

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'elephant' as a likely solution to that line!"

"Why not 'rhinoceros,' sir?" said Skinner, in almost pleading tones.

"Be silent, Skinner! You are making far too many interruptions."

Mr. Quelch wrote the word "Elephant" on the blackboard, directly underneath the two words which were already there. He then proceeded with the puzzle.

"My fourth is a lesson we all despise."
"Latin!" chanted the class in chorus.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.
"I'm very sorry to hear that you all despise such a noble and ancient language," he said. "Nevertheless, I think your solution is the correct one. 'My fifth is a youth with a curly head.'"

"Little me!" murmured Bob Cherry.
The name of "Cherry" was added to the others. Then Mr. Quelch continued:

"My sixth is a substitute for bed. That, of course, is a hammock. Why, bless my soul! The initial letters of these words spell my name!"

All eyes were turned towards the blackboard, and this is what the class saw:

Quebec,
Umbrella,
Elephant,
Latin,
Cherry,
Hammock.

"So far so good," said Mr. Quelch. But Skinner didn't seem to think it was good. His face was quite pale, and his knees were nearly knocking together with apprehension. Presently he rose in his place.

"If—if you please, sir—" he faltered. "Well, Skinner?"

"I should like to be excused lessons, sir, if you don't mind. I've come over queer!"

Mr. Quelch glanced searchingly at the cad of the Remove. He saw Skinner's agitation, and his suspicions were aroused.

"You will remain in your seat, Skinner," he said sternly. "When we have solved this problem I will consider the advisability of releasing you."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "I can see trouble looming on the giddy horizon! Skinner's been up to something!"

Mr. Quelch went on with the puzzle. The class helped him considerably, and it did not take long to complete the solution.

"Next comes an Eastern country grand—"

"India, sir!"

"And a fellow who hails from that far land—"

"Singh, sir!"

"My next was worn by knights of pluck—"

"Armour!"

"Then follows a chap who's fond of tuck—"

"BUNTER!" roared everybody.

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

Mr. Quelch frowned Billy Bunter into silence.

"Next is a prince of world-wide fame—"

"Edward!"

"My next is the Duffer's Christian name—"

"Alonzo!"

"And my next a person who plays the game—"

"A sportsman, sir!"

"My last is a place of amusement—packed."

"That's a theatre, sir!"

"My whole embodies a well-known fact."



Mr. Horace Quelch stared at the blackboard with eyes which seemed to start from their sockets. From the class came a low murmur of awe. For the "well-known fact" was blazoned upon the blackboard in large capitals, for everyone to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest. "Oh, my giddy aunt!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Look out for squalls!" (See Chapter 6.)

Mr. Quelch paused. There was a squeak of alarm from Skinner. He knew only too well what the "well-known fact" was. So did the class the next moment. And so did Mr. Horace Quelch!

The Remove master stared at the blackboard with eyes which seemed to start from their sockets.

For a full moment Mr. Quelch stood petrified, unable either to move or speak.

From the class came a low murmur of awe. For the "well-known fact" was blazoned upon the blackboard in large capitals, for everyone to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

Quebec,
Umbrella,
Elephant,
Latin,
Cherry,
Hammock.

India,
Singh.

Armour.

Bunter,
Edward,
Alonzo,
Sportsman,
Theatre.

"QUELCH IS A BEAST!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Oh, my giddy aunt! Now look out for squalls and cataracts!"

There was a moment of hushed expectancy. And at last Mr. Quelch recovered the power of speech—and of action. He spun round towards the class, his hands clenched, his eyes gleaming. There were thunderclouds on his brow.

"Fish!" he roared. "Who is responsible for this—this flagrant and studied insult?"

"I guess one of my sub-editors wrote that puzzle, sir."

"His name?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Fish was silent. With all his faults he was no sneak, in the sense that Billy Bunter was."

"Very well, Fish," said Mr. Quelch. "I will not press the matter. I have a very shrewd idea that the culprit is Skinner. I noticed his growing uneasiness whilst I was working out the problem. Skinner, stand out, sir!"

The wretched Skinner slunk out from his place. He was in a state of blue funk almost amounting to panic, and guilt was written all over his face.

Mr. Quelch addressed Skinner first with his tongue and then with his cane.

The humorous contributor to the

"Greyfriars News," who looked anything but humorous now, received a very severe scolding, and his yells of anguish fairly awakened the echoes.

Mr. Quelch did not spare the rod, and he was quite breathless by the time the castigation was over.

"There!" panted the angry Remove master. "Let that be a lesson to you, Skinner, not to publish any more veiled libels concerning me! Go to your place!"

Yelping in spasms, Skinner went back to his seat.

Mr. Quelch then turned to Fisher T. Fish.

"I trust, Fish, that you were not aware of the solution to Skinner's problem until we worked it out just now?"

"Nope, sir!" said Fish. "I guess if I'd known what Skinner was up to, I shouldn't have published it!"

"That is well," said Mr. Quelch. "Lessons will now proceed."

And they did—punctuated by fitful yelps from the unfortunate Skinner.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Slight Misunderstanding!

"GUESS there's a slump!" Fisher T. Fish spoke sorrowfully. He was presiding at a meeting of his newspaper staff in the woodsshed.

It was Saturday morning. The "Greyfriars News" had been in existence five days, but the circulation, instead of putting on flesh, had dropped considerably. Fish's newspaper had not fulfilled its early promise.

Five hundred copies of No. 1 had been sold, several fellows having been prevailed upon to buy more than one copy. No. 2 had gone very slowly, and there was a drop of one hundred. No. 3 had gone still more slowly, with a drop of a further hundred. No. 4 had experienced an even worse fate; and No. 5 which was on sale Friday evening, had only been bought by one hundred fellows.

In the short space of five days four hundred readers had been lost! The circulation had come tumbling down, and there was despair in the editorial office and in the editorial breast.

"Of course there's a slump, fathead!" said Skinner, in reply to Fish's gloomy observation. "How can you expect otherwise, when my humorous stuff is cut out of the paper?"

"Aw, shucks!"

"Even old Quelch had to admit that my contribution was the only decent thing in the paper," Skinner went on. "The other stuff's no good. It's too weak and watery."

"Bolsever major rose up in wrath.

"If you dare to call my boxing column weak and watery—" he began.

"Cork it, you guys!" growled Fisher T. Fish. "Don't want two of my sons coming to blows. The question is, what can we do to win back our original circulation?"

The sub-editors shook their heads in perplexity. It really seemed that nothing could be done. Fisher T. Fish had already made several efforts to stop the rot, but they had proved futile. First of all, he had canvassed Courtfield and Friardale, in the hope of inducing the local tradesmen to advertise in the "Greyfriars News." But the local tradesmen, knowing Fisher T. Fish, had politely—and in some cases impolitely—declined to have anything to do with his paper.

Fish had then conceived the daring scheme of writing to Martin Clifford and

Owen Conquest, the well-known boys' authors, asking those gentlemen if they would care to contribute to his newspaper. Apparently they did not care. Like the local tradesmen, they knew Fisher T. Fish!

Meanwhile the circulation of the "Greyfriars News" had dropped in a disastrous manner.

The situation was desperate, and something would have to be done to retrieve the fallen fortunes of the House of Fish. "I've got it!"

It was Fish himself who made that ejaculation, after a long spell of deep reflection.

"What's the latest stunt?" asked Trevor, without enthusiasm.

Fish rubbed his hands briskly together. His face was bright, and the sparkle had returned to his eyes.

"What price a special football edition this evening?" he said. "The Remove are playing St. Jude's this afternoon in the second round of the Public Schools Cup. Guess this is where you come in, Treluce."

"Me?" said Treluce, forgetting his grammar in his surprise.

"Yep. You're our special football reporter. I want you to go over to St. Jude's with the team and report the match, and telephone the report to old Smithers, the printer. Then he'll squeeze it into the Stop Press column."

"That's a good idea, Fishy," said Rolsover major. "The fellows here will be simply dying to know the result of the match, and the paper will sell like baked chestnuts on a cold day!"

"Yes, rather!" said Skinner. "There's quite a lot of excitement about this match with St. Jude's, and if a report of the game is published before the team gets back, the 'Greyfriars News' will sell out in next to no time!"

"It's a great stunt, by Jove!" exclaimed Trevor.

But there was one fellow who didn't seem to think so. That was Treluce. He looked quite unhappy.

"It's a long way to St. Jude's," he protested. "I doubt if I can raise the railway fare."

"Guess you needn't worry about that," said Fish. "Your travelling expenses can come out of the funds."

"But it's a beastly fog, having to go all the way to St. Jude's to report a mouldy cup!"

Fisher T. Fish glared at the speaker.

"See hyer," he said. "You've got to do your duty. I'm not going to have any slackers on my staff. If you don't like to tackle this job, say so, and I'll fire you out and get somebody else in your place!"

Treluce scowled. He didn't want to lose his job, on the staff of the "Greyfriars News." True, the paper was doing badly at present, but there might be brighter days to come—days of affluence and prosperity, in which Treluce wanted to share.

"Oh, all right," he growled. "I'll go to St. Jude's."

But he had no intention of keeping his promise. Anthony Treluce had been invited to a little party at Highcliffe that afternoon, as the guest of Ponsoby & Co., the "nutty nuts" of that school. Treluce wouldn't have missed that party for worlds; but the question was, how could he possibly go to the party and report the football match at the same time? He could not, like Boyle Roche's bird, be in two places at once.

It was indeed a poser, and Treluce could see no way out. He didn't want to miss the merry function at Highcliffe, neither did he want to lose his job on the "Greyfriars News" through failing to send in the football report,

Treluce pondered over the problem a great deal, and it was not until after dinner that an inspiration came to him.

The Greyfriars footballers were about to depart by charabanc. And a big crowd had assembled to see them off.

"Play up, you fellows!"

"Mind you put it across St. Jude's!"

Harry Wharton smiled as he clambered into the charabanc.

"We'll do our best, of course," he said.

"You ought to lick St. Jude's to a frazzle, look you," said Morgan.

"They're only a shadow of a team. Rookwood trounced them in the first round by seven goals to nothing."

"And if the Remove don't win, there's going to be trouble!" said Ogilvy grimly.

"You fellows only scraped through the first round by the skin of your teeth. We shall expect you to do much better in this match."

"Faith, an' if you don't lick St. Jude's we'll give you a warty reception when you come back to night!" declared Micky Desmond.

"A red hot reception, in fact!" said Dick Russell. "Don't you dare to show your faces at Greyfriars again if you lose!"

Harry Wharton frowned.

"Oh, dry up, for goodness' sake!" he growled.

The Remove eleven was under a cloud at the moment. It had not been giving satisfaction. There was a general feeling that the team had gone stale. Fellows were saying that Harry Wharton ought to drop his personal friends from the eleven and introduce new blood.

If the Remove lost at St. Jude's there would certainly be ructions. For St. Jude's were very poor indeed. They had a weak defence, which crumpled up completely under pressure.

Just as the charabanc was about to start on its long journey Treluce had his inspiration. He beckoned to Tom Brown, who was one of the Remove players, and whispered in his ear:

"I say, Brownie, will you do me a favour?"

"All depends."

"I shall be at Highcliffe this afternoon," murmured Treluce, "and I badly want to get the result of the match as soon as it's over. So will you phone it through to me at Highcliffe?"

Being an obliging sort of fellow, Tom Brown consented. He saw no reason why he shouldn't telephone the result of the match to Treluce.

"All serene!" said Tom Brown cheerfully.

And then the laden charabanc rumbled away through the school gateway.

Treluce followed on his bicycle. Fisher T. Fish saw him depart, and he naturally concluded that Treluce was going to cycle to St. Jude's.

Fish would have had a rude shock had he seen Treluce alight at the gates of Highcliffe.

Ponsoby & Co. welcomed the Greyfriars junior with open arms. Treluce was a fellow after their own heart. He was never averse to a "little flutter."

Ponsoby had invented a new game. It was a game of chance, at which a great deal of money could be won—and lost.

Treluce was in funds when he arrived at Highcliffe. He was bankrupt at tea-time, and he began to think that Ponsoby's new game was an excellent thing—for Cecil Ponsoby!

No sooner had the "Giddy Goats" finished playing than Mr. Mobbs, the master of the Highcliffe Fourth, looked in. Ponsoby & Co. rose respectfully to their feet.

"Is Treluce here?" asked Mr. Mobbs.

(Continued on page 17.)



Supplement No. 157.

HARRY WHARTON
EDITOR

Week Ending January 12th, 1924.



BOB CHERRY:

I find you can save quite a lot of money by going without feeds at the tuckshop, trips to the Courtfield Cinema, bicycles, footer togs, taxi-rides, boots, and chocolates. Deny yourself all these luxuries, and you'll become as rich as Croesus—and as miserable as a dyspeptic millionaire!

HAROLD SKINNER:

Not having saved a penny-piece in my life, I'm not qualified to give any advice on the subject.

HURREE SINGH:

If you savefully hoard a penny a day, it will grow into the esteemed quidfulness long before the year is out. Borrow an empty cigar-box, make a slit in the lidfulness, and use it as a money-box. And when you have managed to collect-fufully save a quidfulness, don't forget the fellow who gave you this useful tipfulness!

MARK LINLEY:

I find that the best way to save money is to open a post-office savings bank account, and to deposit each week 25 per cent of your pocket-money, whatever the amount happens to be. Thus, if your allowance is ten shillings a week, you will be saving half-a-crown, and when the inevitable "rainy day" comes along you will be able to smile. You will also be able, like the village blacksmith, to look the whole world in the face, and owe not any man!

FISHER T. FISH:

Guess the most important thing is how to make money, not how to save it! They say that any fool can make money, but I'm not so sure. I've tried no end of money-making wheezes, but the enterprising firm of Fish is still stony-broke!

S. Q. I. FIELD:

Many people say that the best way to save money is to give up smoking. I have always eschewed the fragrant weed, and have never attempted to smoke the
Supplement i.]

How to Save Money!

SOME AMAZING AND AMUSING METHODS ARE QUOTED BELOW.

pipe of peace or the piece of pipe; but I haven't saved any money through it!

DICK PENFOLD:

The way some fellows save is shocking. They hide their money in a stocking. I knew a chap in days of yore who hid it underneath the floor! I also knew a silly clump who stored his money in the pump! But though I strive with grim intent, I've never saved a single cent!

MR. PROUT:

I have managed to save quite a lot of money by going in for inexpensive forms of sport. Those who take up motoring have to pay a big price for their cars and petrol; those who play polo have to purchase expensive horses; and those who play Rugby football have a heavy doctor's bill to pay, as a result of injuries sustained in the "scrum." But rifle-shooting, of which I am very fond, is a pastime that pays for itself over and over again. The sun spent on ammunition is recouped by the number of rabbits, pheasants, and partridges one kills and sells to poulterers. I estimate that I have shot over a hundred rabbits this term, and more birds than I am able to calculate!

(We saw Prout running amok in the Close the other day with his Winchester repeater. Evidently it was the "Close" season for game!—Ed.)

A CRY FROM THE HEART.

A well-known physician was sought by a man who thought there was something wrong with his heart.

The physician made a cursory examination, which disclosed a large swelling in the man's cardiac region.

"There certainly appears to be an extraordinary swelling right here," said the medical authority, tapping his finger on the man's side. "We must reduce this at once, my good man—at once!"

A faint smile illumined the face of the patient.

"Oh, doctor," he exclaimed, "don't reduce it too much, please! That swelling is my pocket book!"

EDITORIAL!

By
HARRY
WHARTON.

THE art of saving money—that is the subject of this week's cheery supplement.

I don't claim to be an authority on finance, and neither do the members of my staff. All we know is that it is far easier to spend money than to save it! Moreover, we often find great difficulty in putting something aside for the proverbial "rainy day."

This being the case, we should not be justified in scolding those of our readers who spend too much and save too little.

All I want to say in this brief editorial "pov-wow" is that thrift is a jolly fine thing, and ought to be encouraged. The wise folks say that once you form a habit of saving money, it grows on you, just like any other habit. The sensible fellow generally contrives to put some cash aside, so that he will be equipped against any emergency. The happy-go-lucky fellow doesn't bother. And it was the happy-go-lucky fellow that the old scribe had in mind when he wrote: "Thy poverty shall come as a thief in the night, and thy want as an armed man."

But there is one thing I should like to emphasise. Do not confuse thrift with miserly hoarding. There's a vast difference. The miser is a contemptible creature, who worships the golden calf. The thrifty person saves money because it's a sound and sensible policy.

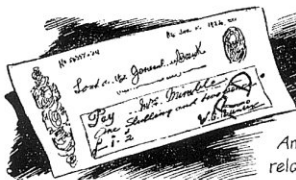
I only wish I could be more sensible in the matter of saving. I had a remittance from my uncle this morning, and by to-time—hey presto!—every penny of it had been spent!

You will find plenty of fun in this issue. Tom Brown, our gay humorist, is in one of his irresistible moods; and Billy Dunter's story of his banking account will provoke roars of merriment. Another amusing titbit is "A Thrifty Boy's Diary," by Alonzo Todd.

We have elected to treat the subject of thrift in a humorous way; but don't forget that there is a serious side to it, and that the fellow who saves money to-day is the fellow who will be able to face the unknown morrow with a smile!

HARRY WHARTON.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 831.



Bunter's Bank Balance!

An Amusing Narrative,
related by the Fat Junior Himself.

THERE are several ways of saving munny. There are even more ways of spending it!

If you want to save munny, you can take one of these courses—as the cook said when she staggered into the dining-hall with a laden tray.

You can either put your munny in the bank, or in the post-offis, or in a jam-jar in your study cubberd, or under your pillow.

Personally, I've tried every possible way of saving munny; but I'm no better off than when I started!

I once saw an advertisement in all the newspapers. It said that if you saved fifteen-and-sixpence, it would become a pound in five years' time. The headline of the advertisement was:

"WATCH IT GROW!"

Well, I managed to collect the sum of fifteen-and-sixpence—cheerily by means of borrowing—and I locked it in the desk in my study. Every now and then, I unlocked the desk and took a peep at it; but it didn't seem to be growing!

There was a ten-bob note, a couple of half-crowns, and a sixpence. That makes fifteen-and-six, duzzent it? Well, every time I looked at it, it was still fifteen-and-six. And yet the advertisement declared that it would grow into a pound!

I didn't have the patiens to wait five years, until the munny sprouted into a quid. Trooth to tell, I began to suspect that there was a catch in that advertisement, somewhere! After all, it didn't seem reasonable to suppose that fifteen-and-six would grow into a pound of its own accord.

One day, in deep disgrused, I took the munny out of my desk and treated myself to a little snack at the tuckshop. You can't get much grub for fifteen-and-six, these days. About enuff to whet the appetite of a sparrow, that's all.



It had taken me about ten months to collect the munny; it took me about ten seconds to skvander it!

The next time I got some cash, I tried to save it by keeping it in a jam-jar in the study cubberd. But every time I went to the cubberd I made a practkias of drawing out a tanner, and my savings soon vanished.

The same thing happened when I tried keeping my munny under my pillow. Every morning, on rising, I helped myself to a few pence, and my savings took unto themselves wings!

A few months later, I opened an account in the post-offis savings bank. I started with five bob, and the old dame in Friardale post-offis told me that in a year's time I should get two and a half per cent. interest. The princisly sum of three-halipence, mark you, actually given to me by a gennerus Government! It seemed too good to be true.

But alas! My five bob didn't remain intacked very long. I had occasion to draw out a bob here, and a bob there, and one day the old dame in the post-offis shook her head sadly, and said:

"You can't draw out any more munny, Master Bunter. It's all gone, and you will have to close your account."

Sobbing in spasms, I rushed blindly from the post-offis.

My next and biggest venture was to open a banking account. I got my pater to start it for me. The bank manager arranged for me to have what they call a "Currant Account"—though I should have preferred a Blackberry one.

However, I had a check-book to play with, and a pass-book, and a paying-in book. I couldn't quite see the sense of having a paying-in book, bekwase there's a lot more fun in drawing out than paying in!

For some days, after starting my banking account, I had the time of my life. I was able to stroll into the tuckshop at Greyfriars, order what grub I wanted, and produce my check-book with a flourish.

I made my schoolfellows awfully jellus, as you may guess. Harry Wharton & Co., who had always treated me with desupision in the past, were now compelled to treat me with respect.

"Old Bunter's simply rolling in riches!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Why, he's as rich as a giddy Crowstus," said Frank Nugent.

"Simply swimming in shekkles, by Jove!" chimed in Johnny Bull. "Whenever he wants a jam-tart, he simply makes out a check for tuppence, and hands it to Mrs. Minblab with a lordly air."

It was, indeed, the time of my life. But it didn't last long.

Soon the dismal day dorned when Mrs. Minblab said to me:

"I'm sorry, Master Bunter, but that last check you gave me has come back from the bank, marked 'R. D.'"

"What does that mean, ma'am?" I asked, with a smile. "Rothschild's Disciple?"

"No, Master Bunter. It means that your check has been dishonoured. You have nothing at the bank to meet it."

"Meet it?" I echoed, in surprize. "But it didn't want to be met. It didn't travel by train!"

Mrs. Minblab frowned.

"The fact is, Master Bunter," she said, in tones as acid as the tablets she sells, "you have overdrawn your account."

"Oh crumbs!"

Gradually it dorned upon me that my bank-balance had melted away like snow in the sunshine.

It was an awful shock to my nervus cistern. I can tell you.

I had always thought that banking was a ripping sort of game. I thought you could draw out as much as you liked, and pay in as little as you liked. But I now realised that bank managers were not philanthropists.

I wrote and asked my pater to start another banking account for me; and his reply, instead of being couched in terms of parental affeckshum, was most rood!

He said he would see me to Jerrico before he invested any more munny on my behalf.

I have now despaired of saving munny. I haven't any to save, as a matter of fact.

But never mind! I am living in daily expcctation of a postle-order, and when it comes— (The end of the world will come, also!—Ed.)

I have since discovered that there are better things than bank balances in this world, deer readers. I chancst to happen on a beautiful rabbit-pie which the cook had left on the kitchen table. It was a stunning pie—the bird, I mean the rabbit, was done to a "T." I wish you could get a glimpse of me now, deer readers—I'm having the time of my life. A bank balance is all right in its way, but take this tip to your hearts—there's nothing to beat a well-balanced waistcoat.



I wish you could get a glimpse of me now, deer readers.



The Hidden Horde!

By
Dicky Nugent.

A Powerful, Pungent, Pulsating Story of School Life

"I SAY, you chaps!"

Poore of the Fourth looked into the end studdy, where Jack Jolly & Co., the heroes of St. Sam's, were frying the festive kipper.

"Buzz offski!" growled Jack Jolly, dropping into Russian, as he frokewonty did.

"Get 'outovitch!" said Merry and Bright together.

But Poore, instead of beating a retreat, advanced into the studdy.

Let us take a good look at this miserable specimen, dear readers, before we proceed with our story. Let us sighs him up, and way him in the ballances, so to speak.

To begin with, Poore was shabby in the eggstern. His eaten jacket was worn threadbare (eaten by the moths, was presume!—Ed.); his trousers were torn in several places; the souls and heels of his shoove were worn out; and he wore no collar or tie. He turned out his pockitts as he stepped into the studdy, and Jack Jolly & Co. saw that they were full of emptiness.

"Hard up again, Poore?" asked Jack. "Yes; I'm in a fearful stew, you chaps—absolutely in the soup! I haven't a penny to bless myself with! Spare a copper for a poor, hard-up playmate!" added Poore, with a wimper.

"You'll find a copper under in the villdige," said Jack Jolly, with a grin. "He's a big, berly constable. Talk about the strong arm of the law! Why, I saw him hold up a motor-car the other day!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Merry and Bright.

"And if you go to Mr. Lickham's studdy," added Jack Jolly, "you'll find a sixpence. Old Lickham's always making free with his cane—therefore he's a 'tanner'!"

There was a fresh peel of laughter from Merry and Bright.

But Poore didn't laugh. He was sobbing as if his hart would brake.

"I'm on the rox!" he wailed. "I'm only a poor skollership boy, as you know, and I'm absolutely without a bean!"

"You'll find one in the Head's garden," said Merry.

Jack Jolly Co. went on frying their kippers. But they could not get rid of the sponger of St. Sam's. To quote the old saying, the Poore was with them always.

There were two ways of dealing with Poore. One was to bundle him neck and crop from the studdy, the other was to have a whip-round on his behalf.

Supplement iii.]

Jack Jolly & Co., being the soles of jennugrosity, decided on the latter course.

The princely sun of fourpence-halfpenny was raised for Poore's benefit, and he pockitted the munny with a woop of delite, and pranced out of the studdy.

Jack Jolly looked very thoughtful as he sat down to tea with his chums.

"I don't quite know what to make of that fellow Poore," he said. "He's perpetually hard up. In fact, he lives in a state of infernal poverty. It seems jolly funny to me."

"Has he got a pater and mater?" asked Merry.

"Yes, he can't be an often!"

"Of course he can't," growled Bright, "or else he'd be in an oftagee instead of a publick school. Surely he gets a weakly supply of pockitt-munny from his pater?"

"He declares he's never had a penny-peace since he came to St. Sam's," said Jack Jolly. "He's always cadging for munny. Matter of fact, I don't think he's nearly so hard up as he tries to make out. I've got a shrood idea that he's a miser, with a hidden horde stowed away somewhere!"

"My hat!" said Merry and Bright, breathlessly.

"Of course, his togs are shabby and his shoova are worn out," Jack Jolly went on; "but that's nothing to go by. There are lots of millionaires who dress like tramps."

"And, vice-versa, there are lots of pawpers who dress like millionaires," said Merry.

"Eggssactly! I think we'd better keep Poore under close observation, chappies, and we'll jolly soon find out whether he's as poor as he pretends to be."

After that Jack Jolly & Co. assumed the roll of detectives. They shadowed the wretched Poore wherever he went; and they did it so cleverly that he had no idea he was being spied upon.

Next morning there was a letter for Poore. The three chums were concealed



Poore turned out his pockitts as he entered the studdy, and Jack Jolly & Co. saw that they were full of emptiness.

in the hall, disguised as umbrella-stands and hat-racks, and they watched the sponger of St. Sam's open the letter. They saw him take out a Trezzury Note, and they heard his gloating cackle of glee.

"Follow him!" muttered Jack Jolly, as Poore walked out of the hall. "Let's see what he does with that remittance."

The three ammatjure detectives followed Poore to his studdy. He popped inside and left the door slightly ajar, so that Jack Jolly & Co. were able to peep into the apartment.

And what do you think they saw the sneaky, stethy, skoundrelly snake-in-the-grass do?

Why, he nelt down in the fireplace and stuffed the Trezzury note up the chimney!

There was a shout from Jack Jolly.

"Caught pink-handed!"

"Caught in the very act!" roared Merry and Bright.

The three chums dashed into the studdy. The wretched miser turned his head and saw them coming, and a shriek of alarm broke from his lips.

"Bowled out, by Joopter! They've discovered my hidden horde!"

Jack Jolly stooped down and thrust his hand up the chimney. A little way up there was a recess where all the loot was concealed. There were Trezzury notes, and 4-crowns, and florinus, and two-shilling peaces, and bobs, and six-pences, and tanners, and threepenny-bits, and coppers galore.

"Why, there's enuff munny here to buy up St. Sam's!" eggsselamed Jack Jolly. Then his lip curled scornfully, and he turned to Poore.

"So this is the poor, down-at-heel pawper whom we have befrended?" he said bitterly. "March him away to the Head, you fellows!"

"Give him a hiding!" roared Merry. "The end's had any amount of tanners out of me!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bright dully.

"Not a bad idea," said Jack Jolly. "I'll call the fellers!"

The wretched Poore shivered like a jelly and then fell on his knees.

"I didn't mean it!" he howled. I— Yoowp!"

His words ended in a fearful howl as the indignant fellers, in response to Jack Jolly's call, came pouring into the studdy and set about the young miser. They whalloped him good and proper.

"He's had enuff from us," said Jolly at length. "I think we've taut him a lesson. Let's hawl him to the Head. St. Sam's will be glad to see the bak of poore Poore who wasn't poore. 'Up with him, chaps!'"

"Mersy!" pleaded Poore.

But he got no mersy from Jack Jolly & Co., and he got no mersy from the Head.

Poore was publicly dispelled from St. Sam's, and it will be a long, long time before the astonish-ed fellows will cease to discuss the Hidden Horde.

THE END.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 651.

A THRIFTY BOY'S DIARY!

By ALONZO TODD.



MONDAY.

I succeeded in saving one penny to-day—a notable achievement. I had been over to Courtfield to gaze into the shop windows, and instead of taking a taxi-cab back to Greyfriars—which would have cost me two-and-sixpence—I walked back, and wore out two-and-fivepence worth of shoe leather in the process. I thus saved the magnificent sum of one penny, and feel very proud of myself in consequence!

TUESDAY.

I was tempted to plunge into a whirlpool of reckless extravagance to-day by purchasing a bar of chocolate-cocoa. However, I fought manfully against the temptation, and resisted the impulse to partake of such a disgusting orgy, which would have shocked my Uncle Benjamin.

I therefore saved twopence. Dear me! My balance at the bank is swelling to gratifying proportions!

WEDNESDAY.

I feel somewhat distressed to-day. I have proved one of my Uncle Benjamin's maxims to be false. He is very fond of saying "A penny saved is a pound gained." Well, I saved a penny—by delivering two postcards by hand instead of posting them—but I have failed to gain a pound. Extraordinary! There must be something wrong somewhere. I shall have to write a lengthy letter of reproach to my esteemed avuncular relative.

THURSDAY.

Alas! I have fallen from grace to-day,

with a vengeance! Instead of saving money, I have actually spent some! I indulged in an act of the most reckless, riotous extravagance. Let the dreadful deed be made public in these pages. Let me disclose the shocking act of improvidence. I—I bought a halfpenny bun at the tuckshop!

FRIDAY.

I atoned for yesterday's improvidence by actually saving sixpence! Billy Bunter has been imporing me all day to "lend him a tanner," but I have stubbornly declined, with the result that the nimble sixpence still nestles in my own pocket!

SATURDAY.

More money saved! I desperately needed a new pair of shoes; but instead of buying them at a boot store, I obtained some cardboard and brown paper, and made them myself! I have thus saved about twenty-two-and-sixpence. I will now take my savings, in a sack, to the nearest bank! How nice it is, to be sure, to be a person of thrifty habits!

(I only intend to pay you a tab for these extracts, Lonzy, instead of half-a-crown. I shall thereby save the sum of one-and-sixpence. You're not the only thrifty person at Greyfriars, you see!—Ed.)

A POET'S DILEMMA!

By DICK PENFOLD.

"Start to save to-morrow!"
Writes my Uncle James.
"Squander, to your sorrow!"
Uncle Frank exclaims.

"Thrift is simply topping!"
Writes my Cousin Rose.
"If you go out shopping,"
All your money goes!"

"Save a shilling weekly!"
Writes my maiden aunt.
I reply, quite meekly,
That I simply can't!

"Borrowing and lending
Are not wise," says dad,
"Stop your foolish spending,
Practice thrift, my lad!"

"Save your cash!" says mater.
"Start at once to do it!"
If you don't, why, later,
You will surely rue it!"

All my rich relations
Tell me, "Study thrift!"
Or cares and sad vexations
Will follow sure and swift!"

I think it rather funny
The way these folks behave;
They urge me to save money,
But send me none to save!

THRIFT TOPICS!

By TOM BROWN.



Billy Bunter has saved sixpence! He saw the glittering coin rolling towards a drain, and he pounced upon it before it could go through the grating. Quite a good way of saving sixpence!

It is rumoured that Harry Wharton once saved a shilling. At all events, he plunged into the River Sark on one occasion and rescued his chum Cherry—thereby saving a Bob!

Some of our English kings must have been fearful spendthrifts. Charles the First, for example. When the Civil War came along, he found it impossible to save a "crown!"

Lord Maulerever, we regret to report, was late for brekker this morning. But he sprinted into the dining-hall just in time to "save his bacon." Thrifty fellow!

Skinner of the Remove has invested in an umbrella. That's about the only thing Skinner intends to put aside for a rainy day!

Johnny Bull—although you might not believe it—is awfully keen on economy. He is a fellow of few words, and therefore believes in "saving his breath."

Dicky Nugent has just written a story entitled the "Hidden Horde!" Does he refer to an ambushed tribe of savages, or to a buried treasure?

Dick Penfold looked into my study a moment ago, and wanted to borrow a file. I asked him what he wanted it for, and he replied sadly, "To file a petition in bankruptcy!"

I feel sorry for Mr. Joseph Mimble, the school gardener. He keeps an allotment, yet he is "without a bean!"

SOME KICK!

At an Army disposal sale a man bought a mule. As he had brought a friend with him they decided to ride it in turns. The owner mounted, and, after riding a short distance, found that the animal would not proceed. The man who was walking encouraged it with a stick, and was rewarded with a kick in the stomach, knocking him into a newly-made gutter. After a few minutes he arose with a new kerbstone in his hands and threw it at the mule, but hit the owner on the back of the head instead, knocking him into the road. On seeing this, the thrower of the missile feigned unconsciousness and lay down in the gutter again. Neither of them spoke for a long time, but at last the owner sat up and said to the other, who had just opened his eyes, "What's the matter, Bill?" To which the other replied: "That mule kicked me in the stomach." "Oh, that's nothing," said the owner, "he kicked me on the back of my head!"

[Supplement iv.]

THE GREYFRIARS NEWSPAPER!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Ah, yes! You are wanted on the telephone, my boy, in my study."
"Thank you, sir!" said Truluce.
He hurried away to the Form master's study.

The telephone receiver was off its hook, and Truluce picked it up and spoke into the transmitter.

"That you, Browney?" he asked.
"Yes," came the reply over the wires.
"What was the result?"
"Six to nothing."
"Oh, my hat!"

"Did you get that all right?" asked Tom Brown.

"Yes, thanks very much! Good-bye!"
Truluce rang off just as Mr. Mobbs stepped into the study.

"Do you mind, sir, if I ring up the printer's in Friarale?" asked Truluce.
"I've got a very important message to give, and it's urgent."
Mr. Mobbs nodded.

"You have my consent, Truluce," he said.

The Greyfriars junior promptly rang up Mr. Smithers, the printer of Fish's newspaper.

Truluce had the result of the match in his possession, and it would not be difficult to "fake" a brief report of the game. He took it for granted that St. Jude's had beaten the Greyfriars Remove by six goals to nil. It did not occur to him for one moment that the boot might be on the other foot, and that the Remove might have won.

Although he was the special football reporter of the "Greyfriars News,"

Truluce knew very little about football. He certainly did not know that St. Jude's were a very poor side. Tom Brown had not actually said which team had won, but there was no doubt in Truluce's mind that it was the home team. Visiting teams seldom won, especially by such a pronounced margin as six goals to nil.

Suddenly a voice came over the wires.
"Smithers speaking. Do you want me?"

"Yes," said Truluce. "There's a special report that I want you to print in the Stop Press column of the 'Greyfriars News.' Will you take it down?"

"Yes. I've got paper and pencil here. Fire away!"

Whereupon Truluce dictated his report to the printer, and Mr. Smithers took it down word for word.

Truluce chuckled as he left the study.

"Fishy will never know that I didn't go to St. Jude's!" he murmured. "Of course, Wharton & Co. didn't see me there, but I shall say I was wedged in amongst the spectators. It was jolly decent of Tom Brown to phone me the result of the match. The paper will be on sale at Greyfriars very shortly, and everything in the garden will be lovely!"

But Truluce was an optimist!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Order of the Boot!

"PAPER! Special Football Edition! Paper!"

A number of newsboys hurried and scurried through the Greyfriars Close in the gathering dusk.

Instantly there was a rush of feet, and scores of fellows came surging out into the Close.

"Capt's result!" yelled Dicky Nugent.
"Paper!"

"Great Sensation at St. Jude's!" roared Tubb of the Third. "Paper, sir?" he added, bearing down upon Micky Desmond.

Micky purchased a paper. So did Russell, and Rake, and Morgan, and Ogilvy, and Wibley. They hurried down to the school-gates with their copies, in order to read them by the light of the lamp that glimmered overhead.

The juniors gathered round in a circle, and feverishly turned to the Stop Press column. Then there was a yell from Micky Desmond.

"Tare an' 'ounds! Shure, an' this is the biggest bombshell that ever burst on Greyfriars!"

"Licked by Jove!" gasped Ogilvy.
"And what a licking!" exclaimed Dick Russell. "Six goals to nil! Oh, my hat!"

The juniors were stunned by the news. They stood blinking at their papers in the light of the lamp, and wondering if it was all a dream. But it was no dream. There was the report, in black and white. And the score appeared twice, so it was hardly likely to be a printer's error.

"REMOVE ROUTED AT ST. JUDE'S!"

"HOME TEAM'S SMASHING 6-0 VICTORY!"

"The Remove Eleven visited St. Jude's to-day, to play in the second round of the Public Schools Cup contest. The game started before a big crowd, from the kick-off St. Jude's were 'all over' their opponents. The Greyfriars defence was very shaky, and the forwards were never in the picture. St. Jude's pil-d on goal after goal, and play (Continued on page 18.)

FAMOUS GEMS!

(An Interesting and Instructive article, specially written for the MAGNET.)

FROM time to time the earth has yielded to man many of her most highly prized treasures, and these, eagerly sought after and desired in possession by so many, have resulted in happenings of a wonderful and surprising nature. To the modern fiction writer the introduction of some great precious stone or famous gem has long served as a centre around which to weave tales of adventure and mystery, which most people would deem impossible really to have their counterpart in actual fact; yet, strange as it may seem, connected with some of the world's most famous precious stones are incidents beside which those emanating from the fertile brain of an imaginative author pale into insignificance.

From time immemorial the desire to possess gems has been a conspicuous trait in the character of man, and awful and terrible are the crimes that have been committed in pursuance of this all-absorbing passion.

One of the most historic stones in the world is that known as the

HOPE DIAMOND,

or the blue Indian Savernier, which at one time occupied a conspicuous position in the crown of Louis XIV. of France. It is quite probable that the Grand Monarque acquired this jewel, which was then thought to be the only blue diamond in

existence, from one of his subjects, a M. Savernier. The value of this beautiful gem is probably about £25,000. But far exceeding this in value is the world-famed

REGENT,

which was found in the Pital mines of India by a slave, who hid it in his leg, allowing the skin to grow over the hole he had cut for the reception of the jewel, which weighed 210 carats.

At the very first opportunity the Hindoo fled from the mines, and sought refuge on an English vessel, confiding his guilty secret to the captain of the ship. This man, overcome by covetousness, cut off the leg of the unfortunate Hindoo, abstracted the diamond, and then threw the wounded man overboard.

Thence the stone passed into the hands of an Indian merchant, from whom it was bought for £12,500 by the Governor of Fort St. George, Major Pitt, grandfather of the Earl of Chatham. But since the days of its acquisition there was no peace for the new possessor, who, living in dread of hourly assassination, at length sold the gem to the Duke of Orleans, who was at that time Prince Regent of France, for £135,000. But its adventures did not end here, for, after the Revolution in France it ornamented the sword of the First Consul, who sold it into other hands. The "Regent" is now supposed to have been worth nearly £500,000.

Other and even more famous stones are those known by the names of the "Braganza," the "Nizam," the "Koh-i-noor," the "Orloff," and the "Star of the South." A few facts about some of these stones may be of interest. The most noteworthy, of course, is the

KOH-I-NOOR,

which was acquired as far back as the beginning of the fourteenth century by the Sultan Ala-ed-din. In 1526 it passed by conquest to the son of Sultan Babu, afterwards falling into the hands of the great Aurungzebe. The name of "Koh-i-noor," or Mountain of Light, was given to the jewel by Nadir Shah, and, after a succession of romantic adventures, it passed into the hands of the Treasury at Lahore, eventually being presented to Queen Victoria after the annexation of the Punjab by the British in 1849.

The "Orloff" once formed the

EYE OF AN IDOL

in a temple on the island of Seringgam in Mysore, whence it is said to have been stolen by a French soldier.

Of rubies the finest are even more highly prized than diamonds. Gustavus III. of Sweden presented one to the Empress Catherine, which was as large as a pigeon's egg. The value of such a stone would, of course, be enormous.

Of other gems the "Imperial Opal" has attracted much attention. This wonderful stone, which was discovered in Queensland several years ago, was to have been added to the Crown regalia previous to the death of the Queen.

To give an example of a giant emerald, we may mention that in the year 1555 one was found in the mines of Muzo, in the Republic of Colombia, weighing no less than 2,350 carats. What became of this almost priceless gem it would be difficult to say.

was most one-sided. Never has the Greyfriars Remove given such a sorry exhibition. Final:

"St. Jude's 6, Greyfriars 0."

The fellows who perused that report were utterly flabbergasted. Seldom or never did the Remove lose a match by such a margin. And to think that St. Jude's, a team of duffers, had routed the Remove in this fashion!

There was weeping and gnashing of teeth at Greyfriars when that report came through.

The only persons who were pleased were Fisher T. Fish and his sub-editors. They had the satisfaction of seeing their Special Football Edition sold out in half an hour; and Fish had to send a messenger post-haste to the printer's, requesting him to run off an additional hundred copies.

It was good business, and Fisher Tarleton Fish was in the seventh heaven of delight.

The other fellows, however—Micky Desmond, and Russell, and the rest—were simply furious.

"This is what comes of Wharton playing his pals in the team, look you!" said Morgan angrily.

Russell nodded.

"It's a thundering disgrace, being licked by six to nothing!" he exclaimed. "Why, a reserve team would have put up a better show!"

Donald Ogilvy clenched his hands and snorted with wrath.

"Just wait till the team gets back!" he said grimly. "We'll jolly well mob them!"

"Yes, rather!"

Feeling run high in the Remove, and a wrathful crowd of juniors assembled in the Close to await the return of the footballers.

They had a long time to wait.

An hour passed, and then Trulzee cycled through the school gateway. He rang his bell violently, forcing a passage through the assembled throng.

Instantly there was a chorus of shouts. "Have you been to see the match, Trulzee?"

"Is it a fact that the Remove were licked to a frazzle?"

Trulzee discreetly ignored the first question. But he answered the second.

"Yes, it's the sober truth!" he said. "Nice dashing sort of eleven we've got—I don't think!"

And Trulzee rode on through the darkness in the direction of the bicycle-shed.

The juniors concluded that Trulzee had just returned from St. Jude's. They did not dream that he had been spending the afternoon at Highlife.

The crowd in the Close grew more and more impatient for the footballers to come in. And at last they came.

There was a rumble of wheels and the foot of a horn, and the motor charabanc loomed up in the dusk.

There was another sound—the sound of tenuous voices raised in song.

The footballers were making merry. They were bawling "Dunke Goes West" at the top of their lungs, and the crowd in the Close looked astonished. Instead of crawling home with their tails between their legs, so to speak, the Remove footballers were assuming the role of conquering heroes!

Micky Desmond clenched his hands.

"Faith, an' we'll jolly soon make the spalpeen pipe to another tune!" he exclaimed.

The charabanc came to a halt in the Close, and the footballers clambered down. Instantly they were surrounded by a surging, seething horde of fellows.

Somebody started to hiss, and the sound was taken up on every side.

It was quite a hostile demonstration, and Harry Wharton & Co. fell back in amaze.

"What on earth——" gasped the captain of the Remove.

"You silly asses!" roared Bob Cherry. "Have you suddenly gone potty?"

The hissing stopped, only to be replaced by hooting and booing.

"Mob the bouders!" shouted Dick Russell. "We'll teach 'em to throw matches away like this!"

"Throw matches away?" echoed Harry Wharton, in blank amazement. "What do you mean?"

Russell strode up to Wharton, his eyes flashing.

"You don't care a fig for the school's reputation," he exclaimed hotly "when you go and get trounced by six goals to nil——"

"But we didn't!"

"W-what!"

"Only one team got trounced, and that was St. Jude's!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "We piled on the merry goals, and ran out winners by six to six!"

"So, you see, the boot is on the other leg, footfully!" said Hurree Singh, with a smile. "It was St. Jude's who were lickfully defeated, not our worthy and honourable selves!"

There was an angry roar from the crowd in the Close. But their wrath was not kindled against the Remove footballers any longer. It was directed against "The Greyfriars News!"

"Spoofed, he jabers!" ejaculated Micky Desmond. "That villain Fish is responsible for this!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's Fishy's latest?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Why, he's got a report of the match in his precious paper stating that the Remove were hopelessly licked!" said Ogilvy.

"My lat!"

"Fish must have faked the whole thing!" said Dick Russell. "Let's come and tell him what we think of him!"

Russell darted away in the direction of the woodshed, to which retreat Fisher T. Fish had retired.

Hard on Russell's heels surged a crowd of angry juniors. They were like ravening wolves, seeking what they might devour.

Fisher Tarleton Fish was alone in the woodshed. He was not expecting visitors. Certainly he was not expecting a wholesale invasion.

The furious Removites took the woodshed by storm. They crowded in, and their menacing attitude caused Fisher T. Fish to jump up in alarm. He started to speak, but his words were drowned by an angry roar.

"Spoofer!"

"Swindler!"

"We'll teach you to put faked report in your rotten old rag!"

"Bump him!"

"Squash him!"

"Sit on him!"

Fisher T. Fish turned quite pale. He did not relish the prospect of being bumped and squashed and sat upon. He had had enough bumpings during the past week to last him for the rest of the term.

He looked round wildly for a way of escape, but there was none. The newspaper proprietor of the Remove was at the mercy of the mob.

Fish tried to explain that he was not personally responsible for the football report which appeared in his paper. But the juniors were in no mood to listen to explanations. They hurled themselves upon the unhappy Fish and snote him hip and thigh.

"Yow-ow-ow! Lot up, you mug-wumps!" yelled Fish.

But the avengers did not desist until the amateur editor lay in a squirming, groaning heap on the floor of the woodshed.

Even then they did not desist altogether from deeds of violence. They

HALF-MINUTE STORIES!

By THE JOKER.

Muddle-Puddle Plumbing.

The householder smothered his wrath, and descended to the basement.

"Are you the plumber?" he asked of the grimy-looking individual who was tinkering with the pipes in the cellar.

"Yes, guv'nor!" answered the man.

"Been long in the trade?"

"Bout a year, guv'nor!"

"Ever make mistakes?"

"Bless yer, no, guv'nor!"

"Oh, then, I suppose it's all right! I imagined you had connected up the wrong pipes, for the chandelier in the drawing-room is spraying like a fountain, and the bath-room tap's on fire!"

Railway 'Rithmetic.

"Where's your ticket?" demanded the collector.

The sleepy yokel opened an eye, looked at the collector, and closed it again.

"Now, then, where is it? Haven't you got one?" exclaimed the collector.

The sleepy traveller shifted, and opened his other eye. Then he shook his head, and resumed his recumbent posture.

"All right," said the collector, consulting his book. "You'll have to pay! Five-and-six, please!"

The sleeper took no notice.

"Don't you hear me?" cried the inspector, shaking him angrily. "Five-and-six!"

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For a moment the weary eyes opened again. Then a slight dawning of intelligence broke upon the yokel's countenance, and he answered:

"Eleven!"

The Best Policy.

He had dined at the same restaurant, at the same table, at the same hour, with the same waiter—James—for six months on end. It was at the beginning of the seventh month that James approached him deferentially in the middle of his mutton-outlet.

"I've got a chance to change my situation, sir," whispered James, "and I was wondering if you'd say a good word for me—tell 'em I'm honest, and so on."

The diner hesitated.

"Of course," he said, "you're a good waiter, James; but I don't know anything specially about your honesty."

"Well, tell 'em that, and say you think I'm honest!" pleaded the waiter.

"Very well," nodded the diner. "I can do that."

"Thank you, sir—thank you!" exclaimed James gratefully. "And when you come up to-morrow, I'll make up your bill a bob short!"

ALL SPORTS

THE TOPICAL ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY

proceeded to wreck the editorial sanctum of the "Greyfriars News," scattering manuscripts all over the place, and overturning chairs and forms.

At last, after giving full vent to their outraged feelings, the invaders withdrew, leaving Fisher Trellove to perform the painful task of sorting himself out.

Fisher groaned aloud as he tottered to his feet. It was a case of the innocent suffering for the guilty. Anthony Trellove was the fellow to blame; but it seemed that Fisher had to suffer for the shortcomings of his sub-editors.

After a brief interval the door of the woodshed opened and Trellove himself came in. He stared in astonishment at the scene of chaos.

"What the merry dickens—" he began.

Fisher T. Fish looked daggers at his visitor. If looks could have killed, Anthony Trellove would promptly have expired amidst that litter of papers.

"You—your villain!" hooted Fish. "I guess I'd deal you a sockdolager if I wasn't feeling so sore!"

"Why—what's happened?" gasped Trellove in dismay.

"You sent a spoof report to the printer's!" howled Fish. "A pretty mess you've made of everything! I shouldn't be surprised if you've killed the paper!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"You didn't go to St. Jude's at all!" scolded the incensed editor. "You simply faked a report, and all the fellows are furious. They jolly nearly tore me limb from limb. Get out of my sight—and consider yourself sacked!"

"Oh, I say! Draw it mild, Fishy—"

"Get!" roared Fisher T. Fish, picking up a heavy ebony ruler and brandishing it in a menacing manner. "And don't you dare to poke your nose inside this establishment again!"

Trellove saw quite clearly that Fisher T. Fish was in earnest. So he promptly "got." And later in the evening Fish was advertising for a new sub editor.



As the Remove footballers clambered from the charabanc someone started to hiss. "What on earth—" began Wharton. "We'll teach 'em to throw away matches!" hooted Russell. "Mob the bouders!" "But you silly asses," said Wharton in amazement, "we won!" "W-w-what?" "We won!" repeated Wharton. (See Chapter 8.)

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Tragic End of a Great Enterprise!

"DAY by day, in every way, it's dropping lower and lower!" Thus Harold Skinner. And he was referring to the circulation of the "Greyfriars News."

Several days had passed, and the situation had grown worse and worse. It was not merely an appalling situation, it was a desperate one.

There were gloomy faces in the woodshed, where Fisher T. Fish had summoned a special emergency meeting to decide what was to be done.

"It's no use blinking the facts, gents," said Fish. "Our circulation has dropped down to thirty. I've had to dismiss all the newshags except one. There's no work for 'em to do."

"We shall find it a job to sell a single copy soon!" granted Bolsover major. "Honest if I can understand this awful slump. You'd think everybody would buy the paper, if only for the sake of reading my boxing column."

"It's your boxing column that's killing the paper, if you ask me," said Trevor.

"What!" shouted Bolsover. "It's a jolly sight better than your 'Greyfriars Gossip,' anyway!"

"Rais!"

Fisher T. Fish called for order. "No sense in flying at each other's throats," he said. "We've got to do something to stop the rot."

"Hear, hear!" said Skinner. "I'll tell you what's wrong with the paper, Fishy. It's too tame. The public

clamours for sensational news, and we don't give 'em any."

"Guess there's none to give," said Fish wearily. "Nothing ever happens in this sleepy old town. No murders, no divorces, no thrilling crimes. The most exciting bit of news we've had this week is about the Head getting a sore throat. "And the tragic death of the kitchen cat," said Trevor. "Don't forget that!"

Fish gave a grunt.

"If we want to buck the circulation up I guess we shall have to do something desperate," he said. "Things are too awful for words! Oh! Smithers, the printer, is denouncing for his bill to be paid, and we've not nearly enough cash to meet it."

Bolsover looked grave.

"Smithers will be complaining to the Head if his bill isn't settled soon," he said.

"How on earth can we settle it, with a circulation of thirty?" groaned Fish.

"Echo answers, 'How?'" said Skinner. "Smithers will have to wait."

The staff of the "Greyfriars News" continued to discuss the tragic situation. And the more they discussed it, the more tragic it seemed to become.

Fisher T. Fish had launched his newspaper with a view to getting rich quick. But his great expectations had not been

realised. Instead of reaping fame and fortune, Fish had merely succeeded in piling up a big bill at the printer's.

And that bill would have to be paid right speedily, or Mr. Smithers would come down like a wolf on the fold. And if he complained to the Head the consequences would be disastrous.

"I guess we shall have to make a real big effort to pull the paper together," said Fish. "We'll cram it with thrills and sensations—"

"But they never happen," interjected Trevor.

"Then they must happen in our own minds," said Fish.

"Do you mean that we must invent sensational news?" asked Skinner.

"Exactly!"

"But the fellows will know it isn't true—"

"They may find out afterwards, but they will have bought the paper, and that's all we want," said Fish. "Now, let's put our heads together and see if we can fudge up a few sensational pats that will make the paper sell like hot cakes!"

This course having been agreed upon, the members of the editorial staff set to work.

Both Fish and Skinner possessed vivid imaginations, and they found it easy to

describe a number of events which had never happened.

The amateur journalists of the Remove worked long and late that evening, and they succeeded in producing some really hair-raising sensations.

"Waal, if to-morrow's issue doesn't sell out in about ten minutes, it won't be our fault!" said Fisher T. Fish. "We'll have some special placards printed and stuck up all over the school. That'll fetch 'em!"

The "copy" was placed in an envelope, ready for despatch to the printer in the morning; and Fish and his sub-editors rested from their labours.

Next day a whole series of bombshells burst upon Greyfriars School.

When Harry Wharton & Co. came in from the football field a number of startling placards greeted their gaze.

"My only Aunt Sempronia!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Just look at that! Surely there can't be any truth in it!"

The Famous Five stopped short and stared.

Posted up in the hall was a large placard bearing the sensational announcement:

"THE HEAD ABOUT TO RESIGN!"
(Official.)

See
"THE GREYFRIARS NEWS."

Greatly wondering, the juniors passed through the hall.

They had not proceeded very far before another placard arrested their attention. It was pasted on the wall of the Remove passage:

**"SHOCKING CALAMITY!
"COKER INJURED IN MOTOR-
CYCLE MISHAP!"**

"Well, I always said that old Coker would break his neck one of these days," said Johnny Bull. "Looks as if he's pretty nearly done it!"

"But is it true?" asked Harry Wharton sceptically. "Looks to me like another of Fishy's fishy stunts."

"Same here," said Nugent. "It's simply a wheeze to swell the circulation of 'The Greyfriars News.'"

"But surely Fish wouldn't have the feulful nerve to invent all these things!" said Bob Cherry, aghast. "It would land him into a frightful row! Hallo! Here's another placard. The place is simply swarming with them!"

A little way along the passage another placard appeared:

**"TROUBLE ON THE GOLF LINKS!
"MR. PROUT CHALLENGES SIR
HILTON POPPER TO A DUEL!"**

The juniors stared at that information in blank amazement. It was well known that Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, was at daggers drawn with Sir Hilton Popper, the fiery baronet. Was it possible that there had really been a bitter quarrel between them on the golf links, resulting in Mr. Prout challenging Sir Hilton to a duel?

The Famous Five believed it was all bunkum. But there were others who took the placards more seriously.

Among these was Alonzo Todd, the duffer of the Remove. Alonzo was a guileless youth whose leg could be pulled a dozen times a day. He honestly believed that those startling placards were founded upon fact, and he hurried off to Mr. Prout's study.

The master of the Fifth was at home. He was reclining in the armchair, his feet encased in slippers. A fat cigar was between his lips, and wreaths of smoke were ascending to the ceiling.

There was a sudden tap at the door, and Alonzo Todd made a dramatic entry. "Desist, my dear sir!" he exclaimed, advancing towards Mr. Prout.

The Form-master removed the cigar from his mouth, and jumped to his feet. He glared at his youthful visitor.

"Todd!" he thundered. "What do you mean, sir?"

"Desist!" repeated Alonzo. "I implore you not to meet Sir Hilton Popper in a duel. It may be attended with fatal results!"

"W-what?" gasped Mr. Prout. "Let the matter be settled by a gentlemanly apology, sir," entreated Alonzo. "No doubt you acted under great provocation when you challenged Sir Hilton Popper to a duel, but no good can come of it, sir. I entreat you to settle the quarrel in an amicable way!"

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Prout. "Are you ill, Todd?"

"Nunno, sir."

"Do you feel at all feverish?"

"Indeed no, sir."

"Then pray explain," said Mr. Prout, his voice rising to a roar, "why you are babbling all these nonsensical remarks. I have not the slightest intention of fighting a duel with Sir Hilton Popper, or with anyone else!"

Alonzo Todd drew back a pace. He looked quite perplexed.

"But—but it's on the placards, sir," he faltered.

"On what placards?" thundered Mr. Prout.

"Those of 'The Greyfriars News,' sir."

"Impossible!" said the master of the Fifth. "Fish would not dare to invent such a wild story. Go—"

Mr. Prout paused.

From the corridor without came the shrill voice of Dicky Nugent.

"Trouble on the golf links! Paper! Mr. Prout challenges Sir Hilton Popper to a duel! Paper!"

The thunderclouds gathered on Mr. Prout's brow.

"You appear to be quite right, Todd," he said. "That young rascal Fish has had the unheard-of effrontery to put this wild story into circulation. I will go and interview him at once!"

So saying, Mr. Prout strode out of the study.

As for Alonzo Todd, he betook himself to the sacred apartment in which the Headmaster of Greyfriars worked.

Because one of the placards had proved to be a fraud, it did not follow that all the others were fraudulent. One swallow didn't make a summer. Alonzo had seen the placard about the Head resigning his position, and he implicitly believed it.

Doctor Locke looked up from his papers in some annoyance when Alonzo stepped into his study, after a preliminary tap on the door.

"What is it, Todd?" he asked testily.

Alonzo threw out his arms appealingly. "Don't, sir!" he implored.

"What!"

"I entreat you, sir, to re-consider your decision!"

"Bey!"

"I repeat—don't!" said Alonzo earnestly.

"D-d-don't what?" stammered the Head, in utter amazement.

"Don't resign, sir! Think the matter over carefully, and I feel sure you will decide to stay. Greyfriars can ill-afford to lose the services of a kind and benevolent Headmaster."

Doctor Locke looked anything but kind and benevolent at that moment. There were storm-signals on his brow, and he bestowed the glove of a basilisk upon Alonzo Todd.

"Boy! Todd! Have you taken leave of your senses?" he demanded. "No thought of resigning has ever taken shape in my mind!"

Alonzo blinked at the Head in sheer stupefaction.

"But—but the placard distinctly states, sir, that you are about to resign!" he stammered.

"Placard!" echoed the Head, in perplexity. "Which placard?"

"The placard of 'The Greyfriars News,' sir."

"Oh!"

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Doctor Locke looked up from his papers in some annoyance as Alonzo Todd stepped into the study. "What is it, Todd?" he asked testily. Alonzo threw out his arms appealingly. "Don't, sir," he implored. "What!" "I entreat you, sir, to reconsider your decision!" "Boy! Don't—w-what?" spluttered the Head, in amazement. "Don't resign, sir," said Todd, appealingly. (See *Chapte. 9.*)

Gradually the truth dawned upon Doctor Locke. He realised that the announcement about his impending resignation was merely a "journalistic stunt" on the part of Fisher T. Fish.

The Head frowned darkly. "I can assure you, Todd, that you are labouring under a misapprehension," he said. "As I remarked just now, I have not the slightest intention of resigning my position."

"I am greatly relieved to hear it, sir," said Alonzo. "Where would Greyfriars be without you, sir? Pause and consider!"

But the Head had no desire to wrestle with that problem. He waved Alonzo to the door.

"Pray leave my study, Todd," he said, "and be good enough to send Fish to me."

Alonzo retired, and went to look for the editor of "The Greyfriars News."

He found Fisher T. Fish in the woodshed. Mr. Prout was present also, and he was going for Fish "baldheaded" metaphorically, of course.

"Excuse me," said Alonzo, poking his head round the door, "but the Head desires to see Fish."

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!" groaned the unhappy editor. "More trouble, I guess! It never rains but it pours!"

"Go, wretched boy!" thundered Mr. Prout. "I trust Doctor Locke will administer the thrashing you so richly deserve! I trust also that he will suppress your ridiculous newspaper!"

Fisher T. Fish crawled away to the Head's study like a condemned felon going to his doom.

It was a very painful interview that took place—particularly painful for Fisher T. Fish.

The Head lectured the schoolboy newspaper proprietor at great length, and he followed up the lecture by administering a severe swishing. He also issued the stern decree that "The Greyfriars News" was to be suspended forthwith.

It was a bitter pill for Fish to swallow. Gone were his fond dreams of acquiring wealth and prosperity. His cherished hopes had melted away like snow in the sunshine.

But "the most unkindest cut of all" was yet to come.

While Fisher T. Fish was squeezing his palms together after his licking, Trotter, the page, looked in to announce that a Mr. Smithers desired an interview with the Head.

"Show him in," said Doctor Locke.

The local printer was ushered into the study, and there was another painful

ordeal for Fisher T. Fish. Life seemed to consist solely of painful ordeals these days.

Mr. Smithers presented his bill for printing expenses, and demanded prompt payment. Fish was not in a position to settle, so the Head sent the bill to the junior's father, with a request that he should pay it. Fishy's "popper" was likely to be extremely annoyed on receiving that bill, and there would be no pocket-money for Fisher Tarleton Fish for a long time to come!

When the ordeal was over Fish tottered away from the Head's study feeling that life was not worth living.

"The Greyfriars News" died a sudden death, and there were very few who mourned its fate.

Thus was the curtain rung down upon yet another of Fish's enterprises. And for many days afterwards Fisher T. Fish went about with a face like a fiddle.

The business-man of the Remove had received a severe set-back, but there was no doubt that he would presently bob up again with another of his startling schemes for making money. For no amount of failure could crush the ambitions of the late editor of "The Greyfriars News."



A Marked Man!

by
Hedley Scott.

A Thrilling Serial Story of
League Football, introducing
Ferrers Locke, the World-
famous Detective, and his
Young Assistant, Jack Drake.



The Challenge!

"RIPPING!" chimed in Jack Drake, with equal warmth. "They evidently know a player when they see one!"

The postman could have brought nothing better than that formal communication from the Selection Committee. A feeling of depression had taken hold of Jim Blakeney of late, due in the first instance to the falling off of the supporters of the Rangers, and secondly to the fact that the club Mr. Theodore Kettleton had inaugurated had rapidly leaped into favour with the football-loving crowd at Middleham.

"This will make some of them sit up in Middleham!" grinned Drake cheerfully. "What will old Kettleton have to say about it, I wonder? The people will run wild with excitement when they learn that one of their youthful citizens has been selected to represent England against Scotland. Hurrah!"

The more Jack Drake pondered over it the more excited he became. Jim Blakeney was silent. He hardly knew whether he was dreaming or whether the whole thing was the product of an imaginative brain. But another glance at the letter, another look at the animated faces before him was evidence enough. There it was in black and white—selected to represent England!

"This will rally the crowd round the Rangers' banner again," said the detective quietly. "You mark my words, they'll be ready to cheer you to Land's End when they get to hear of it. It's the first time that an International player ever came from Middleham!"

"I hope you're right, Mr. Locke," said Jim Blakeney. "Naturally enough, I'm pleased beyond measure at the prospect of playing for England, but I would willingly sacrifice that honour if I could see the Rangers on their feet again."

"Strike while the iron is hot," said the detective. "Challenge the rival club to a match—you've no fixture for this Wednesday!"

"Good idea!" agreed Drake. "Your team is rapidly improving, and I reckon they'll give old Kettleton's crowd a jolly rough game!"

Both Locke and Blakeney smiled slightly at Drake's reference to the pompous individual who rejoiced in the name of Theodore Kettleton, and then became serious again. There was something in the detective's idea that appealed to Jim Blakeney, for he immediately sat down and penned a challenge to the executor of the Rangers.

Jenkins was given the letter to post. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 331.

and then Blakeney and his guests fell to discussing the chances of the Rangers should they be fortunate enough to meet the Crusaders.

"It will be a fine game," said Locke at length. "The Crusaders have hardly got into their stride yet, and that will balance

HOW THE STORY OPENS.

JIM BLAKENEY, the eighteen-year-old centre-forward of the Middleham Rangers, who is a nephew of

TIGER SLEEK, a notorious criminal, who has thus far escaped the dock.

MORNINGTON—HARDACRE, the late managing-director of the Rangers, a great friend of Blakeney's, and inventor of a secret wireless ray.

RONALD SWIVELLER, the inside-left of the Rangers, and nephew of Hardacre. Jealous of Blakeney's rapid strides into favour, Swiveller has committed a series of crimes in his endeavour to get Blakeney hounded out of Middleham. Hovering in the background, ready to encourage Swiveller's underhanded methods, is Tiger Sleek. Each attempt to mar Jim's good name, however, has been thwarted by

FERRERS LOCKE, the world-famous detective. The sleuth, by a strange and thrilling series of events, throws in his lot with Blakeney, and becomes his firm friend.

JACK DRAKE, Ferrers Locke's young and capable assistant.

By a cunningly worked plot, evolved by Tiger Sleek, and put into practice by Ronald Swiveller, Jim Blakeney is arrested as the murderer of Mornington—Hardacre, who is found dead in the library at the Myrtles. Ferrers Locke, however, proves conclusively Blakeney's innocence, and the young footballer is acquitted.

Some time later the will of the late Mornington—Hardacre is granted probate, and to his unbounded delight and surprise, Jim Blakeney finds that he has inherited the bulk of the murdered man's estate. Much to his dismay, Ronald Swiveller is left only a small annuity of one hundred pounds. Faced of the grim hand of the law, which still seeks the murdered man's assassin, Swiveller suddenly leaves the neighbourhood to start life anew. He leaves behind him a demoralised team in the Rangers, which, owing to the unsportsmanlike tactics of Theodore Kettleton—one-time director of the club, who refuses to be on the same board of management as Jim Blakeney, and who has now started a rival football club—is beginning to lose thousands of its supporters.

At a time when Jim Blakeney is feeling very depressed, owing to his team's poor display against a rival club at the foot of the League table, he receives a letter from the International Selection Committee, intimating that he has been chosen to play for England in the forthcoming match against Scotland.

"Bravo!" exclaims Ferrers Locke, upon reading the letter. "Congratulations, Jim, my lad!"

(Now read on.)

their superiority in other directions. Our lads, on the other hand, are just beginning to realise the value of combination!"

"Yes," muttered Blakeney. "I think we shall be able to give them a run for their money if the estimable Mr. Kettleton accepts the challenge."

The morning papers contained an effusive account of the verdict of the International Selection Committee in selecting Jim Blakeney of the Middleham Rangers to represent England in the coming match with Scotland. The townsfolk were delighted at the honour conferred upon them, for it meant that Middleham was coming to be recognised as a power in the football world. Not a few of them felt remorse at having thrown over their support to the Crusaders, and again, not a few of them vowed to turn up at the next match in which the Middleham Rangers figured: a of old.

At the foot of the glowing article in the papers appeared Jim Blakeney's challenge to the Crusaders—a challenge that Mr. Theodore Kettleton was forced to accept on account of the strong public feeling in the matter. Thus it was Jim Blakeney received by post a formal acceptance of the challenge, and no one up at the Myrtles was more delighted than Ferrers Locke.

"I said this would be your chance, Jim," he remarked at lunch-time. "The crowd is all ready to do you homage again. For Heaven's sake, my lad, beat the Crusaders on Wednesday, and I'll wager the Rangers will resume their old position in the Middleham world of sport."

"I hope you prove a true prophet, Mr. Locke," said Jim Blakeney earnestly.

That same afternoon saw the Rangers hard at practice. The recruits in the eleven fell into their stride from the outset, the forwards combined well, and the defence seemed to be on the top of their form. Taken altogether, it was a team of youngsters; but Jim Blakeney was completely satisfied with their progress at the conclusion of the afternoon's work.

"Very ship-shape indeed!" commented Ferrers Locke, as he accompanied Blakeney home to the Myrtles. "If I were a betting man I'd lay even money on the Rangers to-morrow, despite the glorified reputation of the Crusaders!"

"The morrow will decide!" grinned Blakeney. "I'm not feeling worried about it, anyway!"

Rangers v. Crusaders!

By three o'clock on the following day a steady stream of humanity wended its way to the Middleham Rangers' Football Club. The majority of the old-time supporters of the Rangers were there, their loyalty being put to a hard test on account of the fact that six ex-members of the Rangers were now sporting the blue-and-white jerseys of the Crusaders. The winning or losing of the match would mean a world of difference to them. This was the first time that the rival clubs had been billed to meet, and speculation ran high.

"If the Rangers win," avowed one old ancient, "it's me for shouting the Rangers ever after!"

"Hear, hear!" agreed his associates. "After all, the Crusaders ain't done much, have they?"

They certainly hadn't. True, they had beaten several teams drawn from the neighbouring counties; but that was not First League football. Their meeting with the Rangers would decide the issue in the animated controversy that reigned round the touch-lines half an hour before the match.

Suddenly a roar of applause rang out, which was taken up and magnified a thousand times as the blue-and-white jerseys of the Crusaders came into view. Mr. Kettleton and Mr. Wirtle, up in the grand stand, grinned and rubbed their hands with satisfaction. The welcome was better than either had expected. The smiles wore off, however, as the Rangers took the field. The applause, the encouragements, the cheers, swelled into a volume of sound far in excess of that accorded the Crusaders.

When Jim Blakeney made his appearance at the end of the line of players emerging from the dressing-room, he was given an ovation all to himself.

"Hurrah!"
"Come on, Jim, lad!"
"Middleham's International, boys! Give him a cheer!"
"Hip-hip hooray!"

Smiling his acknowledgements, Blakeney clapped Harold Digby on the shoulder.

"We're going to win, old chap—I can feel it in my bones! Didn't expect an ovation like that, did you?"

The skipper of the Rangers shook his head.

"They are a funny crowd in Middleham, Jim," he remarked. "One minute they had a fello' to the skies; the next—well, you've seen for yourself!"

The referee beckoned the two captains to the referee, and the coin was tossed. There was little or no wind, so no advantage could be obtained from the elements. And in less than two minutes after the formal handshake of the rival captains the teams were lining up.

Phoop!

The game had started. Ninety minutes of grim struggling, ninety minutes of glorious and uncertain baffle had been set in motion. The result—it would be futile to conjecture at this point, for the ball was lobbing merrily in the region of the centre-line, the opposing forwards and halves fighting keenly for possession.

Suddenly, from out of a rick of struggling humanity, there emerged the Rangers' left-half, the ball running smoothly at his feet. With a keen glance that took in the positions of the rival eleven, he passed to Spalding Jennings, the outside-left, who had earned the plaudits of the crowd on innumerable occasions during the time of Mornington Hardacre.

"Go it, Spalding!"
Jennings was going it with a vengeance. Down the touch-line he raced,

keeping the leather under perfect control, at a pace that left his opponents standing. Then, when a lumbering back showed up on the horizon, he swung the ball into Jim Blakeney.

"Shoot, Jim!"
But that was easier said than done. Three defenders immediately hemmed in the centre-forward, and some hard knots were given and received. Jim went staggering from a vicious shoulder-charge, but the ball was still attached to his feet, it seemed, even when he was sprawling on the ground. Then Harold Digby took a hand in the picture. His arrival reduced the opposition considerably, and, with a well-timed kick, he passed the ball to Tony Williams, the inside-right.

Tony was in a better position to score than his centre had been, and he lost no time in testing the goalie. A fast ground-shot gave the Crusaders' custodian little time in which to think, and, more by luck than good judgment, he tipped the sphere over the crossbar for a corner.

"Come on, Rangers!"
It was like old times to hear the battle-cry from the packed thousands round the



Jim Blakeney took the ball in full career and slammed it goalwards. The go/keeper's hands closed upon the leather for one fleeting second, and then it was seen to trickle into the net. "Goal!" (See this page.)

touch-lines, and it acted as a powerful tonic on the home eleven. They packed the goal-mouth like a lot of hungry lions at feeding-time, and it was no surprise to the spectators to see the ball flash into the net from the resultant corner-kick.

"Hurrah!"
"First blood to the Rangers!"
"Now what about it, Kettleton?" demanded one loud-voiced gentleman in the cheaper stand. "Who said you'll win the Cup with the Crusaders, eh? Take a thousand years to do it in at this rate!"

His remark, heard by hundreds present, evoked a roar of derisive cheering upon the head of the pompous Mr. Kettleton and the bewigged gentleman at his side.

Jim Blakeney felt a thrill of satisfaction run through him. It was his head which had deflected the ball into the net. To him it seemed a good omen of the future.

The Rangers, urged on by their initial success, performed wonderfully against

their heavier opponents—opponents who put their superior weight into the scale on every possible occasion. The charging was unnecessarily heavy, and several of the spectators began to call upon the referee to open his eyes, and again, to "try specs."

But the referee knew his job. He cautioned one persistent defender of the Crusaders, and cast many a warning glance in the direction of others who were playing as close to an infringement of the rules of the game as they dared.

The Crusaders were pressing now with dogged and somewhat brutal persistence, but they could not draw level. The Rangers' goalkeeper was equal to all occasions. High shots, low shots, corner shots—he met them every time and cleared.

"Played, goalie!"
The Rangers began to combine once again, the same left-half emerging from a mass of players, the same outside left racing along the touchline, the same well-judged centre. This time, however, Jim Blakeney made no mistake about the opportunity thrust his way. He took the ball in full career, and despatched it goalwards at a terrific pace.

All eyes watched the flight of the sphere, gradually bringing into focus the nervous activity of the Crusaders' custodian, who was running up and down his citadel like a caged animal. There was a disconcerting twist to the ball that left him undecided as to which course to pursue—to come out and meet the ball, or stay where he was.

His very hesitation proved fatal, for although his groping fingers closed upon the leather for one fleeting second, the slippery sphere ran through his hands and trickled into the net.

"Goal!"
"Good shot, Jim!"
"Play like that for England, Jim, and—good-bye to Scotland!"

Mr. Kettleton watched his team's poor display with narrowed eyes. The Crusaders were going to lose the day. He felt positive of that. And a win meant all the difference to the success of the club he had formed—formed on the "stolen" material of the Rangers' Club. It was poetic justice, but it found no sympathy with the pompous ex-director of the home club.

He glanced expressively at the little man beside him.
"What do you think, Wirtle?" he remarked.

"I think we're booked for a first-class licking!" grunted the bewigged Mr. Wirtle. "Why, they're all over us!"
"Then you think the same as I do," grunted Mr. Kettleton in a strange voice.

He winked significantly at his companion and walked down the gangway of the stand.

A burly individual encountered him at the back of the grandstand, and to him Mr. Theodore Kettleton spoke in lowered tones. With a grim smile, the burly fellow touched his cap and shunk off, leaving Kettleton gazing after him thoughtfully, the while his eyes narrowed to fit almost oblique.

Then, with a grunt, Kettleton turned on his heel and sought his companion, Mr. Wirtle.

"Come, Wirtle!" he said. "We must be getting back to the office! I've seen enough of this match, anyway!"

The words seemed to be deliberately spoken for the benefit of the crowd in the near vicinity. Instead of Mr. Wirtle, four scores of spectators turned their heads sharply at the conversation, and were surprised to see the two directors of the Crusaders walking down the exit.

"I should think he has had enough,"
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muttered one member in the stand. "They can't play for toffee!"

"Hear, hear! But I don't think much of a man who can't stay and watch his own club put up a fight! Jolly good job Kettleton and Wirtle are not with the Rangers, if that's their spirit!"

"Rather!"

"Hallo, it's half-time!"

The latter remark turned the conversation in the grandstand. The crowd shifted uneasily in their anxiety to catch a glimpse of the returning players. Cheer upon cheer rang out as the mud-stained members of the Rangers' eleven doubled off to their dressing-room—cheers that suddenly turned into shrieks and hoarse cries at the back of the stands.

"Fire! Fire!"

Who Fired the Stand?

THE cry rang out from several directions at once, and a general stampede ensued. Great clouds of smoke were seen to be pouring out from the back of the grandstand at half a dozen different points. Flames, too, were beginning to lick the ironwork of the structure. And, to make matters worse, a gentle breeze had sprung up.

In less than a minute thousands of people were tramping and pushing against their fellows in a wild endeavour to escape from the tongues of flame that everywhere threatened to engulf them.

Some of the calmer people present tried to stem the panic, but their exhortations were lost in the uproar, and they themselves were forced onward to the exits. Shrieks mingled freely with moans on all sides. And the flames began rapidly to spread under the gentle breeze from the north.

Jim Blakeney, who had darted from the dressing-room at the first alarm, stood gazing in almost paralysed astonishment at the sight which met his eyes. The whole of the main grandstand was well alight. He felt himself suddenly being shaken by the shoulder, and turned to find Ferrers Locke at his side.

"By heavens, Jim!" gasped the great detective. "This is awful! Have you no fire apparatus?"

Blakeney seemed to pull himself together at the words of the detective.

"This way, Mr. Locke!" he exclaimed. "I'll get the fellows on the job!"

Rushing into the dressing-room, he explained the situation to the startled players. Volunteers quickly came forward to help in quelling the flames. Old Jeff Dunstan, the trainer, was soon unfastening the fire-extinguishers and the hose, and Jim lost no time in detailing the footballers to their positions.

"Get at the back of the stands, if you can, Digby!" he called. "Mr. Locke and some of the fellows will help me from underneath! I'm certain that's where the fire broke out!"

At the double the Rangers came out of the dressing-room, into which curling wreaths of smoke was already beginning to pour. They were out now to fight for something more than goals—they were fighting for the lives of the terror-stricken crowd above.

Diving through the narrow aperture that gave admittance to the store-rooms underneath the main stand, Blakeney and Ferrers Locke, accompanied by two of the Rangers carrying between them a length of hose, gasped with astonishment at the sight before them.

Not three yards away from the entrance to the underground room the flames were licking and curling upwards like a display of fireworks. Wood was cracking, sparks were flying, and the metal beams were beginning to bend under the intense heat.

The fire-fighters immediately set to work with their apparatus, but still the flames ravaged wider and wider, until the heat and the choking volumes of black smoke made it almost impossible for the party of men to remain there.

Then suddenly came the piercing note of the alarm bells on the fire-engines. Three engines, their crews even at that moment putting the finishing touches to their uniform, dashed up, and the men jumped to the ground. Inside two seconds a steady stream of water was playing from the hose of the foremost engine, quickly followed by several jets of water from the remaining engines.

Now that the firemen had arrived, the panic-stricken crowd seemed to calm down. No longer did they trample and fight each other in a futile attempt to reach the exits. And by a systematic direction of the streams of water over the burning stand, a passage was made safe for the terrified spectators to scramble out into the road.

That done, another party of firemen, dragging their hoses after them, reached the spot where Jim Blakeney, Ferrers Locke, and the footballers had congregated, their blackened faces bearing ample testimony to their efforts to fight the flames.

"It's terrible in there!" said Jim to one of the officers. "It's a regular holocaust!"

But the firemen were trained to take risks, and they took them. Donning their smoke-helmets, they entered the burning store-rooms and played a heavy deluge of hissing water on the blazing structure.

Within half an hour the flames were well under control and the stands had been emptied of the spectators. The local ambulance corps had arrived post-haste on the scene, and its energetic members were attending to the injured. The majority of the cases for treatment, fortunately, consisted of minor burns and bruises. But one man in particular was taken away to hospital unconscious, the nature of his burns being such that they could not be administered to by the ambulance men.

"I think everything is all right now, Mr. Blakeney," remarked the smoke-begrimed commissioner of the brigade. "I'll leave three men to keep an eye on the stands in case of a further outbreak." "Many thanks," replied Blakeney. "Your men have done exceedingly well, and I'm very grateful for your prompt attention. Beats me, though, how the fire broke out—"

"Ah," interrupted the commissioner, "that is a matter which will need a deuce of a lot of explaining to the insurance company."

"What do you mean?"

"Simply this, sir," said the fireman gravely. "In the course of my investigation I came across six petrol tins stowed away under the stands—"

"What? Petrol tins? Never!"

"I'm afraid it is only too true. Although the tins were empty, of course, it is obvious to a child of six that the fire raged at its height wherever these tins were to be found. I am not suggesting for one moment, Mr. Blakeney, that you have any knowledge of this regrettable business, but the fact remains it is a deliberate case of arson—"

"Great heavens!" exclaimed Blakeney in horrified astonishment. "Arson? I—"

"You appear to have enemies, Mr. Blakeney," continued the commissioner, "who are clever and bold enough to go to such lengths as—"

He broke off and made a significant gesture in the direction of the blackened heap of ruins. The young footballer felt his heart sink as he, too, gazed at what had once been considered one of the finest grandstands in the country.

"I'd give anything to know who was at the bottom of this dastardly outrage," he said bitterly.

"So would I," remarked the commissioner grimly. "I've been interested in the Rangers for over twenty years. I have seen them grow from a team of comparative hobbledheys to a First League eleven. I have witnessed some rare hard struggles on the field, but never until this last three months have I come across these filthy pokes in the back. There's some strong power at work to reduce the Rangers to their old state, and if things go on as they appear to be doing, it will soon be all up with the wearers of the black-and-gold!"

It was quite a long speech for the kindly officer, but he meant every word he said.

Blakeney shook his head determinedly. "No!" he declared emphatically. "I'm going to see this thing through. I'm going to fight! And I'm going to find

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out, moreover, who was responsible for this fire!"

"I wish you luck," said the old fireman, extending his gnarled hand. "You're a plucked 'un."

He moved away, leaving Blakeney staring dully at the still smouldering remains of the stand. Suddenly the young footballer felt a hand on his shoulder, and he turned, to find Ferrers Locke at his side. Briefly he acquainted him of the commissioner's discovery.

"It's a wretched business, but cheer up, Jim," said the sleuth quietly. "Things might have been worse. According to the ambulance men, only one fellow has been severely burned, and it was thought that an immediate operation was the only means of saving his life. The others have sustained minor injuries only."

"Well, I suppose I ought to feel thankful for that," muttered Jim. "It's a dirty business, though. Just when the Rangers were showing their mettle, too. Funny it should happen just then—"

"Ah!" The exclamation escaped Locke's compressed lips, and his brows puckered. "I wonder—"

His words trailed off. "What do you wonder?" asked the young footballer eagerly, noting his companion's knitted brows.

"Nothing," replied the detective laconically. "You must excuse me, Jim. I have one or two investigations to make!"

Without further ceremony the world-famous sleuth walked quickly away and was soon lost to view in the dense crowd. The fire now under control, the spectators began to disperse. They all realised that there would be no more football for that afternoon.

Ferrers Locke jostled his way out of the crowd, and headed at a brisk pace for the local hospital. Arrived there, he inquired if he might see the spectator who had been severely burnt. But, as he expected, the nurse had instructions that the injured man was not to be disturbed. The unfortunate fellow had been operated upon, and was still unconscious.

"I wonder if I might examine his clothes?" asked the detective. "The man has not yet been identified. I take it?"

"I'm afraid you will have to see the superintendent, sir," replied the nurse. "I have not the authority to grant such a request. Still, if you will come this way Dr. Spinnet will see you."

The great detective followed close on the heels of the nurse, and was eventually shown into the presence of Dr. Spinnet, the superintendent. When the official became aware of his visitor's identity he avowed his willingness to assist in so far as it lay in his power.

"By all means, Mr. Locke, examine the poor fellow's clothes," he said. "But I'm afraid there's little enough to help you to identify him. The major portion of the garments are in a shocking state—practically fell away from him when we undressed him."

"I understood from one of the ambulance men," observed Locke, as he walked along the corridor, "that your patient's clothing melted strongly of petrol."

"Indeed they did—and still do for that matter," returned the medico. "I must confess that I was rather surprised at such a circumstance myself. Ah, here we are!"

He led the way into a small room, and within two minutes Ferrers Locke was subjecting what remained of the injured man's clothing to a severe and all-embracing scrutiny.

"As you remarked, doctor," he said at length, "there's very little to help me here. I can smell, however, quite a

distinct aroma of petrol in these clothes. Very strange—"

He broke off sharply as the superintendent, with a view to making himself useful, brought into view from one of the pockets a key ring that contained half a dozen keys.

For fully five minutes Ferrers Locke stood staring down at the bunch of keys and then he whistled in astonishment. Simultaneously he dived his hand into his trousers' pocket and withdrew a bunch of keys—every one of which was an exact replica of those on the ring taken from the burnt garments.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated, half aloud. And then, to the amazed superintendent: "May I use your telephone?" "Certainly!" replied the officer.

He led the way to his private apartments and discreetly withdrew when Locke took up the telephone receiver. Ten minutes later the sleuth joined him again.



"Fire! Fire!" The cry rang out from several directions at once, and a general stampede ensued. Great clouds of smoke were seen to be pouring out from the back of the grand stand at half a dozen different points. Flames, too, were licking the ironwork of the structure. "My heavens, Jim!" gasped Ferrers Locke, clapping his young companion on the shoulder. "This is awful!"

(See page 24.)

"I have phoned Major Carstairs, the Chief Commissioner of Police," he said, "and I have instructed him to send an official representative of the law to collect these burnt clothes and this bunch of keys. You will take great care of them Dr. Spinnet whilst they are in your hands, won't you, for with them I hope to solve the riddle of the burnt grandstand up at the Middleham football ground."

"Then you have discovered—" began the medico excitedly.

"You will know all in a couple of hours' time," said the sleuth, reaching for his hat. "And I rather fancy you'll have a small part to play in the capture. The constable who's coming to collect these articles will acquaint you of your duties. Au revoir!"

With a smile at the medico's perplexity the sleuth withdrew, and for the next hour was being whirled round the

town of Middleham in a taxicab. He made a call at each motor-repair works and petrol agent's depot in the neighbourhood, and finally ordered his driver to proceed to Mr. Kettleton's villa.

As luck would have it the detective bumped into Kettleton's chauffeur—the very person he most desired to see and interview. That the subsequent conversation between them was satisfactory on both sides was evidenced firstly by the gratified smile on the face of the chauffeur as he accepted a crisp pound note, and secondly by the exultant gleam in Locke's eyes as he mounted the steps of Kettleton's villa.

An imperious summons on the door brought the maid to the spot in double-quick time.

"Kindly tell Mr. Kettleton that I wish to see him," said the sleuth

gravely, presenting his card. "My business is very important!"

He was ushered into the hall and was joined some few moments later by the pompous Mr. Kettleton himself.

The Clue of the Six Tins!

"COME into the study, Mr. Locke," said the rival director sourly.

"No time for that," answered the sleuth hurriedly. "It's about the fire this afternoon that's brought me here—"

He paused, and was quick to notice the look of apprehension that crossed the florid features of Kettleton.

"Well, what about it?" demanded the director of the Crusaders.

"There's a fellow detained in hospital, unconscious," continued Locke. "They think you could identify him; and they require your presence there!"

"Oh!" muttered Kettleton vaguely; "I suppose I had better go along then."

"If you care to accompany me," said Locke urbanely, "I shall be pleased to place my taxi at your disposal."

"Very well," granted Kettleton. "It's rather a nuisance as I'm very busy at the moment, but I'll come."

He donned his coat and hat and entered the taxi. Locke gave the driver of the cab the address of the hospital and then seated himself opposite Mr. Kettleton. In absolute silence the detective and his companion traversed the short distance to the hospital. At the entrance they were met by the superintendent who was evidently experiencing a difficulty in controlling the muscles of his face.

"Will you come this way, gentlemen?" he invited.

Locke and Kettleton followed the medico along the corridors until the latter stopped at a ward and swung open the door.

"I must request you gentlemen to make as little noise as possible," he said. "The patient has only just recovered consciousness and is not in a fit state to be excited."

"Quite!" nodded the pompous Mr. Kettleton. "Let me have a look at the man!"

He strode into the ward and was directed to a bed around which was a screen. He passed the screen with all the assurance and self-satisfaction which was so typical of his character, and then he received a shock. As he gazed at the bandaged figure in the bed his own jaw dropped suddenly in astonishment; his eyes threatened to burst out of their sockets; his fists clenched and unclenched spasmodically. Then, with a roar like a wild animal, he spun round on Ferrers Locke.

"What's the game?" he demanded hoarsely. "I don't know this man. I—"

His words trailed off into an unintelligible murmur as the uniformed figures of two policemen and an inspector suddenly appeared from the other side of the screen.

Kettleton backed away obviously alarmed, his crafty eyes roaming round for an avenue of escape.

"I beg to differ, my dear Mr. Kettleton," said Ferrers Locke. "You are perfectly well-acquainted with the man in the bed yonder. Moreover, you may consider yourself under arrest as being concerned in a charge of arson. Inspector, it's for you to do the formalities!"

Inspector Motley drew out his notebook and pencil.

"I hold a warrant for your arrest, Mr. Theodore Kettleton," he said officially. "And I warn you that anything you may say will be used in evidence against you."

"It's a trick!" stormed Kettleton, now turning a deathly white. "A trick! Where's your warrant?"

The warrant was produced. Since Locke's communication over the telephone Major Carstairs, the Chief Commissioner, had lost no time in putting the machine of the law in motion. As Kettleton glanced at the warrant and read its contents he shrank visibly, and his pompous manner deserted him.

"Come!" said the inspector. "I have a cab outside!"

A sudden fit of passion took hold of the prisoner. Shaking off the detaining hands of the constables he strode fiercely towards the bed.

"You traitor!" he roared, shaking his fist menacingly at the bandaged figure in the bed. "You curl! You bound! You've betrayed me!"

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He was prevented from doing the injured man harm by the timely intervention of Ferrers Locke. The sleuth jumped forward and arrested Kettleton's fist even as he was about to dash it into the face of the injured man.

The latter moved slightly and tried to speak, but the bandages, coupled with the pain of his damaged face, made that impossible of accomplishment.

"That, I think," said Locke quietly. "Turns a theory into a fact, inspector. Off with him!"

Storming at the top of his voice and struggling to free himself, the once pompous individual known as Theodore Kettleton was dumped in the cab and rapidly driven to the station. In the quietude of a prison cell he was left to reflect upon his misdeeds.

Meanwhile, Ferrers Locke was seated in the Chief Commissioner's room with the chief himself and Inspector Motley.

"And now tell me, Locke," Major Carstairs was saying, "how the deuce did you get on Kettleton's trail?"

"We will go back to the match between the Crusaders and the

Rangers," returned the sleuth quietly. "A couple of minutes before half-time several people in the grandstand were surprised to hear Mr. Kettleton saying to his companion Mr. Wirtle that it was time they were getting back to their office. Bear well in mind, too, the Crusaders were two goals down. I overheard the remark myself, and, at the time thought it a rather strange."

"I should think so, too!" put in the chief. "Considering the importance of the match, it was certainly surprising for the Crusaders' two chief directors to announce publicly their intention of leaving the ground. But proceed, Locke!"

"In the light of what we know now," continued the sleuth, "it is obvious that Kettleton intended the people in his vicinity to hear his statement. It would save a lot of questions, should anyone want to know what had happened to him. At the same time, it ensured his own safety when the stand was fired."

"Exactly!"

"Then I heard from Blakeney," went on the sleuth, "that the Commissioner of the Fire Brigade had discovered six petrol tins underneath the stands. I also learned of an ambulance man that one poor fellow had been very badly burnt, and taken to hospital. The ambulance man was a talkative fellow, and, amongst other things, he commented on the extraordinary fact that the injured man's clothing reeked of petrol. That set my ears a-tinkling, as it were. I began to be suspicious—"

"But where was the connection?" asked Inspector Motley.

"Look at it this way," said Ferrers Locke. "The fire, as you know, started underneath the stand—amongst the store-rooms, which are, or are supposed to be, kept locked. Bearing that well in mind, it is rather difficult to account for the clothes of one of the victims of the fire smelling strongly of petrol—"

"I get you!" interrupted the chief. "The spectators were in the stands, and, although they might have been burnt, no petrol could have reached them at the height they were from where the fire originated."

"Quite so," smiled Locke. "Therefore it was perfectly natural to assume that the injured man was below the stand at the time of the fire. My theory is that the scoundrel was going about his job quite unaware of the fact that one of the cans of petrol was leaking, when the spirit suddenly caught fire from a pile of rubbish which the fellow had ignited. It is fairly safe to assume, too, that he was bowled over by the attendant explosion, for he was found—so a fireman told me—just outside the door of one of the store-rooms, unconscious."

"Dr. Spinnet told me, too, that the fellow was suffering from concussion as well as severe burns. However, I'm going along too fast. I visited the hospital to which the injured man had been taken, and examined his clothes. As you know for yourselves, the clothes reeked of petrol. That, I think, explains point number one."

The chief commissioner and Inspector Motley nodded in assent.

"Point number two concerns a certain bunch of keys which were among the injured man's effects. Now those keys gave the finishing touch to my theory. The finding of them prompted me to phone you, major, and request you to make out a warrant for the arrest of Kettleton, and, again, to serve the

warrant at the hospital where the injured man was lying. I knew that once Kettleton saw his confederate he would give the game away. You see, no one knew the identity of the man in hospital, and Kettleton, no doubt, fondly imagined that the chap who had done his dirty work for him was miles away."

"That turned out successfully, Locke," grinned the chief. "But it was a bit of a gamble—eh?"

"Admitted. But to return to the bunch of keys. Those keys belonged to the Middleham Rangers Football Club."

"What?"

"It's quite true," grinned Ferrers Locke. "You see, I possess a similar set of keys myself, being a director of the Rangers. They were pass keys. And the pass keys of the club were owned only by Mornington Hardacro and Theodore Kettleton in the old days. Before I phoned you, major, I got on to Jim Blakeney and asked him if Mr. Kettleton gave up his pass keys when he resigned from the club. I was informed that he hadn't done so. That set the ball rolling. Point number three: Six tins of petrol were purchased in Middleham yesterday by Mr. Theodore Kettleton—purchased separately at six different depots. How does that strike you?"

"Appears that Kettleton was anxious that his extensive purchase of petrol should not be known!" exclaimed Major Carstairs.

"Exactly. It was when I had reached that point in my investigation that I decided to tackle Kettleton's chauffeur. I bumped into him and got him talking. He informed me that when he left the garage on Tuesday night the car was already washed and cleaned for the following morning. He was surprised to find when he reported for duty this morning that the car had been taken out over-night and used. Then I taxed him with the six tins of petrol, and, as I had expected, he knew nothing about them. The time of the purchase of the petrol fits in very well with the time the car must have been used, for the chauffeur left Kettleton's villa at eight o'clock. The petrol was purchased between half past eight and nine."

"My word, Locke!" said the chief. "But you don't let the grass grow under your feet!"

"But the motive for all this?" exclaimed the inspector, who was vastly interested.

"That also is easy of explanation," smiled Ferrers Locke. "As everyone in Middleham knows, Jim Blakeney has been selected to play in the International match against Scotland. Consequently the town-folk are Blakeney mad. Mr. Theodore Kettleton, having formed a new footer club, has had things all his own way during these last few weeks. Now that Blakeney is once again in the public eye, Kettleton stands—or, rather, stood—the chance of losing thousands of supporters of the Crusaders."

"You mean that the people who had been attending the matches of the Crusaders would again return to the Rangers' ground, now that Blakeney has been selected as an International?" said the chief.

"Quite so. But the motive doesn't end there. The match with the Crusaders meant a great deal to the Rangers did they but win. On the other hand, it meant more still to the Crusaders if they lost. Naturally enough, people watching the two elevens would be more inclined to follow the fortunes of the victors in the future than the losers. The gate receipts, as you know full well, mean the



As Theodore Kettleton gazed at the bandaged figure in the bed his own jaw dropped suddenly in astonishment; his eyes threatened to burst out of their sockets; his fists clenched and unclenched spasmodically. Then, with a roar like a wild animal, he spun round on Ferrers Locke. "What's the game?" he demanded hoarsely. "I—I don't know this man. I——" He broke off as two policemen appeared from behind the screen. (See page 26.)

success or failure of a team. Well, I reconstruct the motive of the crime in this fashion," added the sleuth. "Kettleton, in his heart of hearts, had an idea that the Crusaders would lose the match with the Rangers—a match, mark you, which he had been compelled to accept on account of the strong public opinion in the matter—and he laid his plans accordingly."

"With the aid of this fellow now in hospital, he arranged that the six tins of petrol he had purchased should be distributed beneath the stands, in the various store-rooms. That's where the pass keys came in handy—they made the accomplishment of the scheme practically easy. No one is on duty up at the ground after eight o'clock at night. It would be simple for a car to drive up with six tins of petrol on board, dump the tins for our damaged friend to distribute without anyone being the wiser."

"Yes, I'm inclined to think on the same lines as yourself," said the chief slowly. "What's more, I shouldn't be surprised if the downfall of the Rangers wasn't worked in the first place by that scoundrel Kettleton."

"Oh, he's at the bottom of the whole scheme, I feel positively certain," said Ferrers Locke. "But when he fails to explain how he has disposed of the petrol he purchased, and why he took the trouble to buy it at six different shops, and, again, why he left the Middleham ground two minutes before the fire broke out, and how the pass keys came to be in his confederate's keeping, I'm afraid the judge will decide that it's high time Mr. Theodore Kettleton took a long rest at his Majesty's expense."

"I think so, too, Locke," grinned the chief. "Many thanks, old man, for yet again coming to my aid."

"I have done nothing that you yourself could not have achieved," replied Locke quietly. "You see, I had the information first, and got to work without loss of time. You would have arrived at the same solution, and— By Jove," he exclaimed suddenly, "time's on the wing! I must get back to the Myrtles! Jim Blakeney will be wondering what on earth's happened to me!"

He snatched up his hat as he spoke and moved towards the door.

"So long, major!" he said. "You'll let me know of any further developments, won't you?"

"Of course!"

And, with a friendly nod in the direction of the inspector, Ferrers Locke vacated the room. In less than five minutes he was walking briskly up the sweeping drive of the Myrtles, well satisfied with his day's work.

But before the evening wore away Fate had destined that he should receive another shock.

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B is for BUNTER, the corpulent Bill; Although he won't own it, his beauty-is nil!

C is for CHERRY; whose brown curly hair Is voted "divine" by the damosels fair.

D is for DUTTON, whose features are plain, His deafness will drive poor old Toddy insane.

E is for EUCLID, an ugly old buffer, Whose problems and posers we now have to suffer!

F is for FISH, from the great Noo York City; Not even his pals can pretend that he's pretty!

G is for GOSLING, the crusty old porter— No beauty at all to be found in that quarter!

H is for HOSKINS, whose straggling black locks Give lovers of beauty a series of shocks!

I is for "INKY," of dusky complexion; His beauty will bear the minutest inspection!

J is JONES MAJOR, whose beauty is such That no words of mine can extol it too much!

K is for KIPPS; he's a conjurer clever, But really can't boast any beauty whatever.

L is for LODER, a lean, lanky guy; His beauty's not clear to the naked eye!

M is for MORGAN (I'll now crack a joke) If his face is his fortune, then "Taiffy" is "broke!"

N is for NUGENT, a good-looking chap. Unless he has just taken part in a scrap!

O is for OGLIVY—quite a good sort, But not an Adonis, I'm grieved to report.

P is for PENFOLD, whose face, I'm afraid, is Beloved by the lads, and adored by the ladies!

Q is for QUELCHY, a fine-looking man. (I'm bound to say this, for these verses he'll scan!)

R is for RUSSELL—good-looking in parts, But his beauty won't make him a breaker of hearts!

S is for SKINNER; he's oft in disgrace, But he's rather good-looking—except for his face!

T is for TROTTER, the undersized page; His beauty won't earn him a job on the stage!

U, Y, and W are letters I dread, And, so are X, Y, so'll I finish, 'Nuff Z!



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