

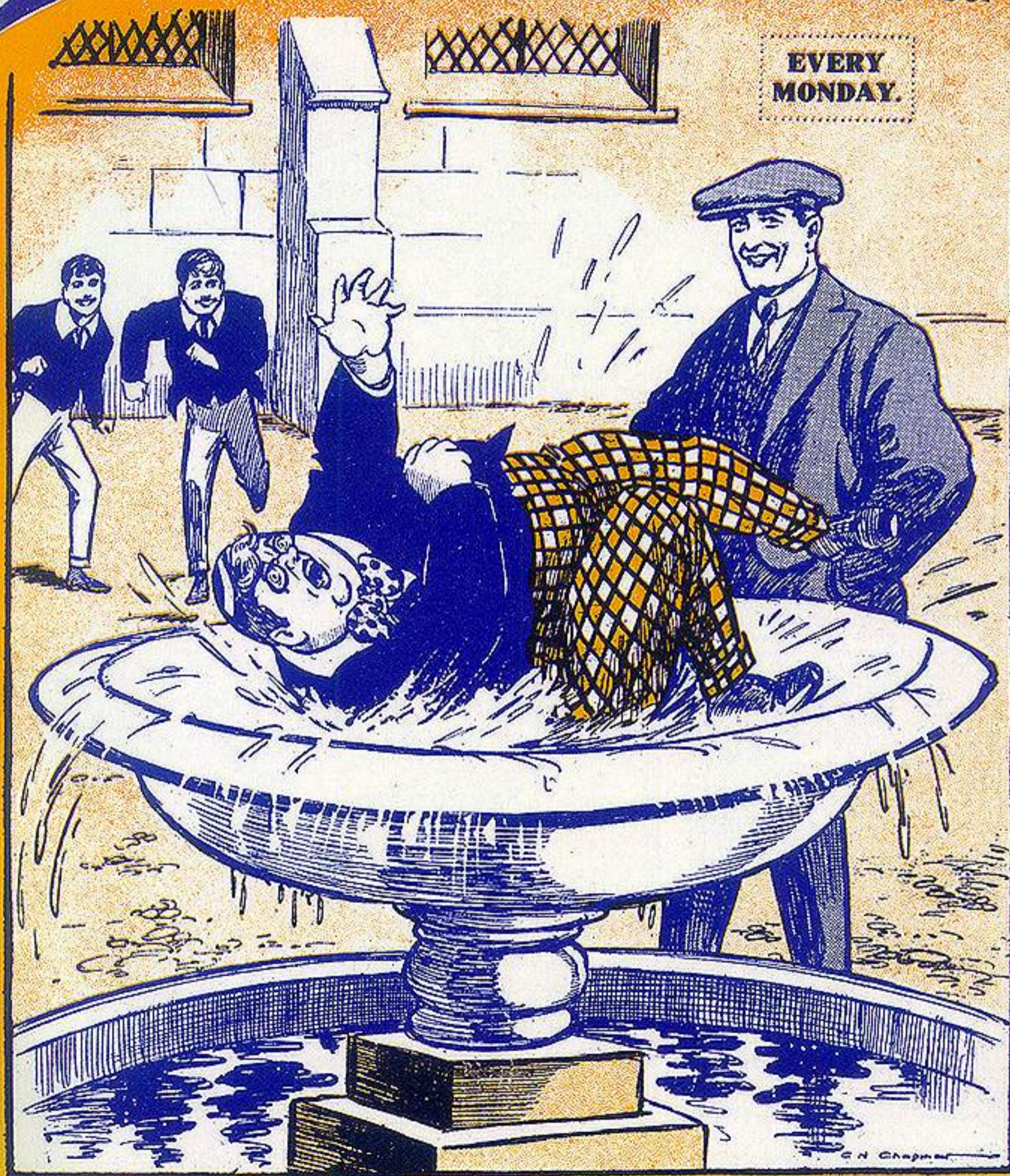
THE PLUNDERED SCHOOL! This week's magnificent story of
Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars

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The Magnet 2^d

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THE PORPOISE IN "LIQUIDATION!"

BILLY BUNTER TAKES A BATH!

(A diverting incident from this week's long complete Greyfriars story.)

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In honour of several Old Boys who have re-visited Greyfriars Harry Wharton & Co. give a variety concert in the Rag. At a time when the fun is at its height the alarm is given that Greyfriars has been plundered by a mysterious burglar. Who is the man?



A Magnificent Story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars.
By famous FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Coker Comes a Cropper!

"COKER'S on the warpath!" said Bob Cherry. The chums of the Remove chuckled. The mere mention of Coker's name was a sufficient cause for merriment. And the fact that Horace Coker was on the warpath meant that there was going to be some fun—and some trouble. The fun would be for the lookers-on—the trouble for Coker himself!

There could be no disputing the fact that the great Coker was on the warpath. As the gentleman in the "Gondoliers" observed, "of that there was no shadow of doubt, no possible probable shadow of doubt, no possible doubt whatever!"

The mighty Horace was striding along in the direction of the Sixth Form passage. There was a frown on his rugged face, and the light of battle gleamed in his eye. He looked neither to the right nor to the left as he strode along. The Famous Five of the Remove followed in Coker's footsteps, and he must have heard them coming along behind him. But he did not heed. Coker was too absorbed in his present mission to take any notice of a parcel of fags, as he would have called them.

Coker halted at length at the door of Wingate's study. He applied a burly fist to the panels, and the deep voice of the captain of Greyfriars bade him enter. Coker stalked into the study, leaving the door ajar—for which act of thoughtfulness Harry Wharton & Co. were duly grateful. They did not want to miss any of the fun.

"I've got a feeling that Coker will come out of that study a jolly sight quicker than he went in!" said Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

"His entry was quickfully swift, but his exit will be quickfully swifter!" said Hurree Singh, showing his teeth in a broad grin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Listen!" said Nugent suddenly. "Coker's speaking!"

"Oh, father, I hear the sound of guns!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Coker was certainly speaking. He seemed to imagine that George Wingate was afflicted with deafness, for his voice was loud and dictatorial.

"I insist, Wingate! I absolutely insist! I've been barred from the footer eleven too long. And now that the Old Boys are sending a team down to Greyfriars, for the Past versus Present match, I must insist upon having a fair show. You hear me?"

"I hear you."

Wingate's reply was quiet—ominously quiet, it seemed to the listening juniors in the passage.

"Well, what do you say?" Coker went on. "I can fill any position in the team—goal or back or half or forward. If it's a first-class defender you want, I'm your man! If it's a goal-getting forward, you needn't look farther than me!"

"Indeed!"

"Yes, indeed!" said Coker, his wrath rising. "I'm not going to be barred and boycotted and back-seated any longer!"

Coker evidently believed in "apt alliteration's artful aid" in order to emphasise his remarks.

But those remarks were wasted on the desert air, so to speak. They might as well have been addressed to the ceiling, or the carpet, for all the effect they had upon George Wingate, captain of Greyfriars and skipper of games.

There was a pause inside the study. Then the booming voice of Horace Coker became audible once more. Coker possessed a fine pair of lungs, and the Bull of Bashan would have envied his thunderous bellow.

"What about it, Wingate? Am I going to play against the Old Boys, or am I not?"

"Not!" was the prompt reply.

"Oh! And why?" demanded Coker truculently.

"I wish you'd run away and pick flowers," said Wingate wearily. "You make me tired. I'm sick of pointing out to you that you're the biggest booby that ever attempted to boot a football! You put up a fairly good show when you played for the Fifth in the Coker Cup contest. But I knew that form was too good to last. Instead of progressing, you've gone back; and now you're as big a duffer as ever! Pardon my plain speaking, but it's no use a fellow mincing his words when he's trying to make you understand."

There was a sputtering sound from Coker—something like a soda-water siphon in action.

"You—you—I'm not going to stand here and be insulted like this! You might be captain of the school and captain of games, but you're not going to ride roughshod over me, George Wingate! I've been looking forward to playing against the Old Boys, and you'll want the very best team you can get together!"

"Quite so," agreed Wingate. "And that's why I'm not including you! You'd better buzz off now. Your face worries me!"

"My hat!" gasped Coker. "I'm dashed if I'm going to take this lying down! I'm a dangerous sort of fellow when I'm roused, and if you put me out—"

"Precisely what I'm going to do!" said Wingate.

It was not the sort of "putting-out" that Coker meant, but it was very drastic and effective.

There was a short, sharp scuffle inside the study. Then the door opened to its fullest extent, and the burly form of Horace Coker came hurtling forth into the passage.

Harry Wharton & Co. sprang clear, and Coker landed at their feet with a bump and a roar.

Crash!

"Yarooooop!"

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The tall figure of George Wingate loomed up in the doorway.

"Coming back to continue the argument, Coker?" he asked pleasantly.

"Ow-ow-ow!"

"I don't know whether that's an affirmative or a negative," said Wingate. "But I fancy you've had enough. These kids will render first aid if you need it."

So saying, Wingate retired into his study and closed the door.

Coker lay in a sprawling heap on the linoleum. He was vaguely wondering whether an earthquake had struck him.

"Want a helping hand, Coker?" asked Bob Cherry politely.

"Gerraway!" gasped Coker.

But the Famous Five were always only too pleased to help lame dogs over stiles or to help lame Fifth-Formers along passages. They grabbed Coker without ceremony, and heaved him to his feet. Then they gave him a push, and a number of well-shod feet clumped together upon the rear of Coker's person.

The great Horace, uttering bellows of anguish, broke into a run. He sprinted down the passage like a champion of the cinder-path, and the tuneful laughter of five merry juniors followed Coker in his headlong flight.

"And now," said Harry Wharton, "having witnessed one entertainment, we'll toddle along to the Rag, and arrange another. I'd almost forgotten that we'd called a meeting of the Remove Entertainments Committee. It's timed for six o'clock, and that's six striking now!"

"Lead on, MacDuff!" said Johnny Bull.

And the Famous Five wended their way to the junior Common-room—famously known as the Rag.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Wealth of Talent!

"GENTLEMEN—" "And others!" murmured Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton frowned his chum into silence.

"We are gathered together with one accord, in one place, to discuss a very important matter. On Friday the Old Boys are sending their footer eleven down to Greyfriars—"

"Hurrah!"

"They are going to spend the night here, and the great match—Past versus Present—will be played on Saturday."

"Tell us something we don't know!" growled Bolsover major.

Wharton glared at the bully of the Remove.

"I'll tell you one thing you don't know—how to behave yourself at a meeting!" he said. "Now, gentlemen, it has occurred to me that we ought to get up a show of some sort for Friday evening. It will be a deadly dull evening for the Old Boys, unless there's an entertainment going. We want a real, live, sparkling show! And who can deliver the goods better than the Remove?"

"Nobody!" roared the Remove in unison.

Harry Wharton, perched on the table at the end of the Rag, smiled upon the assembly.

"Well, that's unanimous, at any rate," he said. "Now, we've got to decide what sort of a show we're going to give."

"A cattle-show, with Billy Bunter in the limelight!" suggested Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Don't rot!" said Wharton. "What is it to be—drama, comedy, tragedy, farce, or what?"

There was a confused clamour of voices. Somebody shouted for Shakespeare. Somebody else wanted one of the famous musical comedies of Gilbert and Sullivan. Bolsover bellowed for tragedy. Skinner screamed for farce.

"I say, you fellows," said Billy Bunter, "what about a farcical dramatic tragedy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Waal, I guess no show will be a success unless you count me in!" said Fisher T. Fish. "If you give a tragedy, it will be a farce, and if you give a farce it will turn out a tragedy!"

"Rats!"

"Dry up, Fishy!"

Tom Brown lifted up his voice.

"I think we ought to play 'Hamlet,'" he said, "on one condition."

"And what's that?" asked Wharton.

"That I'm Hamlet!"

Wharton laughed.

"I think Shakespeare's a little too stodgy, for an occasion like this," he said. "Besides, we'd never be able to swot up our parts in time. Personally, I don't think we could better a variety concert, with all the songs and patter written by ourselves."

"Hear hear!" said Bob Cherry. "A variety show is the proper caper."

"I was going to suggest a nigger troupe," said Skinner. "But we've only one nigger!" he added, with a glance at Hurree Singh.

Instantly the Nabob of Bhanipur was on his feet.

"Unless you withdrawfully take back that remark Skinner," he said, "I will dotfully smite you on the boko!"

"Sorry!" said Skinner promptly; for Hurree Singh's dusky fist was poised within an inch of his nose.

"Let's get on with the business," said Harry Wharton. "I'll put the matter to the vote. Those in favour of a variety entertainment, prepared by the Remove, and rendered by the Remove, kindly show their hands!"

Quite a forest of hands went up. There could be no doubt as to the popularity of Wharton's suggestion. Shakespeare was all right at times; and Gilbert and Sullivan was even better. But nothing could beat a home-made show—a concert specially prepared by the Removites themselves.

"Good!" said Wharton. "That settles it. Now, everything we act and sing has got to be original. No stale songs and skits. Somebody will have to write some special songs for the occasion."

"Penfold's the man!" shouted Micky Desmond.

Harry Wharton turned to Dick Penfold, who was the recognised poet-laureate of the Remove.

"Will you write us some songs, Pen?" he asked.

"Delighted!"

"You'll make them bright and breezy, so that they'll go with a swing?"

"Of course!"

The writing of the lyrics having been arranged, Harry Wharton called for volunteers to give variety turns.

There was no lack of talent in the Remove. There was, in fact, quite a wealth of it. There was scarcely a fellow

who was not prepared to take his turn on the platform in the concert-hall, for the amusement of the Old Boys.

Billy Bunter offered to give an exhibition of ventriloquism—an offer which was cordially accepted. There were lots of things that Bunter thought he could do, and couldn't; there was one thing he thought he could do, and could. That was ventriloquism.

The fat junior could throw his voice in a marvellous manner, and at times he had deceived nearly everybody at Greyfriars. He had not given an exhibition in public for some time; and the fellows were looking forward to another ventriloquial display by the Valentine Vox of Greyfriars.

Oliver Kipps, who was a juggler and conjurer of no mean order, volunteered to give an extra-special turn. Kipps could conjure and juggle with the skill of a professional; and Harry Wharton gladly put his name down on the list.

William Wibley offered to give some impersonations of the Head, Mr. Prout, Mr. Quelch, Gosling, the porter, and other Greyfriars celebrities.

It would be good fun, and the masters would enjoy it as much as anybody; for Wibley would be careful not to say or do anything that was likely to give offence. So Wibley's name was added to the list of performers.

Bolsover major had no intention of being left out of the picture. Bolsover had learnt some rope tricks from a man at a country fair.

"I'll allow one of the Old Boys to tie me up in knots," he said, "and then I'll undertake to get free. He can truss me up like a chicken, if he likes; but I'll guarantee to find a way out."

"How is it done?" asked Billy Bunter.

Bolsover chuckled. "I'm not giving away any secrets," he said. "I can do it, and that's enough."

Little Wun Lung, the Chinese junior, expressed his willingness to give a display of acrobatics. Wun Lung was as agile as a monkey, and he could perform the most hair-raising feats. How he managed them was a complete mystery to his schoolfellows. They simply couldn't "savvy."

Bob Cherry and Mark Linley arranged to dress up as a pair of country yokels. One was to be "Old 'Arry" and the other "Old Jarge." They were to give an amusing dialogue concerning the new-mown hay, and the "turmut," and other rural matters.

Billy Bunter asked if it would be possible to have an eating contest. He offered to enter into competition with any two fellows in the Form; but there were no takers.

"It would be a disgusting exhibition," said Wharton. "The Old Boys wouldn't care for it at all. Besides, there could be only one result. The combined appetites of any two fellows in the Remove don't equal yours, Bunt."

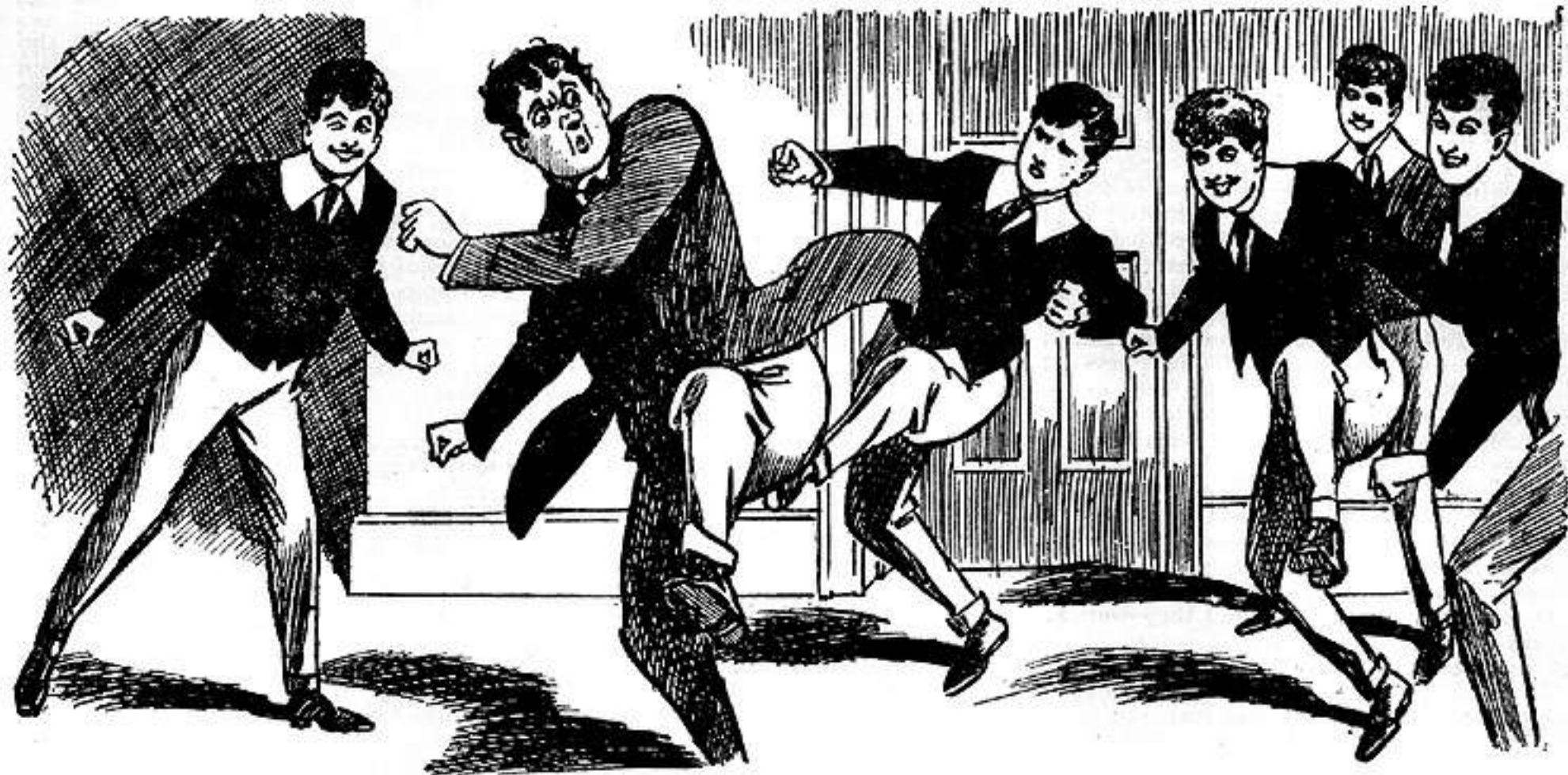
So the eating contest was ruled out. But Frank Nugent, who was a clever artist, undertook to do some lightning sketches on a blackboard. Nugent's amusing caricatures were a constant source of delight to his schoolfellows; and his services were gladly accepted.

"There's no reason why the concert shouldn't be a huge success," said Wharton.

"In fact, with Johnny Bull at the piano, it will be a 'thumping' success!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "As soon as Penfold has written the songs, we'll have the first rehearsal," said the captain of the Remove.

ANSWERS
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"Want a helping hand, Coker?" asked Bob Cherry politely. "Gerraway!" gasped Coker. But the Famous Five were always willing to help lame dogs over stiles, or to help lame Fifth-Formers along passages. They grabbed Coker without ceremony and heaved him to his feet. Then they gave him a push, and a number of well-shod feet clumped together upon the rear of Coker's person. "Yarooop! Ow-wow!" roared Coker. (See Chapter 1.)

Dick Penfold offered to sit up late, consuming large quantities of midnight oil, in order that the songs might be written with dispatch. And after further discussion the merry meeting broke up.

The Removites were resolved that their concert should be a brilliant success—"right from the word 'Go!'" as Fisher T. Fish expressed it.

Even football would have to take a back seat during the next few days, whilst the juniors threw themselves heart and soul into rehearsals.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

No Luck for Bunter.

"THE class will now dismiss!" Mr. Quelch smiled as he uttered that welcome announcement. And the class, instead of springing to their feet with alacrity, and making a dash for freedom, blinked at the Remove-master in amazement.

It was Friday afternoon; and there was still an hour to go before the proper time of dismissal arrived.

Had Mr. Quelch mistaken the time? Was his watch an hour fast? Even so, there was the Form-room clock, which advertised that it was half-past three. And lessons were not supposed to finish until half-past four.

It was not at all unusual for lessons to finish late; but it was only once in a blue moon, so to speak, that they finished early. Mr. Quelch was a hard taskmaster, and he was not in the habit of making lavish concessions of this sort.

But Mr. Quelch, from his point of vantage at the desk, had seen what the juniors could not see. Glancing over the heads of his pupils, and through the window beyond, Mr. Quelch saw eleven stalwart young fellows coming across the Close.

"You seem surprised at this early dismissal, my boys," said the Remove master, with a smile. "But there is an adequate reason for it. The Old Boys have just arrived!"

"Hurrah!"

The juniors were on their feet now and making tracks for the door. There

was quite a stampede from the Form-room, and everybody rushed into the Close to meet the Old Boys.

There were several familiar faces among the visitors. Some of them were in the habit of paying frequent visits to the old school.

The Honourable James Maxwell—affectionately styled the "Honourable Jimmy"—was the skipper of the Old Boys' Eleven; and he greeted the boys cordially. He knew most of them, and he had a busy five minutes shaking hands.

"Hallo, Wharton! How d'ye do, kid? Still ruling the roost in the Remove, what? That's the style! Hallo, Cherry! I see you're still smilin'—as usual! Why, here's our old friend Bunter—fatter than ever, by Jove! Too much grub and too little exercise—what?"

"Oh, really, sir—"

"No need for me to perform any introductions," said the Honourable Jimmy. "I think you know nearly all of us. Oh, but there's one Old Boy you've never seen before—Dick Chester. Forward, Chester!"

There was a buzz of excitement among the juniors as a tall, handsome-looking young fellow stepped to the fore.

The name of Dick Chester seemed to have an electrifying effect upon Harry Wharton & Co. True, they had never seen him before, but they had heard of him. There was scarcely a Greyfriars fellow who had not done so. His name was "familiar in their mouths as household words." For Dick Chester was the greatest goalkeeper Greyfriars had ever known. The story of his brilliant achievements had been handed down through the generations. He had been known to go through a whole football season without conceding a goal. And it was with feelings akin to awe that Harry Wharton & Co. shook hands with this great man.

"Well, this is an unexpected treat, and no mistake!" said Harry Wharton. "We didn't dream we should ever meet you, Mr. Chester! Matter of fact, we—we thought—"

"That I had gone under in the Great War?" said Dick Chester, with a smile.

"Yes. You were reported wounded and missing, and we were afraid that was the end of you."

"Happily it wasn't," said the Old Boy. "I came through all right. But this is the first opportunity I've had of visiting the old school. It's the same as ever, I see. That old tower has weathered the storms of centuries, and it will stand for a good many years yet."

"The tuckshop's still standing, too!" chimed in Billy Bunter. "You must be jolly hungry, Mr. Chester, after your journey. And I'll admit I'm a bit peckish myself—Ow! Why did you tread on my foot, Bull, you beast?"

"Shurrup!" growled Johnny Bull.

"You're having tea with us, aren't you, Mr. Chester?" said Harry Wharton.

"That's immensely kind of you," said the Old Boy. "We've all been invited to tea by the Head; but, personally, I should prefer to have it in a junior study. It will be less formal, and far more enjoyable."

"Hurrah!"

Harry Wharton & Co. were delighted at the prospect of entertaining such a great man as Dick Chester. For in their eyes he was truly great. A Cabinet Minister, or a field-marshal, or an admiral could not have commanded such admiration as a fellow who had gone through a whole season without giving away a goal.

The chums of the Remove escorted Dick Chester into the building, chatting eagerly with him as they went. They felt that they were in for a good time. Over the tea-table they would get their guest to tell them of some of the great games which had been played in the dashing days of old.

Billy Bunter tacked himself on to the party, but he was not wanted. And the juniors frankly told him so.

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"Make yourself scarce!"

"Roll away and pluckfully gather flowers!"

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly at his schoolfellows.

"Beasts! Why can't I come and have

tea with Mr. Chester? I believe he's a distant relation of mine—fifth cousin twice removed, or something like that, and I want to talk to him about it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dick Chester did not seem eager to claim kinship with the portly Owl of the Remove. Certainly Harry Wharton & Co. were not eager for Bunter's company. And, since he would not go quietly, they had to resort to gentle persuasion.

Billy Bunter was whirled round in the passage, and a number of boots clumped together upon the rear of his plump person. Bunter fled, howling; and the chums of the Remove, with many chuckles, went on their way with Dick Chester.

"Beasts!" growled Bunter, as he emerged once more into the Close. "I thought there was quite a good chance of getting a feed; but those rotters are always cutting me out. They know what a fascinating fellow I am, and they were afraid that Mr. Chester would jaw to me all the time, and leave them out of it."

But Billy Bunter soon brightened up at the prospect of extracting a loan out of one of the Old Boys. He caught sight of the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell, and promptly rolled up to him.

"Excuse me, sir—"

The Honourable Jimmy, who stood surveying the school fountain, in which he had often been ducked as a boy, turned his head.

"Well, my corpulent friend?" he said genially.

"Ahem! I—I'm expecting a postal-order—" began Bunter.

"Good!" said the Honourable Jimmy. "I hope you get it all right."

And he resumed his contemplation of the fountain.

"You—you don't quite understand, sir!" said Bunter desperately. "There—there's been a delay in the post, and my postal-order's hung up somewhere. If you would be kind enough to advance me a small loan—"

The Honourable Jimmy was smiling grimly. He recalled the occasion of his previous visit to Greyfriars. On that occasion Billy Bunter had come to him with a tale of woe. They were going to eject him from the Remove Cricket Club, he said, because he hadn't the wherewithal to pay his subscription, which had got behind. The Honourable Jimmy had "swallowed" this plausible tale, and had advanced Bunter half-a-guinea. He learned later that the half-guinea had been expended at the tuckshop.

That incident rankled in the mind of the Honourable Jimmy. It was not so much the loss of the money, as the fact that he had been "taken in," which nettled him. And he resolved to teach Billy Bunter a lesson.

"Ten bob would tide me over till my postal-order comes," explained the fat junior.

If Bunter expected the Honourable Jimmy to produce his wallet, and hand over a ten-shilling Treasury note, he was doomed to disappointment. The Old Boy was still surveying the shallow water which rippled in the basin of the fountain.

"In fact, I shouldn't say 'No' to five bob," Bunter went on. "If you're hard up, sir—though I don't see why a gent like you should be on the rocks—I'll be satisfied with half-a-crown."

"Indeed!"

"Yessir!" said Bunter eagerly. "Even a mouldy half-dollar will be useful to a chap who's in low water. Hellup! Wharrer you up to, sir?"

The Honourable Jimmy had spun round suddenly. He laid hands on Billy

Bunter, and, with a herculean effort, he swung the fat junior off his feet.

Strong man though he was, that feat of weight-lifting put a great strain upon the Honourable Jimmy's muscles. But he managed to stagger forward, and deposit his human burden in the basin of the fountain.

Splash!

"Ooooooh! Gug-gug-gug! Help! Rescue!" spluttered Bunter wildly.

It had all happened so suddenly and unexpectedly that the fat junior had not been able to offer any resistance. He wallowed in the shallow water, like a plump pig in a muddy ditch.

There was a patter of running feet, and Tom Brown and Squiff and Russell and Micky Desmond came hurrying to the spot. They roared at the sight of the floundering Bunter, who lay on his back in the basin of the fountain, with his legs wildly thrashing the air.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, an' Bunter's having his annual bath!" chortled Micky Desmond.

The Honourable Jimmy beckoned to the laughing juniors.

"Your fat friend came to me with a tale that he was in low water," he said. "So he is—now! You'd better help him out of it."

And the Honourable Jimmy strolled away, leaving the juniors to go to the assistance of their unfortunate school-fellow who happened to be "in low water!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Old Memories!

IN Study No. 1 in the Remove passage all was merry and bright.

A cheerful fire sputtered and crackled in the grate, and the table groaned beneath the weight of the goodly viands, as a novelist might say.

Harry Wharton & Co. were in funds, and they appeared to have bought up the contents of the tuckshop—lock, stock, and barrel. It was a feast of the gods that the Famous Five had prepared.

Dick Chester made himself thoroughly at home. He had been given the place of honour at the head of the table. The rest of the party had to squeeze themselves in where they could. Peter Todd had dropped in, and Mark Linley, and Tom Redwing, and two or three more. In fact, there were a dozen juniors in the study, including the Famous Five. And the Remove studies had not been constructed to accommodate a crowd.

The Famous Five sat at the table, as was their right. The others sat where they could. Two or three were perched in a row on the window-sill, balancing their cups of tea on their knees.

"Quite like old times, having tea in a junior study," said Dick Chester, smiling upon the assembly.

"You were in the Remove at one time, of course, Mr. Chester?" said Harry Wharton.

The Old Boy nodded.

"When I was in the Remove we had the reputation of being the most unruly Form at Greyfriars!" he said.

"A tradition which we still live up to!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Yes, rather!"

Hurree Singh, poised a dish of doughnuts in one hand, and a dish of jam-tarts in the other, presented them to Dick Chester.

"Will you partake of the jamful tarts or the doughful nuts, honoured sahib?" he asked.

"Thanks!" said Dick Chester, smiling. "I'll have a doughnut. I see the old dame at the tuckshop makes them as well

as ever. Nicely coated with sugar, and plenty of jam oozing out of them. I'm a connoisseur of doughnuts, and I've never tasted nicer ones than Dame Huggins makes."

"Dame Mimble!" corrected Frank Nugent.

"Ah, yes, Mimble! I had forgotten. One forgets a lot of things during an absence of twelve years. But there are a few things that one never forgets. There are famous footer matches that stick in the memory, and famous fights, and dramatic expulsions. A Great Rebellion is also an event which is not soon forgotten."

The juniors looked eagerly at their guest. They felt that a good story was coming.

"There was a Great Rebellion in your time, wasn't there, Mr. Chester?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes, in 1910. I happened to be the ringleader of it."

"Was the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell in it?" inquired Wharton.

"Oh, no! It was before his time. I'm the oldest member of the footer team we've brought down. The other fellows belong to a younger generation. They've never met me before. Simply knew me by repute. But I happened to run across the Honourable Jimmy in town, and I told him who I was, and said I'd love to run down and see the old place again. So he fixed me up with a place in the eleven. I'm to keep goal."

"Then there will be no hope for our forwards, I'm afraid," said Johnny Bull. Dick Chester smiled.

"Don't expect great things of me," he said. "I'm not the goalkeeper I was. Five years in France, fighting the Huns, put me back a good deal so far as footer was concerned. If you expect to see me play like a Sam Hardy to-morrow, I'm afraid you'll be disappointed."

"Tell us about the Great Rebellion, Mr. Chester!" exclaimed Tom Redwing, from his perch on the window-sill. "What started it?"

"Well, it was this way. Mr. Quelch—I notice he's still here—was thoughtless enough to contract a nervous breakdown, and he was ordered away for a month to get over it. They put a temporary master in his place—an awful old tyrant called Turnbull. I was captain of the Remove at the time. We'd always looked upon Mr. Quelch as a bit of a martinet; but he was a docile lamb compared with this brute Turnbull. I shall never forget the man. He had a face like Oliver Cromwell, and a voice like the Bull of Bashan, and the cruel nature of a Nero."

"My hat!"

"Turnbull ruled with a rod of iron," Dick Chester went on. "He also ruled with a birch rod, which ought never to have been allowed. It's an unwritten law that only the headmaster is entitled to birch a fellow. But Turnbull kept a birch in the Form-room—and he didn't keep it there for ornament, either. He used it, and he laid it on pretty thick, too! I've known a fellow to be birched for merely muttering in class."

"Great Scott!"

"The brute ought to have been kicked out!" said Bob Cherry indignantly.

"He was," said Dick Chester. "I'm coming to that. Of course, we weren't going to stand such tyranny. We sent a petition to the Head, but that didn't do any good; so the only course open to us was a rebellion. We had a Form-meeting in the dorm, after lights out, and I put it to the fellows straight. 'Are we going tamely to knuckle under to this beastly tyrant,' I said, 'or are we going to kick?' 'We'll kick!' was the unanimous answer. 'Very well, then,' I said,

"We will pool our money, and lay in provisions for a siege. And we'll barricade the dorm, and hold out against all comers. And we'll refuse to budge until the Head has sent Turnbull packing!"

"What happened then?" asked Wharton breathlessly.

"Well, a party of us broke bounds, and went down to the village and bought enough supplies to last us for a week at least. We smuggled the grub into the dorm in the middle of the night, and then we started to dig ourselves in, so to speak. We barricaded the door and the windows, so that it was impossible for anybody to get in. And next morning, instead of turning out at the first clang of the rising-bell, we enjoyed the unusual luxury of breakfast in bed.

"Old Turnbull came along and hammered on the door, and bellowed for admittance. We told him to run away and pick flowers, and he nearly had an apopleptic fit. He threatened us with a flogging apiece, and he added the cheering information that the ringleader would be expelled. Then he went and fetched the Head and the rest of the masters, and there was a terrible to-do. But we stuck to our guns and refused to budge.

"We held out for two days and two nights, and defied all efforts to dislodge us. And then I came up against the first bit of real trouble. The provisions weren't lasting out so well as we expected—there were one or two greedy fellows who had been exceeding their ration. The weaker spirits began to whine, and wanted to give in. But I wasn't having that. We all had to stand together if the rebellion was to be a success, and I refused to release any of the funks, though they badly wanted to go.

"The third day of the rebellion was jolly uncomfortable, because the funks exercised a depressing effect over the others. It was as much as I could do to maintain a cheerful spirit among the rebels. It looked as if there would be a mutiny in the camp, and I began to feel genuinely alarmed.

"And then the rebellion ended—with dramatic suddenness.

"It appeared that Turnbull, the tyrant, had been put in charge of the Third Form. He lost his temper with one of the kids, and flogged him unmercifully. There's no need for me to go into gruesome details. It's sufficient to say that the kid was hardly conscious at the finish. And then the Head walked in and saw what had happened. He realised at once that the Remove had a genuine grievance, and that they had been quite justified in asking for Turnbull's dismissal.

"Turnbull went at a minute's notice. The parents of the kid he had flogged so brutally wanted to prosecute him in a court of law; but the affair was hushed up somehow.

"The Head came up to the dorm and told us that Turnbull had gone, and the rebellion ended automatically. We got off scot-free, I'm thankful to say. The Head realised what a brute Turnbull had been, and he overlooked the affair. Another temporary master was engaged—a decent fellow this time—and everything went smoothly after that."

His story ended, Dick Chester sat back in his chair and lighted a cigarette. But the juniors were eager for fresh yarns, and they gave the popular Old Boy no rest. He had to tell them of the most exciting footer matches he had played in, and then to describe his thrilling experiences in the Great War. And Harry Wharton & Co. listened all the while with rapt attention.

"Thanks awfully, Mr. Chester!" said Harry Wharton, when the Old Boy had finished. "You've had enough exciting

experiences to fill a book—several volumes, in fact!"

"Yes; I've led a pretty crowded life," said Dick Chester, "and my adventures are not over yet—at least, I sincerely hope not. Life would be a deadly dull affair if every day was alike, and if nothing ever happened to break the monotony."

"Indeed it would!" said Mark Linley. There was a tap on the door, and Mr. Quelch looked in.

Dick Chester jumped up, his face slightly flushed.

"How do you do, sir?" he said, extending his hand.

Mr. Quelch shook hands cordially.

"I am delighted to meet you, Mr. Chester, after all these years," he said. "Dear me, how you have altered! I should scarcely have known you, had I not been informed that you were taking tea in this study."

The Old Boy smiled.

"Twelve years make a tremendous difference to a fellow," he said. "But you, sir, do not appear to have altered a scrap. You do not seem a day older than when I was a boy in your Form!"

Mr. Quelch was naturally delighted at this compliment. His colleagues on the school staff sometimes imparted to him the painful information that he was "getting on"—information which no middle-aged gentleman likes to hear. It

was refreshing to meet an Old Boy who considered he had not altered a scrap in the course of twelve years.

The Remove master remained in the study for some moments, talking about old times.

Harry Wharton & Co. noticed that Dick Chester did not seem quite at ease. But this was easily understood. Very few Old Boys ever feel quite comfortable in the presence of their old masters. They get the feeling that they are small boys again, being taken to task for some misdemeanour.

"Good-bye for the present, Mr. Chester," said Mr. Quelch at length. "We shall probably meet again this evening, at the entertainment which the ingenious youths of my Form have organised for the benefit of the Old Boys."

Dick Chester nodded, and Mr. Quelch smilingly withdrew.

"The same old Quelchy!" murmured the Old Boy, when the Remove master had retired. Then, turning to the juniors, he added:

"What time does the entertainment start?"

"Eight o'clock," said Harry Wharton. "And the fun will be kept up until nearly midnight, by special permission."

"Splendid! I can clearly see that my friends and I have a delightful evening



"There," said the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell, surveying his handiwork with great satisfaction. "P'r'aps you'll oblige the audience by gettin' out of that fix in ten seconds!" "Oh, certainly," said Bolsover. But the ten seconds sped by and Bolsover was still struggling to rid himself of his bonds. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the audience. "Go it, Bolsover!" (See Chapter 5.)

in store. And now, with your kind permission, I will leave you in order to wander round the old boyhood haunts. Many thanks for a most enjoyable spread!"

Dick Chester took his departure. His ears must have burned as he walked down the corridor, for Harry Wharton & Co., summing up their Old Boy guest, unanimously voted him a jolly good fellow.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter at His Best!

DURING the afternoon a number of amateur billstickers had been busy.

Bills were exhibited all over the school, to advertise the forthcoming entertainment. Not that it needed much advertising. It was already common knowledge that the Remove were going to give a show, and a free show at that. And every fellow in the school, from Wingate down to the youngest fag, intended to roll up at eight o'clock to see the fun.

However, the affair had been advertised—more as a merry jest than anything else—and every bill bore the following thrilling announcement:

**"GENTS OF GREYFRIARS!
ROLL UP AND SEE THE REMOVE
REVELS!**

A GRAND VARIETY SHOW

will be given in the concert-hall this evening, commencing at 8 sharp. Nothing stale or out-of-date! No jokes with whiskers on! Everything brand-new! Greyfriars songs written by a Greyfriars fellow! Come and hear them! Come and cheer them!

At enormous expense we have secured the services of

BILLY BUNTER

(the world-famous ventriloquist),

who has agreed to throw his voice, provided the audience promises to throw no bad eggs!

We have also secured the services of

OLIVER KIPPS

(the celebrated conjurer and juggler),

who can produce tame rabbits from nowhere, and keep a dozen top-hats spinning in the air at the same time!

Other talented artistes include

FRANK NUGENT,

whose 'lightning sketches' on the blackboard will evoke 'thunders' of applause!

Also the famous rope-trick merchant,

PERCY BOLSOVER,

who will permit any member of the audience to tie him up in knots, and will undertake to free himself in ten seconds!

BOB CHERRY and **MARK LINLEY** will appear in a Brilliant Burlesque; **WILLIAM WIBLEY** will give some of his wonderful impersonations; **WUN LUNG**, the famous 'acrobat, will hop about like a Chinese Cracker; and there will be

A HOST OF OTHER ATTRACTIONS!

The audience is earnestly requested to refrain from hurling missiles at the performers; but in order that their ammunition may not be wasted, we will prevail

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upon Coker of the Fifth to render a song! It is bad form to pelt Removites, but Fifth-Formers are fair game!

ADMISSION—NIX!

(Proceeds to be handed to Billy Bunter as a loan!)

ROLL UP IN YOUR MILLIONS!

The Greyfriars fellows rolled up quickly enough—not in their millions, but in their dozens and scores.

The masters rolled up, also, and even the majestic Head condescended to patronise the Remove's latest and greatest venture.

As for the Old Boys, they had special seats reserved for them in the front row—the "dress circle," as Bob Cherry humorously called it.

Dick Chester, however, detached himself from the rest of the Old Boys. He preferred to sit at the back of the hall. Not being of the same generation as the other young men, he hadn't a great deal in common with them, though they would have liked to see more of him. He had spent very little time in their company since they had all travelled down in the train together.

Harry Wharton & Co. were busy behind the scenes. They had adorned their faces with make-up, and they were now running through their songs for the last time, in order to get them off "pat."

There was a clamour of voices from the crowded hall.

"On the ball, you fellows!"

"Up with the merry curtain!"

Harry Wharton smiled.

"They're getting a bit restive," he remarked. "But we sha'n't be long now."

"I say, Wharton! Am I giving the first turn?" asked Billy Bunter.

"No!"

"Oh, really! I suppose you and your pals are going to set the ball rolling? Personal favouritism again! I never get a fair show. I've a jolly good mind not to perform! That would knock the bottom out of the whole concern. It would fall flat!"

"And you'll fall flat in a minute, if you don't dry up!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I say, Bob, how do I look?"

"No uglier than usual!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull gave a wrathful snort, and clenched his hands, as if with the intention of committing assault and battery on his chum. But Harry Wharton hastily poured oil on the troubled waters.

"Come along!" he said briskly. "We'll get to business. Opening chorus by the Famous Five. That's the first item."

The members of the famous Co. stepped on to the stage, and the signal was given for the curtain to be rung up.

A loud cheer greeted the artistes. Johnny Bull was at the piano; and his four chums stood in a row behind the footlights.

Five tuneful voices rendered the opening chorus:

"Oh, we are the Famous Five,

The merriest fellows alive!

We revel and fight from morn till night,

In jests and japes we take delight,

Our motto is 'Always merry and bright!'

Oh, we are the Famous Five!"

"Bravo!"

"Quite a bright an' breezy ditty, by gad!" drawled the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell. "Pile in!"

Stimulated by this encouragement, the Famous Five plunged into the second verse:

"Oh, we are the Famous Five,

As busy as bees in a hive!

We never get slack when things look black,

To worry and care we give 'the sack,'

We follow up fast on Adventure's track!

Oh, we are the Famous Five!"

Harry Wharton & Co. received quite an ovation. And then Peter Todd came on, and sang a song about Coker of the Fifth. Everybody revelled in it—except Coker! The great Horace was seated in the second row, behind the Old Boys, and he flushed to the roots of his hair while Peter Todd chanted his chorus about "Coker, comical Coker—the most amazing joker!"

"My hat!" muttered Coker wrathfully. "He's libelling me, the young rascal! Just wait till after the performance! I—I'll burst him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

At the conclusion of his song Peter Todd was loudly encored; and Coker had to endure the ordeal all over again.

Then Oliver Kipps came on, and caused quite a sensation with his conjuring and juggling feats.

The Remove entertainment was swinging along in rare style. It was crammed with fun and sparkle, and there was not a dull moment.

The only failure was Bolsover major. His celebrated rope-trick did not work out quite as he had intended. Bolsover invited a member of the audience to tie him up in knots, and he undertook to extricate himself from the tangle in ten seconds.

The Honourable Jimmy Maxwell rose from his seat, and vaulted on to the stage, and proceeded to truss Bolsover major up like a fowl. By the time he had finished Bolsover was almost obliterated from view by the coils of rope.

"There!" said the Honourable Jimmy, surveying his handiwork with great satisfaction. "P'r'aps you'll oblige the audience by gettin' out of that fix in ten seconds."

"Oh, certainly!" said Bolsover.

The burly Removite had practised the rope-trick several times with success. Fellows had tied him up in the Close, and he had managed to wriggle free. But something had gone wrong with the works, so to speak, on this occasion. The more Bolsover wriggled and struggled, the more hopelessly entangled he became. The ten seconds sped by, and Bolsover was still struggling. Beads of perspiration broke out on his forehead, and he became quite panic-stricken as he realised that he was a helpless prisoner. Eventually, he was obliged to bellow for help.

The onlookers were almost in hysterics.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"Poor old Bolsover!"

"Did you say you'd get free in ten seconds, or ten days?"

Laughing heartily, the Honourable Jimmy remounted the platform, and severed the unfortunate Bolsover's bonds with a penknife. Bolsover hurriedly retreated behind the scenes, to hide his diminished head.

Frank Nugent was the next performer. A blackboard was placed on an easel, facing the audience, and Nugent, armed with a piece of chalk, did some lightning

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JUNGLE JINKS

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caricatures. There was one of the Head, in gown and mortar-board; another of Mr. Quelch, in the act of chastising a refractory pupil; and another of Coker of the Fifth—though it looked more like Tarzan of the Apes than Coker.

Nugent finished up by sketching the Old Boys from life—exactly as they were sitting in the front row. A storm of applause greeted his effort.

"Jolly clever, by gad!" murmured the Honourable Jimmy approvingly. "That kid will be a second Tom Webster, one of these days."

Frank Nugent flushed with pleasure as he retired.

Then came the "star turn" of the evening. Billy Bunter, fairly bursting with pride and importance, rolled on to the platform. He carried in his arms the dummy figure of a man.

A couple of chairs had been placed in position on the platform. Bunter seated the dummy figure in one, and deposited his huge bulk in the other. Then he commenced a conversation with his inanimate companion.

"Hallo!"

"Hallo!" responded the dummy cheerfully.

"What's your name?"

"Timothy Traddles!"

"What are you?"

"Eh? Well, some people might say I was just a stuck-up dummy, but I'm really quite an intelligent fellow. I'm an Old Boy of Greyfriars."

"Oh, really! And is that where you learned to be intelligent?"

"Yes. And now I'm in the Intelligence Department at Scotland Yard."

"A detective—what?"

"That's so."

"Well, and what can you detect amongst the audience?" asked Billy Bunter, tilting the dummy figure forward in its chair.

"Lots of things. Coker of the Fifth, for instance."

"I'm not a thing!" howled Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter chuckled.

"Can you detect anything funny about Coker?" he asked.

"Yes. That mask he's wearing—an awfully grotesque mask. Can't you see it?"

"It's not a mask!" hooted Coker.

"It's my face!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The audience was almost in convulsions. Coker of the Fifth was being "ragged" right and left that evening. The performers had piled it on for all they were worth. And now that Billy Bunter had started, it was like piling Pelion on Ossa. Coker's countenance was crimson, and he was muttering dark threats as to what he would do to certain of the performers after the show.

Gladly would Coker have rushed on to the platform, and knocked the heads of Billy Bunter and the dummy figure together. But he was restrained by the presence of the Head, the masters, and the Old Boys, Coker saw, to his chagrin, that the adults were laughing just as heartily as the fellows.

Billy Bunter went on with his ventriloquism.

"How long have you left Greyfriars?" he asked, jerking the dummy towards him.

"Ten years."

"Was the same Head here when you were a kid?"

"Yes. Dear old Locke, bless his heart!"

"And the masters?"

"Most of them were here then. Old Quelch, for one—"

"Shush! You mustn't allude to him as 'old Quelch.' He's not old. Why,



"Shush," said the Owl of the Remove to his dummy figure. "You mustn't refer to Mr. Quelch as 'old Quelch'! He's not old. Why, I believe he's still on the right side of seventy!" "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the audience. Mr. Quelch frowned and rose to his feet as the ripple of laughter ran round the hall, but he recovered his good humour in an instant. (See Chapter 5.)

I believe he's still on the right side of seventy!"

Mr. Quelch frowned, as a ripple of laughter ran round the hall. But the Remove master recovered his good humour in an instant.

"Did you ever get tanned when you were a kid?" Bunter asked the dummy.

"Yes. Sometimes by the sun, and sometimes by Quelch—I mean, Mr. Quelch. He used to treat me like a postage-stamp."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, he used to lick me, and then put me in the corner!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter was fairly in his element now. He loved the limelight, and the laughter and applause rang like music in his ears. After further conversation with the dummy concerning Mr. Quelch, he suddenly switched on to Mr. Prout.

"Was Mr. Prout at Greyfriars when you were here?"

"Yes, rather! Poor old Prouty! Awfully decent sort, but a dangerous man when he runs amok with his Winchester repeater!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Prout rose indignantly from his seat.

"Bunter!" he roared. "How dare you cause that grotesque figure to make such impertinent remarks!"

"No offence, sir!" came a voice from the dummy.

Mr. Quelch leaned forward in his seat and tugged at his colleague's coat-tails.

"Pray be seated, my dear Prout, and permit Bunter to proceed with his nonsense," he said. "You were highly amused just now when I was made the

victim of Bunter's sallies. I took them in good part, and it now behoves you to do likewise."

Mr. Prout sat down. He really had no choice in the matter, for Mr. Quelch practically jerked him back into his seat.

Billy Bunter prattled on gaily.

"Did Mr. Prout ever run amok when you were here?" he asked.

"I should say so! We had a burglar scare one night, and Mr. Prout rushed round the Close with his rifle, intending to shoot the looter. He managed to put a bullet through the tuckshop window, and another through the window of the porter's lodge; and with a third bullet he punctured the Head's mortar-board! I hope his marksmanship has improved during the last ten years?"

"Oh, yes!" said Billy Bunter hastily; for Mr. Prout, like the ancient mariner, held him with his glittering eye. "He's improved out of all knowledge! Why, he could snick the pimple off Gosling's nose at a distance of five-hundred yards!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Gosling, the porter, was not present at the entertainment. Which was just as well. He would possibly—nay, probably—have resented that allusion to the pimple on his nasal organ.

"Mr. Prout very often forgets to load his rifle," Billy Bunter went on; "then there's no danger of any damage being done."

"That reminds me," said the dummy.

"Eh? Reminds you of what?"

"A little conundrum of mine. What is the difference between Jack Dempsey and Mr. Prout?"

"Give it up," said Bunter, after a pause.

"One shot out his left, the other left out his shot!" came the reply. And there was a peal of laughter from the audience.

Billy Bunter went on with his ventriloquism for quite a long while. He would probably have gone on all night had not Harry Wharton whispered to him from the wings and urged him to "pack up."

Thunders of applause followed the fat junior as he retired, dragging the dummy figure after him.

The Remove entertainment was proving an unqualified success; and there were still many more "numbers" to come. That was why Wharton had insisted on Billy Bunter's retirement. He wanted to get the show over by midnight.

William Wibley was the next performer to take the platform. The audience watched him with eager interest as he impersonated several well-known celebrities at Greyfriars.

But one member of the audience was not watching.

Dick Chester, the popular Old Boy, quietly vacated his seat at the back of the hall, and, like the Arabs in the poem, he silently stole away.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Discovery!

ELEVEN o'clock!

Even the loud boom of the old clock in the tower could not be heard in the Greyfriars concert-hall. It was drowned by the roars of applause which greeted Bob Cherry and Mark Linley, who had just rendered their amusing burlesque of a couple of country yokels.

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet.

"Kindly excuse me," he said to his colleagues. "I should like to stop and see the entertainment through, but I have work to do."

"Your 'History of Greyfriars'?" questioned the Head, with a smile.

"Precisely, sir. I have a very important chapter to write, concerning the great rebellion of 1910."

"Write it to-morrow," suggested Mr. Prout.

But Mr. Quelch shook his head.

"There is a proverb about the un-wisdom of deferring till to-morrow what can be done to-day," he said. "I really must go."

And he hurried out of the concert-hall.

The corridors were in darkness as Mr. Quelch wended his way to his study. And the place seemed strangely desolate as well as dark. Practically all Greyfriars was present in the concert-hall.

Mr. Quelch shivered a little as he groped his way along. The corridors seemed chilly and draughty, after the warm atmosphere from which he had just emerged.

Picking his way with difficulty, Mr. Quelch muttered uncomplimentary remarks concerning the individual who should have seen to the lights, but who had neglected his duty in order to go to the entertainment.

There was an electric-light switch in the corridor, but when Mr. Quelch pressed it down nothing happened. Hence the uncomplimentary remarks. Apparently the House lights had been switched off at the main, not having been needed. But Mr. Quelch considered it was high time they were switched on again.

The Remove master groped for his study door—and found it. He cannoned

into it in the darkness with an impact which shook every bone in his body.

"Ow!"

Mr. Quelch staggered back against the opposite wall. By this time he was feeling annoyed—not mildly annoyed, but very considerably annoyed. No middle-aged gentleman enjoys the experience of colliding with a door in the darkness.

"The House lights ought certainly to have been turned on by now!" he muttered. "This is most exasperating! I shall be unable to switch on the light in my study."

Mr. Quelch groped for the door again—very cautiously this time—and he turned the handle. To his further exasperation the door refused to budge.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Remove master.

He rattled the handle, and twisted it this way and that way, and pushed with all his force. But all his efforts were unavailing. The study door was locked on the inside.

Mr. Quelch was amazed, as well as annoyed. How came his door to be locked?

The possibility of burglars flashed into the Form master's mind. Had some intruder entered his study with the object of raiding it?

As he pondered over this possibility, Mr. Quelch fancied he heard a movement inside the apartment. There was a sound as of a window being opened. It might have been merely the wind, for it was a wild night. And yet—

Now greatly alarmed, Mr. Quelch hurried down into the Close. At least, he tried to hurry, with disastrous results. In the darkness he took a short cut down the School House steps, and literally rolled from top to bottom.

Bump!

"Wow! Oh dear! I'm severely hurt!" groaned Mr. Quelch. "How did I come to miss that top step?"

For a quite a minute the Remove master lay in a sprawling heap at the foot of the steps. But his injuries were not so severe as he had feared, for he found he was able to rise to his feet.

Dusting his clothes with his hands, Mr. Quelch made his way through the wind and the darkness towards his study window. He saw that it was unfastened, and his fears of a burglary were confirmed. Mr. Quelch had left that window securely fastened before going to the Remove entertainment.

"There has been a marauder in my study—I am certain of it!" he exclaimed. "And apparently he has only just escaped by the window. He may be still on the school premises! I will at once investigate!"

Mr. Quelch peered all around him in the gloom. Like Moses of old, he looked this way and that way, and there was no man.

In the distance he could see the red rear light of a car disappearing down Friardale Lane. But Mr. Quelch attached no importance to this. There were cars on the road at all hours. Possibly that particular car belonged to Dr. Short, of Friardale, who was returning home after paying a late call.

Mr. Quelch made a tour of inspection. He walked right round the Close, peering into every nook and corner. But there was no skulking figure to be seen in the shadows.

"I may be incorrect in my surmise that a burglar has been busy," he murmured. "Before giving an alarm, I had better ascertain if the contents of my study have been tampered with. Entry by the door is impossible; but I will get Gosling to climb through the window."

Having made this resolve, Mr. Quelch hurried down to the porter's lodge.

There was a light in the parlour window. Mr. Quelch peeped through the panes, and a peaceful scene met his gaze.

Gosling, the porter, was lying back in his armchair. There was an empty gin bottle on the table, and an expression of placid contentment on Gosling's face. He was asleep. His feet—those "pore, tired feet" to which he frequently referred—were encased in comfortable slippers.

Mr. Quelch frowned. He opened the window and thrust his head into the parlour.

"Gosling!" he roared.

Snore!

"Gosling! Gosling! Rouse yourself at once!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "I suspect that there are burglars on the premises!"

Mr. Quelch's voice resembled the booming of breakers on the beach. It was sufficiently stentorian to arouse the celebrated Seven Sleepers. It certainly aroused Gosling. He opened his eyes with a start, and blinked towards the window. Then, catching sight of Mr. Quelch's wrathful countenance, Gosling jumped up with surprising agility for a man of his years.

"Anythin' wrong, sir?" he asked.

"Yes!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "My study has been entered by some unknown marauder!"

"My heye!"

"The door has been locked on the inside, but the window is open; and I want you, Gosling, to climb into the study and unlock the door, so that I can enter."

Gosling grumbled under his breath.

"Nice goings hon! Crawl in an' clamber in' through winders at this time o' night! I'm a porter, I am—not an acrobat!"

"Make haste!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

Gosling sat down and proceeded to put on his boots, grunting laboriously as he did so. Then he lighted a lantern, and shuffled to the door, and joined Mr. Quelch in the wind swept Close. Together they proceeded to their destination.

The outer sill of Mr. Quelch's study window was at no great distance from the ground. This was fortunate, for Gosling's climbing powers were not equal to those of Tarzan of the Apes. As it was, he had considerable difficulty in hoisting himself on to the sill. But he succeeded at last, and clambered through into the study.

"Switch the light on, Gosling!" called Mr. Quelch from the Close.

"That's jest wot I'm tryin' to do, sir!" growled Gosling. "But the blessed thing won't hact!"

"Then I must trouble you, as soon as you have unlocked the door to go and put on the House lights at the main switchboard. They ought to have been turned on by now."

There were further mumbings and grumbings from Gosling, as he groped his way to the door and unlocked it.

"Wot I says is this 'ere—I'm a porter, I am! not a bloomin' electrician!"

Nevertheless, Gosling did as Mr. Quelch requested, and when the Remove master entered his study a few moments later and pressed down the switch the light appeared.

Mr. Quelch gave a hurried glance round the apartment.

The room was in a state of the most complete disorder. Chairs had been removed from their customary positions, papers were strewn about the table, and

Mr. Quelch's desk had been forced open, and the lid was thrown back.

"Good gracious!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "There has undoubtedly been a burglar in this study! Gosling could not have caused all this chaos and confusion when he was here just now. I must ascertain what is missing."

The Remove master's first thought was for his priceless manuscript. Had the "History of Greyfriars" been stolen?

But the burglar had evidently come across something more interesting than the "History of Greyfriars," which still reposed in the desk.

A valuable ivory bust was missing from the mantelpiece, also a bundle of Treasury notes, which Mr. Quelch had intended to take to the bank at the first opportunity. The opportunity had gone now, and so had the notes.

Mr. Quelch stood thunderstruck.

"A deliberately planned robbery!" he exclaimed. "The thief must have known that practically everybody would be at the Remove entertainment, and he could not have chosen a more appropriate time for his nefarious deed. I wonder if I am his only victim, or if this robbery has been carried out on a wholesale scale?"

Mr. Quelch hurried out of his study and rushed around to the other masters' studies. He found all of them in the same condition as his own—completely disordered.

The mysterious burglar had indeed been busy. He had burgled on a colossal scale, for not a single master's study had been overlooked.

As to the exact nature and extent of all the thefts, Mr. Quelch was unable to judge. Nor did he stop to find out.

It was possible that the plunderer was still on the premises. Much valuable time had been lost, but Mr. Quelch hoped that if he gave the alarm at once and the whole school joined in a hue-and-cry after the burglar, that daring individual would be found and compelled to surrender.

Cherishing this hope, Mr. Quelch strode away at a rapid pace in the direction of the concert-hall.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Man-Hunt!

"FINAL chorus, gentlemen—by the Famous Five!" announced Harry Wharton.

"Hurrah!"

"Pile in, you fellows!"

It was on the stroke of midnight when the Famous Five started to give the last "turn" of all.

They were half-way through their lively chorus, and going strong, when Mr. Quelch re-entered the concert-hall.

The Remove master was looking very grave. He walked up to the Head and whispered a few words in his ear. The Head gave a violent start, and those sitting near him were aware that something was seriously amiss.

The Famous Five finished their chorus, and it was loudly encored. But before Harry Wharton & Co. could give the encore, the Head mounted the platform, and raised his hand for silence.

"I regret to announce," he said gravely, "that whilst we have been enjoying ourselves in this hall, the school has been plundered!"

There was a buzz from the audience and from the fellows on the stage.

"My only aunt!" murmured Bob Cherry, clutching Harry Wharton's arm. "Burglars, by Jove!"

"Yes, and they couldn't have chosen a better time!" replied the captain of the Remove.

"They have raidfully burgled the school—lockfully, stockfully, and barrelfully!" muttered Hurree Singh.

"Shush! Head's speaking," whispered Nugent.

"It is just possible," Dr. Locke was saying, "that the burglar or burglars are still on the premises. Search must be made at once!"

"Yes, rather! An' I'll lead the way!" exclaimed the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell, jumping to his feet.

There was quite a commotion in the concert-hall. Anything in the nature of a man-hunt appealed to the Greyfriars fellows—especially the juniors and fags.

There was quite a stampede to the door, and the doorway was blocked by a struggling, clamouring throng.

"Make way, there!" roared Coker of the Fifth.

"Ow! Somebody trod on my toe!"

"Heave-ho!"

It was like a Cup Final crush. The weakest went to the wall, and the strongest soon pushed their way through.

Harry Wharton & Co. let themselves out by a smaller exit at the back.

"After the giddy burglar!" shouted Bob Cherry.

And they went off like a pack of bloodhounds in full cry.

"The question is, where are we to start searching?" panted Frank Nugent, as he ran.

"Let's go out into the Close," said Johnny Bull. "If the burglar's still in the building, he'll be driven out by the hue-and-cry, and he'll run right into our arms!"

"That's so," said Harry Wharton. "Hallo! Here's Mr. Chester!"

The Old Boy looked flushed and breathless as he joined the juniors.

"No luck so far," he said. "When the alarm was given I rushed around to the box-room, hoping to catch the marauder in the act of slithering through the window. But he wasn't there. I think the best plan is to keep watch in the Close."

"Great minds think alike," said Johnny Bull. "I'd just suggested the same thing. Mr. Chester."

"Come on!" said the Old Boy. "The scoundrel mustn't be allowed to escape if we can help it!"

The party rushed out into the Close. It was very dark, and the wind was blowing great guns. But the noise of the hue-and-cry inside the building was plainly audible. Greyfriars resembled a human hive.

The Famous Five, accompanied by Dick Chester, kept a sharp look-out. At any moment they expected a shadowy form to emerge from the building, driven out into the Close by the knowledge that the alarm had been given.



"Collar him!" panted Dick Chester. There was a rush of feet, and the man who carried the sack was leapt upon from behind and bowled over without ceremony. The Old Boy seated himself on the man's chest, and Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry grabbed his legs. There was a gurgling cry from the victim. "Hellup! Gerroff me chest! You're suffercatin' me, as ever was!" Wharton gave a startled gasp. "Why, we've got the wrong pig by the ear," he said. "It's Gosling!"

(See Chapter 7.)

They were ready for him when he appeared. But he never came.

"Must have got away already," muttered Harry Wharton, after several moments had elapsed.

"Looks like it," said Nugent.

Suddenly there was a shout from Dick Chester.

"There he goes! After him!"

Peering through the gloom, the juniors distinctly saw the outline of a man's form making its way towards the school gates. There was a sack over the man's shoulder, and the juniors did not doubt that it was the sack containing the plunder.

Dick Chester darted off at an amazing turn of speed, with the Famous Five hard at his heels. They caught up to their quarry as he was nearing the porter's lodge.

"Collar him!" panted the Old Boy.

There was a rush of feet, and the man who carried the sack was leapt upon from behind, and bowled over without ceremony.

Dick Chester seated himself on the man's chest, and Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry grabbed his legs.

There was a gurgling cry from the victim.

"Hellup! Gerroff me chest! You're suffercatin' me, as ever was!"

Harry Wharton gave a startled gasp.

"We've got the wrong pig by the ear, you fellows," he said. "It's Gosling!"

"Yes, an' I'll report yer!" spluttered Gosling. "Hattackin' an honest an' sober man, an' bowlin' 'im clean off 'is feet! Wot I says is this ere—"

"There's no plunder in this sack," chimed in Johnny Bull, who had been investigating. "It's only firewood!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Dick Chester vacated his human seat, and Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry let go of Gosling's legs. Then they assisted the wrathful and indignant porter to rise.

"Awfully sorry, Gossy—" began Bob Cherry.

"So I should think!" snarled Gosling. "Bumpin' an' brusin' an honest man like this 'ere! Disgustful, I calls it! Can't a man go to the woodshed an' fetch some wood for 'is fire without bein' set upon by a pack of young 'ooligans?"

"It's an unfortunate mistake, dear man," said Dick Chester. "We mistook you for the burglar."

"Burglar?" hooted Gosling, greatly incensed. "Do I look like a blinkin' burglar? 'Ave I got the features of a Bill Sikes?"

"We only saw the back view of you," explained the Old Boy.

"Well, you might make sure of a man's hi-dentity before settin' on 'im like that!" grunted Gosling. "I reckon I ought to 'ave summat by way of concentration."

"You mean 'compensation,' surely?" said Dick Chester, with a laugh.

"That's it!"

"Well, I'm sincerely sorry it happened, Gosling. Perhaps this will recompense you for the shock you have sustained."

And he slipped a couple of half-crowns into the porter's horny palm.

Greatly mollified, Gosling picked up the sack and proceeded to his lodge, limping a little.

"What a sell!" said Dick Chester, with a rueful laugh. "Never mind! If we hang on a bit longer we may get hold of the right man."

But, although the party "hung on" for another half-hour, there was no sign of the burglar or burglars. It seemed only too probable that the plunderers

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had made an easy get-away before the entertainment had ended.

A number of figures loomed up in the darkness, and the voice of Wingate of the Sixth was heard.

"Seen anything of the burglar?"

"Not so much as his shadow!" replied Dick Chester. "He must have got away before the alarm was given."

"He's made a jolly good haul, anyway," said Wingate. "He seems to have taken every article of value that was in the place—every portable article, that is."

"Great Scott!"

"Has the Head telephoned to the police?" asked Dick Chester.

"Of course! Every effort will be made to capture the burglar—or the gang, as the case may be. We can do nothing more here. The place has been searched from end to end—every nook and corner of it. And the Head's just told us to give it up, and get off to bed. A complete list of the stolen property will be available in the morning—and it will be a mighty long list, too, I'm thinking."

"Hope my concertina's safe," said Johnny Bull anxiously.

"Of course it's safe, fathead!" said Wharton, laughing. "What would a burglar want with an old-fashioned, out-of-date, obsolete concertina?"

"Look here—" began Johnny Bull angrily.

"Anybody who has removed your concertina, Johnny, would be bestowing a boon upon the community!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "Sounds heartless, I know; but I wish the burglar had bagged it—likewise Tom Brown's gramophone!"

"Well, we'd better buzz off to bed!" said Harry Wharton. "Good-night, Mr. Chester!"

"Good-night!" said the Old Boy cordially, as he shook hands all round.

"Great pity this has happened! But it won't make any difference to the match being played to-morrow, will it, Wingate?"

"Not a scrap!" said the captain of Greyfriars. "They've robbed us of our possessions, but they won't rob us of the satisfaction of licking the Old Boys!"

Dick Chester laughed.

"You'll never do that," he said, "not in a thousand years! Good-night all!"

And the party in the Close dispersed to their respective sleeping quarters.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Man Short!

GREYFRIARS had a severe shock next morning.

It was, of course, common knowledge that the school had been burgled overnight; but the full extent of the mischief was not realised until the dawning of a new day.

Losses were reported from all quarters. In addition to the theft of the Treasury notes and the ivory bust from Mr. Quelch's study, the Head's safe had been rifled, and a large sum of money taken therefrom.

A very valuable stamp album—the property of Mr. Capper—had been stolen. A small gold cup, which Mr. Larry Lascelles had won during his boxing career, had taken unto itself wings. Many articles of value had been taken from the studies of the other masters; and, to crown all, the various Games Fund boxes had all been rifled. It was estimated that the thief or thieves had got away with several hundred pounds' worth of loot.

"Why, the place has been absolutely plundered!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, when this information had been made known.

"The burglar must have had the geography of the school at his fingertips," said Frank Nugent. "He must have known exactly which studies to visit and which to leave alone."

"How on earth did he manage to get away with such a huge haul?" said Bob Cherry.

"Well, he only took small articles," said Johnny Bull. "And I dare say he had a car waiting out in the road."

"But Gosling would have seen it—" began Nugent.

"Not he! If I know anything of Gossy, he would have been curled up in his armchair, fast asleep, at the time the school was plundered."

"It's a rotten business," said Wharton, with a frown. "And it couldn't have happened at a worse time. I hear that some of the Old Boys are among the victims. The Honourable Jimmy Maxwell left his gold ticker on the dressing-table, in his room, and it's been taken. And Dick Chester had a valuable tie-pin stolen. It's beastly! The Old Boys will begin to think they've walked into a sort of thieves' kitchen!"

The Famous Five were taking a stroll in the Close, on that sunny spring morning. There were no lessons, for it was Saturday—the day of the great match between Past and Present.

The sensational events of the previous night made no difference to the match. The Honourable Jimmy Maxwell reported that the members of his eleven were fighting fit; and Wingate of the Sixth had posted the names of the school players on the notice-board. The name of Horace Coker was absent from the list. Coker was naturally very sick about this, and he broadcasted his opinion that the Old Boys would win by a big margin—owing solely to the fact that he, Horace Coker, was not playing!

"It ought to be a great game," said Bob Cherry. "I'd walk a good many miles to see Dick Chester keeping goal for the Old Boys. He says he's gone off a lot, but I'll wager he's as good as ever!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Talk of angels," said Hurree Singh, "and you're sure to hear the flapfulness of their esteemed wingfulness!"

Dick Chester, looking as handsome and debonair as usual, came strolling towards the group of juniors.

(Continued on page 16.)

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GREYFRIARS REVISITED!

By AN OLD BOY.



Stands old Greyfriars where it did
When I was a tiny kid?
Yes! I see its lofty spire,
Like a pinnacle of fire,
Gleaming in the sunlight's rays—
Goodly sight to greet my gaze!
Still unscathed by storm or flame,
It stands, through centuries, the same.

Stands old Quelchy as of yore
Firmly on the Form-room floor?
Does his voice like thunder roll?
Does he still say "Bless my soul"?
Yes! I see him standing there,
Though Father Time has thinned his hair.

Still I hear his wrathful shout:
"Boy, you are a dunce! Stand out!"

Stands the tuckshop where it did
When I squandered many a "quid"?
Yes! The worthy Mrs. Mimble
Still presides, though not so nimble
As in eighteen-ninety-nine,
When her doughnuts were divine!
Silver streaks adorn her hair—
It was black when I was there!

Stands the old school fountain still,
Where the sneaks had many a swill?
For we used to duck them daily,
Leave them there, and walk off gaily!
Many a "rotter" had his face in-
buried in the brimming basin!
Yes! The fountain lingers yet—
A landmark few will e'er forget.

Boys may come and boys may go
In a constant ebb and flow;
Mighty storms may rage and roar,
Sweeping over sea and shore,
Greyfriars stands for generations—
Naught shall shake its sure foundations!
Ne'er shall its traditions perish:
Its good name we'll ever cherish!

MY FAVOURITE OLD BOY!

Nearly every fellow at Greyfriars has his own particular favourite among the Old Boys. Some interesting and amusing confessions appear below.

BOB CHERRY:

My favourite Old Boy? The pater, of course! I often get him to chat about the glorious japes he played in his boyhood, and about the thrilling cricket and footer matches in which he took part. My pater was "one of the lads" in his boyhood. He has been described as "The Prince of Practical Jokers," and I reckon he deserved the title! His motto at Greyfriars was: "A jape a day keeps stagnation away!" In other words, it prevents life from becoming monotonous. Being a merry japer myself, I am following in father's footsteps!

BILLY BUNTER:

I don't know the name of my favourite Old Boy. I only know that he was no end wealthy. He turned up at the school in a Rolls-Royce, and requested me to show him round. I willingly obliged; and he not only stood me a hansom feed at the tuckshop, but gave me a "fiver" into the bargain! That partikular Old Boy will always be my first favorite!

DICK PENFOLD:

The nicest Old Boy I remember came down to Greyfriars last December. He talked about his boyhood days; he charmed us in a hundred ways. His name, I think, was Captain Davey, and he was in the British Navy. The yarns he spun were simply thrilling; the jokes he cracked were simply killing! Before he left he said: "Here, kid! Kindly accept this modest quid!" "Hurrah!" I cried. "Give me your fist! You priceless old philanthropist!" But please don't think 'twas this donation which won my glowing admiration. I liked him quite apart from that. A real good sport, I tell you flat!

VERNON-SMITH:

My favourite Old Boy is R. B. Standish. Playing cricket for Greyfriars First Eleven in 1900, he hit a ball clean over the roof of the gymnasium—a feat which has never been equalled. That is quite sufficient to make Standish a hero in my eyes. He is paying another visit to Greyfriars in the summer, and I hope to see him repeat his wonderful feat.

HURREE SINGH:

The worthy and esteemed Old Boy who stands first in my admiration is E. W. Dartforth, the greatest bowler the school has ever producefully hatched. Playing for the senior eleven against Courtfield Wanderers, in 1911, he bagfully captured all ten wickets of the opposing team at a cost of only two runs! Verily, there were some wonderful giants in the dashing days of old-fulness!

HORACE COKER:

My favourite Old Boy is Colonel Charlton, a distinguished Army officer, who often comes down to the school. The last time he was down he told me I was a jolly good motor-cyclist. And praise from such a distinguished Old Boy is praise indeed! I offered to give the colonel a lift in my side-car, but for some uneggsplained reason he declined!

DICKY NUGENT:

My favorite Old Boy is the fellow who distinguished himself in the Grate War by putting out an ammunition-dump. We always have a half-holiday every year to sellybrate this gallant feat. That's why this partikular Old Boy happens to be my favorite!

SOME FAMOUS OLD BOYS!

By GEORGE WINGATE.

GREYFRIARS, like all other public schools, can boast a large number of old scholars who have "made good" in the world's broad field of battle, and who have won fame and fortune. Seldom, indeed, do we hear of a failure. There have been a few—a mere handful—but these "black sheep" exist in every sphere of life, and there are some Old Boys who would never distinguish themselves if they lived to be as old as Methuselah. Some of my readers may remember Carberry of the Sixth, who was expelled from Greyfriars. Carberry never did any good for himself or for anybody else after leaving the school. He became a drifter—a thorough lazy, good-for-nothing waster.

But Carberry's case is an isolated one—an exception to the general rule. For every fellow who has failed, I could mention a hundred who have succeeded—who have climbed to the top of the tree by sheer merit. On our list of distinguished Old Boys we have two major-generals, several eminent statesmen, a famous explorer, an actor whose name is a household word, and a barrister-at-law who has saved many a man from the scaffold by the eloquence of his pleading.

In the world of sport we have over a score of county cricketers—amateurs—who were once at Greyfriars. We can also point to many amateur boxers and footballers who received their education at our famous Kentish school. All forms of sport are encouraged at Greyfriars; and if a fellow wants to shine in any particular department of sport—be it cricket, or swimming, or rifle-shooting—he is given every facility while at the school. Some critics of our public school system say that we give too much attention to sport and too little to study. But, personally, I believe that sport helps us in our studies. Nothing like a healthy mind in a healthy body.

Has Greyfriars produced any great airmen? The answer is in the affirmative. Much good work was accomplished during the Great War by Greyfriars Old Boys who had become pilots or observers. Some are still in the Air Force, having made aviation their profession. Whenever an aeroplane flies over the school—and sometimes we see a dozen in a day—we wonder whether the pilots happen to be Old Boys soaring over their "Aima Mater."

It is good to greet these famous Old Boys when they come to pay us a visit. I have entertained dozens of them to tea in my study, and have enjoyed their anecdotes and revelled in their reminiscences. Doubtless I have entertained a coming Prime Minister, or a second Cromwell, or a budding Dickens. Who knows? But they are all rattling good fellows, and we are all jolly proud of them.



A Double Sensation!

By TOM BROWN.

I SAY, you fellows! Famous Old Boy just arrived! Down at the gates! Buck up!"

Billy Bunter jerked out the words breathlessly. He blinked in at the open door of Study No. 1, where the Famous Five were preparing tea.

"Famous Old Boy, eh?" said Harry Wharton. "What's his name?"

"Colonel Funguss, O.B.E." "Sounds rather an ancient old joser!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Any fungus on Colonel Funguss?"

"Well, he's got plenty of face-fungus, if that's what you mean," said Billy Bunter. "A military moustache and pork-chop whiskers."

"You mean mutton-chop, surely?" chuckled Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And he's a great gorger!" said Billy Bunter impressively.

"Eh? How do you know that?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"Because he's an O.B.E. I suppose an ignorant fellow like you, Bull, wouldn't know the meaning of that. It means 'Orders Buns Everywhere.'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fat, frabjous dummy!" roared Bob Cherry. "O.B.E. stands for Order of the British Empire. It's a Government honour, you know. They used to give 'em away with a packet of tea during the war."

"It wasn't quite so bad as that, Bob," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Still, I grant you it was easier to get an O.B.E. than a V.C. Let's come and have a yarn with the old colonel."

The Famous Five hurried down to the school gates. They had rather a shock when they caught sight of the distinguished warrior. If they had expected to see a tall, upright gentleman of military bearing, they were disappointed. Colonel Funguss was small of stature—"an undersized little rat," as Johnny Bull rather bluntly expressed it. He was attired in a golfing-suit, and, like most men of diminutive stature, he looked ludicrous in "plus fours." The only thing about him that was military was his moustache. He also had side-whiskers. In fact, the colonel's face was almost obliterated by "face fungus." It resembled an overgrown garden.

"Good-afternoon, my lads!" said the colonel, in a gruff voice, as Harry Wharton & Co. came up. "And what Form might you belong to—the Second?"

Harry Wharton flushed indignantly.

"We're in the Remove, sir!" he said.

"H'm! Most unruly Form at Greyfriars, if my memory serves me correctly."

The colonel paused to survey the historic edifice of Greyfriars.

"I see the old place is still the same—every stick and stone of it, begad! Doesn't seem to have altered a scrap during the last forty years."

"Was it forty years ago when you were here, sir?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes. Quite a lifetime, isn't it? I must have a good look round the old place, after tea."

"Will you do us the honour of having tea with us, sir?" inquired Wharton.

"H'm! What have you got to eat? I'm not faddy, but I like my food to be plentiful and wholesome."

"We can get anything you like, sir, from the tuckshop," said Nugent.

"Excellent! Lead the way!" Colonel Funguss was escorted to Study

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No. 1, and the Co. made him comfortable, and waited on him hand and foot. They did not warm to their guest exactly. He had no winning ways with him—no charming personality. He was, in fact, downright rude on several occasions. He criticised Mrs. Mumble's rabbit-pie, and he belittled her buns and slandered her scones, and traduced her tarts. But it was observed that he ate them all right!

It was not until after tea that the juniors suspected that anything was wrong. And then Bob Cherry happened to notice that the colonel's mutton-chop whiskers were coming unstuck, as it were, down one side. Now, whiskers are supposed to be stationary fixtures, and when they slip their Moorings, so to speak, they cannot be real whiskers.

A gleam came into Bob Cherry's eyes. He whispered his suspicions to Harry Wharton, and at the same instant the colonel jumped up from his chair, said he would have to be going, and darted to the door. But he found the exit barred by Johnny Bull.

"Stop!" said Johnny grimly. "I believe you're an impostor!"

"Let me pass!" panted the colonel.

The next moment Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were upon him. The side-whiskers were wrenched off, likewise the military moustache; also, the false wig and the bushy

EDITORIAL!

By HARRY WHARTON.

WE never hear much about the Old Boys of Greyfriars." This is a complaint which constantly crops up in my correspondence, and which I am doing my best to remedy this week.

One naturally wonders what has become of all the hundreds of fellows who have passed through Greyfriars School at some time or another. Just as one wonders where the flies go in the winter-time, so one wonders where the Old Boys go when they have left their schooldays behind them.

Many, of course, go up to Oxford or Cambridge. Many others go into training for commissions in the Army or the Navy. Some devote themselves to the study of the law or medicine. And a few daring spirits ignore the beaten track of life, and go exploring in distant lands, living lives of adventure in the remote places of the earth. Some seek their career on the stage; and some few become "pen-pushers," or, to use a more dignified phrase, novelists. And there is a poet or two knocking around among our Old Boys. I can give proof of this, because one of them has sent me some verses for this issue.

My uncle, Colonel Wharton, was at Greyfriars in his youth. So was Major Cherry. Lots of other fellows can claim that their fathers and grand-fathers were at Greyfriars. But it is not on record that Billy Bunter's sire ever passed through these historic portals. Bunter declares with pride that his pater went to Eton. If this is true, we offer our sincere sympathies to that famous college. But it can't be true; for, as Bob Cherry humorously observes, if Bunter's pater went to Eton, he would have "Eton" them out of house and home! What a "Harrow"-ing reflection!

Good luck to all the generations of Greyfriars Old Boys, and may their shadows never grow less!

HARRY WHARTON.

eyebrows. And the Famous Five found themselves staring into the chagrined face of Dick Trumper, their rival from Courtfield County Council School!

"Spoofed!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Dishfully diddled, and japefully ragged!" groaned Hurree Singh.

"Trumper, you cheeky boulder—"

"What a nerve!"

"Bump him!"

There was short shrift for the humorous Trumper. In fact, he saw no humour whatever in the situation. He was soundly bumped on the study carpet, until every bone in his body seemed to be aching at once. And then he was shown the way out—not courteously or politely, but very forcibly, with several hefty hoofs behind him, to facilitate his exit.

The practical joker took to his heels, and he didn't stop running until he was safely off the school premises.

It was about half an hour later, when Bob Cherry, standing at the window of Study No. 1, gave a shout of sheer astonishment.

"My only aunt! That cheeky boulder Trumper has had the nerve to show up again!"

Instantly Bob's chums joined him at the window. Coming across the Close was a dapper little gentleman in "plus fours." If it wasn't the disguised Trumper, then it was his counterpart.

Harry Wharton & Co. were staggered. They had not dreamed that Dick Trumper would dare to venture into the lion's den again, after the rough handling he had received.

"He's going to try to spoof some of the other fellows," said Wharton, "but we won't give him a chance! We'll put him out on his neck!"

"Yes, rather!"

Snorting with indignation, the Famous Five hurried down into the Close. Without a word, they hurled themselves upon the dapper little gentleman, and started to whirl him towards the school gates, despite his frantic protests.

Then a window was thrown up, and the stern voice of the Head rang out.

"Wharton! Cherry! Bull! How dare you lay hands upon a respected Old Boy of this school? Release Colonel Funguss immediately!"

"But—but he's an impostor, sir!" stammered Harry Wharton.

"Nonsense!"

Bob Cherry plucked at the little man's side-whiskers, and he gave a howl of anguish. The whiskers remained intact. They were real!

Then the awful truth flashed upon the juniors that they had committed assault and battery upon the genuine Colonel Funguss!

"My only Aunt Sempronia!" groaned Bob Cherry. "We've fairly done it now!"

"I'll have you flogged black an' blue for this outrage, begad!" stormed the colonel.

But when the juniors explained that they had already been spoofed once that afternoon by a fellow masquerading as the colonel, the wrathful old warrior simmered down, and accepted their humble apologies. He also requested the Head not to punish his assailants, in the circumstances. Harry Wharton & Co., looking very sheepish, went back into the building, and Greyfriars laughed loud and long when it heard the story of the double sensation.

THE END.

[Supplement ii.]



Bunter as an Old Boy!

A Vision of the Future
By Bob Cherry.

IT was on a sunny spring morning in the year 1950, when a portly and middle-aged gentleman came puffing up to the gates of Greyfriars. He was very dusty and dishevelled, and he mopped his perspiring brow with a large handkerchief.

"At last!" he murmured. "I thought I was never going to get here!"

Out of the porter's lodge shuffled a very ancient man, leaning heavily on a pair of crutches, and with one gouty foot suspended from the ground, and swathed in bandages.

The portly and middle-aged gentleman gave a cry of recognition.

"Why, it's Gosling—dear old Gosling! I thought you would have been in your little wooden box by now, Gossy!"

"Wot I says is this 'ere," croaked the very ancient man. "I'm deaf in both hears, an' if you wants to make me 'ear you'll 'ave to beller. 'Oo are yer? An' wot do you want on these 'ere 'allowed presinks?"

The middle-aged gentleman went up close, and bawled into the porter's ear:

"I'm Bunter—Billy Bunter! Don't you remember me, Gossy?"

"My heye!" gasped Gosling. "Fancy you turnin' up after all these years, like a bad penny! 'Ow did you get 'ere?"

"Hoofed it, most of the way!" grumbled Billy Bunter. "I tried to travel by train, without a ticket; but they spotted me at Sevenoaks, and kicked me out of the carriage. I've had to walk all the way from there, and I'm jolly peckish, I can tell you! Does Mrs. Mimble still keep the tuckshop?"

"She do."

"And does she still make nice jammy doughnuts, and delicious cream buns?"

"She do."

"And does she conduct her business on credit?"

"She don't!"

Billy Bunter made a wry face at this. But he was determined to try his luck. Perhaps, for old times' sake, Mrs. Mimble would unbend to the extent of letting him have a jolly good feed "on tick."

Billy Bunter recognised the dame when he saw her. The onward march of Father Time had changed her appearance considerably. She was very, very old, and she seemed to have shrivelled and shrunk. She blinked at Billy Bunter through a pair of enormous spectacles.

Bunter lifted his somewhat battered hat. "Hallo, Mrs. Mimble! It's good to see your cheery old dial again, after all these years. You seem rather fogged as to who I am. Switch your memory back twenty-five years or so, and my identity may dawn on you."

"Lor', bless me! It's—it's Master Bunter, growned up!" gasped the old dame.

Billy Bunter nodded and smiled.

"It's me, right enough," he said ungrammatically.

"Why, I thought you would have gone off pop long ago, through over-eatin'!" said Mrs. Mimble.

"Not me, ma'am! My recipe for a long life is to have half-a-dozen meals a day, and plenty of snacks between times. Keeps the old engine going, you see," explained Bunter, tapping his heart.

He paused, and surveyed the laden dishes on the counter.

"Jolly nice doughnuts, ma'am!" he remarked. "Your hand has lost none of its cunning, I can see. These jam-tarts look simply delicious, too. They'll fairly melt in the mouth."

Supplement iii.]

"Not in your mouth, Mr. Bunter—unless you pay for 'em!" said Dame Mimble, in the firm manner which Billy Bunter knew of old.

"Oh, really! I'll pay for them all right, ma'am, as soon as my postal-order arrives."

"My goodness!" gasped Mrs. Mimble. "Is it the same postal-order you were expectin' when you were a boy at Greyfriars?"

"Oh, no!" said Billy Bunter loftily. "I've had hundreds of postal-orders since I left school. In fact, I've had so many that it wasn't worth the fag of cashing 'em! But just at the present moment I happen to be on the rocks. So if you'd be good enough, ma'am, to serve me now, and let me settle up later—"

But Dame Mimble pointed out, as she had often pointed out of yore, that her establishment was a tuckshop, not a tickshop.

However, help was at hand. There was a sudden stampede in the doorway of the tuckshop. The members of the Remove Form had just been dismissed from morning school, and the tuckshop was always their first port of call, when they were in funds.

"Hallo!" ejaculated Dick Barton, the captain of the Remove. "Who have we got here?"

"A distinguished Old Boy!" said Billy Bunter, puffing out his chest with pride.

"My hat!"

"Ever heard of William George Bunter, my boy?"

"Yes, rather!" said Barton. "They've handed his name down from generation to generation. He was the fattest fellow Greyfriars ever had, and the biggest sucak, spy, and glutton into the bargain!"

Billy Bunter went purple.

"Be very careful, my lad! You are taking my name in vain. Surely you have heard that W. G. Bunter was a wonderful sportsman—the greatest cricketer who ever cricked, and the greatest footballer who ever footed?"

Dick Barton shook his head.

"No; but we've heard you were the greatest glutton who ever gutted!" he said.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter wagged a plump forefinger admonishingly at the laughing juniors.

"Cheeky young beggars!" he snorted. "You deserve to be reported to the Head, for insulting such a talented and distinguished Old Boy. But I'll overlook your impertinence on condition you stand me a jolly good feed, here and now!"

The good-natured Removites promptly rose to the occasion, and Billy Bunter perched himself on a stool—the identical stool on which he had often sat, in the days of long ago—and was regaled with cakes and tarts and buns. He was permitted to eat as much as he could, without stint or limit. And the juniors stood spellbound at the enormity of his appetite. Dish after dish was cleared of its contents with amazing rapidity.

"By Jove, what a trencherman!" gasped one of the juniors.

"No doubt about this being the genuine Billy Bunter!" said another.

"Is he going on for ever, like the brook?" queried a third.

Billy Bunter's gastronomic feats fairly staggered the juniors. "And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew."

But even Bunter was finished at last, and it was a wonder the stool didn't collapse beneath him.

"Thanks awfully, you kids!" he said, rolling off his perch. "I've done famously!"

"I should say you had!" said Dick Barton. "You won't want another meal for about a fortnight!"

"Rubbish! I hope to have late dinner with Mr. Quelch this evening. He is still here, I take it?"

"Yes; but he'll soon be retiring," said Barton. "He's ripe for his Old Age Pension."

"Dear old Quelch!" said Bunter, with a sigh. "He always had a warm corner in his heart for me. You see, I was his favourite pupil—the apple of his eye, so to speak."

"He told us quite another story," said Barton. "Only the other day, when he was talking about old times, he said: 'William Bunter was the most refractory pupil I ever had. He used to eat in the Form-room, and sleep in the Form-room, but he never by any chance did any work in the Form-room!'"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's a gross slander!" said Billy Bunter indignantly. "I shall ask old Quelch what he means by it."

The portly Old Boy rolled away to Mr. Quelch's study. He found the Remove-master working at a very battered and ancient typewriter.

The Remove master had altered out of all knowledge. The briskness and alertness which had characterised him in the old days were now absent. He felt old, and he looked old. He had, in fact, cultivated a beard.

"Hallo, sir!" said Billy Bunter, rolling into the study. "Still going strong with your 'History of Greyfriars,' I see."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, tottering to his feet. "It is Bunter! And still as substantial as ever! How are you, after this long interval of time?"

"Oh, I'm all right," said Bunter. "I've climbed to the top of the tree, and I'm a very substantial man now—financially, as well as physically. I have a large balance at the bank."

Billy Bunter discreetly refrained from pointing out that it was a debit balance, and that he had overdrawn his account!

"I am delighted to hear of your success, my dear Bunter," said Mr. Quelch. "I never dared to hope that you would make a success of your life."

"Oh, really, sir! You remember that penknife you gave me, on the day I left Greyfriars? Well, I carved out my career with it."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"You will stay to dinner, Bunter, I hope?"

He hoped nothing of the sort, but he had to appear polite.

"Oh, yes! That's what I came along for," said Bunter frankly. "It's a treat to see my old Form master; but it's a bigger treat to see a well-laden table. By the way, I've got a bone to pick with you, Mr. Quelch. You've been telling the kids that I was an awful bouncer in my youth."

"I merely told them the truth," said Mr. Quelch mildly.

"Oh, really! Well, I won't quarrel with you now, or you might change your mind about letting me stop to dinner."

Billy Bunter made himself comfortable in Mr. Quelch's armchair. In due course dinner was served, and, despite his tremendous orgy at the tuckshop, Bunter did full justice to it. And then, having borrowed five shillings from Mr. Quelch—to be repaid when his postal-order arrived—Billy Bunter bade a fond farewell to Greyfriars!

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THE PLUNDERED SCHOOL!

(Continued from page 12.)

"Top of the morning!" he said cheerfully.

"Good - morning, Mr. Chester!" chanted the Co. in chorus.

The Old Boy fell into step with the juniors.

"Grand day for the match," he remarked. "I'm beginning to feel quite excited! There's only one thing that takes the gilt off the gingerbread, and that's this beastly burglary."

"I hear you've had a valuable tiepin stolen," said Harry Wharton.

"Yes. And if ever I come to close quarters with the thief it will go hard with him!" said the Old Boy grimly.

"That tiepin was a very special gift from my mater."

"Oh!"

"What wretched luck!" said Nugent sympathetically.

"I'm not the only victim to be consoled with," said Dick Chester. "I understand that your Games Fund box has been rifled."

"Only too true," said Wharton.

"I'm very distressed about that. It was a beastly, low-down trick! How much had you in the box?"

"A matter of eight pounds," said the captain of the Remove. "All the footer subscriptions had just been paid, you see."

Dick Chester gave a low whistle.

"Your footer-club can ill afford to lose such a sum," he said. "I wonder if you would allow me to make good your losses to a certain extent? If a fiver would be any use, to start afresh with the junior funds, just say the word."

"That's awfully decent of you, Mr. Chester!" said Harry Wharton, speaking with some emotion. "But—but I don't think we ought to impose on your generosity to that extent."

"Nonsense!"

The Old Boy produced a wallet from his breast-pocket, and extracted a five-pound note. He handed it to Wharton, but the captain of the Remove shook his head.

"I really don't feel justified in taking it, Mr. Chester," he said. "But I'm awfully grateful to you for your offer—in fact, we all are."

"Our gratitude, kind sahib, cannot be expressfully put into words!" said Hurree Singh.

Dick Chester smiled, and replaced the banknote in the wallet.

"As you wish," he said. "I sincerely hope that even now it is not too late for the plunder to be recovered. The police are investigating the matter, and at any moment there may be developments."

But the Famous Five had little faith in the abilities of the local police. They visualised the portly P.-c. Tozer ambling about aimlessly in quest of the burglar; and they sighed.

After taking a few turns up and down the Close, Dick Chester nodded cheerfully to the juniors, and departed. He had not been gone many minutes when the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell appeared on the scene.

The genial skipper of the Old Boys' eleven looked anything but genial now. His hands were thrust moodily into his pockets, and there was a frown on his face. Harry Wharton & Co. attributed this to the fact that the Honourable Jimmy's gold watch had been stolen.

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But it was not on that account that the Old Boy was frowning.

"Good-morning!" he said gloomily. "Could I trouble one of you to pop down to the post-office for me and dispatch a telegram?"

"No trouble at all, sir," said Wharton readily. "We'll all go."

"Thanks! I'll scribble out the wire now."

"Nothing wrong, sir, I hope?" ventured Bob Cherry.

The Honourable Jimmy looked glum as he scribbled on the fly-leaf of his pocket-book.

"One of our men has been called away," he explained. "Illness in the family. It's Sylvester, too—one of our best players. I'm wiring to Captain Westbrook—an Old Boy who was here in Dick Chester's time—to come and fill the breach. The probabilities are that he won't be able to get away at such short notice. Anyway, I'll send the wire an' hope for the best."

Having written the message, the Honourable Jimmy tore out the fly-leaf and handed it to Harry Wharton. And the Famous Five set off at once on their mission.

It was a very urgent "S.O.S." call that the Honourable Jimmy had sent out.

"Westbrook, United Services Club, London.—Man short. Desperately in need of substitute. Do come if humanly possible. "MAXWELL."

That telegram was dispatched at the earliest possible moment. But the morning was well advanced now, and it would take Captain Westbrook all his time to get down to Greyfriars in his car. Besides, the wire was addressed to his club, and he might not be there!

However, the Honourable Jimmy was hoping for the best. So were Harry Wharton & Co. They wanted to see a thrilling match, with a close finish; and if the Old Boys had only ten men they would be severely handicapped. And it was an unwritten law that no present Greyfriars fellow could play as substitute in an Old Boys' eleven.

"I hope to see Captain Westbrook turn up in time for the kick-off," said Harry Wharton.

"If he doesn't, I'm afraid it will mean a licking for the Old Boys," said Johnny Bull.

And Hurree Singh remarked that the lickfulness of the esteemed and worthy Old Boys would be terrific!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Match—and the Bombshell!

AFTER dinner all roads led to Big Side.

Seniors and juniors and fags flocked down to the ground, followed at a more sedate and leisurely pace by the Head and the masters.

The atmosphere was electric with excitement. Even the amazing affair of the burglary was banished from everybody's mind for the time being.

As Bob Cherry remarked, there was only one question worth debating at that moment: "Would the Present pulverise the Past, or would the Past put it across the Present?"

In the visitors' dressing-room the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell was pacing to and fro in great agitation.

"I was hopin' our substitute would be here by now," he said.

"Have you sent for somebody to come and play in Sylvester's place?" asked Dick Chester.

"Yes. I'm expecting him to arrive at any moment. If he doesn't turn up in time for the kick-off we shall have to start with only ten men."

"Oh, help! Rotten luck, Sylvester being called away like that!"

The Honourable Jimmy nodded, and contracted his brows. Occasionally he halted at the little window of the dressing-room, and gazed across the playing-fields to the long white road which stretched in the distance. He hoped to see Captain Westbrook's car come whizzing into view.

But the minutes passed, and the substitute did not arrive. The countenance of the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell grew more and more doleful. He had set his heart on winning this match, but he despaired of doing so with only ten men. Confound that fellow Westbrook! Why didn't he get a move on? The irony of it was they used to call Westbrook "The Hustler" when he was a boy at Greyfriars, because he was such an energetic, go-ahead sort of fellow. Great pity he couldn't hustle a bit now, reflected the Honourable Jimmy.

The time for the kick-off came—and went. Around the ropes all Greyfriars was congregated. But neither the Past nor the Present team had yet taken the field.

Wingate of the Sixth, clad in speckless jersey and spotless shorts, put his head in at the window of the Old Boys' dressing-room.

"Your man not arrived yet, Mr. Maxwell?" he asked.

"No. He was wired for, an' if he started away on receipt of the telegram he ought to be here by now. I wonder if we dare postpone the start for five minutes?"

"Oh, yes, that'll be all serene!" said Wingate cheerfully. "We'll wait. The crowd will get a bit restless, but that can't be helped."

The five minutes ripened into ten, and the ten into a quarter of an hour. And still the substitute had not arrived.

It was impossible to delay the start of the match any longer. The crowd had grown feverishly impatient. They were demanding, in no uncertain voice, the appearance of the players.

"We'd better sally forth to the fray," said the Honourable Jimmy, with a sigh. And he led his men on to the field.

A mighty cheer greeted the appearance of the Old Boys. And Harry Wharton & Co. put in a special cheer for Dick Chester. The popular Old Boy was attired in black shorts and a white sweater, which had the Greyfriars colours interwoven in the form of a triangle at the chest.

"Hurrah!"

"Play up, the Boys of the Old Brigade!"

"Pile in, the ten men!"

The applause, however, was mild by contrast with the deafening roar which greeted George Wingate and his merry men.

Wingate had got together a very strong team, sound in all departments. Hammersley was to keep goal, Walker and Tom North were the backs. There was a very strong intermediate line, and Wingate, Gwynne, and Faulkner were among the forwards. It was a team that would take some whacking.

"Greyfriars! Greyfriars!" rose the shout.

"Good old Wingate!"

"Pile up the merry goals!"

Mr. Larry Lascelles, the mathematics master, was in charge of the game. He shook hands with the rival captains in the centre of the field. Then a coin was spun.

The Honourable Jimmy Maxwell made a wry face when he found that he had lost the toss.

"It never rains but it pours," he said. "First we're a man short, then we go and lose the toss. I suppose you're goin' to set us to face this hurricane?"

"Exactly!" said Wingate, with a grin.

It was not really a hurricane that swept down the ground, but it was a very strong wind from the sea, and it would handicap the Old Boys to a considerable extent.

Mr. Lascelles blew his whistle, and the ball was set in motion.

In the first minute the school attacked. Swinging the ball from wing to wing, they made ground rapidly. Eventually the ball was returned to Wingate in the centre, and he fired in a fast first-time shot.

But Dick Chester was ready. He was upon the leather with the spring of a panther. He grabbed it, bounced it as he stepped forward, and then punted it up the field.

"Well cleared, sir!"

"And he said he had gone off!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Why, he's as good a goalie as ever!"

"It will have to be a very good shot to beatfully baffle the worthy Chester!" said Hurree Singh.

"Yes, rather!"

There was a short spell of mid-field play, and then the school forwards swarmed to the attack again.

Dick Chester was literally bombarded with shots, but he never lost his head or his judgment. Time and again it was Chester alone who stood between the school forwards and their objective. He gave a masterly exhibition of goalkeeping. Shots were rained in upon him from all angles, but he kept his citadel intact. A flashing drive from Wingate looked as if it would beat him all ends up, but he dived low and cleverly diverted the ball round the post.

A corner-kick followed, and Gwynne lobbed the leather to alight just in front of the goal. Wingate's head and Dick Chester's fist went for the ball simultaneously. But the Old Boy got there first, and punched clear.

And so the grim duel went on—a duel between the Greyfriars forwards and the Old Boys' defence.

Wingate & Co. were "all over" their opponents, and they did everything but score. Had an ordinary goalkeeper been opposed to them, they must have been two or three goals up at the interval. But Dick Chester was no ordinary goalkeeper. He knew his job, and he was equal to every emergency. And if he had a stroke of luck occasionally, who could begrudge him it? He deserved to have all the luck that was going, because of the truly great game he was playing.

Half-time came, and neither set of forwards had found the net. The Old Boys had never looked like finding it. Their forwards, disorganised by being a man short, had never been able to get going.

During the "breather" the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell strolled up to Dick Chester.

"Dear man, you're our salvation!" he said. "But for you we should be in Queer Street, or some equally undesirable thoroughfare. You don't appear to have forgotten the art of goalkeepin'. Your hand has lost none of its cunning."

Dick Chester laughed breathlessly. "I've been lucky," he averred. "It's too much to hope that I shall go through the second half without being beaten.

But I shall do my best, of course. By the way, what's happened to our eleventh man?"

"Ask me another!" said the Honourable Jimmy. "His car turned turtle in a ditch, I expect; or p'raps he tried to get here by aeroplane, an' somethin' went wrong with the works."

"Do I know the fellow you've sent for?"

"Yes; he was here in your time. In fact, I believe you were great pals at school."

"What's his name?"

Before the Honourable Jimmy could reply to that question he was called away by Mr. Lascelles. And Dick Chester had no chance to pursue the topic.

The game was resumed at a great pace. Now that they had the wind in their favour the Old Boys were more in the picture. Their forwards got within shooting distance on several occasions, but Hammersley held the fort in capital style.

The crowd round the ropes was hungering for a goal. And presently they had their hearts' desire.

The school forwards broke away, and Gwynne put across one of his delightful centres. Faulkner fired in a fierce shot, which Dick Chester pushed out. But he could do nothing more than push the ball to the foot of Wingate. And the Greyfriars skipper banged the ball into the corner of the net with a shot that no custodian in the world would have saved.

"Goal!"

"Hurrah!"

"Old Wingate has scored at last!" chortled Bob Cherry. "I had a feeling

in my bones that he'd work the oracle sooner or later!"

The spectators were highly elated. Caps went whirling in the air, and the applause was deafening.

But it was short-lived, for within a minute the Old Boys had equalised.

The Honourable Jimmy Maxwell, leading his forwards after the manner of an officer leading his men "over the top," gathered up a pass from the right wing, and shot with all his force.

Hammersley of the Sixth rolled over in the mud in a frantic attempt to clutch the leather, but the ball crashed past him into the net.

"Goal!"

"All square!" said Harry Wharton. "We shall see a rare tussle now!"

And they did! From that time onwards the game was packed with thrills.

Both goals had narrow escapes, but both survived—until the very last minute. And then Wingate rallied his men for a last desperate onslaught upon the Old Boys' goal. Dick Chester fisted out a couple of shots in quick succession. Then he rushed out—in order to take the ball from the very toes of Faulkner. But the tall Sixth-Former was too quick for him. He smartly side-stopped, and then the ball came red-hot from his boot and whizzed into the net.

It was the winning goal. A sternly-contested game had ended in a victory for the Present over the Past by the



Gwynne lobbed the leather to alight just in front of goal. Wingate's head and Dick Chester's fist went for the ball simultaneously. But the Old Boy got there first and punched clear. "Good save, sir!" roared the juniors. "Played, sir!" (See Chapter 9.)

narrowest possible margin. And the air was rent by cheering.

The Old Boys were not disgraced by their defeat. They had played gamely enough, and with a full team in the field they would probably have saved the game. On the other hand, but for the brilliant goalkeeping of Dick Chester the school would have won by a much bigger margin.

Muddy and leg-weary, the twenty-one players retired to the dressing-rooms, while the multitude shouted itself hoarse.

"A great game, by gad!" panted the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell. "If only our substitute had turned up—Why, by the Lord Harry, here he is!"

All eyes were turned towards the entrance to Big Side, where a smart two-seater had just drawn up.

A tall man of military appearance jumped out of the car, and hurried with long strides towards the Old Boys' dressing-room. The Honourable Jimmy Maxwell greeted him from the doorway.

"Why, Westbrook! You're exactly ninety minutes late, dear man. The game's over an' won!"

"Awfully sorry, Jimmy!" panted the captain. "I had engine trouble on the road, and was hung up the dickens of a time before I could get going. I hoped to be in at the death, but I see the game's over. Who won?"

"School," said the Honourable Jimmy tersely. "Two goals to one. We shouldn't have got off so lightly, but for the glorious goalkeepin' of Dick Chester."

Captain Westbrook gave a violent start.

"Eh? Whom did you say?"

"Dick Chester—the fellow who used to keep goal for Greyfriars in the old days. He came down with the team, you know."

"The dickens he did!" ejaculated the captain. "Then he must have come in spirit, and not in flesh and blood!"

"Gad! What makes you say that, Westbrook?"

The captain's reply was heard by everybody in the dressing-room. And it came as a bombshell to the Old Boys.

"Dick Chester is dead. He was killed in action during the second battle of the Somme!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Brought to Book!

"DICK CHESTER—killed in action!"

The Honourable Jimmy Maxwell muttered the words blankly, like a man in a dream.

"It—it can't be so!" he added.

"But it is so!" persisted Captain Westbrook. "As a fellow-officer of poor old Chester, you must give me the credit of knowing the facts. I was with him at the last. In fact, I had the grim duty of conveying his dying wishes to his relatives. I don't believe the Greyfriars authorities knew that Chester had been killed. He was reported wounded and missing, and the report was never amended."

The Honourable Jimmy stood thunder-struck.

If Dick Chester was indeed dead—and the captain's statements clearly showed that he was—who was this man who had come down to the school in Chester's name? Was it an amazing masquerade? Was the man an impostor, personating a popular Old Boy who had been killed in the War?

Incredible! Surely the whole school, and the Old Boys into the bargain, had not been deceived by a colossal piece of bluff?

There was a look of utter stupefaction on the face of the Honourable Jimmy. He turned again to Captain Westbrook.

"Had Dick Chester any brothers?" he asked.

"No."

"Had he a namesake in the school at any time?"

"No."

"Then—then this fellow who came here calling himself Chester is an impostor, by gad!"

"That is quite obvious," said Captain Westbrook grimly. "Where is the fellow? In here?"

Even as the captain spoke one of the footballers, wearing a raincoat over his football attire, and a thick muffler around his neck, attempted to pass out of the dressing-room. He tried to dart past the two Old Boys, who had been conversing in the doorway, but Captain Westbrook was too quick for him.

"Stop!" he thundered.

And his iron grasp fell upon the shoulder of the would-be renegade.

Then the light of recognition gleamed in the captain's eyes.

"Why, it's that scoundrel Cunningham! What are you doing at Greyfriars, you rascal?"

"Let me go!" snarled the other fiercely.

But Captain Westbrook was a powerful man, and he held his quarry safe.

"Gentlemen," he said, surveying the circle of astonished faces, "I regret to inform you that you have been the victims of a dastardly deception. This man is not Dick Chester. His name is Cunningham. He is a waster of the worst type. I don't know what his motive was in coming here in the name of Dick Chester; but you may depend upon it it was no honourable motive."

Instantly there was a startled exclamation from several of the Old Boys.

"The robbery!"

"That's it!" said the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell excitedly. "The school was plundered last night, Westbrook, and this villain must have had a hand in it!"

The captain nodded grimly.

"I don't doubt that for a moment," he said. "Cunningham has already been convicted for robbery."

"But how did he get to know about Dick Chester?" asked one of the Old Boys.

"And where did he pick up his knowledge of Greyfriars?" asked another.

"That is easily explained," said the captain. "During the War Cunningham served as Dick Chester's batman. But he was something more than a mere servant. He enjoyed Dick Chester's confidence, and had a close insight into his private affairs. They often talked about Greyfriars, and Cunningham used to read the school magazine when it was sent out to Chester. So you can see how he gained his knowledge of the place. It was a comparatively simple matter for him to come here posing as Dick Chester. In the first place, none of you fellows were here in Chester's time, and would therefore not recognise Cunningham as an impostor. Some of the masters would have remembered the genuine Chester; but a fellow alters a good deal in twelve years, so they would not have suspected that anything was wrong."

"Well, it's dashed fortunate that I sent you that telegram, Westbrook!" said the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell. "If you hadn't turned up, this precious scoundrel would have got clear away."

"I doubt it," said the captain quietly. "His number would have been up, in any case. Here come the police!"

A police-inspector, accompanied by a stout sergeant, was approaching the dressing-room. At the sight of them Cunningham turned pale, and clenched his hands until the knuckles stood out

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"GEM" EARLY!

sharp and white. He knew that the end had come, but he made no comment.

The police-officers halted at the entrance to the dressing-room.

"Sorry to intrude, gentlemen," said the inspector, "but I have a warrant for the arrest of a man named Mark Cunningham."

"Here's your man!" said Captain Westbrook.

And the next moment the handcuffs clicked on the wrists of the captive.

"Is that the man who engineered the raid on the school last night?" inquired the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell.

"It is, sir," said the inspector.

"How did you find out?"

"Cunningham had a confederate, who has given him away," was the reply. "It was the confederate who removed the stolen property—by car. He was apprehended at Burchester for exceeding the speed limit, and then the plunder was discovered in the car. We assumed, of course, that the man had carried out the burglary himself; and he is to be brought up before the magistrates on Monday morning. He refused to make any sort of statement until this afternoon, when he informed us that he was merely the catspaw of this man Cunningham. He declares that it was Cunningham who actually carried out the thefts."

"Thereby hoping to save his own skin!" snarled Cunningham. "Well, the game's up, and I've nothing more to say. But I don't want to hang about here. You can shunt me off as soon as you like!"

Cunningham's wish was promptly gratified. He was "shunted off" there and then. He was marched down to the school gates by the two officers of the law. There was one on either side of him; and, like Eugene Aram of old, "he walked between, with gyves upon his wrists."

Harry Wharton & Co. had witnessed that dramatic arrest from a distance. They could not understand it—could not make head nor tail of it.

"Dick Chester arrested!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Good heavens!"

"What on earth is wrong?" muttered Nugent.

"It must be a ghastly mistake!" said Bob Cherry.

As the procession passed the juniors Harry Wharton ran forward.

"Mr. Chester! What is wrong? Why have they arrested you?"

The impostor dared not meet the frank, inquiring gaze of the captain of the Remove. He lowered his eyes and said no word. And the procession passed on to the school gates.

Harry Wharton & Co. were utterly bewildered. But they understood later, when the truth was made known to them by the Honourable Jimmy Maxwell.

It was a great blow to the chums of the Remove. They had become warmly attached to "Dick Chester," and had not for one moment dreamed that Greyfriars had been harbouring an impostor and a plunderer.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Billy Bunter. "I knew the fellow was a crook the moment he set foot in the school. That's why I declined to have tea with him in your study, Wharton, old chap. You should—Yarooop! Ow-wow! Stop it, you beast!"

Bunter's remarks ended in a howl as Wharton brought his foot into play upon the fat junior's nether garments. Wharton had little time or sympathy at that



"Stop!" thundered Captain Westbrook, gripping the footballer by the shoulder. "Why, it's that scoundrel Cunningham! What are you doing at Greyfriars, you rascal?" "Let me go!" snarled the other. But Captain Westbrook held his quarry safe. "Gentlemen," he said, "I regret to inform you that you have been the victims of a dastardly deception. This man is not Dick Chester!"
(See Chapter 10.)

moment to expend on the fat and fatuous Billy.

"Well, this is a giddy knock-out, and no mistake!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "I hadn't the slightest suspicion that the fellow was playing a part. I thought he was a real good sort."

"Same here," said Harry Wharton. "To give the scoundrel his due he had a most charming way with him!"

"He was jolly cute, too!" said Nugent. "Fancy offering us a fiver to start the Games Fund afresh, after he had rifled the box overnight!"

"He pretended he had had a valuable tiepin stolen, too," said Johnny Bull. "He was jolly deep, and no error! But he was bowled out at the finish, and he deserves all he gets. It was a frightfully low-down trick to impersonate an Old Boy who was killed in the War."

"Yes, rather!"

It took Harry Wharton & Co. quite a long time to recover from that rude shock. And for many days afterwards the main topic of conversation, in study and dormitory, was the amazing masquerade of Mark Cunningham, who had caused such an upheaval during his twenty-four-hour visit to The Plundered School!

THE END.

(Don't miss next Monday's grand extra-long story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, entitled "INKY'S PERIL!"—Mr. Frank Richards at his best.)

Number Four.

The citizen of the purple countenance strode ominously into the front office of the country newspaper.

"Where's the editor?" he shouted.

"Do you want to see him personally?" queried the office-boy calmly.

"Of course I do!" roared the caller. "I'm going to thrash him within an inch of his life!"

"Oh, that's all right!" replied the boy coolly. "Just take a seat, please, will you? There are three others ahead of you. If you watch, you'll see 'em come through the window one by one. Count 'em, and when the third comes down, you can go up!"

Done Brown.

It was a stewpot morning on August 1st, and Brown, the junior clerk at Swotson & Swotson's, was feeling sticky. Suddenly the voice of Swotson senior floated to him across the room:

"Brown, you may take a month off!"

It was too much for him. Seizing his penholder in one hand and his ruler in the other, he danced a war-dance on the office floor.

"Brown," roared Swotson, "are you crazy?"

"No, sir—no, sir!" sang Brown. "But you did say a month, did you not?"

"Certainly, that is what I said! To-day is the first of the month, and last month's calendar remains upon your desk. Take last month off, Brown, my boy—take last month off!"

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A SHORT COMPLETE STORY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN MOUNTED POLICE!



THE SECRET OF DOOM FARM!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Foxy Hearst's Cunning.

"ILLEGAL diamond buying? I thought all that sort of thing was out of date!" observed Dick Mansel, in surprise.

Maurice Hilton laughed.

"Shows what a greenhorn you are, old chap! There's as much secret trading in stones as ever, and the more dodges we unearth the more the beggars invent."

"Suspect anyone in particular?" inquired Mansel.

Hilton glanced round cautiously, for the two young police troopers were sitting on the veranda of the Trek Hotel. He lowered his voice.

"Yes, we're dead sure of the chap. Trouble is, we can't get proof. Old Gregg, the inspector, gave us the mischief of a rowing yesterday."

At that moment a square-built, well-dressed man came walking quietly down the street. Mansel saw Hilton start slightly as his eyes fell upon him. The man looked up, saw the troopers, and waved a smiling greeting, calling out in a patronising tone:

"Good-morning, Mr. Hilton!"

"Good-morning!" returned Hilton gruffly. And then, as the other passed on: "The cheek of the brute!" he muttered angrily.

Mansel stared.

"Talk of the devil!" growled Hilton. "That's the chap himself, John Hearst—Foxy Hearst we call him. He's been at the game for a year or more, and how he gets the stones away, Heaven only knows. It's this way," he continued, after a pause. "Hearst lives at Doom Farm, two miles out of town. Nice little place all his own. He has an office in town here where he plays at being a land agent. But that's only to mask his real business. Not a good stone is stolen by a Kafir but it reaches his hands, and somehow or other he sends 'em down country. We've done all we know—watched his office and arrested and searched niggers leaving it, watched his house and bribed his servants. All no good. The fellow grins in his sleeve, and practically defies us."

"Ever searched him?" suggested Mansel, after a pause.

"Can't do that without a warrant. And we can't get a warrant on mere suspicion." Mansel smiled.

"I wouldn't worry about a warrant."

"What do you mean?" muttered Hilton sharply.

"What time does he go home at night?"

"Pretty late, as a rule. Usually dines in town," replied Hilton.

"It's dark by seven these nights," suggested the other significantly.

Hilton started.

"You mean—"

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"Exactly. You understand. There's a plantation by the road, isn't there?"

At half-past eight that evening Foxy Hearst, walking back to Doom Farm, was suddenly set upon by two burly tramps. He laid out with his stick, but was disarmed before he could do any damage. Next instant a cloth was flung over his head, and he was quickly dragged into the bushes, where he was bound, gagged, and chloroformed.

As soon as he was quite insensible, his captors went through his clothes with professional expertness, but to their disgust found absolutely nothing incriminating.

"There'll be a secret pocket somewhere," muttered the taller of the two seeming tramps, who was none other than Dick Mansel. "Here, let me look!"

"Quick, he's coming to!" whispered the other.

"Pull the coat off him," answered Mansel. Hilton did so, and just as Hearst began to stir the two vanished in the gloom, carrying the coat with them.

Arrived at the barracks, the two troopers spread out the garment—a long-skirted morning coat—and searched it thoroughly. Suddenly Hilton uttered an exclamation. He had found a pocket cleverly concealed in the lining. He turned it inside out.

"No luck!" growled Mansel.

Save for a few small downy feathers the pocket was absolutely empty.

A week later Dick Mansel found his chum one evening sitting in his room looking worried and grim to the last degree.

"What's up?" he asked.

"Only Gregg swears he'll send me up country next week," answered Hilton despairingly. "That'll mean loss of promotion for a certainty."

"The Hearst business?" inquired Mansel, who, being a newcomer, was not actively concerned in the I. D. B. inquiry.

"Of course!" was the reply.

Mansel considered a while.

"Have you ever thought of searching the fellow's house?" he suggested at last.

"No use," answered the other. "He has two servants there in the day, and at night a big mastiff prowls round the yard and outbuildings."

"Bit of doctored meat would settle the dog for the time," suggested Mansel. "Then you might get in and have a look round. It's risky, but I jolly well think it's worth it."

"I'm game to try," answered the other fiercely. "Anything's better than being buried up in Basutoland."

Mansel volunteered to help Hilton in his desperate enterprise, but this the latter flatly refused. So Mansel had to content himself with procuring the drugged meat for his friend. Hilton, a lover of animals, stipulated that the bait should not be poisoned, but merely inoculated with a sleeping drug.

Soon after twelve next night, Hilton, in his tramp disguise, reached Doom Farm. All was dark, not a light showing from any window. He crept up on tiptoe to the wall, and quietly pitched his pieces of doctored meat over the wall which surrounded the whole place. As the first fell he heard a deep growl. But presently a cracking of bone between powerful jaws told him that his ruse had succeeded. He waited ten minutes, then scaled the high mud wall, and dropped gingerly on the other side.

Of the dog there was no sign. Hilton approached the house, and after a complete circuit, decided that the back door offered the best chance of getting in. He went to work with a skeleton key, and in three minutes was inside the house.

So far all had worked like a charm. Hilton had never expected anything half so easy. He drew a deep breath, and on tiptoe crept through the kitchen into a front room. He turned on the light of a tiny electric lamp, and surveyed his surroundings. He found himself in the dining-room, so switched out his light, crossed the hall, and tried the opposite room. Ah, this was what he was looking for! It was half sitting-room, half study, most comfortably furnished, and contained a large writing-desk and a small iron safe.

Hilton decided to try the desk first. He had plenty of keys, and very soon the top drawer yielded to his burglarious efforts.

EXTRA LONG

Story of Harry Wharton & Co.
of Greyfriars appears in next
Monday's issue of the

MAGNET

with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh
as the central figure. Make a
note of the title—"INKY'S
PERIL"—and order a copy of
your favourite paper at once.

You'll vote this latest effort
from the pen of Mr. Frank
Richards a tophole

YARN!

Packets of letters filled it, but there was no sign of diamonds. A second and a third gave the same results. In spite of his intense anxiety to get evidence against the clever thief, Hilton could not bring himself to read the letters. It should be diamonds or nothing, he vowed to himself; and even as he made the vow he flushed hotly with shame that he, Maurice Hilton, should be driven to play the part of midnight thief.

Yet the excitement of the search grew upon him. He opened a fourth drawer, and was rapidly rummaging through it, when his ears, strained to catch the slightest sound, detected a board creak outside the door. He sprang up, listening with all his might.

The newcomer was rapidly approaching the door. The young trooper stared wildly round for means of escape. Ah, the window! He flung it open, and just as the door burst open sprang wildly out into the black night, and, dropping in a flower-bed, ran with all his might for the wall.

In his hurry he ran bang into it, jumped, and tried to reach the top with his fingers. With a groan he realised that it was higher here than where he had first climbed it. Before he could make a second attempt, he heard his pursuer spring from the window and come dashing across the grass. Doubling, he tore along the foot of the wall.

A pistol cracked, but the bullet flew high. Lights sprang up in the windows.

"After him, Bruno!" roared a man's voice.

Hilton only hoped to Heaven that Bruno was still asleep.

Hearst was too close to give him another chance at the wall, and lights were already appearing in the compound. With the courage of despair, Hilton turned off sharply and made for the outbuildings at the back. He had a vague idea of reaching the roof, and so finding a way out of the place.

The darkness was intense, and, unable to see where he was going, the young fellow suddenly found himself inside a large shed. Now he was trapped in very truth.

Shouts rang out; he saw the gleam of a lantern. Another man had joined Hearst. It was all up. And then, just when hope was dead, his outstretched hands touched a ladder, and in a flash Hilton was up it and safe for the moment in a large loft.

The place was full of hay, and it was but a moment's work for Hilton to dive into it head foremost and burrow his way deep into the soft, sweet-smelling mass.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. A Stern Chase.

THE noise of pursuit swept by. "Where did he go—over the wall?" shouted an angry voice. "I tink so, Baas," replied the Kafir's deep bellow.

"Go round by the gate, then." The sounds died away. Hilton breathed more freely. But presently back they came, and, to his horror, Hearst's voice was heard below.

"Sam, I believe he's in the outbuildings. Go up to the loft and take a look round."

Bare feet padded up the ladder. A lantern gleamed on the dark rafters. Hilton shrank, breathless, into a corner beneath the hay.

The burly nigger came stamping over the hay. Hilton flattened himself tight against the floor. The man actually walked right over him, but, fortunately, the cushion of hay was thick and deep.

"Ain't no one here, sah!" he heard the Kafir call at last.

And then the light vanished, and for a second time Hilton dared breathe again.

All night he lay there, not venturing to move, for Sam had been left on guard, and growls warned him that the mastiff was himself again.

At last dawn broke, and, as the light grew, from overhead came the soft cooing of pigeons.

And then suddenly a pigeon flew down on to the loft floor, and half-unconsciously Hilton noticed it was of the long, slim carrier breed. Like a flash the remembrance came to him of the feather in Hearst's captured coat, and a cry of exultation almost escaped from his lips as he started up. He felt he had the key to the mystery.

The dawn was broadening. Hilton crawled out of his refuge and took a cautious glance out of the end window of the barn. To his disgust, the negro was on guard between him and the wall, and the great fawn-coloured dog was prowling restlessly to and fro.

Back he went to his hiding-place and waited. About eight o'clock he heard steps on the ladder again. It was Hearst himself in his town-going clothes. Hilton watched with breathless interest as the man caught a pigeon, and carefully slipped it into a tiny wooden cage, and this into a hidden pocket in his coat.

Without the slightest suspicion that he was observed, Foxy Hearst turned and disappeared. To Hilton came a fierce resolve to follow him at any cost.

He waited only till his intended victim was clear of the premises, then glanced out again. Ah, as he thought! Sam had only waited his master's departure to go into the house. Hilton felt in his pockets. Hurrah! He still had a bit of the doctored meat. He flung it to the waiting hound.

A moment of suspense as the dog sniffed the bait suspiciously. Then the beast crunched it up, and in five minutes Hilton saw him keel over in a sound sleep.

Hearst had not been an hour in his office in the town before Hilton was safely ensconced at an opposite window, from which a good view of Foxy's office windows was obtainable. The policeman was oddly equipped. He had a powerful field-glass and a double-barrelled gun. To make assurance doubly sure, Dick Mansel was posted on the roof of the same house, also armed with a gun.

The day dragged slowly by, but at last twilight fell. It was a business quarter, and Hilton watched the offices rapidly empty. But his glass showed him that Hearst was still in his room, which was a large one at the back of the house, and on the first floor. "It's getting late!" he muttered at last disappointedly.

And the words were hardly out of his mouth before the sash opposite was carefully slipped open, and a pigeon flung out.

Hilton seized his gun as the bird circled once or twice uncertainly. With a sudden, swift motion the bird shot upwards, and before Hilton could bring his weapon to bear was out of shot. But almost instantly the sound of a shot was heard above, and the pigeon dropped like a stone and fell with a little thud into the paved courtyard below.

"Good shot, Mansel!" exclaimed Hilton.

He dashed out of the room and down the stairs. But someone else had been equally quick. As the young policeman emerged

from the door Foxy Hearst came dashing across the yard.

"You sneaking blackguard!" Hilton heard him shout.

And then the two flung themselves simultaneously upon the dead pigeon.

Hearst fell on top of it, and, with a quick motion, flung the bird aside and gripped at Hilton's throat. One hand reached its mark; the other the policeman seized, and a fierce struggle began. Hearst was powerful and desperate, and Maurice Hilton gasped under the tremendous pressure on his windpipe. He made a great effort, and, seizing Hearst's wrist, tore the hand away from his throat, and then, flinging himself forward, twisted the other arm back.

Hearst kicked him heavily twice as they rolled over, the second time on the knee, causing exquisite pain. Hilton replied by driving his disengaged fist heavily into Hearst's face.

It was his last effort. Hilton rolled him over, and his head came with a bang on the hard pavement. With a groan he straightened out and lay limp.

"Well done, old chap!" shouted Dick Mansel, running up.

And next second the two were eagerly examining the dead pigeon.

"Here it is!" exclaimed Maurice in a voice shaking with excitement, as he tore from under the bird's tail quills a tiny red bag.

As he slit it open a rough diamond rolled into his hand. The case was complete.

There were two things left to do. First, Hearst was handcuffed and taken to gaol. Next, the two troopers galloped like mad to Doom Farm, and, after securing Sam, the nigger, took possession of the place. Ample proof of Hearst's guilt was secured among the papers, and the pigeon-loft being carefully guarded, birds were watched returning. Messages found upon these gave a clue to the diamond-stealer's correspondents, and their sudden arrest not only saved Hilton from his banishment, but procured him shortly afterwards promotion to the rank of corporal.

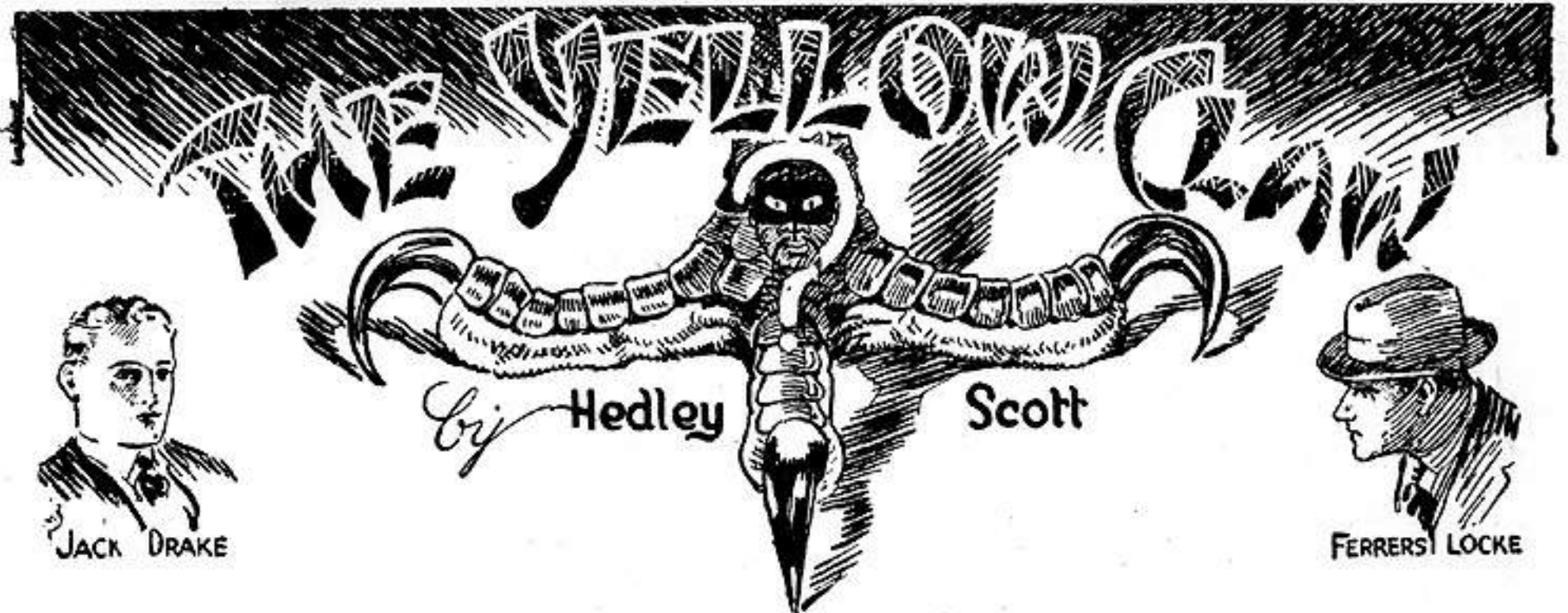
THE END.

(There is another thrilling Mounted Police story next Monday, entitled: "The Lone Hand!" Be sure and read it, boys!)



Hilton drove his fist full into the diamond stealer's face. Hearst straightened out and lay limp. "Well done, old chap," shouted Mansel, running up. "Now let's have a look at that dead pigeon."

THE CONCLUDING CHAPTERS OF THIS AMAZING STAGE AND DETECTIVE SERIAL, CHUMS!



The Prisoner of the Loft!
TURNING on his heel, Locke was about to descend the staircase again, when his footsteps were arrested by the sudden sound as of a man moaning. He halted, listening intently. Sure enough, his senses had not failed him. From somewhere close at hand issued a low moan—a moan that was repeated loud enough now for the little party in the room below to hear.

"What's that?" asked Smithson quickly.

"That's what I'm going to find out!" said Ferrers Locke grimly.

He stood listening for a few moments, and then he turned sharply on his heel. Reaching the spiral staircase again he began to climb the steps until he came on a level with another floor of the cottage. To right and left of him were several doors, and from the one farthest away the sounds proceeded. Locke reached the door and tugged at the handle. As he had half expected, the door was locked. But that to a man of Locke's capabilities was no serious obstacle. His skeleton keys came into play, and before many moments had elapsed he had forced the lock.

Another moment and the door was swung open. The room beyond was in darkness. But Ferrers Locke had made no mistake. For the moaning sounds were issuing from somewhere close at hand. The sleuth's electric torch shed a welcome beam of light into the darkened room, revealing a scene that brought a cry of triumph to his lips.

At the end of the beam of light was reflected the figure of a man—a man chained to the wall by a broad strip of metal that encircled his waist. At first glance Locke would have put the age of the man down at sixty odd years, so frail, so aged was his appearance. A shock of grey curly hair fell uncontrolled across a doming forehead, its very lightness of colour contrasting strongly with the deep, burning lustre of two eyes that stared out and alternately blinked as the light from the torch fell across them. The clothing of the man was in keeping with what fiction has erroneously acclaimed the distinctive dress of artists, musicians, or men of letters to be. It could be summed up in three words—careless and eccentric.

All this Ferrers Locke took in in a few seconds. The next he had discovered an oil lamp that rested on a small table in the centre of the room. He hastened towards it with a reassuring remark for the benefit of the prisoner chained to the wall, and quickly applied a lighted match

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to the bare wick. Once the light began to suck at the oil in the cubicle at the base of the lamp the sleuth was better able to take stock of his surroundings. He found himself in a well-furnished room—perhaps loft would be a better term—with shelves filled with volumes at every wall. On the floor itself was an expensive Turkey carpet. At one end of the room was a desk covered with papers and writing materials. At the other, in close proximity to the man chained to the wall, in whose direction the detective strode quickly forward, was a sumptuous bed, with overhanging curtains in Victorian style.

"Who—who are you?" gasped the prisoner of the loft as the detective feverishly began to try his skeleton keys on the patent lock that held the circular strip of steel round the old man's wrist. "Who—"

"I am a friend," said the sleuth reassuringly. "Your period of captivity is at an end!"

"Thank Heaven!" muttered the old man, his head falling upon his frail shoulders. "I have prayed for such a deliverance."

It took Locke several minutes to force the lock of the steel band, but at last the task was accomplished. The steel band fell to the floor, clanking noisily against the chain that held it fastened to the wall, but the noise fell on deaf ears so far as the old man was concerned. He had fallen into a dead faint.

Gently as a mother would lift a child the sleuth picked up the old man and carried him to the bed. He stretched him upon it, and covered him with the eider-down. Then he gazed long and earnestly into the intellectual yet emaciated face. A deep sigh of pity escaped him as he stood thus, and those who knew the celebrated sleuth would have been astonished to see him give way to such emotion. At length he turned on his heel.

"A sleep will do him the world of good!" he muttered, softly crossing the room. "He looks worn out."

The grim lines relaxing about his mouth Ferrers Locke slowly descended the spiral staircase and rejoined his companions in the room below. They, as did the chauffeur, Yvonne, and Mrs. Mazelrigg, surveyed him questioningly.

"You scoundrel!" exclaimed Locke, striding forward and facing the shivering figure of the chauffeur. "How long has that man been chained to the wall?"

"Two days!" replied the chauffeur, shrinking before that stern, masterful gaze. "I—I was acting under orders. It's not my fault, sir," he whined.

"Bah!" exclaimed the sleuth scornfully. "You, perhaps, will taste a little of what that man has gone through before many hours have elapsed."

He turned on his heel and spoke to Smithson, communicating what he had discovered in the loft above. The Scotland Yard man blinked in amazement as the sleuth unfolded the story.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "Is this a play?"

"A play?" repeated Locke, in a tone full of meaning. "Well, I suppose it is in a way. But the curtain is about to fall before the author intended it. Smithson, we must take our prisoners to London. If you take the four lascars in the limousine—you can drive a car, I know—I will escort Mrs. Mazelrigg, the chauffeur, and Miss Yvonne."

"But what of the two Ethiopians and the old man in the loft?" asked Smithson.

"Drake—he is just coming to—can attend to the old man," said Lockeslowly. "Roberts can keep watch over the two Ethiopians until I can arrange for a conveyance of some sort to fetch them to town. I'll phone from Godalming to the Yard, and arrange with Colonel Horlingson to despatch an ambulance car for the old man. It would not be safe for him to travel otherwise."

"Right-ho!" said Smithson.

Ferrers Locke swiftly outlined his plans to his astonished assistant, who, although a trifle dazed, was none the worse for his adventure.

And five minutes later the limousine and the taxi were speeding towards London with their cargo of prisoners.

Gavanga, the Mute!

"SALUBRIOUS neighbourhood, isn't it, Miss Yvonne?"

Ferrers Locke accompanied the remark with a smile at the rapt and excited expression on the face of the young girl sitting by his side. The sleuth and his companion occupied, next the driver, the spacious front seat of a large covered-in motor-lorry. No one catching sight of the innocent-looking vehicle, whose canvas exterior bore the legend "Furniture Removals," and the two passengers by the rugged-looking driver, would have thought for one moment that the "furniture" in the present instance was represented by a posse of the famous Flying Squad from Scotland Yard. But such was the case. Ranged on forms in the interior of the lorry were fifteen picked men, each fully armed.

Immediately upon his arrival in town

Ferrers Locke had called upon the Chief Commissioner of Scotland Yard and handed over to his care the prisoners he had brought back from Hindhead. That Colonel Horlingson was surprised by the few facts which the private detective chose to make known to him was apparent long after Locke had departed with the posse of police-officers, for the Chief looked strangely moved and excited.

And now the lorry containing the detectives was speeding through Limehouse Causeway, the young girl by the side of the driver doing her best to direct him to the secret stronghold of the Yellow Claw Society.

"I am not certain of my way," she remarked to Ferrers Locke, "for I was never allowed very far away from the place, and, moreover, I have only been back from Belgium six months. But I shall know where I am when we have proceeded a little farther."

"Good!" ejaculated Ferrers Locke briefly, eagerly scanning the dingy street through which he was now passing. "I feel certain we are on the right track!"

For another five minutes the lorry rumbled on its way, and then Yvonne gave a sudden start and clutched the detective by the arm.

"Look!" she said, pointing a trembling finger in the direction of a tall, broad figure lounging along the pavement some distance in front of them. "I know that man! He's Gavanga—one of my father's—I mean, the Yellow Claw's servants. A mute!"

A murmur of exultation escaped Ferrers Locke at this sudden piece of news, and the next moment he was signalling to the driver of the lorry to pull up. Then, whispering a few words in the man's ear and nodding reassuringly at Yvonne, the sleuth slipped from his seat. Unobserved by any passers-by, the detective dropped lightly on the pavement and commenced to saunter carelessly in the wake of the mute.

The lorry suddenly seemed to develop engine trouble as, for the next five minutes or so, the driver was constantly applying his brakes and attending to the engine. But that was only a little bit of bluff. In reality the driver was, in turn, following the route taken by the mute and the detective, and the subterfuge of the troublesome engine allowed him to travel at a snail's pace, so that he would not overtake them, without exciting any suspicion.

Occasionally pig-tailed heads would appear in the narrow doorways that lined the dingy thoroughfare. Suspicious eyes would gleam out at the lorry. But the heads were withdrawn as stealthily and swiftly as they had appeared, and the owners thereof were apparently satisfied that the lorry was all it proclaimed to be—a furniture remover's van.

In the Chinese quarter of Limehouse every man seems to be suspicious of his neighbour, which is not surprising when it is borne in mind that the slum district so loathsome to the European often shelters some of the most hardened scoundrels one could meet in a day's march. Here it is that the drug fiends carry on their nefarious trade, reaping a rich harvest in their poisonous wares, only too readily sought after and indulged in by derelict specimens of humanity who seek oblivion in the potent fumes of hashish and opium.

Such was the district through which Ferrers Locke found himself sauntering, a score of paces in the rear of the broad shape of Gavanga, the mute. Suddenly the man he was following disappeared down a side turning that led to the murky waters of the Thames. The

stench of paint, tar, seasoned rope, and the hundred and one odours that form the make-up of riverside wharves assailed the sleuth's sensitive nostrils. But he scarcely heeded them in the excitement of the chase. Occasionally he would slide into the friendly shelter of a doorway as the man he was following would turn his head as though to make sure that he was not being followed. Away in his rear Locke could hear the uneven purr of the motor-lorry as it rumbled over the equally uneven cobbles.

And then, just when the sleuth was beginning to wonder when the chase would end, the mute paused at a doorway and glanced stealthily to right and left. Locke was just in time to dodge behind a buttress, but his keen eyes, nevertheless, never left his quarry. He waited five minutes, during which time the mute had evidently been admitted to the house outside which he had halted. Making a mental note of the place, Locke retraced his steps, and eventually joined the lorry-driver.

Yvonne was trembling with excitement now.

"This is the road, Mr. Locke," she exclaimed. "I know the place now. The house which Gavanga entered leads to the large warehouse next door. The warehouse is where I have lived since I returned from Belgium."

"Good!" grunted the sleuth.

He rapped three times on the woodwork at his back—a prearranged signal for the police officers to hold themselves in readiness. Six of them had previously received instructions to form a cordon round the place immediately the raid began. The other nine had been detailed to follow Ferrers Locke.

The lorry came to a standstill outside the door of the house next the warehouse.

"Now," rapped Ferrers Locke, jumping from his seat, revolver in hand, "all together!"

IN THE LIMELIGHT.

- THE YELLOW CLAW, a mysterious and powerful organisation that preys upon wealthy Englishmen.
- SIR MALCOLM DUNDERFIELD, a successful City financier, whose family the Yellow Claw has threatened to wipe out.
- JOHN HUNTINGDON, his nephew. An actor by profession, Huntingdon invariably fills the leading role in Mark Chaerton's plays.
- FERRERS LOCKE, the famous detective, of Baker Street, who has been engaged by Sir Malcolm to bring the dreaded society to book.
- JACK DRAKE, the sleuth's clever boy assistant, who is given a job as dresser to Huntingdon.
- INSPECTOR PYECROFT, a Scotland Yard detective, who has joined forces with Ferrers Locke.
- MARK CHAERTON, a successful playwright, who has also been threatened by the Yellow Claw. He, too, seeks Ferrers Locke's services when his theatrical company starts its tour of the provinces.

Locke has reached that stage in his investigations where he is almost certain of the identity of the Yellow Claw. In company with two plain-clothes men, he traces the agents of the scoundrel to a cottage situated in the Devil's Punchbowl, and effects their capture. At the same time he assures a young girl named Yvonne, whom he finds in the cottage, that she is not—as she has been led to believe—the daughter of the Yellow Claw.

(Now read on.)

The members of the Flying Squad scrambled from the lorry in less time than it takes to tell. Scarcely a second later the door of the house was creaking and groaning under the combined charges of Ferrers Locke and three police officers.

The rotten woodwork did not stand up to such drastic treatment for any length of time, and suddenly it swung inwards on a broken hinge. The raiding party surged in, revolvers in hand, and leaped for the narrow staircase that ascended from the hall. Above and in the distance came yells and cries of alarm, and the sounds of scurrying feet. But so sudden was the attack and so swiftly was it carried out that the inhabitants of the warehouse were caught like rats in a trap.

Thanks to Yvonne, Ferrers Locke knew the interior plan of the building, and at the head of the police officers he reached the landing of the staircase and plunged down a long, wide passage heavily curtained.

From a door on the right a dusky figure darted out, and, upon catching sight of the raiding party, the man snarled like an animal at bay, and whipped out an ugly-looking kris. But before the blade could do any damage a burly fist crashed into the man's face, and he dropped like a log, his weapon clattering to the floor. For one instant Ferrers Locke stopped to issue instructions to one of the party to mount guard at the end of the passage, and then he sped on.

At the end of the passage was a large square of curtaining. This the detective swung aside, finding himself in a room draped with heavy black and gold curtains. In the centre of the room was a large cauldron, in which some overpowering incense smouldered and spread to every corner of the apartment. From his first impression of the place Locke knew it to be the same room that Drake had described to him. But he had little time to examine his surroundings then. At the far end of the room, huddled like so many sheep, only looking more dangerous, was a group of armed men. They represented between them almost every nationality under the sun.

"Hands up!" rapped the private detective, levelling his revolver, a course followed by the police officers, who spread themselves out fanwise. "If a man moves a finger in resistance I shall shoot without compunction!"

There was something in the incisive tones of the great detective that took the fight out of the cosmopolitan crew in the corner. Snarling and cursing in their different tongues, they slowly raised their hands aloft.

In less than five minutes the whole lot had been taken prisoners.

A search of the warehouse revealed many strange sights to the raiding party, amongst which was a complete wireless plant for transmission and reception. The place was lavishly furnished, and decorated little in keeping with what one expects to find in a warehouse. Passages led off from all parts of the room wherein the cauldron of perfume gave off its oppressive stench, passages that led to separate rooms. And it was in one of these latter that Ferrers Locke came across what, or, rather, whom, he sought.

Chained to a staple in the brick wall was Mervyn Dunderfield, the portrait painter and cousin of Sir Malcolm Dunderfield.

He blinked in astonishment as his gaze rested on the smiling face of Ferrers Locke.

Locke and the less-amused expressions of the police officers.

"Well, I'm hanged!" he blurted out. "I don't know whether I've been living in the Arabian Nights or not, but this is an unexpected pleasure, Mr. Locke. I would be obliged if you would set me free."

The painter was liberated within five minutes, during which time he treated Ferrers Locke to an account of his experiences during the past twenty-four hours.

"When I came to," he said, in conclusion, "it was to find myself here, whilst the scoundrel who had taken great pains to kidnap me calmly told me that in less than forty-eight hours I should shuffle off this mortal coil, accompanied in spirit by my cousin John, whom he had lured, or hoped to lure, to this confounded place."

"Huntingdon met with an accident that detained him in Blackpool," explained Locke. "Nothing that you need feel anxious about now," he added hastily. "For his broken leg is mending well."

Thereupon the detective gave Mervyn Dunderfield a brief account of the bogus telegram sent by the Yellow Claw to Huntingdon and the actor's subsequent accident.

"But where is the Yellow Claw?" said Dunderfield. "Who is he?"

"He is not in this building, I can assure you," said Locke easily. "I made certain first that my bird was away from his nest. We have yet to surprise him. But come; time is short. We have to escort these prisoners to the police-station. This evening, Mr. Dunderfield, you will know all."

The sleuth turned on his heel, and the police officers, with their prisoners in tow, poured out into the street. Their comrades, who had remained below, reported that no member of the gang had escaped, of which fact Locke was cognisant already, for he had obtained from Yvonne the number of agents to be found in the warehouse. Leaving three of the policemen on guard over the warehouse, Locke clambered into the lorry, what time the remainder of the Flying Squad dumped their prisoners in the interior of the van.

Once more the lorry moved off, its load of "furniture" creating just as little sensation through the Chinese quarter of Limehouse as it had done half an hour before.

The "Guest" of the Evening!

"WE are all present, gentlemen!" Sir Malcolm Dunderfield, resplendent in evening-dress, bowed to the seven similarly-clad gentlemen in the spacious dining-room of his Park Lane mansion, and made a move towards a choicely-spread table of gleaming silverware and snowy white linen. The financier, acting on Ferrers Locke's instructions, had invited Colonel Horlingson, Inspector Morrison, Mark Chaerton, and three distinguished members of the Dunderfield family to a dinner. The object of the dinner ostensibly was to discuss the amazing record of the Yellow Claw, but Sir Malcolm Dunderfield knew that Locke's suggestion contained something far deeper than that. Moreover, at the far end of the dining-room a curtain, hung at Locke's suggestion, screened a portion of the room from view. What was, or, rather, what had been, going on behind that curtain only Ferrers Locke amongst the whole assembly knew.

There was a tense feeling of suppressed

excitement in the atmosphere that rather jangled the nerves of the financier. He had given Locke a free hand to do whatever he liked, a concession all the more readily granted when the detective had produced Sir Malcolm's cousin Mervyn safe and sound, and apparently none the worse for his experiences in the stronghold of the Yellow Claw. But much to Sir Malcolm's astonishment, Locke had definitely stated that Mervyn's presence at the dinner would spoil his plans, and so the portrait painter had departed from the Park Lane mansion on the understanding that he would be free to return in an hour's time.

Colonel Horlingson had all his work out to keep his excitement in check. Next to Ferrers Locke himself, the Chief knew more about the whole affair than anyone. But even the great man from Scotland Yard was not cognisant with the main facts of the little drama to be enacted under the direction of his unofficial colleague.

The guests sat down at the table, and three silent-footed menservants attended to their needs. The dinner was a great success. A desultory conversation was kept up throughout the meal, Mark Chaerton being the only one who seemed to be preoccupied with his own thoughts. Every now and then he would glance suspiciously at Sir Malcolm, and then turn his deep, luminous orbs on the composed face of Ferrers Locke.

Coffee and liqueurs were served, and then cigars were lighted.

"Now, gentlemen," began Sir Malcolm, "we will start the discussion. Mr. Locke, knowing more about this terrible personality, rejoicing in the name of the Yellow Claw, than anyone present, it will not be out of place for him to set the ball rolling."

The sleuth smiled and rose to his feet, bowing slightly to the guests.

"Gentlemen," he began, "I have taken great pains to prove the truth of the words I am about to utter in connection with the arch-scoundrel who has troubled society so long, and I will therefore ask your indulgence and uninterrupted attention for about ten minutes."

A murmur of applause escaped the guests, and all waited for Locke to resume.

"It will sound very much like a story," continued the sleuth gravely, "but, on my word as a gentleman, every word of what I am about to tell you is solid fact! You know of my adventures with the Yellow Claw up to this point, so I will not trouble to recount them again. However, to begin at the right place, we must go back over a period of forty years. About that time there belonged to a certain well-known family in society a young man noted for his extravagances and wild living. For the moment he shall remain nameless. His father, however, did what many another man has done in similar circumstances—cut him off with a shilling. The son eventually disappeared from this country and went to California. There he seems to have led just as wild and unruly a life, for the last that was heard of him was that he died in poverty.

"Such, however, was not the case, for I am in possession of evidence to the contrary. He was very much alive—is still very much alive. To retrace our steps again, as it were, I must point out that this young scapegrace once belonged to a secret society whose name we are all familiar with—the Yellow Claw. At the time he joined the society, however, it was in its infancy. A few years later the society faded out of existence altogether, but its memory still remained with the young man of whom we speak.

Being a clever fellow, for all his wildness, he recognised the power that would be his if he revived the society. Again I must ask your indulgence, for it is necessary for me to go back over some of the ground we have covered," added the private detective, pausing for breath.

A wild, excited look shot across Sir Malcolm Dunderfield's face—a look that was instantly quelled by a meaning glance from Ferrers Locke.

"At the time our man joined the secret society," continued the sleuth, "he was accompanied by his half-brother. He, too, by force of circumstances, which we need not go into at this moment, was compelled to join the Yellow Claw. He was compelled also to sign certain documents wherein he contributed his fortune to the good of the cause—a fortune that he was yet to inherit, for his father was at the time still alive. Here," added the detective, slipping a hand into the pocket of his evening jacket, "I must hasten my story, for I am causing Sir Malcolm Dunderfield unnecessary suspense."

The guests gazed searchingly at the City financier, noting his drawn features and the hectic flush that burned in either cheek. Mark Chaerton fidgeted uneasily in his chair. Perhaps out of the whole assembly he was the most uncomfortable person present.

"The man who fled to California," continued Ferrers Locke impressively, "was Sir Malcolm's half-brother Wallis!"

"What?"

A murmur of astonishment escaped the guests, with the exception of Mark Chaerton.

"And Wallis Dunderfield," went on the sleuth, "is none other than the Yellow Claw!"

"What!" repeated the financier, rising in his seat. "My brother?"

"Exactly. And your half-brother is with us now," said Locke quietly. "Here in this very room."

"Great Heavens!"

The guests jumped to their feet, as this startling denouement fell upon their ears, and it was seen that Colonel Horlingson and Inspector Morrison moved slightly in the direction of Mark Chaerton in response to Ferrers Locke's meaning glance.

"And Wallis Dunderfield, alias the Yellow Claw, lives under a cloak of respectability," went on Ferrers Locke, suddenly pointing a sharp finger at the playwright. "He is known to us all as Mark Chaerton, the famous playwright!"

The effect the sleuth's words caused could not have been more startling had he named the Chief of Scotland Yard as the head of the dreaded society. Mark Chaerton himself trembled slightly, and a peculiar vengeful expression shot into his dark eyes. But his confusion was momentary.

"Mr. Locke," he said dryly, breaking an ominous and oppressive silence, "I admire your method of story-telling, but I think it's hardly the thing to do to drag my name into the yarn. Did I not know you better I would institute proceedings for libel. This is a rare joke, however, although not in good taste."

"This is no joke, Wallis Dunderfield!" said Ferrers Locke suddenly, whipping out from his pocket a loaded revolver. "I charge you, in the first place, with the murder of Chip Sawyer!"

Colonel Horlingson and Inspector Morrison moved forward, and before the echo of the sleuth's words had died away, the handcuffs had encircled the bogus playwright's wrists. Even then the man's sang-froid did not desert him. He laughed harshly, although a fleeting shadow of fear took hold of his heavy features—plain indication of his guilt.



At the end of the beam of light was reflected the figure of a man chained to the wall by a broad strip of metal that encircled his waist. "Who are you?" he gasped, as Ferrers Locke darted forward. "I am a friend," said the sleuth, reassuringly. "Your period of captivity is at an end!" (See page 22.)

"You fool! You will regret this Ferrers Locke!" he said harshly. "Such a slander will cost you your reputation and your fortune!"

"We shall see," rejoined Locke coolly. "I have not done yet. You will change your tune before the evening is over, Wallis Dunderfield!"

"But—but are you sure that this—this scoundrel is my brother?" exclaimed Sir Malcolm wildly, looking fixedly at the handcuffed man. "It—it cannot be! He bears no resemblance to the young man I knew forty years ago. See, his hair is black, not a grey hair visible. And if what you say is true, my half-brother Wallis would be over sixty years old!"

"Very true," smiled Locke. "A man changes considerably in that time, and a bottle of hair dye carefully and frequently applied works wonders, Sir Malcolm. We will proceed, however."

The sleuth walked to the end of the dining-room and drew aside the curtain. Instantly a young girl appeared. Trembling slightly, she accompanied the detective to the astonished circle of evening-clad gentlemen.

"Allow me to present Yvonne Chaerton!" said the sleuth quietly.

"Not—not—not Wallis' daughter?" almost screamed Sir Malcolm.

"No, no!" was Locke's reassuring answer. "She is the daughter of the real Mark Chaerton—the real playwright, who has been kept a prisoner for this last six years at a cottage in the loneliness of the Devil's Punchbowl!"

"Great Heavens!" The exclamation escaped from six voices at once.

"And Mark Chaerton now, happily, is free," smiled Ferrers Locke. "I released him from captivity only this morning."

He clapped his hands twice, and in

response the curtain at the far end of the room was again drawn aside. This time an aged, frail-looking man came slowly into view. He halted before the assembly, trembling slightly, and his eyes turned to flash a hatred of the handcuffed man.

"You—you scoundrel!" he said, his voice trembling. "So your day has come! I have waited and prayed for such a time!"

The pseudo playwright shrank away from the lashing scorn and hatred in the old man's voice. He realised that his last card had been played, and all his composure fell from him like a cloak. He covered his face with his manacled hands and sank into a chair. But he was not allowed to rest there for long. Colonel Horlington summoned two policemen, who had been holding themselves in readiness below, and a moment later the bogus playwright passed out of the dining-room—a broken man.

"And now, gentlemen," said Locke coolly, "I expect you are all dying to know how this puzzle has been pieced together. If you will give me your attention for another five minutes I will explain."

Ferrers Locke Explains!

"IN the first place," said the sleuth at length, "it must be remembered that the Yellow Claw was noted for the cheap dramatic effect that attended his excursions into crime, hence his imposture of a Chinaman. That leads us to the point that Wallis Dunderfield was present at the last ball given by the late Alec Maldane, in the fancy dress of a Chinese mandarin. Again, he was present at the reception

given by Sir Malcolm Dunderfield, also in the guise of a Chinaman.

"I first became suspicious of his movements when, in response to an urgent telephone message, I hastened to his house in Eton Square and found that he had, according to his own story, been bound and gagged and robbed by the Yellow Claw, to the tune of ten thousand pounds. I extracted from him the number of the notes alleged to have been stolen, and discovered at a later date that two of the ten-pound notes alleged to have been stolen were still in his possession. A few days later he gave them to Huntingdon in exchange for a cheque. They are now in my wallet, for I exchanged them in turn with John Huntingdon for the equivalent amount in one-pound notes. Again, the handcuffs with which he had alleged he was made prisoner by the Yellow Claw were of the type that could be operated at will by the wearer. In point of fact, they were "property" bracelets used on the stage. The knot holding the gag, too, was a peculiar sailor's knot, and a glance at this scoundrel's boxes will reveal the fact that several of them have been secured by cord tied in the same fashion. But even at this stage I was not certain of my man; I did not know, for instance, that he was Wallis Dunderfield."

"And how did you get on the trail?" asked Colonel Horlington.

"A visit to Somerset House furnished me with a few particulars," continued Ferrers Locke. "I discovered that the genuine Mark Chaerton was born in Milford, near Witley. Inquiries at Milford drew the fact that Chaerton had lived there until six years ago when, just after his wife's death, he disappeared

entirely. His daughter, I learned, too, was being schooled at a convent in Belgium.

"Little was known of the real Chaerton, for he lived the life of a recluse; so the villagers said; but no one in Milford accepted the bogus Mark Chaerton as the man who had lived in their midst all his life. The coincidence of the names was scarcely noted, and the fact that the impostor set himself up as a playwright aroused no suspicion, for no one in Milford was aware of the fact that for many years they had nursed a genius in their midst. You see, none of Chaerton's plays had been put before any producers up till that time. Writing plays was a hobby of yours, was it not, Mr. Chaerton?"

The playwright nodded.

"Yes," he replied. "I wrote them for the love of the thing. Have always written them in that spirit. But proceed, Mr. Locke. You interest me!"

"Very well," continued the sleuth. "Before my visit to Somerset House I came across an Ethiopian—a servant of this scoundrel Wallis—who had befriended my assistant Jack Drake when he had the misfortune to fall into the hands of the Yellow Claw. The man was dying, but before the end came he endeavoured to make known to me the identity of the man at the head of the society. Before he drew his last breath I gleaned that the Yellow Claw's real name was Wallis something or other.

"The next clue I picked up was when the 'Man and His Money' company arrived at Blackpool. As you know, before that Huntingdon nearly lost his life on the railway owing, as we thought then, to an accident. In reality, it was a deliberate attempt on his life made by his scoundrelly uncle. At the hotel Huntingdon received a threatening letter, followed by a visit of the Yellow Claw himself. You know of the exciting chase we had across country, culminating in the Yellow Claw's car plunging over the cliffs. The dummy figure at the wheel of the car, however, contained a valuable clue. It was stuffed with copies of the 'Californian News.'

"Now, as you know, Wallis Dunderfield was last seen and heard of in California. That fact opened my eyes a little. But the clues followed fast and furious after that. I discovered when I arrived back at my hotel that a light burned from a tall building a few hundred yards away. I traced the room in which that light appeared to the Mecca Hotel. And the room was booked in the name of Mark Chaerton. Strange, don't you think, that he should be awake at such a time—two o'clock in the morning—especially in view of the fact that he assured me that he had passed a peaceful night!

"Then came the advent of the tall stranger from abroad. I saw him follow the bogus Chaerton into the first-class carriage, and then I phoned you, colonel, to put a man on his track. Later I decided to run up to town myself. The affair of the tragedy in Mervyn Dunderfield's flat can easily be reconstructed. In the light of what I know now—for a cablegram from a detective agency in California was handed me an hour ago—the tall stranger's name was Michael Sawyer, commonly known as Chip. It transpires that Chip Sawyer and Wallis Dunderfield had a lot in common. Sawyer met Wallis, however, when the latter was about forty years of age, and, according to the cablegram, both were mixed up in

several burglaries. The reported death of Wallis was a blind to hoodwink the police, who were after him for manslaughter. Chip Sawyer went to prison, and was released last year. It appears more than likely that he trailed his old colleague here, pierced his identity, and intended to blackmail him. That meant danger for the double game Wallis Dunderfield was playing.

"As I reconstruct the crime he lured Chip Sawyer to Mervyn Dunderfield's place, and then shot him. By so doing he hoped to reap a double benefit. Naturally enough, upon finding the shot figure of a man answering to the Yellow Claw's appearance, and Mervyn Dunderfield missing, the police would theorise on the lines that Mr. Mervyn had committed the crime. And as Mr. Mervyn would never be able to step forward and refute any such charge—for it was obvious the intention of the Yellow Claw to put him out of the way for good—everything in the garden would have worked out to plan. But, like all criminals, Wallis Dunderfield left clues behind him—the robe unpierced by any bullet, and the key insurance ring. Those two mistakes will cost Wallis Dunderfield his life."

"Amazing!" said Colonel Horlingson. "Your deductions, Mr. Locke, have been built up on most insignificant clues. But tell me, how was it that this young lady never escaped from the Claw's clutches and informed the police? For it is obvious that she didn't acknowledge him as her father."

"There you are a trifle hasty," remonstrated Ferrers Locke. "For you must remember that Miss Yvonne had been abroad at her convent in Belgium for over six years. She was sent home, and was met by Mrs. Mazelrigg, an adventuress, whom I saw visit the bogus Mark Chaerton's place the same evening that the crime in Mr. Mervyn's flat was discovered. I recognised the woman at once, for I had been investigating a case in which she figured a year ago. Miss Yvonne will tell you that Mrs. Mazelrigg was her keeper; no other word is applicable. She watched Miss Yvonne like a cat watches a mouse, and never allowed her out of doors alone. Miss Yvonne was stuffed with the story that her father had developed into a first-class criminal, and as she never saw Wallis Dunderfield without his Chinese disguise, it is quite easy to understand and sympathise with the unfortunate girl's credulity. You must remember, too, that she hadn't seen her father since she was six years old—and a child of that age does not remember events too well. To make it simpler, the average child of six does not know whether its parents are honest folk or otherwise. The mind is not developed to a sufficient extent rightly to draw the line between honesty and crookedness. Thus they played on Miss Yvonne's credulity and kept her in ignorance of the real state of affairs—what time her father was kept a close prisoner, writing plays in exchange for his life."

"But the motive of all this?" said Sir Malcolm Dunderfield. "Why did the Yellow—I mean, Wallis wish to wipe out our family in its entirety?"

"Not in its entirety," corrected Ferrers Locke. "For he himself would have remained alive. Do you not see the plot now, Sir Malcolm?"

"I must confess that I don't," said the financier slowly.

"It's quite simple, really," said Locke, with a smile. "It is well known, for

instance, that you are a millionaire. Again, it is more than rumoured in certain circles that you will leave the bulk of your money to John Huntingdon. You certainly would not leave a penny to Wallis Dunderfield, even if you had known that he was still alive—now would you?"

"That I certainly wouldn't," said Sir Malcolm quietly. "I wiped Wallis out of my memory altogether when my father died, for it was chiefly through Wallis' rotten mode of living and the anxiety it caused, that the poor old gov'nor went under. And on his deathbed he beseeched me never to acknowledge Wallis as a member of the family. I agreed."

"Then the motive is clear," said Locke. "By first disposing of the members of the family to whom the fortune would come in the event of yours and Huntingdon's death this scoundrel would then have come forward with impunity, claimed that the report of his death was a mistake, proved his identity, and then calmly demanded the fortune. About the same time, too, the man known to the world as Mark Chaerton would have mysteriously disappeared. Do you see daylight now?"

"By jingo, what an infamous scoundrel he is!" roared Sir Malcolm. "But he shall pay for this!"

"Yes, I rather think he will," said Locke quietly. "A man can't commit murder without paying the penalty. That is the law."

"And his cosmopolitan gang of confederates—what of them?" said one of the guests.

"Penal servitude for them, I reckon," returned Ferrers Locke. "They are only his tools, it is true, but there are several deaths lying at their door. Angelo Costello, and Harah, the Ethiopian, for instance."

"By Jove, Mr. Locke, you are a marvel," exclaimed Sir Malcolm at length. "You have given me the surprise of my life in telling me the identity of the Yellow Claw; but you have put my mind at rest. No longer shall I, or any bearing the name of Dunderfield, be troubled by the threats of the scoundrel who has terrorised the world so long. There is one thing that disturbs me, however, and that is that when my scoundrelly half-brother comes up for trial the world will hear the unpleasant fact that I was once a member of the Yellow Claw Society myself, and the fact, too, that my half-brother was its chief. It will take a lot of living down, Mr. Locke."

Before the celebrated sleuth could make any reply one of the footmen hurried into the dining-room and approached his master.

"You will excuse me, gentlemen," said the financier. "I am wanted on the phone."

Sir Malcolm was absent about five minutes. When he returned his features were strangely drawn and white.

"What's wrong?" asked Ferrers Locke. "Nothing concerning your—"

Sir Malcolm nodded.

"Wallis is dead," he said slowly. "It appears that he took poison on the way to the police-station. The two plain-clothes men with him rushed him to the nearest doctor's, but nothing the medico could do would pull him round. It was the doctor who spoke to me over the phone."

For some few minutes there was silence in the room, and then Colonel Horlingson spoke.

"Well, the Law has been cheated of its victim," he said ponderously. "But I'm thinking that it is all for the best. In any case, your brother, Sir Malcolm, would not have escaped the rope. As it is, the unpleasant facts of which you spoke just now will remain hidden to the outside world."

"Then I suppose I ought to feel grateful," murmured Sir Malcolm.

It was three months later that the general public became aware of the fact that the Yellow Claw society had been disbanded, and that its rascally chief—who was not a Chinaman—had been arrested by the police, and had afterwards taken his own life. And although it appeared in print that the real Mark Chaerton had been kept in durance vile for a period of six years, during which time he had written play after play, which had been appropriated by the Yellow Claw and put forward as his own work, no mention was made of the Yellow Claw's relationship to Sir Malcolm Dunderfield, the big City financier.

But a generous public was not slow to patronise the real Mark Chaerton's next play. Every seat in the house was booked for a month ahead before the company had performed its dress rehearsal even. And, needless to say, John Huntingdon, who had recovered from his injury, filled the leading role.

The only person who seemed to be out of sorts on the opening night of the play was Inspector Pycroft. He had not yet become reconciled to the fact that he had been left at Blackpool whilst all the fun was going on in town. But Fate had handed him some compensation, for, on his journey down from Blackpool, Pycroft had bumped into no less a person than Ezra B. Phillips, whom, it appeared, was wanted by the American police on a charge of embezzlement. The estimable Ezra B. was promptly arrested and escorted to London; and Colonel Horlingson, the Chief Commissioner, had made a special mark against the inspector's name for future promotion.

But even Pycroft's morose mood fell from him as the curtain rang up on Mark Chaerton's latest play, and he became absorbed in the splendid acting of John Huntingdon, for the "lead" was giving of his best.

And after the show Sir Malcolm Dunderfield sprang a last-minute invitation on the C.I.D. man to attend a supper-party given at the Waldorf Hotel. Around the table were seated the principal characters who have appeared in this narrative—Ferrers Locke, John Huntingdon, Colonel Horlingson, Jack Drake, Inspector Pycroft, Mark Chaerton and his daughter Yvonne. At the head of the table was Sir Malcolm, as genial a host as could be met in the whole of London.

Like the play, the supper was a great success, and when the financier proposed a toast in honour of Ferrers Locke, no voice was quicker to respond than that of Mark Chaerton, the man who had been rescued by the great detective from the tentacles of the Yellow Claw.

THE END.

(Now look out for the next amazing mystery case, featuring the world-famous detective, Ferrers Locke. "The Quest of the Purple Sandals" is billed to start the week after next. Be sure you read the opening chapters of this powerful story, boys!)

Next Monday's Programme!

"INKY'S PERIL!"

By Frank Richards.

ACCORDING to my promise, the next issue of the MAGNET will contain a special long and extra fascinating yarn of Greyfriars. The title speaks for itself, but it only gives you the merest shadow of an idea of the absorbing interest of a really great and powerful story. We see how the cheery Nabob of Bhanipur, living the jolly, care-free life of a schoolboy at a famous British school, is caught up in a network of intrigue which has wrecked the peace of the distant land where the popular Hurree Jamset Ram will one day be called upon to reign.

Good old Inky, the tower of strength to the Remove, the sport-loving fellow with the brave heart, and the weird English, is the mark of a gang of dusky conspirators who will stick at nothing to compass their ends. There are mysterious comings and goings, and a perfect maze of strange happenings. Through it all the good chum from India comports himself like the true sportsman he is and always has been.

Inky's pluck is of the right royal sort. He can play up to the great traditions of his race, and the upshot of the new yarn will be that Hurree will be better liked than ever, not a doubt of it. The extra length of this story was called for. The additional pages are none too many. Magnetites will be saying the tale runs short as things are, but that cannot be

helped. Look out for a really fine, appealing drama, and plenty of Greyfriars dash next Monday.

A SPRING-CLEANING NUMBER!

Most appropriately the "Greyfriars Herald" in the new MAGNET is devoted to that ever-necessary spring-clean. Some papers say a lot against spring-cleaning as an institution, but to object to the business of renovating and dusting up when the primrose season comes along is all nonsense. The blithe springtime brings along no end of cheery events, and it is only right that a general wash and brush-up should be regarded as the correct thing. All ideas and ambitions should be titivated up for the spring, and H. W. & Co. have much to say on the whole business. An all round, illuminating supplement, this.

"THE LONE HAND!"

You will like the stirring yarn of the Canadian Mounted Police which appears next week: It is gripping from first to last.

"THE QUEST OF THE PURPLE SANDALS!"

For a fortnight hence I have the first story of this new series. Ferrers Locke is on the trail, and has never had bigger game to track down. Make a note of this fresh feature. It is something out and out new—for the MAGNET, as ever, scores again. The week after next. Where are those purple sandals?

Your Editor.

THE BIG

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THE MAGNET

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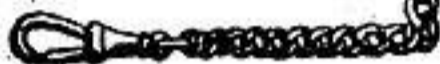
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