

"THE AMATEUR ROGUE!"

Extra-special school story featuring
Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars.

The MAGNET²



SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR!

No. 1,201. Vol. XXXIX.

EVERY SATURDAY.

Week Ending February 21st, 1931.



Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address:
The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

SCUSE my chuckles, chaps! I told you I have a friend who is a "beak," and every now and again he weighs in with a number of "howlers" that are almost worthy of Billy Bunter or Dicky Nugent. Here are one or two of the latest:

"Dick Turpin rode on Black Bess to New York!"

"A parasite is a man who lives in Paris!"

"A Soviet is a cloth used by waiters!"

"Scent is the sound made by hounds!"

After those you won't be surprised to hear that one bright youngster wrote that:

"Columbus sailed to America on a currant!"

That's enough to be going on with!

Now let's have a look at the letters I am asked to answer this week. The first one concerns

BRITAIN'S BLACK DIAMONDS.

Do you know all the wonderful things which are extracted from coal? Will Hayton, of Leicester, asks me for some information on that subject. It may interest him—and others, too—to know that even the dyes which colour our clothes come from such a homely product as coal! But that's not all. The number of useful things which come from coal is legion. Gas, of course, is one of the most important, but just look at this list: Pitch, crude tar, ammonium sulphate, road tar, benzole, carbolic acid, creosote oil, naphthalene, coke, toluene, fuel oil, sulphuric acid, and various drugs.

No wonder we refer to coal as "black diamonds." Incidentally, if you would like to know how to

MAKE YOUR OWN GAS,

here is a simple way of doing it. Get an old clay pipe and put several small pieces of coal in the bowl. Stop the bowl up with clay and push it in the fire, allowing the stem to jut out. As the coal is heated it produces gas, which comes along the stem, and can then be lighted with a match.

Next, please!

Harry Browning, of Lowestoft, is another reader who has written to me for information concerning the career he wishes to follow. He wants to know

HOW TO BECOME A SHIP'S STEWARD.

There is a very excellent Sea School at Gravesend which trains boys to become ship's stewards, and to go there my chum must be not less than 5 ft. 6 in. in height, and not over 17½ years of age. The course of training is free, and lasts from ten to twelve weeks. He must provide himself

with an outfit, or else pay £6 towards the cost of one. At the end of his training he will be sent to a ship, where he will be able to obtain an advance of pay, which may be used towards the purchase of any kit that he has not already obtained.

It may interest other readers to know that this is also a

FREE SCHOOL FOR SAILORS,

and boys are taken for training for the deck department also. If a boy shows promise, he can also be instructed in the duties of a "Wireless Watcher." There is a floating school attached, and part of the instruction is given on this. Boys who intend to go in for the deck department must have first-class eyesight, and must pass a Board of Trade test for both form and colour vision before they can be considered.

Any reader who desires further particulars can obtain them by writing to the Sea School Selection Officer, 11, Hart Street, London, E.C.3. A boy who trains at this school will go to sea as a "Ship's Boy," and after a year will become an "Ordinary Seaman." After three years sea service he will be entitled to the rating of "Able Seaman," and after four years, if he has studied and made headway, there is nothing to prevent him sitting for the examination to become an officer in the Mercantile Marine.

BY the way, they have a saying at sea to the effect that a sailor without a knife is like a ship without a rudder. And I think the same thing applies to a schoolboy. Do you possess a good knife? If not, why don't you have a shot at getting one free by sending along a good joke that I can pass on to my other readers?

J. A. Dixon, of Clinique Manufacture, Loysin, Feydey, gets a topping Sheffield steel penknife for this effort:

Draper: "These are specially strong shirts, sir, which can't be damaged at the laundry. They simply laugh at the launderer."

Customer: "I know, I had some which came back from the laundry with their sides split!"



There are several
RAPID FIRE REPLIES
for me to answer this week, so here goes:
The "Mounties" (Fred Stone, of Warwick). There is a very long waiting list for the Canadian North-West Mounted

Police, and recruits are only engaged after a personal interview in Canada. So I am afraid that, unless you go to Canada first, you will not be considered.

International Language (J. H., of Glasgow). A Norwegian professor has "invented" a new language which he hopes will become internationally used. It is called "Anglio," and is based on English—with certain alterations. For instance, it includes what is called "nu spelling." I should imagine that Dicky Nugent and Billy Bunter will take it up immediately!

A Doggy Ailment (George Winchester, of Wrexham). If your dog is continually shaking his head and clawing at his ear, he is probably suffering from a canker in the ear, which is a very common doggy ailment. You can easily cure him with a powder or a liquid which can be obtained from any good chemist. Look after your pal—he's worth it!

Free University Training in Canada (J. M. of Dulwich). Well-educated boys can obtain a two years' course in scientific farming at Macdonald College (McGill University). You should write to W. H. Hayward, 82, Charing Cross, London, S.W.1 for full particulars.

A "Talkie" Query ("Bobs" of Whitby). So you've noticed that some "talkie" pictures are narrower when projected on the screen? That is because part of the film is taken up by the "sound-track." On an ordinary film the picture is approximately 24 millimetres in width, but the sound track takes up about 2½ millimetres of a "talkie," and the difference is quite noticeable when the picture is enlarged by projection.

Now for a Greyfriars limerick, for which Olaf Pickering, of "Burnt Ash," 29, Shipley Avenue, West Road, Newcastle-on-Tyne, has been awarded a leather pocket wallet:

Bob Cherry's a fellow true blue;
He "sticks up" for Tatters like "glue."

So, when Smithy's sarcasm,
Bob's methods are drastic.
Trust Bob to show Smithy who's who!

GOSH! Space is short now, so I'd better let you know what next week's MAGNET will contain.

As usual, Frank Richards starts the ball rolling with

"A ROGUE'S REMORSE!"

a rattling good yarn that's full of punch. Frank R. seems to be trying to surpass anything he's yet written, and you'll vote next week's story to be one of the finest that have ever come from his pen.

Have you written to let me know what you think of "The Island of Slaves" yet? If not—don't delay! I told you it was a yarn in a thousand, and I reckon you'll agree with me. But I'd like to hear from you, all the same.

"Greyfriars Herald"—tip-top as usual! More jokes and limericks! "Old Ref"—well, do you know a better and breezier writer on soccer? I don't! And—well, you'll come into the office again next week, won't you, chums?

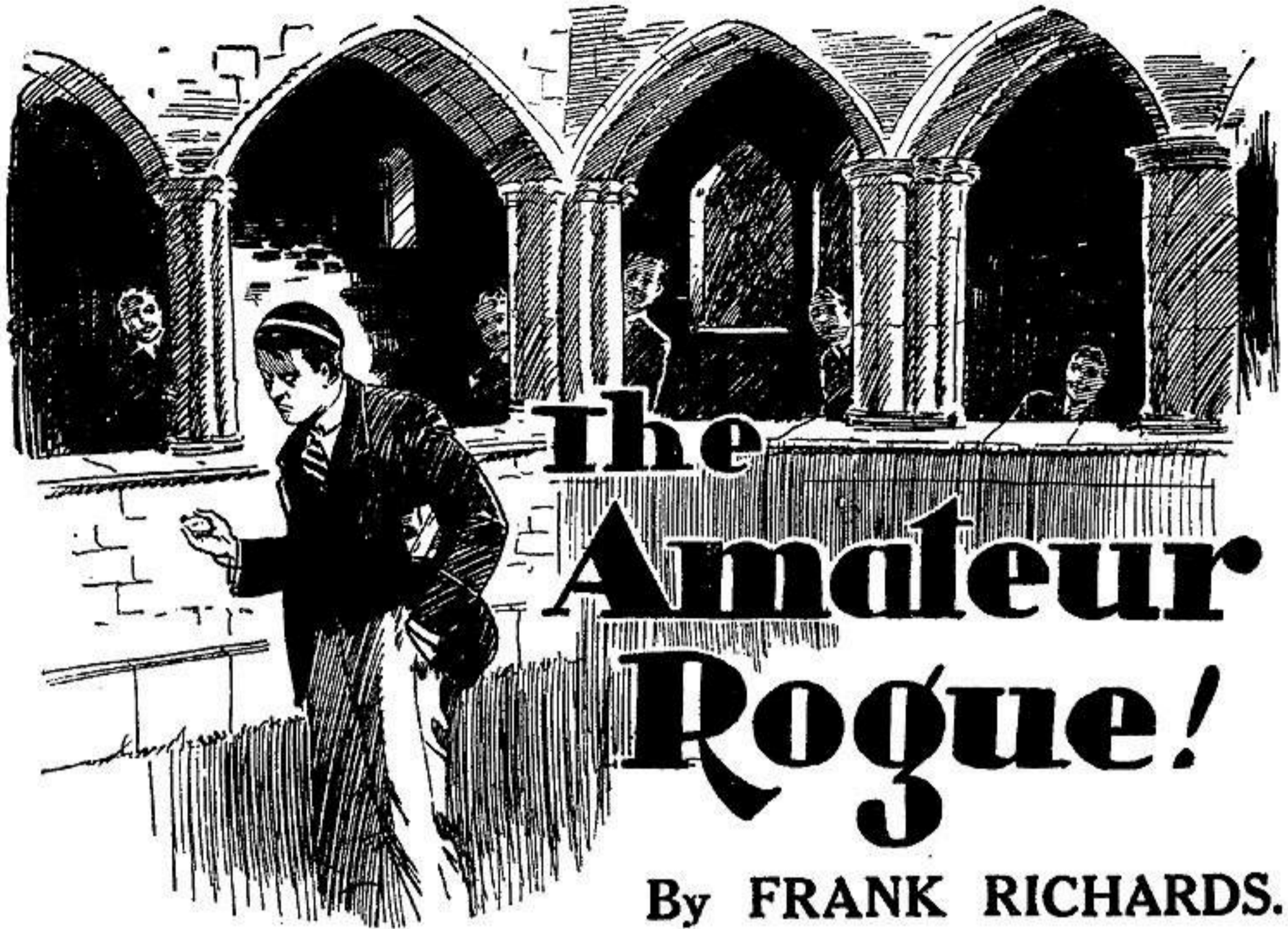
YOUR EDITOR.

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All efforts to be sent to: c/o MAGNET, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C. 4 (Comp.).

DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY OF WINNING SOMETHING USEFUL!



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Knows How!

BILLY BUNTER pushed open the door of Study No. 1 in the Remove and blinked into that celebrated apartment.

There was one fellow in the study.

It was Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley, the new fellow in the Remove; more familiarly known as "Tatters."

Tatters was seated at the study table with a pen in his hand, a worried look on his face, a French exercise before him, a French dictionary open in his right hand, a French grammar at his left.

Bunter grinned.

Tatters, the one-time tinker's boy, had considerable difficulties with the English language. He seemed to be finding still more difficulties with French.

He did not look up as Bunter blinked in through his big spectacles. He was busy and worried.

"I say——" began Bunter.

"'Ook it!" said Tatters, without looking up.

Bunter chuckled.

"Dropped something?" he asked.

"Oh, don't be a hass!" said Tatters. "'Ook it! I got to get this blinking exercise finished before I can go out, and the blokes are waiting. Don't worrit a bloke! 'Ook it!"

Billy Bunter did not hook it. He rolled into the study and stood blinking down at Tatters and his French exercise.

It was quite a simple exercise. Even Bunter could have handled it with ease. But it troubled Tatters, who had never

heard a word of French before he had come to Greyfriars a few weeks ago.

"I say——" recommenced Bunter.

Tatters looked up in exasperation.

"Don't I keep on telling you to 'ook it?" he exclaimed. "Think a bloke wants to stick indoors on a 'arf-'oliday? I got to take this to Mossoo before I go over to Cliff House with the blokes. I can't go out till it's done. Now dry up."

"Like a fellow to help?" suggested Bunter.

"I've promised to do this 'ere on my own," answered Tatters. "Wharton or Nugent would have 'elped me. Cut off."

He turned to his exercise again.

Bunter did not cut off. He seemed,

saved them the trouble of waiting, and also improved things generally for them, in Bunter's opinion. The offer had been declined without thanks.

"J'ai fini ce que vous m'avez donne a faire!" mumbled Tatters, coming to the last line of his exercise.

"That's easy!" said Bunter.

"'Tain't easy to me!" grunted Tatters.

"I suppose not!" said Bunter. "You didn't get much French when you were tramping the roads as a tinker, mending pots and kettles! He, he, he!"

"I didn't get any, you fat hass!" said Tatters, "and I got to make up for lost time now! And you ain't 'clping by jawing."

Bunter blinked at him with a lurking

grin on his fat face. Bunter's offer to

take Tatters' place that after-

noon had been declined un-

gratefully by the Famous

Five. But Billy Bunter had

his own ideas about that. Tea

at Cliff House was an attrac-

tive function. Bunter was

going to wangle it if he

could! And he thought that he could!

"I say, Cholmondeley——" he started

again.

"Do shut up!" implored Tatters.

"You're worriting a bloke."

"You can't go out till you've taken

that exercise to Mossoo?" asked the

Owl of the Remove.

"I've told you so, fat'ead."

"How long has it taken you?" asked

Bunter.

"More'n an hour!" grunted Tatters.

"Dry up while I work this blooming

thing out. J'ai fini——"

"Well, I'll tell you what," said Bun-

ter; "buck up and finish it, and I'll

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It doesn't pay Carne, prefect of Greyfriars, to play the rogue, for five schoolboy tecs are for ever on his trail!

for some reason, interested in Tatters and his French exercise.

Tatters was worried, and he was pressed for time. It was a half-holiday, and a fine afternoon. Harry Wharton & Co. were waiting at the door of the House for Tatters to join them when he had finished that exercise and delivered it to Monsieur Charpentier. The chums of the Remove were going to Cliff House to tea that afternoon, after a spin on their bicycles, and they were taking Tatters with them. They had to wait for him, but they waited cheerfully.

Bunter, indeed, had offered to go instead of Tatters, which would have

take it to Mossos for you. Then you can get off."

Tatters had stretched out his hand to the dictionary with the idea in his mind of hurling it at Bunter as the only means of getting rid of the fat junior's interruptions. Now he withdrew it.

"Oh!" he said. "All right! That'll save some time—Mossos always keeps a bloke talking! Bet you he'd keep me ten minutes! You tell 'im you brought it for me."

"That's the idea!" said Bunter.

"Right-ho!"

Had not Tatters been so busy and so worried, he might have noted the sly grin on Bunter's fat face, and he might have wondered, too, at Bunter's obliging offer. It was not one of William George's customs to perform good-natured services for other fellows.

But Tatters was anxious to get done and to get out. The fat Owl's offer was very welcome; for it was highly probable that Monsieur Charpentier would keep him when he handed that exercise in.

Tatters was not a member of any regular French set; he had separate and special instruction from the French master. Mossos was a kind and conscientious gentleman, and he took a lot of trouble with Tatters, compassionating his blissful ignorance of the beautiful French language. Tatters appreciated it, as a rule; he had a grateful nature. But on a half-holiday, with his friends waiting for him, Tatters rather desired to dodge Mossos and his conscientious kindness. It was possible to have too much of a good thing.

Billy Bunter shut up at last, and Tatters worked out the last sentence of his exercise to his satisfaction.

He rose from the table with a sigh of relief.

"That's done!" he said. "Thank goodness! Now a bloke can get out."

He blotted the exercise carefully and handed it to Bunter.

"Much obliged," he said.

"Oh, don't mench," said Bunter airily. "That's all right! You know what a kind and generous fellow I am. I'm always doing things for people, as you know."

"Oh, my 'at!" said Tatters. "Well, all right! Thanks!"

And Tatters cut out of the study and hurried down the stairs. He did the stairs at great speed, scudded out of the House, and joined the Famous Five in the quad.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Ready, old bean?"

"What-ho!" said Tatters.

"Finished that jolly old exercise?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Every blooming word!" said Tatters.

"Taken it to Mossos?"

"Bunter's taking it for me. Mossos would keep me jawing," explained Tatters. "I say, let's get out!"

"Come on, then," said Johnny Bull.

And the chums of the Remove headed for the bike-shed. There they got their machines out to wheel away. But as they emerged from the bike-shed, a fat figure came into view. It was Bunter, breathless.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bow-wow!"

"I say, stop!" Bunter came up, gasping. "I say, Tatters, I'm frightfully sorry—"

"What the thump are you sorry about?" asked Tatters, with a stare.

"About that French exercise—"

"What about it, fat'ead?"

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"I dropped it—"

"Well, I s'pose you picked it up again."

"I—I couldn't—"

"Eh?"

"You—you see, I—I dropped it in the study fire—"

Tatters jumped.

"What?" he roared.

"Frightfully sorry, and all that," said Bunter, blinking at him. "It was quite an accident, of course! Accidents will happen! It's rather beastly for you to have to do it over again, as it will take you an hour, and you won't be able to go out after all. Hard cheese, old chap!"

"My 'at!" gasped Tatters.

"As you're not going," continued Bunter, "you won't mind lending me your bike, will you? I'll go instead."

"Wha-a-t?" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

"You see, Tatters can't come now," said Bunter. "That's settled—he simply can't come, as he's got that French exercise to do over again. So I'd better come instead. See? Let's get off! No good wasting time. Let's start."

The Famous Five did not start. They stood as if rooted to the ground, glaring at Bunter with a glare that might have withered a stone image.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Reward of Strategy!

"YOU fat villain—" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, old chap—"

"You—you—" stuttered Bob Cherry. He broke off, stuttering. Words failed him.

"I say, you fellows! We're wasting time! As Cholmondeley isn't coming, you know—"

"You esteemed and preposterous rascal!" ejaculated Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "My absurd chums, the ragfulness is the proper caper."

"I—I say, you fellows!" Bunter backed away in alarm. "I say, wharrer you getting your rag out for?"

"You've burned my exercise!" shrieked Tatters.

"Oh, really, Cholmondeley—"

"Collar him!" roared Johnny Bull.

The juniors stacked their machines against the wall of the bike-shed. They turned on William George Bunter with grim looks.

Apparently Bunter had not expected them to see through his masterly scheme for "wangling" a tea at Cliff House. Bunter had been strategic—very strategic! He had no doubt that his sly and wonderfully astute scheme was buried in darkness, as it were; wrapped in mystery, and completely hidden from all eyes but his own.

But the looks of the Removites seemed to indicate that they suspected something! Billy Bunter could see that!

"I—I say, you fellows." He backed farther away. "I—I hope you don't think I chucked Tatters' exercise in the fire on purpose! I wouldn't, you know! It was a sheer accident! I—I happened to stoop down to—to poke the fire, and—and it slipped into the fire, you know—"

"Collar the fat scoundrel!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! It was—was an accident! I—I never did it to keep Tatters in, you know! I—here, keep off, you beasts!"

The juniors did not keep off. They collared the Owl of the Remove on all sides. Bunter squeaked with alarm.

"You fat toad!" howled Tatters. "You offered to take that paper to Mossos, jest to get it into your 'ands, so that you could shove it into the fire!"

"Oh, really, Cholmondeley! That's frightfully suspicious, you know!" gasped Bunter. "I've told you it was a pure accident! I was just stooping down to tie my bootlace, and it slipped from my hand—"

"Bump him!"

"I say, you fellows! Leggo!" roared Bunter. "I say—yarooooogh!"

Bump!

Bunter sat and roared.

"The fat idjit!" said Tatters. "Now I got to go in and do that blooming exercise all over again! My eye! I can't remember 'arf of it—I got to work it all out over agin! I'll smash 'im!"

"Yarooooogh!"

"You fat scoundrel—"

"Owl! Leggo! I—I—It was an accident!" shrieked Bunter. "I—I just stumbled over the hearthrug, you know, and it slipped out of my hand and fell in the fire—"

Bump!

"Whooooop!"

Bump!

"Yow—ow! Help!"

"'Old him!" gasped Tatters. "'Old him while I get that tube of solution." Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley darted back to the bike-shed.

"Good egg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter wriggled with dire apprehension.

"I say, you fellows! Leggo! I—I won't come to Cliff House with you now! I mean it—I won't! Leggo! I say, I—I was only thinking of Tatters, you know! He—he's so backward in French, it will do him good to do that exercise over again! See? Besides, it was an accident! I ran into a chair and it slipped out of my hand into the fire! Besides, I haven't burned it at all! I took it to Mossos—I took it to him at once—I—I hope you can take a fellow's word—"

"'Ere you are!" Tatters came out of the bike-shed, a tube of solution in his hand. "Now, you fat frump—"

Bunter roared and wriggled in dread.

"Ow! Keep off! I say you fellows! Keep him off. Whooop!"

"Go it, Tatters!" grinned Bob Cherry.

Tatters went it.

While Bunter squirmed and wriggled and yelled in the grasp of the Famous Five, Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley squeezed the tube of solution over his head. He squeezed it out to the last drop.

Sticky solution mingled with Bunter's hair, and ran down his fat neck. But Tatters was not satisfied yet. Tatters had to stay in the House doing a French exercise over a second time, instead of joining his friends in a cheery bike-ride in the fine frosty weather. Tatters was naturally wrathful. Tatters intended to give the Owl of the Remove a lesson that would cure him of strategic wangling, and he gave him one. He mixed the solution in Bunter's hair, as if he were mixing up a pudding, to an accompaniment of yells and squeaks from the hapless Bunter. He plastered it over his face, over his eyebrows, over his fat little nose, and over his extensive ears. He shoved the empty, but sticky, tube down Bunter's back. By the time he had finished, Billy Bunter was looking horrid; and he was feeling more horrid than he looked.

"There!" gasped Tatters. "That'll do!"

"Ooooooooooogh!"
"I fancy he'll be busy washing of himself, all the while I'm doing that blooming exercise over again."

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

"Ow! I say, you fellows—groogh! I'm sticky! Wow! I—I feel horrid! Oooooch! Leggo! Oh dear! I say, I—I won't do it again! I—I'll never do it any more! And I never did it! Honest Injun! Groooooogh!"

"Now all kick together!" said Bob. "Go it!"

Bunter rolled away, gasping and spluttering. If ever a strategist repented him of his strategy, Bunter did in those dreadful moments. From the bottom of his fat heart he wished he had never thought of that masterly scheme of replacing Tatters in the party for Cliff House.

Two or three boots landed on Bunter as he rolled. He yelled and scrambled up, and fled for his life.

"After him!" roared Bob Cherry. "Kick him all the way to the House!"

Bunter put on speed.

As a matter of fact the chums of the Remove did not leave the bike-shed. They considered that they had wasted enough time on Bunter. But the fat Owl had the impression that there was a rush in pursuit—and he fled for the House at frantic speed.

It was sheer ill-luck for Bunter that Carne of the Sixth met him in full career, half-way to the House.

Carne of the Sixth was walking along with his hands in his pockets, his eyes on the ground, a wrinkle in his brow, buried deep in thought. He was not, naturally, expecting a charge. He got it without expecting it!

Whatever Carne was thinking of, it was quite driven from his mind when Bunter rushed into him. There was a terrific crash, and the Sixth Form man went over as if a battering-ram had smitten him.

"Oh!" gasped Carne.
"Ooogh!" spluttered Bunter, reeling from the shock.

"Great gad! You—you—you—" gurgled Carne, scrambling to his feet, crimson with fury. "You—you—" He grabbed Bunter by the collar with his left hand, and gripped his ashplant in his right. The ashplant fairly rang on Bunter's tight trousers.

"Ow! Wow-ow! Yow! Help! Fire! Yoooop!" roared Bunter.

Whack! Whack! Whack!
"Ow—ow! Beast! Wow! Leggo! Whooop! Help! Yarooooop!"
Whack, whack, whack!

Carne of the Sixth seemed to think that he was beating carpet. Bunter wriggled and roared, and finally tore himself away from the prefect and fled. A panting, palpitating, sore and sticky Bunter dodged into the House at last, and headed for a bath-room, where for the next hour or so he was busy with hot water and soap and a scrubbing-brush, trying to get the solution off. But after all his efforts, Bunter was still sticky.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

"I haste, I run, I jump!"

"BUST my buttons!" groaned Tatters.

It was hard cheese. Once more installed in Study No. 1 in the Remove Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley wrestled with French. There was no help for it.

Tatters had to grind French while the other fellows were out of gates.

There was, fortunately, plenty of time for him to get over to Cliff House for tea. The afternoon was young yet. Harry Wharton & Co. were going to ride for a couple of hours before they turned up to tea with Marjorie & Co. at Cliff House School.

After Tatters had got through the French and Mossoo, he was going to cut across to Cliff House direct, and meet the other fellows there in time for tea. That was all right; but as a matter of fact it was the bike ride more than tea at Cliff House that attracted Tatters. He wanted to be out of doors, not sticking in a study grinding French.

However, there was no help for it, and Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley worked hard at that exercise, doing it all over again from the beginning. He remembered



While Bunter squirmed and wriggled and yelled in the grasp of the Famous Five, Cholmondeley squeezed the tube of solution over his head!

That French exercise had to be done. As a matter of fact, it had been already overdue. Tatters was not a slacker, but such things were liable to be left till the last moment, sometimes. It would not have mattered very much but for the intervention of the fatuous Owl of the Remove.

Now it mattered a lot!

In his days as tinker's boy with Tinker Wilson, Tatters had not had a good time, but at least he had had plenty of open air. He liked Greyfriars, and was glad to be at the school; but he felt the confinement of walls and doors more than the other fellows did. Even Bob Cherry was not keener on getting out of doors than Tatters was. Tatters would have enjoyed thoroughly that bike spin by frosty lanes and woodland paths, in the cheery company of the Famous Five. Now it was off, and

some of it, which helped. But the task kept him an hour in the study, and he was tired when he had finished.

But he was finished at last. "J'ai fini ce que vous m'avez donne a faire," wrote Tatters at last; and the task was done.

He almost gasped with relief as he rose from the table and threw down his pen.

"Bust my buttons!" cried Tatters. The heir of Sir George Cholmondeley, lord of Cholmondeley Castle in Hampshire, was still Tatters the tinker's boy in many respects, especially in his choice of expressions. "Blow my blooming buttons! It's ard on a cove, and no blooming error! I've a blinking good mind to go an' look for that there Bunter and give him some more!"

He took up the finished exercise and

left the study. As he went down the Remove staircase he came on William George Bunter.

Bunter was in a newly swept and garnished state. He was crimson with exertion, and rather breathless. Soap and hot water and scrubbing had done much for Bunter, but he was still sticky here and there. He blinked at Tatters through his big spectacles, and the heir of the house of Cholmondeley gave him a grim look.

"I say, old chap, have you done it again?" asked Bunter, with a blink at the paper in Tatter's hand.

"Yes, you fat idjit."

"Well, look here," said Bunter. "I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll take it to Mossoo for you, if you like."

"Wha-a-t?" gasped Tatters.

"I will, really," said Bunter, blinking at him with owl-like seriousness. "Hand it over, old chap, and I'll take it to Monsieur Charpentier for you!"

"My 'at!" said Tatters, staring at him blankly. He was not likely to trust that precious exercise a second time into Billy Bunter's fat paws.

"I mean it," said Bunter. "I hope you don't think I'd chuck it away, or stick it in the fire, to pay you out for shoving that solution over me. Of course, I wouldn't."

"My eye!" said Tatters.

"Nothing of the sort," said Bunter brightly. "You hand it to me, old chap, and I'll take it straight to Mossoo's study. I wouldn't dream of giving you the job over again, old fellow, because you're a beast, and I want to make you sit up, you know. Hand it over."

Tatters did not hand it over.

"You fat idjit!" said Tatters in measured tones. "I ain't trusting you

with this 'ere, but I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll blooming well bang your silly 'ead on the banisters!"

"I—I say—leggo—yaroooh!"

Bang!

"Yooooooooooooop!"

Tatters went on his way downstairs, leaving William George Bunter sitting on the Remove staircase and roaring. Really, William George seemed to be having no luck at all with his strategy this afternoon.

Tatters arrived at Monsieur Charpentier's study, tapped at the door, and entered.

Henri Charpentier, the French master at Greyfriars, was seated at his study table, pen in hand, writing.

He glanced up as Tatters entered, and waved a hand at him. Apparently he did not want to be interrupted. Mossoo was writing a letter home to his people in his native land, and such epistles in Mossoo's case were lengthy. He had already covered several sheets in flowing French, and he had several more to cover. Mossoo did not want to be interrupted; and Tatters certainly did not want to interrupt him. All Tatters wanted was to deliver the goods, so to speak, and vanish.

"My exercise, sir—" ventured Tatters.

"Oui, oui! C'est ca! Attendez!"

Tatters knew what "attendez" meant, but he naturally did not want to "attend" with so much of the half-holiday already gone, and the rest going. So he decided not to understand French.

"Yes, sir, I'll put it on the table!" he said.

"Mais mon!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "When I say attendez, mon

garcon, zat is to say wait! You wait, viz you!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" groaned Tatters.

He waited.

He knew that Henri Charpentier was going to be kind and conscientious. He was going to take Tatters through that exercise, and point out his little errors, with patience and kindness. It was very good of him, for it was going to take up some of the afternoon, which was a half-holiday for masters as well as boys. Poor Tatters wished that he would not be so good. He wanted to get out.

However, he could not tell Henri Charpentier so, therefore he waited.

Mossoo's pen ran on.

Mossoo was an affectionate little gentleman. He liked his post at Greyfriars, but his heart was with his own people in his own country. There were fellows like Skinner of the Remove, and Price of the Fifth, who sneered at Mossoo's old coat and asked whether Mossoo was ever going to buy a new hat. But many fellows knew, or suspected, that a great part of Mossoo's salary was changed into French currency and sent across the Channel to help the relatives to whom the little French gentleman was "l'oncle Henri," and a kind of earthly Providence. Poor Mossoo's coat was growing older and older; but so were his little nephews and nieces in la belle France. And times were hard.

Tatters liked Mossoo. Mossoo had been very kind and patient with the one-time tinker's boy, whose blunders in French were more ghastly even than Billy Bunter's. He knew, too, that Harry Wharton & Co. had a great respect for the French gentleman, and Tatters generally took his cue from his friends in the Remove. He waited as cheerfully as he could, shifting from one leg to the other, and from the other back to the one.

Monsieur Charpentier, as he wrote rapid French, seemed to forget that Cholmondeley was there.

There was a far-away look in his eyes, and he mumbled every now and then as he wrote: "la chere Annette," "le bon petit Adolphe"—apparently the names of small relations.

Tatters suppressed a yawn.

On the table, at the French master's elbow, lay an engraved slip of paper, and Tatters glanced at it. It was a French banknote—a billet de banque for five thousand francs.

Tatters could guess that that banknote was going to be enclosed in the French master's letter home.

Francs, of course, were not what they once had been. Before the War five thousand francs represented two hundred pounds. But at the present rate of exchange Mossoo had been able to buy a five-thousand-franc note with the sum of forty pounds. That was its value in England; though in France, expended with French thrift and economy, it was worth much more than that.

Mossoo, like all Frenchmen, disliked the low rate of exchange of his native currency, but he found it very much to his benefit when he was sending money to France.

Forty pounds, however, was a large sum to a gentleman in Monsieur Charpentier's position. It was no wonder that his coat grew shabbier and shabbier, and that he sadly needed a new hat, if he helped his needy relatives to this tune.

Scratch, scratch, scratch! went Mossoo's pen.

"Oh, my 'at!" murmured Tatters.

Tap!



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The door opened, and Carne of the Sixth looked in.

He stared at Tatters for a moment, and then glanced at the busy French master with a faint grin.

Mossoo's affectionate attachment to his "chere famille" was well known in the school. He was a rather effusive gentleman. He had a tender heart, and wore it on his sleeve, so to speak.

Members of the staff, in Common-room, had often been called upon to gaze at photographs of little Annette, or little Peter, or little Adolphe, which Mossoo received from time to time, and which he showed to the other masters with a touching simplicity.

Carne grinned. Carne's opinion of Mossoo was that he was an effervescent little ass; an opinion that Carne did not take much trouble to conceal.

"Monsieur Charpentier," he said. Mossoo looked up impatiently. "Oui, oui! You interrupt me, isn't it?" he said.

"Mr. Prout asked me to mention that he is waiting, sir."

"Ah! Ciel! I forget!" Monsieur Charpentier jumped up. "Verree well! Tell Mr. Prout that I haste, I run, I jump!"

Carne walked away. Evidently Mossoo was not going to finish that lengthy letter home at one sitting. He threw a sheet of blotting-paper over the unfinished epistle as it lay on his table.

"Zat is verree, vat you call, disconsoling," said Mossoo. "I forget zat I walk viz Prout zis afternoon! Helas! Shumley, I have now no time to look at ze exercise—later on I looks at him! I looks at him viz great care, plus tard! You place him on ze table, maintenant! Comprennez? Zat good Mistair Prout he must not wait! I run, I hurry, I rush!"

And the little gentleman whisked out of the study.

Tatters chuckled. He had been waiting ten minutes for the French master, and goodness only knew how much longer he might have had to wait but for the fact that Mr. Prout had arranged to walk with Mossoo that afternoon. Tatters felt much obliged to Mr. Prout.

He stepped to the table and laid down the exercise. Then he followed Monsieur Charpentier from the study. Mossoo was already at the end of the passage.

Tatters passed him a minute later, talking to the Fifth Form master—apologising with many gesticulations for his forgetfulness, and for keeping the good Prout waiting; and apparently unconscious that his lengthy apologies were keeping the Fifth Form master still waiting!

Tatters hurried down to the bike-shed for his machine. He wheeled it out and pedalled away cheerily, glad to be in the open air at last.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Ponsonby Going Strong!

"GREYFRIARS cad!" Ponsonby, of the Highcliffe Fourth, detached himself from the tree against which he was leaning, in Friardale Wood, and threw away his cigarette.

A schoolboy in a Greyfriars cap had lifted his bicycle over the stile in Friardale Lane, to remount it in the footpath.

Ponsonby's eyes gleamed at him from a distance.

"That's the tinker, you men!" he said.

Gadsby and Vavasour looked round. The three Highcliffians were taking a little walk that afternoon, which was a half-holiday at Highcliffe, as at Greyfriars. They had stopped in the wood to smoke cigarettes—that being one of Pon & Co.'s amusements on a half-holiday.

At the sight of Tatters, Pon looked warlike at once; but Gadsby grunted and Vavasour yawned.

"Oh, don't let's rag!" said Gadsby. "I'm fed-up with raggin' with those Greyfriars cads."

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour. Pon set his lips. "That's the tinker cad—Tatters, they call him—who insulted me at Highcliffe last week," he said.

Gadsby and Vavasour grinned. Pon chose to put it that way; the actual fact being that Pon had chipped the "tinker," not wisely but too well, and that Tatters had pulled his nose. Even after the lapse of a week there were traces on Pon's nose of that vice-like grip that Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley had fastened on it on that occasion.

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There's a penknife in the post for Arthur E. Angus, 51, Harrington Place, Lowfields, Sheffield. Hope he'll like it.—Ed.

Pon evidently had not forgotten the liberty taken with his handsome nose. Pon had a long memory for offences.

"Oh, let him alone!" said Gadsby. "That brute generally goes about with a gang of the cads, and we don't want a shindy!"

"He's alone now," said Ponsonby. "He'll be passin' us in a minute. Have him off that bike!"

"Look here, Pon, you asked for it, you know," said Gadsby. "It was really rather thick raggin' the chap when he was over at Highcliffe to see a football match. Let it drop."

Pon's eyes glittered. "I'm not losin' this chance," he said. "Have him off that bike, I tell you!"

Gadsby grunted again, and Vavasour contributed another yawn. But they obeyed their leader's behests.

Tatters slowed down as he saw three figures in the footpath. After the bright wintry sunlight in the open lane it was dusky under the trees, and the Greyfriars junior did not, for the moment, recognise the Highcliffians.

He had seen Pon & Co. only once before, on the occasion when he had gone over to Highcliffe with Harry Wharton & Co., to watch the Greyfriars First Eleven playing there.

As he slowed down the three Highcliffe juniors made a sudden rush at him. Almost before he knew what was happening Tatters was dragged off the bike and the machine curled up on the ground with a clang.

"Ere!" gasped Tatters. "What's this game?"

He struggled in the grasp of the Highcliffians.

Tatters was a sturdy fellow and more than a match for any one of the three, taken singly. But he had no chance against the three together.

"Get him off the path," said Ponsonby. "Somebody might pass!"

"Leggo, you rotters!" roared Tatters, struggling fiercely. "Blooming cowards—three to one! Give a bloke a chance!"

But giving a "bloke" a chance was not Ponsonby's way. Three pairs of hands grasped Cholmondeley, and dragged him through the brambles that bordered the footpath, out of sight among the trees.

Tatters struggled and resisted, every foot of the way, but he had to go. He was in a rather rumpled and dishevelled state by the time the Highcliffians had dragged him into the wood.

"Now we've got him!" said Ponsonby cheerily. "We'll make the giddy tinker sorry he left his pots and kettles!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "I pulled your blooming beezee, you Ponsonby!" gasped Tatters. "I'll jolly well pull it again! You give a bloke a chance, if you ain't afraid to put up your 'ands!"

"This isn't a fight!" said Ponsonby contemptuously. "No Highcliffe man would condescend to fight with a fellow of your class. This is a raggin', to teach you manners!"

"Absolutely!" grinned Vavasour. And the cheery trio proceeded to rag. The next ten minutes were wild and whirling for poor Tatters. Pon had a heavy hand in a ragging. There was a muddy puddle close at hand, and Tatters was rolled bodily into it, till his face and clothes were plastered with mud.

His collar was jerked out, his tie pulled away, his cap stuffed down his back, and his jacket split. And mud clothed him like a garment.

The Highcliffians were roaring with laughter by this time. When Tatters was allowed at last to crawl out of the mud he presented a shocking sight—comic enough to the eyes of Ponsonby & Co.

"Oh gad!" gasped Pon. "What a giddy scarecrow! Still, he looks more like a tinker now than he did!"

"Absolutely!" chortled Vavasour. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Tatters, exhausted with futile struggling, breathless and dizzy, sat and spluttered. He spat out mud and gouged mud from his features, amid the merry chortling of the Highcliffe knuts.

"Bust my buttons!" gasped Tatters. "Oh, blow my blooming buttons!"

"Elegant expressions—what?" cried Ponsonby. "Good old tinker!"

"Filthy outsider!" said Gadsby. "Absolutely!"

"Well, you can crawl away now, you filthy ruffian!" grinned Ponsonby. "We're done with you! Next time we meet you we'll give you some more of the same!"

"Not if my friends are with me, you won't!" panted Tatters. "You wouldn't dare if you wasn't three to one, you sweeps!"

"Still cheeky?" grinned Pon. "The tinker doesn't know when he's had THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,201.

enough! Kick him back to the footpath!"

Tatters scrambled to his feet. His eyes were blazing with fury. The three Highcliffians, expecting him to run, rushed at him.

But Tatters was not running. He made a spring at Ponsonby and drove a muddy fist full in that elegant youth's countenance. Ponsonby yelled, and went fairly spinning, to crash down on his back.

"That's one for you, anyhow!" gasped Tatters.

Ponsonby scrambled up, his nose streaming red, his face furious. He rushed at Tatters savagely.

"Back up, you men!" he panted. "Give him some more!"

Tatters darted away through the thickets. He captured a blow and a kick as he went. He tore back to the footpath where his bicycle had been left. He reached the machine and dragged it up, but before he could get his leg across it the pursuers came whooping out of the wood after him.

The bike thumped down, with Tatters sprawling across it. Pon threw himself on the fallen junior, punching savagely. Pon's nose was streaming crimson, and his temper, never good, was at boiling point.

"Chuck it, Pon!" gasped Gadsby.

"I—I say, draw it mild—absolutely!" stammered Vavasour.

Pon's present proceedings were rather too "thick" even for his faithful followers. But the dandy of Highcliffe did not heed. He thumped and punched, and punched and thumped, till his arm ached, with Tatters roaring and struggling under him on the sprawling bike.

The hapless Tatters dragged himself away at last. He dragged up the machine. Pon seemed disposed to go for him again, but Gadsby pushed him back.

"That's enough!" said Gadsby curtly.

"More'n enough!" gasped Tatters. "I'll see you again, Ponsonby, when you ain't three to one, and then look out, you rotter!"

"Let me get at him, Gaddy, you fool!" snarled Ponsonby.

Tatters jumped on the bike and drove at the pedals. He rushed the machine along the footpath, and the Highcliffians were left behind. He did not stop till he was at the end of the wood and came out into the open road.

But he stopped there. He was in no state for tea at Cliff House. Obviously, he could not present himself at that educational establishment for young ladies in his present condition. Miss Penelope Primrose probably would have fainted at the sight of him, and Marjorie & Co. would certainly have been very much astonished.

"Oh, bust my buttons!" murmured poor Tatters. "I'll jest smash that Ponsonby soon's I get a chance! I'll knock his blooming nose through the back of his blinking 'ead, so I will! Oh crikey!"

Tatters got a wash in a pond and made himself as tidy as he could, and rode back to Greyfriars. With all his efforts to put himself to rights, he still looked a rather remarkable figure. He rode back to the school by devious paths, not desiring another encounter with the Highcliffe party. When he arrived at Greyfriars and wheeled his machine into the shed many eyes were turned on him.

"Been under a traction engine?" asked Vernon-Smith, meeting him as he came into the House.

"I been ragged!" gasped Tatters. "Them 'Ighcliffe blokes——"

"You look it!" chuckled the Bounder. "Better go and get a wash before a beak sees you!"

"He, he, he! I say, you do look a wreck!" chortled Billy Bunter. "I say, where did you pick up all that mud? He, he, he!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" growled Tatters.

And he tramped away in search of a wash and a change, both of which he needed badly. A Sixth Form man was coming down as he tramped up the stairs to the dormitory. Carne gave a start, and stared at him and frowned.

"Here, what are you up to?" he demanded. "Don't you know that fags are not allowed to go up to the dormitories?"

Tatters was aware of that rule—a rule that was frequently disregarded. Still, it was the rule that a fellow who wanted to go to the dormitory in the day-time had to ask leave of a master or a prefect.

"Yes, Carne. But I got to change my clothes. I been ragged——"

"Who on earth has handled you like that?" asked Carne, staring at him.

"Oh, some blokes!" said Tatters.

He was burning with resentment against Ponsonby, but he had no intention of mentioning his name to a Greyfriars prefect, which would have amounted to an official complaint.

"Well, you should have asked leave," said Carne. "You know the rule."

"Yes, I know. But I'm in a 'urry," said Tatters. "You can give me leave, Carne, being a prefect."

Carne gave him a very curious look. There had been a time when Carne of the Sixth had been down on Tatters with a very heavy down. But for the past few weeks Carne had taken no notice of him, and when they had come rarely into contact he seemed to have forgotten his dislike for the Greyfriars tinker. He nodded.

"Very well," he said. "You certainly look as if you want a change. You can cut on."

"Thank you!" said Tatters meekly.

And he went on his way, too much concerned about the state he was in to wonder what Carne of the Sixth had wanted in the neighbourhood of the junior dormitories.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Awful for Mossoo!

MARJORIE & CO., at Cliff House, did not have the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley that afternoon. Harry Wharton & Co. arrived at Cliff House and saw nothing of Tatters on the road, and he did not come in for tea; and when tea was over he had not appeared. And nothing had been seen of him when the Famous Five took their leave.

They mounted their machines to ride back to Greyfriars, rather wondering why Tatters had not turned up. He had been quite keen to come over to Cliff House and make the acquaintance of their schoolgirl chums.

"Poor old Tatters!" said Bob Cherry. "I suppose he's wrestling with French; never got finished in time."

"I dare say Mossoo kept him jawing, too," said Nugent. "All that fat idiot Bunter's fault! We'll kick him when we get in!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The kickfulness is the proper caper!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Highcliffe cads!" exclaimed Bob; and the juniors turned into the path through the wood.

Ponsonby & Co. were strolling along the footpath. Each of the young rascals had a cigarette in his mouth, no doubt feeling safe from observation so far from their school.

They stood aside from the path to give the cyclists plenty of room to pass. Ragging Tatters on his own was one thing, but looking for trouble with five hefty fellows was quite another. Ponsonby & Co. stepped aside in their politest way.

The Famous Five rode past them. Had they known what had happened in the wood earlier that afternoon, they would not have passed so peaceably. But they knew nothing as yet of the ragging of Tatters, and Pon & Co. escaped what they would certainly otherwise have received.

The chums of the Remove came out into Friardale Lane. As they lifted their bikes over the stile into the lane two gentlemen came walking from the direction of the village.

The juniors smiled as they glanced at Mr. Prout and Monsieur Charpentier.

The two masters were coming back from their walk. Little Monsieur Charpentier, neat and dapper, looked more diminutive than ever by the side of the portly Prout. Prout was not a tall gentleman, but he was much taller than Mossoo and at least twice as wide. Mossoo's slight figure was made slighter by his black coat; while Prout, in his celebrated purple overcoat with fur collar, looked immense. Prout was talking, of course; the boom of his voice reached the juniors at the stile. Mossoo patiently tried to get in a word here and there, but he did not have much luck.

Harry Wharton & Co. capped the two masters respectfully, and rode on to Greyfriars.

The machines were put into the bike-shed; and they found Tatters' machine there, from which they knew he was within gates. They strolled into the quad, looking for him.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

Tatters was in the quad, and he cut across to meet his friends. He had washed and changed, but he was still feeling the effects of that severe ragging, and there were signs about him of Ponsonby's vicious thumps.

"Oh, 'ere you are, you coveys!" said Tatters.

"Why didn't you turn up?" asked Harry. "You look as if you've been in the wars, old bean. Anything happened?"

"That blooming Ponsonby 'appened!" said Tatters ruefully; and he explained the episode in Friardale Wood.

"My only hat!" said Bob Cherry, with a deep breath. "And to think that we passed the cads, and might have given them teco!"

"If we'd known——" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I'm goin' to give that Ponsonby teco, as you call it, soon's I get a chance," said Tatters, with a gleam in his eyes. "I'll jest make 'im 'owl, I will, soon's I get my 'ands on him."

"We'll trot out next half-holiday, and look for him," said Harry Wharton, with a smile.

"I say, you fellows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bunter! Just in time to be kicked!" exclaimed Bob. "Turn round, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Turn round, fathead! How can I kick you if you don't turn round?"

"Beast! I say, Mossosoo wants you, Wharton! He told me to tell you! Like his cheek!" added Bunter, with a sniff. "I jolly nearly told him I wouldn't take his dashed messages!"

Wharton glanced round. Mr. Prout and Monsieur Charpentier had come in. The Fifth Form master had disappeared into the House; but little Mossosoo was standing in the doorway, looking out into the quadrangle.

Harry Wharton went towards the House, to see what the French master wanted. Monsieur Charpentier gave him a kind smile.

"Mon cher, zere is time to catch as you say, ze post at the post office, isn't it?" he said.

"I think so, sir," answered Harry.

"I wish verree much to catch zat post, with a letter recommande—what you call, registered," said Mossosoo. "I have not finish him when I go valking with Monsieur Prout! Now I finish him verree quick; and perhaps you walk on your bicycle—zat is, run on your bicycle, and catch zat post for me, isn't it?"

"Certainly, sir!" answered Wharton.

"You are one verree good boy, Wharton," said Monsieur Charpentier. "Suivez moi—follow me, and I gives you zat letter."

"I shall have to ask Mr. Quelch, sir, as I may not be back before the gates are closed," said Harry.

"Verree well; you ask Monsieur Quelch, while I get zat letter ready," said the French master.

The captain of the Remove proceeded to his Form master's study, where he received the necessary leave from Mr. Quelch. Then he walked along to the French master's study.

Monsieur Charpentier had finished his unfinished epistle in haste by the time the junior arrived there. He folded it and placed it in a registered envelope, and then began searching among the papers on his table. A puzzled look came over his face, which quickly changed to one of alarm.

"Mon Dieu! But vero is it?" he exclaimed. "Ciel! I leave him here! He does not valk away all by his own self! Zat is pas possible! But if he do not valk away, I demand where he is!"

"Lost something, sir?" asked Harry, from the doorway.

"He is not lost, for he cannot be lost," said Monsieur Charpentier. "I leave him here viz zat letter, and cover him viz ze blotter, ven I rush verree quick, because Mr. Prout is waiting. He cannot lose himself; but where is he? I demand to know!"

"But what is it, sir?" asked Wharton. "Perhaps I can help you find it."

Monsieur Charpentier was getting excited, and Wharton spoke in quite a soothing tone.

"C'est un billet-de-banque, de cinq mille francs!" exclaimed Monsieur

Charpentier. "Vat you call one bank-note, five zousand francs. I leave him on zis table viz zat letter—yes! But yes! Now he is not to see!"

"Shall I help you look for it, sir?"

Wharton was a schoolboy, and Monsieur Charpentier more than old enough to be his father; but he spoke soothingly, as to a child. Monsieur Charpentier was a trifle infantile, especially when he got excited. And he was getting into a tremendous state of excitement now.

The bare possibility of the loss of such a sum as forty pounds gave Mossosoo a thrill of horror and dismay. He could not possibly afford to lose such a sum, or, indeed, the tenth part of it.

Only by rigid economy, by careful scraping and squeezing, had poor Mossosoo put that sum together, to send to his relatives in France. The bare thought of its loss made his head fairly spin.

leave a banknote lying on your desk worth forty or fifty pounds?"

He stared at the French master. It was quite unlike the neat, tidy, orderly French master to leave anything lying carelessly about. Leaving money lying about was utterly unlike him.

"Vous ne comprenez pas!" gasped Mossosoo. "You do not catch off—zat is, I zink, catch on! I have zat billet-de-banque all ready, to put in letter—I am interrupt—I leave zat letter—I do not zink to myself, in zat moment, about zat banknote. Mister Prout—he wait. I run, I rush, I hurry, comme-ca-comprenez? Helas! I am ruin—I am desolated, I am knock into one cocked hat! Ciel!"

Wharton was puzzled. He understood how the thing had happened; but he could not possibly understand what had become of the banknote.

Monsieur Charpentier wrung his



Tatters made a spring at Ponsonby, and drove a muddy fist full into that elegant youth's countenance.

Wharton did not suppose for a moment that it was lost. As likely as not it was right under the French gentleman's nose, only he was too excited to see it.

"I'll find it, sir," said the captain of the Remove cheerfully.

"Pas possible—he is here no more!" wailed Monsieur Charpentier. "Here he should be, but he is not!"

Harry Wharton hurriedly searched the table. There were many papers and books there, and he moved them all, sorting them all out, in search of the billet-de-banque.

But there was nothing remotely resembling a French banknote on the table. If it had been there, it was not there now.

"Sure you left it here, sir?" asked Harry at last.

Mossosoo was wringing his hands now, possibly as a help in the search.

"Mais oui!" he groaned. "I leave him zere! Zat is certain! Zat is vat you call a dead shirt!"

Wharton jumped; but he realised that Mossosoo was referring to a dead cert.

"Well, it isn't here now, sir," said Harry. "But surely, sir, you didn't

hands, with a haggard look. The banknote was gone! That was certain! It had not walked away, obviously; and the only possible conclusion was that it had been taken away. Perhaps for the first time in his life Mossosoo had been careless with money; and he was paying terribly dearly for his carelessness. Wharton, to his horror, saw that the French gentleman was on the point of weeping.

"C'est un vol!" moaned Mossosoo. "Un voleur—one teef, he is come teefing to my study! Mais oui! Zat banknote he is teefed!"

"Teefed!" gasped Wharton.

"One teef he come—"

"A—a—a thief! Oh crikey!" Wharton gasped.

It was a horrifying thought, yet if the banknote had been there, it must obviously have been taken away, and it could only have been taken by a thief.

"For goodness' sake, sir, mind what you say!" exclaimed Wharton. "It's simply impossible—a thief! You must have put it somewhere else!"

"I put him nowhere else!" shrieked Mossosoo. "One teef he come!"

"But who'd know the thing was

here, sir!" said Harry. "Nobody would imagine for a moment that there was a banknote in the study; and if you put the blotter over it, nobody who came to the study could have seen it. So, you see, sir, nobody could—"

Monsieur Charpentier jumped.

"Zat Shumley!" he shouted.

"Cholmondeley!" gasped Wharton.

"He vas here—he see ze banknote! I leave him in ze study when I go to Mister Prout—zat Shumley—"

"Rot!" exclaimed Wharton, forgetting for the moment that he was speaking to a master. "Cholmondeley wouldn't touch your banknote!"

"I say zat he was here! He see him! I leave him here—ciel! Mon Dieu! Who else take him, if not zat Shumley? I go to ze Head! I go to ze police."

"For goodness' sake, sir—" gasped Wharton.

Unheeding, Monsieur Charpentier rushed from the study. He was in a state of the wildest effervescence by this time, and his voice could be heard in the corridors, almost shrieking.

"Zere is one teef! Zere is one teef!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Wharton.

And he left the study, and hurried to rejoin his friends, his face very grave.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Under Suspicion I

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"What the thump—"

"My esteemed and absurd Wharton—"

The Co. realised that something was "up," as the captain of the Remove joined them. The expression on his face was startling.

"What on earth's the row?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Row enough," said Harry. "That old ass Mossoo has mislaid a banknote, and he thinks somebody's pinched it from his study."

"My 'at!" ejaculated Tatters.

"The silly old chump!" growled Johnny Bull. "Who the thump would pinch his silly banknotes? French banknotes ain't worth pinching, if you come to that."

"This one was," said Harry. "It was for five thousand francs. Anybody could change it for forty pounds or so."

"Oh, my only hat!"

"Tatters, old chap—" began Harry.

"Why, that's the blooming note I see on his table when I was there!" said Tatters. "I s'posed he was going to put it into the letter, but he never finished the letter, as Carne came to tell him that Prout was waiting."

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gave the Greyfriars "tinker" a curious look. But the dusky nabob did not speak.

"You saw the banknote there?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes." Tatters nodded. "I'd never seen a French banknote before, you see, and I jest noticed it. Mossoo was keeping me waiting while he finished his letter, though he never finished it. It was there under my eyes for ten minutes or more."

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"We'd better have this clear," he said, in a low voice. "For goodness' sake, Tatters, be careful what you say! Tell us exactly what happened. You saw that banknote on Mossoo's table when you took your exercise there?"

"That's it," said Tatters.

"Did Mossoo leave you there when he left?"

"Yes. You see, Carne put his ead in at the door, to tell him Prout was waiting. Mossoo had forgotten. He jumped up and cleared off at once, and then I left arter him," said Tatters. "I only stopped to lay my exercise on the table."

"Did he put away the banknote before he left?"

Tatters reflected a moment.

"No. I fancy he'd forgot about it. He chucked a blotter over the letter he was writing, and I think over the banknote, too."

"Then it was still lying on the table after he'd gone?"

"That's so."

"Oh, my hat!" said Harry blankly.

Evidently the French master had been right on that point. There could no longer be any doubt that he had left the billet-de-banque exactly as he had said that he had left it. It followed that the banknote had been abstracted from his study during his absence from the House.

Tatters gave him a startled look.

"My 'at!" he ejaculated. "What are you driving at, old covey? That old ass don't think I touched it, does he?"

"He jolly well does!" said Harry.

"Oh, bust my buttons!"

"He's yelling out now that the banknote's been stolen," said Harry. "And—and it's pretty clear that it has, too. Somebody's taken it."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"Looks like it," said Johnny Bull. "Somebody must have sneaked into the study and pinched it. But who'd do such a rotten thing?"

Wharton looked at Tatters, a strange expression on his face. He did not, and could not, suspect Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley of so base an action. But the circumstances were fairly overwhelming.

No chance visitor to the study—if any—could have suspected that a banknote would be lying loose on the table, covered by a blotter. No one could possibly have gone to the study expecting to find money lying about loose. Whoever had taken the banknote had seen it while the French master was writing the letter.

Tatters' face grew a little pale.

"Old covey," he said, in a very quiet voice, "you ain't thinking that I might 'avo touched that money, are you?"

Wharton shook his head.

"No—no, never! But there's going to be trouble. Keep cool over this, Tatters, old man. You can see how it looks, yourself. But it will be all right when they find the banknote."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Hero comes Quelch!"

The Remove master came out of the House. There was a grim and sombre expression on his face. He made a gesture to Tatters.

Cholmondeley drew a quick breath.

"He wants me," he said.

He hurried towards his Form master. His friends went with him. They were sticking to Tatters; all the more because it was plain that suspicion was falling on the waif of Greyfriars.

"Cholmondeley!"

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eyes seemed to bore into Tatters. But the boy met his penetrating gaze bravely.

"I have learned from a prefect that you went to the Remove dormitory this afternoon."

"Yes, sir!"

"Did you ask leave of a master?"

"I—I was in a 'urry, sir—"

"Did you ask leave of a master?" repeated Mr. Quelch, in a voice of iron.

"No, sir," faltered Tatters.

"Why did you go up to the dormitory, Cholmondeley?"

"Some blokes had mopped mud over me, sir, and I had to get washed and changed, sir."

"Some boys, do you mean? What boys? Give me their names."

"Not Greyfriars blokes, sir," said Tatters hastily. "It 'appened out of gates, sir."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"You admit going up to the dormitory without mentioning your intention to anyone in authority, as you should have done?"

"Yes, sir. But Carne gave me leave, sir, when I met him on the stairs, and told him 'ow it was, sir."

"Follow me, Cholmondeley!"

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch went back to the House, with Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley trailing at his heels.

His friends followed him in, and watched him follow Mr. Quelch to the Head's study. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, quietly and without a word, left his companions and disappeared.

"I say, you fellows!"

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!"

"But I say, have you heard?" squeaked Billy Bunter. "Cholmondeley's going to be sacked for bagging a banknote! He, he, he!"

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, I'm not surprised!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "He must have done a lot of pinching when he was on the road with that Tinker Wilson. Stands to reason he did, you know. I'm really surprised that he hadn't broken out before."

"Shut up, you silly chump!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I hope you're not going to back up a thief?" said Bunter warmly. "I say, Cholmondeley hasn't gone halves with you, has he?"

"What?" shrieked Bob.

"There's a limit, you know," said Bunter. "You oughtn't to go halves in a thing like that, Cherry. I'm surprised at you. I say—Yaroooop!"

Bunter's remarks wound up in a fearful yell as he was strewn along the floor.

The chums of the Remove waited at the corner of Head's corridor, their eyes on the Head's door. A crowd of other fellows joined them there. The news had spread like wildfire that a banknote was missing, and that Cholmondeley of the Remove had been taken up before the Head.

"You fellows know what's happened?" asked Peter Todd.

"Only that there's some idiotic mistake!" said Wharton.

"You don't think it was Tatters?" asked Vernon-Smith.

Wharton gave the Bounder a glare.

"I know it wasn't, you fathead!" he snapped. "What the thump do you mean, Smithy?"

"Well, don't snap a fellow's head off," said the Bounder, with a grin. "From what I heard, nobody but Cholmondeley knew the banknote was there—and I suppose he must have gone through some queer experiences before he came to Greyfriars—"

"He was as honest as daylight."

"I dare say. But he was brought up among thieves and vagabonds. It must have been a bit of a tussle to keep honest when he was tramping with a character like Tinker Wilson," said the Bounder.

"He kept honest, fathead."

"I'm not sayin' he didn't," drawled

(Continued on page 12.)

"Half-Time" Gossip!



It'll take a wise footer fan to stump "Old Ref." Try him on any soccer teaser you like—he's never been caught napping yet!

NEVER, within recent times, have there been so many long-drawn-out Cup-ties as during the present season. There have been many matches which have been like serial stories—one instalment after another, and "to be continued in our next" at the end of them.

It is now several years since the present system of arranging the Cup-ties was instituted. Since that time there has usually been one match in the third round, by way of example, which has had to be played three times before a definite decision was arrived at. This season there were three Cup-ties in the third round which had to be played a third time. Are the football clubs of the country getting more and more on a level of equality or are they adopting, to a greater extent than in the past, safety-first tactics? These are questions which I haven't the space to discuss this week, and in any case they are questions concerning which it would be difficult to give a satisfactory answer. It may be nothing more than a mere coincidence that we have had such a lot of these "to-be-continued" Cup-ties this season.

Because we have had these long-drawn-out games, however, I have received several letters raising questions about them. One reader wants to know the Cup-tie which went on for the longest time until the winner was decided.

So far as I have been able to discover, the "record" match in this connection was played in the 1924-25 season, and clubs as far apart, geographically, as Barrow and Gillingham, were in opposition. The two teams met on five occasions, and in four of them, of course, finished level. In all, the two teams battled for supremacy for nine and a half hours.

It seemed to these players of Barrow and Gillingham—as they told me at the time—that they were playing each other every day in the week. "Here we are again," they would say in unison as they entered the field. In the same season, and in an earlier qualifying round, Leyton and Ilford, two amateur clubs, met five times before it was decided which side should progress. This figure of five is the record number of times in which any two clubs have ever met in the same round of the Cup competition, but it looks as though even this record will be beaten one of these days.

THE fact that there have been so many replays in the Cup this season has also, apparently, tempted another reader to ask a question. He wants to know whether these drawn games are arranged between the clubs and the players in order that they may get the extra money therefrom.

I am quite willing to admit that the money which comes from replayed Cup-ties—there has been one replay this season which brought the clubs over two thousand pounds each—is useful. While this is true, however, I have no hesitation in replying to my correspondent in the negative.

Not for one moment do I believe that Cup-tie draws are arranged so that the clubs can reap a financial harvest from the extra gates. The arguments are all against any such arrangement. Let us suppose for a moment that two clubs did try to arrange to play a draw in a Cup-tie. It is obvious that they would also have to arrange two draws. The side playing on its own ground—and thus having the advantage—would not be prepared to agree to a draw unless it was also agreed that the game should be a draw when played on the ground of its opponents.

Apart from this, the whole idea bristles with too many difficulties. Imagine once more that a drawn Cup-tie was arranged; that both sides agreed not to win. A player of one side might go back on the whole arrangement and score a winning goal in the last minute of the game. There could be

no redress by the club thus knocked out of the Cup. They wouldn't be able to protest because they would know full well that if they did so they would be severely punished for being parties to an arrangement to deceive the public. No, you may take it from me that drawn Cup-ties are not arranged. Each side is desperately anxious to win; does its very best to win. It is mainly because teams are so anxious to win that we get so many drawn games, as teams play for safety rather than run risks.

HAVING dealt with my questioners concerning the straightness of Cup-ties, I may as well reply to other questions I have received on similar lines. At least two readers have asked me whether the Cup draw is in any way arranged by those who make it. Let me admit at once that I can see very good reasons for such a question reaching me. The draw for the fourth round this season worked out in a most remarkable way, bringing together many teams from the same area.

For example, Chelsea were drawn against Arsenal in the fourth round, Southport against Blackpool, Barnsley against Sheffield Wednesday, Birmingham against Port Vale, and so on, while if Torquay had won their game against Bury they would have had to play Exeter City. On the face of it, there was justification for the suggestion that the fourth round draw had been so arranged as to make "local Derbies" of many of the matches.

Believe me, however, this again was nothing more or less than a coincidence.

The draw for the Cup—the draw for each round—is perfectly straight and above board. I think I have explained in the past how it is done; how numbered balls are placed in a bag and then drawn out one by one. There is no suggestion of "wangling" the draw, which is made in the presence of many officials of the Football Association.

I CAN now turn to one or two general questions concerning actual play. In a recent match, according to one of my readers, his side was awarded a penalty kick. When this was taken the goalkeeper saved the shot, but the referee ordered the kick to be re-taken because the goalkeeper moved before the ball was kicked and thus broke a rule. The captain of the side thought, in the circumstances, that it would be wise to allow another player to take the "spot" kick the second time. The other fellows protested, saying that the same player ought to take the kick. Were they right in their protest? The answer is that the protest was out of order.

There is no rule on the books which even suggests that if a penalty kick has to be retaken for any reason, it shall be taken the second time by the same player who took it the first time.

In another game a somewhat unusual incident cropped up. The referee stopped the game while the play was going on under the cross-bar because a player was seriously injured. After such a stoppage he had, of course, to drop the ball in order to re-start play. In dropping the ball the referee sent it over the line between the posts without it touching any player. One side wanted a goal, but the referee would not allow it, and he was quite right.

When the ball is dropped by the official following a stoppage it is not in play until it has touched the ground.

If it touches the ground outside the field of play—in this case over the goal-line—it must be thrown down again.

"OLD REF."

THE AMATEUR ROGUE!

(Continued from page 10.)

the Bounder. "But if Mossoo's jolly old banknote doesn't turn up, I fancy the Head won't have much doubt who's pinched it. He mayn't be so ready to believe that the kid passed through the fire without being burned."

"It's pretty plain to me," said Skinner. "Stands to reason that the fellow must have pinched when he was a tramp. Well, he's pinched again! That's the long and the short of it."

"Looks like it," said Snoop.

"Oh, cheeso it!" snapped Bob. "Cholmondeley has plenty of money, if you come to that. His grandfather gives him a good allowance."

"Yes, if it were a quid or so," said Skinner. "But forty pounds is a big sum of money. Might tempt a chap."

"Speak for yourself!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I wasn't brought up with a thieving Tinker," said Skinner. "It's like you fellows to fly in the face of plain facts. You know as well as I do that Cholmondeley's done the pinching."

"I guess it's a cinch," remarked Fisher T. Fish.

Wharton set his lips.

"The banknote may be found any minute," he said. "You'll be sorry for saying these rotten things when it comes out that poor old Tatters doesn't know anything about it."

"When?" grinned Skinner.

"The whenfulness is terrific, as Inky would say," remarked the Bounder. "By the way, where is Inky now? Isn't he sticking to Tatters like the rest of the happy family?"

The chums of the Remove looked round. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh had left them so quietly that they had not observed his absence till the Bounder remarked on it.

"Where's Inky, you men?" asked Wharton.

"He came in with us," said Nugent. "Hallo, here he is!"

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh came along, with his quiet step, and rejoined the little crowd at the corner of Head's corridor. There was a lurking smile on his dusky face, and a peculiar glimmer in his dark eyes. It might have been supposed that the Nabob of Bhanipur found something entertaining in the present thrilling state of affairs.

"Here is my absurd and esteemed self, my worthy chums!" purred the nabob. "Is the estimable Tatters still with the Head?"

"Yes; going through it, I suppose," said Harry. "Some of these silly chumps think you're not backing-up Tatters, Inky."

The dusky nabob smiled.

"The back-upfulness is terrific!" he answered.

"You don't believe Cholmondeley pinched the banknote?" asked Skinner.

"Not at all-fully, my esteemed Skinner! The knowfulness is great that the absurd Tatters is incapable of pinchfulness!"

"Rot!" said Skinner.

The Co. looked curiously at their dusky chum. They could not quite understand him at that moment; his look perplexed them. Harry Wharton pressed his arm.

"Inky, old man, what have you got in your noddle now? Do you think it is going to be all right for Tatters?"

Hurree Singh nodded.

"Quitefully!" he answered. "You need have no fearfulness for our absurd chum! You may take my ridiculous

word for it that he will come through the cloudfulness of suspicion with flyful colours!"

"You know a lot about it!" sneered Skinner.

"The knowfulness is preposterous!" assented Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

And, perplexed as they were, the Co. found comfort in the assurance of the nabob that Tatters would come through with flying colours.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Before the Beak!

DR. LOCKE looked exceedingly grave.

Mr. Quelch looked worried.

Monsieur Charpentier looked like a wildly excited turkey-cock.

Tatters stood silent, with a clouded face. In that clouded face there was a trace of bitterness.

Tatters realised that, in a matter like this, suspicion was more ready to fasten upon him than upon any other Greyfriars man. In the circumstances, it was impossible for the Head to forget what Tatters had once been.

It had been with great doubt and mis-giving that Dr. Locke had admitted the tinker's boy to the school. Tinker Wilson, the man he had tramped the roads with for years, was known to be a thief and vagabond, and was now in prison. That the boy had remained honest and honourable in such surroundings, and under such influences, the Head hoped and believed; but such a hope, and such a belief, crumbled away in the light of what had happened now.

It was true that the wai's circumstances were greatly changed. If he had resisted temptation as a half-starved tinker's boy on the road, he was not likely to yield to it now that he was owned and proclaimed as Sir George Cholmondeley's grandson and heir. He had as large an allowance as any junior at Greyfriars. He was not in want of money—unless, indeed, he had secrets unknown to his headmaster.

But if he had "pinched" as the associate of the rascally tinker, it was only too likely that he had yielded to the temptation of taking such a sum as forty pounds—a fortune to a junior schoolboy. And all the evidence was that he had.

Tatters realised that.

But it was with a feeling of bitterness that he realised, also, that his miserable past, almost forgotten now, had risen up against him in the mind of his headmaster. It was inevitable; he knew that, but it was bitter to know it. He knew that, consorting with thieves and rogues, he had never touched a farthing that was not his own; he knew that he had borne many a savage beating from the tinker because he would not "pinch" for the scoundrel. He knew it; but the Head did not know it, and could not know it.

The distress in poor Tatters' face obviously touched the headmaster's kind heart. But Dr. Locke had his duty to do. If there was a thief in the school, that thief had to be exposed and turned promptly out of Greyfriars.

The Head broke a long silence.

"You deny having touched the banknote, Cholmondeley?" he asked at last.

"Yes, sir."

"You do not deny that you knew it was there?"

"No, sir. I see it there."

"It was there after Monsieur Charpentier left the study, leaving you in the room?"

"I was less'n a minute after him, sir—"

"Answer my question."

"Yes, sir; it was there," faltered Tatters. "I wasn't thinking about it, sir; but I remember that Mossoo threw a blotter over the letter he was a-writin' of, sir, and over the banknote, too."

"You left the study without touching it?"

"Yes, sir. Never thought about it at all."

"What did you do afterwards?"

"I went out on my bike, sir. I was going over to Cliff House, where the other blokes was; but I got into a row with some fellers, sir, and came back all muddy."

"That was your only reason for going up to the dormitory?"

"Yes, sir."

"You are aware, Cholmondeley, that leave has to be asked to go up to the dormitories in the daytime?"

"Yes, sir; but being all muddy, and in a 'urry—"

"The House rules, Cholmondeley, are not laid down without reason. You should have asked leave."

"I know, sir," said Tatters humbly. "I never thought, sir. 'Sides, I was so muddy I wouldn't 'ave liked to go to Mr. Quelch, sir."

"But for the mere chance that a prefect happened to be coming down the stairs, it would not be known that you had been up to the Remove dormitory at all, Cholmondeley?"

"I s'pose not, sir."

"You see now the folly, Cholmondeley, of disregarding rules laid down by older and wiser heads than your own. You may or may not have had a good reason for going to the dormitory; but by going there without mentioning your intention, according to rule, you lay yourself under the suspicion of going there to conceal what you had taken from Monsieur Charpentier's study."

Tatters' lip quivered.

He could not very well tell the Head that that rule was constantly disregarded in the House, being one of the many school rules that were more honoured in the breach than the observance.

He stood silent.

"Mr. Quelch!" Dr. Locke turned to the Remove master. "I must ask you what opinion you have formed of this boy since he has been a member of your Form?"

"I am bound to say, sir, that I have found most of his faults of a superficial nature, due to his unfortunate early training," said Mr. Quelch. "I have always regarded him, without doubt, as perfectly honourable."

The headmaster nodded, and glanced at Mossoo.

"Have you, Monsieur Charpentier, ever had any reason to doubt the honesty of this junior?"

"Non, non!" said Monsieur Charpentier. "Mais non! Mille fois, non! I have like zat boy, sir. I have always zink him one good boy!"

"You would not willingly suspect him of such an act of dishonesty as this?"

"Mais non! But ze zing, he speak for himself," said Monsieur Charpentier dismally. "He is alone in ze room viz ze banknote. He go, and ze banknote he also go. I fear zat zey zo togezzer. I am terribly distressed! I am disconsolate! I am desolate! But I zink—"

A gesture from the Head stopped the French master's flow of eloquence. There was another silence.

Tatters and the two masters waited

for the Head to speak. Dr. Locke spoke at last.

"A search must be made. As the boy went to the dormitory, the search had better begin there. Cholmondeley, have you any objection to your box in the dormitory being searched?"

"Course not, sir!" said Tatters. "Mr. Quelch, as the boy is in your Form, I have to ask you to undertake this disagreeable task."

"I am at your service, sir," said the Remove master.

"Then let no time be lost." "Come, Cholmondeley!" said Mr. Quelch not unkindly.

Tatters followed his Form master from the Head's study. Monsieur Charpentier trailed behind. The Head was left with a thoughtful and sombre expression on his face. The whole affair was gall and wormwood to him. He could have little doubt how the matter stood, and he was feeling a sense of resentment against Sir George Cholmondeley, who, as a governor of the school, had practically forced him to take this unfortunate boy into Greyfriars. This was the result! An expulsion for theft! That was inevitable now. And the Head sighed deeply as he thought of it.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.
A Shock for Carne!

"**H**ERE they come!" said Bob Cherry.

The murmuring voices in the crowd at the corner of the passage died into silence as Mr. Quelch appeared from the Head's study. In silence the juniors watched him come along the corridor, with Tatters and the French master in his wake.

Mr. Quelch glanced frowningly at the crowd. He did not approve of juniors collecting in the corridors.

"Kindly disperse at once!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"But Cholmondeley, sir—" began Wharton.

Mr. Quelch frowned more portentously. But as his keen eyes read the anxiety in the faces of the Co., his look relaxed. He realised that they were concerned about their friend, as, indeed, they had ample reason to be.

"Nothing has transpired so far," said Mr. Quelch. "The facts, when ascertained, will be made known to the school. Now disperse."

And the crowd cleared off.

Tatters' friends gave him encouraging looks as they went, and his clouded, troubled face brightened a little. It was something to know that his chums believed in him and stood by him, darkly as the cloud of suspicion was closing over him.

"I say, you fellows, they're going to the dorm!" squeaked Billy Bunter, as the three disappeared in the distance.

"Anybody know whether Chol-

mondeley has been up to the dorm this afternoon?" asked Hazeldene.

"Yes, rather!" said the Boulder. "Still, he had a good reason. He was ragged by some Highcliffe cads, and came in swamped with mud. He had to go and change."

"Wonder what they'll find in his box?" yawned Skinner.

"Nothing that doesn't belong to him, Skinner," said Harry Wharton, with a flash in his eyes.

Skinner shrugged his shoulders. The Co. waited at the foot of the staircase. It was evident that there was going to be a search of Tatters' belongings, and they were anxious to know the result.

From the direction of the Sixth Form studies Carne of the Sixth came along, and he glanced at the Famous Five. He seemed about to pass on, but he paused and spoke.

"Any news, you kids?" he asked. "Have they found that banknote?"

time. I suppose he feels bound to speak out what he thinks."

A dusky smile glided over the face of Hurree Janset Ram Singh, but he did not speak. Bob Cherry gave him a quick look.

"Cough it up, Inky!" he said rather sharply.

"My esteemed Bob—" "I don't like the look in your eye, Inky!" said Bob.

"My esteemed and ridiculous chums," murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur, after a glance round to ascertain that only the Co. were within hearing, "you have perhaps forgotten the estimable Rackstraw."

"Tatters' cousin, Rackstraw? What about him?"

"The inestimable and disgusting Rackstraw desires the bunkfulness of the absurd Tatters from Greyfriars in order to take his place as heir of the ridiculous Sir George," murmured the



"Great Scott!" George Wingate picked up an engraved slip of paper from underneath the table and held it up. "What's this?" Monsieur Charpentier leaped excitedly from his chair and stared at the banknote with unbelieving eyes.

"Not yet," answered Harry.

"I suppose it's really missing," said Carne. "Mossoo is rather a little ass. Sounds rather thick, making out that it's been pinched."

"Well, I helped him look for it," said Harry. "It was not in his study, Carne, and it seems certain that he left it there."

"Well, I don't believe Cholmondeley had it," said Carne. "He's a cheeky little sweep, but anybody can see that he's straight. They're rather fools to pick on him."

Carne walked on and joined Lodor of the Sixth, and went out into the quad. The juniors glanced after him and glanced at one another.

"That's decent of Carne," said Bob.

"Jolly decent," said Harry. "Poor old Tatters needs fellows to speak up for him now, but I'm blessed if I expected to hear Carne speak up for him!"

"Same here," said Nugent. "Carne used to be down on Tatters. Still, I must say he's clucked all that for some

nabob, "and the worthy Carne is handfully in glove with the disgusting Rackstraw."

Four fellows jumped as if touched by an electric shock. Four pairs of eyes were fixed on the nabob.

"Inky! You—you—you suspect—" gasped Wharton.

"Once already the esteemed Tatters has had a narrow escape, my worthy chums. I remarkably observed that there would be a next time. This is the esteemed next time."

The Co. gazed at him blankly. They had almost forgotten that dark suspicion, in which they had never placed much faith. Evidently it had remained in full force in the dusky nabob's mind.

"Oh, you're dreaming, Inky!" said Bob. "Making out that a Greyfriars prefect—even Carne—could try to fix a thing like this on a kid!"

"Carne's said only this minute that he believes in Tatters," said Harry Wharton.



(Continued from page 13.)

"That is only esteemed eyewash, my worthy friend. It helps to bar off suspicion from his worthy self."

"You're making him out to be a pretty villain!" said Bob. "Inky, old man, I know you're as deep as a well, but that's the limit. Chuck it!"

There was a very startled look on Wharton's face. The captain of the Remove was asking himself whether it was possible.

"My hat!" muttered Wharton. "My hat! Look here. Carne knew the banknote was there, very likely. At least, he looked into the study to tell Mossos that Prout was waiting for him, and he may have seen it—"

"The seefulness was terrific!"

"And it was Carne reported Tatters for going up to the dorm without leave," said Harry. "But—but—but—"

"Gammon!" said Bob. "They won't find anything in Tatters' box. Old Inky is too jolly deep sometimes."

Wharton set his lips.

"If they find anything in Tatters' box I shall believe that Tatters put it there," he said. "But—but—but—"

He broke off. If the stolen banknote was found in Tatters' box Tatters was finished at Greyfriars.

That was certain. Even if his friends still believed in him, or tried to believe in him, it could make no difference.

To utter their suspicions of Carne would be worse than useless; such an accusation against a Sixth Form prefect, without an atom of proof, would be taken for the most reckless and audacious of slanders.

For what did it rest upon? Rackstraw was known to be his cousin's enemy; and Carne was acquainted with Rackstraw.

Bunter had heard, or fancied he had heard, some talk between the two on the subject; probably exaggerated at the time, and half-forgotten now. And, according even to that vague story, Carne had angrily refused to touch such a scheme.

Hurree Singh, whose brain was probably the keenest at Greyfriars, was absolutely certain on the subject.

They had great faith in the keen astuteness of the nabob. Still, even if Hurree Singh was right, there was no atom of proof against Carne. Even if the stolen banknote was found in Tatters' box, the juniors would not find it easy to believe that Carne had put it there. And nobody else at Greyfriars would dream of entertaining such an idea for a single moment!

Indeed, a fellow who made such an accusation against a Sixth Form prefect would not save Tatters; he would be more likely to be expelled along with him. He would be called upon to furnish proof, clear and irrefragable proof, and there was no proof at all!

The juniors stood in troubled silence. Only on the dusky face of Hurree Singh

Jamset Ram Singh was there a faint smile.

"Inky!" said Wharton at last, and his voice was a husky whisper. "Inky, you believe that Carne spotted that banknote in Mossos's study?"

"Yes, my esteemed Wharton."

"And jumped at the chance of fixing it on Tatters?" asked Wharton. "That he bagged it after Mossos had gone out, and Tatters after him?"

"Exactly!"

"And—and planted it in Tatters' box?" muttered Wharton. "Good heavens! And—and poor old Tatters played into his hands by going up to dorm without leave, Inky?"

"And met the esteemed Carne coming down," murmured the nabob. "What had the absurd Carne been doing?"

"Well, he might have been there for lots of reasons, Inky! You can't mean to say you believe that Mossos's banknote is going to be found in Tatters' box!"

"I mean to say that the estimable Carne placed it there, my esteemed Wharton, and is now waiting for it to be found there."

"Impossible!"

The nabob smiled. Wharton opened his lips and closed them again. A number of other fellows were gathering round.

"I say, you fellows, what are you confabbing about?" asked Billy Bunter, blinking inquisitively at the Famous Five.

"Br-r-r-r-r-r!"

"Time Quelchy was through," remarked the Bounder. "Anybody take two to one in doughnuts that they find the banknote in Tatters' box?"

"Oh, shut up, Smithy!"

Carne of the Sixth came into the House again. He approached the group by the foot of the stairs.

The Famous Five gave him fixed looks as he came. The prefect's manner and look were much the same as usual. If he had anything on his mind he was keeping himself well under control. But he seemed, at all events, to have forgotten the great gulf that was fixed between the Sixth and the Lower Fourth. He joined the group of juniors.

"Have they come down?" he asked.

"Not yet!"

One thing, at all events, was certain: Carne was taking a personal interest in the matter. No other Sixth Form prefect was concerning himself particularly about what was going on. Still, it was true that Carne had been drawn into the affair, as the prefect had reported that Tatters had gone up to the Remove dormitory that afternoon.

"Here they come!" murmured the Bounder.

Mr. Quelch appeared on the stairs. Tatters was behind him. Monsieur Charpentier appeared in sight, wringing his hands, and mumbling in French to himself.

Mossos certainly did not look as if his five thousand franc billet-de-banque had been found. He looked in despair, and on the verge of hysterics.

"Helas, helas!" the juniors heard him mumbling. "C'est affreux, c'est une chose affreuse! Helas!"

Carne gave the French master a startled look.

Mr. Quelch's face was grim. Harry Wharton stepped forward as the Remove master reached the foot of the staircase.

"May I ask if the note has been found, sir?"

"It has not been found, Wharton."

"Not found, sir?" exclaimed Carne.

The words seemed to leap from him of their own volition.

Mr. Quelch glanced at the prefect.

"No, Carne! Cholmondeley, follow me!"

"Yes, sir!" said Tatters.

He followed Mr. Quelch back to the Head's study. Monsieur Charpentier trailed after them, still muttering that it was a "chose affreuse!"

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh pressed Wharton's arm. The captain of the Remove gave him an inquiring look.

"Look at the esteemed Carne!" breathed the nabob.

Wharton looked at Carne. He started as he looked.

Carne of the Sixth was as pale as a sheet, and his eyes had a hunted look. He stood quite still, staring blankly after Mr. Quelch. If ever a fellow looked as if he had received a stunning shock, Carne did at that moment.

Wharton looked at him long and hard, and then turned back to the nabob. Hurree Singh's soft whisper was in his ear.

"The esteemed Carne has expected something to happen, which has not happened, my worthy chum! The flabbergastfulness of the estimable Carne is terrific!"

"But—but—" stuttered Wharton. He felt as if his brain was in a whirl.

Carne moved suddenly. He went away towards the Sixth Form studies, and he seemed to move like a man in a dream. His door was heard to close in the distance.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Amazing!

"VENERABLE and esteemed Wingate!"

Wingate of the Sixth grinned.

The captain of Greyfriars was in the prefects'-room, discussing, with several other great men of the Sixth, the strange affair that was going on in the Lower School.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh appeared in the doorway of the apartment sacred to the prefects, and addressed Wingate in his own peculiar variety of the English language.

"What do you want, kid?" asked Wingate good-humouredly.

"If you will give me your worthy permission to make a suggestive remark, esteemed Wingate."

"A—a—a what?" ejaculated the Greyfriars captain.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Gwynne of the Sixth. "The young ass meant a suggestion or a remark? Which is it, young Jampot?"

"Both, esteemed Gwynne," answered the Nabob of Bhanipur. "According to the instructions I received from the venerable moonshee, Mook Mookerjee, the combinefulness of a suggestion and a remark would be a suggestive remark!"

Wingate chuckled.

"You'd better forget Mook Mookerjee and take tips from Quelch," he said. "But what do you want to say, anyhow?"

"The excellent Froggy has lost an esteemed banknote, as you are perhaps awareful," said the nabob. "My beloved and detestable friend, Tatters, is now with the absurd Head under the pernicious suspicion of bagging the banknote."

"Well, what about it?"

"It has occurred to my poor and debilitated brain, esteemed Wingate,

that perhapsfully the detestable bank-note may be in the worthy Froggy's study all the time."

"What rot!" said Wingate. "Mossoo wouldn't be kicking up this fearful row without making sure that the bank-note was missing. You're talking rot, kid. Cut off!"

The Nabob of Bhanipur did not cut off.

"I beg the esteemed Wingate to condescend to lend the ear of attention," he said. "The worthy Mossoo is terrifically excited, resembling the absurd turkey-cock, but the esteemed Wingate is full of commonsense and fatheaded perspicacity. If the banknote should be found in Mossoo's study it would save a preposterous amount of terrific fuss."

Wingate gave the dusky junior a very keen look.

"My hat!" murmured Sykes of the Sixth. "It's possible! It would be just like that little ass Mossoo to go off at the deep end for nothing!"

"The Head would jolly well slang him if it turned out like that!" said Loder, with a whistle.

"It can't be possible," said Wingate, shaking his head. "Mossoo's a rather excited little ass, but he couldn't be such a fool."

"He was esteemed fool enough to leave a banknote lying about his table, estimable Wingate."

"That's true," said Gwynne, with a laugh. "I—I wonder——"

"It can't be possible," said Wingate. "Still, it's pretty thick to suppose that there's a thief in the school. Where's Mossoo now, kid?"

"He is in his study, esteemed Wingate, in a state of preposterous grief and honourable hysterics."

"Poor little beast!" said Gwynne. "This must be a knock-out for him; he can't afford to lose money to that tune. I hope the jolly old banknote will turn up."

"I thinkfully opine that it will turn up in the esteemed Froggy's study if it is searchfully looked for."

"Utter rot!" said Wingate. But he rose to his feet. "The man couldn't be such a benighted ass! Still, I suppose it won't do any harm to give him a look-in. I'd be jolly glad if it turned out that it was only an idiotic mistake of Mossoo's. I'll go, kid, though you're a cheeky young ass."

"I'll come and lend a hand," said Gwynne.

The two Sixth-Formers left the prefects'-room. Hurreo Janset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin on his face, watched them proceed to Monsieur Charpentier's study, and then went to rejoin his friends.

"Where is the esteemed Tatters?" he asked.

"Queelby's taken him to our study in the Remove," answered Wharton glumly. "I suppose they're going through his things there. It's pretty sickening!"

"Where have you been, Inky?" asked Nugent.

"I have suggestively remarked to the esteemed Wingate that perhaps the detestable banknote is in Froggy's study."

"Rot!" said Wharton. "It isn't! Mossoo might be ass enough to make a mistake, but I helped him look for it."

The nabob gave him a curious smile.

"I have a terrifically strong belief that the banknote will be found in Mossoo's study," he said.

"Rubbish, old man!"

"Let us proceedfully go and see!" suggested the nabob.

"May as well," said Bob. "My hat! If it turned out that the jolly old bank-note wasn't lost at all——"

Harry Wharton shook his head. He was quite satisfied with the thoroughness of the search he had made amongst

the books and papers on the French master's table.

However, he followed his friends to Masters' Studies. The door of Monsieur Charpentier's study was wide open, and Wingate and Gwynne were in the room. Mossoo was there, seated—or, rather, crunched—in his armchair, in a state of very nearly hysteria. The prompt search of the box of the supposed thief had led to nothing, and the poor little gentleman was giving up the hope of ever seeing his banknote again. And the loss of such a sum was absolutely overwhelming.

"Chut, chut!" he was saying, as the juniors arrived at the door. "It is nonsense, Wingate—it is stuff! Have I not looked? And Wharton, he look also. Zat billet-de-banque is gone—he is vanish—he is disappear—he is what you call pinch!"

"No harm in looking round to make sure, sir," said Wingate.

Mossoo made a despairing gesture.

"Look if you wish! Pourquoi pas! Mais, je vous dis. But I tell you he is gone—he is vanish—he is pinch!"

"Well, let's look round, Gwynne," said Wingate.

The two prefects began a search of the study. From the passage outside the Famous Five followed them with their eyes. There was a sudden roar from George Wingate.

"Great Scott! What's this?"

He picked up an engraved slip of paper from underneath the study table. He held it up and stared at it.

"Monsieur Charpentier, did you have two banknotes for five thousand francs?" he exclaimed.

"Mais certainement non!"

"Well, this is a five-thousand-franc banknote—Bank of France——"

"Quoi!"

The French master leaped from his chair as if it had become suddenly red-hot. He leaped at Wingate and clutched the billet-de-banque from his hand.

He clutched it and stared at it with unbelieving eyes. Wingate looked at him rather grimly. Gwynne grinned.

"C'est ca!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier dazedly. "C'est ca! Zat is my banknote—the billet-de-banque de cinq mille francs! Ciel! Name of a name, of a name, of a name! You have found him!"

"Looks like it!" granted Wingate.

"Name of a dog!" gasped Monsieur Charpentier. "Name of a zousand dogs!"

He fairly blinked at the banknote. His eyes danced.

"But—but I understand not!" he spluttered. "I leave him on ze table; now he is find under ze table!"

"The draught from the window, perhaps——" said Gwynne.

"But ze window he is shut."

"From the door, then——"

"But—but I look under ze table when I search for him, and when I look he is not zero. Wharton he look also."

Wingate glanced at five faces in the doorway.

"Did you look under the table when you helped Mossoo search for the banknote, Wharton?"

"I certainly did," answered Harry.

"Then you must have been a young ass not to see it! It was there!"

"Blessed if I understand it!" said Harry blankly. "If it was there I should have seen it. I mean, I suppose it must have been there, as you've found it there, but—but—— Well, it beats me!"

"You are a young ass!" said the

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A TOPPING ANNUAL.

Greyfriars captain. He was strongly inclined to add that Monsieur Charpentier was an old ass, but he refrained. "Well, you've got it, Mossou; it wasn't stolen at all. You'd better let the Head know before he sacks somebody for what hasn't happened."

"By gad, yes!" said Gwynne.

Monsieur Charpentier gave a sort of wail.

"Le pauvre garçon—zat poor Shumley—I have suspect him—I have zink he pinch zat note—and zat note he is not pinch! Helas! How I wroug zat pauvre garçon! I vill beg his pardon one zousand times! I vill beg his pardon five zousand times—"

"Better tell the Head—"

"C'est vrai! I go to ze Head zis moment—I run—I fly!"

And the French master flew—Harry Wharton & Co. barely escaping his charge as he whisked out of the study.

"Well, my hat!" said Gwynne. "What a jolly old storm in a teacup! Of all the thumping old donkeys—"

"Of all the benighted old frumps!" growled Wingate. "Hurree Singh, you seem to have shown more horse-sense than anybody else in this matter. I'm glad you came and made that suggestion. You're a sensible kid."

"The praise of the esteemed Wingate is like the voices of sweet singing-birds in my absurd ears," answered the nabob gravely.

Wingate grinned and walked out of the study with Gwynne. Harry Wharton looked at his dusky chum expressively.

"Let's go up to the study," he said abruptly. "Quelch's still rooting about there with poor old Tatters."

The Famous Five hurried up to the Remove passago. Trotter, the page, was making a search of Study No. 1 under the eyes of Mr. Quelch. Tatters stood in the doorway with a dismal face.

Mr. Quelch almost glared at the Famous Five as they arrived.

"You should not have come here now!" he snapped. "Go away at once!"

"The banknote's found, sir."

"Wha-a-at?"

"Wingate found it in Mossou's study, sir," said Bob. "Monsieur Charpentier's gone to tell the Head."

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

Tatters' troubled face brightened, like the sun coming out from dark clouds. He gave a cheery chirrup.

"Bust my buttons! I say, you coveys, that's prime! Mean to say that the blooming banknote ain't been took at all?"

"Just that," said Nugent. "Wingate looked for it and found it under Mossou's table."

"This is—is—is extraordinary!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Amazing! You—you are sure of what you say, my boys?"

"We've seen the banknote, sir! Monsieur Charpentier has taken it to the Head now," said Harry.

"Bless my soul!"

Mr. Quelch made a sign to Trotter, who left the study, grinning. The Remove master pursed his lips, looking at Cholmondeley. He seemed rather at a loss for words.

"Cholmondeley," he said at last, "I am sorry, my boy, that you should have been put to this trial. I am glad to be able to say that I had little doubt—no doubt—that your innocence would be demonstrated. I should have required the very strongest proof to believe that

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you were capable of a dishonourable action."

"Thank you, sir!" said Tatters. "I was 'orribly afraid, sir, you might think I'd done it, seeing how it looked! And now it ain't done at all! That's spiffing, sir!"

At any other time, Mr. Quelch would have chided Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley for using such a word as spiffing. Now he only gave him a wintry smile and hurried from the study.

When the Remove master was gone Harry Wharton closed the study door. He turned to the Nabob of Bhanipur with a grave, rather grim expression on his face.

"And now, Inky," he said very quietly, "tell us what all this means?"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH smiled faintly.

The other fellows looked at Wharton, and looked at the nabob. Wharton's words had surprised the Co.

"What does Inky know about it more than we know?" asked Bob.

"Lots, I fancy!" said Wharton. "In fact, I'm sure!"

"Blessed if I see—" began Johnny Bull.

"The knowfulness is terrific, my esteemed chums," said the junior from India's coral strand, with a nod.

"You were making out, you old ass, that Carne bagged that banknote from Mossou's study and stuck it in Tatters' box!" said Bob warmly. "I told you you were too jolly deep. What the thump are you grinning at?"

"What I said, my esteemed Bob, was the fact."

"Eh?"

"I will explicate explainfully, my absurd Bob. You notefully observed that I left you departfully when the worthy Tatters was taken to the Head."

"Yes," said Harry, watching the nabob curiously, "and—"

"And, I went to the Remove dormitory!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh quietly.

"What on earth for?" asked Nugent.

"To look in the esteemed Tatters' box—"

"In my box!" ejaculated Tatters.

"What for, Inky?"

"To take Mossou's banknote out, my worthy Tatters."

There was a gasp of amazement from four fellows. Tatters almost jumped clear of the floor.

"Inky! You ain't saying you thought—"

"I did not think you had pinched the absurd note, Tatters! But I was sure that the excellent and execrable Carne had pinched it and put it in your box."

"My 'at!" said Tatters blankly.

"But it was found in Mossou's study!" roared Bob. "What the jolly old thump are you driving at, Inky?"

"It was found in the absurd Tatters' box before it was found in Mossou's study, my worthy Bob."

"Wh-a-at?"

"Knowing that it had been plantfully landed on Tatters, I lost no time in getting to the dorm," said the nabob quietly. "While you fellows were waiting outside the esteemed Head's study, and the worthy Tatters was up before the Beak, I was rooting in his box in the dorm. I found the esteemed French banknote tucked away inside a folded shirt."

"Inky!"

"There was no time to lose, as it was clear that there would be a search of Tatters' ridiculous belongings," said Hurree Singh. "It was necessary to find the banknote before the honourable Quelch found it."

"It—it—it was reely in my box!" gasped Tatters.

"It was, my absurd friend."

"Bust my buttons!"

"I took it away with me," resumed the nabob, "and while Mossou was otherwisefully engaged, and there was no one in his study, I proceedfully arrived there and dropped it under his table."

"Oh crumbs!"

The Co. stared at the nabob with bulging eyes. Wharton had guessed that Hurree Jamset Ram Singh knew something. But he had not dreamed of this. The other fellows were still more amazed.

"But—but why didn't you let on, fathead?" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

The nabob grinned.

"The least said, the sooner the cracked pitcher saves a stitch in time, as the English proverb says," he answered. "I did not desire you to give the show away with your beautiful and speaking countenances."

"Then—then the banknote actually was in Tatters' box?" gasped Bob.

"It was there—hidden in a ridiculous shirt."

"My hat! If Quelch had found it there—" breathed Bob.

"In that case, my worthy Bob, the absurd Tatters would have been adjudged a thief and kickfully ejected from this absurd school."

Harry Wharton drew a deep, deep breath.

"The villain!" he said, in a low voice. "The villain!"

"Look here, we're not keeping this dark!" hooted Johnny Bull. "Let's go to the Head at once—"

"Yes, rather," said Bob. "That awful scoundrel—it's pretty plain who planted the banknote where Inky found it—"

"It is plain to us!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh quietly. "But to others the plainfulness is not preposterous. If we tell the Head that the banknote was found in Tatters' box, my esteemed friends, it will not hurt Carne! It will convict Tatters as an estimable thief."

Johnny Bull's jaw dropped.

"Oh crikey! But—"

"The darkfulness is the proper caper. I was only a quarter of an hour ahead of the esteemed Quelch. But whether the banknote was found in Tatters' box by me, or by the absurd Quelch, would come to the same thing if the worthy Head knew."

"Oh, my 'at!" muttered Tatters.

"I—I—I suppose so," stammered Johnny Bull. "We know that that villain, Carne, must have done it; but, of course, we can't prove it. Any more than if Quelch had found it there!"

"Exactly!"

There was a long pause. The chums of the Remove tried to think it out. Tatters broke the silence in a husky voice.

"Inky, old man, you've saved my bacon!" he muttered. "I'd have been booted out for sure if you hadn't butted in."

"The surefulness is terrific," said the nabob, with a nod. "But—as soon as I heard that a banknote was missing, my worthy Tatters, I knew that 'next time' had arrived! And you mentioned that the worthy Carne had looked into Mossou's study—and that

you had met the delectable Carne on your way to the Remove dormitory! It was plain enough for anyone to see—except my worthy and esteemed chums!" added the nabob, with a grin. "Rub it in!" said Bob.

"And—and—" said Wharton. "Why did you take the note back to Mossoo's study, Inky? You've made him look a thumping ass—making it look as if the banknote was never lost at all. The Head will slang him."

"The servefulness right is great! Mossoo is terrifically to blame for leaving a banknote for forty pounds lying on his table. The jawfulness from the esteemed Head will make him more careful another time."

"Something in that!" said Bob, with a grin. "Anyhow, he had to have his blessed banknote back! And you couldn't tell him you'd hooked it out of a shirt in Tatters' box."

"But—but—what are we going to do about it?" gasped Nugent. "That awful villain can't be allowed to run on."

The nabob's dusky face was grim.

"We are going to stop the disgusting Carne," he said. "But the talkfulness is not the proper caper. This must be kept terrifically dark—for if anyone should learn that the banknote ever was in Tatters' box, it will be believed that the esteemed Tatters put it there."

"Blow my blooming buttons!" said Tatters. "I s'pose they would!"

"The still tongue is the bird in hand which saves a cracked pitcher from going longest to the well," said Hurree Singh. "And now, my esteemed chums, let us go and see Carne."

"What the thump are we to see Carne for?" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "I'd rather see an adder."

The nabob grinned.

"The worthy Carne is in his study—and I do not envy him his present framefulness of mind!" he said. "He must think that the banknote is still in Tatters' box, and that the esteemed Quelch failed to find it there."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Let us be the first to inform him that the banknote is found," said Hurree Singh. "His esteemed face will be worth watching."

"Oh, good!"

"I'd rather bung my knuckles in his face!" growled Johnny Bull.

"But the bungfulness of the knuckles is impossible, my worthy Johnny. Let us go before someone else takes him the esteemed news."

"Oh, all right!"

Harry Wharton & Co. left Study No. 1 and went down the stairs. It was time for prep now; but nobody, as yet, seemed to be thinking of prep. All the



Carne's face paled perceptibly as he saw the two words traced on the looking-glass. "What does it mean, Carne?" Loder asked. "How should I know?" muttered Carne.

Remove were buzzing with the affair of the French banknote. There was a good deal of laughter at the expense of Monsieur Charpentier. At the foot of the stairs the Famous Five met the Bounder, who was grinning.

"Mossoo's had it hot and strong from the Beak, I fancy," he said. "A royal jaw, and no mistake! He looked crumpled up when I saw him coming away from the Head! Like a giddy deflated tyre."

"Serve the old ass right!" grunted Johnny Bull. "He shouldn't leave money about his study."

"You're rather an ass, Wharton!"

"Eh! How's that?" asked Harry.

"Well, I hear that you helped Mossoo look for the jolly old banknote, and it was under his table all the time! You must have looked for it with your eyes shut!" said Smithy.

Harry Wharton made no reply to that. The chums of the Remove went on their way to the Sixth, leaving the Bounder to retail his description of Mossoo in his crumpled and deflated state to a crowd of laughing fellows.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Another Shock for Carne!

CARNE of the Sixth sat on the edge of his study table, rose and walked about the study and sat down again.

He seemed unable to keep still.

There was a hunted, haunted look on his face. He set his lips to keep them from trembling, and they trembled the next moment.

The wretched Carne was in a position that might have racked any man's nerves. He was cast for the part of a

villain, and he was not a villain! Under the orders of Rackstraw, he dared not fail in the part assigned him. He had to engineer the ruin of a Remove junior or face ruin himself. To face the punishment of his own reckless folly and wrongdoing he lacked courage; and he was now merely a tool in Rackstraw's hand. Had he been a cold-hearted and hardened rogue like Rackstraw the matter would have been different. But he was nothing of the kind.

His conscience was an accommodating one; but it could not stretch to the extent required now for his peace of mind. Fear drove him to play the part of a rascal; conscience tormented him all the time. Between fear and remorse, his state of mind was unenviable.

Fear, perhaps, predominated now.

Had the matter gone smoothly, as it should have gone, at least it would have been over and done with. His dislike of the wail, and the passage of time, would have stifled conscience. He would have been finished with the matter, and he would have been safe.

But the matter had not gone smoothly. Something was wrong—he could not understand what; but the scheme had not gone according to programme.

He had waited for the announcement that the stolen banknote had been found in Tatters' box! That, of course, had been a certainty—as he had placed it there. Cunning had been aided by circumstances, and it had seemed that the thing must pass off without a hitch.

But the banknote had not been found!

Somewhat—inexplicably—Quelch had searched Tatters' box without finding

it! Such carelessness on the part of a man like Quelch was incomprehensible.

Quelch was the man to do such a thing with the utmost thoroughness. He would dislike intensely the task of searching a schoolboy's box for stolen money; but, given the task, he would carry it out with meticulous care. He was the last man in the world to look for something that was there, without finding it.

Yet he had not found it!

Carno saw his whole plot fall to pieces. Tatters had fallen under suspicion; he would remain under suspicion if the banknote was not found. But if it remained in his box he would find it himself sooner or later. What would happen then? Certainly he would not keep it—he could only take it to his Form master and state where he had found it. What would be the result of that? Or—more likely, Carno reflected—he might burn the note, in fear of not being believed if he gave it up. No doubt the boy might be kept under observation to ascertain whether he made any attempt to change a French banknote into English money. But that was no use to Carno—he knew that whatever Tatters might do with the note he would not keep it.

Why had it not been found?

It occurred to his mind to intervene and give the Remove master a hint to search again. But that was much too dangerous. Mr. Quelch certainly would be surprised by Carno's keenness to fix the theft on Cholmondeley, as well as offended by a hint that his search had been careless. It was Carno's cue to keep as clear of the affair as he could; even to affect a belief in Cholmondeley's innocence when he spoke of the matter. Anything to keep off possible suspicion.

He could not intervene. He had to leave the matter where it was. And the question hammered and hammered in his mind—why had the banknote not been found? He had concealed it in the box, as a thief naturally would have concealed a stolen note. But it had

not been so hidden as to escape a careful search. Why had Quelch, for the first time in his life, been careless in so terribly serious a matter?

He roamed restlessly about the study, trying to think. There was nothing he could do—nothing! But why had the note not been found? At the back of his mind was a strange conviction that if the banknote had been there it would have been found; it must have been found. Yet it must have been there, for he had placed it there—unless he was going out of his wits.

Remorse would have followed success; fear and uneasiness followed failure. Something that he could not understand had happened, as if some invisible power had intervened to defeat him.

Tap!

He spun round to the door. He had locked it, afraid that some Sixth Form man might butt in on his miserable solitude. He did not want to see anyone just then—in his trouble and anxiety he was much too afraid of betraying himself.

"What—who's there?" he called out unsteadily.

"My esteemed Carno—"

"Clear off, you young fool!"

Carno rapped out the words angrily. It was only a junior—a Lower Fourth fag—coming to bother him at such a time!

"But I have something to tell you, esteemed Carno!" answered the soft voice of the Nabob of Bhanipur. "If you will have the terrific goodness to let me in!"

"I'm busy! What is it?"

"The esteemed French banknote belonging to the absurd Froggy has been found," answered the nabob.

Carno jumped.

"Oh!" he gasped.

He ran to the door, unlocked it, and threw it open. Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh's dusky face smiled in the doorway; behind him were his chums. Tatters had not come with the Famous Five; but the Co. were all there.

"You—you said—" began Carno.

"The apologize is terrific for the buttfulness in," said Hurree Singh. "But as the worthy Carno seemed to be interested in the matter I thought I would come and inform him that the esteemed banknote had been found."

"Oh, yes! Quite!" said Carno. "You can come in! Of—of course I'd like to know that the matter's cleared up. So they've found the banknote?"

His face was almost bright. Obviously—to Carno's mind—Quelch had searched again and found the stolen note in Tatters' box. Certainly it could not have been found anywhere else!

It was an immense relief. Remorse, no doubt, would set in later; for the moment Carno was only conscious of relief in learning that his scheme had not, after all, failed.

That these juniors knew anything did not occur to him for a moment. But, knowing what they did, Harry Wharton & Co. could read his thoughts with ease; they knew what he was thinking as clearly as if he had told them. He had taken it for granted that the French banknote, found now, had been found where he had placed it! And they did not mean to enlighten him yet! The talking was left to Hurree Singh, and the wily nabob played Carno of the Sixth like a fish.

"So they've found it?" repeated Carno.

"Yes." Hurree Singh nodded. "Another esteemed search was made for it, and it was found, Carno."

"Well, that clears it up," said Carno. "I'm—rather sorry for the kid—of course, he never really had a chance with his wretched upbringing. He ought really never to have come to Greyfriars. Is he sacked?"

"The esteemed Cholmondeley is not sacked," said Hurree Singh, shaking his dusky head.

Carno started.

"Not sacked?"

"Not at all," said Harry Wharton.

"But—but—" Carno licked his dry lips. "You say that the stolen banknote has been found."

"It has been found."

"The Head can't let off a thief! What do you mean?" Carno was too startled and alarmed to realise that he was betraying a personal interest in the affair. "The Head's bound to sack him. Now that the banknote has been found in his box—"

"It was not found in his esteemed box," said the nabob.

Carno stared at him.

"Not—in—his—box!" he muttered huskily.

"Not at allfully," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, with smiling amiability. "That is what we came to tell you, Carno, knowing that you believed the esteemed and absurd Tatters to be innocent."

Carno felt as if his brain was spinning. If the banknote had been found, it had been—it must have been—found in Tatters' box! Where else could it have been found?

The juniors looked at him grimly. If they had wanted any proof of Hurree Singh's statement of the case, they had it now, in the frightened face of the wretched plotter. Carno was very nearly at the end of his self-control. The stolen banknote had been found—but not where he had placed it. What could it mean—unless it meant that he was going mad?

His voice came huskily as he spoke again.

"I don't understand you, Hurree Singh! You say that Mossoo's banknote has been found—"

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"Quitefully."

"Not in Cholmondeley's box?"

"No."

"Then—then—where?"

"The esteemed Wingate searched in Mossos's study——"

"In Mossos's study!" muttered Carne dazedly.

"And found it there——"

"Wingate found it in Mossos's study?" Carne's voice cracked. "You young fool, what do you mean?"

"The banknote was picked up under Mossos's table, Carne!" said Bob Cherry.

"You lying young fool!" stammered Carne. "Have you come here to tell me silly lies? What do you mean?"

"Exactly that," said Bob. "Wingate searched in Mossos's study, and found the banknote lying on the floor under the table."

Carne looked at him wildly.

He did not believe it—he could not believe it. How could the banknote have been found in Monsieur Charpentier's study, when he had, with his own hands, slipped it inside a shirt in Cholmondeley's box in the Remove dormitory?

For some moments Carne of the Sixth stood staring at the juniors. Then he brushed past them and strode out into the passage. He had to know what had happened.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another.

"Pretty plain now," said Nugent. "If ever there was a fellow knocked into a cocked hat, it's that precious rascal at this moment."

They followed Carne into the passage. Walker of the Sixth was lounging in his study doorway, and Carne called to him.

"Walker! Anything found out about that banknote yet?" Carne tried to make his voice normal; but there was a cracked note in it that made James Walker stare at him oddly.

"Yes; haven't you heard?" answered Walker. "It wasn't stolen after all—only that old donkey Mossos dropped it and fancied it had been pinched. I hear that the Beak has jawed his silly head nearly off."

"Where was it found?"

"Under the old donkey's own study table," grinned Walker. "Like that old ass to go off at the deep end over nothing, wasn't it?" Walker of the Sixth stared at Carne again. "I say, old bean, are you ill? What's the matter?"

Carne went back into his study without answering. He passed the Remove fellows unseeingly. They could almost have pitied the miserable wretch at that moment. The door slammed, and the key was turned. Carne wanted to be alone now—he dared not be seen.

He threw himself into a chair, and leaned his head in his hands. He tried to think, but his brain was dizzy. The banknote, which he had hidden in Tatters' box, had been found—under the table in Monsieur Charpentier's study! What did it mean? What could it mean? Were his senses failing him? Had he only imagined that he had hidden the banknote in Tatters' box? That was impossible, unless he was going insane. Was he going insane?

He pressed his hands to his throbbing, burning forehead. In those moments Carne suffered in full measure for his rascality.

The way of the transgressor was hard.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER,

Persecuting a Prefect!

"THUCYDIDES!" yawned Loder of the Sixth.

"What?" asked Carne absently.

"Jolly old Thucydides this mornin' with the Head?"

Carne grunted.

It was the following morning. Carne was walking in the quad with Loder after breakfast. His eyes were on a group of Remove juniors at a distance. The Famous Five and Tatters looked very merry and bright that morning.

Apparently there was some joke on among the chums of the Remove; they were talking and chuckling, evidently in a merry mood.

Carne's glance dwelt on them sourly and suspiciously.

Since the happenings of the previous day Carne had had time to think.

In his first terror and dismay, he had really wondered whether his wits were leaving him. What had happened was inexplicable. But long and weary pondering through a sleepless night had cleared his mind a little.

He was driven to the conclusion that only one thing could have happened. Someone—probably Tatters himself—knew his game. That someone had watched him, or suspected him, and had removed the stolen banknote from Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley's box in time.

It was the only explanation, unlikely and unwelcome as it was. It meant that, instead of acting secretly, in the dark, as he had believed, he was known, by one person at least in the school, for the plotting rascal that he was. Tatters, or a friend of Tatters, knew!

It was a terrifying thought.

Instead of being safe, secure from all but his own conscience, as he had believed, he was in danger. Next time, there might be proof against him. If he was suspected, if he was watched, every step he took was beset with perils. And there must be a "next time"—he dared not fail Rackstraw.

One of the juniors knew—he feared that more than one knew. The whole Co. had come to his study the previous evening, to tell him of the discovery of the French banknote. He had been too disturbed and alarmed to take much heed of it at the time; but he was well aware, on reflection, that that was a very peculiar step for Remove juniors to take. It showed pretty plainly that they knew of his own deep personal interest in the matter.

He looked at them now, laughing, together, and wondered what the jest was. Were they talking of him, and his defeat? Did they know?

"Dreaming, old man?" asked Loder pleasantly.

Carne started.

"Eh, what? No! Hallo, there's the bell!"

The fellows began to go in to the Form-room.

Carne was not in much of a humour for Greek that morning—especially Thucydides. He had plenty on his mind without that.

His face was clouded, and his heart heavy as he took his place with the Sixth. Bad enough, if his miserable scheming had been secret; known only to himself. But known to others—suspected, at least! That gang of juniors knew—at the very least, they knew that Mossos's banknote had been "planted" on Tatters, for one of them must have removed it and taken it back to where it belonged, before the search began. Did they know, or suspect, that Carne

had played that dastardly trick? Their visit to his study in the evening looked like it.

Dr. Locke did not always receive the strictest possible attention from the Sixth, even upon so enthralling a subject as the Peloponnesian War. To the Head, Thucydides was a delightful author; and his little difficulties only gave him an added zest. It did not strike the Sixth in the same way. Most of the Sixth would cheerfully have boiled Thucydides in oil, had that been practicable. On this especial morning, Carne would hardly have been able to follow the Head in his wanderings in ancient Greece even had he started at "Thoukudides Athenaios." Which he did not; being much deeper than that in his delightful author.

Fortunately, the Head did not observe Carne especially.

Carne listened to what was, to his ears, dreary tripe, like a fellow in a dream.

When the Head started to read and expound one particularly delightful passage bristling with traps for the unwary, and told the Sixth to follow him in their books, Carne did not hear him or make a move. Loder gave him a friendly nudge.

Carne stared at him, comprehended, and took up his Thucydides. He could open the book at the required place and pretend to read Greek.

A slip of paper in the volume caught his attention. He looked at it idly; he did not remember having put a book-mark in the volume.

Then he gave a sudden start and caught his breath. It was a half-sheet of notepaper, and there was writing—or, rather, printing—on it, the words having been written in capital letters, obviously for the purpose of leaving no clue to the writer. And what Carne read was a limerick:

"There's a fellow who's used as a tool,
A mixture of rogue and of fool!
He played a bad prank
With a billet-de-banque,
And he ought to be sacked from the school!"

Carne of the Sixth scarcely breathed as he read that remarkable effusion.

The words danced before his eyes. They knew! There was no doubt about it now. Carne did not need to wonder any longer over what jest the chums of the Remove had been chuckling in the quad that morning. This was the jest.

One of the young rascals had slipped into the Sixth Form room before class and slipped that paper into his Thucydides, certain that he would find it there sooner or later.

They knew! They knew more than he had dreamed! The word "tool" told him that! He was used as a tool by Cyril Rackstraw. How, in the name of all that was terrifying, did those juniors know?

Carne's heart almost died within him. He slipped the paper into his pocket at last. No eyes but his must see that precious limerick.

Yet he knew that by suppressing it he was, in fact, admitting what he was indirectly charged with. Any other Sixth Form man who had found such a gibe in his school books would certainly have raised Cain about it. He would have wanted to know what on earth it meant, and he would have been determined to know, and to visit condign punishment on the jester who had been guilty of such impudence.

Carne certainly could have raised

Cain about it if he had liked. They had no proof of any kind—they couldn't have. They suspected, they knew, but they had nothing that they could lay before the headmaster.

The implied accusation in the limerick was enough to get the writer a Head's flogging if Carne could trace him out—and if he dared to trace him out.

But he realised wretchedly that he dared not.

It would make the matter the talk of the school. Every man at Greyfriars would know that Carne had been accused, with or without grounds, of laying a deadly trap for the junior boy. It would be the sensation of the term.

Carne shuddered at the thought of the astonishment, the amazement, the endless discussion and surmising which would accompany the search for the perpetrator of that limerick. He might never succeed in nailing the offender, who had been careful to leave no clue; but he would certainly succeed in providing Greyfriars with a nine days' wonder—with himself in the centre of the picture. He dared not, and he knew that the juniors knew that he dared not.

It seemed an eternity to Carne before he escaped from the Sixth Form room that morning. But he escaped at last, and, avoiding his friends, he went out into the quad.

For some time he walked under the frosty old elms, trying to think out how he was to deal with this new and startling development. He tore the limerick into tiny pieces and dropped the pieces in the fountain. There was an end of that, at all events. But what more he could do was a problem to which he could find no answer.

So absorbed in his thoughts was Carne that he paid no heed to Bunter who at that moment, and in full sight of the wretched Sixth-Former, was making frantic efforts to clamber through the pantry window with a view to annexing a juicy-looking pie that reposed on a shelf near at hand. At any other time Carne would have seized the fat junior and given him the licking of his life. Fortunately for Bunter, Carne's dismal meditations occupied him to the exclusion of anything else.

Carne went into the House at last to his study. Loder met him in the passage and came into the study with him. Carne did not want his company; he wanted nobody's company then. But he was aware that his friends in the Sixth had already noticed something—something queer—and he was desperately anxious to appear normal, unconcerned. Loder wanted to talk about gee-gees—a subject after Carne's own heart, as a rule, but a dreary bore to him now. It was gee-gees that had led him into his present hideous position. If he had gone straight, like Wingate or Gwynne, or almost any fellow in the Sixth, he would never have come under Rackstraw's thumb.

"Hallo!" said Loder. "What the dooce does that mean, Carne? Some fag been larking here?"

Carne stared round.

"What—"

Loder pointed to the looking-glass over the fireplace. On the glass two words were traced in chalk in large capitals:

"TRY AGAIN!"

The colour seemed to drain from Carne's face as he looked. "Try again!" One of those young scoundrels must have

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chalked the words on his glass while he was in the quad.

Loder stared at him, puzzled.

"What does it mean, Carne?" he asked.

"How should I know?" muttered Carne. "Some silly trick of a fag, I suppose. It doesn't mean anything."

"Well it must mean something," said Loder—"I mean, it must refer to something or other."

"It's just rot!"

Carne took a handkerchief and wiped the chalked words from the glass. Loder was looking at him very curiously.

"I'll look into this," he said. "Fags can't play tricks in Sixth Form men's studies. I'll jolly well—"

"Oh, let it drop!" said Carne hastily. "It's not worth making a fuss about."

"Rot!" said Loder warmly. "Some cheeky fag has been here, and what he jolly well wants is a licking! Blessed if I understand you lately, Carne! I should have thought you the last fellow at Greyfriars to be cheeked by fags without making them sit up for it."

"Let it drop, I tell you."

"Rats!" said Loder. "A prefect can't pass over cheek like this. I'll jolly soon root out the young sweep who's been here!"

"I tell you, mind your own business!" snapped Carne, goaded. "I'm a prefect, if I choose to take the matter up! Mind your own business!"

Loder gave him a glare.

"Oh, if you put it like that—" he grunted angrily.

And he walked out of Carne's study and slammed the door after him.

Carne panted. He gave no thought to Loder. He had offended Loder, but Gerald Loder did not matter. Where was this to end? It was going to be a regular persecution. Where was it to end?

In Hall, at dinner, Carne, from the high table where the prefects sat in state, looked down at the Remove table at a distance. He saw several faces turned towards him, and they were grinning. He dropped his glance at once.

"My beloved 'earers," said Bob Cherry, when the chums of the Remove walked out after dinner, "I think dear old Carne will get fed-up in the long run. I think he will chuck it. There's a frightful lot of difficulties in a giddy career of crime when you've got half a dozen Sherlock Holmeses on the spot watching you—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Carne, coming out of Hall, heard the juniors laughing in the passage. It was a chance for Carne. Laughing in the passages was "side" for any fellow under the Fifth. He strode towards them.

"What's all this row?"

"Oh, sorry!" said Bob Cherry meekly. "I was only telling the fellows a funny story about a man following a career of crime with half a dozen Sherlock Holmeses watching him all the time and heading him off."

Carne walked away. A dozen fellows had looked round, and he dared not let the talk go further. Bob Cherry grinned at his comrades, and they walked cheerily out into the quad.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Talk on the Telephone!

"I SAY, you fellows!" Billy Bunter rolled out of the House, blinked round in the quad, and headed for a group of juniors who were chatting by the

windows of Masters' Studies. Four members of the Famous Five were there with Tatters. Bob Cherry was not visible.

"I say, you fellows, seen Carne?"

"Carne wanted?" asked Harry Wharton, while his companions chuckled.

The chums of the Remove seemed to know somehow that Carne was wanted.

"Yes!" grunted Bunter. "Wingate's told me to fetch him. He's wanted on the phone in the prefects'-room."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Owl of the Remove blinked at the juniors in surprise.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," he said. "I say, I've got to find Carne! Seen the beast?"

"I saw him on the Sixth Form green," said Nugent.

"Oh, all right!" grunted Bunter.

And the fat Owl rolled away to the Sixth Form green to tell Carne that he was wanted on the phone.

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged joyous grins. They were standing under Mr. Quelch's window, and there was a sound at that window. They looked round at it. Mr. Quelch was not there. Ten minutes ago the juniors had watched Mr. Quelch walk out of gates. That was why Bob Cherry was in his Form master's study at this moment, engaged with Mr. Quelch's telephone. While the cat was away the mice were playing—with the telephone.

"All serene—what?" came Bob Cherry's whisper from the window, which was open a few inches.

"The sereneness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"Right as rain!" said Harry Wharton. "Wingate's taken the call, and he's sent Bunter to fetch Carne. Bunter's looking for him now."

"Good egg!" chuckled Bob.

"You'll get him on the phone in a minute!" said Johnny Bull. "For goodness' sake, don't let him recognise your voice, Bob!"

"No fear! That's all right!"

"Oh, my 'at!" murmured Tatters. "What a game! I say, Carne will be as mad as a 'atter!"

The juniors chuckled. They remained under the window; keeping one eye open for Carne and the other, as it were, for Mr. Quelch. If Quelch came back it was necessary to signal to Bob, so that that cheery youth could beat a prompt retreat from the study.

There was no sign of Quelch returning. But Carne was soon seen, heading for the House from the direction of the Sixth Form green.

He disappeared into the House. Probably the prefect was wondering who wanted him on the phone. He walked quickly to the prefects'-room, where Wingate and Gwynne and several other Sixth Form men were in the armchairs round the fire. Wingate glanced round at him.

"Man waiting for you on the phone, Carne," he said. "I took the call. He asked for you—gave the name of Rackstraw."

Carne was crossing towards the telephone, which was in the corner by the window, when he stopped dead. He spun round towards Wingate.

"What name?"

"Rackstraw," answered Wingate.

He gave Carne a rather curious glance. The name of Rackstraw was familiar to him. Most of the Greyfriars fellows had heard of Cyril Rackstraw, grandson of Sir George Cholmondeley and cousin of Cholmondeley of the Remove. On the occasion when Tatters had been kidnapped Rackstraw had come rather into prominence.

Probably the prefects in the room were

rather surprised to learn, from the name given on the phone, that Carne of the Sixth knew Cholmondeley's cousin. Perhaps they wondered whether it was the same Rackstraw. Anyhow, there was no doubt that the name had struck them.

Carne went over to the telephone with an unpleasant beating in his heart, alarmed, and savagely enraged. Why the man had been fool enough to ring him up at Greyfriars, thrice fool enough to give his own name on the telephone, he could not imagine. It was quite out of keeping with the cunning caution of Rackshaw's character.

Possibly he was getting impatient to hear from his tool at Greyfriars; but the folly of coming out into the open like this was obvious. Carne's hand was trembling as he picked up the receiver.

"Hallo!" he said into the mouthpiece. "Hallo!"

"Is that Carne speaking?" The voice that came through in reply was husky, hoarse, as if the man on the telephone had a cold.

"Yes. Who is that?"

"You know who it is, Carne! I gave my name! Look here, I want to know how you've got on with the job."

"The—the job?" stuttered Carne.

Was the man mad enough to mention Tatters and the plot to get him expelled, on the telephone? At the risk of being overheard at the exchange? Was Rackstraw out of his senses?

"Yes, getting young Cholmondeley expelled!" went on the husky voice. "How have you got on with it?"

Carne almost dropped the receiver.

He glanced over his shoulder at the half-dozen seniors in the room. They were within hearing unless he lowered his voice. Men who used the phone in the prefects' room were not supposed to have secrets to discuss over the wires. Certainly, Wingate and his companions were not inquisitive, and were not giving Carne and his talk any attention. But it certainly did not occur to them to clear out of the room while Carne was at the instrument.

"For goodness' sake, mind what you say!" whispered Carne into the transmitter. "You may be heard at the exchange."

"What? I can't hear you! Speak louder!"

Carne ground his teeth.

"I'll speak to you later—I'll ring you up!" he panted.

Anything to keep the fool quiet, was Carne's idea.

"You'll speak to me now!" came back the husky voice. "Don't forget that you're under my orders, Carne; and that if you fail to carry them out I'll get you sacked from Greyfriars!"

"Are you mad?" hissed Carne wildly. "Speak louder! I can't hear if you whisper."

"I'm overheard here," whispered Carne.



Carne made a rush at Hurree Singh, his eyes blazing. The Indian junior, however, dodged away, and did the length of the Cloisters at record speed.

"I can't hear you. Speak louder!"

Carne's brain was in a whirl. The man must be mad—absolutely mad—to talk like that over the public telephone! Did he want to give himself away—and give Carne away?

The Sixth-Former stood staring at the instrument, wondering dizzily what to do. He jammed the receiver back on the hooks. That was the only thing he could do.

He went to the other window, at a little distance, and stood looking out into the quad, keeping his back to the seniors in the room. He had cut off—it was the only thing he could do. The man would not be mad enough, imbecile enough, to ring him up again.

Buzzzzzzzzzz!

The telephone bell rang!

Was it Rackstraw again? Could it be? Gwynno of the Sixth rose, with a yawn, and took the receiver, before Carne could decide what to do.

"Hallo! What—what?" Gwynne jumped, and looked round at Carne. "Here, Carne, it's for you! It's that man Rackstraw again! He says you were cut off."

"Oh!" gasped Carne.

"And he says—" Gwynne broke off. "Better take the call yourself, Carne."

He handed Carne the receiver, with a strange look at him.

"What do you mean, Gwynne?" asked Carne huskily. "What did he say?" Had Rackstraw been mad enough to say anything?

"If you want to know—"

"Tell me what he said!" breathed Carne.

"Well, he said he's waiting to know how you're getting on with the job. I don't know what he means."

Carne wondered if he was going to faint. He felt like it! Had Rackstraw

been drinking, or had he gone mad? What could he mean? Did he want all Greyfriars to know? Carne put his mouth to the transmitter.

"Hallo!"

"Hallo! Did you cut off, Carne?" The husky voice had an angry note. "If you get your ears up, Carne, you know what to expect! I'd get you sacked from Greyfriars as soon as look at you!"

"You fool!" hissed Carne. "Are you out of your senses? Be silent."

"It's not for you to give me orders, Carne! It's for you to take orders—and jump to them, too! Have you got Cholmondeley sacked yet?"

Carne gave a wild glance round. Wingate and his companions were going out of the room. That was something to be thankful for, though Carne knew that they were going, because they were aware that something very peculiar was going on over the wires.

Wingate rather ostentatiously slammed the door after him. Carne could speak freely at last, though he was still in terror of listening ears at the exchange.

"You mad fool, Rackstraw! You mad idiot! Do you want to betray me and betray yourself? You've said enough to get me bunked, if anybody heard. Haven't you sense enough not to talk on the phone?"

"I want to know how you've progressed with the job, Carne! Look here, I'd better come along and see you! I can get into the school Cloisters without being seen. I will be there at six, sharp!"

"It's not safe—"

"That's for me to decide! Turn up in the Cloisters at the old wall on the fir wood. Or shall I walk up to the House
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and see the Head? You know what that will mean for you!"

"I'll be there!" gasped Carne.

He was willing to agree to that, or to anything else, to get this madman off the telephone.

"You'd better! Well, so-long!"

Carne was able to ring off at last. He left the prefects'-room with the sweat on his brow.

At the same time, Robert Cherry of the Remove let himself out of Mr. Quelch's study and strolled out of the House. There was a cheery grin on the ruddy face of Robert Cherry.

He met his comrades in the quad, and they grinned also.

"All serene," said Bob. "Dear old Carne is going to meet Rackstraw in the jolly old Cloisters at six."

"My hat!" said Nugent. "He really bit!"

"Why shouldn't he?" chuckled Bob. "He thought it was Rackstraw talking on the telephone—and he had to listen to his master's voice."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't know where he thought Rackstraw was telephoning from, but I'll bet he didn't guess it was from Quelch's study!"

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

"At six," said Bob, "dear old Carne will be in the Cloisters—at the end by the fir plantation. Generally a very lonely spot, suitable for the meetings of giddy conspirators. But on this occasion, my beloved 'earers, the spot is not going to be lonely."

"No fear!" chuckled Nugent.

"Dear old Carne is going to have the time of his life! And I really think he will get fed-up with giddy conspiracies! Anyhow, we're going to do our little humble best to feed him up!"

"We are—we is!" chortled Johnny Bull.

Carne of the Sixth, in his study, was in a state bordering on distraction. He was to meet Rackstraw within the precincts of the school—at six. It was true that the Cloisters were generally deserted; but fellows might happen to wander there. The fool had not even had sense enough to fix the appointment for after dark! Was the man mad? Mad or not, Carne had to obey "his master's voice." But this could not go on! Carne felt that it could not go on. He was Rackstraw's tool, to save his skin. But the situation was growing impossible and intolerable.

And there was worse to come. As Shakespeare has observed, "thus bad begins, but worse remains behind!" Carne was not, as he fancied, going to meet Cyril Rackstraw in the old Cloisters. But he was going to meet somebody there.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not His Master's Voice I

HARRY WHARTON & Co. were chatting in the quad, when Carne came out of the House a few minutes before six. They did not appear to give him any attention; and Carne was too worried to take any heed of the juniors. He sauntered away with an air of carelessness, and the juniors exchanged a grin as he disappeared in the direction of the Cloisters. Evidently Carne had not the faintest suspicion that it was not "his master's voice" that had spoken on the telephone.

"I say, you fellows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Are you the

chap who dropped a packet of toffee in the Cloisters?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes!" said Bunter at once.

If a packet of toffee had been picked up in the Cloisters Billy Bunter was prepared to lay claim to it without delay. It was true that he had not dropped a packet of toffee there. But that was a trifle light as air to William George Bunter.

"Sure?" asked Bob. "One of those big half-crown packets, I mean."

Bunter's eyes glistened behind his big spectacles.

"Yes! Yes, rather!" he gasped. "Hand it over, old chap! It's mine! I—I was wondering where I'd dropped that toffee."

"Oh, I didn't pick it up," said Bob, carelessly. "You see, I didn't know it was yours, Bunter."

"You left it lying there?" ejaculated Bunter.

"Well, I didn't pick it up. I say, Bunter—"

But William George Bunter did not stay to listen to what Bob had to say. He was rolling off towards the Cloisters, full steam ahead.

"Now I wonder," murmured Bob, "whether Bunter fancied, from what I said, that there's a packet of toffee in the Cloisters! He seems to fancy so."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was no doubt that Billy Bunter had received that impression—quite an erroneous impression—from Bob Cherry's remarks.

The Owl of the Remove arrived in the Cloisters at breathless speed. He rolled through the quiet old place, to the wall at the farther end which abutted on a little plantation of firs—a very secluded spot as a rule. He blinked to and fro as he went, but failed to sight a packet of toffee. He sighted Carne of the Sixth, however, leaning on the last stone pillar, and wondered what on earth a Sixth Form prefect was loafing about in that lonely place for. He wondered, too, at the ferocious glare that Carne gave him. There was nothing for the prefect to be ratty about, so far as Bunter could see.

"I say, Carne, have you seen it?" asked Bunter. "I say, I dropped a packet of toffee here—"

"No. Get out!"

"Well, I want my toffee!" said Bunter, blinking at him. "I suppose I can look for it, Carne."

Six chimed out from the clock-tower. The voice on the telephone had said six sharp! Every moment now Carne expected to see Rackstraw's head rise into view from the firs beyond the crumbling old wall. He gave Bunter a look that made him jump.

"Clear off, you fat fool!"

Bunter backed away. He did not like Carne's looks; but he wanted that imaginary packet of toffee.

"I—I say, Carne— Oh crikey!"

Bunter jumped away as Carne made an angry stride at him.

There was a sound of flying footsteps in the Cloisters. Billy Bunter was in full flight. He almost rushed into the Famous Five when he got back to the quad.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the jolly old hurry?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I—I say, you fellows!" spluttered Bunter. "I say, Carne's bagged my toffee—"

"What?" yelled the juniors.

"He must have!" gasped Bunter. "He's hanging about there, and he wouldn't let me look for it! Sprang at me like a tiger! Oh dear!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say, you fellows, fancy a Sixth Form prefect bagging a man's toffee—"

"Ha ha, ha!" shrieked the Removites.

"I—I say, Bob, you go and look for it!" urged Bunter. "You're not afraid of that beast, old chap."

Bob winked at his comrades.

"Right-ho!" he answered.

Bob Cherry strolled into the Cloisters. He whistled cheerily as he went. Carne started almost convulsively as the cheery Bob came up. It was five minutes past six.

"What do you want here, Cherry?" Carne tried to speak naturally, without much success.

"Oh, just strolling round," answered Bob.

"Well, clear off!"

"Fellows are allowed to walk round the Cloisters if they like," answered Bob, with a stare.

"Take fifty lines, Cherry, and go to the House at once!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Bob Cherry walked away, still whistling. It was worth fifty lines! Carne leaned on the old wall and waited. Rackstraw was late—luckily, as it happened. If he had come while the juniors were hanging about—

Carne started, and gritted his teeth, as Harry Wharton came into sight, strolling under the old arches. That usually secluded spot seemed to be haunted by juniors this evening.

"Clear out of this, Wharton!" called out Carne.

"The captain of the Remove looked at him.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because I tell you!" snapped Carne.

"If you want a licking—"

"Not at all!" answered Wharton politely; and he walked away—slowly, very slowly. But finally, to Carne's relief, he disappeared.

Carne's relief did not last long. A few minutes later Frank Nugent came sauntering up. Carne gave him a glare like a basilisk.

"Nugent! Do you want anything here?"

"Only strolling round, Carne," answered Nugent innocently.

"Well, go and stroll somewhere else."

"Oh, all right!"

Nugent departed. Once more Carne was left alone in his secluded spot. But not for long. Johnny Bull came sauntering along a few minutes later.

Carne looked at him. Was this a rag? How could it be, when these juniors could not possibly know what he was there for? What would they think—what would everybody think—if he kept on sending fellows out of the Cloisters? He would be drawing the attention of all Greyfriars to his secret place of appointment at this rate. But there was no help for it—when Rackstraw might arrive any moment.

"Clear off, Bull!" said Carne, between his teeth.

"Eh, what's the matter?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I've told you to clear off!"

"But why—"

Johnny Bull did not wait for an answer to that question, or even to finish the question. Carne of the Sixth was coming towards him with a dangerous look. The Removite disappeared along the old arches.

Carne leaned on the wall, breathing hard. Rackstraw was a quarter of an hour late. Was he coming? Carne jerked himself up the old wall and stared over. If Rackstraw was coming,

(Continued on page 28.)

THE MOST AMAZING STORY OF SLAVE-TRADING EVER TOLD!

THE ISLAND OF SLAVES!

BY STANTON HOPE.



"For the last time, dog of a feringhee," thundered the giant Abyssinian, "from where did you come?"

Chotajee's Plight!

HE crept forward to the date-palms and slithered back quickly with the announcement that three other men were returning from the village—Ras Dhin, the Abyssinian, and two others.

"P'hew!" Tony breathed. "When that black tiger goes aboard and questions Chota he'll have the poor little chump hung, drawn, quartered and fed to the sharks."

By peering round the corner of the store-dump they saw Ras Dhin signal and a bellam come and take him off to the dhow. Then Guy, after making sure that no one else was returning from the village, again took out his patent lighter.

"Beat it for those rocks, Tony!" he whispered, "and I'll join you before the fire gets a hold and lights up the beach. If we're seen—"

There was no need for Guy to explain. Tony knew the penalty of their desperate enterprise if they were caught by the minions of the terrible Ras Dhin. They would die—and he did not care to dwell upon the likely

manner of their dying. Death in the maw of a deep-sea shark would be pleasant compared with falling into the clutches of that black tiger from Abyssinia!

When Tony had reached the rocks Guy stooped down beside the matting and splintered wood at the base of the great stack of rifles and ammunition, covered by date sacks. The wick lighted from the first spark from the flint, and he shielded the tiny flame in his hand until he applied it to some of the matting. Some of this, which had been made damp by spray during the hurricane, had since been dried by the wind, and the hungry fire seized hold on it with avidity. Resolutely the young officer applied the light to other portions of the matting and the flames began to run along the debris at the foot of the store-dump like fiery serpents roused from their nests.

The orange fire reflected on the sand beyond the dump, and Guy slithered round to the far side and darted away through the night to the rocks where Tony had concealed himself.

AS BLACK AS THE ACE OF SPADES is Chotajee, the Bengali, but to his English friends of the warship Falcon, he's WHITE ALL THROUGH!

(See opening chapters of story on page 26.)

The two chums took up their position as close to the sea as possible, heedless of the spray which drenched them from the surf.

Swiftly the fire spread as the wind blew the flames and sparks among the wreckage, sacks and boxes.

Within half a minute of the start of the blaze great activity became apparent on the anchored dhow. The gruff shouting of men was followed by the splash of oars as two of the boats moored to the dhow came racing to the beach. Among the rocks Guy and Tony watched some of the Arabs leap out into the hissing white surf as soon as the boats grounded; but precisely at the same moment the first box of rifle ammunition took fire.

Crack! Crack! Crackety-crack!

The nickel-coated bullets began plopping through the air and spurting up the sand near the dump.

The fire quickly spread, and now the flames were eating furiously into the boxes of rifles and ammunition, and hundreds of small explosions, like the bursting of Chinese crackers, beat out upon the night.

Emitting loud cries, the Arabs leaped back into their boats and shoved off out of range of that furious bombardment.

"Ha, ha, ha!" Tony chuckled. "As poor old Chota used to say, 'he who takes fright and runs away lives to give frightfulness another day.'"

"Let's hope they don't take it out of Chota too soon," Guy said seriously. "We must give 'em time to get farther out, then we'll slip into the water."

Normally, when fired from a rifle, a bullet gains its high velocity from the fact that the cordite charge forces it through the confined space of a long barrel. Because these cartridges were loose in the boxes of the dump much of the force of the explosion of the cordite charge was lost, and the farthest that any of the bullets reached was the surf tumbling upon the beach. So the Arabs were soon out of range, but they continued rowing furiously back to the dhow.

From somewhere inland there began another uproar of voices, a sure indication that the village had been roused, and it was time to be going.

"Now for it!" Guy whispered. "For the love of Mike, Tony, take your cue from me in getting into the water, because if you get punched back on those rocks by the surf, you'll find yourself with your ribs stove in."

They discarded their tunics and shoes, and Tony left the heavy automatic behind him. Guy cautiously moved forward over the volcanic rocks, and clung on to a piece of wreckage wedged between two of them as a wave curled and

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thumped to a depth of a couple of feet. When the wave had passed, Tony joined him, and the two held on together and resisted the next battering-ram of surf.

The hurricane had long since passed, but there was an awkward deep-sea swell which was bringing in long, white-crested rollers.

"Our chance is that there's deep water beyond here," said Guy, "and I think there is. Swim below the surface, old man, until you feel the next wave pass over you, and then come up and strike out like blazes to prevent getting flung back."

They waited their opportunity, and, at Guy's word, flung themselves off the rock and swam with heads down in the swinging seas until they could hold their breath no longer.

They came up almost together in the trough of a wave, glimpsed another beginning to curl ahead of them, gulped a draught of the night air into their lungs, then dived again to avoid that punch of foaming water which might hurtle them back to the rocks.

The roaring fire threw a fierce light over the beach, and the palms beyond, and set the surf piling on the sand, scintillating with reflected gold. It splashed crimson on the dhow with her high poop and forward raking masts, and the boats huddled alongside her. In fear and trembling, many of the Arabs were on all fours on her decks, turned in the general direction of Mecca, and thumping their heads on the planking.

The great blaze with its hammering explosions seemed to spell disaster to them, and they were terrified of the giant black Abyssinian who stood by the tiller with his chest bared to the warmth, and thundering a volley of strange oaths against this unexpected turn of the wheel of fate!

Their attention engrossed by the fire, the Arabs failed to see the two small objects creeping out to sea. Only the heads of Guy and Tony showed above the surface, and they swam with a powerful breast-stroke and without making a splash. By keeping a course straight out from the rocks, they avoided getting in the fierce glow of the fire, and the farther they swam the greater the darkness that enwrapped them. Finally, having got a full half-mile out upon the warm sea, they turned and, taking advantage of the tide, swam with equal stealth toward the dhow.

Their ankles tingled each time they thought of sharks, but these brutes had gone far from land before the hurricane burst, in their instinctive fear of being caught in the heavy surf and thrown up on land.

Presently, as the fire began to die down, Tony and Dunn saw fresh activity aboard the dhow, and two boats went toward the shore. They hoped that Ras Dhin might go with the men, but the Abyssinian giant remained standing like a bronze statue on the poop-deck.

"We can thank our stars it's getting darker again!" Guy panted. "The wind's veered round, and that'll increase our chance of beating it if we can nab a bellum."

Silently they drew nearer to the dhow and, taking advantage of the deep shadow under her starboard quarter, got alongside. No one challenged them, and Guy helped Tony to a foothold on one of the clamps of the huge wooden rudder.

Near by a bellum with mast stepped was moored by a long rope, but they had to accept the hazard that Arabs

might come down into it and see them. A stout rope, knotted at intervals of about eight inches, hung sheer from the quarter, and Guy hauled himself out of the sea by it and listened anxiously as the water trickled down in streams from his saturated shirt and trousers. Too much noise was going on aboard the dhow, however, for this slight sound to give away their presence.

"We'd better shin aboard," Guy whispered, leaning toward Tony. "Follow me, old-timer, and we'll take a dekko at the old hooker."

Hand over hand he went up the rope until he came to a square scuttle in the stern. With the greatest caution he peered in, but could see nothing in the darkness, although he could distinctly hear shuffling noises and faint moans.

Suddenly a pale light illuminated the scene within as a door was flung open somewhere forward. And through the port Guy was able to see that this filthy lower deck of the dhow was packed with African slaves!

He motioned to Tony to remain clinging to the rope just below him, and secured a sidelong view through the scuttle of two Arabs near the open door knocking the shackles from the wrists of a burly slave. He saw the Arabs leave, prodding the slave, who only wore a loincloth, ahead of them with the points of their knives.

When they had gone and the door had been shut, Guy hauled himself up and wriggled feet-first through the scuttle, beckoning Tony to follow him. His fall was broken by some of the slaves on the deck below him, and the negroes in their fright gave vent to howls and moans.

Tony dropped down beside Guy, and both chums flung themselves down among the hot bodies of the slaves as the door of this foul hole was drawn partly open again, and an Arab slashed a whip among some of the unfortunate negroes nearest him. Terrified of attracting attention, the other slaves remained quiet and cringed in the darkness, affording a screen to the two chums.

When the Arab had withdrawn and the door had closed again, only the deep moans of the men who had been struck, and the heavy breathing of the others, broke the stillness of the slave-hold.

Now Guy knew that his former suspicions had been correct. There had been slaves aboard the dhow when she had been stopped and boarded on the previous day. Then, they must have

THE FIRST CHAPTERS RETOLD.

LIEUTENANT GUY EASTON, SUB-LIEUTENANT TONY DUNN, and CHOTAJEE, a Bengali interpreter, are sent to board a suspicious-looking dhow heading a southerly course out of the Red Sea. On the return journey, however, they are shipwrecked and cast on the Island of Khoof off the Arabian coast. Arriving in the village, Guy and his companions are just in time to contrive the escape of two captive Somalis who have fallen into the hands of Sheikh Haji of Khoof. Cautiously creeping towards the beach again the trio make the startling discovery that the dhow which they had been sent to inspect has called at the island to pick up a cargo of rifles and ammunition for shipment to Afghanistan. Thinking the best plan would be to set fire to the dump, the chums are collecting all the inflammable material within reach when Chotajee is spotted by the village Arabs and taken prisoner. Realising the futility of tackling the Arabs, Guy and Tony crouch in the deep shadows of the store-dump.

"We'd better see that the coast is clear," says Guy, "before we start up this Guy Fawkes' stunt!" (Now read on.)

been in a forward hold, and some or all had been transferred to this after part of the ship.

As the chums' eyes became accustomed to the deeper darkness, a quavering voice spoke near them.

"Massas! Massas! Sab us!"

Running with perspiration in the fetid heat, Guy turned in the direction of the voice and dimly made out the form of a negro, his hands clasped in supplication, and a chain festooned from his shackled wrists.

"Who are you?" he demanded, in a hoarse whisper. "Where were you and these others captured, and how did they get you aboard here?"

Trembling with mingled excitement and hope, the negro said he had once been a house-boy to an English rubber planter in Kenya, but had returned to his own village of Debbah in Abyssinia. Then an Arab slave caravan arrived, the village was razed to the ground, and the young men, like himself, had been marched to the coast. By night they had been taken aboard the dhow secretly in a river near Tajura, and he believed that they were destined for slavery under certain chieftains in remote parts of Persia.

"Tell your comrades here," said Guy, "that we are British naval officers, and that they must do nothing to give away our presence. Just now we can do nothing to aid you, but you can rest assured that when we get back to our ship, we shall never be satisfied until every man-jack of you is free!"

He stumbled among the slaves fastened to their clanking chains, followed by Tony. The blood of both the chums boiled in fury against Ras Dhin and the other slavers as they saw the suffering of these helpless negroes who had been dragged from their burned village for a life of servitude in a far land. Some, they noticed, who had been ill and had died during the buffeting of the vessel in the hurricane, still remained among their living comrades, and many had become too weak to move owing to their hardships.

The scuttle had been opened to give them some measure of fresh air, for hitherto, owing to the chase by the Falcon and the hurricane which had followed, it had not been policy for the slavers to give their captives exercise on deck.

Dragging aside the heavy wooden door, Guy led the way through an ill-lighted compartment stacked with bales to a bamboo ladder leading through a hatchway in the deck above.

Many of the Arabs had left the dhow for the shore, and most of those who remained had resumed the work of dumping cargo over the side from the forward deck.

Standing side by side on the wide bamboo ladder, the chums cautiously peered over the hatch-coaming and saw a sight which again set the blood in their veins running hotly.

Bare to the waist, and tied with his hands to a rope at the foot of the rakish mainmast, was little Chotajee, their babu pal. Near by was the bearded Arab whom they recognised as Hassan, the skipper of the dhow, and two other Arabs, with the burly negro slave between them. Standing sideways from where Guy and Tony were hiding, and with his back towards them, was the giant Abyssinian, Ras Dhin!

It seemed that Chotajee must have pretended not to have understood

Arabic, for the Abyssinian was addressing him in better English than the Bengali himself used. And Guy exchanged a glance with Tony, for he had guessed on their previous visit to the dhow that the Abyssinian giant knew English, and was something considerably bigger than a mere deckhand, as Hassan had said.

"By the beard of the Prophet, you shall find your tongue, dog of a feringhee!" thundered Ras Dhin, "or else it shall be torn from you. You say you were fishing near Aden; but Aden is many leagues across the sea. No open boat could have been carried so far as to be wrecked at Khoof. Is it not true, son of a pariah dog, that you are a spy?"

The voice of Chotajee came in quavering response:

"N-no, sahib! Truly have I always been brought up to emulate Washington Sahib, who smote down esteemed cherry-tree with homely chopper and said, 'I cannot tell an untruthful lie.' Sahib, I am honest Bengali babu and esteemed 'Failed B.A.' of illustrious Indian university, and may debased pimples afflict honourable tongue if I do not tell truthfulness! My master is Mr. Juglawalla, an honourable sandalwood merchant from the Punjab, and I am his chief clerk or babu. While fishing on holiday I was blown, willy-nilly out to sea and regain senses on unknown island."

"Corks!" Guy muttered. "He's a masterpiece!"

Again Ras Dhin used the word feringhee—foreigner—and made an insulting allusion, in the Eastern manner, about Chotajee's forebears. Plainly he disbelieved the little Indian, and was inwardly boiling with fury about that mysterious outbreak of fire in the store-dump ashore. When he had unburdened himself of the abuse, he demanded:

"What were you doing on the beach near the store of dates, offspring of pigs? Is it not reported that you had many dried sticks in your arms when you were first seen among the palms?"

"Believe not the debased Arabs, who are liars and sons of liars, s-sahib," quavered Chotajee. "Is not the word of honest babu and Failed B.A. more to be respected? In truth, sahib, I was but proceeding in search of Arab dwellings to requestfully ask shelter for the night. Did not Poet Omar quoth, 'Keep stick for jackals, but mercy for stranger?'"

Tony put his mouth close to Guy's ear.

"My giddy aunt!" he whispered. "If the chump starts quoting poetry, Ras Dhin will flay him alive!"

Such evidently was the Abyssinian's intention, in any case, for an Arab came from forward, and tossed down on the deck two long whips of African type made of rhinoceros hide!

"It is nothing we can get out of your mouth, pariah from a polluted land!" the black giant rasped. "Therefore will we try other means. Speak what is true, or with these whips of good rhinoceros hide, five hundred lashes will be laid in your debased back!"

Both Guy and Tony gripped the bamboo ladder tighter.

Five hundred lashes!

Long before that fearful sentence was carried out their Bengali pal of the Falcon would be cut to pieces! Fifty lashes with either of those rhinoceros hide whips, with their thongs triangular in shape and with cutting edges, would be fully enough to bring about the death of any ordinary strong man!

They saw Chotajee trembling at the

rope which held his wrists suspended above his head, and trembled the more as Ras Dhin discarded an upper garment, leaving himself only in loose draperies around his legs, and curly toed shoes. Then he picked up the whip.

"For the last time, dog of a feringhee," thundered the Abyssinian, "from where did you come?"

He jerked a thumb at the babu's jacket which lay on the deck, and had the name kassab, which means store-keeper, embroidered on it, and some gold oak leaves which had been the Indian's special pride.

"Is not that the badge used in the ships of the British infidels?"

"N-no, s-sahib," Chotajee chattered.

"Let your words be words of truth," the giant blackamoor snarled, "and then will you save yourself from the whip. Did not others come with you in the boat to Khoof?"

Notwithstanding the torture that confronted him, the little babu shook his head.

"N-no, s-sahib!"

The faint orange glow of the dying fire ashore lighted Ras Dhin's massive chest and back, and flickered on the mighty muscles as he beckoned the big negro slave to hand one of the whips to him and take the other for himself. He and the slave would take turn and turn in the grim work of slashing the life out of the little babu!

On that precarious perch provided by the bamboo ladder, Guy took a grip on Tony's arm and found his chum quivering like a panther ready to spring.

The Slave Whip!

"FOR the love of Mike—wait!"

By that hoarse whisper Guy urged his chum to refrain from impetuous action.

They stood together on the wide bamboo ladder leading from the hold of the Arab slave dhow and gazed across the after-deck. All their nerves were taut and vibrant like the aerial wires of a warship in a gale, and their tempers were heated to the point of boiling over.

There, by the light of the lantern, they could see Chotajee, the little Bengali who acted as storekeeper aboard their ship, his nut-brown face twisted with fear and despair.

Since he had fallen into the hands of Ras Dhin, the terrible Abyssinian who obviously was something big in the slave traffic, he had believed that his doom was sealed, but even the prospect of being flogged to death with a whip of rhinoceros hide had failed to break his spirit.

It was not always that Chotajee was brave by any means—under the lash his tongue might loosen. But Guy and Tony honoured him for having refused, in spite of all threats, to give away the fact that two English companions had been wrecked with him on this island of Khoof, off the Arabian coast.

"Listen here," Tony said in a fierce undertone, "we can't stand by and see the life of that poor little lubber slashed out of him by these murderous swabs!"

"No," Guy muttered. "We've got to act, come what may. But if we make a move a moment too soon it may mean all the difference between life and death. At least we'll put up a fight for our old sidekicker, but for Heaven's sake take the signal from me!"

During the nerve-racking moments

while Ras Dhin put a final question or two to Chotajee, the chums, in their sea-soaked vests and white naval trousers, waited for a better chance of striking with success. Meantime, Hassan, the Arab skipper of the dhow, ordered the two dusky deckhands forward to help with the work of dumping the cargo. Whereas the pals had destroyed the great store of rifles and ammunition on the foreshore, there was other illegal cargo in the village for transport to the anchored dhow.

"Your tongue is still tied, son of a pig," Ras Dhin snarled, addressing Chotajee, "therefore must we find other means to loosen it."

Turning, he rasped something in an African tongue to the giant negro who had been taken out of the slave hold; but the man's eyes were turned in hopeless yearning towards the land which he had not seen since the dhow had sailed from Tajura, on the African coast. He had picked up one of the two great rhinoceros hide whips, according to Ras Dhin's previous order, and the other whip lay there on the deck, with the lash curved over the dirty planking, like a sinister, dark grey snake. Chotajee, with his brown back bare and his hands strung above his head at the base of the mainmast, looked at that whip on the deck with the fascinated stare of a rabbit hypnotised by a serpent.

Then suddenly Ras Dhin uttered a bellow of rage that the big negro slave did not hand him the other whip immediately on his command. Startled, the man turned round, and the giant Abyssinian, who had discarded his upper garments, snatched the great whip out of his hands.

Whang!

The lash of it hissed through the warm night air like a swiftly flying hornet, and its triangular cutting thong hammered down full across the slave's back.

The man emitted a shriek of pain, and under the yellow light of the lantern a crimson streak, swiftly broadening, showed across the velvety skin of his back.

The bearded skipper of the dhow gave an appreciative chuckle, but the tone of his voice changed abruptly to alarm as a figure garbed in white came leaping up out of the hatchway. It was Guy, a fraction ahead of Tony, and, like his more impetuous chum, he was fighting mad at this brutal treatment of the helpless slave who had been dragged away from his own country to be sold into lifelong servitude.

"You swab!" hooted Guy. "You offal unfit for pariah dogs!"

He deliberately used the sort of expression of the greatest insult to an Eastern native, and as Ras Dhin flung round in amazement and fury, he snatched the whip of rhinoceros hide from his hands.

Whang!

Again the great thong slashed viciously through the air, propelled by all the power of Guy's lusty right arm. But this time it fell across the naked back of the Abyssinian.

Slash!

That deadly thong, sharp and tough as a whalebone, cut deeply into the muscles from side to side of his back, and the slave-dealer uttered an agonised yelp as the unfortunate slave himself had done. He lurched towards the dhow's wooden gunwale, and, recovering himself, snatched an automatic pistol from the loosely draped garment about his loins and the upper part of his legs.

"Dog of a feringhee!" he roared. "For that you die!"

Barefooted though he was, Guy kicked upward with all his force as the giant Abyssinian swung round on him, and struck the brute's wrist smartly with his instep, and the pistol went spinning out of his fingers over the gunwale, to fall with a plop into the sea. Then, leaping in, the young naval officer struck upward fiercely at the slave-dealer's chin, damaging his own knuckles on a jaw that felt like solid oak.

Taken from his balance, Ras Dhin went staggering back. His heel struck against a ring-bolt and he crashed down, his head thumping on the deck with a sound like a mallet on wood. And thereafter a black veil was drawn over the exciting events of the next few minutes for the burly brute who had been paid back so swiftly in his own coin.

Speedily at the heels of Guy, Tony leaped across the deck and whipped a keen-bladed jack-knife from his trousers pocket. The bearded skipper, Hassan, exploded into guttural Arabic and dragged a squat, curved knife from a silver, ornamented scabbard at his sash. Hurling himself straight at the man, Tony shot out his left, with all the force of his lunging body behind it.

The blow got home between the Arab's eyes. His knife clattered to the planking, and he thumped down like a pitted ox, the stars and planets of the Arabian night performing amazing antics round his head.

"That's yours!" Tony told him. "Now for you, Chota, old chum!"

Slash! Slash! The keen-bladed knife cut through the ropes that bound the Bengali's wrists, and the little babu reeled across the deck, babbling incoherently with joy and relief, and slipped into his coat.

"Beat it aft!" came the panting voice of Guy. "The swabs for'ard have taken the alarm!"

He gave a jerk of his thumb in signal to the slave squirming from the pain of his back, and fire suddenly kindled in the eyes of the cruelly ill-treated negro. The other whip of rhinoceros hide was near to his bare feet, and he snatched it up from the deck and swung the great thong whistling through the air.

(Guy and Tony have succeeded in rescuing Chotajee from the hands of the merciless Ras Dhin, but they're far from being out of the wood yet! Don't fail to read next Saturday's full-of-thrills instalment, whatever you do, chums!)

THE AMATEUR ROGUE!

(Continued from page 24.)

surely he would be in sight. But he was not in sight.

A footstep close at hand caused Carne to drop back from the wall and spin round. Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh was sauntering up, his hands in his pockets, his dusky face impassive. Carne looked at the Nabob of Bhanipur as if he could have bitten him.

It was a "rag." He was sure of that now. These young scoundrels suspected something, and were coming along one after another. Carne did not speak. He made a furious stride towards the Indian junior.

Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh jumped back.

"My esteemed Carne!" he ejaculated.

Carne, still without speaking, ran at him, his eyes blazing. Hurree Singh dodged away, and did the length of the Cloisters at record speed. Carne went back to his wall, breathing in gasps.

Half-past six! No sign of Rackstraw! Was he coming? Dusk was falling thickly now. Footsteps in the Cloisters again. Carne spun round with something like a howl of fury.

"You spying young rotter! I'll— Oh— Ah— I—I— Wingate!"

It was the captain of Greyfriars, and he stared at Carne. Carne stared at him, angrily and uncasily.

"You're wanted, Carne!" said Wingate curtly.

"Wanted! Who—what?"

"That man on the telephone again," grunted Wingate.

With that Wingate turned and walked away, and Carne followed behind.

As he went into the House he sighted Harry Wharton & Co: Bob Cherry was not with them, though Carne did not notice that at the moment. He went to the prefects'-room.

Six or seven seniors were there, and he could not fail to see that they all looked at him curiously. He knew he had been under discussion. The Sixth Form men elaborately withdrew from the vicinity of the telephone as the wretched Carne went to take up the receiver.

"Hallo!" he almost groaned.

"Is that you, Carne?"

"Yes."

"Hope you had a good time?"

"I—I don't understand."

"You wouldn't, with a brain like yours. The fact is, Carne, you'd better give up being a rogue. Nature intended you for a fool, not a rogue. Stick to Nature's plan, old bean."

Carne felt his brain spinning.

"What—what?" he gasped.

Then he gave a sudden, convulsive jump. The voice was still on the wires, but it was no longer husky. It came in startled tones:

"Oh, my hat! Quelch!"

Carne, dumbfounded, listened, the receiver glued to his ear. Another voice, evidently that of a man speaking very near the instrument, came to him; sharp tones that he knew.

"Cherry, what are you doing here? You are using my telephone."

It was the voice of Mr. Quelch.

Carne staggered. The receiver dropped from his hand, and he heard no more.

But he understood now.

The owner of the husky voice on the telephone was not Rackstraw. It was Bob Cherry of the Remove. The telephone calls had come from the Remove master's study. It was a rag! He knew now why "Rackstraw's" voice had been husky.

The look on Carne's face as he turned from the telephone made the Sixth men in the prefects'-room stare. Carne tramped out of the room, leaving the seniors staring at one another.

He strode away in the direction of the Remove master's study, pale with rage. But he paused before he reached that study—paused, hesitated; turned away, and went to his own room. He dared not bring it all out before a Form master. He quailed at the thought of facing Quelch's cold, searching eyes. With guilt and terror on his conscience he dared not. He went to his own study, and shut the door.

Bob Cherry rejoined his comrades, wriggling a little, but with a cheery grin on his face.

"Two whacks for using the old bean's telephone," he said. "Still, it was worth it. Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows, we're giving jolly old Carne the time of his life, and my belief is that he will chuck it."

And the chums of the Remove went cheerily up to prep. There was no doubt that Carne of the Sixth was having the "time of his life," though whether he was going to "chuck it" remained to be seen.

THE END.

(Next week's topping yarn of Greyfriars is entitled: "A ROGUE'S REMORSE!" You'll feel like kicking yourself, chum, if you miss it!)

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REMOVE POLICE!

MISSING!!! George Gatty (Second Form) has been missing since three o'clock to-day. DESCRIPTION OF THE MISSING PERSON: Race rummy and lanky, jacket thin, nose ditto, collar ditto, hands ditto. LAST SEEN ON THE FAGS FOOTBALL GROUND.

Information of Gatty's whereabouts is wanted urgently. He was wearing the football number, Second versus Thirds, and as the Seconds lost 10-0 it is feared that a sinister fate has overtaken the referee.

REWARD OF ONE DOUGENUT OFFERED FOR INFORMATION.

Greyfriars Herald

Edited by
HARRY WHARTON
F. G. R.

LATEST EXTRA GOOD EDITION

February 21st, 1931.

LOST!

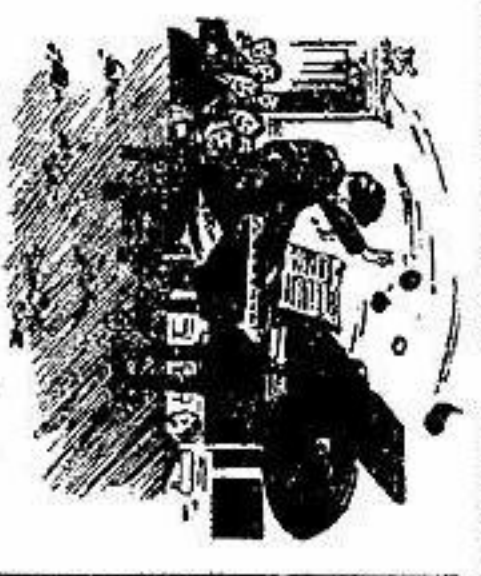
One gorgeous gold watch—a present from my dear father. This gold watch cost thirty-five guineas and now I've lost it! I don't know where it is but somewhere in the remove I think or it may be in the yard outside no reward offered as I am stony brook.—W. G. BUNTER (Study 7.)

FOUND.

One rolled-gold turnip—value fivepence. Will owner please apply Study No. 1 Remove?

PIANOFORTE RECITAL BY CLAUDE HOSKINS

Eggs and Tomatoes *Ad Lib.*



Still he thumped on!

UNFEELING CONDUCT OF REMOVE

"Gentlemen!" he said. "I shall now have much pleasure in playing you Mendelssohn's Spring Song."

"Oh crumbs!" gasped the Remove.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hoskins resented himself at the piano. He had won the day. The Remove had had enough. They stole softly from the room, leaving Hoskins playing the "Spring Song" to an audience composed of Tom Dutton.

Ancestors Traced

Leave it to Fisher T. Fish

The FISHER T. FISH AGENCY is willing to trace out any galoot's ancestry for the trifling fee of five dollars, twenty-five cents, and feeling; the piece being marred only by the frequent cries of "Meow!"

With the first notes of "Brabins' Hungarian Dance," however, a tomato sailed through the air and impinged itself on Hoskins' nose. Beyond muttering "Gwooh!" the pianist gave no sign of discomfort, and did not attempt to wipe away the decayed and odoriferous vegetation on his nasal organ.

He was still playing fourteen to the dozen when several eggs plastered themselves over his features. His fingers did not stop moving upon the keyboard, however. A beetroot caught him on the top-knot; but still he thumped the piano.

Thump, thump, thump!

Crash!

An egg on his chin.

"Yarook!"

Thump, thump, thump!

Eggs, tomatoes, apples, and beetroots—all in an advanced state of decay—rained upon Claude Hoskins, but still, like Casabianca, he stuck at his post, and played the "Hungarian Dance" to the bitter end.

Then he stood up, glaring at the audience, and wiping eggs and tomatoe off his face with a handker-

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

EXCITING FOOTER TUSSLE ON LITTLE SIDE

"REMOVE WINBY NARROW MARGIN"

Remove 38
Bolsover's XI 0

SPECIAL REPORT

EDITOR'S NOTE: The report no good against the brilliant Bolsover team written for us by dribbling and snooting of Gosling Percy Bolsover, the Captain of the opposing side. We don't like to accuse Bolsover of early, in order to slant the gates, favouritism, but, really, he there is little doubt that Bolsover's screwy does the Remove XI team would have won handsomely.

What do you think?

The official Remove Eleven won a hard game against Bolsover's Eleven on Little Side last Saturday. The match attracted a great crowd, and who were thrilled from start to finish by the clever play of Bolsover's team.

Wharton scored for the Remove in the first minute. The goal was palpably offside, and the referee not have given it. And, as a matter of fact, the goal wasn't fair in any case, because Billy Bunter, the goalkeeper, wasn't ready.



Bunter between the sticks.

In the first five minutes the Remove were two up; thanks to an unfair penalty given against Bolsover—when all that talented player did was merely to punch Nugent's nose for charging him.

Cherry took the penalty and drove the ball so hard that it carried Bunter into the net. After this, Bunter ran away and Snoot went in goal.

Bolsover got round after round of applause for his clever tackling at right-back, fish, at centre-half, was rather weak, and bludgeoned on the right wing, was not quite so speedy as he might have been.

But this clever combination of Bolsover's team made the Remove fight hard to retain their lead.

The first half finished with the Remove winning by fourteen to five. (Wharton 6, Vernon-Smith 5, Kenfold 2, Nugent 1.)

In the second half Bolsover's team completely outplayed the Remove Eleven, and pinned them in their own half nearly all the time. The Remove backs were

AMAZING TELEPHONE MESSAGE

BUNTER COURT

Shock for Remove Skipper

OWL'S FATHER DINES WITH THE SWELLS

Is there such a place as Bunter Court? Until this morning we should have said "No." In fact, before dinner we were ragging Billy Bunter about his ancestral home.

"Bungs!" snorted the Owl of the Remove, blinking fiercely. "Perhaps our butler will be on the telephone this afternoon."

"And perhaps he won't."

"The porpharfulness is terrific."

We laughed; but later on we were rather sorry. For, surely enough, that afternoon the telephone bell rang, and a voice inquired for Master Bunter. But Master Bunter was out of gates, so the voice asked to speak to Master Wharton instead.

Hurry went to the phone and lifted the receiver.

"Hallo!"

"Is that Mr. Wharton?" inquired a fruity voice.

"Speaking."

"I wonder whether you would be so good as to take a message for Master William, sir?"

"Who's Master William?"

"I should say, Mr. William Bunter. I am Wilkinson. I'm speaking from Bunter Court, sir."

Wharton nearly dropped the receiver.

"What-a-ah?"

"I said I was speaking from Bunter Court, sir."

"Ye gods! Is there really such a place, then?"

"Oh, really, Wharton!"

"I thought it was all spoof, Mr. Wilkinson."

"That fat rascal is such a fearful spoofey, you know."

"Look here, you rotter!" roared Wilkinson. "You know jolly well that I live at Bunter Court. I despise you, Wharton. I hope you don't mind me mentioning it."

"Not at all."

"Suspiciousness is low. You're a low beast, you rotter. And I've a jolly good mind to drop up the floor with you when I get back."

"Oh crumbs!"

Mr. Wilkinson coughed.

"Will you be kind enough to tell Master William that his honoured father will not be able to come down to Greyfriars on Saturday, as he is dining with the Duke of Southdown and the Marquis of Almsquash?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" said Wilkinson.

"Thank you very much, sir," said Wilkinson, with dignity. "And mind you give the message, you brist!"

So there you are. We thought there was no Bunter Court; but in the face of that amazing telephone message, what is one to believe?

SURPRISING STATISTICS

By Our Mathematical Expert

Here are a few surprising statistics which can be (or cannot be) verified by advanced mathematicians.

If all the lies told by Billy Bunter in the course of one year were written down in a huge book, it would take seven months and eight days to read it—provided anybody was fool enough to try.

If all the money given away by Fisher T. Fish since he has been at Greyfriars was placed inside a washin' shell it wouldn't crowd the nut.

If all the pound notes changed at the truckshop in the course of one year were placed end to end along the Friar Road, there would be an unholly scramble.

The amount of muscular energy used by Mr. Quelch during a month, while wielding the can in the Remove class-room, would be enough to raise a weight of 1,860 lbs. to a height of fifty inches. The yells of Mr. Quelch's victims would raise it still higher.

If Horace Coker's ears were an inch larger, he would look even more like a mule than he does at present.

If the amount of ink used at Greyfriars in a year was poured into a 1,000 gallon tank, it would drown any idiot who fell in it.

If the amount of money Wharton will pay me for this article was swallowed by a guak, it wouldn't give the creature indigestion. (This last fact is perfectly correct.—Ed.)

OBITUARY

Sudden Death of Alphonso

We greatly regret to announce the death of Alphonso, youngest white mouse of Mr. George Tubb. Alphonso died yesterday evening at the age of 3. The cause of death is started to be heart-trouble, arising from a severe attack of Mrs. Kebble's cat.

Dr. Skinner was summoned yesterday evening and tried to administer oxygen to the patient, but in vain. Mr. George Tubb and Dr. Skinner were present when the patient died, and there was a heart-rending scene as he breathed his last.

The funeral will take place on Monday next at three o'clock in the quad. Mr. Ogilvy will play the funeral March on his mouth-organ. The coffin is a handsome blue-and-yellow structure by Messrs. Bryant & May.

We extend our deepest sympathy to Mr. Tubb and to the mouse's brothers and sisters.



Dr. Skinner called in.