

MAMMOTH COLOURED AERO PLATE in this "RANGER"! week's "RANGER"!

The MAGNET 2^D





A KINSMAN'S TREACHERY!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Walk for Bunter!

"WAITING for me?" asked Billy Bunter cheerily.

"No fear!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Not the smallest little bit in the world, old fat bean!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

Billy Bunter blinked indignantly at five grinning faces.

It was Saturday afternoon—a half-holiday at Greyfriars—and Harry Wharton & Co., in coats and caps, were waiting by the steps of the School House.

They were waiting—but certainly not for Bunter. William George Bunter was superfluous, as he generally was.

The chums of the Remove were waiting for Tatters—otherwise, Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley, the new junior in the Remove. And they did not "enthuse" in the least when Billy Bunter rolled out of the House and joined them.

"I say, you fellows, I'd like a walk to Highcliffe," said Bunter. "I jolly well know you're going to tea there!"

"Is there anything Bunter doesn't know?" asked Bob Cherry, addressing space. "This is what comes of making keyholes to doors."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The knowfulness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh. "The kickfulness is the proper caper!"

Billy Bunter backed promptly away.

"I say, you fellows! No larks! I suppose you'd like me to come?"

"What on earth put that idea into your head?" asked Frank Nugent, in astonishment.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's

THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 1,203.

Tatters!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley came down the steps. "Come on, you men!"

"Ere I am!" grinned Tatters. The grandson and heir of Sir George Cholmondeley had been weeks at Greyfriars now, but he had not yet overcome his little difficulties with the aspirate. He still talked a good deal as had been his wont when a tinker on the road.

"Ear, 'ear!" said Bob Cherry humorously, and the six Removites started for the gates.

"I say, you fellows!" bawled Bunter. But the chums of the Remove passed the fat junior, like the idle wind which they regarded not.

But William George Bunter was not to be passed unregarded. He rolled in pursuit.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked cheerily out of gates. It was a fine, cold spring afternoon, just the weather for a long cross-country walk, and the chums of the Remove had planned an extensive ramble, winding up at Highcliffe School for tea with friends there.

Billy Bunter knew that there was to be tea at Highcliffe, and he had no doubt that his fascinating company would make that function a success. But he did not know that there was to be a long ramble first. That was a discovery he had yet to make. So he rolled after the party in cheery spirits.

"I say, you fellows, don't walk so fast!" hooted Bunter, as the juniors swung along the road towards Courtfield Common. "What's the good of hurrying? You'll be early for tea, anyhow!"

Bob Cherry glanced round.

"You coming, Bunter?" he asked.

"I jolly well am!" answered the Owl of the Remove emphatically. "If you're thinking of leaving out an old pal, after all I've done for you—"

"Courtenay hasn't asked you," remarked Frank Nugent. "But I suppose that doesn't matter?"

"Not a bit, old chap! He's sure to be glad to see me! But, look here, don't walk so jolly fast! It's hours to tea-time yet!"

"Slow down, you men!" said Bob Cherry.

"Rot!" grunted Johnny Bull. "We haven't come out to crawl along like snails."

"My dear chap, Bunter wants to come!"

"Blow Bunter!"

"But the walk will do him good!" said Bob. "Give Bunter a chance! We can put on speed when he gets fed-up and chucks it."

Johnny Bull grinned.

"Oh, all right!"

Billy Bunter grinned, too. He was not likely to get fed-up, and chuck it, with tea in Courtenay's study at Highcliffe in prospect. Courtenay and his chum, the Caterpillar, always "did" their visitors remarkably well; their study on such occasions was a land flowing with milk and honey. Certainly, Bunter was not expected there, and far from desired there. Still, if he went in with Harry Wharton & Co., Bunter sagely considered that the Highcliffe men would be bound to stand it. So long as he was not actually kicked out, Bunter did not worry about anything else.

The walkers slowed down, and Bunter rolled along with them. They reached Courtfield Common, across which the road lay to the town and the school. At that point Harry Wharton & Co. turned to the left, into a lane that bordered the common.

"I say, you fellows, that's not the way!" roared Bunter.

"It's our way!" grinned Bob.

"It's straight on to Highcliffe, you chump."

"We're rather going round, old fat bean."

"The roundfulness is going to be terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!" chortled Hurree Singh.

"Look here, you beasts—"

But the juniors did not "look there." They walked on up Oak Lane, and Billy Bunter, with a discontented grunt, rolled after them.

Oak Lane, which ran by the edge of the common, and past the gates of Popper Court, was more than a mile long. It led to the towpath on the Sark, and by the time the gleaming river came in sight Bunter had bellows to mend. Harry Wharton & Co. were proceeding at quite a leisurely pace, as if they really wanted Bunter to keep up. Certainly they were giving him a chance. But the fat Owl of the Remove was gasping spasmodically when they arrived on the bank of the Sark.

"I say, you fellows—" he gasped.
 "Put it on, old bean!" said Bob Cherry encouragingly. "Only another seven miles."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "What?" shrieked Bunter. "You—you beast, it's not half a mile to Highcliffe from here, if you cut across the fields—"

"But we're not cutting across any old fields," explained Bob. "We're following the towpath as far as Braye—"

"That's two miles!" gasped Bunter.
 "And then going round to Woodend, and—"

"That's three more!"
 "And then—"

"Beast!" howled Bunter. He did not want to hear any more of the programme. "You—you—you awful rotters!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Look here! You jolly well know I can't go to Highcliffe without you!" gasped Bunter. "Courtenay wouldn't understand, and—and that beast Ponsonby might start ragging me, too, and—and—I say, you fellows—"

"Put it on!" chuckled Johnny Bull.

The chums of the Remove swung on their way up the river, accelerating now. They chuckled as they went. Billy Bunter did not chuckle. He gasped and spluttered as he rolled on.

"I say, you fellows—" "Good-bye, Bunter!"

Billy Bunter came to a halt. He had done two miles, and he felt as if he had done two hundred. Seven more made him shudder even to think of them.

Bob Cherry looked back, and waved his hand.

"Aren't you coming, Bunter?" he roared.

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

Harry Wharton & Co. swung on, and disappeared round a bend of the winding towpath. And Billy Bunter, with feelings too deep for words, if he had had any breath left to utter them, proceeded to understudy the ploughman in the poem, who homeward plodded his weary way.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.
Just Like Pon!

"**C**HUCK it! Ow! Keep orf!" "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"What the thump—" "Elp! Oooooop! Ow! Keep orf!" It was a wild howl that greeted the ears of the Greyfriars fellows as they came swinging cheerily up the towpath. A rather startling scene burst on their view.

"Highcliffe cads!" granted Johnny Bull.

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. Three Highcliffe juniors—Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Vavasour were ahead on the towpath. They did not look round as the Greyfriars fellows appeared in

the offing. They were too busily engaged.

Standing waist-deep in the shallow water by the bank was a ragged man in a battered hat. He was drenched, and smothered with mud, and in a state of wild excitement.

The three Highcliffians were pelting him with clods, which splashed in the water all round him. When he strove to clamber ashore, they shoved him back into the water again and resumed the pelting.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared blankly at the scene.

The man in the water looked like a tramp—and a rather unpleasant variety of tramp. He had a broken nose, and several missing teeth, which looked as if scrapping was rather in his line. But evidently he was no match for the three young rascals who were ragging him, a fact of which Ponsonby & Co. were taking ruthless advantage.

Harry Wharton's brow darkened. "The rotters!" he muttered. "Three to one—that's Pon's style! I don't know what the man may have done, but they're not going to rag him like this."

"Let's chuck them in after him!" suggested Johnny Bull.

"Let's, my worthy chums," said the Nabob of Bhanipur. "What is saucy for the goose is saucy for the gander, as the English proverb remarks!"

"Hold on," said Frank Nugent; "we

Three times has Tatters been within an ace of expulsion from Greyfriars, due to the scheming of his shady cousin. Now comes the fourth attempt which, if successful, will see young Tatters hounded out of the school and stripped of a fortune!

don't want a row with Ponsonby, when we're going over to Highcliffe presently."

There was a pause. The fact that Harry Wharton & Co. were chummy with Courtenay, the captain of the Highcliffe Fourth, and at feud with Ponsonby & Co. of the same Form, had often placed them in an awkward position.

Tatters' eyes gleamed. Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley still had a bruise on his shin where Ponsonby had hacked him a few days before.

"Look 'ere, I'm going to wallop Ponsonby!" exclaimed Tatters. "He got away last time; 'acking a bloke on his blooming shin! This 'ere is a chance to give him beans!"

"Not to-day, old fruit," said Bob Cherry. "Better keep off rags with Highcliffe men, when we're going to Highcliffe to tea."

"Rot!" grunted Tatters.

"My dear chap—"

"Rubbish!"

Bob Cherry grinned. Tatters was one of the best-tempered fellows in the Remove, but there was no doubt that he felt very sore against Ponsonby of Highcliffe. Pon's supercilious contempt had wounded the Greyfriars tinker deeply; and a hack on the shin, too, was not a light matter. Tatters was in a warlike mood.

"Chuck it, old man!" said Bob. "You can lick Pon some other time. But we're jolly well going to stop that rag. It's too thick."

"Yes, rather!" said Harry Wharton.

The Greyfriars juniors quickened their pace.

The broken-nosed man made another attempt to scramble out of the shallows.

Ponsonby met him with a crashing blow full in the face, which sent him sprawling backwards into the water, with a gurgling yell.

"Stop that, you cad!" shouted Bob.

Ponsonby & Co. stared round. The Greyfriars fellows came up at a run and placed themselves between the Highcliffians and the water. The gasping tramp scrambled shoreward again, spluttering and panting, clothed in mud as in a garment.

"Get aside, you rotters!" said Ponsonby between his teeth. "What are you buttin' in here for?"

"Mind your own business!" snapped Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" chimed in Vavasour.

"You're not touching that fellow again," said Harry Wharton coolly.

"What has he done?"

"Find out!"

"I ain't done nothing, sir!" gasped the tramp, struggling from the water. "You keep them fellers orf, sir, and let a bloke get out. I ain't done nothing, 'cept ask the young gentleman to 'elp a cove on his way."

The ragged man scrambled out, under the protection of the Greyfriars fellows, dripping with water and mud, and shuddering with cold.

Ponsonby & Co. did not venture to attempt to get at him again with the six juniors between.

"All serene, Weary Willy!" said Bob. "We won't let the rotters touch you again."

The tramp shook water from him like a dog and rubbed his broken nose where Ponsonby's fist had landed. He gave the dandy of Highcliffe a bitter, evil look.

"If I 'ad that young cove 'ere alone I—" he muttered.

"Will you Greyfriars cads mind your own bizney?" demanded Ponsonby. "We're makin' an example of that ruffian."

"You'll let him alone," said Wharton curtly. "If he begged from you, you had no right to duck him for it; and it was a dirty hooligan trick to pitch him into the water. You wouldn't have done it if you hadn't been three to one. Let him alone."

"Is he a friend of yours?" asked Ponsonby sarcastically. "I've noticed that you're rather gone on tramps and tinkers."

Harry Wharton turned to the broken-nosed man.

"Cut!" he said. "We'll see that these cads don't stop you."

"Thank you kindly, sir," said the tramp. He gave Ponsonby another black look. "You've ducked a cove, and nearly froze him, you young 'ound, you! P'r'aps I'll see you agin some time when you ain't got a gang with you!"

"Chuck that!" said Wharton sharply.

"Cut off while you've got the chance!"

And the broken-nosed man hurried away down the towpath. Gadsby, who had a clod in his hand, lifted it to throw. A rap on the arm from Bob Cherry caused Gadsby to drop the clod with a yelp of pain.

"Oh, come on, you men!" said Ponsonby. "We don't want a row with these outsiders."

Tatters jumped into Ponsonby's way. "You ain't going just yet, Mister Superior Ponsonby!" said the Greyfriars tinker. "You're going to put up your 'ands; and this time I'll see that you don't 'ack a bloke's shins, and get away, you funk!"

"Hold on, Tatters, old man," said Harry.

"I ain't 'olding on!" retorted Tatters obstinately. "I'm going to give that feller beans."

"Not to-day!" grinned Bob Cherry, and he caught the Greyfriars tinker by the arm and swung him aside. "You'd better cut, Ponsonby—unless you're keen to put up your hands."

Pon evidently was not keen to put up his hands. He was backing away from the tinker with great precipitation.

"Leggo!" roared Tatters. "I tell you I'm going to lick 'im!"

"Rats!" said Bob cheerily. "Clear off, you worms—and don't go the way the tramp has gone—you're done with him. If you go that way I'll let Tatters loose after you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Leggo, you silly hass!" howled Tatters.

"Not to-day!" chuckled Bob.

Ponsonby & Co. departed in haste. The tramp had disappeared down the river, and the Highcliffians went up the river. Evidently they did not want Tatters "let loose" after them.

The three Highcliffians did not exactly run, but they walked very fast—very fast indeed; and in a few moments they were out of sight.

"Look 'ere, you silly howl!" gasped Tatters, wriggling in Bob's powerful grasp. "I keep telling you I'm going to lick that rotten Ponsonby."

"And I keep on telling you that you're not going to lick him to-day," grinned Bob. "Pon will keep!"

"The keepfulness will be terrific, my esteemed Tatters," said the Nabob of Bhanipur soothingly. "Let not the smilefulness of friendship be overclouded by the frownfulness of ridiculous wrath."

"Oh rats!" grunted Tatters.

Ponsonby & Co. had vanished now, and Tatters gave it up.

But there was a frown on his face as he resumed his way with the Famous Five.

Bob Cherry clapped him cheerily on the shoulder.

"Keep smiling, old bean!" he suggested.

"Oh rats!" said Tatters.

And it was not till another mile had been covered that the frown faded from Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley's face and his good-humour returned.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Visitors at Highcliffe!

"LOOK here, Courtenay!"

Ponsonby put his head in at the doorway of Study No. 3 in the Highcliffe Fourth and snapped out the words.

The study presented a rather festive appearance.

A bright fire burned, the table was laid for tea, and good things galore were piled there. Frank Courtenay was giving the last touches to a pile of toast; his chum, De Courcy, was idling by the study window. Both looked round as Ponsonby's scowling face appeared in the doorway. Courtenay gave him a cold glance; the Caterpillar smiled gently.

"Well?" asked Courtenay.

"I believe you're expecting some Greyfriars cads to tea this afternoon," said Ponsonby.

"I'm expecting my friends from Greyfriars, if that's what you mean," answered Frank Courtenay quietly.

"Same thing," sneered Ponsonby.

"Bein' cads and outsiders, they'd naturally be friends of yours."

"Is that what you came here to say?" asked the captain of the Highcliffe Fourth. "If so, you've said enough, and you can go."

"Stand not upon the order of your goin', but go at once, as jolly old Shakespeare puts it, Pon!" remarked the Caterpillar. "Don't give us the trouble of kickin' you along the passage."

"I met the rotters this afternoon," said Ponsonby, unheeding. "They had that tinker fellow along with them—the fellow called Rags, or Tatters, or somethin'—"

"Cholmondeley!" corrected the Caterpillar. "A most interesting character, Pon. Quite a romantic story, if you're interested—"

"Thanks—I'm not!"

"Quite interestin', I assure you, old bean. Left a hapless orphan, the dear youth was brought up by a travellin' tinker, neglected and disregarded by his noble grandfather—"

"Oh, cheese it, Caterpillar!"

"But I'm tellin' you an interestin' story, Pon. I've had it straight from the horse's mouth, and it's romantic but true. Think of a tinker bein' suddenly found and claimed by a jolly old baronet as rich as Croesus, and findin' himself the heir of a title, a fortune, and a magnificent castle! Considerin' that he's frightfully rich—or goin' to be frightfully rich—I'm sure that a chap like you, Pon, will be willin' to overlook any little mannerisms he may retain from his tinkerin' days. If you want an introduction—"

"You silly ass!" hooted Ponsonby.

"If you want an introduction, Franky will perform the ceremony with pleasure. Won't you, Franky? Of course, you'll have to behave yourself a little. Your usual manners won't do in this study when we've got visitors."

Frank Courtenay laughed.

"Will you shut up, Caterpillar, and let a fellow speak?" snarled Ponsonby. "I've come here to tell you, Courtenay, that—"

"That you want an introduction to Cholmondeley?" asked the Caterpillar.

"No!" yelled Ponsonby.

"Well, he wouldn't be much in your line," remarked De Courcy. "His education has been frightfully neglected—he doesn't play bridge or banker or nap, or smoke cigarettes, or back geeges. If he had been sent to Highcliffe instead of Greyfriars he might have learned all these things; I'm sure you'd have done your best to enlighten him—so long as his money lasted, at least. But—"

"You cheeky ass, shut up! Courtenay, I've got a visitor in my study this afternoon," said Ponsonby. "I don't want any ragging from those Greyfriars cads, and especially not from their friend the tinker. If you're having the ruffian here you've got to keep him quiet. See?"

"There won't be any ragging if you don't begin it," said Courtenay. "You generally do."

"I'd have put my visitor off if I'd known you were having those outsiders here to-day!" snapped Ponsonby. "But I've only just heard. Keep your precious tinker to yourself, that's all."

And with that Cecil Ponsonby slammed the door of Study No. 3 and departed.

Courtenay frowned angrily; the Caterpillar smiled.

"Can you rely on the good behaviour of the jolly old tinker, Franky?" asked the Caterpillar.

"Oh rot!" said Courtenay. "He's an

inoffensive fellow enough, though he has some queer ways of speaking. Ponsonby has gone out of his way to be offensive to him. I've heard that he and his friends ragged him baldheaded one day, three or four to one; and when they had a scrap Ponsonby lamed him with a hack on the shin and bolted. It's rather natural if the fellow's got his back up after that."

"Quite!" agreed the Caterpillar. "Pon's always askin' for a thrashin', and he seems to think he's goin' to get one when the tinker arrives here. And he seems rather particular about that visitor he's got in his study. Who's his jolly old visitor, Franky?"

"Don't know or care."

"I saw him when he came in," drawled the Caterpillar. "Pon introduced him to Mobby, our respected Form master, who butted in—Mobby always butts in. Mobby was rather impressed. Pon said he knew him at home, but—"

"But what?" grunted Courtenay.

"But I've a strong suspish that he was pullin' Mobby's leg. My own idea is that Pon made his acquaintance at the Three Fishers, playin' billiards. Naughty place that you know nothin' of, Franky—and rightly so!" grinned the Caterpillar. "I knew it in my bad old days, before you came to Highcliffe an' snatched me like a jolly old brand from the burnin'—"

"Fathead!"

"I didn't catch the gentleman's name," drawled De Courcy. "But he looked rather a knut. Franky, a dreadful doubt smites me."

Courtenay glanced at him.

"What do you mean, you ass?"

"I can't help suspectin'," said the Caterpillar gravely, "that while Pon is allowin' Mobby to suppose that he's entertainin' a family friend from the home department, they're really goin' to handle the wicked pasteboards and smoke the pernicious smokes in Pon's study. Awful, ain't it? Think I'd better trickle along and utter a word in season?"

"Ass!"

"Or you could do it, Franky, in your well-known and inimitable seventhly manner—"

"Fathead!"

"Anyhow, we mustn't let the tinker butt in, lookin' for Pon to give him a black eye, and upset a bridge party!" smiled the Caterpillar.

"Cholmondeley will behave himself if Pon keeps out of his way," said Courtenay. "If Pon asks for trouble, as he did before, the tinker can thrash him without any interference from me."

The Caterpillar glanced from the window.

"Here come the jolly old party," he remarked. "In the cires, dear man, I think I'll trickle down the stairs and guide them safely past Pon's door to this delectable study. From what I've heard, the tinker is simply ferocious towards dear old Pon, and my calm and beneficent influence may help him to keep his wrath bottled up."

And the Caterpillar left the study and lounged along the passage towards the stairs. The door of Ponsonby's study was closed, but there was a sound of voices from it as the Caterpillar passed. One voice, deeper than the rest, was evidently a man's voice, and that of Ponsonby's guest. Rupert de Courcy walked on and went down the stairs. At the door of the House he met Harry Wharton & Co. and greeted them with his usual urbanity.

They came up the stairs in a cheery crowd together. Tatters, who had visited Highcliffe before with his

friends, knew which was Pon's study, and he paused as he reached the door, with a gleam in his eyes. The Caterpillar gently slipped his arm through that of the Greyfriars tinker and drew him on.

"Farther on, dear man!" he murmured. "That's not our study."

"Come on, Tatters!" said Harry Wharton, with a rather sharp note in his voice. "No rags here, you ass!"

"Orlright, old scout!" said Tatters. "I ain't goin' to kick up a row 'ere! But— My 'at!" He broke off with a startled exclamation.

From Pon's study came Pon's voice, evidently speaking to his visitor, every word quite clear.

"Staying long in these parts, Mr. Rackstraw?"

"A few days, I think."

It was a deeper voice—a man's voice—that answered, a voice well known to all the Greyfriars juniors.

The juniors stared at one another blankly.

The man in Ponsonby's study was Cyril Rackstraw—cousin of Tatters—his scheming rival for the fortune of old Sir George Cholmondeley.

"Quite, quite!" murmured the Caterpillar pacifically. "But I seem to see a warlike gleam in the eye of our friend Cholmondeley."

The juniors laughed.

"I think Pon ought to be given the tip about that rotter," said Harry. "He's no friend of ours, but I think it's up to us. You fellows go on while I speak to Ponsonby."

"P'r'aps I'd better speak to 'im?" suggested Tatters.

"Don't be an ass! Get on!"

Bob Cherry took Tatters' arm and marched him on. Johnny Bull and Nugent and Hurreo Janset Ram Singh followed. Wharton remained with the Caterpillar at Pon's door.

The Caterpillar, rather curious to see how this strange episode would turn out, tapped on the panels.

"Who's there?" came Ponsonby's voice.

"Little me," answered De Courcy urbanely. "I believe your door's locked, Pon, but not against an agreeable bloke like myself, surely?"

sitting in the study armchair was revealed to the fellows in the passage. He started to his feet, his eyes glittering at Wharton. Evidently he recognised the captain of the Remove at a glance.

"You here, you young sweep?" he muttered.

"Yes, Mr. Rackstraw," said Harry, with a scornful glance. "I'm here."

Ponsonby glanced from one to the other, as did the other knuts in the study—Gadsby, Monson, Vavasour, and Drury.

"You know Rackstraw?" asked Ponsonby. "What are you drivin' at, Wharton? What the thump do you mean?"

"That man Rackstraw is cousin of Cholmondeley, of my Form at Greyfriars," said Harry. "You may not have known that, Ponsonby."

"Cousin of the dashed tinker?" ejaculated Gadsby.

"Exactly!"

"What rot!" said Ponsonby.

"And that's not all," said Harry quietly. "Cholmondeley, as you know,

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Plain English!

"RACKSTRAW!"
"My only hat!"
"That scoundrel!"
"Bust my buttons!" said Tatters.

The whole party came to a stop. De Courcy gazed at them in surprise. He had heard the words spoken in Pon's study. Anyone near the door might have heard them. But they conveyed nothing to his mind, and he was astonished at their effect on the Greyfriars fellows.

"That rotter 'ere!" exclaimed Tatters. "What's he doin' 'ere, I'd like to know? My 'at!"

"You fellows happen to know Pon's visitor?" asked the Caterpillar.

"Yes, rather!" said Bob Cherry grimly.

"He's my cousin?" grunted Tatters.

"Eh, what?" ejaculated the Caterpillar.

"It's true," said Harry. "That man Rackstraw is the grandson of Sir George Cholmondeley, of Cholmondeley Castle, same as Tatters, only Tatters is descended on the male side and has his name, and Rackstraw isn't and hasn't. What on earth can Ponsonby have to do with that rascal?"

"Is he a rascal?" drawled the Caterpillar.

"A thorough rascal," said Harry. "I know Ponsonby isn't very particular, but he can't know that he's got a kidnapper and a treacherous villain in his study. He ought to be warned against that man."

The Caterpillar whistled softly. This was a complete surprise to him.

"Sure of what you're sayin', old bean?" he murmured.

"Quite!"

"Well, no harm in givin' Pon a word of warnin'," said the Caterpillar. "If the sportsman's anythin' like your jolly old description of him, Pon will want to stand clear of him, though, as you justly remark, dear old Pon isn't particular. But no rags!"

Wharton coloured a little.

"I hope you know we shouldn't think of ragging here, De Courcy," he said.



As Harry Wharton & Co. came swinging cheerily along the towpath, Ponsonby & Co. swung the tramp into the muddy water and began pelting him. "Stop that, you cads!" shouted Bob Cherry.

The door was opened.

"Comin' in, Caterpillar?" asked Ponsonby. "Why, what—"

He stared angrily past De Courcy at the captain of the Greyfriars Remove.

"Thanks, no," smiled the Caterpillar.

"But Wharton wants to speak a word—only a jolly old friendly word, gentle as a cooin' dove, old bean. So lift that frown from your baby brow."

"You silly ass!" grunted Ponsonby.

"I've nothin' to say to Wharton or any other Greyfriars cad."

"That question does not arise, as the lawyers say," answered the Caterpillar cheerily. "The point is that Wharton has somethin' to say to you."

"I don't want to hear it."

"You'd better, Ponsonby," said Harry quietly. "We're not friends, but in this matter I'm speaking as a friend."

"Blessed if I understand you," said the dandy of Highcliffe, staring at him.

"But you can get it off your chest, I suppose? What's bitin' you?"

Wharton gave the door a push, and it swung wide open. The man who was

was a tinker on the roads once, but he was found and reclaimed by his grandfather, Sir George Cholmondeley. It came out that Rackstraw had been bribing a rascally tinker named Wilson to keep him from being found."

"Can you prove that?" asked Rackstraw, with a contemptuous shrug of the shoulders.

"No, but I know it's true," said Harry, "just as I know that you tried again and again to kidnap Cholmondeley, and only stopped when my Form master, Mr. Quelch, warned you off, and you were afraid that the police would be called on to deal with you."

"What rot!" said Gadsby.

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

Pon did not speak. He stared very curiously at Rackstraw. So far as Pon knew, Rackstraw was an idle and dissipated man whose agreeable acquaintance he had made at the Three Fishers. That was all he knew so far, but he was learning more about him now.

"Since then," continued Wharton, "that rogue has been plotting with

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,203.

others to get Tatters disgraced and expelled from school, to ruin him with his grandfather. He has failed every time, but he has been too cunning to let us have any proof that would land him in chokey or show him up to Sir George Cholmondeley. But that's the kind of man he is, Ponsonby, and he's a dangerous acquaintance for any fellow to have. I felt bound to tell you so."

"And you're makin' all these accusations against a man without any proof?" asked Ponsonby.

"I'm prepared to repeat the accusations in the presence of a police officer or anyone else, and chance it," said Wharton coolly. "There's no actual proof, but Mr. Rackstraw dare not put the matter to the test. If he dare, let him go straight to my headmaster, and call on me to say it over again in the presence of Dr. Locke."

"That's a fair offer," grinned the Caterpillar. "Takin' it, Mr. Rackstraw?"

Rackstraw compressed his lips.

"I'm not likely to enter into bandyin' words with a cheeky schoolboy," he said contemptuously. "I hardly expected this sort of thing when I dropped in to see you, Pon."

"Not my fault, old bean," said Ponsonby. "These Greyfriars cads are always buttin' in where they've no business. If you've said your piece, Wharton, will you oblige me by clearin' off?"

"I felt bound to warn you, Ponsonby, that you have a plotting rascal, a lawless scoundrel, in your study," said Harry. "That's all. I'm done!"

He turned his back on Ponsonby and walked up the passage with the smiling Caterpillar.

Ponsonby shut the study door.

There was a rather uncomfortable silence in the study. Gadsby and Monson, Drury and Vavasour, looked at one another uneasily. They were foes to the captain of the Greyfriars Remove, but they knew well enough that Harry Wharton would not have uttered such an accusation lightly, and they knew that his motive was good in warning them against the chance acquaintance Ponsonby had so recklessly picked up at a disreputable resort, and the warning had sunk into their minds. A reckless, gambling blackguard was a man they could like, but a plotting rascal who might be collared by the police was quite another proposition. The Highcliffe knuts were feeling uneasy and alarmed.

"Blessed if I hadn't forgotten that I've got to fag for Langley!" exclaimed Monson suddenly. "I shall have to cut, Pon."

And without waiting for an answer Monson left the study.

"That reminds me," said Gadsby slowly, "I—I haven't written those lines for Mobby. See you another time, Mr. Rackstraw."

Gadsby left the study.

Vavasour and Drury exchanged a glance, and, without even taking the trouble to invent any excuse, they followed Gadsby.

Cyril Rackstraw compressed his lips hard. He looked at Ponsonby, with a sardonic smile.

"Your friends seem to have taken alarm," he remarked. "A pleasant little party quite spoiled. I'd better go, I think."

"Not at all," answered Ponsonby.

He closed the study door, came back to his chair, sat down, and lighted a cigarette. His eyes were curiously on Rackstraw's handsome, dissipated face.

"It's true?" he asked.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,203.

Rackstraw shrugged his shoulders.

"I rather wondered," went on Ponsonby coolly, "why you seemed so keen on pickin' up a friendship with me, Rackstraw. Did you fancy that I might be of some use to you against that cad Cholmondeley?"

Rackstraw gave a little start. He had set Ponsonby down as a vicious young blackguard; but he had not guessed that the good Pon was as keen, as astute, and very nearly as unscrupulous, as himself.

"Did you know I was up against him?" asked Ponsonby.

"I saw you running from him and his friends one day last week," answered Rackstraw. "I rather guessed from that that there was no love lost between you."

"I hate the upstart cad," said Ponsonby. "I don't know that I've ever disliked any fellow so much—not even Courtenay, or Wharton, or any of his friends. I owe him a good deal—and it's the sort of debt that I should like to pay."

Rackstraw smiled sourly. That was the judgment he had already formed of the dandy of Highcliffe.

"What Wharton said was true," went on Ponsonby. "I dislike the fellow no end; but I'm no fool—I know why he spoke as he did. And"—Ponsonby lowered his voice—"I'm not runnin' risks, Mr. Rackstraw, but I'm up against that brute Cholmondeley all the way, and if I can help you do him a bad turn you've only to say the word. And I'm not particular as to ways and means so long as it's safe."

Rackstraw laughed. Harry Wharton's intervention had been well meant—he had been bound to speak as he had spoken. But its effect had been to bring matters to a point which Rackstraw had not expected to reach for a long time. A Greyfriars fellow had been a tool in his hands; but he had weakened and repented and turned the plotter down. Ponsonby was not likely to follow that example. Ponsonby was a fellow after the unscrupulous schemer's own heart. The only question was whether he was able to help Sir George Cholmondeley's grandson in his scheming to disgrace Sir George's other grandson. There was no doubt of his willingness.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Keeping the Peace I

FRANK COURTENAY greeted the Greyfriars fellows cheerily in Study No. 1. It was a cheery party that sat down to tea round the table. Rackstraw was dismissed from the minds of the juniors; there were far more pleasant topics for conversation. The talk ran chiefly on football—a subject in which all the juniors were keenly interested, with the possible exception of the Caterpillar. But if the Caterpillar was bored he showed no sign of it, tolerating the "football jaw" with his usual smiling urbanity. There was a match on, between the Highcliffe junior team and the Greyfriars Remove, on the following Wednesday, on the Greyfriars ground, and talk naturally ran on that subject. If the Caterpillar had to suppress yawns he suppressed them unnoticed, and he was still smiling and urbane when the visitors rose to go.

The two Highcliffe men walked down to the gates with the Greyfriars party—partly to see them off, partly to see that no rags were attempted by Ponsonby and his friends.

Ponsonby was loafing in the quad with some of the knuts; his visitor, apparently,

was gone. Pon glanced at the Removites and assumed his most supercilious and scornful smile, and Tatters halted. But Bob Cherry linked arms with the Greyfriars tinker and marched him on towards the gates.

"This way, you ferocious sweep!" grinned Bob.

"I'd like to give him a bang on the beezzer afore we bunk!" said Tatters.

"My dear chap, his beezzer—whatever that is—will keep!" drawled the Caterpillar.

"That's all very well," grunted Tatters. "But you ain't been ragged by that bloke, like I 'ave, nor yet 'acked on the shin. I tell you, I was limping for days after that rotter 'acked my shin."

"Oh, come on!" said Wharton hastily.

"I'm a-coming, ain't I?" said Tatters; and he came on. But he glanced back with a gleaming eye at the dandy of Highcliffe. "Pon'll keep—he can't always run away when I get arter him."

"Depend on it, he will do his best," smiled the Caterpillar. "Pon's got terrific sprinting powers on such occasions. He doesn't go in much for games, but I believe he would win the school mile hands down if he had a bloodthirsty tinker after him."

"I'd jest like to knock that blooming grin off his mug," said Tatters, with another inimical glance at Pon.

"Come on, you ass!" grunted Johnny Bull.

The chums of the Remove did not want a shindy in the Highcliffe quad.

"Oh, orl right!"

Unwillingly, Tatters turned his back on his old enemy, and, having said good-bye at the gates, the Greyfriars party walked away. The Caterpillar smiled as he turned back into the quad with his chum.

"Pon's booked for a high old time, Franky, if that ferocious tinker catches him out of gates," he remarked.

"Serve him right!" grunted Courtenay. "We don't want a row here, but I must say I hope that Cholmondeley will catch him some time and give him the thrashing he deserves."

"Hackin' a fellow's shin, in a scrap, is rather thick, even for Pon!" agreed the Caterpillar. "But I hope the tinker won't quite slaughter him, for the jolly old tinker's own sako. Queer cuss, that tinker, isn't he?"

Courtenay laughed.

"Yes, rather; but I like him."

"Same here," said the Caterpillar. "Still, I'm glad he's gone without a shindy. When he slaughters Pon I'd rather the massacre took place outside the gates."

"I dare say he'll forget all about it," answered Courtenay carelessly. "He seems a good-natured chap."

The Caterpillar shook his head.

"You didn't spot the gleam in his jolly old eye," he remarked. "I did! We shall hear one of these days of Ponsonby bein' picked up in a state of wreck and ruin after the tinker's handled him. Pon asks for these things, though he doesn't really want 'em."

Courtenay laughed again, little dreaming how soon the Caterpillar's careless words were to be verified.

Tatters had a rather moody look as he walked away from Highcliffe with his friends. Good-tempered as he was, Ponsonby roused all the bitterness that there was in his nature, and he obviously regretted that he had left Highcliffe without punching Pon. But his discontent soon passed, and he was in his usual cheery mood when the

(Continued on page 8.)

FREE GIFT COUPONS IN



Every big 2d. bar of Nestlé's Chocolate is carefully wrapped to ensure absolute freshness. And every bar has a Gift Coupon in it. All Nestlé's packets from the 2d bars upwards contain coupons now. Scores of really valuable free gifts. Which would you like? A Table Tennis Set, a Match Football or a Fountain Pen? There are many other gifts to choose from. Send for Nestlé's Presentation List to-day, and five free coupons

This offer applies only in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

NESTLÉ'S new 2^d wrapped bars

FIVE FREE COUPONS

To Nestlé's (Gift Dept.), Silverthorne Rd., Batterssea, London, S.W.8
Please send me 5 FREE COUPONS and the Nestlé's Presentation List.

Name
IN BLOCK CAPITALS

Address

47/7-3-31 ½d. Stamp sufficient if envelope is unsealed.

A KINSMAN'S TREACHERY!

(Continued from page 6.)

chums of the Remove arrived at Greyfriars.

"I say, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter met the juniors as they came into the House. He gave them a deeply reproachful blink through his big spectacles.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob. "You missed a good thing at Highcliffe, Bunt. You should really have put in those seven miles."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Still, you made the party a success!" added Bob.

"Eh! How could I make it a success, you ass, when I wasn't there?"

"That's how!" explained Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! I say, you fellows, I had to have tea in Hall," said Bunter sorrowfully. "Toddy was out, and you know how selfish Toddy is—when he goes out to tea he never thinks of a fellow. There was nothing in my study. I was frightfully hungry after tea in Hall. In the circumstances I knew you wouldn't mind my having your cake, Bob."

"My cake?" repeated Bob.

"Luckily, you never locked your study cupboard," said Bunter, blinking at him. "So it was all right."

"It was all right?" gasped Bob.

"Yes, old chap!"

"You fat villain! I was going to stand a study supper with that cake!" roared Bob Cherry.

"If you're going to be mean about that cake, Cherry, I shall pay for it, of course," said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Shell out, then, you fat burglar!"

"You'll have to wait till the next post. I'm expecting a postal order," explained Bunter. "I'll settle for the cake and the chocolates at the same time, Wharton."

"The chocolates!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Yes; luckily I found them in your study—"

"Why, you—you—you—"

"Did you find anything in my study,

too?" demanded Johnny Bull, in a sulphurous voice.

"Oh, really, Bull! If you think I've touched your measly toffee—"

"You've bagged my toffee?" roared Johnny Bull.

"Certainly not! I hope I'm not the fellow to bag a fellow's toffee. I never knew you had any. I never touched it, of course. You can ask Skinner; he knows. I gave him some."

"You—you gave him some of the toffee you never touched?" gasped Johnny.

"I—I—I mean— I meant to say— Yaroooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Probably Bunter did not mean to say "Yaroooooop!" He said it quite involuntarily as Johnny Bull smote with a heavy hand, and the Owl of the Remove sat down suddenly.

"Ow! Wow!" gasped Bunter.

"Beast! I jolly well won't pay for that toffee now! I was going to—and now I won't! And I never had it, you beast—any more than I had Nugent's bananas—"

"What?"

"Or Cholmondeley's raspberry jam—"

"My 'at!"

Billy Bunter had evidently been busy while the chums of the Remove were teazing at Highcliffe.

"And I jolly well won't stand you fellows a spread when my postal order comes! Yah!"

"We shall be able to stand ourselves one out of our old-age pensions by that time!" grinned Bob.

"Beast!"

"Up-end him and shake the loot out of him!" suggested Nugent.

"Yaroooooh!"

Billy Bunter rolled hurriedly away, without waiting to be up-ended.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Hands off Ponsonby!

"**W**ARE beaks!" murmured Herbert Vernon-Smith.

"Quelch's got 'em!" murmured Skinner.

Some of the Remove fellows grinned. More of them looked serious. It really

was not a grinning matter when Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, had "got 'em," as Harold Skinner elegantly expressed it.

It was Monday morning, and the Remove were going into their Form-room. Mr. Quelch, standing at his desk, undoubtedly had a grim face.

Something had occurred to disturb the lofty serenity of Henry Samuel Quelch. Something recent, apparently; for Quelch had looked quite serene at prayers and at breakfast—that is, as serene as Quelch ever looked in the morning. The Remove fellows wondered what it was—some of them with uneasy misgivings.

Bunter, thinking of a certain cake that had belonged to Coker of the Fifth, wondered whether Quelch had heard about it. Skinner and Snoop had an uneasy feeling that a scent of smoke might have been detected about them. Fisher T. Fish had a worried feeling that the Beak might have spotted some of his money-lending operations among the fags. Bolsover major wondered if Quelch had noticed that Hazel's nose showed signs of recent punching. Other fellows had other misgivings; for it was obvious that trouble impended.

"Cholmondeley!"

"Oh, my 'at!" ejaculated Tatters.

"Good egg!" breathed Skinner.

Skinner was not the only man in the Remove who felt relieved when the Greyfriars tinker was called upon. Evidently it was Cholmondeley who was "for it." It was a relief to the rest of the Form, if not to Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley himself.

"Cholmondeley!" repeated Mr. Quelch. His gunlet eyes fixed on the face of the heir of Cholmondeley Castle.

"Yessir!" gasped Tatters.

"A very serious matter has been brought to my notice Cholmondeley."

The Removites wondered what it was. Of all the fellows in the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars Tatters was one of the most orderly and well-behaved. His manners and customs perhaps were not polished; and most of his aspirates were conspicuous by their absence; and he was rather a trouble to the Form master as he did not share the normal work of the Form. But his conduct was really exemplary. Evidently, however, the Remove master was on Tatters' trail.

"I—I 'ope I ain't done nothing, sir!" stammered Tatters.

"I have received a telephone message from Mr. Mobbs, the master of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"I don't know the bloke, sir!" said Tatters innocently.

"I have warned you, Cholmondeley, not to use such an absurd and meaningless expression as 'bloke' in my hearing!"

"I—I mean, covey, sir—that is, gent—"

"That will do! Mr. Mobbs complains that you have threatened a member of his Form at Highcliffe, a boy named Ponsonby."

"Bust my buttons!" ejaculated Tatters.

"Kindly refrain from using such expressions, Cholmondeley!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "Mr. Mobbs informs me that Ponsonby, of his Form at Highcliffe, cannot venture out of the school gates without danger of being attacked by you. What does this mean?"

Tatters stood silent. Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances.

Evidently the lofty Pon looked forward with misgiving to a meeting with the Greyfriars tinker. It was like Pon to beg for trouble, and use any kind of

The LIGHTHOUSE MYSTERY



Darkness has fallen on Wayland Heath. Lights and strange figures move about! Out of the darkness above looms a huge shape—an aeroplane! Whispers—shouts—cries of fear—the sound of blows—cries of pain! The roar of an ac-o-engine—a blinding flash—crash! Then—darkness again—and silence! MYSTERY! Raaaaaa! A speeding car shoots away from the Heath! Chug-chug-chug-chug! A motor-boat moves slowly out from the bank of the river—and in the covered dinghy behind crouch two figures, schoolboys from St. Jim's, who are determined to get to the bottom of the mystery! Bound for Puffin Island—and the old deserted lighthouse!

BOYS! GET THIS GREAT YARN TO-DAY! IT'S PACKED WITH THRILLS! FULL OF MYSTERY AND ADVENTURE! AND IT ALL TAKES PLACE AT DEAD OF NIGHT!

THE GEM 2

Now on Sale. Make sure of a Copy.

trickery to dodge it when it came along.

"Answer me, Cholmondeley," said Mr. Quelch. "This is a very serious matter. Frequent trouble has been caused by quarrels between Greyfriars boys and Highcliffe boys. Such quarrelling is strictly forbidden by both headmasters. You must have used very serious threats to Ponsonby to cause him to place himself under his Form master's protection in this way."

"Rotten sneak!" growled Bob. "Sneaking funk!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Silence! Cholmondeley, have you threatened this Highcliffe boy? Answer yes or no?"

"I've told 'im I'm going to smash him, sir!" said Tatters.

"What? What?"

"Smash him, sir, as soon's I get a chance," said Tatters.

There was a chuckle in the Remove. It died away as Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eyes glittered over the Form.

"You admit using such threats, Cholmondeley?"

"Yes, sir. That bloke's ragged me!" exclaimed Tatters indignantly. "Three of them set on me, and Ponsonby was the worst—thumping a bloke while the other coveys was holding me! And when I made him put up his 'ands arter, he 'acked my shin and got away. And I jolly well—"

"Silence!"

"Yes, sir!" said Tatters meekly.

"May I speak, sir?" asked Harry Wharton.

"If you know anything about this matter, certainly!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Tatters—I mean, Cholmondeley—did not begin the trouble, sir," said the captain of the Remove. "Pon started it, and ragged him, and acted like a brute and a coward, as he generally does—"

"Hear, hear!" grinned the Bounder.

"Now he's sneaked to his Form master because he's afraid of getting what he has asked for, sir!" exclaimed Wharton hotly. "He can't possibly have told Mr. Mobbs the facts."

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips.

"I believe you, Wharton—and I believe you also, Cholmondeley! I am not unacquainted with the offensive ways of this boy Ponsonby. Nevertheless, Mr. Mobbs has put the matter in my hands; and Dr. Locke is extremely annoyed by the constant trouble between the two schools. Cholmondeley, I forbid you ever to make any attempt to carry out the threats you have uttered to Ponsonby."

Tatters was silent. Generally the most obedient fellow in the Remove, he showed signs of obstinacy now, in his looks. Mr. Quelch read his face with a glittering eye.

"Understand me, Cholmondeley! I have given Mr. Mobbs my assurance that Ponsonby will not be molested by you, or any Greyfriars boy. Whatever offence he may have given you, you are to avoid him carefully; to avoid all friction with him or any other Highcliffe boy. In the event of your disregarding this most serious command, you will be dealt with severely."

Still Tatters did not speak.

"You understand me, Cholmondeley?" rapped out the Remove master sharply.

"Yes, sir!"

"Bear my warning in mind, then."

With that the matter dropped, and lessons started in the Remove room.

Tatters' face was clouded during class that morning.

It had been Tatters' fixed intention to look for Ponsonby on the next half-

holiday, and give that superb youth something of what he had asked for so earnestly and persistently. Certainly he had never foreseen that Pon would sneak to his Form master and drag a Greyfriars master into the matter.

When the Remove were dismissed for morning break, Mr. Quelch's warning to Cholmondeley was the sole topic in the Form. Every fellow expressed his opinion of Pon and his sneaking; and not one opinion was complimentary to the dandy of Highcliffe.



Billy Bunter clambered desperately up the tree with Coker's lunch-bag slung on his arm. The next moment Ponsonby passed swiftly beneath the spreading branches!

"I'd jolly well look for him and smash him, all the same, Quelch or no Quelch!" Bolsover major declared loudly in the quad.

"I'm going to!" said Tatters.

"You're not, old bean!" said Bob Cherry. "You shut up, Bolsover! You're not going to get Quelch's rag out, Tatters, old chap!"

Tatters' lips set obstinately.

"You don't want trouble with Quelch, old fellow!" said Harry Wharton. "After all, that sneaking cad isn't worth thinking about."

"I ain't going to think about him! I'm going to give 'im a thundering good 'iding, jest as soon as I can lay 'ands on him!" said Tatters.

"Let dogs delight to bark biterfully, my esteemed Tatters, as the worthy poet remarks?" suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But you should not let your esteemed and ridiculous passions rise."

"I'm going to wallop 'im!" said Tatters. "He ain't going to rag me, and 'ack my shins, and then sneak out of it by telling the tale to his blooming Form master! I'm going to wallop 'im!"

And from that determination the Greyfriars tinker refused to budge; and his comrades could only hope that Ponsonby—who evidently suffered from cold feet—would be careful not to let his cold feet draw him in the direction of Tatters.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.
The Highcliffe Match!

"I SAY, you fellows!" It was Wednesday afternoon, and Harry Wharton & Co. were sauntering in the quad after dinner. It was not yet time to change for the football match, and the Famous Five had time to kill. Billy Bunter rolled out of the House and headed for the gates; but he stopped as he came on the chums of the Remove.

Bunter had a bag in his hand and a rather anxious pucker in his fat brows. He seemed in a somewhat uneasy mood. Like Moses of old, he looked this way and he looked that way.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry. "Not going out, Bunter? Aren't you going to line up on Little Side and cheer our goals?"

Bunter shook his head.

"I don't suppose you'll bag any, old chap!" he answered. "You fellows won't make much of a show against Highcliffe, without me in the team."

"Oh, my hat!"

"They'll walk all over you," said Bunter. "What can you expect, when you leave out the best man in the Remove?"

The Famous Five smiled genially. "Go on, old bean!" said Bob. "It's a pleasure to listen to you."

"No good asking me to play, though," added Bunter. "I've got a rather important engagement this

afternoon. If you've been thinking of playing me against Highcliffe, Wharton, I'm afraid you'll have to wash it out."

"If I'd been thinking of playing you against Highcliffe, fatty, I should expect to be carted off to a lunatic asylum!" answered the captain of the Remove.

"Yah! Anyhow, I'm off," said Bunter. "I say, you fellows, if you see Coker and he asks after me, tell him I'm gone to Folkestone for the afternoon, will you?"

"Why the thump should Coker of the Fifth ask after you?" demanded Frank Nugent, in astonishment.

"Well, he might," said Bunter evasively. "Coker's a suspicious beast, you know."

The Famous Five stared at Bunter. "What's in that bag?" asked Johnny Bull.

"This—this bag? Nothing."

"Have you been bagging anything from Coker's study?"

"I hope I'm not the fellow to bag anything from a fellow's study," said Bunter. "There's nothing in this bag. It's empty."

"You're taking an empty bag out for a walk?"

"Yes, old chap! I—I mean, it isn't exactly empty! I—I've got a parcel to post, you know, and it—it's in this bag. I'm going to post it on my way to—to Canterbury. I'm going to Canterbury this afternoon to—to see the cathedral. There's a cathedral there, you know."

"If you've been grub-raiding in a Fifth Form study, you fat brigand—" began Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Let's see what's in the bag!" grinned Nugent.

"I say, old chap, you shouldn't be inquisitive," said Bunter. "There's nothing in this bag, except some books I'm taking to read in the train. You'll tell Coker I'm gone to Canterbury, won't you? I mean, Folkestone! He may ask."

"Look here—"

"If he asks you whether I was carrying anything," added Bunter cautiously, "tell him I wasn't! No need to mention this bag. Tell him I've gone to Folkestone to see my Uncle George, and mention that I wasn't carrying anything. That's rather important."

And Bunter rolled on to the gates, leaving the Famous Five staring after him.

But they dismissed Billy Bunter from their minds as Tatters came along. Bob Cherry hailed the Greyfriars tinker.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Coming down to see the match, Tatters?"

"Well, I'm gon' to see you kick off," said Cholmondeley. "But I'm going out of gates arter."

"Not looking for Ponsonby?" asked Wharton.

Tatters made no reply.

"Look here, you ass, you'll have a row with Queleh if you do," said Harry. "Give it a miss, old fellow."

"Well, I ain't going to look for him," said Tatters slowly. "But if I 'appen to see the bloke—"

"Better stay in and watch the game," said Bob. "It's going to be a good game. Highcliffe are in great form—and so are we."

"The formfulness of our esteemed selves is terrific, my ridiculous Tatters!" said Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh. "The watchfulness of the absurd Soccer is the proper caper."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1.203.

Tatters grinned. "Well, I'll see you kick off, anyhow!" he said; and he strolled away with his hands in his pockets.

A little later the Famous Five went back to the House. It was getting near time for the Highcliffe footballers to arrive. The Remove men were already gathering in the changing-room. The Famous Five joined them there. By that time they had forgotten all about Bunter and Coker; but they were reminded of the latter's existence when a rugged face was put in at the doorway of the changing-room and a wrathful voice addressed them.

"Here, you fags!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, old bean!" said Bob Cherry. "Coming down to see the match, Coker?"

"Don't be a young ass!" snapped Coker.

"You might pick up some tips about footer," suggested Bob. "You need them, you know."

"If you want a thick ear, Cherry—" roared Coker.

"As many as you can give me, old pippin!" answered Bob affably. "Pile in!"

Coker of the Fifth gave him a glare, but he did not pile in. The crowd of juniors were ready to pass a few happy minutes ragging Coker, while they waited for the visitors, if Coker asked for it. But the great man of the Fifth restrained his just wrath.

"Look here, you young sweeps!" he exclaimed. "I'm looking for Bunter."

"Oh, my hat! What do you want Bunter for?" asked Peter Todd.

The Famous Five grinned. They had a strong suspicion what Horace Coker wanted Bunter for.

"Price of the Fifth saw him sneaking out of my study!" hooted Coker. "I've been there for my lunch bag, and it's gone. I had it packed already to take in the car and that fat villain has scooped it. I'm going to smash him. If you fags know where he is—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter in the changing-room. Evidently William George Bunter had been unable to resist the temptation of Coker's lunch-bag.

Coker was "standing" himself and his pals a motor run that afternoon, as Coker often did on a half-holiday—money being no object with Coker. It was like Coker to pack a lunch-bag with a generous and lavish hand for such an occasion. And it was still more like Bunter to get wind of it, and annex the bag while Coker was engaged elsewhere. Coker had packed a collation for three in that bag—himself and Potter and Greene of the Fifth. But it was destined to be a collation for one, and that one, William George Bunter of the Remove.

"Do you know where that fat villain is?" roared Coker.

"Gone out of gates," chuckled Bob Cherry. "But he left a message for you, Coker."

"A message!" repeated Coker.

"What message?"

"He's gone to Folkestone for the afternoon to see his Uncle George."

"Gammon!" hooted Coker.

"And he's gone to Canterbury for the afternoon to see the cathedral."

"Wha-a-at?"

"He left both messages," grinned Bob. "You pays your money, and you takes your choice."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I'll smash him!" roared Coker.

And he tramped away in great wrath

to search for Billy Bunter, though he was certainly not likely to search for him either at Folkestone or at Canterbury.

But Coker and Bunter, and all such trifles, were dismissed from mind when the Highcliffe footballers arrived. When the teams went into the field Harry Wharton glanced round at the fellows gathering to watch the match, and was relieved to see Tatters among them. Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley was there to see the kick-off, and Wharton hoped that he would remain to see the game through. But as the game got going he forgot the Greyfriars tinker, little dreaming of what was to happen that afternoon while the footballers were urging the flying ball.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Treed!

"**B**EAST!" grunted Billy Bunter. It was hard luck.

The person whom Bunter least desired to see that afternoon was Coker of the Fifth. But the person whom he would have next least desired to see was Cecil Ponsonby of Highcliffe.

And it was Ponsonby that he saw. He was well out of Coker's way.

Bunter was not a great walker, and he was not fond of exercise. But with Coker's lunch-bag in his possession, the Owl of the Remove realised that it behoved him to get to a safe distance from the school before he sampled the contents of that bag. He knew what it contained. He had seen Coker packing it in the school shop in his usual lavish way.

He was eager to begin. But it was certain that Coker of the Fifth would be hunting for his lunch-bag up and down and round about Greyfriars, and near Greyfriars there was no rest for the wicked.

So Bunter, bag in hand, rolled away towards Courtfield Common, perhaps hoping that Coker would learn that he had gone to Folkestone to see his Uncle George, or to Canterbury to see the cathedral.

One of the paths on the common lay through a thick patch of woodland, and it was for this spot that Bunter was heading when he sighted Ponsonby strolling on the common.

Bunter quickened his pace at once, hoping that the dandy of Highcliffe had not seen him. He knew what to expect from Pon, if he fell in with that festive youth far from aid. Pon was very keen to keep clear of Tatters, who had a hefty punch, but he was generally equally keen to fall in with any Greyfriars man who was less than his match. Bunter hurried on towards the wood. And he grunted dismally as he heard a sound of running feet behind him.

He blinked back over a fat shoulder. Pon, with a cheery grin on his face, waved a hand to him.

"Stop!" he called out.

Bunter was not likely to stop.

He broke into a run, gasping for breath. Behind him came the running footsteps. Bunter had no chance in a foot race, and he was still a hundred yards from the wood when a touch fell on his fat shoulder.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

He stopped and spun round, grasping the bag convulsively. He glared at the grinning Ponsonby through his big spectacles.

(Continued on page 12.)

"Half-Time" Gossip!



Don't waste your breath arguing chums. Let "Old Ref" settle your Soccer problems. What he doesn't know about the great winter game isn't worth knowing.

AT one time I had an idea—perhaps I should confess that it was also a hope—that there were no new problems connected with this game of football which could possibly arise. Alas, this week I have been reminded that such is not the case.

From all sides and angles we have talked about offside questions, but there now reaches me an offside question in a new form. It appears, summing up a letter I have received, that in a recent match there was a hot attack around the goalkeeper of a side for which one of my readers play.

The centre-forward of the other side made a desperate attempt to rush the ball through; to carry the goalkeeper by force.

This attempt failed in its objective, but such was the speed at which the centre-forward was travelling that he could not stop himself until he reached the net.

When this centre-forward had picked himself out of the meshes of the net he noticed that the attack was going on, and afraid that he would be given offside if he immediately came back to the field of play, he stayed in the net for a moment or two. In that position he could not be offside, of course, as he was beyond the field of play and not interfering with the play in any way.

Then a hot shot was sent in by a colleague of the centre-forward. The goalkeeper failed to catch the ball cleanly, and dropped it on the goal-line. This was an opportunity too good to be missed from the point of view of our centre-forward in the net.

He suddenly became very active, slipped from his place in the net, got the ball which the goalkeeper was struggling to get away, and scored.

Was it a goal, and if not, why not?

I EXPECT my bright young readers will see the point which makes the problem so difficult. When the shot was handled by the goalkeeper, the centre-forward could not be offside, for even if he had been offside previously, the playing of the ball by an opponent would have put him onside. As the centre-forward was not offside it seems to me that the referee had no alternative but to award a goal. But in giving this verdict, I am compelled to agree that it does not seem quite fair.

The goalkeeper cannot fairly be handicapped by the possibility of an opponent coming from the back of him in this case from the net—to score a goal when the goalkeeper fails to stop a shot cleanly.

My only conclusion is that this was merely one of those hard cases for which there is no provision in the rules.

Of course, we could fall back on the argument, often brought forward in other cases, that the centre-forward should have been pulled up for leaving the field of play without the permission of the referee. As I have previously pointed out, however, this leaving the field rule was never meant to affect cases of a player just running beyond the goal-line or the touch-line in the exigencies of the game.

It was bad luck for the side of which my reader was a member to lose a goal in such circumstances, but I am afraid there was no other decision possible. Nor do I think we may need be seriously troubled about the same sort of thing happening with anything like frequency.

It is extremely unlikely, for instance, that any club would decide that it was wise, as a matter of tactics, to send a player beyond the goal-line to wait for such chances to turn up as in the case I have detailed.

I OFTEN wonder whether the managers of our big football clubs have long or short memories. So far as some of them are concerned, it would certainly be just as well if their memories were short, because they make mistakes from time to time. I am reminded of this by the number of players who have made good this season after being "rejected" by other clubs. As a case in point take young Barber, the full-back of Chelsea, who has done so well for them in the Cup-ties this season.

He was brought up as a boy at West Ham, and actually played for the same junior side as two other prominent Chelsea players—Townrow and Bishop. Now the West Ham officials are usually very much alive to the promise of the young players in their district. Evidently, however, the Hammers officials overlooked Barber.

This player then joined Luton Town, and played several games with them last season. At the end of the term, however, the Luton officials thought so little of him that they did not make him an offer of summer wages, and did not put him on their retaining list for a transfer fee.

Chelsea signed on Barber, and now the player is being spoken of as perhaps the best find of the season in the defensive side of the game. Barber's present transfer value would be about five thousand pounds.

WELL, well, these things happen in the best of regulated football families, and it is no use crying over spilt milk. Scores of similar cases could be quoted, and it does not necessarily follow that anybody was to blame. Plenty of footballers play for a time without showing form at all above the ordinary. Then suddenly they develop all in a moment, as it were, without anybody being able to explain the why and wherefore of that development.

The mysteries of "form" and that sort of thing are very interesting. Managers of big clubs look very wise when they discover a young player who develops to an extraordinary extent. They say nothing, however, about the young players on whom they built high hopes who failed to develop, and over whom much good money was wasted. Right down at bottom it is my conviction that nobody can foretell, with certainty, just how far a young player of promise will go in the game. I would put it like this.

If a manager signed on to-day a dozen lads of equal age and equal promise, and put them through the same coaching and training routine, possibly one of the twelve would rise to the highest flights and the other eleven would remain at ordinary levels. Why?

My answer is that the genius at football, or any other game, is not the player who is coached. The genius—the player who stands out above his fellows—is the one in whom there is a mysterious something which the others do not possess. That something—the ability to go the last yard shall we say?—can't be put into the footballer by anybody. It is either there or it isn't there. The trouble is that nobody can be quite sure when, or if ever, that extra ability will show itself.

IN reply to a question from a reader, I cannot recall any case of a football club playing eleven men, all of them Internationals, in the same match. There have been cases of football clubs having more than eleven International players on the staff at the same time—Cardiff City and Sheffield United are comparatively recent examples—but I can't trace any match in which either of those clubs played a whole eleven of Internationals in one game.

"OLD REF."

A KINSMAN'S TREACHERY!

(Continued from page 10.)

"Keep off, you beast!" he gasped.

Ponsonby chuckled.

"Fancy meetin' you, old fat bean!" he remarked. "Where are you goin' with that bag?"

Bunter did not answer the question. He backed away, eyeing the dandy of Highcliffe apprehensively.

The Owl of the Remove was not a fighting man, but there was a desperate gleam in his little, round eyes behind his big spectacles. If anything could have screwed up Billy Bunter's courage to the sticking-point, it was the prospect of being deprived of a feed.

"Keep off!" he gasped.

Ponsonby, grinning, followed him up. It was a solitary spot, and the cheery Pon was prepared to spend a happy ten minutes in ragging a fat and flabby fellow who could not defend himself.

"You rotter!" gasped Bunter. "I wish Tatters was here. I wish the other fellows were here. You'd cut off fast enough!"

"But they're not here," grinned Ponsonby. "And when you get back to Greyfriars you can tell them that I ragged you baldheaded, and shoved you into a ditch, and—"

Bunter jumped back as the dandy of Highcliffe reached at him. Pon, with a chuckle, jumped after him.

Crash!

"Ow!" spluttered Ponsonby.

Bunter was desperate. He swung up the heavy bag, and smote with all his strength. Ponsonby had not expected the worm to turn, and he was taken quite by surprise.

The crash of the heavy bag sent him spinning. He went down on his back with a thud in the grass.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

For an instant he blinked at the prostrate Pon, almost terrified at what he had done. Pon was down, gasping and breathless; but what he would do when he got up again was awful to contemplate.

Bunter spun round and raced away.

Fear, as a novelist would say, lent him wings. His feet seemed scarcely to touch the ground as he flew.

He reached the wood as the breathless and enraged dandy of Highcliffe scrambled to his feet.

There, for an instant, he blinked back.

Ponsonby, panting, and red with rage, was taking up the pursuit again. He came after Bunter at top speed.

"Oh lor!" gasped Bunter.

He raced on through the wood by the narrow footpath that was tangled with brambles on both sides.

But he did not go far.

He was well aware that he had no chance in a foot race with Ponsonby. Half-way through the little wood he turned from the path.

Close by the path grew an ancient tree, thick with branches. Bunter was not good at climbing; but he clambered desperately up the tree, the low branches helping him. Ten feet from the ground the branches of the old beech spread in all directions, and where they jutted from the parent trunk there was a hollow space into which Bunter plunged, still with Coker's lunch-bag in his convulsive grasp.

He squatted in the hollow in the midst of the branches, and palpitated.

He was only in time.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,203.

He scarcely breathed as running feet passed along the path, under the spreading branches of the beech.

Ponsonby passed on, running hard, evidently in the belief that Billy Bunter was still ahead of him.

His footsteps died away in the distance.

"Oh lor!" panted Bunter.

It was some minutes before Bunter recovered his breath. Ponsonby had disappeared; but Bunter did not think of leaving his refuge. It was more than likely that the dandy of Highcliffe was still looking for him.

He gave his attention to the bag now. In the hollow of the trunk, with rising branches all round him, Bunter was concealed from sight from anyone on the ground. And he realised that he could not have found a safer or more comfortable spot for taking a rest and a feed. Leaning back against a branch the fat junior opened the bag, and his eyes glistened behind his spectacles. Had Coker of the Fifth packed that bag with a special view to Billy Bunter's delectation, he could not have been more successful.

There was a sound of champing jaws, and a beatific smile overspread the podgy countenance of William George Bunter.

Bunter was beginning to enjoy life.

But the Owl of the Remove had scarcely eaten enough for two hungry fellows, when his podgy jaws suddenly ceased to champ, and he started in alarm.

There was a sound of footsteps on the path below.

The beast was coming back!

Someone, at all events, was on the path. Bunter did not venture to betray himself by peering down. He sat silent and motionless, and listened.

The footsteps halted.

Bunter's heart thumped!

Whoever it was, had stopped directly under the ancient beech. Bunter heard the scratch of a match, and the scent of a cigarette floated up to him.

"Beast!" breathed Bunter silently.

But he was more puzzled than alarmed. If it was Ponsonby below, he could not know that Bunter was there. Had he known, he could easily have clambered up the old beech and rooted him out. Instead of which, he had lighted a cigarette, and was smoking. Bunter began to wonder whether it was Pon, after all. If it was someone else, all was serene.

The fat junior stirred at last, silently and cautiously, and peered down at the fellow under the tree.

The next instant, he drew back his head, like a tortoise popping back into its shell.

It was Ponsonby below! The dandy of Highcliffe was leaning on the trunk of the beech, facing the footpath, smoking a cigarette. Obviously he knew nothing of Bunter's proximity, and the fat junior wondered what on earth he was there for.

Slowly it dawned on his fat brain that the old beech in the wood on the common, was a place of appointment. He had rather wondered at seeing Ponsonby out alone on a half-holiday; generally his friends were with him. He guessed now that Ponsonby had been on his way to some appointment when they had encountered on the common. Pon had hunted for him, lost him, and given up the chase, and now he was waiting under the old beech for someone to join him there—possibly a book-maker, or some bookmaker's messenger, or something of the sort.

Pon, leaning on the beech, was

smoking one cigarette after another, and looking through a little book—some tipster's publication. Evidently he had time on his hands.

So long as he remained there, Billy Bunter was a prisoner in the beech. He hardly dared even to munch a cake with the greatest caution, lest a sound should reach Ponsonby's ears.

How long was the beast going to remain there? Obviously he was waiting for someone who might not arrive yet. It was a relief to Bunter, a few minutes later, to hear the sound of footsteps approaching on the tangled path from the direction of the open common.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Licked at Last!

"GOAL!"

"Bravo!"

It was first blood for Greyfriars, and there was a roar from the fellows on Little Side.

The first half was going strong. Twice the home goal had narrowly escaped, but each time, Squiff, in goal, had stopped the leather. Now the Remove men attacked hard, and Harry Wharton sent the ball into the visitors' goal. Tatters' voice joined in the cheering. But as the teams lined up again after the goal, Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley strolled away from the football field.

Tatters was keen on footer, and would have been glad to play; but he was not up to the form required for the Highcliffe match. Highcliffe were a strong team, since Frank Courtenay had pulled them together, and Pon and his knutty friends had been dropped. They were worth watching, especially Courtenay, and the Caterpillar. But Tatters was thinking of other things now, and he walked off the ground while the Greyfriars fellows were cheering Wharton's goal.

The Greyfriars tinker wheeled his bike out. He pedalled away towards Courtfield at a brisk pace.

Mr. Quelch's warning had not been forgotten. Tatters was not exactly going to look for Ponsonby. So far, he heeded the commands of his Form master.

But he knew that it was likely enough that Pon was out of gates on a half-holiday, and that if he was out of gates, a fellow cycling around Courtfield way, might happen on him—by chance.

Tatters turned from the road, by the path that led across the common, and cycled on at a leisurely pace.

There was no doubt that he wanted to meet Ponsonby. It was, in Tatters' opinion, altogether too "thick" that the dandy of Highcliffe should escape the punishment that was his due, by sneaking to his Form master, and bringing Mr. Quelch into the matter. If Pon wanted to dodge trouble, he should have thought of that before he took the offensive in the first place. And there was no doubt that if Pon came on Tatters, with the odds on his side, he would rag the tinker as he had done before. That sort of arrangement was altogether too one-sided to please Tatters.

So although he was not precisely looking for Ponsonby, he entertained a hope of falling in with him, and as it happened, that hope was to be realised.

Tatters reached the spot where the path ran through the little thick wood, and dismounted to wheel his machine through. There was bright spring sunshine on the open common, but on the

narrow tangled path through the wood, it was dusky under the heavy overhanging branches. Tatters was quite close to a fellow who stood leaning against an ancient beech tree, smoking cigarettes and reading a sporting paper, before he saw him.

"My 'at!" ejaculated Tatters.

It was Ponsonby of Highcliffe!

Tatters' approach caused the dandy of Highcliffe to look up. He started at the sight of the Greyfriars tinker.

"So you're 'ere!" grinned Tatters.

Ponsonby drew a deep breath.

He had glanced up, at the sound of someone approaching, expecting to see the man he had arranged to meet in that solitary spot—no other than Cyril Rackstraw. Since the little scene at Highcliffe School the week before, Rackstraw and Ponsonby had agreed that it would be better for Rackstraw not to come to Highcliffe again. In the circumstances, it was obviously safer for their acquaintance to remain unknown to others. But that acquaintance had continued and ripened. Rackstraw was very useful to his young sporting friend in matters concerned with backing horses, and he had no scruples whatever of helping a rockless young rascal on the downward path. And in their bitter dislike of Tatters they had a feeling in common; and to Pon, Rackstraw made no secret of his aim to drive his cousin in disgrace from Greyfriars. Whether Ponsonby could help him in that object he could not yet tell, but it was certain that the will would not be lacking.

jeered Tatters. "If you 'ad, you wouldn't keep your distance, I fancy! You'd be raggin' me and 'acking my shins, you blooming funk. Man to man, you don't want to put up your 'ands."

"They haven't taught you at Greyfriars that there's an "H" in the alphabet yet!" sneered Ponsonby.

Tatters flushed.

"Quechy says I ain't to wallop you," he said. "But I don't see it. It's too thick! Anyhow, I'm going to pull your nose, like I did once before. If you don't choose to put up your 'ands after that, you can sneak away, and I'll give you a blooming kick to start you."

Ponsonby started back from the beech, as a finger and thumb approached his handsome nose.

"You low rotter——" he panted.

The next moment, as Tatters closed in on him, he struck out. Tatters gave a

And it was a thrashing that Pon was capturing. Ho fought fiercely and savagely, using his feet as well as his hands, utterly regardless of fair play so long as he got home on his enemy.

But it availed him little; or, rather, it made matters worse for him, for Tatters, intensely exasperated by a back from Pon's boot, pressed him fiercely, and the dandy of Highcliffe was knocked right and left.

Billy Bunter watched with great enjoyment. This was how he would have liked to handle Ponsonby himself had it been possible. Every thudding blow that reached the dandy of Highcliffe was music to Bunter's fat ears. He forgot even his feast as he watched, with eager eyes behind his big spectacles.

Crash!

Ponsonby went down at last, gasping,



The car drew to a halt, and Sir George Cholmondeley jumped out and raced towards the strange, pitiful figure sprawled by the roadside. "Good gad!" barked Sir George.

Looking up, in the expectation of seeing Rackstraw, Pon saw Tatters, and he breathed hard.

Tatters leaned his machine against a tree, and came towards the dandy of Highcliffe.

Pon eyed him evilly. Uneasy as he was at the meeting, Pon could not keep the supercilious, contemptuous sneer from his face.

"Keep your distance, you cad!" he snapped.

Tatters' eyes gleamed at him.

"You can't speak to a bloke without calling him names, what?" he said. "You worm, you. I been jawed by my Form master about you! You rag a covey three to one, and 'ack his shin in a scrap—and then you go sneaking to a schoolmaster to save your measly skin! What kind of a rotten funk do you call yourself with all your airs?"

Ponsonby gritted his teeth.

"Keep your distance, you scrubby ruffian!" he said savagely.

"You ain't got your pals with you now, to pile on a bloke three to one,"

yelp as the Highcliffe fellow's knuckles crashed in his face.

Then he jumped at Ponsonby.

All remembrance of Mr. Quech and his injunctions was gone now. He remembered only Ponsonby's many offences. There was a yell from Pon as a fist crashed on his nose.

"Now go it, you funk!" panted Tatters.

Ponsonby had little choice in the matter, and for the moment, at least, rage supplied the place of courage. He fairly flung himself at Tatters, and they fought fiercely.

From the branches of the beech overhead, unseen and unsuspected by either of the combatants, Billy Bunter grinned down at the scene.

It was quite an entertainment to the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter could have slithered down the beech and escaped, while Ponsonby was engaged with his enemy; but he did not think of it. He was too keenly interested in watching the dandy of Highcliffe thrashed.

panting, one of his eyes closed and his nose streaming crimson.

Tatters stared scornfully down at him.

"Get up, you funk!" he snapped.

"You ain't licked yet!"

Then, as Ponsonby refused to stir, the Greyfriars tinker contemptuously turned his back on him, grasped his bicycle, and wheeled it on through the woodland path.

Ponsonby remained lying in the grass under the spreading branches of the beech, groaning.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Vengeance of the Tramp!

BILLY BUNTER grinned.

For five minutes Bunter had thoroughly enjoyed himself.

But as Tatters wheeled his bike on, and disappeared by the winding path through the wood, Bunter ceased to grin.

Tatters was gone; but Ponsonby remained. And Bunter, after a blink down at the groaning fellow in the grass, popped back into his hiding-place.

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

It dawned on Bunter's fat brain that he would have done well to take advantage of those five furious minutes to escape. But it was too late now.

The thought of what would happen if Pon spotted him now almost made the fat Owl's blood run cold.

Pon had had the thrashing of his life, and if he had a chance of passing it on to a Greyfriars man who could not scrap, Bunter did not need telling how eagerly Pon would jump at that chance.

The dandy of Highcliffe staggered to his feet at last.

He leaned on the beech, dabbing his streaming nose with his handkerchief, which was soon crimsoned.

Bunter heard the savage words that dropped from his lips, and trembled. If Ponsonby found out that he was there—

But Ponsonby had no suspicion that anyone was there. He dabbed his nose and rubbed his eye, muttering words that would have shocked Mr. Mobbs, had his Form master overheard them. Savage words were mingled with gasping and groaning.

Bunter listened. He wondered whether Ponsonby would clear, or whether he would wait for whomsoever it was he had come there to meet. The Highcliffe junior showed no sign of going, as yet. He was spent by the strenuous scrap, and he leaned on the beech, groaning and muttering to himself while he dabbed his nose and eye.

There was a rustle in the thickets. Pon did not heed it; but Bunter, wondering if Tatters was coming back, blinked down. If he had another chance to escape Bunter was not going to lose it.

It was not Tatters, however, who appeared on the path. Tatters, by that time, was far away on his bicycle.

Bunter blinked down at a squat, tattered man, with a broken nose, several missing teeth, and a ragged cap pulled down low over a beetling brow.

The fat junior had never seen him before; but he could see that the man was a tramp, and not the kind of tramp that Bunter would have cared to meet in a lonely place.

He had a bundle on his shoulder, tied in a red-spotted handkerchief, and a stick under his arm.

He came slouching along the path, and Bunter, as he blinked down at him, was glad that he was out of sight, and was careful to keep out of sight.

The tramp, passing under the branches of the beech, stared at the well-dressed fellow who was dabbing his nose there.

His stare was simply curious at first, but a moment later recognition dawned in his stubbly face.

"My word!" he ejaculated. "You!" Ponsonby gave him a quick look, and started. He ceased to dab his nose, and stared at the tramp. Every vestige of colour vanished from his face as he recognised the broken-nosed man.

Bunter heard him give a hoarse gasp.

"Keep off!"

The broken-nosed man dropped his bundle, and the stick slid down from under his arm into his hand.

He came closer to Ponsonby, his little eyes gleaming under his beetling brows, his lips drawn back in a snarl from his blackened teeth.

"You!" he repeated. "You, what pitched me into the water, and pelted me, you young 'ound! I told you I 'oped I'd see you agin, when you hadn't got a gang with you!"

Ponsonby shrank back against the tree.

He had fared badly at the hands of Tatters. But the savage, threatening scowl on the tramp's face showed that he had much worse to expect from the man he had wantonly ill-used.

"Let me alone!" breathed Ponsonby. "You—you lay a hand on me, and I'll set the police on you!"

The broken-nosed man grinned savagely.

"You laid 'ands on me fast enough when there was a gang of you," he said. "Wot had I done to you, I'd like to know? You jest piled on a bloke, a gang of you, 'cause it ain't no use for the likes of me to 'ave the law on you. You soused me in the river, and chucked stones at me, and I'd 'ave been 'arf-drowned if some young gents 'adn't come along and stopped you! Wot you got to say now, man to man?"

"I—I—I'm sorry!" gasped Ponsonby. "It—it was only a lark! I—I never meant to hurt you—"

"You bung a bloke into a 'arf-frozen river, and bung stones at him, and never meant to 'urt him!" said the tramp, with savage sarcasm. "Well, p'r'aps I don't mean to 'urt you, more'n you meant to 'urt me! Jest about as much, I fancy!"

"Hands off!" screamed Ponsonby, in utter terror, as the ruffian grasped at him.

The next moment he was struggling and writhing in the grip of the tramp. With his left hand the ruffian held the writhing junior, with his right he wielded the stick.

Bunter, quaking with terror in the beech, heard the sound of crashing blows, and shuddered with horror.

He had enjoyed seeing the dandy of Highcliffe thrashed by Tatters. But he was not enjoying this.

Had he dared, he would have dropped from the tree, and given the wretched Highcliffe fellow aid. But for no earthly consideration would the Owl of the Remove have ventured within reach of the ferocious ruffian.

Not that Bunter's help would have been of any use. One blow from the broken-nosed man would have knocked Bunter completely out.

The Owl of the Remove remained where he was, quaking.

Ponsonby was yelling, shrieking, raving, howling for mercy. But there was no mercy for him.

The man was a brutal ruffian. In sheer wantonness Pon and his friends had ragged the man, well knowing that, so far as the law went, they had nothing to fear from a tattered and disreputable outcast. A thrashing was no more than Ponsonby deserved at his hands. But it was more than a thrashing that the ruffian gave him.

**BRITAIN'S BEST BOYS'
COLOURED PAPER**

THE RANGER—2^D.

GET IT TO-DAY!

With utter brutality he laid on the blows of the stick, careless of the injury he did.

Ponsonby, yelling with pain, turned on him at last in desperation. His fists crashed into the brutal, stubbly face.

There was a roar of rage from the tramp.

He struck out fiercely with the stick, and the blow crashed on the Highcliffe junior's head.

A gasping cry came from Ponsonby, and he fell headlong in the grass.

He did not move again.

The broken-nosed man raised the stick for another blow. But he held his hand. His last blow had stunned the hapless Highcliffe fellow, and Pon lay senseless at his feet.

"My word!" muttered the ruffian. He seemed for a moment soared at what he had done.

But he quickly recovered himself. He dropped the stick, stooped by the senseless schoolboy, and ran thievish hands through his pockets. A minute later he picked up stick and bundle and disappeared along the path at a run.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked down from the beech, his face white with horror and fear. Ponsonby lay senseless in the grass; the tramp had disappeared.

"I—I—I'd better help him!" Bunter stammered through his chattering teeth. "B-b-but if that awful beast should come back—"

He listened, but there was no sound in the wood. He slithered down the beech at last, forgetful even of Coker's lunch bag.

Ponsonby lay insensible, and Bunter, blinking round him in terror, approached the still form in the grass.

He stopped suddenly, quaking.

There was a sound of footsteps—a rustling of brushing twigs. Someone was coming up the path! To Bunter's terrified mind it meant only one thing—that awful tramp was coming back!

In an instant the fat junior plunged into the trees and tore away.

He was not thinking of hiding now. He was only thinking of getting away. He vanished from the path before the newcomer came in sight, tearing away through the trees. In a few minutes he found himself on the open common, and he tore on frantically in the direction of Courtfield. It was half an hour later that Billy Bunter, panting, gasping, perspiring, and still terrified, burst into the police station at Courtfield.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Precious Pair!

CYRIL RACKSTRAW stopped. In utter amazement he stared at the figure lying in the grass under the spreading branches of the beech.

He had come there to meet Ponsonby, but this was not how he had expected to find him.

The cigar dropped from his mouth, and he stood staring down at the Highcliffe junior blankly.

"Good gad!" he ejaculated.

Ponsonby stirred and groaned.

A strange expression came over Rackstraw's face. A strange light gleamed in his eyes.

On his way to the place of appointment Rackstraw had passed a cyclist, and stepped out of sight behind a tree till he was past. He did not want to meet Tatters, but he had watched the Greyfriars tinker with a curious and

malevolent eye, noting the signs of combat in his face. He was well aware of the bitter feud between Tatters and Ponsonby; he had hoped and planned to turn it to his advantage in his scheming against his rival for Sir George Cholmondeley's fortune. Now the strange thought came into his mind that Tatters had played into his hands.

The cyclist had been coming from this direction when Rackstraw had seen him. His looks had shown that he had recently been fighting. The thought had crossed Rackstraw's mind that there might have been a hostile meeting between the two. Now he found Ponsonby lying stunned, battered, bruised, in the grass under the beech. If Tatters had done this—

Rackstraw's look was gloating at the thought.

If Tatters had done this there was no more need for scheming. The young scoundrel had cooked his own goose. Expulsion from Greyfriars and a term in a reformatory would be his reward if he had done this to Ponsonby. Sir George Cholmondeley would cast him off in horror and disgust if this could be proved against him. Rackstraw had won his game, and won it with Tatters' own help, if the tinker had done this!

And who else could have done it? The young scoundrel, trained by a ruffianly tinker, was capable of it, in Rackstraw's opinion. His opinion of Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley was founded on jealous hatred, and he was ready to give poor Tatters credit for this act of ferocious brutality, or for anything else.

He breathed hard and deep. If Tatters had done this— And he felt assured that Tatters had done it. The wish was father to the thought.

Ponsonby stirred again, groaned, and sat up dazedly. His hand went to his head and he groaned again.

Then, as his dizzy eyes made out a figure standing near him, he panted huskily in deadly fear:

"Keep off! Let me alone!"
 "It's all right," said Rackstraw soothingly. "It is I! Your friend! Let me help you."

He raised Ponsonby from the grass and helped him to a seat on a fallen log. Ponsonby leaned back against a tree, groaning. He recognised Rackstraw now.

"Keep with me," he muttered hoarsely; "that villain may be still about. Don't leave me, Rackstraw."

"Rely on me," said Rackstraw. "By gad! You're hurt, old fellow. Take a sip of this."

He drew a flask from his pocket and placed it to Ponsonby's lips. The taste of what it contained was probably not new to Ponsonby. The colour flushed a little into his haggard face.

He leaned on the tree, breathing hard. Rackstraw eyed him. It was his cue to sympathise, but he could hardly keep the gloating out of his look. If Tatters had done this—

Ponsonby was black and blue with bruises. His face was bruised and cut, and there was a large lump on his head. Obviously he had been savagely beaten with a stick; beaten as no decent man would have dreamed of beating a dog. Ponsonby was going to be laid up—perhaps for weeks. He was in no state to get away without aid. But for Rackstraw's coming he might have lain for many hours in the wood, unable to crawl away. Whoever had done this was booked for prison.

"You met Cholmondeley here?" said Rackstraw at last.

Ponsonby nodded.

Rackstraw's eyes burned.
 "I thought so! I passed the young scoundrel; he was coming from this direction. He attacked you?"

Another nod.
 "This does for him!" said Rackstraw. "You've been through it, Pon;

but that's a consolation for you. This does for him."

Ponsonby stared at him dully.
 "I don't understand you!" he muttered faintly. "I had a fight with Cholmondeley—hang him! He—he knocked me out! Then that tramp—"
 "What tramp?" Rackstraw's face fell.

"I don't know his name—a brute with a broken nose." Ponsonby's voice was low and faint. "I'll give his description to the police, though. I'll get him two years for this!"

Rackstraw's teeth set hard.
 "You mean that it was not Cholmondeley who handled you like this?" he muttered.

"Of course it wasn't!" snarled Ponsonby. "It was that tramp! We—we ragged him the other day—ducked him in the river. I never dreamed that I should ever see him again! He came on me here, and—and—" He broke off with a groan.

Rackstraw gritted his teeth hard. It was not Tatters, after all! But for his bitter hatred of the Greyfriars waif he would have known that it was not Tatters who had done such a thing.

There was a long silence.
 "Let's have this clear," said Rackstraw at last. "Cholmondeley met you here and attacked you—"

A nod.
 "He knocked you out and left you—"

Another nod.
 "After that this tramp, whoever he is, came on the scene and beat you up for an old grudge—"

Ponsonby nodded again.
 "Well," said Rackstraw, with a deep breath, "never mind the tramp! I dare say he's far enough away by this time; he's not likely to hang about here, with the police looking for him. He will naturally expect you to set the police after him. He will be in the next county before night. You're going to wash out the tramp, Pon; forget that he ever existed."

"You—you fool!" muttered Ponsonby. "I'm going to send him to prison—I'm going to get him the longest stretch I can—"

"Can't you see?" breathed Rackstraw. "You wash out the tramp, and—Cholmondeley did this!"

"Cholmondeley?"
 Ponsonby stared blankly.

"Cholmondeley!" repeated Rackstraw. Pon still stared. But slowly understanding dawned on him. The look that came over Ponsonby's battered face was not pleasant to see.

"Oh gad!" he muttered.

"Don't you see?" muttered Rackstraw. "Cholmondeley did this—and he's going to be sacked from his school for it—he's going to be sent to a reformatory for it! He's done for—if we fix this on him! You pay off your score against the young scoundrel, and I clear him out of my way! You understand? Arthur Cholmondeley did this—and there never was any tramp!"

Ponsonby breathed hard.
 "I get you!" he muttered.

"You're game?"
 "I'm game!"
 "Nobody saw the man here—no witnesses—"

"Of course not! He couldn't have beaten me up like this if there had been anybody about."

Rackstraw nodded. He felt sure of that.

"But—I'm not letting that broken-nosed brute off, after what he's done to me—"

OUR LEATHER WALLETS
 ARE IDEAL FOR THE
 POCKET!

All you've got to do to win one is to compose a Greyfriars limerick like Miss Dorothy Wilden, of 19, Foxmore Street, Battersea, S.W.11, who sent in the following winning effort, which is illustrated by our artist:



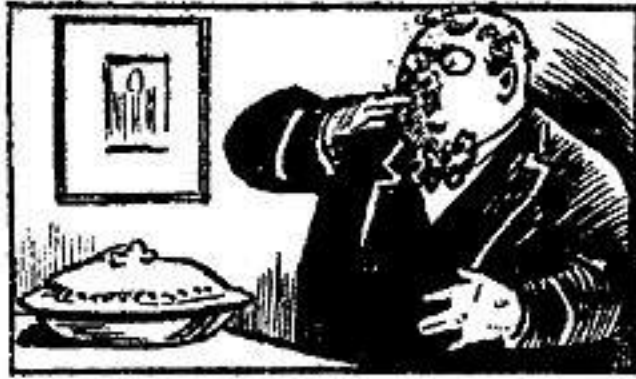
Fat Bunter, the Greyfriars Owl,



Round other chaps' studies did prowl



When, from out of his eye,



A pie he did spy—



A smile took the place of a scowl!
 GET BUSY ON A LIMERICK
 TO-DAY!

"Never mind him! He can be found and dealt with another time, if you're keen on it. Easy enough to trace him if we want to. Cholmondeley first."

"Cholmondeley first!" agreed Pon, with an evil glitter in his eyes. "By gad, I'll make that cur squirm for knockin' me out!"

Rackstraw's look was gloating again. Plot after plot against his rival for a fortune had failed; but this should not fail. Ponsonby, after all, was the tool he had needed!

"I'll help you as far as the road," he said, at last. "You can pick up a lift in a car there! I mustn't be seen with you! I'll get out of this neighbourhood at once—now all's clear! I'd better be at Cholmondeley Castle when the news comes—cannot be too careful! Can you walk now, if I help you?"

"I'll try."

Rackstraw helped him to his feet. Ponsonby groaned at every step, as he was helped along the path. Twice the hapless junior almost fainted, as Rackstraw helped him across the common to the road. Near the road, anxious not to be seen, Rackstraw left him.

"You can crawl the rest," he muttered. "You crawled all the way when you tell the tale."

The rascal hurried away. Ponsonby limped on, but in a few minutes he sank into the grass. He was crawling on hands and knees, groaning every moment, when he reached the road, with scarcely strength enough left to wave his hand and call out feebly when a car came in sight from the direction of Courtfield.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Good Samaritan!

SIR GEORGE CHOLMONDELEY, of Cholmondeley Castle, Hampshire, jammed a rimless eyeglass a little tighter under a grizzled eyebrow, and stared from the window of his big, expensive car, at a strange figure by the roadside. The next moment he had barked to the chauffeur.

"Spencer! Stop!"

The car drew to a halt by the side of the road over Courtfield Common, within a couple of yards of the battered, bruised, dishevelled schoolboy who sprawled there, feebly waving a hand and calling.

Without waiting for the chauffeur to open the door, Sir George opened it himself and jumped out, with great activity for a gentleman of his years. The grizzled old baronet, with his mastiff face and a voice like the bark of a fierce dog, had a not unkindly heart. And few would have passed that forlorn figure by the roadside unheeded.

"Good gad! What? What?" barked Sir George, as he bent over Ponsonby of Highcliffe. "What has happened to you? What?"

A face that was white as chalk, where it was not blackened by bruises, stared up at Sir George Cholmondeley. Ponsonby tried to speak, but his voice failed him. He was far more utterly spent, after his terrible experience, than Rackstraw had noticed—the rascal's thoughts being concentrated rather on his own desperate scheming than on the state of his confederate. The weary drag across the common to the road had exhausted what little strength Ponsonby had left, and he was now in a pitiable condition.

"Help!" He managed to get the word out.

"Certainly! Certainly!" barked Sir

George. "Good gad! What can have happened to the boy—he looks beaten black and blue! Spencer, assist me with this boy."

"Yes, Sir George."

The chauffeur had stepped down. His look was commiserating at the wretched Ponsonby. It was obvious that the schoolboy had been beaten with ruthless, savage malice by some brutal ruffian.

Between them, Ponsonby was lifted from the ground. He sagged helplessly in their grasp.

"Can you tell me your name?" asked Sir George. "Can you tell me where you live? I have no time to lose, but—"

"He's fainted, sir!" said Spencer.

"Good gad! What scoundrel can have done this—to a mere boy?" exclaimed Sir George. "He has been beaten terribly—terribly! Help me place him in the car! He looks like a schoolboy—probably he is known at Greyfriars—at all events, Dr. Locke will take him in and a medical man can be sent for! Lift him in."

"Yes, Sir George."

Ponsonby was lifted, gently enough, into the car. He was laid on the soft cushions in the luxurious interior, and Sir George sat on the edge of the seat, to see that he did not roll off when the car ran on again. The hapless Pon was unconscious now. A moan or a muttered word left his white lips at intervals, but he was past speaking clearly.

"Quick, Spencer!" barked Sir George.

The chauffeur resumed his seat, and drove on towards Greyfriars; for which destination Sir George Cholmondeley had been heading when he sighted Ponsonby by the roadside.

The big car raced on.

Ponsonby stirred and moaned. His eyes were open, and they turned dully on the anxious face of the old baronet.

But he did not speak—he was not thinking, then, even of his plot of vengeance against Tatters. He was conscious only of pain.

The car covered the distance to the school swiftly. As it turned in at the gates, Gosling touched his hat with great respect to the lord of Cholmondeley Castle, who was a governor of Greyfriars. Spencer ran the car on to the door of the Head's house.

From the direction of the football ground there was a sound of shouting.

"Goal!"

"Bravo, Wharton!"

The shouts reached Sir George's ears, though he did not think of heeding them. The chauffeur rang at the Head's door, and then helped Sir George lift Ponsonby from the car. The Head's butler, opening the door, looked in amazement at the sagging figure held between the baronet and the chauffeur.

"You know this boy?" barked Sir George. "Does he belong to this school?"

"No, Sir George," said the butler, staring at Ponsonby. "But I think I have seen him before. A Highcliffe boy, I think, sir."

"My dear Sir George, what—what—" Dr. Locke came into the hall, with amazed eyes on Ponsonby.

"You know this boy, sir?" asked the old baronet.

"I—I think so, yes, I am sure—he is named Ponsonby—he belongs to Highcliffe School. But what has happened?"

"I know nothing of that, sir—I found him by the roadside, in this state, and picked him up," said Sir George. "He seems to have been the victim of a savage assault. I was sure, sir, that you

would be willing to take him in and send for medical aid."

"Most assuredly," said the Head at once. "He shall be placed in the sanatorium immediately, and I will telephone to Dr. Pillbury. He is in no state to be taken back to Highcliffe now."

"Very good!" said Sir George.

Ponsonby, still in a dazed, half-conscious state, though he was recovering a little now, was removed at once to the school sanatorium, while the Head went to the telephone. He was left in the matron's charge till the medical man could arrive.

"A strange affair, sir," said Sir George Cholmondeley, when the Head rejoined him. "A matter for the police, I should think. No doubt the boy will be able to state who has used him in that terrible manner, when the doctor has seen him. Some ruffianly footpad, no doubt."

"I should imagine so!" assented the Head. "Dr. Pillbury will be here very soon, and we shall ascertain. In the meantime—"

"In the meantime, sir, I should like to see my grandson," said Sir George. "I desire to see how Arthur is progressing at Greyfriars. As a matter of fact, I have made some changes in my plans regarding my grandson, sir. I presume that he is at hand?"

"No doubt!" said the Head, coughing. "I will at all events send for him. But as it is a half-holiday in the school, it is possible, of course, that the boy may be out of gates—"

Sir George grunted.

"He was not informed of your intended visit, I think, Sir George," said Dr. Locke. "I had no idea—" Dr. Locke coughed again. It was always rather an infliction when a governor of the school came down to Greyfriars; and it was the Head's opinion that Sir George would have done well to apprise him of his intention to call. But the lord of Cholmondeley Castle seemed to have a fixed idea that the rest of the inhabitants of the globe existed only for his convenience.

"I found I had time, sir, to make this visit to-day," said Sir George. "It was not necessary to inform Arthur. Naturally I expected to see the boy here."

"As it is a half-holiday—" murmured the Head.

Grunt!

It did not take long to ascertain that Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley, of the Remove, was out of gates that afternoon. He had gone out on his bicycle. Sir George barked when he received the news.

"Absurd! I have travelled a hundred miles to see the boy. And he is absent! Absurd!"

"Really, Sir George—" murmured the Head.

"I will wait!" barked Sir George.

And the lord of Cholmondeley Castle waited—and the Head of Greyfriars hoped fervently that Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley would not be long in getting back to the school.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Thunderbolt!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. came off the football ground, with cheery faces. The Highcliffe match was over, and Greyfriars had won—two goals to one. And as Harry Wharton had kicked both the goals for Greyfriars, he was feeling particularly pleased with himself. The Famous Five went down to the gates

with the Highcliffe men to see them off. Courtenay and the Caterpillar bade farewell to their friendly rivals, and the Highcliffe footballers were about to roll off in the brake when a cyclist came whizzing up from the direction of Courtfield, and jumped down from his machine.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Tatters!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Ow did it go?" asked Tatters.

"Oh, we pulled it off!" said Bob. "Close thing, though! What have you been doing with your chivvy?"

Courtenay gave the Greyfriars tinker a quick look. The Caterpillar smiled. Arthur Cecil Cholmondeley passed a hand over a swollen nose and a bruised cheek.

"Does it show much?" he asked.

"Well, anybody can see that you've been scrapping," said Harry Wharton, trowaing a little.

"Now I wonder," remarked the Caterpillar thoughtfully, "whether any Highcliffe man has been pickin' up black eyes and busted noses this jolly old afternoon?"

Tatters grinned.

"You'll find Ponsonby, looking wuss'n me, if you want to know," he answered.

"If he looks wuss!" said the Caterpillar gravely, "he must look a regular corker! Well, come on, Franky; let's hurry home an' condole with Pon! Probably he's feelin' the need of friendly condolences."

"I never went looking for him, you blokes," said Tatters, flushing a little. "I jest 'appened on him on the common."

"And you went that way, thinkin' that you might not meet him?" suggested the Caterpillar.

"Well, I thought I might meet him," confessed Tatters. "Still, I wasn't looking for him. And if he hadn't turned up his blooming nose at me, I dessay I wouldn't 'ave punched it."

The Caterpillar shook his head.

"It's one of dear old Pon's bloomin' faults, that he turns up his bloomin' nose too bloomin' often!" he remarked. "It's one of his bloomin' manners and customs, and bloomin' irritatin' to any bloomin' feller—"

"Oh, come on, Caterpillar!" said Courtenay hastily. "Good-bye, you fellows! We'll beat you next time, I hope."

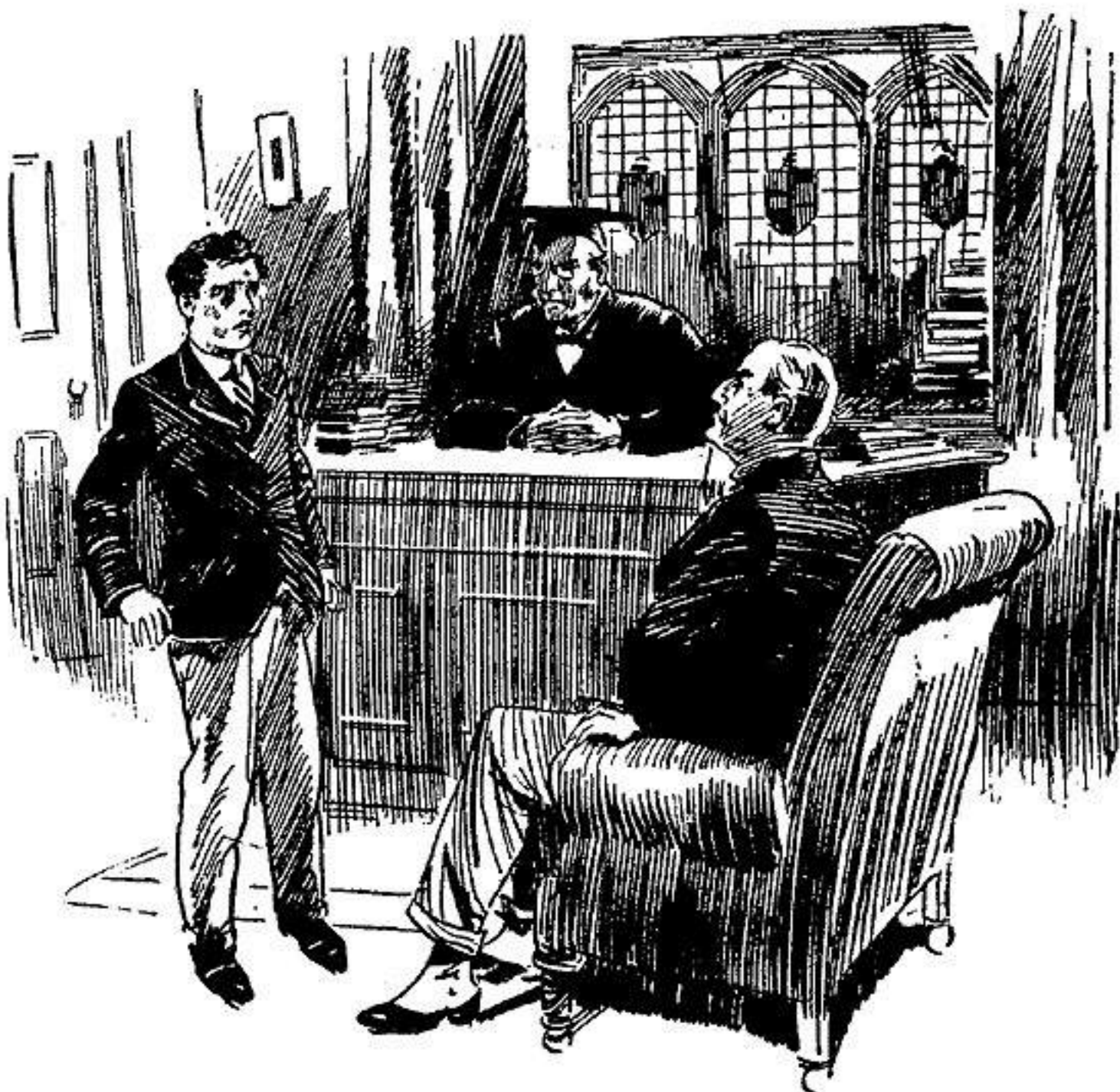
And the brake rolled away with the Highcliffe footballers. Tatters wheeled in his machine with the Famous Five.

The chums of the Remove were looking rather grave. In spite of Mr. Quelch's strict injunctions, Tatters had found trouble with Ponsonby that afternoon. It was likely that he would find trouble with Mr. Quelch, too. Gosling came out of his lodge as the juniors went in.

"Master Cholmondeley's wanted," he said. "You're to go to the 'Ead's study, sir."

"Oh, my 'at!" ejaculated Tatters. "Bust my buttons! That worm can't 'ave sneaked about our scrap already."

Of Ponsonby's arrival at Greyfriars, in Sir George Cholmondeley's car, the



"I understood that you were making friends here, Arthur," boomed Sir George. "I did not expect to find you looking disgracefully battered, sir, from fighting with some other Greyfriars boy!"

juniors as yet knew nothing. They had been too busy on the football ground to heed the arrival of even so great a man as the lord of Cholmondeley Castle.

"What does the Head want Cholmondeley for, Gosling?" asked Harry.

"Visitor to see him, sir," answered Gosling; "Sir George Cholmondeley, sir. He came in half an hour ago."

"Oh lor'!" said Tatters.

The arrival of his grandfather did not seem to buck the Greyfriars tinker. He walked on rather dismally with his chums.

"Well, you're an ass, Tatters," said Nugent. "You've got to show your grandfather a prize nose now. Why couldn't you keep out of scrapping with that Highcliffe cad?"

"Well, I never knowed grandfather was coming," said Tatters. "He never let on to me. Is my nose very bad?"

"Like a squashed gooseberry."

"Better get in," said Harry Wharton.

"I'll take your bike to the shed, Tatters. Sir George isn't the kind of old gent to keep waiting, if you can help it."

"What-ho!" said Tatters ruefully.

He went on to the House. A pair of gimlet-eyes fell on him from a study window; and Mr. Quelch met him as he entered. Tatters suppressed a groan at the sight of his Form master.

"Cholmondeley!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir?" mumbled Tatters.

"I need not ask you if you have been fighting," said the Remove master.

"Nunno, sir! I mean, yes, sir."

Mr. Quelch knitted his brows.

"Only two days ago, Cholmondeley. I warned you to avoid further disputes with Highcliffe boys. Have you been fighting with Ponsonby?"

"You—you see, sir—" stammered Tatters.

"Answer my question!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

"Ye-e-s, sir!"

"In spite of my strict commands, Cholmondeley, you have sought out this Highcliffe boy and fought with him!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, in a voice of thunder.

"I—I didn't look for him, sir! I jest 'appened on him! And he'd have pitched into me fast enough, if he'd had two or three other blokes with him."

"There is no doubt that you are to blame Cholmondeley. I am assured that Ponsonby would not have sought a conflict with you, after having appealed to his Form master to place the matter before me, as he did."

Tatters grinned faintly.

"If he hadn't been alone, sir, he would have—"

"That is not the point, Cholmondeley! Can you say that Ponsonby attacked you, and that you only defended yourself?"

"It's too much of a blooming funk, sir."

"Will you answer me plainly? Did you force a conflict on Ponsonby, or did you not?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Well, sir, yes, I s'pose I did!" admitted Tatters. "Arter he ragged me and 'acked my shins, sir, I—I thought I—"

"I will not deal with you now, Cholmondeley, as your grandfather is. I understand, at the school, and waiting to see you," said Mr. Quelch. "Later, I shall punish you severely for so recklessly disregarding my commands. Now you may go—and make yourself a little

more presentable before you appear in Sir George Cholmondeley's presence."

"Yes, sir!" mumbled Tatters.

Tatters was beginning to wish that he had stayed on Little Side, and watched the football match through, after all. But it was too-late to wish that now. He hurried away, and bathed his face, and put on a clean collar, and brushed his hair, and took his way to the Head's study. He hoped, though not very hopefully, that Sir George would not remark on the signs of recent combat in his face.

He tapped at the Head's door.

"Come in!"

Tatters entered.

Sir George Cholmondeley was there, with the Head. He had waited some time for his grandson, and was not in the best of tempers. Neither was the Head in his happiest mood. A governor of the school had to be treated with distinction, and the Head had taken Sir George to his study for a chat while he waited for Arthur Cecil. But he did not enjoy the chat. Even the Head's polished urbanity was wearing a little thin by the time Tatters presented himself, and never had the headmaster of Greyfriars been so glad to see any junior arrive in his study.

"Ah! It is you, Cholmondeley!" said Dr. Locke. "Your grandfather is here, and has waited—"

"I'm sorry, sir. I never knowed—"

"Quite, quite! Sir George—"

Sir George Cholmondeley was staring at his grandson. His mastiff-face looked more like a mastiff's than ever.

"Arthur!" he barked. "You have been fighting!"

"I—I 'ad a scrap, sir!" faltered Tatters.

"I understood that you were making friends here. I did not expect to find

you looking disgracefully battered, sir, from fighting with some other Greyfriars boy!" boomed Sir George.

"It—it wasn't a Greyfriars bloke, grandfather."

"A Greyfriars what—what—what? Have you not learned to speak English yet? Really, Dr. Locke—"

"Really, Sir George—" said the Head tartly.

"As I feared, my grandson is making little progress here," grunted Sir George. "His language is still disgraceful. He appears to spend his time in fighting, instead of attending to his lessons. Huh!"

"I ain't 'ardly ever fought nobody, sir!" faltered Tatters. "I don't never row with any Greyfriars coveys, sir. It was a 'Ighcliffe bloke."

The Head started a little. Mr. Mobbs' complaint from Highcliffe had reached him as well as Mr. Quelch. His brow became stern.

"With whom have you been fighting, Cholmondeley?" he rapped.

"A—a—a 'Ighcliffe feller, sir—"

"His name?"

"Ponsonby, sir."

Sir George Cholmondeley fairly jumped.

"Ponsonby?" he repeated.

"Yes, sir."

"Dr. Locke, did you not say that Ponsonby was the name of the boy I brought here in my car?"

"Yes, Sir George," answered the Head, with a very strange and startled look at Tatters. "Your grandson has several times had trouble with the boy, though I am bound to say, from what I have heard, that the fault was entirely on Ponsonby's side. He appears to have scoffed and derided your grandson in a very disagreeable way, on account

of—ahem! But a complaint was received from Highcliffe on Monday, and Cholmondeley was strictly forbidden to pursue the quarrel any further."

"After he'd ragged me, and 'acked my shins!" exclaimed Tatters indignantly.

"You fought with Ponsonby this afternoon?" exclaimed Sir George, his eyes fixed on Tatters' face.

"Yes."

"Where?"

"On Courtfield Common, sir."

"Good gad!" exclaimed Sir George. "Is it possible? It cannot be possible! A grandson of mine—good gad!"

The Head's face was very grave now. The same terrible suspicion that was in Sir George's mind, had forced itself into Dr. Locke's.

Tatters stared at them blankly.

He could not understand. The news that he had fought with Ponsonby on Courtfield Common that afternoon seemed to have fallen upon them like a thunderbolt. Why, Tatters could not guess.

"Impossible!" said the Head, at last. "No Greyfriars boy—even a boy with such—such strange antecedents as Cholmondeley—could have acted in such a manner. Impossible!"

Sir George Cholmondeley did not speak again. He sat staring at Tatters grimly. He knew little of the boy. He had seen little of him. It was only when other heirs of his name and title had failed, that he had sought out his grandson—the son of his scapegrace younger son who had gone to the dogs. He had found him in charge of a ruffianly tinker—a brute and scoundrel! That was the kind of training Tatters had had! Had his grandson done this?

Dr. Locke rose.

"The doctor is with Ponsonby now, Sir George," he said. "I will go at once and see him. No doubt Ponsonby will be able now to give me the name of his assailant. Cholmondeley, remain here till I return."

"Yes, sir," stammered Tatters.

Dr. Locke left the study. Tatters remained alone with his grandfather—in silence. Sir George did not speak. He sat like a bronze image, his eyes under his grizzled brows fixed on Tatters with that steady, unwinking stare that filled the boy's heart with a strange sense of uneasiness and terror.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Black Treachery!

"P ONSONBY—"
"In sanny—"
"Knocked out—beaten up—"
"My hat!"

The news was spreading now, and Harry Wharton & Co. heard it with astonishment, not unmixed with alarm—alarm for Tatters.

"But what—what—why?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "He can't be much hurt—he can't—"

"I saw him taken to sanny," said Skinner of the Remove, with a grin. "He was fairly crumpled up! Somebody's given him tremendous teco, and I've rather an idea who it was, too."

"We all know who's been hunting him!" remarked Snoop.

"But how did he get here?" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Why didn't they take him to Highcliffe? He doesn't belong here!"

"Old Tin-whiskers brought him in, in his car," explained Skinner. "He seems to have picked him up on Courtfield Common, after he was knocked

SMASHING

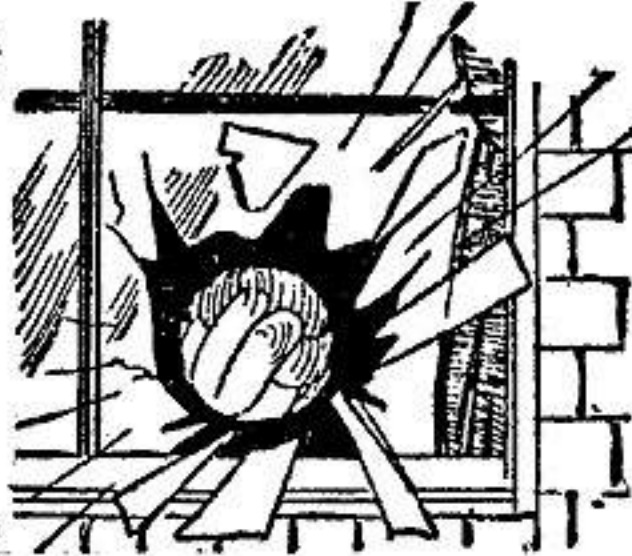
Yarns of Sport
and Adventure
for 4d. ONLY!

No. 273—WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE ROVERS?

Ferrers Locke called in to solve the riddle of a famous football club! Here's a story that will keep you guessing and thrill you throughout.

No. 274—BOSS O' MILL LAND

Tom Compton's only a youngster—but, gosh, he can scrap! Read how he cleans up a gang of ruthless plotters in this powerful tale of mill life.



No. 275—THE RIO KID'S GOLD MINE

The latest and most amazing adventures of the Rio Kid, boy outlaw. Make sure of reading this swift-moving yarn of the Wild West.

No. 276—THE MYSTERY CHAMPION

A smashing story of the ring, starring Norman Conquest, the young white Hope who's fighting his way to the Heavy-weight Championship of the World.



BOY'S FRIEND Library

At all Newsagents, etc. - 4d. each

out. I suppose he didn't know where he belonged, and he brought him on to Greyfriars with him. I'll bet he didn't guess that it was his jolly old grandson who had done it!"

"I can't understand it," said Wharton. "Tatters met the cad, and thrashed him, and he's told us so; but he wouldn't have hurt Ponsonby to the extent of laying him up in sunny. That's ridiculous!"

"The ridiculousness is terrific!"

"But if he really is in sunny——" said Nugent, with a worried look.

"I tell you, I saw him taken there," said Skinner. "I know jolly well who must have done it! Keep it dark, of course, if Pon does! No need to give a Greyfriars man away to the Beaks."

"Pon's not likely to keep it dark, if he's really hurt—or if he isn't, if you come to that!" said Harry. "He will tell everybody who asks him that Tatters thrashed him——"

"Then it's the sack for Cholmondeley, if he does," said Skinner. "I don't like that dashed tinker; but I'll say this much—whatever he gave Pon, Pon asked for. That's Pon's way."

"But he can't be seriously hurt!" said Wharton.

"I tell you he's simply smashed! He had to be carried into sunny, and the doctor's with him now!"

"The medical wallah!" exclaimed Bob.

"Yes. Old Pillbury."

"Great pip!"

It was utterly dismaying news to the Famous Five. By this time all Greyfriars was discussing Ponsonby, and what had happened to him. In the Remove, Skinner was not the only fellow to connect Tatters' name with the occurrence. Tatters' feud with Ponsonby was well known, and a dozen fellows had seen the signs of combat on Tatters' face when he came in.

Had Pon simply been thrashed, no one could have doubted that it was Tatters who had done it. But the news that Ponsonby had been seriously hurt was surprising and dismaying to Tatters' friends. They could not imagine Tatters guilty of an act of ruffianism or brutality. Yet he admitted that he had met Ponsonby and thrashed him. Had his temper, provoked by the Highcliffe dandy's insolence, carried him too far?

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here come the Beaks!" murmured Bob.

Dr. Locke came out of the House, with Mr. Quelch. Both of them glanced at the excited group of juniors in the quad as they passed, and every eye was on their faces. The gravity of the Head's look, the grimness of Quelch's, did not escape a single eye.

They passed on, and the juniors watched them enter the Head's private garden, which had to be crossed to reach the school sanatorium. There was no doubt of their destination.

"Going to see dear old Pon," said Skinner. "Friends, Romans, and countrymen, if you have tears to shed for the jolly old tinker, prepare to shed them now! It's Tatters for the long jump!"

"Oh, shut up, Skinner!"

"Where's old Tatters now?" asked Nugent.

"In the Head's study, with his jolly old grandfather," said Skinner. "Tough-looking old bird, that jolly old grandfather! I shouldn't care to be in young Cholmondeley's shoes now! He must have been off his rocker to handle Pon like that!"

"Pon's an exasperatin' cad!" said Temple of the Fourth. "Young Tatters may have hit harder than he meant——"

"He laid into Pon with a stick," said Skinner.

"You rotter!" exclaimed Bob Cherry angrily. "Tatters did nothing of the sort! You jolly well know he wouldn't."

"I jolly well know he did," answered Skinner coolly—"at least, somebody did, and if it wasn't Cholmondeley, who was it? Somebody has smashed Pon up with a cudgel—beaten him black and blue!"

"Impossible!" exclaimed Wharton, aghast.

"Don't I keep on telling you I saw him?" demanded Skinner. "Anyhow, it will be all over the school soon."

The excited discussion went on. Harry Wharton & Co. were utterly dismayed. Skinner's word was worth nothing, but they learned from other sources that it was true that Ponsonby had been savagely beaten with a cudgel, that he was covered with terrible bruises, and

WHO WANTS A POCKET KNIFE?

Tell a tale like Tony Cunningham, of Isolation Hospital, Bognor Regis, Sussex, and you'll do the trick.



A little boy was sobbing in the street one day.

"What's the matter?" asked a kindly old gentleman. "We've got pancakes and treacle for dinner," blubbered the boy.

"Well, that's nothing to cry about."

"I know," sobbed the youngster; "but I can't find my way home!"

Don't waste time; get down to business **RIGHT AWAY!**

that the medical man had examined him for fractured bones—fortunately finding no serious injury.

That Tatters had been guilty of such an act they could not believe, yet, as Skinner said, if it was not Tatters, who was it?

Tatters, it was certain, had met Pon on the common and pitched into him. It could not have been much later that Sir George Cholmondeley had picked him up and brought him on to Greyfriars. The whole affair had occurred during the space of time occupied by the football match at Greyfriars. The Famous Five had dark and troubled faces as they listened to the excited talk round them.

Meanwhile, Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch had entered the school hospital, where they found Ponsonby in bed, lying in bandages. Dr. Pillbury was gone, having done all he could for the injured Ponsonby, and leaving instructions that he was not to be removed to Highcliffe till the morrow at the earliest. The two masters looked down

on Pon's face—ghastly white where it was not blackened by bruises—with pitying eyes. They both knew Ponsonby, and did not like him; but they had to compassionate him now.

Ponsonby was lying in pain, but he was fully conscious, and quite himself now. His strength had returned to a great extent, though he was feeling the effects of his injuries even more severely than at first. There was a fierce, almost feverish, glitter in his eyes as he lay there, and looked up at the two masters.

He knew why they had come; and not for a moment did Ponsonby repent of the dastardly scheme he had concocted with Rackstraw. He longed for vengeance on the brutal tramp who had ill-used him; but his feelings towards the broken-nosed man were mild in comparison with his hatred for poor Tatters. The broken-nosed man would keep, as Rackstraw had said. Vengeance on Tatters was in his power now, and it was of that vengeance that Ponsonby was thinking, with a gloating anticipation, even while he ached and groaned from his injuries.

"My dear boy," said the Head gently, "if you feel strong enough to speak——"

"Yes, sir!" muttered Ponsonby.

"It is important that the name of your assailant should be known at once," said the Head. "Who was it, Ponsonby, who used you in this brutal manner?"

Ponsonby paused.

"Please answer me, Ponsonby."

"I—I don't want to sneak about a fellow, sir!" said Ponsonby, in a low voice. "I—I dare say he—he never realised how terribly he was injuring me, and—and——"

"The matter is too serious for any such reticence, Ponsonby," said Dr. Locke.

Schoolmaster as he was, the good old Head was very far from plumbing the depths of Ponsonby's character. It did not even occur to him that Pon's reluctance to give the name of his assailant was assumed.

"Was it a Greyfriars boy, Ponsonby?" asked the Head, as the dandy of Highcliffe still affected to hesitate.

"Yes, sir."

Mr. Quelch closed his lips hard.

"His name?" said the Head.

"I—I don't like givin' his name, sir," said Ponsonby faintly. "I—I can make excuses for him, sir, badly as he's treated me. He hasn't been brought up like other Greyfriars men, sir; I dare say he's done this kind of thing lots of times before, and—and——"

"Those words, Ponsonby, leave me in very little doubt as to the boy's identity," said Dr. Locke quietly. "But you must speak out more plainly and give me his name."

"If—if you insist, sir——"

"Certainly, I do!"

"Cholmondeley, sir," said Ponsonby.

The two masters had expected it; yet it gave them a shock to hear it. A brief silence followed. Mr. Quelch broke it.

"Can you tell us precisely what happened, Ponsonby?"

"Yes, sir! I—I was reading a book in the little wood on Courtfield Common when Cholmondeley came along. We've quarrelled before, and—and I'm afraid, sir, that I was a little to blame," said Ponsonby with an air of great frankness. "I rather chipped him about havin' been a tinker, and all that. I never meant any harm, but it seemed to have made him wild. He pitched into me when he saw me, and we had a fight. I—I suppose he was rather wild at gettin' hurt—I hit rather hard—for he got a stick in

the wood and came back at me with it, and—and—"

Ponsonby broke off with a groan.

"And then?" asked Mr. Quelch, very quietly.

"I hardly know what happened then, sir. I think I was stunned when he cracked me on the head with the stick. I had no chance against a fellow with a thick stick—he fairly rained blows on me—"

"Good Heavens!" breathed the Head.

"I—I think I was insensible for some time, sir," moaned Ponsonby. "When I came to I crawled away—I couldn't walk—and got as far as the road. Somebody passing in a car picked me up. The matron here has told me that it was Sir George Cholmondeley—the fellow's grandfather. I—I hope it will not be necessary to tell him what Cholmondeley has done, sir—he was very kind to me, helpin' me—"

The Head sighed deeply.

"Rest yourself now, my poor boy," he said. "You have told me enough."

"It's awfully kind of you to take me in here, sir," said Ponsonby. "But I hope I shall be able to get back to Highcliffe—"

"You will be able to return to your school in the morning, Ponsonby. I have already informed your headmaster where you are, and he will not be anxious about you," said the Head.

"Thank you, sir."

The two masters left him. And Pon's glance, as it followed them, was gloating. Cholmondeley, the cheeky tinker who had thrashed him and humiliated him, and roused his deepest malice, was booked now—and there was not a spark of remorse in the young rascal's heart.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Condemned!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. watched the Head and Mr. Quelch as they returned to the House, with anxious eyes and clouded faces. And the captain of the Remove, taking his courage in both hands, as it were, approached them as they were entering. He felt that he had to know what had happened.

"What is it, Wharton?"

"About Ponsonby, sir. We're all rather anxious," said Harry diffidently. "Is he badly hurt, sir?"

"He has been terribly hurt, Wharton! He has been terribly beaten with a cudgel!"

"Has he said who did it, sir?"

"He has, Wharton," said the Head gravely. "He has given the name of Cholmondeley of the Remove as his assailant." The Head glanced round at a swarm of tense faces. "I have no doubt that you all feel the same horror and scorn as I feel myself at this conduct of a boy who disgraces Greyfriars. Cholmondeley will leave the school immediately!"

The Head passed on with the Remove master, leaving a dead silence behind him.

"That tears it!" said Bob Cherry at last. "Tatters must have been mad—fairly off his rocker!"

"If he did it he deserves to be sacked," said Harry. "But—but—"

He broke off in miserable silence. Dr. Locke returned to his study. Mr. Quelch followed him in. Sir George Cholmondeley rose to his feet, his mastiff face grim, hard as iron. His eyes fixed questioningly on the two masters.

Tatters, his face pale and troubled, looked at them. There was deep uneasiness in his heart. He hardly knew

why. He had thrashed Ponsonby, disregarding his Form master's orders. But surely all this gravity, this funereal solemnity, was not occasioned by a schoolboy scrap? What had happened? What could have happened?

"Well?"

Sir George barked the inquiry.

"Ponsonby has given the name of his assailant, sir!" said the Head, with a sigh.

"And the name?"

"Your grandson's."

Sir George Cholmondeley drew a deep, hard breath. It was evident that that was what he had expected.

His eyes, under his grizzled brows, turned with a glare on the hapless Tatters.

"You young ruffian! You young rascal! Have you anything to say before your headmaster expels you from the school and your grandfather casts you off?"

Tatters almost staggered.

"You—you ain't going to expel a bloke for that, sir?" he panted. "Wot 'ave I done?"

"Certainly you are expelled from Greyfriars, Cholmondeley!" said the Head sternly and indignantly. "I trust that it may be convenient for Sir George to take you away with him, in order that this school may be no longer disgraced by your presence."

"I shall take him away!" barked Sir George. "I shall remove him from the school which, I see now, he ought never to have entered. But he is no longer my grandson. Insensate that I was to believe that bearing my name would undo what he has learned by a training among scoundrels and ruffians. I shall provide for you, Arthur—I am bound to do that—but you will never enter my house again. Fortunately, I have another grandson. Go and pack your box! You leave Greyfriars at once!"

Tatters cast a wild glance round him.

"I—I don't understand, sir! Wot 'ave I done?"

"You dare to ask that question!" rapped the Head.

"I know I've thrashed that bloke Ponsonby, sir—and he asked for it a lot of times. I've been disobedient to Mr. Quelch, who's always been kind to me, and I'm sorry. But you ain't turning me out of the school for that, sir? You wouldn't!"

His eyes turned beseechingly on the Remove master.

"Mr. Quelch, you've always been kind to me, and I ain't never disobeyed you only this one time. Won't you say a word for me, sir?"

"How can I say a word for you, Cholmondeley?" said the Remove master. "I am shocked beyond expression at what you have done. I have had a high opinion of you, in spite of your failings. I should never have dreamed that you were capable of this!"

"I ain't never disobeyed you before, sir!"

"I am not speaking of your disobedience, Cholmondeley, as you must know perfectly well."

"What else 'ave I done, sir?"

"Boy," thundered the Head, "you know what you have done to that unfortunate lad, Ponsonby!"

"I know I licked him, sir," stammered Tatters. "I ain't sorry for that, 'cepting that Mr. Quelch told me not to. I s'pose Ponsonby's been licked before. He's always asking for it."

"You young rascal!" barked Sir George. "How dare you? Do you dare to attempt to excuse your ruffianism, your brutality, your—your criminal brutality? Are you not aware, sir, that you may be sent to a juvenile prison if Ponsonby's relations care to press the matter?"

Tatters stared at him.

"Rot!" he gasped.

"What—what?"

"I tell you rot!" almost shouted Tatters. "I licked Ponsonby, and he asked for it. I never gave 'im 'arf so much as he gave me once, when they was three to one. I never 'acked his shins, like he did mine. I got the mark now where he 'acked my leg!"

"Is this sheer effrontery, or is the boy out of his senses?" gasped Sir George. "Do you dare to deny, boy, that you beat Ponsonby in the most brutal manner with a heavy cudgel almost to the danger of his life?"

Tatters' eyes almost started from his head.

"I never did!" he yelled. "If Ponsonby says I did, he's a liar! I never touched him except with my fists, though he kicked me, and 'ard, too!"

"Silence!" snapped the Head.

"I tell you it's lies, sir!" shrieked Tatters. "Pon's well known to be a liar. And if he's been beat with a cudgel, like he says, let him show the marks! Let him come 'ere and show the marks, sir!"

"Are you not aware, Cholmondeley, that Ponsonby is now lying in the school hospital under the doctor's care, too ill even to be taken back to his own school?"

Tatters gazed at the Head uncomprehendingly. It was a full minute before he found his voice.

"You seen him, sir? You say he's been beat with a cudgel and 'urt? If he has, sir, it wasn't me did it."

"What?" gasped the Head.

"I never touched him with anything but my 'ands, sir!" panted Tatters. "I licked 'im. I own up to that. I left him in the grass, malingering, pretendin' he was knocked out. I never touched him after that. If he's been beat with a stick I can't make it out. I never touched him with a stick. He can't say that I did."

"He has said so!"

"He—he—he has said that I beat him with a stick, sir, and you seen the marks?" stuttered Tatters.

"Yes, as you know very well."

"I—I didn't know! I don't know! I—I—" Tatters stammered incoherently. "I never did it, sir! P'r'aps somebody else did. He was all right when I left him, sir."

"I will hear no more of this!" barked Sir George Cholmondeley. "Such effrontery—such malevolence! Pah! The boy is a liar as well as a ruffian! Arthur, be silent!"

"I tell you, sir—"

"Silence!" roared Sir George.

"Say no more, Cholmondeley," said the Head. "Go and pack your box, and prepare to leave the school immediately!"

Tatters cast a wild glance round at the three stern faces. He read grim condemnation in every one of them. Bewildered, his brain reeling under this unexpected and inexplicable blow, the unhappy boy turned to the door.

Knock!

It was a knock on the Head's door as Tatters reached it.

Read the Rippling School
Stories of St. Jim's in—

The GEM LIBRARY 2^D

Every Wednesday.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

I SAY, you fellows!" Billy Bunter blinked curiously at the crowd of excited fellows gathered before the House. Evidently something exciting had happened at Greyfriars during the absence of the Owl of the Remove, and Bunter wondered what it was.

Billy Bunter had returned, and he did not come alone. Bunter's arrival, certainly, would have attracted no attention whatever just then. But the portly gentleman in uniform who came with him rather excited curiosity. It was Inspector Grimes, of Courtfield, who walked up to the House with the Owl of the Remove.

The sight of a police inspector in uniform at that moment gave the Famous Five a chill. The terrible thought leaped into their minds that the Highcliffe headmaster had called in the police, and that Inspector Grimes had come for Tatters.

"I say, you fellows, what's up?" exclaimed Bunter. "I say, Wharton—"

Harry Wharton did not heed him. He touched Inspector Grimes on the arm as the portly officer walked to the House. Mr. Grimes glanced down at him.

"You've come about Ponsonby, sir?" asked Harry.

"That is so, Master Wharton. I understand that the boy is here, from what I heard from Highcliffe."

"Yes!" gasped Wharton. "He's in sanny here. But—but for Heaven's sake, Mr. Grimes, you don't mean that they've made a charge against Cholmondeley?"

"Cholmondeley?" repeated Mr. Grimes, with a stare. "Who is Cholmondeley?"

Wharton stared in turn.

"You haven't come here for Cholmondeley, sir?"

"Cholmondeley?" repeated Mr. Grimes again. "Oh, I remember—the boy who was kidnapped by a tinker once. Nothing happened to him again, I hope?"

"You—you haven't come for him?" gasped Wharton. "I mean in connection with Ponsonby—"

"What connection has he with that matter?" asked Mr. Grimes.

Wharton stared blankly.

"Hasn't he?" he asked.

"Not that I am aware of."

The inspector walked into the House, leaving Harry Wharton staring.

Trotter, the page, took in Mr. Grimes' name to the Head. It was Trotter's tap at the study door that sounded as Tatters was about to leave.

Tatters stepped back from the door as it opened. The Head glanced impatiently at Trotter.

"What—what is it?"

"Inspector Grimes, sir."

Dr. Locke paled a little. Mr. Quelch compressed his lips. Sir George Cholmondeley's brows contracted grimly. The same thought was in all three minds—that the Highcliffe headmaster had placed the matter in the hands of the police.

"Show Inspector Grimes in at once, Trotter," said the Head faintly.

Trotter retired, and a moment or two later the portly Courtfield inspector entered the study. He saluted the three gentlemen there with portly politeness.

"I trust I am not interrupting you, sir," he said. "I shall detain you only a moment, in any case. The boy Ponsonby is here—"

"I understand, sir," said the Head. "I understand! Cholmondeley, you may remain. I fear that you will be required."

"Yes, sir," muttered Tatters.

Inspector Grimes glanced at the junior. He seemed a little perplexed.

name as that of his assailant. His assailant is already under lock and key at Courtfield police station."

Had Inspector Grimes suddenly stood on his head he could not have astonished the three gentlemen more.

They gazed at him blankly.

Tatters' face lighted up.

Mr. Quelch broke the silence.

"Inspector Grimes, please explain! We—we are hopelessly bewildered. I fail to understand—"

"There is evidently some mistake, sir," said Mr. Grimes. "The matter is simple enough. This afternoon a Greyfriars boy named Bunter came running into the police station in a state of excitement and terror. He had witnessed



"Inspector Grimes," barked Sir George, "I demand that this young scoundrel be taken into custody." "Oh, don't," gasped Ponsonby; "it was Rackstraw who made me do it!" "What?" gasped Sir George. "My other grandson, Cyril? You must be mad!"

"This is the boy, Mr. Grimes," said the Head.

"I don't quite follow, sir," said Inspector Grimes, puzzled. "I have called to see the boy Ponsonby, to obtain a statement from him with regard to the assault on Courtfield Common, if he is in a state to make one."

"He has already made a statement to me, sir, which no doubt he will repeat to you," said the Head. "He has given the name of his assailant; though I confess I do not see how you have already become aware—"

"He has given the name?" exclaimed Mr. Grimes.

"Yes."

"That is all to the good; though, as we have the man, his name is not of the first importance," said Mr. Grimes.

"But what is the name?"

The Head gazed at him.

"He has given the name of this Greyfriars boy, Cholmondeley—"

"Dr. Locke!"

"And if you have come to take the boy into custody—"

"I quite fail to follow you, sir!" said Mr. Grimes. "Unless the boy Ponsonby is wandering in his mind—as is perhaps possible in the circumstances—he cannot have given this lad's

a violent assault upon a Highcliffe boy named Ponsonby. I gather that Bunter, being in fear of Ponsonby personally, hid himself in a tree when he saw him at hand. He was consequently an unseemly witness of what followed. He saw a tramp—a man with a broken nose—attack the boy, on account of some old grudge, as Bunter judged by what he heard, and beat him into a senseless state with a cudgel. After the tramp was gone Bunter descended from the tree to give Ponsonby what aid he could. Hearing, or fancying that he heard, the tramp returning, he fled from the spot and ran all the way to the police station to give information."

The inspector paused—in a dead silence.

"On Master Bunter's information," resumed Mr. Grimes, "I immediately proceeded to the spot with a constable. No one was found there; only signs of a struggle. I lost no time in the matter, sir. Master Bunter's description of the tramp was sent out at once, and within an hour he was arrested. Master Bunter identified him at the station; and several articles of value—such as a ring, a gold watch, a purse containing currency notes, and other things—were found on him, which he had stolen from Ponsonby. I telephoned

to Highcliffe School, and was informed that they had heard from you that the boy was here. So I came to see him and take his statement, sir."

"Oh lor'!" gasped Tatters.

"Good gad!" barked Sir George Cholmondeley. "Good gad, sir! You—you say you have the man who assaulted Ponsonby—a mere tramp—"

"That is so, sir."

"There is no doubt—"

"Doubt?" repeated Mr. Grimes. "The man does not deny it. He could scarcely do so with Ponsonby's watch and money found in his pockets."

"Then my grandson—my grandson did not—"

"Inspector Grimes," said the Head in a deep voice, "Ponsonby has stated—deliberately stated—that these injuries were inflicted upon him by a Greyfriars boy—by this boy Cholmondeley—"

Mr. Grimes blinked.

"Is the boy wandering in his mind, sir?"

"He is perfectly cool and collected."

"I had better see him, sir," said Inspector Grimes. "I fail to understand such a statement, which is obviously false from beginning to end."

The Head drew a deep, deep breath.

"I—I told you I never did it, sir!" ventured Tatters. "You—you believe me now, sir?"

"I believe you, Cholmondeley! I fear—I greatly fear—that the wretched boy has allowed his personal dislike to cause him to make a false statement to your detriment, incredible as it seems."

"By gad!" barked Sir George. "The young scoundrel! I must see this boy! I will hear the truth from him!"

"Come!" said the Head.

Ponsonby, with a chill of uneasiness at his head, looked up from the white pillow. Even before a word was spoken, the cad of Highcliffe realised that there was danger.

The expressions on the faces of Dr. Locke, of Mr. Quelch, of Sir George Cholmondeley, told him as much; still more, the grimness of Inspector Grimes' official visage. It was Mr. Grimes who addressed the wretched schemer.

"Master Ponsonby, I am here to take your statement. You have informed Dr. Locke, I am told, that your injuries were caused by a Greyfriars boy named Cholmondeley?"

Ponsonby breathed hard.

"Yes!"

It was too late to retreat now, though fear was heavy in his heart.

"Why did you make this statement?"

"It's true!" breathed Ponsonby.

"Wretched boy!" broke out the Head in tones of the deepest indignation.

"It is not true! It is false, and proved to be false! The vagrant who assaulted you is under arrest and has confessed."

Ponsonby gave a faint cry.

"You young scoundrel!" barked Sir George. "By gad! Boy as you are, the law will deal with you for this! Perjury—slander—Inspector Grimes, I demand that that young scoundrel be taken into custody."

Ponsonby uttered a scream of terror.

"Oh, don't! Don't! It was not my doing—it was Rackstraw—Rackstraw made me do it; I never meant—I'll tell the truth—I—I—" he babbled in terrified incoherence.

"Rackstraw!" gasped Sir George.

"It was all his doing—all Rackstraw's idea—"

"Do you mean my other grandson, Cyril Rackstraw? Are you mad? How can you know him; what has he to do with this?"

In panting accents of terror it came out—the whole story. For Rackstraw Ponsonby cared nothing so long as he could save himself. Indeed, in those moments he hated Rackstraw with a virulent hatred for having landed him in this fearful scrape.

The whole story was panted out, to ears that listened with horror and disgust. And the expression on the face of Sir George Cholmondeley when at last he turned away, would have scared Cyril Rackstraw, could the hard-hearted plotter have seen it.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

All Clear!

BILLY BUNTER smirked.

Bunter was enjoying life.

Bunter was "it."

Bunter, in his own fat opinion, always was "it." But, for once, the other fellows agreed that he was.

Rackstraw's last blow at the Greyfriars tinker had been struck, and it had missed the mark—owing to Bunter!

The last and cunningest plot against the heir of Cholmondeley had come to nothing—owing to Bunter!

It was Bunter first and the rest nowhere.

Harry Wharton & Co. had heard Bunter's story in amazement. It was confirmed when the facts were made known. They patted Bunter on the back. They fed him at the tuckshop. They made much of Bunter. Even Coker of the Fifth, when he heard, forgave the annexation of his lunch-bag.

Whether the dastardly plot would have gone through to success was not, perhaps, a certainty; for it was said of old that great is truth, and it must prevail!

But there was no doubt that Billy Bunter had put paid to it! Bunter, as Bob Cherry remarked, never could be ornamental, but there was no doubt that he had been remarkably useful.

Billy Bunter smirked with satisfaction! Billy Bunter, for once at least, had been the right man in the right place! Billy Bunter was the goods!

It had been a cunning plot. To the plotters it had looked a certainty! And all the time Billy Bunter had had the whole thing in the hollow of his fat hand!

The game was up now!

Ponsonby escaped punishment, but he went back to his own school loaded with contempt and scorn and shame; a load that even Ponsonby must have found it hard to bear.

Rackstraw, waiting at Cholmondeley Castle for the return of Sir George—waiting for news—received the surprise of his life when the fierce old gentleman returned. The words that Sir George barked at him were brief, but they were expressive—terribly expressive! They were followed by action—drastic action!

By the hands of the footmen Cyril Rackstraw was thrown from the door, with a strict injunction never to return.

The plotter's game was up, with a vengeance!

It was all clear for Tatters now.

There was only one fly in the ointment. Sir George Cholmondeley had decided to take his grandson and heir under his own personal care, which meant that Tatters had to leave Greyfriars.

But there was a midnight feed in the Remove dormitory on a very lavish scale the night before he left Greyfriars; such a feed as would be remembered for many a long day.

Billy Bunter was seen at his best in the role of "cook-general," and right royally did he bring his culinary art into play.

The noise and the cheering was, as Hurree Janset Ram Singh pronounced, "terrific," albeit those in authority turned a deaf ear to it; and when at last the Removites turned in there was a general chorus from the juniors:

"Good-night, Tatters, old bean!"

And Tatters replied, with a catch in his voice:

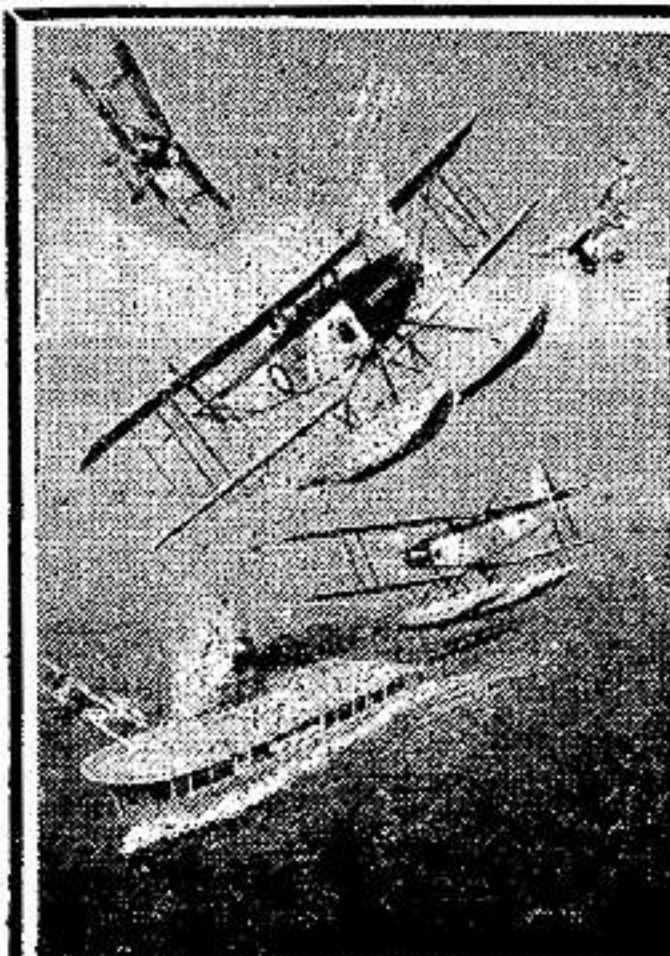
"Good-night, you fellers!"

Silence settled on the dorm, but it was some minutes before Tatters found slumber. He was thinking of his departure in the morning, and all that it meant to him.

But though he left the school, he did not lose his friends—he was not likely to forget Harry Wharton & Co., neither were the chums of the Remove likely to forget the Greyfriars tinker.

(That was a great yarn, wasn't it, chums? But next week's story of Harry Wharton & Co. is even better. Look out for "THE CHAMPION CHUMP!" featuring Horace Coker and get ready for the biggest laugh of the week.)

THE END.



Bombing the Wasps' Nest.

MAMMOTH COLOURED PLATE FREE TO-DAY!

A beautiful colour plate, printed on art paper and measuring 6½ ins. by 9 ins., showing a thrilling episode in aerial manoeuvres by British Fighting Aircraft is

Presented FREE

with every copy of this week's

RANGER

Britain's Best Boys' Coloured Paper.

Now On Sale - - 2d.

THE ISLAND OF SLAVES!

By STANTON HOPE.



Guy and Tony have served in some queer craft, but they never reckoned on being aboard a ship of the desert.

The camel stopped so suddenly that Guy and Tony went hurtling from it like a couple of laden sacks!

Death at the Door!

KILL! Kill the feringhees!" The venom in the howls of the pursuing Arab mob sent a cold shiver down the backs of young Lieutenant Guy Easton and his chum, Sub-Lieutenant Tony Gunn, both of the gunboat Falcon.

Panting and streaming with sweat, they brought up suddenly in the narrow alley between the flat-roofed buildings, horrified that the thoroughfare was blocked by a wall of dried mud twenty feet high. The unscalable wall in front and a frenzied mob of would-be assassins behind—that was their plight, calculated to strike terror into the heart of the boldest!

"Kill! Kill the feringhees!"

The vengeance-seeking Arabs were appearing in a mighty human flood down the wider street leading to the narrow alleyway. In another minute or two they would come surging like a tidal wave into this deserted backwater of the port, a tidal wave which would overwhelm the fugitives and leave them just so much human wreckage, to be found later by the pariah dogs and other street scavengers.

The thought of death in battle or in the clean seas had never held terror for the chums, but an ignominious end at the hands of these raging fanatics, in vengeance for an affront which they had never committed, appalled them.

"That doorway!" panted Guy. "In you go, old man!"

To Tony it seemed only like the action of hunted rats going deeper into a stopped drain where there was no escape from the dog-pack that pursued them.

A few minutes more of life—that was all that the doorway by the side of a shuttered shop seemed to offer them.

The passage was dark, and a rickety wooden stair led upward.

The pals scrambled aloft and found a shut door at the top. They barged against it and it flew open, and they stumbled into a room lumbered with brassware, new and discoloured, where two Arabs were working.

Spinning round, Guy crashed the door shut and dropped the heavy wooden latch into its place, then jammed a large brass tray under the door to form a wedge. A third Arab came down a bamboo ladder leading through a hole in the ceiling and shouted something to his companions who had leaped up from their work in amazement.

They had been engaged in the typical Eastern pursuit of painting over new and cheap brass ornaments with a stain which, in a short time, had the effect of making them look ancient, for old brassware commands a readier sale and higher prices among tourists at Aden and other ports than the new.

Now, from the sentence hurled at them by the man who had been out on the roof to find out what the rumpus was about, they knew that these two "infidels" who had invaded their workshop were being hunted by their fellow-citizens of the port.

One of the men, a lusty fellow with beard parted in the Bluebeard fashion, snatched up a heavy brass urn by the handle and stepped forward to bring the formidable weapon down on the head of Tony, who was almost helpless

from the fatigue of the chase in that torrid Arabian town.

Roused by the danger, the young Englishman summoned every ounce of his strength to his aid, lurched forward and struck upward with his left.

Thud!

Even that cushion of beard failed to save the Arab, for the blow struck home full to the "point," and he went down with a tremendous clatter among a pile of brazen ornaments.

Uttering angry cries, the other two Arabs sprang forward and one ran full-tilt into Tony's right. The blow took him between the eyes and, although it lacked force, flung him off his balance so that he tripped over a carved teak-wood stool and struck the back of his head against a heavy coffee-pot lying on the floor.

The other Arab paused and snatched up a brass candlestick made in the shape of a hooded cobra; but before he could strike a blow with it Guy, who had leaped across the room, jabbed a fist true and hard into the pit of his stomach.

There was no time for fancy fighting, and that blow, which doubled the Arab in two, was more than enough to curb his ardour for the ensuing ten minutes!

"The—the roof!" Tony gasped.

He jerked a thumb at the bamboo ladder; but Guy shook his head.

"Belay!" he said.

He himself had a better plan. The whole Arab populace of the town, he reckoned would be seeking the two English "infidels" supposed to have

THE ISLAND OF SLAVES!

By STANTON HOPE.



Guy and Tony have served in some queer craft, but they never reckoned on being aboard a ship of the desert.

The camel stopped so suddenly that Guy and Tony went hurtling from it like a couple of laden sacks!

Death at the Door!

KILL! Kill the feringhees!" The venom in the howls of the pursuing Arab mob sent a cold shiver down the backs of young Lieutenant Guy Easton and his chum, Sub-Lieutenant Tony Gunn, both of the gunboat Falcon.

Panting and streaming with sweat, they brought up suddenly in the narrow alley between the flat-roofed buildings, horrified that the thoroughfare was blocked by a wall of dried mud twenty feet high. The unscalable wall in front and a frenzied mob of would-be assassins behind—that was their plight, calculated to strike terror into the heart of the boldest!

"Kill! Kill the feringhees!"

The vengeance-seeking Arabs were appearing in a mighty human flood down the wider street leading to the narrow alleyway. In another minute or two they would come surging like a tidal wave into this deserted backwater of the port, a tidal wave which would overwhelm the fugitives and leave them just so much human wreckage, to be found later by the pariah dogs and other street scavengers.

The thought of death in battle or in the clean seas had never held terror for the chums, but an ignominious end at the hands of these raging fanatics, in vengeance for an affront which they had never committed, appalled them.

"That doorway!" panted Guy. "In you go, old man!"

To Tony it seemed only like the action of hunted rats going deeper into a stopped drain where there was no escape from the dog-pack that pursued them.

A few minutes more of life—that was all that the doorway by the side of a shuttered shop seemed to offer them.

The passage was dark, and a rickety wooden stair led upward.

The pals scrambled aloft and found a shut door at the top. They barged against it and it flew open, and they stumbled into a room lumbered with brassware, new and discoloured, where two Arabs were working.

Spinning round, Guy crashed the door shut and dropped the heavy wooden latch into its place, then jammed a large brass tray under the door to form a wedge. A third Arab came down a bamboo ladder leading through a hole in the ceiling and shouted something to his companions who had leaped up from their work in amazement.

They had been engaged in the typical Eastern pursuit of painting over new and cheap brass ornaments with a stain which, in a short time, had the effect of making them look ancient, for old brassware commands a readier sale and higher prices among tourists at Aden and other ports than the new.

Now, from the sentence hurled at them by the man who had been out on the roof to find out what the rumpus was about, they knew that these two "infidels" who had invaded their workshop were being hunted by their fellow-citizens of the port.

One of the men, a lusty fellow with beard parted in the Bluebeard fashion, snatched up a heavy brass urn by the handle and stepped forward to bring the formidable weapon down on the head of Tony, who was almost helpless

from the fatigue of the chase in that torrid Arabian town.

Roused by the danger, the young Englishman summoned every ounce of his strength to his aid, lurched forward and struck upward with his left.

Thud!

Even that cushion of beard failed to save the Arab, for the blow struck home full to the "point," and he went down with a tremendous clatter among a pile of brazen ornaments.

Uttering angry cries, the other two Arabs sprang forward and one ran full-tilt into Tony's right. The blow took him between the eyes and, although it lacked force, flung him off his balance so that he tripped over a carved teak-wood stool and struck the back of his head against a heavy coffee-pot lying on the floor.

The other Arab paused and snatched up a brass candlestick made in the shape of a hooded cobra; but before he could strike a blow with it Guy, who had leaped across the room, jabbed a fist true and hard into the pit of his stomach.

There was no time for fancy fighting, and that blow, which doubled the Arab in two, was more than enough to curb his ardour for the ensuing ten minutes!

"The—the roof!" Tony gasped.

He jerked a thumb at the bamboo ladder; but Guy shook his head.

"Belay!" he said.

He himself had a better plan. The whole Arab populace of the town, he reckoned would be seeking the two English "infidels" supposed to have

desecrated their mosque, and even if he and Tony escaped by the roof, they would have to come down somewhere, and their last plight would be as bad as their first.

Without doubt, in a few seconds the Arabs would be streaming into every doorway and crevice in search of them; but they had secured a brief respite. So, in pursuance of his plan, Guy dropped on his knees beside one of the unconscious brassware workers.

"Rip their togs off 'em!" he exclaimed. "Jump to it!"

Whipping the robes and headgear from the Arabs, the pals flung the garments over the white drill clothes that Major Gundath, the consul, had loaned them.

As they were doing so Guy mentioned a dark suspicion that the Arab in the brown robe who had started all the bobby had been the consul's own servant. The man's movements and that part of his face which had been visible, had strongly recalled Sayyid.

Suddenly they heard some of the mob thumping up the rickety stairway outside the work-room, and before they had finished their disguise their pursuers were hammering on the door.

Another small doorway opened in a wall of the room; but the chums had not thought of anyone else being on the premises. A curious, clucking noise attracted their attention, and, looking round, they saw an ancient native, with grey beard, and wearing the green turban of a haji, or devotee, who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca, framed in the doorway.

"Great snakes!" Tony gulped. "Here's Methuselah!"

The old Arab was unarmed, and he must have been nearly stone deaf not to have heard the racket, for he had only just risen from a bench at a large copper where he had been mixing the potent liquid which was calculated to turn new brass into old.

Launching himself across the room, Tony thrust the old fellow back into the inner chamber and waved a fist under his nose. The ancient Arab promptly subsided on the dirty floor and began uttering the invocations of his faith in his curious clucking way.

"Harmless as an old crow!" Tony ejaculated. "Here, Guy, what about slinging some of this soup over our figureheads?"

Although the skin of their faces and hands was weather-tanned, some sort of dark stain was absolutely essential if their disguises were to be effective. Moreover, they had to roll up the ends of their trousers, whip off their shoes and socks, and don Arab shoes, and their white ankles, if not attended to, would be a fair give-away.

The hammering persisted at the outer door, but the heavy latch and the brass tray wedge were resisting the efforts of the Arabs who could only get at the door two at a time owing to the cramped space.

Suddenly there was a great pounding sound which proved that a chunk of wood had been passed up the stairs and was being used in the effort to batter a way through.

The precious seconds were passing swiftly, but Guy and Tony utilised them to the full. Dipping their hands and arms into the copper pan they rubbed the evil-smelling dope over their faces, ears, and ankles, and finally dipped their feet and legs in it.

In a minute or two the change which had been wrought in their appearance

was truly remarkable. No longer were they two spick-and-span English sahibs, but a couple of Arab workmen, and with a most convincing odour about them.

"Now for it, Tony!"

Guy motioned his pal to the bamboo ladder, and stood aside for him to go aloft. Splinters were flying out of the door to the thunderous hammering of the men trying to break it in. The brass tray on the floor, which had got caught up against an uneven plank, was bending slightly and flattening with a whanging note to the uneven pressure put upon it as the door was being burst inward.

Crash!

The whole door gave with a thud, and two or three Arabs came hurtling headlong into the room among its wreckage as the two disguised chums scurried up the bamboo ladder, and through the hole to the flat roof above.

Ship of the Desert!

"**T**HANK Heaven!" Tony gasped. It was not that the danger was over, but that he could feel the sun again, and breathe the outer air. After all, death in the open at the hands of the mob would be better than dying in the cramped space between four walls.

The roof presented the usual appearance of that of an Arab dwelling, and three strips of coarse, reed matting were laid out, indicating the sleeping places of the Arabs at night under the stars.

Guy, close at Tony's heels, kicked one of them down through the hole in the roof, creating a swirl of grit and dust which completely blinded the first Arab pursuer who reached the bamboo ladder.

The premises of the brassware workers were built in the usual Ahkab style of mud mixed with chopped straw, which set to form a material rather less hard than cement. There was no escape from the back of the building, for there were no other premises near at hand, and there was no chance of running along the roofs on either side. The one means of escape that offered was to leap across the blind, narrow alley into which they had run to escape the crowd, and where now a swarming mob of fanatics were roaring for vengeance.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS RETOLD.

LIEUTENANT GUY EASTON, SUB-LIEUTENANT DUNN, and CHOTAJEE, a Bengali interpreter, having been ordered to board a suspicious-looking dhow heading a southerly course out of the Red Sea, are cut adrift during a storm and cast ashore on the Island of Khoof. After a series of exciting adventures, the dhow in question arrives at the island, and Guy and Tony discover that Ras Dhin, a giant Abyssinian in command of the dhow, is a dealer in slaves. Eventually reaching Ahkab, on the Arabian coast, the boys call upon the consul and unfold their story. With a supply of money and fresh rig-outs, Guy and Tony set off through the streets of Ahkab, where an unknown enemy makes it appear that they have committed sacrilege by setting foot over the sacred portals of the most important mosque in the Arabian port. Fleeing like hares from the fanatical Arabs, Guy and Tony are horrified to find themselves scuppered in a blind alley!

(Now read on.)

Word had got about that the fugitives were in the brassware place, and the stairway was packed dangerously with a shoving, sweating mob of Arabs. The front of the building was unscalable, but a house opposite had a number of teak wood sticks protruding from the wall, a precautionary measure when the place had been built to enable the occupants to get down from that main living place, the roof, in case of fire. Owing to the pressure of the crowd behind no one had been able to pause long enough to climb these, but now that the mob were jammed from end to end of the alley, one or two Arabs were hoisting themselves aloft by this means.

A mighty bowl arose as Guy and Tony appeared on the parapet and steadied themselves for the leap across. It was only a matter of ten feet, for the roofs of the buildings were closer together than the bases to afford shelter in the street from the sun.

Ten feet seemed more than enough, though, when the slip of a foot might mean plunging down into that furious human herd to certain death.

Stooping slightly, the chums eyed the opposite roof, and almost at the same instant made their leap into space. Tony landed safely, but Guy, as he came down on the opposite side, smashed away a cracked portion of the parapet, stumbling forward safely, however, on to the roof itself at the expense of a bruised shoulder. The breaking of the parapet proved a blessing, for the crumbled material thumped down into the faces of the Arabs on the teak wood sticks, and sent them hurtling down among their comrades below.

Tony paused, and Guy waved him on.

"Leg it, old son!"

Had it been in the afternoon the roofs would have been occupied by many low-class Arabs of the quarter taking their siesta. As it was the roofs were deserted, and afforded a far easier means of getting about than the teeming, narrow streets of the bazaars. The chums ran over roof after roof, and leaped chasm after chasm formed by the narrow streets. Guy, who had done some shooting in India, was reminded of a black buck hunt in which he had taken part, only now he was occupying the role of the hunted game instead of the hunter.

Their Arab shoes, which were too loose for them, came off, and as portions of these roofs had become powerfully hot under the morning sun they were assisted to leap the more nimbly. Unfortunately, the mere fact of their appearance on the roofs was bound to attract more attention than they wanted, and when a wider street chasm forced them to descend, a fresh crowd quickly began to collect. These Arabs, however, did not connect them with the "infidel" Englishmen, but were over anxious to find out the reason for their antics, and as the chums' Arabic was not anything like good enough for glib explanations, they hastily made themselves scarce again.

"S-sink me!" Tony spluttered. "There are some more of the swabs coming up in the wake of us, Guy! I—I'm just about blown!"

"Me, too!" Guy panted. "But if you want to live to see your naval pension, don't come to anchor here."

The alternative to using their weary legs was to make for some port in the

shape of an Arab coffee-shop. Both realised, though, that the risk was tremendous, for they would be bowled out first ball if any Arab entered into conversation with them, as was almost bound to happen.

The square which they had seen before opened out in front of them, and here the camels they had disturbed earlier were having the last adjustments made to their packs by the men in charge of the caravan. Without undue haste Guy and Tony mingled among the jabbering Arabs and burbling camels in the square, and a fresh notion occurred to them as they saw a grey riding camel already saddled kneeling near the outskirts of the throng. The owner, they rightly guessed, was in one of the cafes bordering the square, where Arabs sat, cross-legged, drinking the syrupy coffee, and swapping yarns about places beyond the desert.

"My kingdom for a giddy camel!" gulped Tony, misquoting a certain English monarch. "Can't stagger another step, Guy, old shipmate. So it's ride or stop here."

"Great sea-snakes, we can't stop here!" Guy breathed hoarsely. "There's another jabbering crew piling into the square from that other end. Get aboard!"

Both the naval chums had served in some queer craft, but neither had ever been aboard a ship of the desert. Both could handle a sailing cutter, but whether they could get this novel craft under way was a matter of the gravest doubt.

Guy accomplished the feat by the rough-and-ready way of giving the brute a jab astern with a goad he had picked up from the ground. The camel squealed and lifted itself, so suddenly that it almost threw Tony out of the wooden saddle, twisted its snake-like neck round, and brought its teeth together with a savage, sawing movement which narrowly missed removing a few toes from one of Tony's blistered feet.

Risking further efforts of the same kind, Guy darted forward and flung himself over the hollow of the brute's neck, and immediately a fresh uproar started in the square which sent the camel almost frantic.

Dashing forward like a thoroughbred, it plopped through the hot yellow dust at a speed which sent pedestrians scuttling to either side out of the way.

"S-sufferin' wheelks!" Tony babbled, bobbing up and down painfully on the hard wooden saddle. "Hard-a-port, old man! She's steering a giddy course straight back for that mosque where we got into trouble!"

It was the last part of the town that the chums wanted to see again! However, by leaning forward and twisting one of the camel's ears, Guy induced it to take a starboard course down another street and through a more scattered district into the desert beyond.

With the sand under its spongy feet, the camel became as frisky as a colt, while Guy clung affectionately round its neck and Tony, with gritted teeth, clawed on to the saddle.

Altogether it travelled a distance of about half a mile in a sweeping arc before it stopped near the eastern outskirts of the town, so suddenly that the pals went hurtling from it like a couple of laden sacks! Then, very ungracefully, the camel spread its ungainly legs in all directions of the compass and subsided on the sand, making that unpleasant burbling noise characteristic of its species.

Shanks' Pony!

THE pals sat up on the hot sand. "Hurt?" Guy asked.

"No, nunno!" Tony mumbled. "Except for a few dozen blisters on my sternsheets and propellers, I'm as right as rain. But that poor brute is going to die."

"Die of laughing!" Guy said. "It's got us here, and it's not jolly-well going to take us anywhere else. Now we shall have to leg it the rest of the way back to the consul's residence."

In this more select part of the town—the residential district of well-to-do Arabs and Parsee traders—all was quiet. There were far fewer people about than in the bazaar districts, and the little traffic consisted mainly of odd pack-camels and two-wheeled wagons of merchandise drawn by sleepy oxen.

Approaching a cross-road, Guy and Tony, who now attracted no attention at all, caught a brief glimpse of an expensive motor-car gliding past, driven by a native chauffeur. Among the cushions at the back was an Englishman, wearing a neat suit of tussore and a sun-helmet, and who had a monocle in his eye and a black Burma cheroot between his lips.

"The consul!" Guy muttered. Tony, too, recognised him as Major Gundath, whose residence they were eager to find. But it was too late to attract the consul's attention, and they lost by a few seconds the chance of a lift back to the place which would provide them with a secure haven from the storm which their presence had roused in Ahkab.

"Old son," Tony grinned, "the luck of the Navy is out! We've just got to keep on using our gummy feet for propellers, and trust to chance for navigating the short course back home."

These wider streets were less shaded, and the Arabian sun, climbing to its zenith, had heated the stones, so that at times Guy and Tony had to grit their teeth to prevent themselves doing a war-dance which might have attracted unwelcome attention. On their way back in search of the residence, they talked together in undertones of their recent strange adventures, and envied their companion, Chotajee, the Bengali storekeeper of the Falcon, who had elected to remain at the residence for a siesta instead of visiting the bazaars.

They fully anticipated trouble in getting to see Major Gundath again in their present disguise, but that was a minor difficulty, which could be overcome. Their main anxiety concerned their getting out of Ahkab and rejoining the Falcon.

(The presence of Guy and Tony in Ahkab seems to have been the signal for some sinister influence to set to work—to try to get rid of them. Who is working against them? Next Saturday's thrill-packed instalment is full of breathless incidents. Order your copy early.)

SPURPROOF TENTS. Model 0.



Made from lightweight proofed material. Complete with three-piece jointed poles, pegs, guy lines, and brown valise. Weight 5 lbs. Size 6 ft. 6 ins. x 4 ft. 6 ins. x 3 ft. 6 ins. 15/11 With 6 in. wall and 3 in. eave. Accommodates three boys. Special extra lightweight. Made from Egyptian Cotton. Same size. Weight 3½ lbs. 19/6. Send for beautiful illustrated Camping List, post free.

GEO. GROSE & CO., 8, NEW BRIDGE STREET, E.C.4.

"ARE YOU A BOY DETECTIVE?"

Not? Then don't delay! Send at once for the marvellous new "BOYS' SECRET SERVICE BOX." Packed with novelty, fun, and amusement! Look at the contents!!! 1. Handsome Metal Boys' "S.S." Badge. 2. Phial of "S.S." Invisible Ink (for secret messages). 3. Phial of wonderful "S.S." Luminous Ink (shines in the dark). 4. Supply "S.S." Finger-print Detection Powder. 5. Magnifying Lens. 6. "S.S." Secret Code Mask. 7. Fascinating Book crammed with "Things a Boy Detective Should Know." Look at the price! Only 11d., post free!! Get yours NOW from THE BOY DETECTIVE SUPPLY STORES, DESK "M.", 32, CATHCART STREET, GREENOCK.

KING LEOPOLD & LUXEMBURG PKT. FREE!! 25 Belgium, 7 Luxembourg, 6 Airmails, 9d. different. Just send 2d. postage. **LISBURN & TOWNSEND (UJS), LIVERPOOL.**

BE TALL Your Height increased in 14 days, or money back. Amazing Course, 5/-, Send STAMP NOW for Free Book.—STEBBING SYSTEM, 28, Dean Road, LONDON, N.W.2.

BLUSHING, Shyness, "Nerves," Self-consciousness cured or money back! Complete Treatment, 6/- Details, striking testimonials, Free.—L. A. STEBBING, 28, Dean Road, LONDON, N.W.2

PARCEL OF 200 Interesting Stamps, such as Persia, Siam, Roumania (Boy King), Triangular, etc., price 3d. with Approvals only.—W. A. WHITE, Engine Lane, LYR, Stourbridge.



METAL STAMP CASKET FREE!

including MATLOCK MOUNTS, TRANSPARENT ENVELOPES, PERFORATION GAUGE (METAL), WATERMARK DETECTOR and RARE PERSIA HORSE-POST STAMP (Cat. 1/6). Send 2d. post and ask for approvals. If sd. be sent MAGNIFYING GLASS WILL BE INCLUDED.

VICTOR BANCROFT, MATLOCK, ENG.

DON'T BE BULLIED

Send Two Penny Stamps for some **SPLENDID LESSONS** in **JUJITSU** and Handsome Photo Plate of Jap Champions. The Wonderful Japanese Self-Defence without weapons. Take care of yourself under ALL circumstances; fear no man. You can have **MONSTER** Illustrated Portion for P.O. 3/9. **SEND NOW** to "YAWARA" (Dept. A.P.), 10, Queensway, Hanworth, Feltham, Middlesex, Practical Tuition only at 48, Curzaby Street, Regent Street, W.1.

BE TALLER! Increased my own height to 6ft. 3ins. CLIENTS GAIN 2 to 6 INCHES! Fee £2 2s. STAMP brings FREE Particulars.—P. M. ROSS, Height Specialist, SCARBOROUGH.

BLUSHING, SHYNESS.—For FREE particulars simple home cure write Mr. HUGHES, 7, Southampton Row (Box 167), LONDON, W.C.1.

STAMPS—BARGAIN SETS. Write for full list. 25 Air Mail, 1/-, 5 St. Lucia, 6d.—WINNEY (Dept. A), 11, Bramerton St., London, S.W.3.

STOP STAMMERING! Cure yourself as I did. Particulars Free.—FRANK B. HUGHES, 7, SOUTHAMPTON ROW, LONDON, W.C.1.

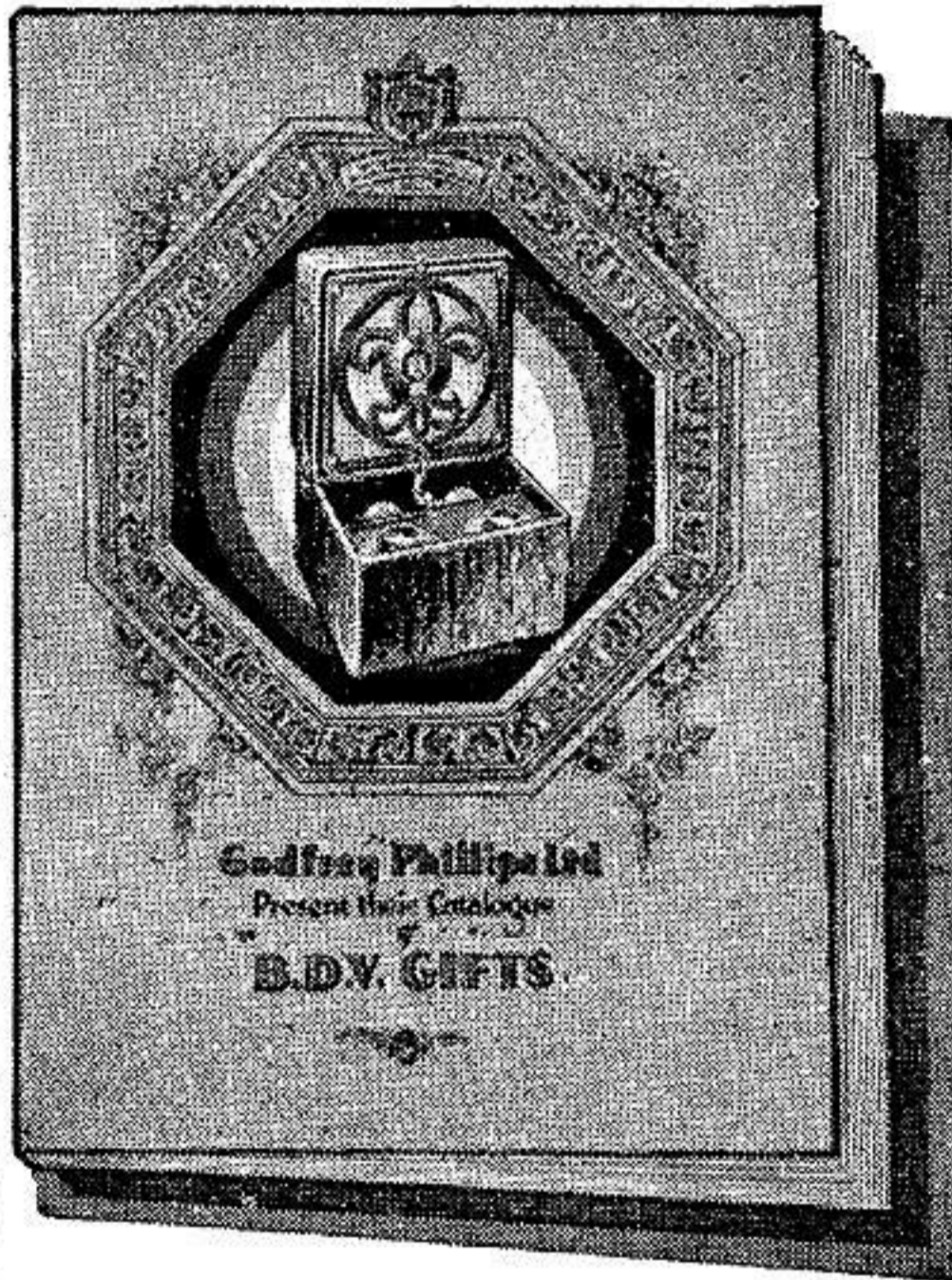
All applications for Advertisement Space in this publication should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, UNION JACK SERIES, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

World's Greatest Gift Book Now Ready

SEND FOR IT NOW..

BOYS!!

B.D.V.'s Golden Gift Book—just out—is the most wonderful and most expensive Gift Book in the World! And it will be the most popular. Send *now* for your free copy. Gifts illustrated in full, glorious colours. Described vividly and accurately. All reduced in coupon value!—a new standard—as seen in the K.-B. "Masterpiece" 2-valve set—greatest of all gift sensations. Get your Golden Gift Book, and begin saving coupons. Ask all your grown-up friends to smoke B.D.V. and give you their coupons. They'll mount up in next to no time, and then—the World's finest gifts are yours—**FREE!**



Here is a greatly reduced illustration of the wonderful Golden Gift Book showing

THE SET THAT SET THE NEW STANDARD

Kolster-Brandes 2-Valve "Masterpiece," Wonderful range. Remarkable purity. Surprising selectivity. Built-in speaker. Bakelite case, closing to 7½ in. by 7½ in. by 7½ in. Worth five guineas. Start now to save B.D.V. coupons for this set!

A FEW OF THE SENSATIONAL VALUES IN THIS BOOK

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| BOXING GLOVES
Made from tough khaki drill, well stuffed. Strong seams. Lined palms. Set of four. | 185
NOW 75 |
| * 38 PACKETS OF 20—ONLY | |
| FOTOS VALVES
A wonderful new long-life valve. Improves every set. | 150
NOW 50 |
| * 25 PACKETS OF 20—ONLY | |
| "MATCH" FOOTBALL
Stout leather case. Pure Para rubber bladder. A real goal scorer! | 280
NOW 80 |
| * 40 PACKETS OF 20—ONLY | |
| "PERFECTION" PEN
24-carat gold iridium-tipped nib. Large ink capacity. Smooth, even flow. Various colours. | 280
NOW 100 |
| * 50 PACKETS OF 20—ONLY | |
| MODEL LOCO
Bassett-Lowkes scale model of the Duke of York. Correct colours. With tender. | 375
NOW 200 |
| * 100 PACKETS OF 20—ONLY | |
| WALLET
Divisions for notes. Safety fastener. Stamp and card pocket. Worth 7/6. | 185
NOW 40 |
| * 20 PACKETS OF 20—ONLY | |
| SMOKER'S KNIFE
Sheffield made. Narrow blade for scraping. Spike, and tobacco tammer. | 60
NOW 25 |
| * 13 PACKETS OF 20—ONLY | |

B.D.V.

• 20 for 1 1½d.

with 2 Coupons worth 3 TIMES other coupon values

* EVEN LESS COUPONS ARE REQUIRED FROM B.D.V. TOBACCO. EACH TOBACCO COUPON BEING WORTH 14 CIGARETTE COUPONS.

BOYS, GET THIS BOOK!

To GODFREY PHILLIPS, Ltd.,
Dept. M., 112, Commercial Street, London, E.1.

Please send me a copy of the new Golden Gift Book showing B.D.V. gifts illustrated in full colours, vividly described and giving the sensationally reduced coupon values bringing gifts twice as quickly! Over 275 splendid gifts. And 5 free coupons!

NAME

ADDRESS

NOTE.—All B.D.V. coupons for gifts should be sent to the above address by registered post. (1/1) K2

ARE YOU FIT?
 Can you run a mile without getting out of breath?
 Can you Box and Wrestle?
 Can you Swim?
IF YOU ARE NOT AN ATHLETE
 come to
FISH'S ATHLETIC SCHOOL
 In Study No. 14 and learn how to be one!



HEATED ARGUMENT AT ANNUAL JUNIOR DEBATING SOCIETY ENDS ON PAINFUL NOTE

Mr. Chairman, "Gentlemen!" "Hear, hear!"

Last to the voices of the orators of Greyfriars! Last Tuesday evening in the Rag a number of distinguished and opened with a short speech in which he remarked that he was pleased to have the honour of presiding at such a notable debate and that anybody who started playing larks would get a thick ear. He then called on Mr. Wharton to put the case for affirmative.

Mr. Wharton, in a voice throbbing with passion, made a brilliant speech in support of the idea that the Remove was more important than the Fourth. He remarked that anybody with a grain of common sense knew without hearing arguments that the Remove was in every way the superior of that moss-grown, moth-eaten institution for half-wits known as the Upper Fourth.

Mr. Temple (Fourth): On a point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Can it, Temple! Give the man a chance!

Continuing, Mr. Wharton said that the Remove had licked the Fourth at football, mopped up the pitch with them at cricket, wiped them out at boxing, and left them standing on the cinder-track. There were, of course, spheres in which the Fourth might possibly shine. At marbles, for instance, or hopscotch.

Mr. Temple: Rising again, Mr. Chairman, to a point of order—yooooop!

Mr. Temple's point of order was quickly disposed of, the Chairman settling the matter by giving him a tap on the nut with his mallet. Mr. Wharton then finished his speech in peace, dealing the Fourth blow after blow till they looked quite limp. The great Remove orator resumed his seat amid roars of cheering.

Mr. Temple was then revived with smelling-salts, and proceeded to the impossible task of successfully defending the Fourth. In a spirited speech he said that he considered the remarks of his opponent to be Tommy-rot and baldpate. What Wharton had said was piffle and tosh. It was utter nonsense and "all his eye" to talk of this and that. He could say anything about his opponent's speech that it was bunkum and hosh and fiddle, fooling fudge.

Proceeding with his argument, Mr. Temple went on to say that nobody could describe the members of the Remove as heaters. In his view, they were about the rummiest-looking lot he had ever had to look at the face of any Removee without feeling a pain. He was assuming, of course, that they called them faces. He had to admit that they reminded him more of boiled puddings than faces.

Greyfriars Herald

THE MAGNET—EVERY SATURDAY
 LAUGH AND GROW FAT.
 No. 35.
 March 7th, 1931.

Edited by
HARRY WHARTON,
 F.C.R.

DODGING QUOD?—COME TO TODD!
 THE ONE AND ONLY CONSULTING LAWYER IN THE SCHOOL!
 Known everywhere as the "Goshit's Friend," No Defence Hopeless When Peter Todd's on the job. Thousands Satisfied!
 "Old Lad" writes:—"Dere Peter, the weigh you got me a huffed for pinching that cake of Nugent's was a marvel!"
 OFFICE HOURS: 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Weds. and Sat.: 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. (Fooler permitting).

'SEASY!' SAYS SKINNER

The Editor of the "Greyfriars Herald" has requested me to give readers a brief outline of my wonderful, new mind-treading system by which the memory may be improved to the 100 per cent efficiency mark. Here goes.

This was the signal for the throwing open of the debate, which was conducted vigorously by both sides with the aid of tomatoes, eggs and fireworks which the debaters had thoughtfully brought with them.

After a few minutes the Remove had them all flying from the Rag. When they had departed, the Chairman put the question, "Is the Remove more important than the Fourth at Greyfriars?"

And the "Ayes" had it, all present being in favour and non, con!

The orators and logicians of the Lower School will now hibernato till the opening of the next season.

"TAKE YOUR PARTNERS FOR THE TUCKSHOP TRIP!" GREYFRIARS GOES CRAZY

Latest Steps Described by Our Dancing Expert

Crash! Bang! Whello! Thump! Clatter-clatter! Thud!

What is it? Is it a tropical thunder-storm in progress? Has the school collapsed? Did Bunter fall down the stairs?

Calm your fears, gentle reader! None of these calamities has overtaken Greyfriars. It is merely the Remove dancing-class holding its weekly session. Since it was started a week ago great strides have been made—particularly by Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, whose strides beat anything yet seen in a ballroom! By the time we have finished training their remarkable feet, we shall have achieved a really remarkable feat!

Naturally, you are all palpating to learn how to dance the very latest steps. Here are a few which can be learned quite easily in the privacy of your own study.

For more advanced steps, write for our inexpensive correspondence course, beautifully illustrated with real photographs of real feet!

THE HOLIDAY HOP.—Stick your thumbs in your waistcoat arm-holes, hold the head well back, take three steps forward and three backward, chassés, turn and do a high-kick with the right foot. Repeat till you feel like a holiday.

THE TUCKSHOP TRIP.—Hop, skip and jump; move the hands as if feeding yourself with doughnuts, pause, then yourself with tummy, look agonised and finish up with three rolling steps as if you had dined not wisely but too well.

THE STUDY STAMP.—Do a double-shuffle, then bring the heels down with a terrific crash. Jump, twist in mid-air and come down with another crash, then stamp on the floor as hard as you can. This dance is greatly appreciated by other people in the study who are doing prep.

THE CLASS-ROOM CRAWL.—Hunt your back, let the hands hang loosely at the sides and drag the feet along in a slow and painful manner. This dance must be executed with an air of extreme melancholy. The very latest idea is to utter plebeian takes his place.

THE MAULY MIKE.—A very easy dance which can be performed by the vertes novice. All you have to do is sink gracefully into the most comfortable place available and fall fast asleep!

KEEP AN ELEPHANT FASCINATING HOBBY—BUT WEIGHTY RESPONSIBILITIES

The chap who makes a hobby of keeping elephants has weighty responsibilities. The best thing to do, therefore, is to start in a small way with a single specimen. Go to your local dealer in gunnies, pigs and white-ribs. Usually he keeps a few elephants in stock in case any of his customers require them at any time and you will probably find one to suit your requirements.

When choosing your elephant always be careful to examine its teeth to see if any are missing or decayed. This is important if you wish to avoid big dentists' bills afterwards.

The texture of his skin is another important matter. This may be tested by driving an iron bar into his leg with a sledge-hammer. When he grunts, you'll know you're through and by measuring the depth, and examining the Elephant-keepers' Skin Test Chart, you'll be able to find out his age.

The pet's eyesight may be tested by holding up a pumpkin to him. If he mistakes it for a bun, he's short-sighted. On the other hand, if you hold up a bun and he ignores it, thinking it to be a pumpkin, the probability is that he's long-sighted.

A word about transporting your elephant. The best way is to send him by the local parcels man, carefully packed in a suitable box with air-ribs drilled in it and the address printed on the label in block capitals. The cost in rural areas should not exceed 7/6.

The problem arises of housing the creature. A large dog-kenel may possibly be converted to take him. If this is not



Staggering Series of Topical Ti-Bits

VIOLENT EXPLOSION.—Coker kicked a goal against his own side yesterday. A group of Removees who happened to be passing exploded with laughter.

SENSATIONAL HOLD-UP.—A hold-up occurred in the quad when Tom Brown's first trouser button went west. The attending button was caught by Bob Cherry, and returned to Brown—buttons being at a discount in the Remove. Fortunately, his nether garments successfully till he arrived indoors, which news "braced" us up considerably.

EARTHQUAKE.—A serious earthquake happened one day last week. Bunter went for a walk after dinner.



DEVASTATING FIRE.—A tremendous fire was observed in the Musketry Range when six marksmen were ordered to fire "ten rounds rapid." Six targets were devastated.

DROWNING TRAGEDY.—There was a drowning tragedy on the Sank on Wednesday afternoon. Snop called out from the bank to the Remove Eight to ask if anyone could lend him five bob, and his voice was drowned by cries of "NO!"

SUSPENSION OF FOOT-BALLER.—A Remove party has just succeeded in securing photos of several birds nests. To obtain them, Bob Cherry, the celebrated footballer, was suspended over the cliff by a rope.

REVOLUTIONS AT GRAY.—The Rev. Henry Wharton has just bought a gramophone. His volitions may be expected at the rate of 80 a minute.

POACHING CHARGE.—Harold Skinner appeared at the Gornam-room Petty Sessions, charged with poaching two eggs from Stink-bombs, Ltd. He was sentenced to be well beaten.

Stock Exchange Forecast

By Our Financial Wizard.

There will shortly be a great boom in dynamite. Yeast is bound to rise. Tight-rope Walkers' Supplies are likely to fall. Timothee Chrompionnes may break all records. There will be a movement away from Stink-bombs, Ltd. A dull tone will be noticeable about the Heskin Piano Co's shares. Liable manufacturers will probably be buoyant. Whibley's Rehearsals, Ltd., are sure to react.