

Long Complete School
Yarn of Greyfriars . . .

“THE NIGHT RAIDERS!”—Inside.

The MAGNET 2^D



**UNBONNETTING
BUNTER!**

THE NIGHT RAIDERS!



By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Pon Asks for It!

O OOOOOGH!" "That," remarked Bob Cherry of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, "sounds like Bunter!"

"Yooooogh!"

Harry Wharton & Co. grinned.

It certainly did sound like Bunter, and it sounded as if Billy Bunter had hit trouble.

Bunter was not to be seen. But his voice, like the voice of the turtle of old, was heard in the land. It was a roar of mingled, indignation, wrath, and anguish that reached the ears of the chums of the Remove. It proceeded from a leafy coppice that bordered the road near the gates of Greyfriars School. William George Bunter evidently was there, and, equally evidently, something was happening to Bunter.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and a glorious, sunny summer's afternoon. The Famous Five had strolled out for a ramble along the river. They were not anxious to see Bunter; it was not on record that anybody had ever wanted to see Bunter. But as they heard that sound of wrath and woe from the coppice they halted, and looked round, to ascertain what was up.

"Wow-ow-ow!" came the dulcet tones of William George Bunter. "Whoop! Highcliffe cad! Wow! Leave off kicking me, you beast! Wow!"

There was a sound of crashing in the thickets. Bunter, it seemed, was in flight, and as he flew he roared.

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He was coming towards the road. Harry Wharton & Co. waited for him to emerge from the wood. Evidently he was pursued. The sound of a thud was heard, apparently that of a boot impinging upon a pair of tight trousers. Somebody was kicking Bunter, and it was clear that Bunter did not like it.

"Yow-ow-ow! Stop it! Yah! Highcliffe cad! Oh, you beast! Help!" roared Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

A fat figure burst out breathlessly into the road.

It was Billy Bunter in full flight.

His fat face was crimson with exertion, his little round eyes bulged over the spectacles that had slipped down his fat little nose, and he gasped and panted and puffed and blew. Perspiration streamed down Bunter. It was unusual for Billy Bunter to exert himself. The strenuous life had never had any appeal for Bunter. But he was exerting himself now, tremendously. He fairly flew.

"Oooh! Oooogh! Grooogh!" gasped Bunter, as he flew.

He pounded past Harry Wharton & Co., without even seeing them, and pounded on towards the school gates.

The Famous Five waited for his pursuer to appear. Bunter had got ahead in the race, urged to unwonted efforts by the boot behind. But the pursuer was close at hand.

From the fat junior's words, it was evidently a Highcliffe fellow who had happened on Bunter in the wood and found a little harmless and necessary amusement in ragging him.

Harry Wharton & Co. had plenty of time on their hands, and they were prepared to expend a few minutes in dealing with that Highcliffe fellow, whoever he was.

Bunter did not matter very much; but Highcliffe boots could not be applied to Greyfriars trousers with impunity.

"Here he comes!" murmured Johnny Bull. "Collar him when he shows up, you fellows!"

"And give him some of his own medicine," remarked Frank Nugent.

"The kickfulness is the proper caper," observed Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "Whoever is saucy to the goose must be saucy to the gander, as the English proverb remarks."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! It's jolly old Pon!"

A slim and elegant figure came running lightly out of the wood.

It was that of Cecil Ponsonby, of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe, the old enemy of the Famous Five of Greyfriars.

Ponsonby was grinning.

Obviously the cheery Pon found great entertainment in ragging a fat and flabby fellow who could not take care of himself. Having bestowed half a dozen hefty kicks on the hapless Bunter, Pon was not finished with him yet. Bunter had left him behind for the moment, but it was easy enough to overtake the fat, gasping Owl of the Remove. Pon was putting on a spurt, and he came out into the road at great speed, and almost ran into the Famous Five before he saw them.

Then he halted suddenly.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

The chums of the Remove lined up, with grinning faces. The expression on Pon's startled face was quite entertaining at the moment. Chasing the fat Owl was one thing, but running into five hefty fighting-men was quite another. Pon's jaw dropped. He looked rather like the ancient lad described by Macaulay, who, ranging the wood to start a hare, came to the mouth of the dark lair, where, growling low, a fierce old bear lay amid bones and blood.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Fancy meeting you!" said Johnny Bull.

"Looking for somebody?" asked Nugent.

"Glad to see you, Pon!" chuckled Harry Wharton.

"The gladfulness is terrific!" chortled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Ponsonby backed away. Billy Bunter, without a glance back, was pounding on towards the school gates, gurgling for breath. Pon would have caught him easily enough had the way been clear. But he was not bothering about Bunter now.

"Don't clear off, old chap, when we've only just met you," said Bob Cherry. The Famous Five followed Ponsonby up as he backed away. "We're just beginning to like you, you know."

"You were kicking Bunter," remarked Harry Wharton. "Possibly you don't know that Highcliffe cads aren't allowed to kick Greyfriars men."

"We're going to give you a tip about that!" grinned Johnny Bull.

Ponsonby panted.

He had thought it quite a happy chance when he happened on Bunter and found an opportunity of ragging a Greyfriars fellow with no danger to his own elegant and superb person. Kicking Bunter was quite amusing. But getting a kicking was not. A kicking was one of those things which it is more blessed to give than to receive.

"Look here, you rotters—" he began uneasily.

"Collar him!"

Ponsonby made another jump back. The grinning Greyfriars fellows followed him up.

"Hands off, you Greyfriars cads!" he panted.

"That's all right," said Bob reassuringly. "You're not worth soiling a fellow's hands on. You're going to get the boot, same as you gave Bunter. Turn round!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ponsonby turned—but it was to flee! He darted back into the wood at top speed.

"After him!" shouted Bob.

"Tally-ho!" roared Johnny Bull.

And the Famous Five rushed in hilarious pursuit of the fleeing dandy of Highcliffe.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

In Hiding!

PONSONBY panted. He ran his hardest. Pon was slim and active, and he was a good runner. But he had little hope of escaping the energetic pursuit of the Famous Five by flight. He was close to Greyfriars, and far from Highcliffe, and he knew that he would be run down long before he could reach safety.

He ran hard through the tangled coppice, with the chums of the Remove whooping in pursuit. For the moment he was out of their sight, hidden by thickets and brambles; but they could hear him, and they were close behind. Pon was not thinking of making a foot-race of it; he was looking for a chance to hide.

He halted, panting, as he reached a massive, ancient oak that grew in the heart of the coppice, half-way to the river.

It was a gigantic tree, and had been standing for centuries, and was said to have been old before the first stone was laid of the ancient foundation of the Grey Friars that was now a school. It was called the Friar's Oak, and its huge branches spread far over the smaller trees and bushes by which it was surrounded.

Ponsonby circled round the massive old trunk, grasped at it, and clambered up.

It was a rather difficult climb, for there were no low branches to help him. But the old trunk was gnarled and rough, and there was hand-hold for an active fellow, and Ponsonby was desperate.

A kicking was due to him if he was captured, and Pon, though he richly deserved to be kicked, did not want what he deserved. Like so many persons, he disliked getting what he had asked for.

He scrambled desperately up the trunk.

SENSATION AT GREYFRIARS!

Remove Form ragged in their dormitory at dead of night.

Black eyes—swollen noses—studies wrecked. Form masters baffled.

Fifteen feet from the earth, great branches jutted out on all sides, and in the midst of them, where they jutted from the parent trunk, was ample space for three or four fellows to lie in cover.

In desperate haste, the Highcliffe junior swung himself into the branches.

It was dusky in the thick foliage of the great oak, though overhead the July sun was blazing from a cloudless sky.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Where is he?"

"After him!"

"Don't let the cad get away!"

"Where are you, Pon, you rotten funk?"

The shouting voices were almost under the tree. Ponsonby scrambled on breathlessly.

He swung himself, in frantic haste, into the central spot over the thick old trunk, with branches rising round him, covering him amply.

Then a sudden gasp of affright left his lips.

He felt himself swinging into space.

It had not crossed his mind, for a moment, that that massive old oak was not solid. It looked as solid as the firm earth in which it was rooted.

But it was far from solid. Too late, Ponsonby realised that the wide old trunk was hollow.

He realised it too late to help himself. He swung over dark space in the centre of the tree, and plunged down.

He grasped wildly round him as he fell, but his grasp found no hold. With a panting gasp of terror Ponsonby shot downward into utter darkness.

Bump!

"Oh!" gasped Ponsonby.

He sprawled in darkness. He had fallen on something soft and yielding, which was fortunate for him. But the shock jarred every bone in his body, and knocked out every ounce of breath. He sprawled, gurgling faintly, dazed and dizzy.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where is he?" bawled Bob Cherry.

Bob's powerful voice was close at hand; but it came to Ponsonby's ears like a faint whisper, through the thickness of the old oak above him.

Ponsonby sat up.

He gasped for breath, and began to feel over his jarred bones, to make sure that none were broken.

Save for the faintest glimmer, in the foliage of the oak high above him, he was in darkness.

Again he heard the faint sound of the shouting of the Greyfriars fellows.

He grinned breathlessly.

He was well hidden now; more completely hidden than he had hoped. He had only to wait till the Removites were gone, and then climb out of the hollow oak, and clear off.

Ponsonby scrambled to his feet. His feet sank in the soft mass on which he had fallen. He guessed that it was an accumulation of ancient leaves that had fallen down the hollow trunk, season after season. It was a mass of leaf mould, more than a foot deep, and it had an unpleasant smell as his feet stirred it. But Pon was glad that it was there. But for that he would hardly have escaped without broken bones.

He waited and listened.

Again and again he heard the Greyfriars fellows calling to one another. But the sound of their voices died away at last.

Harry Wharton & Co. were rooting through the coppice, from the road to the river-bank, in search of the vanished Highcliffe fellow.

But they did not find him.

They looked out on the towpath, but he was not in sight there. Cecil Ponsonby seemed to have vanished into thin air.

"Where on earth has he got to?" growled Johnny Bull.

"The wherefulness is terrific."

"Blessed if I thought Pon could put it on at that rate!" said Bob Cherry. "Look here, he can't have got away. More likely he's hiding in a tree."

"Most likely!" agreed Harry Wharton. "But which tree?"

"The whichfulness is—"

"Terrific!" grinned Bob. And he roared again. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where are you hiding, Pon, you rotten funk?"

But there was no answer. Pon, if he was in hiding, was not likely to answer. Only the echo of Bob's powerful voice came back.

"Well, there's twenty or thirty trees to choose from," said Harry Wharton, with a laugh. "If Pon's hiding in one of them, I think we'd better give him a miss. We don't want to spend the afternoon rooting after him."

"After all, Pon will keep," said Bob. "We can kick him another time. Let's get up the river."

And giving up Ponsonby, the Famous Five walked up the towpath, dismissing the dandy of Highcliffe from their minds.

Silence fell on the shady old coppice
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again. It was welcome to Ponsonby, waiting and listening at the bottom of the hollow trunk of the Friar's Oak. But he waited long before he made a move to escape.

Pon was a wary and suspicious fellow, and he considered it likely enough that the Greyfriars fellows might be hanging about on the watch, waiting for him to show himself.

But when the silence had lasted nearly half an hour, Pon was reassured. He did not like taking risks; but he was fed up with the earthy, stuffy recess under the ancient oak, and he determined to chance it.

He reached up at the interior of the hollow trunk, and essayed to climb. It was then that he made a painful and unexpected discovery.

He had climbed the outside of the gnarled old trunk. But the inside was a different proposition.

"Good gad!" breathed Ponsonby.

In the darkness, his face paled, and his heart beat unpleasantly fast. There was no hold for his hands, and again and again his grasp slipped, and he fell back to the bed of rotting leaves.

Again and again, spurred on by fear now, the dandy of Highcliffe essayed the climb. But it was in vain; and he stopped at last, exhausted, breathless, panting, streaming with perspiration, and with a deadly terror in his heart.

There was no escape from the trap into which he had fallen—no possibility of getting out without help from above. And those who could and would have helped him, had they known, were gone—he had waited till they were gone—and now they were far beyond the sound of his voice. He remembered how faintly a shout had come to his ears; and he knew that a yell for help would travel to a very little distance from the hollow oak. Certainly it would not reach the road or the towpath.

Unless someone chanced to pass through the coppice, and hear him shouting, there was no help for him.

His face was white; his voice husky, as he yelled:

"Help! Help!"

But there were no ears to hear. And Ponsonby, panting, exhausted, threw himself down, at last, on the bed of leaf mould, with a groan of sheer terror.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Chance for Bunter!

"**T**OPPIN'!" said Temple of the Fourth.

Temple, the captain of the Greyfriars Fourth, glanced round his study with an approving eye.

His friends, Dabney and Fry, seemed equally satisfied.

Certainly that study in the Fourth-Form passage looked very neat and tidy, and spick and span; which was not always the case with junior studies at Greyfriars School.

The table was laid for tea; and there was a white cloth, and a full outfit of tea-things; and a jam-jar full of flowers, supplied by the Head's gardener for a small and reasonable tip.

Good things of an edible nature also adorned the study table.

In the centre was a cake—a large cake; a very handsome cake. Smaller but equally tempting viands surrounded it, tastefully arranged.

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Evidently a feast was toward in that study in the Fourth.

"Toppin'!" repeated Temple. "Rippin', in fact!" Temple of the Fourth was an elegant and knotty youth, and he took a great deal of trouble to drop his final g's. "Really toppin'! I think Walker will like this."

"Like his neck, if he doesn't," said Fry.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Rather a waste standing a feed like this to a Sixth Form man!" added Edward Fry, with a touch of regret.

"Well, it's rather an honour havin' a prefect to tea!" said Temple.

"Um!" said Fry and Dabney.

"Well, it's all ready now," said Temple, with a last glance round the study and a glance at his watch. "Time Walker was here."

"Perhaps he's forgotten?" suggested Fry.

Temple glanced at him coldly.

"He's not likely to have forgotten my askin' him to tea," he said. "Don't be an ass, Fry! He said he would come."

"Oh, he'll come!" said Dabney. "Walker of the Sixth is always glad to tea out—he will tea with a junior when he can't land himself on a senior man."

"Don't be a silly ass, Dab!" said Temple, frowning.

Temple was rather proud of having a Sixth Form prefect to tea in his study. He would have preferred Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars; but Wingate had

politely declined. James Walker, of the Sixth, had accepted, an act of condescension on the part of so great a man as a Sixth Form prefect; and Temple preferred not to recognise the fact that Walker, who was rather hard up, was prepared to tea anywhere with anybody.

"Come on!" said Temple. "All's ready now, except makin' the tea—and we can't make that till Walker comes. Let's go an' call for him."

"Oh, all right!"

The three Fourth-Formers left the study. Perhaps Temple had a lingering doubt that Walker of the Sixth might have forgotten the invitation.

Temple strolled elegantly down the Fourth Form passage, his two friends following him.

At the end of the passage a fat junior blinked at them through a pair of big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows—" began Billy Bunter.

Temple did not deign to reply. He walked on, passing William George Bunter like the idle wind which he regarded not.

"I say, old chap—" said Bunter.

Temple walked on regardless; Dabney and Fry grinned as they followed. Billy Bunter gave a snort.

They went down the stairs, and Bunter blinked after them.

A grin dawned on his fat face.

Temple had made considerable preparations for having a prefect to tea. Billy Bunter had seen him doing the shopping. He had nourished a faint hope that Temple might ask a

nice, pleasant, agreeable, rather fascinating Remove man; but Temple had not jumped at the chance of securing such good company.

But as the chums of the Fourth went down the staircase it occurred to Billy Bunter that it might be practicable to turn up for that spread in the Fourth without the formality of receiving an invitation.

As soon as the heads of the three juniors disappeared below the landing, Billy Bunter turned and rolled up the Fourth Form passage to Temple's study.

That study, for the moment, was vacant.

The spread was on the table—all ready! Billy Bunter blinked over it with a gloating eye.

He rolled into the study. There was no time to waste; and Billy Bunter, like Iser in the poem, rolled rapidly.

"Oh! Spiffing!" gasped Bunter. "Prime!"

There was a cricket-bag lying on the sofa. Bunter grabbed it up. There was no time to deal with the plunder on the spot—Temple & Co. might return any moment. Bunter packed the big cake into the cricket-bag. Tarts and buns and cream-puffs—all sorts and conditions of things—followed it. Bunter did not often move quickly; but now he worked with wonderful celerity. He paused only a second to dab a rich and juicy jam-tart into his mouth. It went down like an oyster. Bunter did not even stop for a second one. He cleared the table with rapid hands and rolled out of the study—still, like Iser, rolling rapidly!

Then he ran!

Early that afternoon Bunter had run hard, with Ponsonby of Highcliffe behind him. Now he ran harder.

He was out of the Fourth Form passage almost in a twinkling.

He rolled panting into the Remove passage. That passage was deserted—the fellows had not yet come into tea. Bunter was glad to find the coast clear. Inquisitive fellows might have asked what he was lugging a cricket-bag about for, and what was in it. In circumstances like the present, Billy Bunter did not court inquiry.

He stopped at Study No. 7—his own study. But it was only for a second. He realised that Temple & Co. might suspect him—it was a sad but undeniable fact that when tuck was missing fellows somehow always did suspect Bunter. Study No. 7 in the Remove was the first cover they would draw.

Bunter rolled on.

At the end of the Remove passage, a short stair led to the box-room. Up that stair rolled Bunter.

He rolled into the box-room, and landed the cricket-bag.

Then he paused to reflect—helping himself to a cream-puff as an aid to reflection. He was tempted—powerfully tempted—to sit down on one of the boxes and start on that gorgeous feed at once. But he knew that the hunt would be up soon.

The spread was tempting—very tempting—but it was a case of "safety first." The beasts were certain to suspect him; certain to look for him; fairly certain to track him to his lair.

Tempting as the feed was, it had to wait.

Staying only to scoff half a dozen cream-puffs, a few jam-tarts, a hunk of cake, and a pound or so of chocolate-creams, Bunter concealed the cricket-bag in a corner behind a couple of



Temple, Dabney, and Fry bent over the chair in turn and took six. "You'll think twice before you lark with a Sixth Form man again!" said Walker, tossing the cricket stump away.

trunks, where it was safe from a casual glance.

Then he rolled out of the box-room. He was on the landing again, leaning on the banisters, with an air of casual indifference, when Temple & Co. came up the stairs, accompanied by Walker of the Sixth. So far as Temple & Co. were aware, the fat Owl had not stirred from the spot since they had passed him, going down. Save for a shiny look on his fat face, and a stickiness on his fat fingers, there was no sign of guilt about Bunter.

Temple & Co. passed him as unregardingly as before, with their lofty and distinguished companion; and as they went up the Fourth Form passage, Billy Bunter grinned.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A "Happy" Tea-Party!

"TROT in, Walker!" said Temple. "Oh, do!" said Fry. "So pleased you could come, Walker!" said Temple. "We've got rather a spread."

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. James Walker, of the Sixth Form, reached the door of Temple's study, in the Fourth; and the juniors waited politely for him to enter first. The door stood wide open, and the prefect walked in.

Temple was effusively hospitable; Dabney and Fry wore their politest smiles. Walker was not smiling, however. As a matter of fact, Walker of the Sixth was a little dubious about "teasing" with the juniors. Sixth Form men sometimes asked juniors to tea, on special occasions, but it was rare for them to return the compliment.

Walker was not well-off; and he was not particularly sensitive, and he liked dropping into other fellow's studies to tea. He honoured Sixth Form men in this way as often as they would stand it. He honoured the Fifth Form men in the same way, when they were willing; and often tea'd with fellows like Price and Hilton of the Fifth, who had their own reasons for keeping in with the prefects. He had dropped in to tea sometimes with Hobson of the Shell; but the Shell, at least, were Middle School. Walker had generally drawn the line at teasing with juniors, such as the Fourth and the Remove.

So, though he had accepted Temple's invitation, he was not particularly pleased at finding himself in a junior study, and rather anxious not to be seen there by any senior men. Wingate would have raised his eyebrows; Loder or Carne would have remarked to one another that Walker was coming down to sponging on the fags.

Walker, in fact, had been rather undecided whether he would come, after all; and he had not been pleased when Temple & Co. called for him in the Sixth. Still, he had come. Nothing else had turned up since Temple had asked him; and he did not want to tea in Hall.

Temple & Co. followed him in. Walker of the Sixth glanced at the table. It was laid for tea; but there was nothing of an edible nature to be seen.

"Here you are, Walker!" said Temple, placing a chair for the distinguished visitor.

Walker sat down. "Now—" Temple was going on, when his eyes fell on the denuded table.

He stopped, and stared.

Dabney and Fry stared, too. They could scarcely believe their staring eyes. Not ten minutes ago they had left that table spread with tempting viands that might have tempted an anchorite. And now—

It seemed like some horrid dream to Temple & Co. Excepting a loaf, every article of food on that well-spread board had vanished.

The loaf was still there. But everything else was gone. Even the butter was gone. Billy Bunter was not the man to do things by halves. He had made a clean sweep.

"Oh!" gasped Temple. "I'm afraid I shan't be able to stop long," remarked Walker. "A man's calling at my study soon."

"Oh, yes! I—" stammered Temple. His fascinated gaze was on the table. Where was the tuck gone? Was this some horrid magic?

"What—" began Fry.

"Oh crikey!" said Dabney. Walker looked impatient. He half regretted that he had come at all; and he did not want to wait. Anyhow, he was there for tea, and tea was not visible. He gave a grunt.

"Well—" he began. "Oh, I—I—I'm sorry!" stammered Temple dazedly. "I—we—that is—you see— Oh, my only hat!"

"Look here—" said Walker. "I—I mean to say— Great Scott! S-s-some fellow's been larking here!" gasped Temple. "We—we—we had it all ready—"

"A toppin' spread!" gasped Fry. "S-s-somebody's been here while we were fetching you, Walker."

"And—and—and scoffed the tuck!" gurgled Dabney.

Walker stared at the three juniors.

with a very unpleasant expression on his face.

They stood overwhelmed with dismay and confusion. Somebody—who, they did not know, and could not, for the moment, guess—had visited the study during their brief absence. That somebody had made a complete clearance.

Temple & Co. had brought in their distinguished guest, to find the study in the same state as Mrs. Hubbard's celebrated cupboard.

Walker rose to his feet.

"You fags asked me here to tea," he said ominously.

"Yes—we—we—glad to have you, Walker!" gasped Temple. "We—we had a tip-top spread—simply toppin'!"

"Well, where is it?"

"I—I don't know."

"You don't know!" yapped Walker.

"Nunno! S-s-somebody—" stut-tered Fry.

"Somebody's raided the grub!" gasped Dabney.

"There—there—there's nothing left for tea!" almost wailed Temple. "Oh crumbs! I—I'm awfully sorry, Walker, I—"

James Walker breathed hard and deep. His face grew grim, and grimmer and grimmer. He scented a jape.

He was quite well aware that fellows made jests about the great frequency with which he "tea'd" out. Was it possible that a set of cheeky juniors had had the unparalleled nerve to ask him to tea, simply to pull his leg? It looked like it.

"Is—is there anything in the cupboard, you men?" gasped Temple.

He did not like the look on Walker's face.

"Nunno!" gasped Fry. "Nothing."

Walker compressed his lips.

"So there's nothing for tea?" he said.

"N-n-no! Awfully sorry!"

"You had the cheek to ask a Sixth Form man here to tea, and there's no tea! Your idea of a joke, I suppose?" said Walker.

"Oh, no, nothin' of the kind!" gurgled Temple. "Somebody's been here and scooped the stuff!"

"Scooped it to the last bun!" groaned Dabney.

"You can tell that to the Marines," said Walker unpleasantly. "You think it's rather funny to make a fool of a Sixth Form man, do you? Well, I'll show you just how funny it is!"

"I—I—I assure you—I—I—we—"

"I didn't bring my ashplant," said Walker. "I never knew it would be needed. But this cricket stump will do."

He picked up a cricket stump.

Temple & Co. eyed him with dismay. Whether from disappointment about the tea that was not there, or from the belief that a set of cheeky fags had dared to pull his lofty leg, or from both causes, there was no doubt that James Walker was in a towering rage.

He stepped between the dismayed trio and the door. Then he pointed to a chair with the cricket stump.

"Bend over, Temple!"

Temple gasped.

"I—I say, Walker, I—I assure you, honour bright!"

"Bend over!" roared Walker.

"I—I never—I mean, I didn't—that is, I wasn't—I—I mean to say—Whooooop!"

Walker was impatient. He seemed anxious to get to work with the cricket stump. He grasped Temple of the Fourth by the collar with his left hand, and whirled him over the chair.

Then his right arm rose and fell. A series of whacks sounded like pistol-shots, accompanied by a series of anguished yelps from Cecil Reginald Temple.

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Ow, ow, ow! Wow, wow, wow!"

"That's for you!" said Walker, giving Temple a shove that sent him rolling on the carpet. "Now, Fry—"

"I—I—I say, Walker," stammered Fry, "I—I assure you it wasn't a jape! We really meant— Yaroo!"

Six whacks descended on Edward Fry as he wriggled over the chair, with Walker's left gripping his collar.

Then a swing of the prefect's arm sent him sprawling beside Temple.

"Now, Dabney!"

"Oh crikey!" said Dabney.

He bent over the chair and took his six. His voice was added to the tuneful chorus as he took them.

Walker tossed the stump into a corner, and surveyed the gasping, groaning three grimly.

"You'll think twice before you lark with a Sixth Form man again!" he said. And he walked out of the study.

He left three groaning juniors behind him. Temple groaned, and Fry groaned, and Dabney groaned. It was a chorus of groans.

Walker of the Sixth, in a very bad temper, went to tea in Hall. Temple & Co. were not thinking about tea. They had more immediate and painful things to think of. For a long, long time sounds of woe were heard from that study in the Fourth, and the lamentations of Temple & Co. were like unto the lamentations of Job of old, only more so.

(Continued on next page.)



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THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Secret Passage I

CECIL PONSONBY picked himself up from the bed of dead leaves, with a pale and haggard face. Above him yawned the hollow in the great trunk of the Friar's Oak, with a dim glimmer of sunlight through the thick foliage over it. He had shouted, and shouted again till his throat was hoarse and husky. But his shouts hardly penetrated beyond the trunk of the massive oak; and there were no ears to hear.

How long he had been imprisoned there he did not know, but it seemed like hours and hours. There was terror in his breast, mingled with helpless rage and malice. Sooner or later, surely, someone would pass through the coppice. Harry Wharton & Co. wherever they had gone, might come back that way. But how long was he to be imprisoned there?

Gladly he would have heard the voices of the chums of the Remove; gladly he would have taken the kicking that was his due, to escape from this terrible predicament. But there was no sound.

He had lain for a long time, exhausted, almost in despair. But he picked himself up at last, to make another effort. He remembered that he had a box of matches in his pocket. Pon always carried a box of wax vestas for his cigarettes. He fumbled in his pocket, and drew out the natty, silver box in which he kept his matches.

He struck a match, and held it up to look about him.

He was in a deep, earthy hollow under the oak. The hollow in the trunk extended deep into the earth.

Round him was earth and hard, old roots, excepting on one side, where there was an opening.

The shape of that opening startled him. It was in the form of an arch—a rounded Saxon arch—and he struck another match to examine it more closely. In utter amazement he discovered that it was shaped of stone.

"Good gad!" ejaculated Ponsonby.

He held the match into the arch and stared through. He realised that there was space beyond.

Ponsonby breathed quickly.

Upward, through the trunk of the hollow oak, there was no escape. But it flashed into his mind now that there might be escape in another direction.

Greyfriars in ancient days had been a monastic establishment. There were ancient parts of the buildings which had been standing when William the Conqueror crossed the water. In those old days builders had put in secret passages as surely as modern builders put in staircases and bath-rooms. Pon had heard of the secret passages at Greyfriars, some of which had been discovered by a study of ancient plans, and some of which were supposed still to exist unknown. And it dawned upon his mind that, by sheer accident, he had discovered one of them.

The stone arch could mean nothing else. Obviously, it had been built by human hands.

In those turbulent old days, when a secret retreat had been as necessary as a front door, this hidden passage had been designed, leading under the earth to Friar's Oak. The great tree must have been hollow then; indeed, it was likely, in the light of this discovery, that the hollow was not wholly the work of Nature, but partly of human hands.

Probably in those distant days there had been a ladder—most likely, a rope ladder—for the ascent of the interior of

the trunk. Not a trace of it remained after the centuries.

"Good gad!" repeated Ponsonby.

The passage that lay beyond the stone arch led somewhere, and it was practically certain that it led to Greyfriars School. At the other end, if he could follow it, was safety.

With a glimmering match in hand, Ponsonby trod cautiously through the arch, stooping his head to do so.

Over him was a low, arched roof of stone; on either side was a wall of stone, old and damp and slimy.

A few paces, and he discerned a flight of stone steps before him.

He knelt and tested the top step with his hand; it was firm as a rock—as firm as when it had been trodden by old Saxon monks. The builders of those old days had known nothing of jerry-building.

Step by step, striking matches at intervals, he descended. A dozen steps led him into a narrow, low stone passage, where he had to keep his head bent to avoid touching the roof.

The passage ran before him straight, direct, and, so far as he could judge, in the direction of the school.

With renewed hope, Ponsonby trod along the passage, scratching match after match to light his way through the thick darkness.

The air was close, but it was not poisonous. The outlet through the oak helped to keep it fresh, and there might have been other outlets of which he could see nothing.

On he went, step by step. It was a single direct passage, with no turnings or branches. He knew that he could find his way back in the dark without difficulty if he found no escape at the end and if his matches gave out. He would only have to grope his way along the slimy walls.

"My hat!" breathed Ponsonby, as he stopped at last, his match flickering on the first steps of a spiral stair that led upward.

It was the end of the secret passage, and, obviously, the spiral stair led up to some building above. It could only be Greyfriars School.

Ponsonby had forgotten his terrors now. He was rather keenly interested in this strange discovery.

He mounted the spiral stair, and it led him onward and upward, round and round, step after endless step, till his legs were weary. Every now and then he paused to strike a match, and then groped on again.

He knew that he must be well above the surface of the earth by this time, but stone walls still enclosed him.

He reached the summit at last.

He found himself in a tiny stone cell less than four feet in diameter. He struck matches, and groped over the stone walls, but there was no sign of an outlet.

That there must be an outlet, however, was certain. The secret stairway and passage formed a way of escape from the building to the hollow oak in the coppice. Obviously, there must be a way of entering it.

He groped over the blocks of stone that formed the walls, groping and fumbling and pressing, and, as he fully expected, he felt one of the blocks stir under his pressure.

There was a faint creak.

The stone probably moved on an iron pivot, rusty with age. It turned slowly and heavily, and a sudden gleam of daylight dazzled his eyes.

The turning stone left an aperture in the wall about eighteen inches square. Whoever had used that secret way in ancient days had had to crawl through the opening.

The wall was thick, but the turning stone had left an opening clear through.

Ponsonby stared through the aperture.

The first thing he noticed was a window through which the summer sun was shining—a small window. It was a window in a room, and his glance travelled from it round the room.

A number of boxes and trunks and two or three disused articles of furniture—a broken table and a legless chair—met his eyes.

It was a box-room!

"My hat!" murmured Ponsonby.

He scanned the boxes that were within his sight. He could see initials that were painted on some of them. One was "H. W.," and another "J. B."

It did not take Ponsonby long to guess what names fitted those initials—Harry Wharton and Johnny Bull. He had little doubt that he was looking into the Remove box-room. Pon was friendly with Skinner of the Remove, and Snoop and one or two other fellows, and he had visited the Remove passage a good many times, and knew his way about there. Once he had visited that very box-room with Skinner.

All he had to do was to crawl through that opening in the old stone wall and walk down into the House—where the residents would certainly be extremely astonished to see him!

But now that he knew that he was safe, and could escape as soon as he pleased, Pon was in no hurry.

Other thoughts were already working in Pon's malicious mind.

He had discovered a secret way into Greyfriars—fairly into the quarters of his old enemies of the Remove. Pon was wondering now whether he might not be able to turn that discovery to his own advantage.

Suddenly there was a sound in the box-room.

From where he stood, peering through the gap in the wall, Pon could not see the door, but he knew that it had opened.

The next moment a familiar figure crossed his line of vision.

He caught his breath as he stared at the fat figure of Billy Bunter of the Remove.

If Bunter looked across the room in his direction he could not fail to see the square opening in the wall, short-sighted as he was.

But Bunter did not blink in that direction.

Bunter's thoughts were quite otherwise occupied. The grinning Ponsonby, making no sound, watched him put down the cricket bag and help himself to some of the contents. Bunter's back was to him, and Pon watched him in silence. He watched him hide the cricket bag—evidently still crammed with tuck—in a corner behind the boxes and then roll away. He heard the door shut.

Bunter was gone, little dreaming that eyes had been upon him from a secret opening in the wall.

Ponsonby chuckled.

He put his head and shoulders through the opening and crawled through, and dropped into the box-room. He whipped across to the door and turned the key in the lock.

It was tea-time now, and Pon realised that he was hungry. He was far from Highcliffe and tea in his study with Gadsby and Monson and Vavasour. But there was an ample supply at hand, and, with the door locked, he was safe from interruption. He jerked the cricket bag out of its place of concealment and opened it. Then he sat on

a box and started on the contents. Billy Bunter little dreamed what was happening to the spread he had bagged from Temple & Co. of the Fourth.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Backing Up Bunter!

I SAY, you fellows!" "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" "Rescue!" yelled Billy Bunter. Harry Wharton & Co. were coming up to tea. For the second time that afternoon the dulcet tones of William George Bunter fell on their ears, telling of trouble.

Bunter, on the landing, was encircled by three Fourth Form men—Temple, Dabney, and Fry. The three looked excited and wrathful. Obviously, they were on the point of committing assault and battery, and the Famous Five had arrived only in time.

"Bunter again!" said Johnny Bull. "The Bunterfulness is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and idiotic Bunter is born for trouble as the absurd sparks fly upfully."

"I say, you fellows—" "He had it!" Temple was howling wrathfully. "He must have had it! Bag him and give him jip."

"Rescue!" yelled Bunter. "Hold on, Temple!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. He interposed hastily: "What's the trouble, old bean?"

Temple gave him a glare. "Mind your own bizney!" he bawled. "Dear man, this is my bizney, when you're ragging the Remove. Tell your kind uncle the trouble," suggested Wharton.

"That fat villain's raided my study and—" "I haven't!" yelled Bunter. "He's bagged our spread!" yelled Fry.

"I—I—I didn't—" "Oh, rather!" gasped Dabney. "Cleared us out to the last crumb."

"I—I wasn't—" "We had a prefect to tea," gasped Temple, stuttering with wrath and indignation. "Walker, you know. Somebody cleared out the spread while we were gone and left us with nothin'—not a crumb! And—and Walker thought we were japing him, you know, and gave us six each—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Famous Five. "Funny, ain't it?" roared Temple furiously.

"The funniffulness is terrific." "Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "What a happy ending to a jolly old tea-party!"

"You cackling fatheads—" "This is what comes of greasing up to the prefects!" chuckled Nugent. "You shouldn't grease up to the Sixth, Temple, and then these things wouldn't happen."

Temple glared at him ferociously. Temple liked to be able to say that Sixth Form prefects had tea'd with him; but he did not, perhaps, realise that he was "greasing."

"You cheeky Remove cad!" he stuttered. "I say, you fellows, keep them off!" howled Bunter. "I never touched the things. I haven't been near the study. I never knew anything about it. You fellows know me—you can take my word."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob. "You don't expect anybody who knows you to take your word, do you?"

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"Oh, really, Cherry—" "You'll have to find somebody who doesn't know you, old fat bean," said Bob, shaking his head.

"Beast!" "He had the stuff!" roared Fry. "Look here, you men mind your own business, and leave us alone. We're going to burst him."

"He says he hadn't," said Harry Wharton. "I suppose that's rather evidence that he had—" "Oh, really, Wharton—" "Still, fair play's a jewel!" said the captain of the Remove. "If you saw him scoff your tuck, Temple, we'll take your word, of course, and you can burst the fat boulder all over Greyfriars, if you like."

"Do you think the fat scoundrel would let me see him?" snorted Temple. "If I'd seen him I'd have slaughtered him on the spot!"

"Well, how do you know that Bunter had the stuff, then?" "Well, somebody did—" "I say, you fellows, I never—" gasped Bunter. "I didn't—I wasn't—I wouldn't! I've been here all the time. I never—"

"He knew we had the spread," howled Temple. "He saw me shopping in the tuckshop. He knew we'd left it in the study when he saw us going down to fetch Walker. Then he nipped in and bagged it—" "You can search me if you like," gasped Bunter. "If—if you find any tuck about me I—I—I'll eat it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "He can't have scoffed it in the time," said Fry. "He's hidden it somewhere, of course. He's going to tell us where it is."

"I'll bet he's scoffed some of it," snorted Temple. "He looks sticky. Look at his jammy paws!"

"That's not evidence," said Bob. "Bunter's always sticky, and he never washes. That stickiness may be left over from yesterday."

"Or the day before," said Johnny Bull. "Or last week," said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Oh, really, you beasts—" "He's stacked it away somewhere, to scoff when it's safe!" declared Temple. "He's scoffed some already, and he's got the rest hidden away. I tell you there was tons of it. We had a splendid spread, havin' a prefect to tea—" "I say, you fellows, I don't believe they had a spread at all. And I believe it was raided by a Fourth Form man. I saw Wilkinson—" "Scrag him!" howled Fry.

"I—I think very likely it was the cat!" gasped Bunter. "Collar him!" shouted Temple. "Rag him, and if these Remove cads butt in we'll rag them, too!"

"That's a big order, old bean!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Too large a size for you, Temple."

"Now, hold on," said Harry Wharton pacifically. "I admit that if tuck's missing it looks as if Bunter had it. Still, you can't scrag a man, even Bunter, without any proof. If you've got no proof—" "We don't want any!" snorted Temple.

It was a fact that Temple, sore from his "six," was rather in want of a victim for his wrath than of anything in the way of proof. It was probable, at least, that Bunter had had the tuck, and he was, as Temple would have asserted, only a Remove tick, anyway. But that point of view was not likely to be shared by the Remove fellows.

"Look here, Bunter, did you raid the tuck?" demanded Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—" "Own up, you fat villain!" said Johnny Bull.

"No," roared Bunter. "Nothing of the kind. I hope I'm not the fellow to raid a fellow's tuck."

"Oh, my hat!" "My esteemed prevaricating Bunter, you—" "I never saw it—never touched it—never knew anything about it!" gasped Bunter. "I expect my pals to take my word."

The Famous Five eyed him very doubtfully. Billy Bunter told "whoppers" just as naturally as he breathed; he never seemed to realise that they were whoppers at all. Bunter and truth had so long been strangers that the fat owl really seemed to have forgotten that truth had any existence at all.

Still, it did not seem, to the chums of the Remove, "cricket" to find him guilty without any evidence. Suspicion was strong; but Remove men were not going to let a Remove man be ragged on mere suspicion.

Harry Wharton shook his head. "It's not good enough, Temple," he said. "If you can find any evidence that Bunter raided your study you can burst him all over the House and strew him about in little pieces. But otherwise—" "We're goin' to smash him!" roared Temple. "We're goin' to keep on smashin' him till he tells us where the tuck's hidden."

"You're not!" said Wharton cheerfully. "Collar him!" panted Temple, and he jumped at Bunter, heedless of the Famous Five. There was a roar from the fat Owl.

Temple was excited, and he was wrathful. The loss of his spread, the "six" he had received from his distinguished visitor had naturally had that effect on him. In that frame of mind he forgot prudence. He went "all out" for vengeance, disregarding the Famous Five.

But the Famous Five were not to be disregarded. "Pile in!" chuckled Bob Cherry. Three Fourth-Formers seized Bunter. Five Removites seized three Fourth-Formers. Then there was a wild and whirling affray on the landing.

Three of the Fourth were simply no use against five of the Remove. Temple & Co. sprawled right and left, roaring. The chums of the Remove bumped them down and rolled them over amid a terrific uproar.

Billy Bunter rolled away and left them to it. For several minutes Harry Wharton & Co. were busy. Then three dusty and dishevelled Fourth-Formers scrambled away and fled for their lives.

And the chums of the Remove walked cheerily on to Study No. 1, to tea, what time Temple, Dabney and Fry, in the Fourth-Form passage, gasped, and gasped, and gasped, as if they would never leave off gasping.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Ponsonby Makes Plans!

CECIL PONSONBY chuckled. He rose from the box on which he was seated, in the Remove box-room, in a very cheery frame of mind.

He had had quite a good tea. And while he had disposed of the good things from the cricket bag, he had been thinking.

The secret passage from the Friar's Oak to Greyfriars was his own secret, and it was easy for Pon to realise how useful that secret knowledge might be to him in his warfare with his old enemies of the Greyfriars Remove.

He had a secret ingress into the enemy's territory, so long as he kept the secret of that hidden passage. Many plans for putting it to use had already occurred to Pon's active and malicious mind, while he sat on the box and scoffed the good things Bunter had raided from Temple's study.

The secret had to be kept, if he was to use it, that was clear. It followed that he had to get out of Greyfriars somehow, undiscovered and unseen.

He could not get out by way of the hollow oak at the other end. Somehow he had to get out through the school; and it was not likely to be easy to get away unseen. That was the task before him now.

There was still a large amount of tuck left in the cricket bag. Pon had a good appetite, but nothing like Bunter's; and even Bunter could hardly have cleared off the lot at one sitting.

Taking up the bag, Pon pushed it through the opening in the stone wall, into the secret cell on the other side.

Then he pulled the turning stone shut.

It closed easily enough, falling back into its place with a faint creak. Once it was closed there was nothing to distinguish it from the other large blocks in the wall. Indeed, Pon would not have been able to pick it out himself, once it was shut, had he not made a careful examination of it.

That examination revealed a slight hollow on the surface, which would never have caught a casual eye. But a pressure in the centre of that depression caused the stone to swing open again.

Pon closed it once more, and left it. Now his task was to get away. He unlocked the door of the box-room, and peered out.

He was in the oldest part of Greyfriars. The room that was now used as a box-room had been, in the ancient days, occupied by some shaven monk. Other parts of the ancient building had been brought up to date by more modern builders; but that room, and several others near it, had been left in the original state, the walls of bare stone, as in ancient days. Outside the room was a landing, and a short stair led into the Remove passage.

No one was in sight, but Ponsonby could hear voices. He realised that he would never get out that way unseen.

He drew back and closed the door, and crossed to the window.

That window looked out at the back of the school buildings, and under it was a flat, leaded roof of a lower room.

Pon remembered what he had heard

from Skinner, that fellows breaking bounds after lights out, used the box-room window, and reached the ground from the leads below it.

That, evidently, was his way.

He had to take the chance of being seen from the back windows. That could not be helped.

He dropped on to the leads, and in a few minutes had scrambled down and was safe on the ground.

This was a part of the grounds where the Greyfriars fellows never came, or, at least, were supposed never to come. Ponsonby cut off, and trotted by a path across the kitchen gardens to a distant low wall.

A figure came in sight, that of Mr. Mimble, the gardener, at work among rows of green peas.

Mr. Mimble glanced round, and stared at Ponsonby.

"Rippin'," said Ponsonby; "how do you do it?"

Mr. Mimble's smile expanded.

"If there's one thing I can grow, sir, it's green peas!" he said complacently. "There's a lot to know about growing vegetables, sir, and especially green peas. If you ever grow green peas, sir, you always get the seed from somewhere farther north. I always get it from Scotland."

"That's worth knowin'!" said Ponsonby blandly; and inwardly chuckling at the idea of ever being engaged in the useful task of growing green peas.

Ponsonby spent several more or less interesting minutes in admiring Mr. Mimble's green peas. Then he strolled away, and left by the garden gate. He followed a path that led away from the school, and a few minutes later was in



"Yow-ow!" yelled Gadsby, as he and his comrades entered the low arch. "Ow! I've banged my napper!" "Serve you jolly well right!" grunted Ponsonby. "I told you to stoop first, didn't I?"

The Highcliffe junior was taken aback for the moment. But he was quite cool as he walked carelessly up to the gardener.

Mr. Mimble knew him by sight, and he was undoubtedly surprised to see a Highcliffe junior there. Pon gave him a cheery smile.

"Just lookin' round, Mr. Mimble," he said. "I dropped in to see Skinner—Skinner of the Remove, you know—and he mentioned what splendid peas you're raisin' here. I thought I'd like to see them."

Mr. Mimble smiled. He was proud of his crop of green peas, and flattered by this agreeable young fellow's interest in them.

"No harm, I suppose," said Pon, pleasantly.

"Not at all, sir," said Mr. Mimble. "The boys ain't allowed here, really, but no harm done, sir! They're coming on fine, sir. Look at these."

a lane that led him to the Courtfield road.

He was out of sight of the school now, and with the exception of Mr. Mimble, nobody knew that he had been there. And he had left the gardener with the belief that he had called on a Remove man and strolled round to see the kitchen garden.

Billy Bunter, true, was likely to be surprised when he found the bag of tuck missing from the box-room. But certainly he was not likely to guess how it came to be missing.

Ponsonby walked home to Highcliffe in a cheery mood. He passed through the town of Courtfield and stopped at a shop to make a purchase—a large coil of strong rope.

He carried this purchase away with him, and on arriving near Highcliffe, concealed it in the paddock near the school. He was now provided with

a means of descending into the Friar's Oak, and escaping the same way whenever he pleased.

There was a grin on his face as he strolled in at the gates of Highcliff. Two fellows who were coming from the cricket ground to the House glanced at him. They were Courtenay, the junior captain of Highcliff, and his friend, De Courcy, otherwise the Caterpillar.

Courtenay gave him a careless glance; but the Caterpillar regarded him with some attention.

"Pon's been up to somethin', old bean!" the Caterpillar remarked.

"Has he?" said Courtenay carelessly.

"I know that look in his eye!" grinned the Caterpillar. "Pon's been playin' a dirty trick, or he's plannin' to play a dirty trick. Dear old Pon."

Ponsonby went into the House, and up to his study. He found his friends, Gadsby and Monson and Vavasour, there. Tea was long over in Pon's study; and the Highcliff knuts were smoking cigarettes, which was one of the little customs in Pon's study.

"Hallo, you're late," said Gadsby.

"Tea'd out?"

Ponsonby nodded, with a grin.

"Yes—I tea'd at Greyfriars," he answered.

"Oh gad!" said Monson. "Been callin' on Skinner?"

"No, I haven't seen Skinner to-day."

Pon closed the door of the study. Gadsby and Monson and Vavasour regarded him curiously. They could see that Ponsonby was greatly elated about something.

"What's happened?" asked Gadsby.

"You look a bit dusty, Pon, been rollin' in the mud? You want a wash, old bean."

"Absolutely!" assented Vavasour.

Pon chuckled.

"I've found out somethin'," he said. "We're goin' on the war-path, my infants, and we're goin' to make those Remove cads at Greyfriars sit up."

"We're not!" contradicted Gadsby promptly. "I'm fed up with raggin' with those brutes. They punch too jolly hard for me."

"Absolutely!" said Vavasour.

"Wait till I tell you!" snapped Ponsonby.

"No good tellin' us you've got a scheme on against those blighters," said Monson. "We know your schemes, old man. They always end in a muck-up, somehow! Leave Greyfriars alone!"

"It's as safe as houses this time!" said Ponsonby.

"So you've said before!" grunted Gadsby.

"Absolutely."

"Oh, do shut up and listen to a chap!" exclaimed Ponsonby impatiently.

And he proceeded to explain—his friends listening dubiously at first, and then chuckling. Many a time had Pon planned a campaign against his old enemies at Greyfriars; but somehow the fortune of war never seemed to favour him. But this time, as his friends had to admit, it looked like a sure thing.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Beastly for Bunter!

"BEASTS!"

"What?"

"Rotters!"

"Eh?"

"Pinchers!"

"What the dickens—"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared blankly at William George Bunter.

They had finished tea in Study No. 1,

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and were thinking of a trot down to the nets for a little cricket practice, when the Owl of the Remove burst into the study.

Billy Bunter was red with rage.

His eyes glinted through his big spectacles, his fat brow was corrugated in a deep frown, and he fairly stuttered with wrath.

What was the matter with Bunter was a mystery to the Famous Five. They had not seen him since they had rescued him from the avenging clutches of Temple, Dabney, and Fry. They had, in fact, forgotten his fat existence. Something, it was clear, had happened to excite Bunter. He was raging.

"Pinchers!" he roared. "You've pinched it!"

"Pinched what?" gasped Harry Wharton.

"You jolly well know!" shrieked Bunter. "Where is it? Hand it over! You're jolly well not going to keep it, you beasts. Have you scoffed it?"

"Mad!" said Bob Cherry, commiseratingly. "Quite potty! Have you felt this coming on long, Bunter?"

"Beast! Where is it?" roared Bunter. "What have you done with it?"

"The pottiffulness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific," said Hurree Jamset

Hurrah!!

FREE GIFTS FOR EVERY READER.

See Page 27 for more
:: details, boys! ::

Hurrah!!

Ram Singh in wonder. "His absurd mind is wandering!"

"Has he one to wander?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows, where is it? Look here, halves!" howled Bunter.

"That's fair—halves!"

"Halves of what?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "If you're not off your rocker, what are you burbling about?"

"Making out you don't know!" sneered Bunter. "Talk about Ananias, and Baron Munchausen, and George Washington! Of all the fibbers—"

"Oh, kick him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Mind, I'm going to have it back!" roared Bunter. "You're not going to rob me!"

"Rob you!" gasped Nugent.

"Well, what do you call it, then?" howled Bunter. "Bagging a fellow's spread! I'm willing to go halves! Isn't that fair? Well, where is it? Mean to say you've scoffed the lot already?"

"Mean to say you've had grub raided?" demanded Bob Cherry. "If that's the case, it shows that the old order changeth, giving place to the new!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can guess what the fat idiot is driving at," said Wharton, staring at the Owl of the Remove.

"You never had any tuck, you fat villain!"

"Yah! Beast! Pincher! Rotter!"

Billy Bunter spluttered with wrath.

"Mind it's Temple's cricket bag,"

he said. "The—the tuck was mine, but I borrowed Temple's bag. He will be after you for it!"

"What on earth—"

"It was you!" said Bunter. "Nobody else knew! I know jolly well it wasn't those Fourth Form cads, because I've been keeping an eye open for them. They haven't looked anywhere in the Remove passage!"

"What on earth should they look in the Remove passage for?" demanded Bob Cherry in amazement.

"You know jolly well!" snorted Bunter. "They never went anywhere near the box-room—"

"The box-room?"

"I've been watching. It wasn't that set of rotters! Well, only you fellows knew about it. So it was you!"

"But what's happened?" shrieked Wharton.

"Oh, don't be an ass! I don't know how you guessed I'd packed it away in the box-room, but you must have. Where is it? What have you done with it? You can't have scoffed the lot already. There was a big cake—"

Harry Wharton gave a jump. Light dawned on his mind.

"You—you—you fat rascal! Did you bag Temple's spread, as he said you did? Is that it?"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "That's it, of course! We might have known the fat villain had had it!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"I think I understand now," said Wharton. "That fat frump did bag Temple's feed, and he parked it in the box-room. And somebody's spotted it and bagged it in his turn!"

"It was you!" roared Bunter. "Nobody else knew!"

"You fat porker, if we'd known you had bagged Temple's tuck, do you think we should have backed you up?" roared Wharton. "We took your word that you hadn't had it!"

"Well, that's all right!" said Bunter.

"Of course, I expect my pals to take my word. I never touched Temple's tuck—I don't believe he had any, in fact! The fact is, I had a hamper from Bunter Court—that was the stuff I parked in the box-room. See? Now it's gone! I waited to make sure that those beasts weren't after me, and then I went back for it and it was gone. Well, you fellows must have had it!"

"Bump him!" said Bob Cherry.

"Here, I say—yaroooh—I say, you fellows—whoop!" roared Billy Bunter, as the indignant Co. collared him. "Leggo! Halves! I say, I'll make it halves! Whoooooooop!"

"So you had Temple's tuck, after all, you fat scoundrel—" said the captain of the Remove, grasping the fat Owl by the collar.

"Ow! No! Leggo! I tell you it was a hamper from Bunter Court—"

"And you borrowed Temple's cricket bag to pack it in?" grinned Bob.

"Yes—exactly—I mean, no, it wasn't Temple's cricket bag—leggo—"

"You said it was, you fat fibber!"

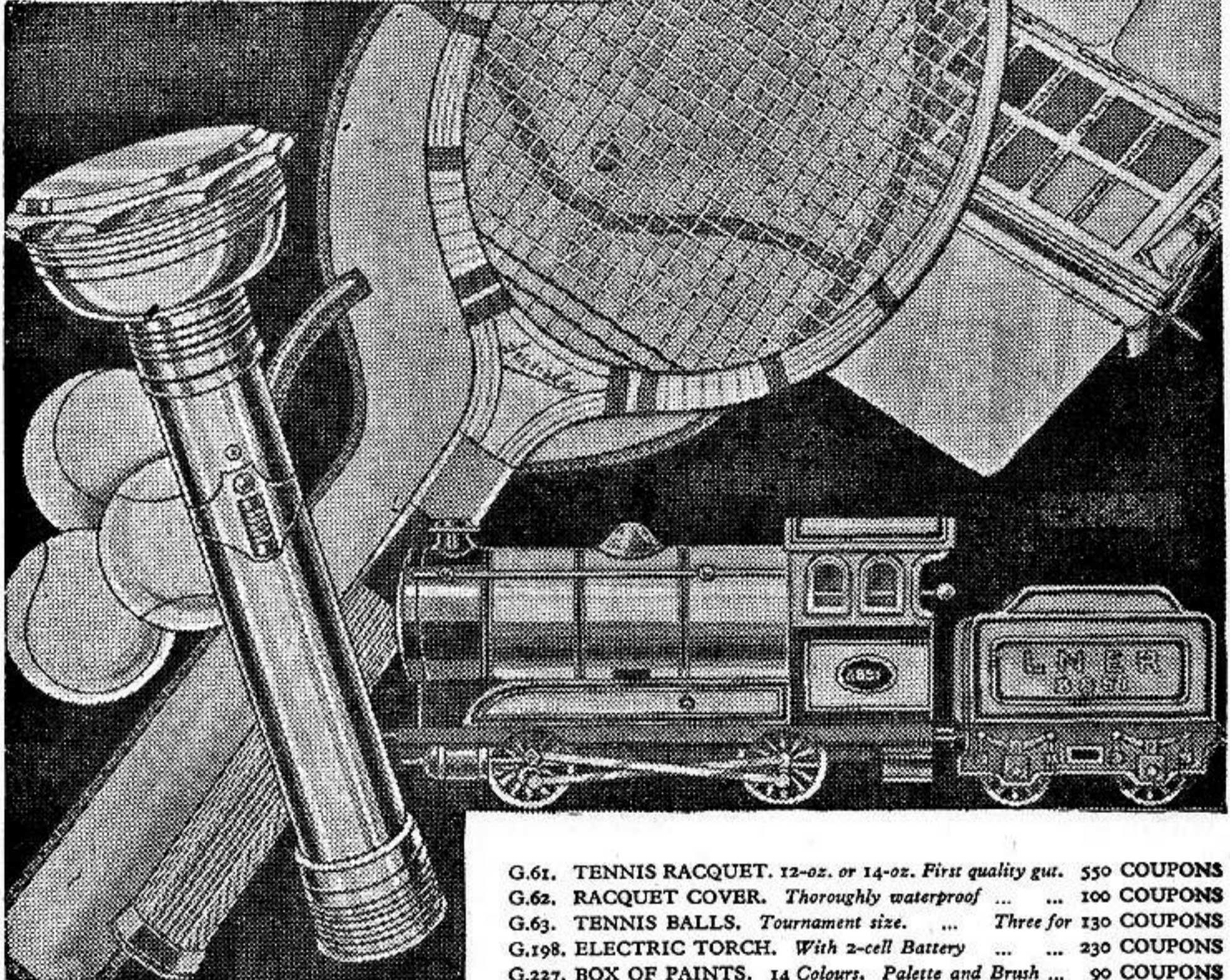
"That—that was only—only a figure of speech!" gasped Bunter. "I meant to say it was Toddy's cricket bag. I mean it wasn't packed in a cricket bag at all. Nothing of the sort!"

"Where did you hide it?" demanded Wharton.

"Ow! In the box-room! Wow! Leggo! I say, you fellows, I tell you it was a hamper from Bunter Court—I'm prepared to swear—"

(Continued on page 12.)

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THE NIGHT RAIDERS!

(Continued from page 10.)

"You're not going to swear in this study!" said Frank Nugent.

"I mean, I'll swear—"

"Naughty!" said Bob Cherry, reprovingly.

"You silly ass, I swear it was a hamper from Temple—I mean it was a Temple from Bunter Court—that is, it was a—a—whooooooop!"

Bump!

"Yarooooooop!"

"Now bring him along," said Harry Wharton. "We've walloped those Fourth-Form duffers for this, and it turns out that Bunter scooped their spread, after all. We'll hand him over to Temple!"

"Hear, hear!"

"The hear—hearfulness it terrific!"

"Come on, Bunter!"

"Ow! I say, you fellows, leggo!" howled Bunter as he was whirled out of the study in the grasp of the Famous Five. "I say, if you swear—"

"This Co. never swears!"

"I mean, if you swear you never had it, I'll take your swear—I mean, I'll take your word. Leggo! I dare say it was Fishy—or Skinner—or somebody—they're not above bagging a fellow's tuck—mean cads, you know! I—I say, I'm not going to see Temple! Temple might think it was his tuck that I put in the box-room—"

"The mightfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Roll him along!"

"I say, you fellows, I—I never had any tuck!" gasped Bunter desperately. "There never was any in the box-room, and I didn't go there for it, and I haven't missed it, and, I say—whooooooop!"

"Kim on!" grinned Bob Cherry.

Spluttering and gurgling, the fat junior was marched forcibly along to the Fourth Form passage.

He went unwillingly, but he had to go.

Really, it was hard lines on Bunter. He had only waited till he was sure that the coast was clear before he returned to the box-room to devour his prey at his leisure. And it was gone—gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream!

Tuck and bag had all vanished together! Bunter's suspicions had fallen on the Famous Five—indeed, he still suspected them of having guessed that he had the tuck, guessed where it was hidden, and bagged it. There seemed no other way of accounting for its mysterious disappearance.

Anyhow, it was gone, and all Bunter was going to get was stern justice from the fellows to whom it had belonged. Which really was hard lines on the grub-raider of Greyfriars.

The Famous Five, energetically escorting Bunter, arrived at the door of Temple's study.

In that study, Temple, Dabney, and Fry were still in a dishevelled and dismantled state, not having quite recovered yet from their hectic encounter with the merry Removites.

They glared, with a deadly glare, at the new arrivals.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo," said Bob Cherry cheerily. "Enjoying life?"

"You cheeky fags—" began Temple.

"Awfully sorry, and all that," said Wharton. "We've found out—from Bunter—that he did bag your tuck after all! He says somebody else has pinched it from where he hid it, so I rather fancy you won't see it again! But here's

Bunter. If you've got any use for him, here he is, at your service."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh!" said Temple. He rose to his feet, with gleaming eyes. "Of course, we know it was Bunter—"

"I never!" roared Bunter. "I haven't been near the study! I never touched the tuck, and never packed it in the cricket bag, and never—"

"Here you are!" said Bob, and he spun the fat Owl across the study, fairly into the arms of Temple & Co.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow! Help! Rescue! Yaroooooh! Whooooooop! Fire! Yow-ow-whoop!"

Harry Wharton & Co. left the study. Billy Bunter was left to the tender mercies of Temple & Co. Judging by the wild roars and yells that rang from the study, those mercies were not very tender.

Altogether it was beastly for Bunter.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

A Night Raid!

"P ON, dear boy!"

Ponsonby gave rather a start as he heard the Caterpillar's cool, drawling voice in the Fourth Form dormitory at Highcliffe.

It was half-past ten; and at that hour, most of the Highcliffe Fourth had settled down to sleep.

But a candle was flickering in the dormitory now, and in the dim light three fellows were out of bed and dressing.

The Caterpillar sat up with a whimsical smile on his face, and looked at Ponsonby, Gadsby, and Monson.

"You silly ass! You made me jump!" snapped Ponsonby.

"You'll get a worse jump, old bean, if a prefect drops a paw on your shoulder while you're out of bounds after lights out."

"Oh, rats!"

"Have you woke up to give us a sormon, old bean?" asked Gadsby.

"Exactly!" assented the Caterpillar. "Look at Franky sleepin' the sleep of innocent youth! Look at me, settlin' down peacefully to balmy slumber, when I'd much rather play the giddy ox just like you men! Why not follow our shinin' example?"

"Bow-wow!" said Monson.

"Mind your own bizney!" said Ponsonby.

"Thing I never do," said the Caterpillar shaking his head. "I've sat up to give you misguided youths a word of warnin'. Suppose Mobby should come up to the dorm and catch you out—"

"Catch Mobbs catchin' me out!" said Ponsonby derisively. "If he came here and found my bed empty, he'd pretend not to notice it."

"Shouldn't wonder," agreed the Caterpillar. "Jolly useful to have a Form master like Mobby! Nice man! But suppose a prefect—"

"Catch the prefects leavin' their game of bridge to butt into a junior dorm!" said Gadsby. "Do they ever?"

"Well, no! I suppose you're not runnin' much risk," agreed the Caterpillar thoughtfully. "You'd have been turfed out of any school but Highcliffe, terms ago. So should I have been, by gum. But since my pal Franky snatched me like a jolly old brand from the giddy burnin', I've been hopin' and hopin' that you men would follow my example and turn over a new leaf, and become

shinin' characters like myself? Won't you let me snatch you like brands from the burnin'?"

"Oh, shut up!" said Ponsonby.

"We're not goin' on the razzle this time, Caterpillar," said Monson. "It's only a jape this time."

"You don't say so!" ejaculated the Caterpillar.

"Honest Injun! It's a jape—"

"Shut up, Monson," said Ponsonby. "Those rotters are friendly with the Greyfriars cads—"

"Well, the Caterpillar wouldn't give us away," said Monson.

"Shut up, all the same."

Rupert de Courcy raised his eyebrows in surprise.

"A jape on Greyfriars in the middle of the night!" he ejaculated. "You're pullin' my innocent leg! You're not turnin' into bold, bad burglars, what?"

"Find out!" grunted Ponsonby.

"Too much trouble!" yawned the Caterpillar, and he laid his head upon the pillow again.

Ponsonby & Co. finished dressing, blew out the candle, and left the dormitory.

Five minutes later, they were out of the House, and making their way through the Old Courts to the paddock that gave on the Courtfield road.

Then they proceeded at a trot through the peaceful, starry July night. Pon was carrying the coil of rope he had concealed in the paddock that afternoon.

The three young rascals avoided Courtfield town, following lonely lanes and footpaths, till they reached the coppice near Greyfriars School.

In the middle of the dark, shadowy coppice, they stopped under the Friar's Oak.

"Here we are!" said Ponsonby.

"I say, that's rather a stiff climb!" remarked Monson, staring up at the darkness of the great tree.

"I did it this afternoon," said Ponsonby.

"Yes, with the Greyfriars men huntin' you," said Gadsby. "But—"

"Oh, rats! I'll go up first, and let down the rope for you!" snapped Pon.

"Good egg!"

Ponsonby clambered into the tree. He was careful this time not to tumble into the great hollow in the trunk. He tied one end of the rope to a strong bough, and threw the other end down to his comrades.

Gadsby, and then Monson, clambered up with the aid of the rope, and joined their leader in the tree.

Pon turned on the light of a pocket electric torch. Gadsby and Monson stared down into the blackness of the hollow trunk, and looked rather dubious. This jape on Greyfriars had quite taken their fancy, when they planned it in the study over their cigarettes; but it did not seem quite so attractive now.

"Looks a beastly hole!" muttered Gadsby. "Might break a leg tumblin' in there."

"There's a stack of leaf mould at the bottom—I didn't break anythin'," answered Ponsonby. "Anyhow, we've got the rope."

"Oh, all right!"

Ponsonby dropped the end of the rope into the hollow, and slid down hand below hand. He vanished from the sight of his comrades in the oak.

A few moments later, the gleam of his torch came from below.

"Come on!" he called out, his voice sounding strangely muffled in the deep hollow.



Wharton switched on the light, to find the dormitory in wild disorder. Bedclothes trilled over the floor, pillows and bolsters were scattered, and everybody was wildly excited. "Fourth Form cads!" gasped Johnny Bull. "They've raided us!"

Gadsby rather gingerly slid down the rope, and joined Pon at the bottom. Monson followed him.

"You have to stoop your heads here," said Ponsonby, and with the electric torch he led the way under the low arch. His comrades followed him.

"Yow-ow!" came in a sudden yelp from Gadsby.

"What the thump——"
"Ow! I've banged my napper——"
"Serve you right!" grunted Ponsonby. "I told you to stoop! Can't you take care, you silly ass?"

"Look here——"
"Oh, come on!"
Ponsonby led the way along the low, stone passage with stooping head. The gleam of the torch shone in advance, flickering over slimy walls. Gadsby and Monson followed him, not in the best of tempers.

"Putrid place!" grunted Gadsby.
"They haven't had a spring cleanin' here lately," said Ponsonby sarcastically. "They didn't know you were comin', you see."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"
The three Highcliffians arrived at the spiral stair. Ponsonby led the way upward. Gadsby and Monson grunted as they clambered up stair after stair in his wake. The narrow winding staircase seemed endless.

But they arrived at last in the little stone cell at the summit. Ponsonby flashed the light round, and picked out the moving stone.

He pressed it, and it rolled open.
"Way in!" he chuckled.
"Oh, gad! What a chance for a giddy burglar, if anybody in that line happened to spot it!" said Monson.

"Those Remove cads may fancy it's burglars when we begin on them," grinned Ponsonby. "But don't talk now—some of the masters will be still up, though they're far enough away from here. Can't be too careful."

He crawled through the opening into the box-room, and Gadsby and Monson followed him in. They blinked round them in the flash of the torch.

"They keep old boxes an' things here," said Ponsonby. "Don't fall over them——"

"Wow!" came from Monson.
"You noisy ass, what——"
"Ow! I've barked my shin on some-thing——"

"For goodness' sake be quiet! I'll leave the stone open," said Ponsonby. "Nobody's likely to come here and spot it, and we may need to get out in a hurry. Come on—we shan't need a light here. I know my way about—I've visited Skinner often enough to learn the lie of the land. This way."

Ponsonby opened the door of the box-room, and the three Highcliffians descended the short stair to the Remove passage.

In that passage was a glimmer of summer starlight from two or three windows, and they could see their way easily enough. Ponsonby knew his way, and their surroundings were not wholly unfamiliar to Gadsby and Monson.

Save for the glimmer of starlight from the windows all was dark. It was half-past eleven, and at that hour all Greyfriars was sleeping, unless some master was sitting up late.

Ponsonby led the way to the stairs that gave access to the dormitories. Pon was perfectly cool; but the hearts

of his companions were beating rather fast. Highcliffe was a slack school, and Mr. Mobbs, the master of the Fourth, was not likely to find fault with Ponsonby & Co. if he could help it. But there was a limit, even for Highcliffe, and if the three young rascals were discovered and caught, it meant serious trouble for them.

Ponsonby came to a stop, and flashed his light round him.

So far, he had advanced without a fault; being on visiting terms with Skinner of the Remove, he knew the lie of the land fairly well. But his visits to Skinner, of course, had been confined to the quarters occupied during the daytime, and on the upper floor, where their dormitories lay, Pon was in strange territory.

"Get on, old man!" muttered Gadsby uneasily. "I—I say, if we were spotted here, they mightn't think it was a jape—they might think we were a lot of burglars. Look here, let's get it over."

"Know which is the Remove dorm?" asked Pon unpleasantly.

"Nunno! Don't you?"
"We've got to find it."
"Oh gad!"

"Easy enough!" said Ponsonby. "Shut up and stick to me."

On tiptoe the three intruders arrived at a door. Pon shut off his light, and opened the door softly. It was a dormitory, and it remained to discover whether it was the Remove dormitory.

Pon stared in, peering into the dim glimmer of starlight from high windows. Gadsby and Monson waited uneasily. As it happened, a shaft of

(Continued on page 16.)



(Continued from page 13.)

starlight fell on a rugged face that was known to him, and he recognised Coker of the Fifth.

He backed out promptly and closed the door.

"That's a senior dorm," he whispered. "Come on."

Another door was found, and silently opened, and Pon peered in again. Somebody seemed to be awake, for a drowsy voice was heard:

"Who's that? Anybody up?"

Pon backed out again. He knew the voice of Hobson of the Shell. Again he closed a door softly.

"We shall be explorin' the whole giddy buildin' at this rate!" muttered Gadsby.

"Oh, shut up! We'll get a bullseye next shot," said Ponsonby.

"If we get spotted—"

"Oh, don't be a funk!"

A few minutes and Ponsonby was at another door.

The sound of a deep and resonant snore greeted his ears as he opened it. Ponsonby grinned.

"I fancy we're right this time," he murmured. "I've heard Skinner talkin' about Bunter's snore. But we'll make sure."

He crept into the dormitory. There was a faint glimmer from the high windows, and he could see the row of white beds. The deep snore of William George Bunter guided him to the bedside of the Owl of the Remove, and he flashed on the light of his torch for a second. One instant's glimpse was enough; he recognised the fat face of the Owl. He crept back to his comrades.

"It's all right," he whispered, "I've seen Bunter—this is the Remove dorm. We're all right now."

"Get on with it, then," muttered Gadsby.

"What-ho!"

And Pon & Co. proceeded to get on with it.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Done in the Dark!

HARRY WHARTON awakened suddenly.

A gleam of light had flashed on his face in the darkness, but he was unconscious of that. He was sleeping soundly. But he came out of that sound slumber with a jump, as he was suddenly grasped.

Half-awake and wholly amazed, the captain of the Remove found himself rolling out of bed, tangled in bed-clothes.

"Oooogh!" he gasped.

"Oh crumbs!" came a gasping howl from Bob Cherry. He also was rolling out of bed in a sudden clutch.

"Ow!" came from Johnny Bull. "Ow! Ooooh! Wharrer you up to? Oooch!" And Johnny Bull bumped on the floor in tangled sheets.

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Three amazed members of the Remove—carefully picked out by the light of the electric torch before the proceedings started—sprawled on the floor, spluttering.

Whack, whack, whack!

"Oh!" roared Wharton, as the lash of a dog-whip curled round his legs. "Oh! Ow! My hat! What—Yaroooh!"

He staggered blindly up. His foot caught in tangled sheet, and he rolled over again. The dog-whip lashed and lashed again, to an accompaniment of breathless chuckling.

"What the thump—" roared Bob Cherry.

Somebody had hold of him by the back of the neck, and was thumping his features on the hard floor. The dazed junior was quite helpless, for the moment, in the hands of the unseen and unexpected enemy.

"Whoop!" roared Johnny Bull. He squirmed and wriggled under a series of terrific smacks.

Voices rang out all along the dormitory now. Every fellow in the Remove was awakened by the wild uproar.

"What on earth—" exclaimed Peter Todd. "Oh, my hat! What—"

Peter sat up in bed, and he rolled off it, as he received a terrific thump in the darkness. He crashed over on the floor.

"What's the row?" shouted Vernon-Smith. The words had barely left his lips, when something hard jolted in his eye, and the Bouncer pitched out of bed, yelling.

"What the dickens—"

"Who the thump—"

Startled voices shouted on all sides. Wharton and Bob and Johnny Bull scrambled up dazedly in the darkness.

Pon & Co. were "getting on" with it. They had picked out the three most obnoxious members of the Co. to begin with. Now they were giving their attention impartially to the rest.

Every advantage was on their side. Not a man in the Remove dreamed for a moment that outsiders were in the dormitory. Nobody could begin to guess what was up.

"Who—what— Oh, you rotter!" panted Wharton, as he barged into a half-seen shadowy figure. "You sweep, take that!"

"Yaroooh!" roared Bob Cherry, as he took it. "You silly ass, what—"

"Oh crumbs! Is that you, Bob?"

"Ow! Wow!"

"Somebody's larking, I suppose! Who— Oh, here he is!" Wharton came into contact with another shadowy form, grasped it, and crashed it over on the floor. "Now, you rotter—"

"Ow! Leggo!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"Great pip! Is that you, Johnny?"

Wharton released his hapless victim at once. "I say, who—"

"Ow! Wow!" roared Squiff, as an unseen fist in the darkness caught him on the jaw. "Who's that? What— who—"

"You fellows gone mad, or what?" shrieked Hazeldene, as he was dragged headlong out of bed. "Leggo— Oh crikey—" He landed on the floor with a crash.

"I say, you fellows! Yaroooooh!" yelled Billy Bunter. "I say, leave off hitting a chap! Who—what— Whoooooop!"

"Get a light!" yelled Peter Todd. "It's a raid—is it the Fourth Form chaps, or what? I'll get a light— Oooooooop!" Unseen hands grasped Toddy, as he fumbled for a matchbox, and he smote the floor of the dormitory with a mighty smite.

Somebody bumped into Herbert

vernon-Smith in the darkness, and the Bouncer hit out fiercely. The yell that followed was in the well-known voice of Harold Skinner.

The next moment the Bouncer went down with a crash, barged over from behind. But he contrived to catch hold of his assailant as he fell. The assailant went down with him.

To his surprise, Smithy found that the fellow was fully dressed. It was not a pyjama-clad form in his grasp.

"Who—" panted the Bouncer.

A crashing blow in the face interrupted him. He rolled on the floor, and his assailant tore himself free.

A match scratched in the gloom. Tom Redwing was scratching it. But before it was fairly alight Redwing was knocked over headlong, and the match did not ignite.

Wild confusion reigned in the Remove dormitory from end to end now. Almost all the fellows were out of bed. They barged into one another, and hefty blows were exchanged in the darkness.

Pon & Co. were making things hum. Keeping together, they hit out recklessly at every shadowy figure that came within their reach, and Pon's dog-whip did great execution amongst bare legs.

Frank Nugent was the first to get a light. He remembered that he had a torch in his jacket-pocket, and he found it and turned it on. He flashed the bright ray round him, but it was knocked out of his hand the next second, and he was hurled over with a crash. He had had a glimpse of three fully-dressed figures, but had not had time to see their faces.

Harry Wharton, amazed, enraged, and considerably damaged, plunged towards the door to switch on the electric light there. His hand was on the switch when he was dragged over.

He fought furiously with his assailants, hitting out vigorously, and he heard a gasping howl as his knuckles landed in an eye.

"Ow! Oh!"

It was not the voice of a Removite, though it sounded familiar. He tore himself away, and jumped for the electric switch again.

"Cut!"

It was a breathless whisper in the darkness.

The dormitory door was heard to slam.

A few moments later Wharton found the switch, and turned on the light. The dormitory was suddenly flooded with illumination.

The Removites, blinking in the sudden light, stared round them.

The dormitory was in wild disorder.

Bedclothes trailed over the floor, pillows and bolsters were scattered, all the fellows were out of bed, all of them wildly excited. Vernon-Smith dabbed a nose from which the crimson was streaming. Skinner nursed his jaw and groaned. Billy Bunter was yelling wildly. Half the Remove had received damages in those wild and whirling minutes in the darkness.

"They're gone!" panted Wharton.

"They—who?" howled Peter Todd. "Has anybody been here?"

"I heard the door slam!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"I saw them!" panted Nugent. "Three fellows—dressed! I didn't see who they were, but they were dressed!"

"Fourth Form cads!" gasped Johnny Bull. "It's a dormitory raid! Let's go after them!"

"Yes, rather!"

"The ratherfulness is terrific!" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "I have had an absurd dot in my ridiculous eye."

"Must have been the Fourth!" exclaimed Wharton. "Can't have been anybody else! We'll jolly well make them sit up for this!"

"Come on!" hooted the Bounder. "Pillows!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Take your pillows! We'll jolly well make the Fourth howl!"

"The howfulness will be preposterous!" "Buck up!"

Harry Wharton threw open the door. A crowd of fellows, armed with pillows and bolsters, followed the captain of the Remove. That it was a dormitory raid by Temple & Co. of the Fourth, the juniors did not doubt, and they were eager to give a Roland for an Oliver.

And while the enraged Removites were making for the Fourth Form dormitory, three Highcliffians were scuttling away by the secret passage, chuckling as they went. Ponsonby & Co., at least, had enjoyed their night out.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Mystery I

"BOYS!" "Oh crumbs!" "Quelchy!" "Phew!"

The light flashed on in the passage. Harry Wharton & Co. came to a sudden halt.

There was, so to speak, a lion in the path, in the shape of Henry Samuel Quelch, the master of the Remove.

The din in the Remove dormitory had been terrific, and it was not surprising that it had reached the ears of Mr. Quelch, and aroused him from balmy slumber. It would have been rather surprising if it hadn't!

Mr. Quelch, on his way to discover what the uproar was about, met the Removites in full career, as it were, on their way to the quarters of the Fourth. Quite a terrifying expression came over the Remove master's speaking countenance at the sight of nearly every member of his Form crowding along the passage with pillow and bolster.

"Boys!" "Oh, my hat!" "What does this mean?" barked Mr. Quelch.

It was rather a superfluous question. Really, what Mr. Quelch beheld, with startled eyes, could scarcely have meant anything but a dormitory raid.

"Wharton, what does this mean?" "H'm!" "You are out of your dormitory, and it is nearly midnight!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "Upon my word, this is—is—is—"

"Scandalous!" said another voice. Mr. Capper, master of the Fourth, came on the scene. "Really, Mr. Quelch, I have been awakened—disturbed—"

Mr. Quelch snorted. "There is no need for you to intervene, sir—"

"I have been awakened—disturbed—startled—at this hour—"

"Go back to your dormitory, boys!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "You will be punished severely for having left it. Wharton, I insist upon an answer! What does this mean? Where were you going?"

"We—we were going after the Fourth, sir," stammered Wharton. "I—I mean, to the Fourth Form dorm!"

"Scandalous!" said Mr. Capper. "A deliberate disturbance at this hour of the night! Really, Mr. Quelch, these boys of your Form—"

"These boys of my Form, sir, are not wholly in fault!" snapped the Remove master. "There has been a disturbance in the Remove dormitory, which was certainly not, I imagine, caused by these boys unaided. Wharton, answer me! Have any boys belonging to another Form entered your dormitory to-night?" Wharton hesitated.

"Answer me at once!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Well, some fellows came in, sir—we didn't see who they were—we can't possibly say who they were—"

WIN A POCKET WALLET,
like Cyril Joyce, of 45, Mill Lane, Codnor, Derbyshire, who submitted the following winning limerick, illustrated by our artist:



Old Bunter was once in Madrid,



When he ate sixty eggs for a quid.



When asked: "Are you faint?"



Replied: "No, I ain't!"



But I don't feel so well as I did!"

You'd just like one of these leather wallets. Why not SET TO WORK AND WIN ONE now?

"We don't know who they were, sir!" said Bob Cherry.

"The knowfulness is not great, honoured Sahib!"

"Then this disturbance was started by boys from another dormitory!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Mr. Capper, I think you will find that the boys of your Form are probably very far from being in a state of repose."

"Really, sir—" said Mr. Capper, taken aback.

"Yes, really, sir!" said Mr. Quelch.

"I will visit the Fourth Form dormitory at once," said Mr. Capper, with dignity. "I do not suppose that my boys have shared in this outbreak—not for a moment, sir! But I will ascertain."

Mr. Capper whisked away, his dressing-gown whisking round him. The Remove master made a gesture, and the hapless Removites tramped back to their dormitory. Reprisals on the Fourth were evidently "off" for that night, at least.

"I shall deal with you in the morning for this!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Now, go to bed at once!"

Mr. Capper appeared in the doorway while the juniors were still tidying dismantled beds and turning into them. There was a rather superior smile on the face of Capper.

"I am glad to say, Quelch, that I found my Form all asleep in bed," he remarked. "They have taken no part in this disturbance."

"It is not unheard of, sir, for boys to feign slumber in such circumstances," said Mr. Quelch icily.

"I have questioned several of my boys, sir," said Mr. Capper, with dignity, "and Temple, the head boy of my Form, assures me that no Fourth Form boy has been out of the dormitory since lights out."

There was a general stare from the Removites as they heard that statement.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry involuntarily.

"I accept Temple's assurance, absolutely," said Mr. Capper, addressing Mr. Quelch with great dignity. "My boys have not been concerned in this unseemly disturbance."

And Mr. Capper whisked away again, leaving the Remove master biting his lip. Quelch's gimlet eye roamed over his Form.

"Wharton, you have stated that boys from another dormitory came here. Did you believe that they belonged to the Fourth Form?"

It was not much use hedging, as Mr. Quelch had met the Removites on their way to visit the Fourth.

"Yes, sir," said Harry. "But it must have been a mistake. Temple would have owned up, sir, if it had been the Fourth."

"If they did not belong to the Fourth Form, who were they?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Did no one here see them?" snapped Mr. Quelch. "I saw three fellows, sir," said Frank Nugent; "but I didn't see their faces. I saw that they were dressed, that's all."

"One of them that I got hold of was dressed," said Vernon-Smith.

"I shall inquire into this," said Mr. Quelch.

And, leaving the light on in the Remove dormitory, he stalked away.

"Blessed if I make this out!" said Johnny Bull. "Temple wouldn't tell lies to get out of a row. It wasn't the Fourth, if he says it wasn't. But who THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,224.

the dickens came here, if the Fourth didn't?"

"Couldn't have been fags," said Harry Wharton. "Might have been the Shell, after all—Hobson and his crowd!"

"One of them had a whip of some sort," said Squiff. "I got it round my legs. That isn't like Hobby—or Temple, for that matter. I can't make it out."

"Someone pitched into me with a whip," said Harry, with a nod. "That sort of beastly hooliganism isn't Greyfriars style at all. More like Highcliffe cads. It's got me beaten."

Mr. Quelch came back to the dormitory. His face was grim.

"Wharton, I have inquired in the Shell dormitory, also in the Fourth, and I am assured that no one left either dormitory after lights out. I have also seen the Third, and with the same result. It appears that no boys from any other dormitory have been here to-night."

"Some fellows came here, sir," said Harry.

"Then who were they?"

"I don't know, sir."

Mr. Quelch gave him a very penetrating look.

"You give me your word, Wharton, that the disturbance in this dormitory was caused by boys from another Form?"

"Certainly, sir! Three of them were seen, though not recognised. We took it for granted that it was the Fourth."

"I am bound to take your word, Wharton. But I cannot understand this. I shall inquire in the morning."

Mr. Quelch put out the light and closed the door. The Removites did not settle down to sleep, however.

There was a buzz of voices in the dormitory. Who were the raiders who had roused out the Remove?

Few of the juniors believed that either Hobson of the Shell, or Temple of the Fourth, would have lied on the subject. If there was a "row" over a dorm raid, no party to it would have tried to throw all the blame on another party. But if the raiders had not been from the Shell, or the Fourth, who were they? Certainly they were not seniors. They could hardly have been fags of the Third. Besides, the Third denied knowledge of the matter, like the Fourth and Shell. As for the Second, they were out of the question. It was really a baffling mystery.

The mystery was still unsolved when the Remove went to sleep at last.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Pon Going Strong!

"MY dear Ponsonby!" said Mr. Mobbs.

Mobbs, the master of the Fourth at Highcliffe School, looked sympathetic.

Pon was the object of his sympathy.

It was afternoon—a hot afternoon—and plenty of fellows in the Highcliffe Fourth were feeling slack and lazy. At the back of the Form several fellows were dozing, lulled by the drone of Mr. Mobbs' voice.

Ponsonby leaned his head on his hand. He seemed to be suffering from a severe headache.

He looked up as Mr. Mobbs addressed him in sympathetic tones, and his face looked very white.

"Sorry, sir; I've rather a headache," said Ponsonby, in a faint voice. "I'm rather feelin' the heat, sir."

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Had Smithson or Yates or Benson been feeling the heat to any extent, it would not have bothered Mr. Mobbs very much. But it was a different matter with the brother of a baronet, and nephew of a marquis.

"My dear boy, you look quite pale," said Mr. Mobbs, with great concern. "You may leave the Form-room, Ponsonby. Take a quiet walk under the elms, my dear boy. It will restore you."

"You're very kind, sir," said Ponsonby.

He left the Form-room with languid steps. Gadsby and Monson exchanged a wink.

Outside the Form-room Ponsonby's languor left him. He walked away quite briskly. He paused in the lobby to rub his face clear of the chalk that had made him look so pale, and then walked out of the House.

Mr. Mobbs had recommended him to take a quiet walk under the trees. Instead of which Pon took a very rapid walk down to the road into Courtfield.

There he picked up a taxi—money being no object to Pon. The taxi whizzed him away on the road to Greyfriars.

He stopped the taxi by the coppice near the school, told the driver to wait for him, and disappeared into the coppice.

A few minutes later he was sliding down the rope in the interior of the Friar's Oak.

If Pon had had a headache, it seemed to be gone now. It had served its purpose, in getting him leave from class.

With a grin on his face Pon followed the secret passage from the Friar's Oak into Greyfriars School.

At that hour all the Greyfriars fellows were in class, as all the Highcliffe fellows except Pon also were. The coast was clear for the raider.

Ponsonby emerged from the secret passage into the Remove box-room and passed out, down the stair, into the Remove passage.

Not a soul was to be seen there.

All the Removites were in the Remove Form-room with Mr. Quelch, enjoying, more or less, that learned gentleman's instructions in Roman history. The studies were absolutely deserted. Unless one of the school servants happened to be in the vicinity, Pon was safe from discovery.

He chuckled as he walked swiftly down the Remove passage to Study No. 1. In that study, which belonged to Wharton and Nugent, he glanced round him with a grinning face.

It was barely three o'clock. The Remove were safe in class till four. Ponsonby had plenty of time.

He set to work at once.

Pon had had a good deal of experience in the ragging line. But now he quite excelled himself.

He was busy for ten minutes in Study No. 1. At the end of that time the study looked as if a hurricane had struck it.

Leaving it in a state of wild havoc Pon went along to Study No. 13, which belonged to Bob Cherry, Hurree Singh, Mark Linley, and Wun Lung. He set to work industriously in Study No. 13.

He gave that study another ten minutes. Then he dropped into Study No. 14, the quarters of Johnny Bull, Squiff, and Fisher T. Fish. Five minutes in Study No. 14 produced an extraordinary change.

Pon had now dealt faithfully with all the members of the Famous Five. That had been his first and most important task. But he had still plenty

of time to spare. And there were other fellows in the Remove for whom he had a personal dislike.

Lord Mauleverer's study came next, and a few busy minutes resulted in great havoc among his lordship's possessions. Then the grinning young rascal went along to Study No. 7; which belonged to Peter Todd and Billy Bunter. Bunter was beneath Pon's lofty notice; but he had a very special enmity for 'Toddy, who had once planted a heavy boot on Pon's elegant trousers.

On a shelf were ranged a number of hefty-looking volumes, which dealt with legal subjects. Peter was the son of a solicitor, and bent on following in his father's footsteps. Peter sometimes dabbled in what he was pleased to call legal studies.

Whether Peter understood those hefty volumes, even if they were understandable at all, was a question. But certainly nobody ever would have understood them, had Pon been given time to deal with them.

He dragged them off the shelf, and stacked them in the fire-grate, and struck matches to set them alight.

But at that moment there was an interruption.

Footsteps sounded in the Remove passage.

With a lighted match in his hand, Pon started, and listened. Somebody was coming up the passage from the stairs.

The Remove could not be out of class for a good half-hour yet. But someone was coming.

Pon's heart beat unpleasantly fast.

If he was discovered there—

He listened intently.

He listened so very intently that the match burned down to his fingers unnoticed, and Pon gave a sudden, sharp yelp.

"Ow!"

He dropped the match quite quickly. The footsteps came on. He heard a fat grunt.

"Oh, gad!" breathed Pon.

He knew that grunt! Either a rhinoceros was loose in the Remove passage, or it was Billy Bunter.

It could hardly be an escaped rhinoceros! So it was Bunter! And Pon was in Bunter's study!

He glared round him for a hiding-place! The thought of being discovered there, of Bunter yelling out the alarm, of the consequences both at Greyfriars and at his own school, made Pon feel quite dizzy. But there was little to be found in the way of cover in a junior study.

Swiftly he pushed the armchair towards a corner, and dropped into the corner behind the high back.

It was the only chance; and he took it swiftly. And he had barely squatted down behind the chair when the study door opened.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Bonnet for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER had been feeling the heat that afternoon.

He had also been feeling lazy.

Only in summer Bunter felt the heat; but all the year round he felt lazy. The changing of the seasons made no difference to that.

Still, laziness seemed to intensify, on a hot afternoon. Roman history never had appealed to Bunter. He did not care twelve pence for the twelve Cæsars; he was not interested in the

over-running of that great empire by the Goths and Vandals. He only wished that the Goths and Vandals had over-run it a few centuries earlier, before the beasts had accumulated so much history to worry a fellow.

That sultry July afternoon, Harry Wharton & Co. thought of the cricket field, and the river, and the approaching holidays; and found it hard to concentrate on things that had happened—or perhaps hadn't—two thousand years ago.

Bunter was not thinking of cricket—it would have made him shudder to think of it. He was thinking of the armchair in his study.

Bunter's brain was not given to exertion, any more than Bunter's fat body. But there were times when Bunter could put on mental pressure. He hated taking trouble, with a deadly hatred. But he would take any amount of trouble to dodge work.

And a really brilliant idea flashed into Bunter's fat brain as he thought and thought, while Quelch droned on about ancient Romans. The Removites had been told to bring maps for that class. Bunter had brought his map, like the rest. But he had slipped it out of sight under his desk; and when Mr. Quelch directed the juniors to look at their maps—by way of illustration of some of Hannibal's operations in ancient Italy—up jumped Bunter.

"Please, sir—"
"What is it, Bunter?"
"May I fetch my map from my study, sir?"

Mr. Quelch sniffed.
"You may fetch your map, Bunter, and you will take fifty lines for having forgotten to bring it into class."

"Yes, sir!" said Bunter meekly.

He rolled out of the Form-room, and rolled away, grinning, to the Remove passage. Looking for a map that wasn't

there might reasonably occupy a fellow till classes were over, Bunter considered—and that was worth fifty lines on a hot day. Fifty lines were not so bad as half an hour more with Quelch and the ancient Romans.

Bunter laboured up the Remove staircase, carrying his excessive weight up slowly. He rolled along the Remove passage like a leisurely snail.

He arrived at Study No. 7, opened the door, and rolled in.

He did not proceed to look for the map. As it was in his desk in the Form-room, a search for it in the study would have been really futile, even if Bunter had wanted it, which he didn't.

He rolled across to the armchair. Somebody had pushed the study armchair back into a corner. Still, it did not matter to Bunter where it was, so long as he sat in it.

The chair creaked as William George Bunter deposited his avoirdupois in it and settled down comfortably.

He grinned with lazy satisfaction. This was better than the Form-room, Quelch, Hannibal & Co.

Bunter stretched out his fat little legs, leaned back his bullet head, and was happy.

Quelch was not likely to come after him. If he did, Bunter was ready to jump up and start an industrious search for a missing map.

In the meantime, he lazed, and was content. The only drawback was, that he could not venture to go to sleep in case Quelch came after him.

Happy minutes of laziness followed. Little did the fat junior, as he sprawled at ease in the chair, dream that he was not alone in the study.

Had he thought of Cecil Ponsonby, he would have supposed that Pon was in class at Highcliffe—but, naturally, he did not think of him.

Pon was doing the thinking!

not do so without being seen; and once he was seen his game was up. If he was seen in the school it would be obvious that he had some secret mode of entrance, as he could not have entered unnoticed by any of the ordinary modes of ingress. And Pon was not done with the secret passage yet—if he could help it.

Minute followed minute—while Bunter rested luxuriously; and Ponsonby quaked with apprehension.

It was clear that Bunter did not mean to go. It was possible that he might be fetched, which meant someone else coming to the study where the Highcliffe junior was hidden. Pon's



Before Bunter could turn, Ponsonby jammed the wastepaper-basket over his head. "Ooooooogh!" gasped the fat Removite, imagining the ceiling must have fallen in on him.

The hapless raider was in a state of utter dismay.

He had supposed that Bunter had come up to the study for something, and would take it and go. He was utterly taken aback when the Owl of the Remove settled down in the armchair, with the evident intention of remaining there.

Pon was a prisoner; and every minute that passed brought the time nearer when the Remove would be dismissed, after which there would be a crowd of fellows coming up to the studies.

Four studies in the Remove passage were in a state of wreck and ruin—and if Pon was found there the Removites would not need to be told who was the wrecker. The damage done to the studies would be as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine, compared to the damage that would be done to Cecil Ponsonby.

Pon, almost in an agony of apprehension, waited for Bunter to go. But Bunter did not go, and showed no sign whatever of going.

Gladly enough, Ponsonby would have tilted over the chair, kicked Bunter round the study, and fled. But he could

brain worked under pressure now. He had to get out somehow.

He made up his mind at last, and rose silently to his feet in the corner behind the high back of the chair. He looked over the chair-back at Bunter, with glinting eyes.

Little dreaming of the threatening face that glared within a couple of feet of him, Bunter sprawled at ease.

In the corner where Ponsonby had crouched was the study wastepaper-basket. It was a wicker basket, half full of torn exercises and other rubbish.

Silently, Pon picked it up. It was a desperate chance, but the only chance he had of getting away unseen.

Taking the wastepaper-basket in both hands, he leaned over the back of the chair towards Bunter.

He was too cautious to make a sound; but Bunter seemed to become aware of something, for he gave a little start.

Before he could turn his head, however, Ponsonby acted promptly. The wastepaper-basket, upside down, was suddenly jammed over Bunter's head.

There was a startled, astounded gasp from the fat junior.

"Oooooogh!"

Bunter did not even know what was happening. His first vague impression was that the ceiling had fallen in on him.

With all his strength Ponsonby jammed the basket down, and drove it harder with his fist.

"Oooogh! Woogh! Gooooogh!" came from within the basket in muffled and horrified gurgles.

Bang, bang, bang! went Pon's clenched fist on the bottom of the basket. It was driven down till the bottom of the basket established contact with the crown of Bunter's bullet head. The rim of the basket was resting on his fat shoulders, and his face was completely masked.

"Wooooooooooooogh!"

One last bang on the basket, and Pon jumped out from behind the chair. He sprinted across to the door.

Billy Bunter staggered to his feet. He clutched wildly at the wastepaper-basket. Wild howls came from its interior.

Pon was out of the study in a twinkling. He raced for the box-room and fled. The secret stone closed behind him, and he panted in safety. Bunter, in Study No. 7, was still struggling with the basket.

It fitted him rather tightly. His head was jammed into it so tightly that the hapless Owl could not get it out again. He roared and howled and gurgled, and clutched wildly at his unaccustomed headgear. But the basket remained sticking on his head like a shell on an oyster.

Ponsonby, breathless and grinning, emerged from the coppice, stepped into his taxi, and whizzed back to Highcliffe. He was in time to present himself in the Fourth Form room before Mr. Mobbs dismissed his class.

"I trust you feel better, my dear Ponsonby?" said the sympathetic Mr. Mobbs.

"Thank you, sir, yes," said Ponsonby. "My headache has quite passed off, sir."

Certainly Pon did not look like a fellow with a headache now. He looked remarkably merry and bright. A little later, when Pon & Co. gathered in their study, there were roars of laughter in that study. Pon's campaign against Greyfriars was going strong, and this time his friends admitted that Pon was backing a winner.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Horrid!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You will go," said Mr.

Quelch in a rumbling voice, "and ascertain why Bunter does not return to the Form-room, Wharton."

"Certainly, sir!"

Harry Wharton rose from his place in Form with alacrity.

There was, as a matter of fact, no need for him to leave the Form-room in order to ascertain why Bunter did not return. He knew quite well why Bunter did not return. It was because the fat Owl, once out of his Form master's sight, was staying out of it, finding more solace in slacking than in absorbing knowledge of the ancient Romans.

Nevertheless, Wharton was quite pleased to obey his Form master's command. Like all the rest of the Remove, he was fed-up with a stuffy Form-room

and stuffy Romans. He was glad to get away from Hannibal, Fabius & Co., if only for a few minutes.

Followed by envious glances from the other victims of the acquisition of knowledge, Wharton walked out of the Form-room and strolled away cheerily for the stairs.

Without hurrying—for, after all, there was no great hurry to round Bunter up and rush him back to ancient Rome—the captain of the Remove made his way to the Remove passage.

He fully expected to find Billy Bunter sprawling in the study armchair, and would not have been surprised to hear the deep echoes of a Gargantuan snore rumbling along the passage. He did not expect in the least to find Bunter looking for a map.

But whatever he expected or did not expect, he most certainly did not expect the sight that actually greeted his astonished eyes as he strolled up the Remove passage towards Study No. 7.

From that study came a sound of gasping, gurgling, and guggling. It was followed by a strange object that staggered out of the doorway.

It was Bunter—bonneted!

Wharton stopped dead, staring at him. Bunter was recognisable from his toes up to the fat shoulders. Farther on, he was screened from the public gaze by an inverted wastepaper-basket.

His aspect was really remarkable.

"My only summer hat!" gasped Wharton.

"Gr-r-r-r-r-r-r!"

"Is—is that you, Bunter?"

"Wurrrrgh!"

"What on earth are you up to?" howled Wharton.

"Groooooogh!"

"Is it a game?"

"Oooooooh!"

"Well, this takes the cake!" ejaculated the captain of the Remove.

He could only stare. Why Bunter had got himself up like this was a mystery to him. Bunter, it was true, was not particular about his headgear. He would borrow any fellow's hat. But it was the first time he had been seen wearing a wastepaper-basket.

"Ooooooh!" came in suffocated, muffled accents through the thick wicker-work of the basket. "Help! Gerrit-off!"

"What?"

"Gerritoff!" gurgled Bunter, clutching at the basket with desperate, fat hands, and clutching in vain. "Ooooooh! Gerritoff! Draggitoff! Luggitoff!"

Bunter was not speaking in Russian. It was the basket that caused the impediment in his speech.

"What do you mean, you ass? Oh, get it off—I see! What have you stuck it on for, you fat frump?"

"Hookitoff!" gurgled Bunter, still not speaking in Russian, though it sounded like it. "You fathead! Can't you luggitoff? Gerritoff! Pullitoff!"

"But why—what—how—"

"Beast! Luggitoff!"

Evidently Bunter had heard the captain of the Remove coming, and had rolled out of the study to gurgle for help. He gurgled and gasped and guggled.

Wharton approached him and grasped the wastepaper-basket. But it was not easy to get it off, pull it off, hook it off, or lug it off. It fitted Bunter's bullet head like the skin of a drum. It was jammed down, and jammed fast, and Wharton pulled and hooked and lugged in vain.

"Ow! Grooogh! Woooogh!" came in a muffled roar. "You silly idiot, you're hurting my napper! You're

pulling my ears off! Oh! Ow! Leggo!"

"I can't get it off without pulling, you—"

"Yaroooh! Leggo!"

Harry Wharton let go. Probably the process of jerking the basket off was painful. Apparently, Bunter preferred to leave it where it was.

"But what did you put it on for?" demanded Wharton. "What the thump did you stick your silly head into it for, Bunter?"

"Ow! I didn't! Wow! Some beast jammed it on my head in the study!" gurgled Bunter. "He was behind the chair, and he bunged it on my napper from behind and banged it down tight! Ow! Woooogh!"

"But who—"

"Idiot! How should I know? Think I've got eyes in the back of my head? Wow! Some beast was in the study! Yow-ow-ow! Gettitoff!"

Wharton tried again. Again a frantic howl from the suffering Owl stopped him.

"Ow! Leggo! Stoppit! My ears! My nose! Wow!"

"Well, my hat!" said Wharton. "I say, Quelch has sent me to fetch you, and—"

"Groooooogh!"

"You've got to come back to the Form-room—"

"Wooooogh!"

"You can't come back like that! It would make Quelch jump! Let me yank it off for you—"

"Ow! Beast! Keep off! Ow!"

Billy Bunter wriggled and struggled in his headgear. Wharton watched him. But Bunter had no luck. The basket would not come off.

"Wharton!" A sharp, barking voice came up the Remove staircase. "Wharton!"

It was the voice of Henry Samuel Quelch.

Wharton ran back to the stairs. Mr. Quelch had been annoyed, but perhaps not surprised, by Bunter's failure to return to the Form-room and the ancient Romans. He was both annoyed and surprised by Wharton's failure to return. So he had come to inquire. But he stopped at the foot of the Remove staircase to call; he disliked stairs on a sultry afternoon.

"Yes, sir!" called back Wharton.

"Why have you not returned to the Form-room, Wharton? Why have you not brought Bunter?" barked Mr. Quelch. "I am surprised at you, Wharton! I did not expect my head boy to dawdle out of class!"

"I—I wasn't dawdling, sir!" gasped Wharton. "But—"

"Where is Bunter?" barked Mr. Quelch.

"He is here, sir. But—"

"Bring him to the Form-room at once!"

"Yes, sir. But—"

"At once!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "At once! Do you hear me? Not a word! If you do not bring Bunter to the Form-room this instant, Wharton, I shall detain you for two hours after class!"

With that dire threat Mr. Quelch turned and rustled away, in a very angry and indignant frame of mind.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured the captain of the Remove.

He returned to Bunter. The fat junior was still wriggling spasmodically in the wastepaper-basket. A long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether, so to speak, was required, to dislodge the basket that clung lovingly to Bunter's bullet head. But that was painful to Bunter; and Bunter did not like pain. In fact, he hated it. Already his nose

and ears felt as if they had been roughly scraped with sandpaper. His headgear was uncomfortable; but it was better than being skinned alive.

"That was Quelch, Bunter—"
"Grooogh! Blow Quelch! Ow!"
"You've got to come to the Form-room—"

"Idiot! Dummy! Fathead! Ass! I can't come to the Form-room like this! And I can't gerritoff! Wooogh!"
"If I give it a jolly hard pull with both hands—"

"Beast! Gorroway!"
"Well, I'm not going to have two hours' detention, ass! Come as you are."

"Wooogh!"
Wharton grasped the Owl of the Remove by the arm and rolled him along the passage.

Mr. Quelch had to be obeyed; and two hours' detention on a sultry July afternoon was not to be lightly incurred. Heedless of the howls, gasps, gurgles and infuriated objurgations that came from the interior of the wastepaper-basket, Wharton rolled the fat junior back to the Form-room and rolled him in.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Who Bonneted Bunter?

MR. QUELCH stared.
The Remove stared.
Henry Samuel Quelch had picked up a cane, ready for Bunter's arrival. He dropped it in his astonishment.

From the Remove, after one blank stare at the amazing aspect of Bunter, there came a yell of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh crikey!" gasped Bob Cherry.
"What the merry dickens—"
"What the thump—" ejaculated Johnny Bull.

"It's Bunter—"
"But what—"
"The whatfulness is terrific."
"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove yelled. This was better than Roman history! It was, in fact, ever so much better.

Billy Bunter rolled, gurgling, into the Form-room, spluttering inside the jammed-down basket. Wharton followed him in.

Mr. Quelch glared round at his hilarious class.

"Silence!" he roared.

Then he fixed a deadly eye on the captain of the Remove.

"Wharton! What does this mean? Have you dared to play such a prank in—"

"Oh! No, sir!" gasped Wharton.
"Not at all, sir! I—I found Bunter like this, and as you told me to bring him at once, I brought him."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Silence! I will cane the next boy that laughs! This is not a laughing matter!" thundered Mr. Quelch.
"Isn't it?" murmured Bob Cherry.

The Remove did not agree with their Form master in the least. But they suppressed their merriment. Quelch was looking positively dangerous.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes fixed on the bonneted Bunter. His penetrating glare almost bore into the basket.

"Bunter!"
"Wooooooogh!"
"How dare you, Bunter?"
"Grooogh!"
"Is the boy mad? Is the boy insane? Bunter, if you are not out of your senses, explain what you mean by this extraordinary conduct. Bunter! Speak! What have you to say, Bunter?"

"Gug-gug-gug!"
"Upon my word! Bunter!" shrieked Mr. Quelch. "Take that basket off at once. Do you hear me, sir? Take it off immediately."

"Ow! I c-c-can't!" spluttered Bunter. "It won't c-c-come off! Oh dear! Ow! I c-c-c-can't move it! Wooogh!"

"Why did you place a wastepaper-basket on your head, Bunter?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Are you totally insane?"

"Ow! No! I didn't! I wasn't—"
howled Bunter. "Somebody jammed it on my head in the study. Ow!"

"What? What? Do you mean that the basket is fixed too tightly to be removed? Did you not place it there yourself?"

"Ow! As if I should!" came a muffled wail from the interior of the wastepaper-basket. "Ow! It's hurting my nose! It's scraping my ears! Ow! I'm suffocating! Wooogh!"

"Is it possible that the boy has been the victim of a trick?" gasped Mr. Quelch, staring at the suffering Owl in wonder.

"He says that somebody was in the study, sir, and whoever it was jammed the basket on his head," said Wharton.

"Nonsense! Who could be in the study, when the whole school is in class? Bunter, who was in the study?"

"Wooogh! I never saw him! Oooogh! It was some beast—wooogh!"

Next Week's
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"Bless my soul! Wharton, take that basket off Bunter's head at once. Use whatever force is necessary to pull it off."

"I—I—I say, sir—"
"If Bunter is hurt it cannot be helped—"

"Yaroooh!"
"Cherry, lend Wharton your assistance."

"Certainly, sir!"
Bob Cherry jumped out of his place and ran to help the captain of the Remove.

Two pairs of strong hands grasped the wastepaper-basket and pulled. There was a fiendish yell from its unhappy occupant.

"Yoooooop! You're pulling my head off! Yaroooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Silence! This—this is most extraordinary! Bunter, you must brace yourself to bear a little inconvenience. Wharton, Cherry, take that basket off Bunter's head at once."

"Yes, sir!" gasped the two juniors.

They dragged manfully at the basket. There was a fearful howl from Bunter, and he lashed out with his fat fists.

A howl from Bob Cherry followed as a fist caught him in the eye. Bob sat down on the Form-room floor with a bump.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob. "Oh, my eye! Oh crumbs!"

"Bunter, how dare you?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Ow! I'm not going to have my head pulled off!" raved Bunter. "I—I

believe my nose is coming off! Yow-ow-cw-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Bunter, I command you to be quiet! The basket must be removed. Bull, Vernon-Smith, Bolsover, help to remove that basket."

The juniors named rushed to help. Bob Cherry staggered up and joined in. The whole Form looked on, with grinning faces.

The Remove had not expected to enjoy last lesson that day. But they were enjoying it now. Even Mr. Quelch had forgotten ancient Rome. The battle of Cannae should have been fought over again in the Form-room that afternoon. Instead of which, there was a battle with a wastepaper-basket. The Lower Fourth found it ever so much more entertaining.

Billy Bunter shrieked and gurgled and roared wildly. But five fellows were equal to the task.

Three of them grasped Bunter; two of them grasped the basket. There was a tug-of-war, and finally Bunter's bullet head came out of the basket, like a cork from a bottle. Wharton and Bob Cherry, who were holding the basket, staggered back and sat down with it as it suddenly flew off Bunter's head. Johnny Bull and Vernon-Smith and Bolsover, who were holding Bunter, tottered back with him and sprawled in a heap with the Owl of the Remove.

The Form-room floor was strewn with gasping Removites. But the trick was done. Bunter's headgear was off at last.

The juniors scrambled up. Bunter sat and roared. His fat face was crimson, his nose, like Marion's in the ballad, was red and raw. He jammed his spectacles straight on his sacrificed nose and yelled.

"Bunter! Get up at once! Be silent! How dare you make such a noise? I command you to be silent."
"Yarooooh!"

"Wharton, assist Bunter to his feet! Bunter, if you utter another sound I shall cane you! Now explain to me, at once, how you came to be in this—this extraordinary predicament."

"Oh dear! Ow! My nose—"
"Never mind your nose now, Bunter! Explain—"

"Ow! My ears—"
"Never mind your ears now, Bunter! I command you to explain—"

"Wow! My napper—"
"Bunter, I shall cane you severely! I—"

"Oh crikey! I'm hurt!" roared Bunter. "I don't know how it happened! I don't know who the beast was! He was hiding behind the chair in the study, and he suddenly jammed the basket over my napper! Oooogh!"

"You were sitting in the chair?"

"Ow! Yes! Wow!"
"And why were you sitting in the chair, when you went to your study to fetch a map?"

"Oh, I—I mean, I—I wasn't sitting in the chair!" gasped Bunter. "That is, I—I sat down just for a tick—a single moment! I—I couldn't see the map, and—and I sat down to—to think out where it was! Then that beast—"

"That what?"

"I mean that rotter—that fearful brute, jammed the basket on my napper! Ow—wow! Look at my nose!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Silence! Bunter, I accept your statement that the basket was affixed to your head by some other person; it is scarcely credible that you can have done such a thing yourself. But who—"

"I don't know! I didn't see him!" gasped Bunter. "He nipped out of the study while my napper was bunged in the basket. Ow!"

Mr. Quelch surveyed the gasping Owl suspiciously.

But really it was impossible to suspect Bunter of having jammed the wastepaper-basket so tightly on his own unfortunate head. He had been the victim, apparently, of a practical joke; but who the practical joker was, was a mystery. Every Greyfriars man was, or should have been, in class.

"This—this is extraordinary!" said Mr. Quelch at last. "Some boy must be absent from his Form-room. I shall inquire. Go to your place, Bunter! Wharton, I leave you in charge of the Form for a few minutes, while I inquire what boy is absent from a Form-room."

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch whisked out of the Remove-room, with a deadly gleam in his eye. Any fellow who was found to be absent from his class just then, was likely to find himself up against it.

He left the Remove-room in a buzz of excitement and merriment. Billy Bunter was the only fellow who was not chortling. From the shoulders up, Billy Bunter felt as if he had been sand-papered by a rough and heavy hand, and it did not feel grateful or comforting. Bunter gasped and groaned, while the rest of the Form chortled; and Mr. Quelch made a hurried round of the other Forms in search of the delinquent.

It was ten minutes before he returned to the Remove-room. He returned a much puzzled man.

Not a fellow in any Form was unaccounted for. Not a fellow in any Form could possibly have been in Study No. 7 in the Remove when Bunter was there. Yet it was certain that Bunter had not bonneted himself; and it followed, by an easy deduction that did not require the intellect of Sherlock Holmes, that somebody had bonneted Bunter. But who?

It was an amazing mystery.

It intrigued both Mr. Quelch and the Remove. Mr. Quelch asked himself who had been guilty of that extraordinary and unprecedented act of ruffianism? The Removites asked in simpler language who had bonneted Bunter? To neither question could an answer be found.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Who Ragged the Remove?

"**W**HO—" gasped Harry Wharton.

"W-what—" stuttered Frank Nugent.

They stared into Study No. 1 in the Remove and fairly gasped. They had been chatting as they came up to the Remove passage about the mysterious bonneting of Bunter. But they forgot all about the bonneting of Bunter as they stared into their study.

There had been rags in Remove passage before; many a time and oft, in fact. But the rag in Study No. 1 was a record! Never had that study, or any other in the passage, ever been seen in such a state of wreckage and disaster.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry joined his chums at the doorway. "What's the jolly old trouble? Why—what—what—" He stared blankly into the wrecked study.

"Who did this?" gasped Nugent.

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A crowd of fellows gathered round the door. Most of the Remove were coming up to the studies, and startling discoveries awaited some of them there.

A ragger had been at work in Study No. 1. That was clear. There was wrath in the faces of the chums of the Remove. But there was more amazement than wrath. For—who was the ragger?

"Somebody's been here," said Johnny Bull blankly.

"But who—" gasped Wharton.

"The who-fulness is terrific."

"Same merchant that bonneted Bunter, perhaps," said Vernon-Smith.

"But who the jolly old dooce—" "Why, the study's simply wrecked!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "By Jove, we'll jolly well scrag the rotter that did this! This isn't a rag—it's beastly vandalism! The looking-glass is smashed—"

"Legs off the chairs!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Carpet torn—cut with a pocket-knife, I fancy!" said Bob.

"The awful rotter!"

"The beastly hooligan!"

"I—I wonder if he's been to the other studies, whoever he is!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Oh, my hat! Let's look!"

There was a rush along the Remove passage.

A terrific roar came from Bob Cherry as he looked into Study No. 13. Another roar boomed from Johnny Bull, at the doorway of Study No. 14. A gasp of dismay escaped Lord Mauleverer, at Study No. 12. And there was a howl from Peter Todd in Study No. 7. Peter had found his legal volumes stacked in the grate, one of them open, with a singed leaf where a match had been applied—though fortunately the damage had gone no farther.

Other studies, apparently, had not suffered damage. Either the mysterious ragger had been interrupted, or he was a fellow who had a special dislike for certain members of the Remove.

But who was he?

The raggings, evidently, had taken some time. It was scarcely possible that Temple & Co., or any other Greyfriars fellows, had put in so much work since class, before any of the Remove came up to their studies. Besides, there was the bonneting of Bunter. It was pretty clear that the unknown person who had been hidden in Bunter's study at that time was the person who had done the raggings. The state of Toddy's legal volumes hinted that he had been ragging in that very study when Bunter's arrival interrupted him. It was pretty clear, too, why he had bonneted Bunter with the wastepaper-basket before making his escape. It was so that he could escape unrecognised. But who was he?

That was the burning question!

"This was done while we were in class!" said Harry Wharton. "So it must have been done by some fellow who had leave out of class—"

"But Quelch found nobody out of class!" said Bob.

"Well, it was somebody."

"Blessed if it looks like a Greyfriars man at all," said Bob. "It was some malicious rotter who did all this damage. A ragging's a ragging; but smashing a fellow's things is sheer hooliganism."

"Yaas, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "It wasn't Temple did this, you men. Temple's an ass, but he isn't a hooligan. He wouldn't do this."

"But who—" gasped Nugent.

"Goodness knows!"

"Can't have been anybody here who doesn't belong to the school," said Harry Wharton. "How could he get in?"

"He couldn't!" said Nugent.

"It doesn't look like a Greyfriars man; but it must have been! We've jolly well got to find him!" said the captain of the Remove.

"And smash him!" hooted Johnny Bull.

"The smashfulness will be terrific."

It was an exasperating puzzle to the Removites. The only explanation seemed to be that some fellow had had leave from class that afternoon, and had improved the shining hour by ragging in the Remove passage. Yet Quelch's inquiry had failed to find any fellow absent from class in the Form-rooms at the time Bunter was bonneted.

"If that fat chump was anything but a born idiot he would jolly well be able to tell us who it was!" snorted Peter Todd.

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Did you let somebody bung a basket down on your silly napper without even seeing who it was?" snorted Peter.

"How the dickens could I see him?" demanded Bunter. "He was behind the armchair. I noticed that the armchair had been shoved into the corner. Of course, the beast did that and hid behind it when he heard me coming. I never knew he was there till that basket was bunged on my head; and he jammed it down tight with his beastly fist—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter warmly. "All the skin's scraped off my nose—"

"Oh, blow your nose!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Didn't he speak?" asked Wharton.

"Didn't you hear a sound from him?" "I only heard him scooting out of the study. That was after the basket was over my face and I couldn't see anything."

"Why didn't you get it off, you fat chump?"

"I tell you he jammed it down tight with his fist, and it scraped all the skin off my nose—"

"Who the jolly thump could it have been?" said Bob Cherry in wonder. "He blindfolded Bunter with that basket to get away without being seen. Of course, he knew we'd scrag him for what he'd done. But who—"

"My esteemed idiotic Bunter," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, "if you had had the absurd brains of a benighted bunny-rabbit, you would have seen that someone was in the study—"

"How was I to see a beast crouching in a corner behind the armchair?" hooted Bunter.

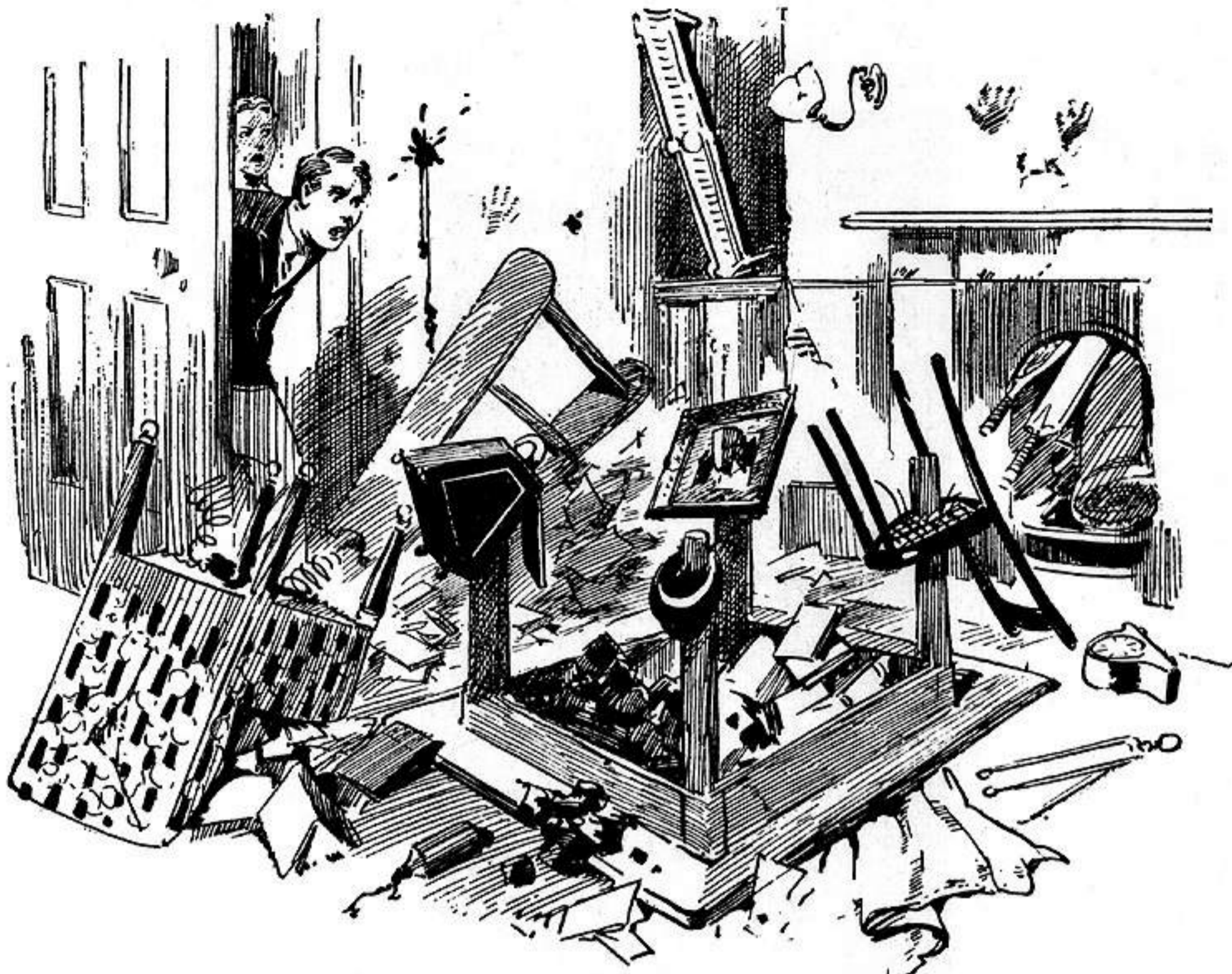
"You potty porpoise," exclaimed Peter Todd, "look at those books piled in the fender! Didn't you see them there?"

"Never noticed them, old chap! I just came in and sat down, you see—"

"Is that how you looked for the map Quelch sent you for?"

"He, he, he! You see the map was in my desk in the Form-room all the time, I was only pulling Quelch's leg about that map—"

"The rotter must have done the other studies, and then come along for my books," said Toddy. "Then that benighted owl rolled along and interrupted him. He ought to have spotted him. Anybody but a born idiot would have spotted the rotter! If that frabjous fathead had had his silly eyes open



"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob Cherry, as he and his chums stared blankly into the study. "Why—what—who—some cad's been here and wrecked our study!"

we should know who had been ragging the Remove. Bump him!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—yarooh!" roared Bunter, as he sat down on the floor of the Remove passage.

"It's getting jolly mysterious," said Bob Cherry. "There was that rag in the dormitory, now a rag in the studies while we're in class! Who the dickens is ragging us?"

But no answer was to be found to that question. It was an utter mystery, and a mystery it remained.

The dismantled studies were set to rights—as much as possible. There was a lot of damage that could not possibly be repaired. The ragger had done his work with a ruthless hand. While they laboured to set things to rights, the exasperated juniors wondered and surmised and puzzled—but they reached no solution of the mystery.

Somebody was ragging the Remove! Some person or persons unknown, as Toddy expressed it in legal language, was making surreptitious war on the Lower Fourth. But who?

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Wrapped in Mystery!

HARRY WHARTON stirred uneasily in his sleep.

It was midnight, and the Remove slept soundly in their dormitory. The rumbling snore of Billy Bunter echoed through the gloom.

Wharton was sleeping less soundly than usual.

He had been thinking, after lights out, of the unknown and mysterious ragger, and wondering whether the invisible enemy's visit was likely to be repeated.

As the unknown had, so to speak, got away with it, and was safe from reprisals, it was quite probable that the Remove were not finished with him yet. Indeed, it was highly improbable that they were finished with him. He was very likely to be encouraged by impunity.

The matter haunted Wharton in his dreams, and made his slumber uneasy. And as a jet of light from an electric torch played over his sleeping face, it sufficed to waken him from uneasy slumber.

His eyes opened.

The light had been instantly shut off; and he opened his eyes too late to see it. But he was conscious of something.

The thought of the mysterious ragger was in his mind at once. He lay silent, listening.

In the darkness of the dormitory, shadows stirred. He made out two figures close by his bed, dim, unrecognisable, mere black shadows in the gloom.

The ragers were there again—two of them this time! He realised it instantly.

Wharton acted promptly.

What they were going to do—except that it was a rag of some sort—he did not know. But he gave them no time to do it.

He flung himself across the bed towards the shadowy forms, hitting out with both hands as he did so.

There was a thud and a startled gasp, and another gasp.

Wharton had been asleep when the flicker of light played on his face. Only a second or two had passed since. Ponsonby and Gadsby were not aware that he had awakened—till he moved! Now they became suddenly and painfully aware of it.

"Ooooooogh!"

"Grooooooogh!"

One clenched fist dashed into a waistcoat; the other into a stooping face.

Bump!

One of the shadowy figures sat down suddenly, gurgling. The other staggered back, taken completely by surprise.

In an instant Wharton was leaping out of bed.

He landed on the fallen figure, and there was a howl of anguish as he landed. It rang through the Remove dormitory.

"Oooooop!"

Wharton grasped the fellow he had sprawled on. The unseen one returned grasp for grasp, struggling desperately.

"Wake up, you fellows!" shouted Wharton. "Wake up, Remove! They're here again—I've got one of them. Get a light."

Sleepy, startled voices sounded along the dormitory. Fellows sat up in bed, staring and peering round them.

(Continued on page 28.)

BANDITS OF THE LINE!



THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Following a series of mysterious train hold-ups, by armed bandits, Ferrers Locke is engaged to track them down. After many exciting adventures, the wizard detective, in company with Jack Drake, his boy assistant, follows a clue which leads him to the House of the Clenched Hand, the headquarters of the gang. Here they overhear the bandits planning their next two big coups—an attack on the London-Harwich express that same night, and the looting of a bullion train due to arrive from Plymouth a few days later. Locke succeeds in frustrating the first part of the programme and with a quota of armed men, boards the bullion train. Late that night the train is held up and a bullet from one of the bandits comes whistling into the van, shattering the electric light.

(Now read on.)

In the Bandits' Hands!

ALREADY Jack Drake and one of the Scotland Yard men were at Ferrers Locke's side, Jack with a rifle, the Yard man with a big automatic. Inspector Simpson whipped out his own weapon and sprang to join them.

"I apologise, Mr. Locke!" he said fiercely. "I was wrong—infernally wrong!"

He fired at a shadowy, flitting shape among the scattered bushes that lined the railway, beyond the low fence.

A bullet came thudding into the woodwork above their heads, and splinters flew. Drake clapped a hand to his cheek where a jagged point of wood had dug into his flesh. He jerked his hand away, fingers stained with blood.

All along the length of the train firing was in progress, sharp and staccato on the night air.

The first rush of the bandits had been checked. Startled, and perhaps a little dismayed at the unexpected numbers of the guards on the train, the men in the white masks had retreated hastily to the cover of the straggling moorland bushes. But they were by no means driven off! There were too many of them for that—Ferrers Locke had already guessed, as a rough estimate, that fifty or sixty men had been waiting in ambush for the train.

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Crack! Crack! Crack!

The barking of rifles and automatics increased in intensity. The forty odd C.I.D. men were firing back, with cool deliberation, from the open doors of the bullion vans in reply to the volleys from the encircling gloom. Cries and shouts could be heard; a sudden scream.

"This is going to be hot!" snapped Locke.

"My hat! It's pretty hot already, guv'nor!" said Jack Drake, with a fierce grin.

He fired at a dim shape moving among the bushes. A cry from the gloom told him that his shot had found a mark.

The next moment a bullet came whining into the van through the doorway where the four were crouching. Detective-Inspector Simpson fell back without a sound, and lay twitching.

Locke stooped hastily and dragged the Yard man to the back of the van. The inspector was unconscious, not killed. The bullet had grazed his temple, stunning him.

Swiftly the Baker Street detective bound the wound with a handkerchief, and sprang back to the door of the van.

A bullet sang past him, passing between him and Drake, and burying itself with a crash in the wooden wall of the van behind them.

"Keep back!" jerked out the criminologist. "Fire round the edge of the door!"

But even so, the walls of the van were little enough shelter against the hail of bullets that was raining against the whole length of the train. Already the woodwork was riddled with bullet holes.

But the defenders of the train were holding up their end well. From the gloom of the moor, where the attackers crouched among the dark bushes, sounds had come that told Ferrers Locke that many of the white-masked bandits had been hit.

"If only they'd done as I'd asked, and let me have sixty men!" he

growled. "We could have charged and rounded up the lot of them without much trouble! But—"

He broke off with a sharp ejaculation.

Jack Drake, in leaning forward to take better aim at one of the shadowy shapes that could now and then be distinguished among the sheltering gloom of the bushes, had missed his balance and fallen from the floor of the van on to the line.

Scrambling up hastily, the youngster turned to spring back into the van. But instantly a shower of bullets told him that he had been seen to fall, and any attempt at climbing back into the van would expose him fatally as a target to the enemy. He dived hastily underneath between the wheels, crouching there, rifle in hand.

The minutes dragged by, with bullets flying hotly between the train and the bushes lining the railway. But at last it seemed as if the attackers had had about enough! Shadowy figures were seen racing back over the moor, and the hail of bullets from the bushes stopped abruptly.

A shrill whistle rang out above Drake's head. It was the prearranged signal, given by Ferrers Locke. Instantly from the line of vans the C.I.D. men came leaping, and away they went in pursuit of the flying bandits.

Ferrers Locke's boy assistant scrambled out from under the van and swarmed over the fence on to the moor with the others.

As they tore through the bushes in pursuit of the retreating scoundrels, a number of dark forms lying there were to be seen. Many of them were groaning.

Drake knew that in many of the vans, too, were groaning figures!

Now and then a bullet came whining back out of the dark, following a stab of crimson from the gloom, as pursuers and pursued raced over the black, desolate moorland. Lights came into view ahead—the lights of waiting cars.

Already some of the cars were moving. The bandits had ready their way of escape!

Drake spurred desperately. He felt grimly determined to catch one, at least of the villainous scoundrels!

Fifty yards from the waiting cars the youngster caught up with one of the hindmost of the white-masked figures. He hurled himself at the man in a Rugger tackle, and the two went tumbling to the ground in a heap.

The mask fell from the face of the struggling scoundrel, and, with a gasp, Jack recognised the man as one of the twelve whom he and Ferrers Locke had seen at Mendoza House.

That the man had recognised him, too, was clear enough.

He fought madly in an effort to free himself, but Ferrers Locke's boy assistant hung on to him tenaciously.

"Get away, would you?" panted Drake fiercely. "I don't think!"

He crashed his fist into the snarling face as the man fought to free himself. But powerful though the youngster's blow was, it was not powerful enough to knock out his man. And the next instant a clenched fist had smashed home on his own jaw, lifting him clean off his feet.

Jack Drake dropped to the grass with reeling senses. He felt himself seized in a pair of muscular arms, heard a savage voice mutter in his ear:

"I want you! We can do with a hostage—"

Ferrers Locke's assistant struggled dazedly. But he could not collect his senses fully—his whole brain was swimming from that terrific blow. Vaguely he realised that he was being dumped into a car, that it was moving off through the gloom. He heard the roar of its exhaust, heard one or two firearms crack out sharply, and then nothing but the sound of the speeding car.

An automatic came nosing into his ribs from someone crouching beside him in the back seat.

"Lie quiet, you!" growled a sinister voice. "Who is it, Schlee?" the voice went on, apparently to the driver of the car.

"Why, it's young Drake, Ferrers Locke's boy assistant!" came the snarling answer, in the voice of his first captor. "He'll be a thundering useful hostage for Lash!"

Jack Drake struggled up. With the cold night air streaming past him, his brain was clearing.

He saw that they were racing along behind a number of other speeding cars. Glancing back, he could make out far off the lights of the bullion train, still standing stationary where the bandits had stopped it by their mysterious powers.

The attack on the bullion train had been a failure! But Ferrers Locke and the men from Scotland Yard had failed to round up the bandits, thanks to the fact that the Baker Street detective had not been allowed sufficient men for the task. And Drake himself had fallen into the enemy's hands!

Where they were taking him, he could not know. But escape was impossible. It was impossible, too, to hope that Locke and the C.I.D. men would be able to rescue him. The bandits, in their fleet of powerful cars, would never be caught that night!

"Put your fins behind you!" ordered the man at his side harshly.

Sick at heart, Jack Drake obeyed. With that circular rim of steel thrust tight against his ribs, defiance would have been madness, he knew. A cord was wound round his wrists, and tightly knotted. Then a handkerchief was stuffed forcibly into his mouth, and fastened there.

Helplessly bound and gagged, the bandits' valuable capture was thrust down into the bottom of the speeding car as the fleeing bandits raced away through the night over the lonely wastes of Exmoor—whither?

The Hidden Message!

IN the study of his apartments at Baker Street, Ferrers Locke paced the carpet with a deep frown upon his clean-cut face.

A week had passed since the hold-up of the bullion train. It had been an anxious week for Ferrers Locke.

On the night of the attack on the gold-train a dozen of the railway bandits had fallen into the hands of Locke and his associates from Scotland Yard. Of these, four had been found dead, the others wounded more or less severely. From none of them, however, had the detective been able to learn anything at all, and it had soon become clear to him that they were not keeping silent from loyalty to their leaders, but because they knew nothing. It was evident that the majority, at any rate, of the white-masked scoundrels who had attacked the bullion train had received their orders by a roundabout way from the head of the gang, whether that person was Dr. Lash or the mysterious man named Moon.

The prisoners who had fallen into their hands were as ignorant as Scotland Yard itself as to the whereabouts of the present headquarters of their chiefs, and even seemed to have no knowledge of their leader's identity. The latter had obviously taken care that their underlings should know nothing, so that they could not betray them if they fell into the hands of the law.

That same night, in a disused quarry

**STUNNING FREE GIFTS
FOR EVERY "MAGNET"
READER.
STARTING IN TWO WEEKS'
TIME!**

not far from the scene of the hold-up, Locke had made an important discovery, however. A small but complicated apparatus, together with a number of accumulators for working it by electric power, had been discovered in the quarry, the bandits having had no time to remove it in their flight.

That this was the apparatus by which the scoundrels had the power to stop trains at will, was evident enough; it was a similar contrivance as that which the detective had seen in the old tower in the Essex marshes, but which had been destroyed before he could examine it.

The apparatus had been brought to London, and was now being examined by railway engineers and other experts, though up to the present they had failed to master the method of working the complicated and mysterious instruments of which it was composed.

But it was of Jack Drake, a prisoner in the hands of the railway bandits, of whom nearly all Locke's thoughts had been since that night.

Where was Jack Drake?

There was not the slightest clue by which Locke could hope to trace the missing youngster. And the knowledge that his boy assistant was in the power of men utterly merciless and unscrupulous had tormented Ferrers Locke cruelly. His face was drawn and haggard as he paced the carpet in his study, with the early evening sunlight glinting in through the open window and the sounds of the traffic in Baker Street rising to his ears.

He paused, taking from his pocket a letter which he had received two days

before, bearing a London postmark but no address.

He had read it many times, but he read it again now as carefully as though he had never seen it before, although he knew the mocking words by heart:

"Dear Locke,—As you are aware, I have the honour to be entertaining as my guest your delightful young assistant, Jack Drake. You cannot hope to find him unless I choose; but, naturally, I am most anxious to reunite two such old friends as the youngster and yourself. To ensure his safe return to you all you have to do is to give me your word of honour that you will utterly cease all activities against me, now and always. If you publish this promise to me in the Personal Column of the 'Times' Drake will arrive home immediately, safe and sound. If, however, you foolishly decline to make this promise within three days, I fear that you will never see him again. Trusting you are in excellent health,

*"Yours very sincerely,
"DR. LASH."*

Locke crumpled the letter in his hand at last, thrusting it back into his pocket, and resumed his restless pacing.

Three days in which to make his decision! And two days had already gone.

The threat contained in the letter was clear enough. Jack Drake would die at his captor's hands unless Locke made his promise to stop all activities against the railway bandits!

It was the hardest decision which Locke had ever been called upon to make.

He felt sure that Scotland Yard would never bring the bandits to book on their own account. His duty to the country was to carry on relentlessly in his war against the scoundrels who had terrified the whole nation. And yet—

He could not let Jack Drake be murdered by them in cold blood!

His duty, or his loyalty to Jack Drake? That was the choice he had to make!

There was a tap on the door. The bland yellow face of Sing-Sing, his Chinese servant appeared. Sing-Sing had been nearly as worried as Ferrers Locke himself during the week that had elapsed since Drake's capture; but his Oriental countenance never betrayed much emotion, even at such a time as this. It was with his usual bland air that the little Chinese handed the detective the evening newspaper that he had brought in.

"Plain bandits at work again alleady," murmured Sing-Sing.

Ferrers Locke whipped open the paper. Glaring headlines met his eyes:

**"BANDITS LOOT GLASGOW.
EXPRESS!
£60,000 WORTH OF DIAMONDS
AMONG BOOTY!
SCOTLAND YARD BAFFLED!"**

A stifled exclamation broke from the detective. Sing-Sing glided from the room, leaving Ferrers Locke reading swiftly.

The latest robbery on the part of the train bandits had occurred in daylight, in a lonely part of the Lowlands of Scotland. They had decamped with their loot in fast cars, and without leaving any trace behind them as to their destination.

Locke flung the paper aside. His fists were clenched, his eyes gleaming.

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"They don't seem to have had any difficulty about replacing their lost apparatus!" he muttered savagely.

It went against the grain utterly for him to think for a single moment of giving up his fight against such men. But in the face of Dr. Lash's threat, how could he carry on? He could not let Jack Drake die!

The telephone bell rang sharply. Detective-Inspector Simpson's voice came to him over the wire.

"Yes, I've seen the newspaper report," said Ferrers Locke. "You want me to go up with you to Glasgow right away?"

He paused, and the haggard lines of his face seemed to deepen. But his voice was quiet as he gave his answer.

"I'm sorry, Simpson! I shall not go with you. I am giving up the case. You must fight these railway robbers alone!"

He heard an astonished, breathless exclamation from over the wire. But Locke replaced the receiver before he heard what the C.I.D. man had to say.

The Baker Street detective had made his decision!

His duty to Jack Drake must come first. With a steady hand he lifted the receiver again, to call up the newspaper office and order the insertion of his reply agreeing to Lash's demand. But before he could get through there was a tap on the door. Sing-Sing glided into the room with a letter in his hand.

Even the yellow face of Sing-Sing betrayed a flicker of excitement as he held out the letter to Locke.

"Letter just come. Liting on envelope is Hon'able Jack Drake's."

"Drake's writing?" exclaimed Locke hoarsely.

He flung down the telephone receiver, just as a voice answered him from the newspaper office, and snatched the letter from Sing-Sing's saffron hand. As the Chinese had said, the address was in Jack's writing. Ferrers Locke tore open the envelope.

The letter within was brief:

"Dear Guv'nor,—The bandits have collared me, as you know. You can't hope to rescue me. I can assure you that is hopeless, worse luck. And unless you agree to Dr. Lash's terms, I shall die at their hands. Therefore please do as he says, guv'nor.—JACK."

The detective handed the little Chinese the letter. Sing-Sing read it, and nodded gravely.

"Vellec lotten!" he commented, as he quietly handed it back to the detective. "What you do now?"

"I must give in, Sing-Sing," answered Locke grimly. "He mustn't die. At any cost—"

He broke off, with a sudden start, staring down at the letter in his hand.

Three tiny marks, evidently made with a finger-nail, beneath the first three letters of the word "worse, and

another under the "k" in "luck" had suddenly caught his notice.

"Hallo—"

Locke's keen eyes made out now other similar tiny marks, scarcely visible to anyone but a man with the keenest eyesight, under various other letters of the words written in Jack's familiar writing.

Locke darted to his desk and began hastily jotting down on a piece of paper the letters so marked. And as he did so the secret message hidden in the youngster's apparently pleading note was revealed.

"Old chemical works, Galanton," were the words made by the marked letters—marked, it was evident, at some moment when the eyes of his captors, who had probably themselves ordered him to write the letter, in the hope that it would induce Locke to accede to their demand, had not been over-watchful.

"Sing-Sing!" Locke leapt to his feet with shining eyes. "It's a message! It

On their flight from the house in Norfolk, Mendoza House, the leaders of the infamous gang had taken up their quarters for the time being at another of their prepared, hidden haunts—an old, disused chemical works on the edge of the Yorkshire moors, near the village of Galanton. The rambling, delapidated buildings, with numerous underground rooms and cellars which had been used for storing dangerous chemicals, was an ideal spot for them. There they could hatch their plans and direct their operations without fear of discovery. Nominally, Dr. Lash was engaged with a few assistants in some chemical experiments, for which he had taken over the old works—that was the explanation accepted among the local villagers.

The sound of the door of his prison being swung open caused Jack Drake to lift his head.

It was the morning following Ferrers Locke's receipt of Jack's letter, with its hidden message. Jack, seated on an old half-broken chair, a steel manacle round his ankle chaining him to a staple in the stone wall, with the remains of his rough breakfast at his feet, had been wondering—had Locke discerned that hidden message?

"Good - morning, my young friend!"

The cellar was dimly lit with an oil lamp, but the passage outside was bright with electric light, and against the glare outside the gaunt figure of Dr. Lash was outlined, stooping in the low doorway as he peered in with glittering eyes at the helpless youngster chained to the stones.

"Good - morning, my young friend!"

repeated Lash in a soft purr. He stepped into the cellar. "You are anxious to know, I doubt not, whether or no Ferrers Locke has been wise enough to accede to my demand. Wise, that is, if he wishes to save your life—"

"Well?" broke out Drake hoarsely. "Don't torment me, hang you! Tell me! Have you had word?"

A low, horrible chuckle broke from the grinning lips of the bird-like figure of Lash. He shook his head.

"No, my young friend. In spite of your pleading letter, on top of mine, when I searched the Personal Column of the 'Times' this morning, I failed to discover any message therein from Ferrers Locke. He has clearly decided to continue the struggle against me—despite the fact that by so doing he brings about your death. A pity, is it not?"

The evil, grinning figure cackled harshly.

"Yes, your friend Mr. Locke has deserted you, I fear!" he went on, in mocking tones. "I should never have thought it! I had made sure my threat would extort from him the promise I asked. I do not mind ad-

How Tom Merry came to St. Jims!

NEXT to the Magnet the best school stories in the world are those that feature Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's. These delightful stories appear in the GEM every week. Tom Merry and Harry Wharton have ever been friendly rivals—valiant leaders of their respective schools. In this week's special number of the GEM, Martin Clifford describes for the benefit of new readers just how Tom Merry arrived at St. Jim's. As a new boy Tom was something of a curiosity. In

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can only mean that that's where he is a prisoner—an old chemical works, at a place called Galanton."

He strode to the bookcase and took down a big Atlas. It was the work of a moment or two to discover that Galanton was the name of a large village in Yorkshire.

He swung towards the telephone, but paused. His first idea had been to tell Scotland Yard that he had discovered the probable secret headquarters of the railway bandits. But thoughts of Jack's danger checked him.

"No," he muttered, "I must go alone. If the place is attacked in force, Lash might take his revenge by killing the youngster before we could stop him. I must go single-handed."

Five minutes later Ferrers Locke was seated at the wheel of his famous car, the White Hawk, threading his way through the London traffic at lightning speed—northward bound!

One Hour to Live!

HIS head buried in his hands, Jack Drake sat chained to the wall behind him, in an underground room of the secret headquarters of the railway bandits.

mitting that, though I despise Scotland Yard, I would prefer Ferrers Locke not to be working against me. However, that cannot be helped. I shall have to concentrate in the near future upon bringing about his—er—lamentable death! Whereas you—"

"Yes?" breathed Drake fiercely. "What about me?"

Lash grinned at him evilly, the light from the door behind him gleaming through his scanty, straggling hair, from which his bald crown rose high and pointed. His black, bird-like little eyes glittered.

"You, my young friend, must die today! I have to keep my bond with Ferrers Locke, remember. I shall take a photograph of your death, I think, to send to Ferrers Locke. It will interest him—"

"You fiend!" burst out the youngster hoarsely. He leapt to his feet, straining on the chain that fastened his leg to the wall. "You fiend! If I could only get my hands on you!"

"You cannot, however!" grinned Lash mockingly.

"Locke will get you in the end!" panted Jack Drake. "You bet he will! And if you think I'm afraid to die, you're wrong! I'd sooner die, and know that Locke was still working to lay you by the heels, than that he should chuck in his hand just to save me! And in the end he'll get you, you murderer!"

"I think not!" sneered Lash. He glanced at his watch. "It is now nine o'clock. You have about an hour to live. Till then, good-bye!"

He turned and strode from the cellar, his gaunt figure vanishing as the door closed softly behind him. The chained youngster stood with clenched fists, breathing fast, staring at the closed door.

A stifled, despairing sound broke from his lips. He stooped and seized the chain that stretched from his ankle to the staple in the wall, dragging on it madly.

He had tried many times during the last few days to drag that chain from its fastening in the wall. He knew only too well how vain those attempts had been. Useless to try—

Jack Drake staggered back. The un hoped-for possibility had happened! One of the rusted links of the chain had suddenly snapped, sending him reeling away from the wall, to fall sprawling. In another moment he had staggered up.

"Free! I'm free!" He muttered the words stupidly. In that first realisation of what had happened, it seemed to Jack Drake that he was as good as saved from his enemies, and the death they were preparing for him—whatever form of death that might be. But as he stood with the broken length of chain still attached to his ankle held in his bruised fingers, he remembered that he had still to make his escape from the old factory if he were to save his life from the vengeance of Dr. Lash!

Turning, he sprang to the door. It was unlocked. Cautiously, he opened it, peering out. The stone corridor outside was deserted. Lash had gone.

The chain fastened to his ankle clinked metallically as he stepped out into the passage, though he was carrying the end of it to prevent it from dragging noisily over the floor. In the brooding silence of the underground corridor it seemed to Drake that the faint jingle of the links was dangerously loud.

Which way to go?

At the far end of the passage he could see some wooden stairs leading upwards. He stole towards them. But he had only gone half-way along the passage when he heard footsteps somewhere above.

His heart leapt into his mouth. Someone was coming. The youngster glanced round hastily for cover. A low arched doorway was close beside him, and he seized the handle—only to find that the door was locked. And already he heard footsteps on the top of the wooden stairs.

There was a big old key in the lock of the door, and he twisted it with feverish fingers. An instant later he had thrust the door noiselessly open and darted through, closing it behind

him, scarcely with time to notice his surroundings.

A startled exclamation from somewhere within the lighted underground room which he had entered, caused him to swing round in consternation.

He realised now that the room was fitted as a laboratory, with a long bench running down the centre, fitted with various apparatus, glass retorts, and Leyden jars and other paraphernalia. On the far side of the bench, peering at him through the mass of apparatus, was an elderly man, wearing a black skull cap, with bright eyes of an astonishingly vivid blue.

(Next week's instalment winds up this great serial with a smashing climax. Don't miss it, boys—order your MAGNET early!)

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of "The Magnet," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped and addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

THE MAGNET LEADS THE WAY!

HURRAH! I feel like cheering and kicking my heels with delight, chums, for I have just completed arrangements for another series of unique FREE GIFTS, about which I hinted last week. These gifts are

THE FINEST

that have ever been given with any boys' paper, and I am confident beforehand that they will be received with loud cheers. You know me of old. If I tell you something is good, it is good, so for goodness' sake make certain that you share in this stupendous treat. Don't miss these good things through being too lazy to order your MAGNET. That's a straight-from-the-shoulder tip.

I am going to tell you about the First Free Gift this week. Of the remaining two you will learn full particulars in our next issue. Number one, then, is a

RIPPING SCHNEIDER GLIDER

complete with elastic catapult! Does it fly? You bet it does, boys! It's a real beauty, and it will be the envy of all your pals. You'll get hours of enjoyment flying this splendid model, which will be presented to you fully assembled

IN A FORTNIGHT'S TIME!

The cat's out of the bag now, and I'll wager you're all jumping with delight and impatience to secure this stunning FREE GIFT. Don't forget, boys, this real-flying glider will be in your hands in two weeks' time—that is, if you take the simple precaution of ordering your MAGNET in advance. Don't forget, too, there are three First-class Gifts in this remarkable series, and the remaining two are just as excellent as that which I've just described. Spread the news, tell all your chums, but first make absolutely certain of your own FREE GIFT copy, by ordering it early.

I DARE say you have all heard of FLOTSAM AND JETSON,

and many of you may wonder—as Harry Dakers, of Stroud, does—what these two words mean. Well, when cargo breaks loose from a wreck and is washing around in the sea, it is called "flotsam." When it is necessary—as it sometimes is—to lighten a ship, part of the cargo is thrown overboard or, as a sailor says, it is "jettisoned." Such floating cargo, therefore, is known as "jetson." So, you see, although both words mean cargo that is floating in the

sea, there is a subtle distinction between them!

When there is some possibility of articles which have been jettisoned being recovered, a buoy is made fast to them, and they are then known as "Ligan."

The same reader asks me what "keel-hauling" was. This was an ancient punishment at sea—and a very severe one. The unfortunate man who was condemned to be "keelhailed" was hauled under the ship's bottom by ropes that were made fast to opposite yardarms! Needless to say, this punishment is never carried out nowadays!

Now to attend to several queries from my readers. Here are a selection of

RAPID-FIRE REPLIES.

Who invented gas lighting? (J. M., of Glasgow.) Yes, it was a Scotman who invented gas lighting. He was William Murdock, of Ayreshire, but his experiments were first made at Redruth in Cornwall.

What was the difference between a "Fool" and a "Jester"? (H. J. L., of Whitby.) A Court fool was a half-witted man who was looked upon as being amusing, but a "Jester" was a well-educated man of ready wit. The "Fool" was only a lower servant, but the Jester was a companion to the king or noble who engaged him.

Where was George Washington born? (J. C. N., of Olney.) At Sulgrave Manor, in Northamptonshire.

NOW for next week's attractions—as they say at the picture palaces!

You'd have to go to a jolly lot of picture palaces before you would come across such an exciting feature as

"THE SECRET OF THE OAK!"

By Frank Richards,

which is next week's long complete yarn of the chums of Greyfriars. There's a crowd of "stars" in it, too! Harry Wharton and the rest of the Famous Five; William George Bunter, in a "gorgo"-ous episode; the egregious Coker; and others too numerous to mention. It's a first-rate yarn, chums—but I needn't tell you that, need I? Every one of Frank Richards' stories are "top-hole," aren't they?

"Bandits of the Line!" will supply you with all the thrills you could possibly desire, and the "Greyfriars Herald" will give you plenty to chuckle at!

Cheerio, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

THE NIGHT RAIDERS!

(Continued from page 23.)

The unseen ragger who was struggling in Wharton's grasp, wrestled frantically to loose himself. But the captain of the Remove held on to him tenaciously.

Who he was, Wharton had not the faintest idea, but he could feel that he was fully dressed—even to his boots, as a savage hack from one of them made painfully clear. Whoever he was, Wharton had hold of him, and did not mean to let him go. As soon as there was a light he would know, and already some of the Removites were scrambling out of bed.

Hands were laid on Wharton in the darkness, the second ragger had jumped to the aid of the fellow he had seized.

He was dragged off, but he still held on to his prisoner. He struggled fiercely in the grasp of the two.

"Rescue, Remove!" he yelled as he was dragged along, holding on to his man like a limpet to a rock.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"What the thump—"

"Turn out, you men—they're here again!"

"Buck up with a light!"

Fellows were turning out on all sides, groping for matches.

"This way, you men!" panted Wharton. "Buck up—oh!" A crashing blow landed in his face, and involuntarily he relaxed his grip. The fellow he was holding tore loose.

Wharton sprawled on the floor, dizzy from the blow. He heard the two unseen ones scrambling away in the darkness.

In a moment he was on his feet, rushing after them. By that time there was a light in the Remove dormitory. But the ragers were speeding away down the passage to the stairs.

Wharton halted on the landing and listened. The two fugitives had dashed away down one of the passages—which, he could not tell. But it was amazing, for he had naturally expected them to head for one of the dormitories—the one to which he supposed they belonged. Instead of which, they had descended the stairs to the next floor below, cutting off their own escape to any of the dormitories—if it was indeed a Greyfriars dormitory from which they had come!

A light flashed out across the landing.

"Wharton! Is that you, Wharton? What—"

Mr. Quelch, in his dressing-gown, with a lamp in his hand, and an angry frown on his face, came across the landing.

"Oh!" gasped Wharton. "Yes—I—I—"

"What does this mean, Wharton? This is the second night that I have been awakened by a disturbance! What—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where are they?" roared Bob Cherry. He came dashing down the dormitory staircase with a dozen fellows at his heels. "Oh! My hat! Quelch!"

The Remove master glared at the excited juniors.

"What does this mean?" he hooted. "What—" He broke off as he turned the light on Wharton's face and peered at him. "You are hurt, Wharton!"

Wharton's hand went to his face. His fingers came away red. His nose was streaming crimson. That knock during the struggle, which had forced him to release his prisoner, had damaged his nose considerably.

He dabbed his nose with the sleeve of his pyjama jacket.

"What has happened?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"It—it was the ragers again, sir!" gasped Wharton. "I—I was after them—I collared one, but—there were two of them—and they got away—"

"Bless my soul! This is beyond toleration!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Do you mean to say that some persons have entered the dormitory again at this hour— Who were they, Wharton?"

"I don't know, sir!"

"You followed them down the stairs?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then it will be easy to identify them on this occasion," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "They cannot get back to their dormitory unseen. Go back to bed at once, and I will visit each dormitory in turn, and ascertain which boys are missing."

The Removites returned to their dormitory, Mr. Quelch following them up the stairs. They gathered in the dormitory in a breathless crowd.

The turn affairs had taken did not please the Removites. They wanted very much to identify the mysterious ragers, and deal with them; but they did not want a master to "butt" in and take the matter in hand. But there was no help for that now, and they waited to hear what Mr. Quelch had discovered.

Discovery seemed certain now—it was undoubtedly certain, if the unknown ragers were Greyfriars fellows. The two fugitives could not possibly have got back to bed undiscovered.

It was ten minutes before Mr. Quelch looked in at the doorway.

His face was grim.

"Wharton, I have visited the junior dormitories, and not a single boy is missing from any one of them!"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton. The juniors stared in blank amazement. If no fellow was missing from bed, who were the ragers who had fled downstairs?

"Wharton—if you adhere to your statement—"

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes scanned the captain of the Remove.

"Certainly, sir!" gasped Wharton. "There were two fellows here—they got away—"

"You are sure they were not Remove boys?"

"Eh! Oh! Yes, sir! Quite!"

"You are sure they ran downstairs?"

"Perfectly certain, sir."

"I cannot understand this, Wharton! I have no doubt that you believe that you are stating the facts, but what you state appears to be impossible. Go to bed now—I shall defer further investigation till the morning."

But further investigation, in the morning, shed no light on the mystery.

What had happened, had happened—there was no doubt about that. But the rest was beyond elucidation.

Who was the invisible enemy? Nobody knew!

There were fellows over at Highcliffe who could have told. But Ponsonby & Co. were keeping their own counsel.

THE END.

(Whatever you do, chums, don't miss the grand sequel to this yarn, "THE SECRET OF THE OAK!" You'll find it in next week's MAGNET.)

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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.

QUELCH'S HOLIDAY CAMP!
 Applications are invited by juniors wishing to spend a quiet holiday in camp with Mr. Quelch. Attractive programme includes regular instruction in Latin, Greek, and other light subjects. Recreation: quiet walks combined with Nature study. Early application is desirable; I anticipate being overwhelmed with eager volunteers!—H. S. Quelch, Masters' Passage.

The Greysfriars Herald

Edited by
HARRY WHARTON,
 F.G.S.

LATEST EXTRA GOOD EDITION

PARENTS! BE MERCIFUL!
 We don't want holiday instruction in Latin, Greek, and other light subjects, and we'd simply hate to take quiet walks combined with Nature study! Whatever you do, don't send your sons to Mr. Quelch's Holiday Camp!—Issued by the Remove Holiday Pro-tecton Committee.

No. 56.

LAUGH AND GROW FAT.

August 1st, 1931.

HOW TO IMPROVE CROAKY

A FEW SUGGESTIONS FROM DICKY NUGENT

Dear Reader,—Do you ever suffer from croakiness? If you do, I recommend you to trot along to the Head's garden and watch a game of croaky. If that duzzent send you to sleep, nothing ever will!

Of course, there are some redeeming features about it. In fact, it's not a bad sort of game, if it were only brightened up. If I had my way with croaky, this is what I'd do with it:

First, I'd make the croaky lawn the size of a football field.

Next, I'd speed it up by letting the players use motor-bikes for playing on.

After that, I'd fix a time-limit of five minutes per game.

To prevent ruffiness, I'd compel the players to wear boxing-gloves, crash-helmets, steel facemasks, and body-pads.

It wouldn't matter then if they did knock each other about when the game got egg-sitting.

FLOWER SHOW SENSATION

HORTICULTURISTS IN A QUANDARY



On Tuesday last the forget-me-nots, and Mr. Johnny Bull's carnato, cricket pavilion on a potato with a carnation flavour. This "hit" of the flower section was Mr. Wun Little Side witnessed a unique function in the shape of the first Annual Flower Show of the Remove Horticultural Society.

The pavilion, we need hardly say, was a riot of colour and perfume. The latter was not altogether appreciated, however, having been rendered somewhat "high" by a number of stink-bombs dropped during the opening ceremony—an unlooked-for occurrence which caused a riot of a totally different kind!

A vast collection of blooming flowers was ranged round the main room. (We trust our readers will understand that "blooming" is not used in a derogatory sense. Bolsolver evidently thought otherwise when the judge referred to his "blooming sweet peas," the judge in question being now in sunny suffering from two black eyes and general shock.)

Some truly remarkable exhibits were on show, including several new plants produced by Remove horticulturists. Among these we should mention the Butter-rose, which we understand to be a cross between a butterfly and a beetroot. Other unique exhibits included the forget-me-quick, which was vaguely reminiscent of onions and

vanished. Professor Skinner states he can only conclude that a jealous rival exhibitor had cut a hole in the marrow and placed an infernal machine in it. Detective-Inspector Penfold, who was called in to solve the mystery, suggests that the marrow was merely an air balloon, but the Professor's sterling honesty is so well-known that no one can suspect him of such villainy.

MASKED CRICKETER AT GREYFRIARS

Mystery Player's Remarkable Game

Greyfriars is still agog with excitement over the intriguing mystery of the Masked Cricketer who played for Courtfield Town against the Greyfriars First Eleven on Big Side on Wednesday.

It is debatable whether these questions will ever be answered. The Masked Cricketer appeared like a bolt from the blue, and after his short, meteoric career went back into the Unknown with the same suddenness as he had arrived.

In the score-book he was entered as "X. Y. Z." Nobody in the Courtfield team seemed to know who he was.

It was whispered that he had made a handsome contribution to the funds of the Courtfield club. There was a hint that that handsome contribution had helped him in securing a place in the Courtfield team.

But why want to play for Courtfield against Greyfriars? Some suggested that he was a county cricketer in need of practice. Others had an idea that an unhappy love affair had driven him to seek solace in the great summer game.

HOLIDAY WEATHER

OUR LONG-PERIOD PROPHETS TIPS

With the summer hols in the sky is likely to be cloudy. At the offing, our readers' thoughts are end of that time, Prout may have anxiously dwelling on the subject of the weather prospects. In the hope that they may prove interesting and illuminating, we therefore give the following brief extracts from the long-period forecasts of our Weather Expert:

A deep depression will remain stationary over Margate during the third and fourth weeks of the holiday. Coker of the Fifth Prospects to entertain Fother and Greene there during that period.

For the first fortnight of Mr. Fisher T. Fish is going home for the vac.

An earthquake may occur at Balham. Hunter proposes to look in at his ancestral home.

The air in the neighbourhood of Mavelever Towers will be distinctly cool. Skinner is thinking of calling on Mauly.

BEST HOLIDAY READING

"THE SEASIDE MURDER"

By Dicky Nugent. A long, enthralling mystery yarn by an author who needs no introduction to our readers. Not recommended for reading at the midnight hour.

"500 FUNNY RIDDLES"

HORACE JAMES COCKER

Contains a marvellous collection of brand-new, strikingly original, screamingly funny conundrums. One example will suffice: "Why does a chicken cross the road?—To get to the other side."

"HIKING AND BIKING"

ROBERT CHERRY

A breezy, good-humoured book, bubbling over with the healthy spirit of hiking and biking. Only drawback: the author hasn't started writing it yet.

"FASHIONABLE PLEASURE RESORTS." By Cecil Reginald Temple. Indispensable to holidaymakers with plenty of "old" no brains and good opinions of themselves.



Illustration of a cricketer in action, possibly related to the 'Masked Cricketer' article.



Illustration of a person in a garden setting, possibly related to the 'Flower Show' article.

THE FILM OF THE WEEK

Stupendous Attraction at Courtfield Cinema

"CRIME." This staggering super-masculine features 5,000 real convicts in a real prison and contains wonderfully artistic scenes of crime in all its aspects, including blackmail, robbery, amusing, forgery, and shooting. It is very uplifting. The projection is excellent, the film breaking down only six times in the first hour of the show. Appropriate music is rendered, where necessary, by the Courtfield Cinema Orchestra.