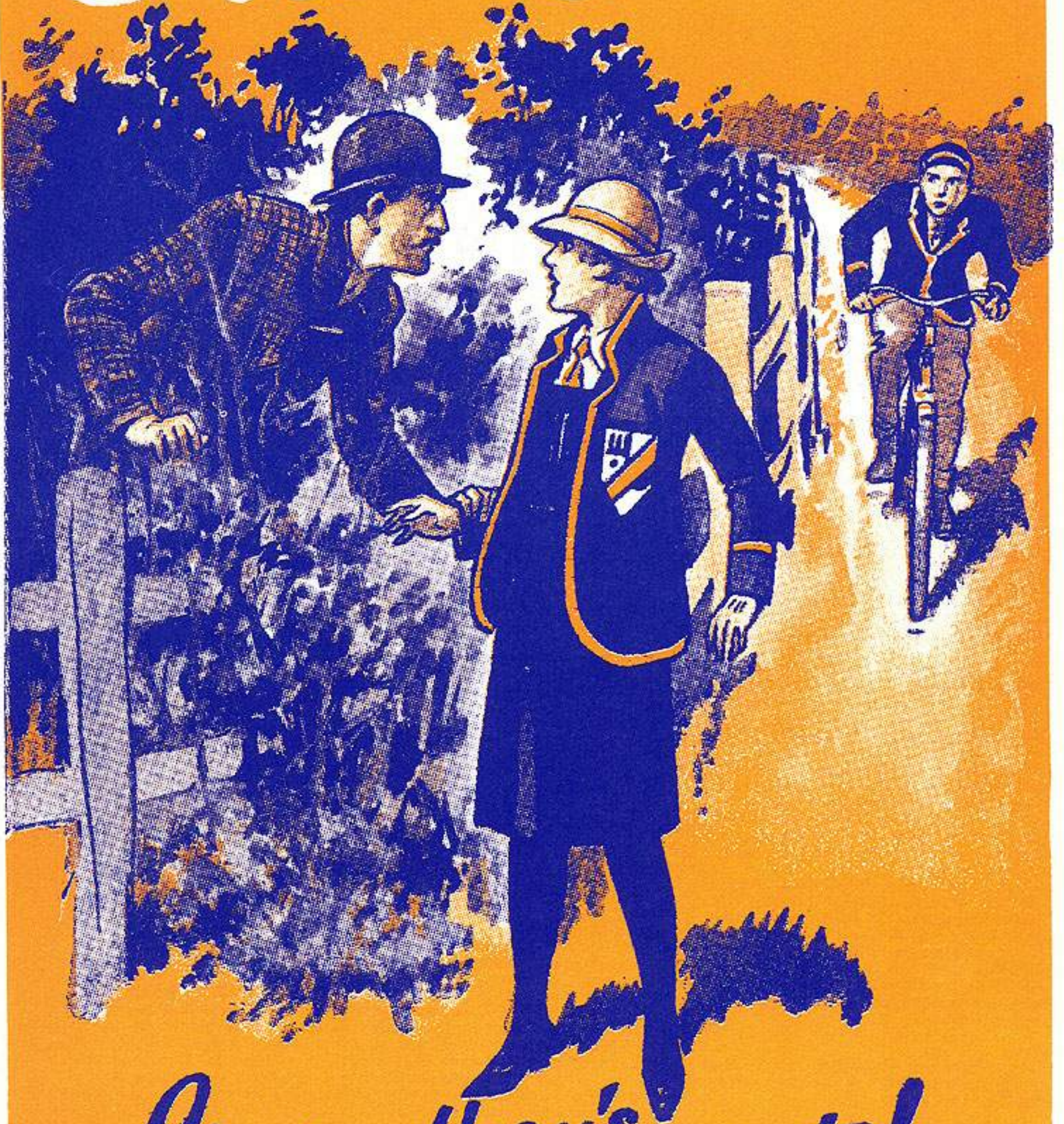


MEET HARRY WHARTON & CO. AND THEIR CHEERY GIRL CHUMS, INSIDE!

The Magnet



A Schoolboy's Secret!



Come Into The Office, Boys!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

EVER wondered how many people there are in the world and into how many races they are divided? That is the question which is asked me by one of my girl readers, who signs herself "Lazily Curious," of Johannesburg, South Africa.

A recent estimation states that there are **OVER EIGHTEEN HUNDRED MILLION**

people now living in the world. The actual number given in the estimation is 1,849,500,000, and they are divided into six races. These races are as follows: Mongolian, Caucasian, Negro, Semitic, Malayan, and Red Indian. You may also be interested to know that the largest number of people on this earth are yellow in colour; then come the whites, followed by the blacks and browns. The reds are the smallest group of the lot.

Some people are inclined to think that the world is already over-populated, but this is not the case. Scientists have estimated that the world can maintain a population of six thousand millions, and, at the present rate of increase of population, this figure will be reached in the year A.D. 2100.

Not far from my office there is one of the most curiously named streets in London. It is called "Hanging Sword Alley," and dates back to the days when that district of London was known as Alsatia, and was the haunt of highwaymen, robbers, pirates, and criminals of every description. Passing it the other day, I was reminded of some other curiously named streets which I thought might interest you. How would you like to live in

THE STREET OF THE FISHING CAT?

There is a street of that name. It is in Paris, which claims to have more queerly named streets than any other city in the world. For instance, there is a street named "The Street of the Bad Boys." But those are only two. Here is a short list of some more:

Ash Trays Street, Son-in-Law Street, The Street of the Lovely Leaves, Big Bottle Street, Hot Cat Street, and Little Mugs Street.

I don't think you will find many such queerly named streets in this country, but if you should know of any that may interest others let me know when next you write to me.

ONE of my Bridlington readers has asked me if I can tell him something about

TRAIN FERRIES.

The best-known in this country is that which runs between Harwich, in Essex, and Zeebrugge, in Belgium. The vessels are most curious to look at—for, like sea-plane carriers, they have their funnels at

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the side, while the "bridge" is actually a bridge, for it spans the opening between the two sides of the vessel, and looks rather like a footbridge over a railway siding.

Below the bridge, on the main deck of the ferry, there are rows and rows of rails, and the goods trains are split up and arranged in sections alongside each other on these lines. The trains are shunted on to the ship and the wheels then fastened to the lines. When the other side of the sea-crossing is reached the trains are run off and coupled up again. Then off they go to their ultimate destination.

Recently a consignment of electrical equipment left Manchester and travelled by this means to Budapest—a distance of 1,300 miles. During the whole of the journey the consignment remained in the same wagons, and thus a great deal of transhipment was saved.

Have you ever heard of

THE EYE THAT NEVER SLEEPS?

John Jordan, of Swansea, wants me to tell him what the phrase means. It is the name that has been given to the famous Surete Nationale in Paris, the Scotland Yard of France. Situated on the "Isle of the City," in the centre of Paris, the sombre-looking building houses some of the finest scientists of Paris, whose labours are devoted to the bringing of wrongdoers to justice.

Perhaps you did not know that, in this country, Scotland Yard has authority over the Metropolitan Police Area only, and cannot investigate crimes which occur outside that district, unless they are approached by other police forces. All the counties and the big towns of this country have their own police and detective forces. In France it is different, for the "Eye that Never Sleeps" controls the police and detective work of the whole of France.

FROM "Curious," of Ipswich, comes a query which might be said to refer to

LIGHTING-UP TIME

—but on a tremendous scale. He wants to know how many lights there are in the famous illuminations which are an attraction at certain seasons of the year at Blackpool. It would be no exaggeration to say that there must be nearly a million. Last year, for instance, no fewer than 300,000 coloured lamps were used in the official illuminations—and that does not include the private illuminations which many citizens and private firms employ.

Here are some interesting items about these marvellous illuminations:

If the current consumed per annum were used for domestic purposes, it would light a drawing-room day and night for 350 years!

Fifty miles of cables and connections are used, and fifteen generating and transforming stations are engaged.

Sixteen miles of wooden strips, 130,000 screws, and 12,000 ft. of timber are needed.

"Some" illuminations, eh? Not even the famous amusement parks of Fisher T. Fish's country can rival them.

Here are a few

RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to briefer queries from my readers:

When was the Eiffel Tower built, and what was it used for? (J. G., of Clacton): It was built in Paris in 1889, and derives a considerable revenue from visitors, who pay to be taken to the top in lifts. It is also used as a broadcasting and meteorological station.

How far is the Sun away from us? ("Inquirer," of Islington): Roughly, about ninety-three million miles. It takes the light of the sun eight minutes and thirty-eight seconds to reach the earth.

Is it possible to mix Oil and Water? (H. S., of Brighton): Yes, but something else must be added. For instance, if soap is added, they can be mixed.

Are Rats intelligent animals? (George Jackson, of Newcastle): Yes. A rat-trainer has succeeded in training some of his rats to dip their paws in ink and spell out dot and dash messages in the Morse Code.

What is a "Sausage Tree"? ("Magnetite," of Liverpool): A tree grown in Central Africa which bears a fruit that looks like a sausage, and which sometimes attains a length of three feet. Its proper name is *Kigelia Tinata*.

HERE'S another interesting item. You'd hardly believe that some

FISH THINK ENGLAND IS JOINED TO FRANCE!

Many thousands of years ago England was joined to the Continent, and the English Channel did not exist. Fish wanting to get to the North Sea in those days had to journey all the way round by the North of Scotland. Scientists who have been studying the movements of fish have discovered that the descendants of these fish still take that long, roundabout journey. Generation after generation of fish have done so, and scientists say, therefore, that these fish haven't discovered yet that there is an English Channel!

A very curious yarn came from North Borneo recently, concerning

CONVICTS WHO ARRESTED THEIR WARDERS!

Two warders in a native prison started arguing, and the result was that they came to blows. The convicts whom they were supposed to be guarding were docile Chinese, and when they saw the warders quarrelling they grabbed their rifles and then ordered them to separate. Then they promptly "arrested" the warders and marched them off to the governor's office. The warders were dismissed from the service and also sent to prison. The convicts were rewarded with a remission of their sentences—thus turning the tables completely on the fighting warders!

I have just left myself a little space to tell you something about next week's attractions. Do not, on any account, miss—

"HONOURS EVEN!"

By Frank Richards,

which is undoubtedly one of the finest stories this famous author has ever written for the MAGNET. The Famous Five are up against something, and so is Billy Bunter. There are chuckles as well as exciting situations in this yarn, and you won't want to leave it until you've read every word of it!

The "Greyfriars Herald" will appear as usual, and then follows further gripping chapters of Geo. E. Rochester's pirate story and more answers to readers' Soccer queries by "Linceman."

YOUR EDITOR.

A SCHOOLBOY'S SECRET!

By FRANK RICHARDS



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Invisible Man!

"LISTEN!"
 "Only an echo——"
 "It isn't!" said Bob Cherry.
 "Listen, fathead!"
 Bob came to a halt.
 "Look here," said Johnny Bull. "If we're getting in for call-over——"
 "Ring off, and listen!"
 Johnny Bull granted. But he rang off.
 "I think Bob's right!" said Harry Wharton.

The Famous Five of the Greyfriars Remove halted in the dusky lane. It was not yet dark, but a mass of thick mist had rolled up from the sea, and Friardale Lane was very dim.

Harry Wharton & Co. had been over to Cliff House to tea. They had left themselves time—just time—to get back to Greyfriars for calling-over. So they were walking rather quickly. There had been frost, and the road was hard, and five pairs of tramping feet roused a good many echoes in the dim, misty woods that bordered the lane.

Peter Hazeldene's uncle disappears from the bank where he is employed, in suspicious circumstances. He comes to Greyfriars secretly. What happens then is told in this dramatic tale of Harry Wharton & Co. and their cheery girl chums, Marjorie Hazeldene & Co., of Cliff House School.

But Bob Cherry was convinced that the sound that came from behind was not an echo.

Some person unknown was following the juniors as they tramped up the dim lane towards the school.

Bob had suspected it for some time, and now he felt sure. The lane was lonely towards nightfall, and the darkest and loneliest part lay ahead of the juniors. Whoever was following was keeping pace, neither drawing nearer nor falling farther behind. Before plunging into the black patch ahead Bob wanted to know who it was.

The chums of the Remove stood quite still and listened. If the sound behind was only an echo, naturally, it would cease when their own footsteps ceased to ring on the hard ground.

It did not cease. Muffled by the mist, but plainly heard, came the sound of tramping feet from the dusky mist.

"That's somebody!" murmured Frank Nugent.

Grunt, from Johnny Bull.
 "We haven't bought this lane," he remarked. "I suppose anybody who likes can come along from the village."

"Fathead!" answered Bob. "I tell you he's been keeping behind us for the last half-mile——"

"Well, he'll pass now, if we stick here long enough," said Johnny sarcastically. "We shall get lines from Quelch for being late for call-over, but I suppose that doesn't matter."

"Ass!" said Bob. "Listen!"

The footsteps ceased. Deep silence reigned in the dusky lane.

Evidently, the man behind had become aware that the schoolboys had stopped, and had stopped also.

A long minute passed. The juniors stood quite still. But there was no sound from the mist, and no figure

loomed into sight. Apparently, the unseen man was waiting for them to start again before he came on.

"That settles it!" said Bob.
 "The settlefulness is terrific!" agreed Hurreo Jamsot Ram Singh.

Johnny Bull nodded slowly. He was convinced at last.

"What the dickens is he following us for?" he asked.

"Not for any good, I imagine," said Bob dryly. "If he's a footpad, I suppose he's waiting for us to get into the loneliest part of the lane before he drops on us."

"Looks like it," said Harry.

It was, in fact, hard to guess any other reason for the shadowing. The juniors listened intently, but there was no further sound from the man behind.

They moved on again at last.

For a couple of minutes they tramped on, and then, at a sign from Harry Wharton, they halted suddenly, and listened again.

Footsteps were audible behind them, as at the previous halt. And, as before, the footsteps ceased almost immediately. The man had stopped again.

There could be no further possible doubt.

An unseen shadower was following them, stopping when they stopped, coming on again when they went on.

Unless he was a footpad, waiting for them to reach the lonely, dark dip in the lane before he came to close quarters, it was inexplicable.

If that was the idea, the chums of the Remove had no intention of playing into his hands. If there was going to be trouble, they preferred it to happen on the spot, where there was still light enough to see what they were about.

Looking back, they could see nothing but mist. The shadower was not far

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THE SECOND CHAPTER.

S O S !

off, that was certain, but he was invisible to their eyes.

Harry Wharton knitted his brows. "Whoever he is, and whatever he wants, there's no doubt now that he's after us!" he said, in a low voice. "There's enough of us to handle any tramp or footpad in the county—"

"And some over!" grinned Bob. "But if we're up against a tussle we'll have it where it suits us, not where it suits him," said Harry.

"Hear, hear!" "I fancy he will dodge into the trees if we go back for him," said Frank Nugent doubtfully.

Wharton shook his head. "That's not the idea. He will come on again as soon as he hears us going on. Well, two of us can go on, and make plenty of noise. Three can wait for him here."

"Oh, good!" "Bob had better go on," suggested Johnny Bull.

"No fear!" said Bob promptly. "I'm staying here for the scrap."

"You've got the biggest feet—"

"You silly ass!" "Inky and Franky get on!" said the captain of the Remove. "They can come trotting back for the scrap—if there is a scrap!"

Frank Nugent made a grimace, and the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur grinned. They were both quite good men in the scrapping line, still, it was a fact that, in that line, they were less useful than Wharton, Bob, and Johnny. And facts were facts!

"Fathcad!" said Frank. "All right! Come on, Inky!"

"Terrific and preposterous ass!" said Hurree Singh. "All right! Come on, my esteemed Franky!"

Nugent and the nabob started on again. They tramped hard and heavy, making as much noise as they could, to give the listening man behind the impression that the whole party had gone on.

Wharton, Bob, and Johnny Bull backed quietly under the misty branches beside the lane. There, out of sight, they watched and waited for the shadower to come up.

If he believed that the whole party had gone on there was no doubt that he would come. And when he arrived in the ambush he would have to give an account of himself and his intentions.

Tramp, tramp, tramp, went the boots of Nugent and Hurree Singh on the hard, frosty road, going on in the direction of Greyfriars. They made as much noise as five fellows had been making before. It seemed fairly certain that the man behind would "fall" to that little trick.

And he did. For, from the direction of the village, footsteps came on again.

"He's coming!" breathed Bob. "Ready!" whispered Johnny Bull. "Quiet!"

Still as mice, hidden in the shadows, the three juniors waited. Closer and closer came the footsteps, and a dim figure loomed at last through the foggy mist.

And as it came abreast of the hidden three they leaped suddenly out of cover, grasped the figure, and up-ended the shadower in the lane.

Bump! A startled yell rang out as the invisible man—now visible—hit the earth, and the next moment he was struggling frantically in the grasp of the three Greyfriars juniors.

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HAZELDENE of the Remove came up the passage, and stared into his study, No. 2 in the Remove, with a scowling brow.

"Stop that rotten wireless!" he snapped

"Bow-wow!" answered Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior, who had the pleasure—or otherwise—of being Hazel's study-mate in Study No. 2

"Look here—"

"Rats!" said Tom Brown warmly. "Shut up, Hazel! I've got half a dozen fellows in to listen—"

"Rotten row!" growled Hazel.

"Oh, shut up!" came from the half-dozen fellows in Study No. 2. The radio went on. Hazel grunted angrily. To judge by his looks he was not in a good temper. That was not uncommon with Hazeldene of the Remove. But his bad temper had no effect on Tom Brown, or on the fellows who had gathered in Study No. 2 to hear the wireless—Peter Todd, Squiff, Lord Mauleverer, Smithy, Redwing, and Billy Bunter.

Tom Brown's wireless set was rather popular in the Remove passage. In fact, Hazel himself liked it well enough when he was in the humour. Now, it seemed, he was not in the humour.

Certainly, when a fellow was ill-tempered, nervy, and worried, wireless did not come as a boon and a blessing. Still, Hazel was at liberty to take his ill-temper, his nerves, and his worry, somewhere else. Nobody in Study No. 2 had any use for them.

"Look here—" grunted Hazel again.

"I say, you fellows, barge him out!" said Billy Bunter.

"Shut up, Hazel!" "Have the fellows got back from Cliff House?" asked Hazel, ruthlessly butting in on the strains of jazz that buzzed from the radio.

"Haven't seen them!" answered Tom Brown curtly.

"Didn't you go with them?" asked the Bounder.

"I shouldn't be asking if they'd got back if I had!" snapped Hazel.

Smithy laughed. "Another engagement, what?" he asked. "Did the geegee come in tenth or eleventh?"

Hazel did not answer that question, except with a scowl. He leaned on the doorpost with a black brow.

Some of the fellows in the study grinned.

Harry Wharton & Co. had gone over to tea at Cliff House with Marjorie Hazeldene and her friends there. Hazel had been booked to go with them.

As he was Marjorie's brother, he might have been expected to be willing to go, if not even keen. Evidently he had washed it out—and it was likely enough that the Bounder had guessed the reason.

When Hazel had a mysterious engagement on a half-holiday, and returned from it nervy and worried and scowling, it was not difficult for the Remove fellows to guess what Hazel had been "up" to.

Not that Hazel was a bad fellow. He was nobody's enemy but his own. But he was sometimes a very bad enemy to himself!

The Bounder's lips curled with amused contempt.

Smithy was rather given to kicking over the traces, and playing the "giddy goat" generally; but when the Bounder

backed a loser, he could take what came to him with a stiff upper lip.

Hazel, in such circumstances, crumpled up.

He had a crumpled look now, as he leaned wearily on the doorpost, scowling into the study, and looking as if he would have liked to kick Tom Brown's radio across the room.

The jazz came to an end, and Tom Brown twiddled the dials.

"Cut it off now!" grunted Hazel. He came into the study, looked round in vain for a chair, and sat sullenly on the table. He was tired as well as disappointed.

"Rot!" said Tom Brown. "We're just going to get the news."

"Blow the news!" "Cheerful sort of chap you are to have in a study, ain't you?" said Tom. "If you want to see Wharton, trot along to Study No. 1, and wait for him to come in. He can't be long now, it's near call-over."

"Yes, take your face away, old bean!" advised Peter Todd. "It rather worries a chap, with that frightfully happy expression on it."

There was a chuckle in the study. Hazel's face was anything but frightfully happy in expression.

"I'm not going to be turned out of my own study!" snarled Hazel. "Stop that rotten row, Brown!"

"Go and eat coke!" retorted Tom Brown.

"Get on with the news, Browney!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Got it!" said Tom. A Kensington accent proceeded from the radio. The wireless announcer was getting on to the news.

Hazel slipped from the table again. He went to the doorway and looked along the passage towards the Remove staircase. With call-over so close at hand, it was high time that Harry Wharton & Co. came in. He was anxious to see the captain of the Remove.

Smithy winked at the other fellows in the study, and some of them chuckled, and Hazel scowled round at them. All the fellows there knew that he was anxious to see Wharton—and why?

If it was merely seeing Wharton that he wanted, he could have seen as much as he liked of his Form captain that afternoon, simply by keeping to the arrangement to go with the Co. to tea at Cliff House. Clearly, Wharton's company had had no attractions for him that afternoon. Something had transpired since.

And they all guessed what it was! Hazel was in need of a helping hand—and that was why he wanted to see Harry Wharton.

"The silly duffers will be late for roll!" growled Hazel, as he failed to spot any sign of the Famous Five arriving.

"Hazel's awfully worried about the chaps getting lines from Quelch!" said the Bounder gravely.

And there was another chuckle. Certainly it would have been rather unusual for Hazel to trouble his head about whether other fellows got lines or not.

"Oh, shut up, Smithy!" snapped Hazeldene.

"You shut up, Hazel!" said Tom Brown. "How are we to hear the news with jaw going on all the time?"

"Bother the news! Who wants to hear the rot?" snapped Hazel. "Silly rot about the rotten weather, and rotten prices of rotten fat stock, and—"

"Quiet, you ass! It's an S O S!" exclaimed Tom.

"I don't care—"

"Shut up!" roared all the Removites in Study No. 2 angrily. A wireless

S O S was a matter of interest; it might concern anybody.

Hazel grunted and shut up.

The Kensington voice from the radio went on:

"Will John James Hazeldene—"

Hazel jumped.

He had ceased to interrupt, just in time to hear his own surname from the wireless announcer.

"Hazeldene?" repeated Toddy. "Is that—"

"Quiet!"

All the fellows were interested—even Hazel now. He had an uncle whose name was John James. Was it possible that the wireless S O S referred to a relative of his own? The announcer went on:

of them, so he could feel for a fellow whose uncle was missing.

"Nothing!" snapped Hazel. "It's only rot. My uncle's all right—of course he is."

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Billy Bunter. "Perhaps he's bolted with the bank's money—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, you silly ass!"

"Oh, really, Toddy! If he's disappeared suddenly from a bank, and the manager wants him, it looks as if— Yaroooooop!"

Billy Bunter broke off with a wild roar, as Hazel jumped at him, grabbed him by the collar, and banged his head on the study table.

The fat Owl's cheery suggestion that

minute or so. The man they had up-ended and collared struggled wildly, striving frantically to escape from their grasp.

But he had no chance of that. Even had he been a hefty tramp, as the juniors expected to find him, the three sturdy Greyfriars fellows would have been able to handle him. But as he struggled and wrenched, and they pinned him down, they discerned that he was neither a tramp nor hefty; indeed, he hardly needed three pairs of hands on him, one of the juniors might have been a match for him.

He was a man of medium size, of slim build, dressed respectably in dark clothes. While he struggled the juniors were too busy to observe him much,



As the three Greyfriars juniors struggled with the shadower they observed that he was wearing a false moustache. "Keep him safe!" grunted Johnny Bull. "I fancy the police would know this sportsman, if they saw him!" The man gave a sharp cry. "Release me!"

"Will John James Hazeldene, lately of Prince Regent Mansions, Brighton, communicate as soon as possible with the manager of the Brighton and County Bank, Brighton."

Hazel caught his breath.

What did it mean?

The S O S delivered, the announcer went on with the news. But the fellows in the study were not listening to it now. They were all looking at Hazel.

"That a relation of yours, old bean?" asked Browney.

"They're mad, I suppose!" snapped Hazel. "There's some mistake in it—that's my uncle—it's his name, and his address. But he can't be missing, so there's no sense in it. He has a post in that bank, so the silly ass of a manager must see him every day."

"Must be missing, if they send out an S O S for him!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Silly rot!" answered Hazel.

"I hope nothin's happened to your jolly old uncle, old chap!" said Lord Mauleverer. Mauly had many uncles, and was affectionately attached to all

his uncle might have bolted with the bank's money did not seem to please Hazel.

He made that very clear to William George Bunter

Bang, bang!

"Yarooop! Whooop! Help!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows— Whooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bang!

"Oh crikey! Yaroooooh!"

Hazel pitched him over on the carpet and stamped angrily out of the study. Billy Bunter sat up and rubbed his head—and the radio went on, to a more or less musical accompaniment of gasps and groans from the Owl of the Remove.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

"GOT him!" panted Bob Cherry.

"Pin him!"

"What-ho!"

Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, and Johnny Bull were quite busy for a

especially in the dim dusk of the mist; but as he collapsed, panting, they realised that he looked, at least, like a respectable citizen—by no means the footpad they had supposed him to be.

Still, appearances might be deceptive, and there was no doubt that he had shadowed them surreptitiously along the dark lane. He had to give an account of himself before they let him go.

"Release me!" he panted. His voice was high-pitched, shrill. "Who are you? What do you want? Release me!"

"The question is—who are you? And what do you want?" answered Harry Wharton coolly. "We'll let you go fast enough if you're up to no harm. We want to know what you were sneaking after us for."

"And we're going to know before you get loose!" growled Johnny Bull.

The man peered up at them. The struggle had brought a flush into his

face, but it faded away, leaving him pale.

His eyes, deep-set, had a hunted look; his face glimmered up white in the dim mist.

There was a dark moustache on his upper lip—dark and thick. Now that the juniors had leisure to look at him they noted a peculiar circumstance about that moustache.

It was a little sideways—one end sticking up to his nose, the other drooping over a corner of his mouth. It was, in fact, a false moustache, and it had been loosened and disarranged in the tussle.

And as they observed that, the three juniors gripped him harder. A false moustache could only be worn for purposes of disguise; a more than suspicious circumstance, added to his previous stealthy and surreptitious proceedings.

"Keep him safe!" grunted Johnny Bull. "I fancy the police would know this sportsman if they saw him."

The man gave a sharp cry. "It is false! It is false! Release me!"

"Who are you?" demanded Wharton. "That is no concern of yours! How dare you seize me like this! If you mean robbery, I have nothing—"

Wharton stared at him and burst into a laugh.

"You silly fathead!" he said. "Do we look like footpads? We've bagged you because you were sneaking after us down a dark lane. What were you following us for?"

"Oh!" The white-faced man gasped. "Are you the schoolboys I was following from Cliff House?"

"You've followed us all the way from Cliff House!" exclaimed Bob in astonishment. "My hat! I never spotted

that there was a blighter sneaking after us till we got this side of Friardale."

"What's your game?" demanded Wharton, quite puzzled.

The man did not answer the question; he peered sharply at each face in turn as if seeking to recognise them, then he panted:

"There were five of you. Where are the others?"

A patter of footsteps on the dark road answered the question. Frank Nugent and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh had heard the sound of the struggle and they were running back to lend a hand in the scrap.

They arrived panting.

"Got him?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Yes, here he is! But I'm blessed if I can make him out!" said Harry Wharton. "I don't think he's a footpad—"

"You fool!" panted the man.

"Thanks! All the same, we want to know why you were after us," said Harry. "You didn't follow us all the way from Cliff House School for nothing, I suppose."

The man lifted his head and peered at Nugent and the nabob. It seemed plain that he was looking for a face he fancied he might know. But his look showed that neither Nugent's nor Hurree Singh's face was familiar to him.

He sank back again, panting.

The expression on his face told of deep and bitter disappointment—mystifying to the chums of the Remove.

"You haven't explained yet why you were after us," said Bob Cherry, but he relaxed his grip on the man as he spoke. "We took you for a footpad, waiting to corner us in a lonely place—"

"You young fool!"

"Well, what were we to think?" demanded Bob warmly.

"We couldn't think anything else," said Harry quietly. "But I fancy it was a mistake now I can see you."

"I'm not so sure of that," growled Johnny Bull. "Honest men don't sneak after fellows down dark lanes, and they don't stick false moustaches on their faces, either."

The man started convulsively.

He jerked free one hand, which flew at once to his moustache. The juniors exchanged glances and released him.

He staggered to his feet, setting straight the artificial moustache. He stood panting almost painfully for breath.

The Famous Five eyed him doubtfully and curiously. Everything about him and his actions was suspicious. But it was borne in on their minds that he had intended them no harm. But what he had intended in his stealthy pursuit was an utter mystery. Obviously, he had had some motive, but they could not begin to guess what it was.

Nugent picked up his bowler hat, which had fallen off, and handed it to him. He jammed it back on his head without a word.

"May as well get on," said Bob. "If the silly ass wants to follow on, let him—now we know he can't do any harm."

"He ought to be made to explain what he was up to!" growled Johnny Bull. "He can't have sneaked after us for two miles for nothing."

The man made a quick backward step. None of the juniors raised a hand to stop him, however, and he backed away and turned and disappeared in the mist. His footsteps swiftly died away.

The Famous Five were left staring at one another.

"Now, what the jolly old dickens does it all mean?" asked Bob.

"I give that one up," answered Wharton. "He was up to something—but goodness knows what!"

"He's gone, anyhow!"

"My esteemed chums—" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"Go it, Inky!" said Bob. "What have you got in your old black noddle now?" And all the Co. looked at the nabob, wondering whether he had hit on an explanation of the strange mystery.

"Perhapsfully he is acquainted with some Greyfriars fellow," suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "and he followed us, thinking that perhapsfully one of us was the fellow he wanted to see."

"Why couldn't he say so, if that's the case?" grunted Johnny Bull.

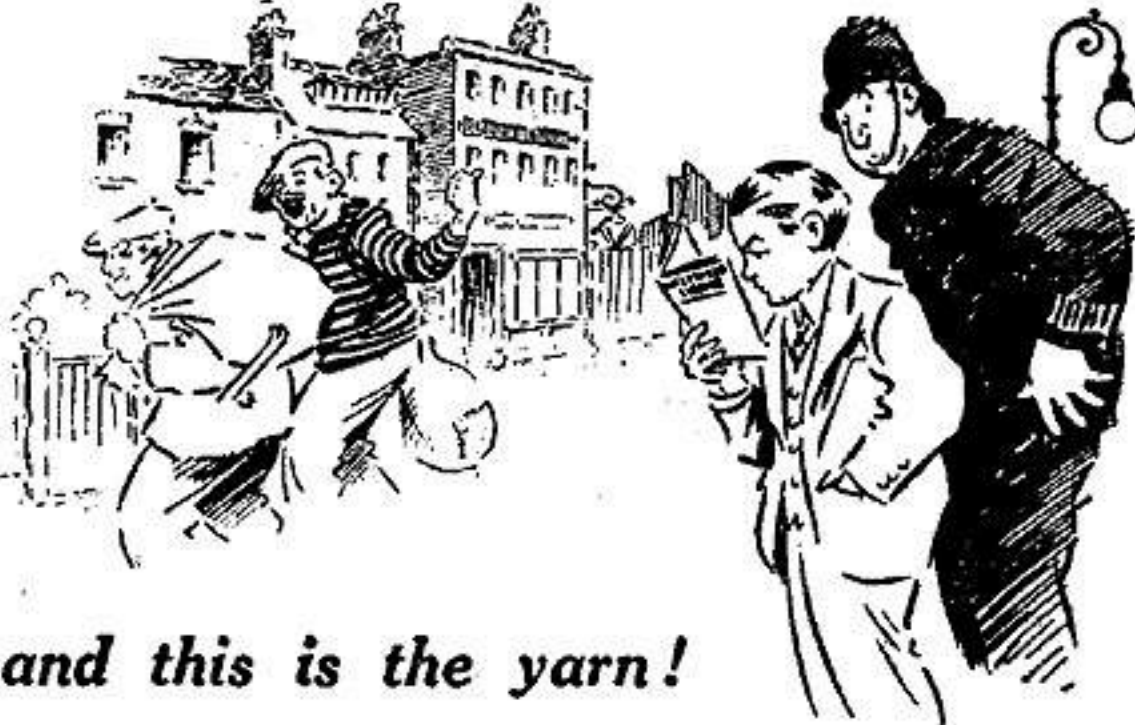
The nabob shook his dusky head.

"I am unacquainted with the answer to that one, my esteemed Johnny," he answered. "But I thinkfully opine that he wished to see a Greyfriars fellow, and that that is why he sneakfully followed us. Instead of waiting for us to reach the dark dip, as we supposefully thought, perhapsfully he was waiting for us to pass the lamp at the cross-roads, where he could have seen our esteemed and idiotic faces from a safe distance, and thus discoverfully learned whether one of us was the fellow he wanted."

"I suppose it's possible," said Harry slowly. "But he seems to have picked us up after we left Cliff House. And if he wanted to see some Greyfriars chap, why should he hang about Miss Primrose's girls' school? More likely to hang about Greyfriars."

"That's so," said Bob. "But he blinked at all of us jolly closely—you noticed that—just as if he was looking for a fellow he knew."

● The burglars chortled with happy glee
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"Yes. I noticed that! I suppose Inky's right—though it doesn't explain it all," said the captain of the Remove. "Anyhow, we're shot of him now, and we can get on. Put it on, or we shall be late!"

The Co. started for the school again, walking quickly. Once they stopped to listen for footsteps behind, but there was no sound now from the dusky mist. Evidently the man with the false moustache was no longer tracking them.

That looked as if the nabob was right; having seen their faces, he had discovered that the fellow he wanted was not among them, and had no further interest in them.

It was clear, at all events, that he was gone now, and the Famous Five dismissed him and his mysterious proceedings from their minds as they arrived at the school—just in time to dodge in before Gosling closed the gates.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Wharton is Wanted!

"I SAY, you fellows!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "Wharton, old chap, stop a minute!"

Billy Bunter was interrupted. Hazeldene pushed him aside and joined the captain of the Remove as the Greyfriars fellows came out of Hall after calling-over.

"I want to speak to you, Wharton!" said Hazel abruptly.

"Oh, really, Hazel!" protested the fat Owl of the Remove. "I was speaking to Wharton—"

"Shut up!" snapped Hazel.

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" chortled Bob Cherry. "You're in demand, Wharton, old bean. Quite a rush of custom! Talk to me instead, Hazel—"

"Oh, don't be a fool!" snapped Hazel.

Bob Cherry raised his eyebrows.

"Look here, Wharton, I was going to say—" recommenced Bunter.

"Will you let me speak to you, Wharton?" almost hissed Hazel. "It's rather important! Get out of it, Bunter!"

"Shan't!" hooted Bunter.

"Toss up for it!" suggested Frank Nugent gravely. "Anybody got a penny?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take it turnfully!" grinned Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows—"

Hazel scowled blackly. Billy Bunter gave him an angry and scornful blink through his big spectacles.

"Look here, Wharton!" muttered Hazel savagely. "I've got to speak to you. Come up to the study."

Harry Wharton looked at him, not very cordially. He was by no means pleased at Hazel having turned down the tea-party at Cliff House that afternoon.

Not that he was keen on Hazel's company. But it had been a disappointment to Marjorie, and Harry did not like to see Marjorie disappointed by her wayward scapegrace of a brother. Why couldn't the fellow have come, as he had arranged to do?

"If you want to speak to me, Hazel, it can't be frightfully urgent," said the captain of the Remove. "You could have talked to me all the way to Cliff House and back if you'd liked this afternoon."

"Well, I didn't like!" snapped Hazel. "I had something else to do, rather more interesting than gobbling cake at

a girls' school. Will you come up to the studies?"

"We're going up at prep—"

"I want to speak to you now!"

"Look here, you cheeky beast!" bawled Bunter. "I want to speak to Wharton."

"Wharton's not coming up to the studies now," broke in Johnny Bull. "We've got boxing on in the Rag, and Wharton's coming into the Rag."

"Yes, rather!" concurred Bob Cherry. "You can talk to Wharton while he's getting the gloves on, Hazel."

"I can't, and won't!" snarled Hazel.

"Then don't talk at all!" said Bob. "You talk too much, anyhow. Come on, you men!"

"I say, you fellows—"

Hazel stood biting his lip as the Famous Five walked away to the Rag. Billy Bunter rolled after them, still talking.

What Hazel had to say to the captain of the Remove, apparently, had to be said in private.

Bunter's remarks, however, could be made in public—and he proceeded to make them.

"Wharton, old chap—"

"Cut it short!" said Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"The shortfulness would be an esteemed boon and blessing!" remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Oh, really, Inky—"

"Smithy's bringing the gloves," remarked Bob Cherry. "Lots of time before prep! Us, up against Smithy, Reddy, Toddy, Squiff, and Newland. Look out for Newland, Franky—ho's your man, and he's been developing rather a punch—"

"Will you let a fellow speak?" hooted Bunter.

"Certainly," answered Bob. "Go ahead! I can speak at the same time, I suppose! A fellow must speak at the same time as you, Bunt, if he wants to speak at all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You see, you're like the jolly old little brook—you go on for ever," said Bob. "But I'll tell you what, Bunter! Go somewhere else and talk! Then you can keep it up as long as you like without bothering anybody."

Billy Bunter gave the cheery Bob a devastating blink through his spectacles. He did not adopt that suggestion. He went on talking, but he remained where he was.

"Wharton, old fellow—"

"Cough it up!" said Harry resignedly.

"I hope you haven't lost that fiver!" said Bunter.

Wharton stared at him.

"The fiver?" he repeated.

"Well, you're jolly careless, you know," said Bunter anxiously. "I offered to mind it for you, didn't I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! It wasn't safe to take it over to Cliff House with you!" said Bunter. "There are dangerous characters hanging about. I heard Temple of the Fourth say he ran into a man hanging about the school yesterday, skulking near the gates—and Coker of the Fifth was saying the very same thing last night. You might have been robbed."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Well, I haven't been robbed, old fat bean," he said. "The fiver's safe in my pocket."

"Good!" said Bunter. "I say—do listen to a chap!"

The Famous Five walked into the Rag, where a number of juniors had already gathered. Bunter rolled in after them. The boxing match that was

booked to take place that evening interested the chums of the Remove rather more than the conversation of Billy Bunter.

Moreover, they knew now what was the urgent communication that the fat Owl of the Remove had to make.

That morning, Harry Wharton had received a handsome and unexpected "tip" from a kind aunt; no less than a whole fiver! Fivers were not quite so common as blackberries. Lord Mauleverer and the Bouncer and Monty Newland had such valuable articles, but to most of the Remove the possession of a five-pound note was an event—and a big event.

Billy Bunter had displayed a keen interest in that fiver. It was clear that his interest had not abated.

In the Rag he grabbed the captain of the Remove by the arm.

"I say, old chap, do let a fellow speak!" he urged. "If you're sure you've got that fiver still safe—"

"Yes, fathead! Let go!"

"Well, what about a study supper?" asked Bunter.

"Hook it!"

"The tuckshop's closed now," went on the fat Owl. "But I can manage that all right if you want me to do the shopping—"

"I don't!"

"Look here, Wharton, are you going to stand a study supper or not?" demanded Bunter.

"Not!"

"Beast! I mean, look here, old fellow! I've been disappointed about a postal order. Lend me the five—"

"Eh?"

"And I'll stand the study supper!" said Bunter. "I'll square next week, when I get some remittances I'm expecting from one of my titled relations. You stand to gain all along the line," the fat Owl continued, eager to make it clear. "You get the study supper and the fiver as well—when I square—"

"When!" said Harry, laughing. "I might get the study supper all right, but I've got my doubts about the fiver."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Smithy with the gloves! Shut up, Bunter!"

"Shan't!" hooted Bunter.

"Kick him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yaroooooh!"

Billy Bunter dropped the subject at last, urgent as it was. The Famous Five joined the rest of the boxing-party.

Skinner of the Remove called out to Wharton.

"Got your fiver, Wharton?"

Harry glanced round.

"Yes," he answered.

"You haven't seen Hazel?"

"Yes, I've seen Hazel!" answered Wharton, puzzled. "What do you mean?"

"You've seen Hazel—"

"Yes!"

"And you've still got your fiver?" said Skinner, with a perplexed look.

There was a laugh in the Rag, and Harry Wharton frowned. He understood now what Skinner meant; and it dawned upon him, too, why Hazel had been so anxious to speak to him in private. It further dawned on him how Hazel had probably been occupied that afternoon, and why he had washed out the tea-party at his sister's school.

"Oh, don't be an ass, Skinner," said Wharton abruptly. And he turned his back on the grinning Skinner.

The boxing match began, and went on with considerable noise and great keenness. During its progress, Hazel's sullen and clouded face was twice seen looking in at the door of the Rag.

The boxers did not observe him, being too busily occupied otherwise; but Skinner did, and he winked at Snoop and Stott. The fact that Hazel was in deep trouble was known by that time to everybody in the Remove who had noticed him at all. His anxiety to see Wharton and speak to him was getting to be a standing joke. It did not need a lot of perspicacity to connect that anxiety with the fact that the captain of the Remove was in unaccustomed possession of a five-pound note.

Billy Bunter, indeed, was indignant. He had his own designs on that fiver, and he saw his study supper in danger if Hazel got in first! Wharton was not perhaps ass enough to hand his fiver over to any fellow that wanted it. But he was a great chum of Marjorie Hazeldene's; and Hazel was the fellow to make the most of that circumstance. If Hazel succeeded in snooping that fiver, where did Bunter come in?

Obviously, nowhere!

So Bunter was indignant and alarmed. He confided to Lord Mauleverer that it was pretty sickening to see a fellow after a fellow simply because that fellow had a fiver. And he did not see why Mauly chuckled at that remark; Bunter was not intending to be humorous.

With great impatience the fat Owl waited for the boxing match to end.

When, at last, it was over, he grabbed at Wharton's arm, as the chums of the Remove were leaving the Rag.

"I say, Wharton, old chap—"

"Leggo!"

"There's still time—"

"Cheese it!"

"Mrs. Mimble would serve a fellow at the side door," urged Bunter. "I'll cut out of the House, and chance it—if you want me to change the fiver—"

"Fathead!"

"Beast!"

And the Remove went up to prep.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Hazel's Way!

HARRY WHARTON looked rather grim, and Frank Nugent smiled, when Hazeldene strolled into Study No. 1, in prep.

Fellows were not supposed to leave their studies in prep; though fellows, certainly sometimes did! Hazel was not in a mood to pay much regard to rules; though that evening, as it happened, Wingate of the Sixth was on duty in prep; and he was a rather dutiful prefect, and likely to spot infractions of the rules. Loder or Carne or Walker might be safely relied upon to be neglecting their duties; but the captain of Greyfriars was quite another proposition.

However, Hazel came out of Study No. 2, and walked along to Study No. 1, heedless of rules and prefects. His business with the captain of the Remove, it seemed, could not wait.

"Busy?" he asked with a sneer.

"Prep!" answered Wharton. "Better get back to your study, Hazel! If Wingate catches you out—"

"Bother Wingate!"

"Well, we've got work to do, if you haven't," said Frank Nugent. "Cut off, Hazel, and give us a chance!"

"I came here to speak to Wharton, not to you, Nugent!" answered Hazel sullenly. "You can shut up!"

Frank's lip curled.

"I dare say you'd have come to speak

to me if I'd been tipped a fiver instead of Wharton!" he said tartly.

Hazel's face coloured deeply. There was not much doubt of what he wanted; but he did not seem to have realised that what he wanted had been revealed to all the Form. Deep in his own troubles and perplexities, he had given little or no thought to what other fellows were thinking.

He gave Nugent a furious look. Like all weak natures he was easily moved to passionate anger.

"You rotter! I'm not asking you for anything!" he snarled. "If you had any decency you'd step out of the study when you know that I want to speak to Wharton privately."

"I can see myself getting out in prep and getting six from Wingate, because you don't want me to hear you sticking Wharton for his tip!" answered Nugent disdainfully.

Hazel clenched his hands.

"Draw it mild, Franky, old man!" said Wharton hastily. "You're rather jumping to conclusions a bit—"

"Oh, rot! It's already a joke in the Form!" snapped Nugent. "All the fellows know that Hazel's landed himself in some trouble, and wants to land it on another chap! He can't get into a scrape without taking on a face as long as a fiddle, and letting all the school know. And you know as well as I do what he's come here for."

Wharton was silent. In point of fact, he had very little doubt about it. He dipped his pen in the ink.

"Whatever it is, Hazel, leave it till after prep," he said.

"It won't wait," said Hazel sullenly.

"Why couldn't you tell me this afternoon, then, whatever it is, instead of cutting off on your own and leaving us to go over to the Cliff House without you?" exclaimed Wharton sharply.

"It hadn't happened then."

"What hadn't?"

Hazel did not answer that question. It was hardly necessary to answer. Obviously, the scrape had materialised after he had deserted the tea-party for Cliff House.

"Look here," he said, with a crimson face, after a brief pause. "Will you lend me some money?"

He rather snapped than asked. Hazel hated asking favours, or putting himself under an obligation.

That did not prevent him from doing both. But he seemed to find some consolation to his pride, by asking ungraciously for a favour and resenting an obligation.

It was a strange sort of pride, perhaps that could be soled by ungraciousness and ingratitude. But it is not, after all, uncommon.

Wharton set his lips.

"What do you want it for?" he asked.

"I don't see that you need ask that question," answered Hazel. "The question is, whether you will lend me some money or not. You needn't be afraid that I shan't repay you, and jolly soon," he added with a sneer. "I'm stony now, but I've got some resources."

Wharton's lips set harder, and Nugent gave a scornful sniff. Both of them knew what Hazel's resources were. It would not be the first time that he had plundered Marjorie.

"Well, I do ask the question," said Harry sharply, "and unless you answer it, let the subject drop."

Hazel would have been glad to turn his back and walk haughtily out of the study, at that. He made a movement to do so. But he stopped. He had to have the money, if he could get it. His pride had to go into his pocket. He

only hoped that Wharton's cash would follow it there.

"I owe a man three pounds," he muttered in a low voice. "If you must know about affairs that don't concern you, you know now."

"I think the affair does concern me if it's my three pounds that you want to use!" snapped Wharton.

"I'm not asking for a free gift!" sneered Hazel. "I shall be able to square in a few days—to-morrow, very likely."

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"Cut that out!" he said. "I'm not going to touch a girl's money. If I lend you three pounds, you'll have to promise me not to ask Marjorie for it."

Hazel crimsoned again. What he was not ashamed to do, he was ashamed to hear put into words.

"You can't mind your own business in this study, it seems," he said, with bitter resentment. "You seem to think that you've a right to butt into my family concerns. Has my sister asked you to look after her?"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Wharton. "I mean what I say! I won't have Marjorie dunned for money to pay what you owe me!"

"I don't owe you anything so far!" sneered Hazel. "Does that mean that you are going to squeeze it out after giving me a sermon?"

Wharton breathed hard. There was only one reason why he did not bundle the insolent fellow neck and crop out of the study. But that reason was a powerful one.

Hazel knew it, too. He knew that if he had not been Marjorie Hazeldene's brother, he would not have dared to come there at all to lay claim to help. He knew that for no other reason would the captain of the Remove have allowed him to carry on as he was doing. That knowledge only added to his sulky resentment.

"Tell me what you want the money for?" repeated Wharton. "You know I've got a fiver; you saw me get it in break this morning. I don't often get one—not once a term—and I've plenty of things to do with it!"

"I've said that I owe a man three pounds."

"From this afternoon?"

"Yes."

"That means that when you left us, instead of coming over to Cliff House, you went off somewhere and played the goat?"

"Has the Head appointed you father confessor to the Remove?" asked Hazel. "Look here, if you're going to lend me the money you can preach at me as much as you like! I'll take the sermon with the cash! If you're not, I'm not standing your pi-jaw! Which is it going to be?"

"You cheeky tiek!" roared Wharton, his temper breaking out. "For two pins I'd pitch you out of the study on your neck!"

"Try it on!" said Hazel. "I'm feeling inclined to punch somebody's head—and I think I'd rather punch yours than anybody else's!"

Wharton half-rose.

Hazel watched him, with a bitter sneer. He hated the position his folly had placed him in, and at that moment he hated Wharton for having to ask him for money. He was quite in a mood for a row.

But at that point there came an interruption.

The study door which Hazel had left ajar was pushed open, and Wingate of the Sixth looked in, with his ashplant under his arm. Evidently the prefect,



The fleeing man suddenly turned and punched. Prout, unexpectedly caught under the chin, lost his footing and rolled over, gasping. He rolled against Quelch's feet, and the Remove master stumbled over him and crashed. "Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Oooooogh!" gurgled Prout.

walking along the Remove passage, had heard the angry voices in Study No. 1, and knew that a fellow not belonging to the study was there.

"What are you doing here in prep, Hazeldene?" he rapped out.

Hazel stared round at him.

"Find out!" he answered.

Wingate blinked. That was not the way for a Lower Fourth junior to answer a prefect of the Sixth. And Hazel, as a rule, was about the last fellow in the Remove to make such an answer. Even the reckless Bouncer would have hesitated at that. It was clear that Hazel, in a state of worry and anxiety and frayed nerves, was not quite himself.

"Find out?" repeated Wingate. "By Jove!" He slipped his ashplant into his hand. "Bend over that chair, Hazeldene!"

Hazel hesitated for a moment. But there was no choice in the matter, and he obeyed, with a savage face.

Whack, whack, whack!

Wharton and Nugent looked on in silence as the ashplant whacked.

Hazel panted.

The Greyfriars captain tucked the cane under his arm again.

"Now get back to your study!" he rapped.

Without a word more, Hazel left Study No. 1. The door of Study No. 2 slammed a moment later.

"Take fifty lines each, you two, for wasting time in prep!" granted Wingate.

And he walked out.

Wharton and Nugent looked at one another. Then, in silence, they resumed prep.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Shell Out:

HAZELDENE was standing in the doorway of his study when the Remove fellows went down after prep.

He looked at Harry Wharton, as the captain of the Remove joined his friends in the passage with so black and bitter a look that it drew a good many glances on him.

Wharton coloured with annoyance. He had never felt so strongly inclined to punch Hazel's head; but, at the same time, he was worried about Marjorie's brother. He left his friends, who went down the Remove staircase, and joined Hazel at his door.

"If you want to speak to me—" he said reluctantly.

Hazel would have been glad to reply with an insult, but he was in too deep a scrape for that. He was rather in the position of a drowning man catching at straws. The paleness of his face, the deep furrow in his brow, told how serious the trouble was, or, at least, how serious the hapless scapegrace believed it to be.

"Not here!" muttered Hazel. "Brown's going to stick that rotten wireless on again! Can't talk here!"

"Silly ass!" came Tom Brown's voice from the study. "Chuck scowling like a pirate in a melodrama, and sit in and listen! You may hear that S O S again about your uncle!"

"What's that?" ejaculated Wharton. "Hazel's uncle—"

"Only some silly rot!" snapped Hazel. "My uncle's all right! Some silly mistake on the wireless!"

"They don't make mistakes like that on the wireless!" said Wharton, staring at him. "Don't be an ass, Hazel!"

"Oh, rubbish!" said Hazel irritably.

"I tell you I had a letter from my uncle only a few days ago!"

"A few days ago isn't now!" said Tom Brown. "If they send out an S O S for a man, he's missing!"

"Oh, rot!"

Hazel, convinced or not, was too worried about his own affairs to waste any thought on John James Hazeldene. He caught Wharton's sleeve and walked him along to Study No. 1. They went into that study together, and Hazel shut the door.

"You're going to lend me the money?" he muttered.

"Tell me how the matter stands."

Hazel made an irritable, angry gesture.

"Look here, don't be a fool!" said Wharton gruffly. "You're asking me for more than half my five-pound note! Do you think I've got money to chuck away with both hands like Smithy?"

"Smithy doesn't chuck it away!" said Hazel, with a bitter sneer. "He's putrid with money; but he's already refused to lend me a few pounds!"

Wharton might have asked him why the dickens Herbert Vernon-Smith should pay his debts for him, especially unnecessary and dingy debts. But it was useless to rub it in. Hazel was so accustomed to landing his troubles on other shoulders that he seemed to fancy that he had a right to pass on his burdens to others. Wharton tried to be patient, thinking of the girl at Cliff House, who would have to take on this worry if he did not.

"I've got to pay a man three pounds—this evening!" muttered Hazel.

"This evening? You're mad! You can't get out of the school this evening, or even out of the House after lock-up!"

"I can, and shall, get out if I've got the money for Sanders!"

"Sanders!" repeated Wharton. He had heard the name before.

"Nobody you know?" sneered Hazel. "If you must know all about it, I lost all I had this afternoon playing banker, and three pounds on the nod! I promised to let Sanders have it, and I've got to keep my word!"

"You can't see the man?" said Wharton blankly. "Where is he?"

"Waiting to see me."

"Not near the school?"

"Not a dozen yards from the school."

"Oh, you awful ass!" Wharton was quite aghast. "It's the sack for you if you break out after lock-up to see some rotten rascal like that!"

"He's not a rotten rascal!" answered Hazel sullenly. "He will kick up a row if he doesn't get what's due to him. I suppose any man would. I lost the money, and it's a debt of honour!"

"Don't bring honour into it!" snapped Wharton, in disgust. "You've been gambling, and only a rotten rascal would gamble with a schoolboy! And you're going to pay the man because you're afraid of him. Do you think I can't see that? What has he threatened to do?"

Hazel's lip quivered.

"He will wait," he said. "But if I don't go out with the money, he will ring at the gate, and ask to see the Head."

"Likely!" said Wharton scornfully. "He would be kicked out on the spot, even if Gosling let him in!"

"You can think so, if you like; I don't. You're safe enough; you're not in my position. I can't risk it. I promised to pay him. I had to. He knows—at least, he thinks—that I can get the money from my friends. Do you want me to swindle the man?"

It was not easy for the captain of the Remove to keep patient at that. Hazel, having gambled out of his depth, had promised to pay the man, coolly counting on bagging three-fifths of the five-pound note he knew that Wharton had. The cool impudence of it was hard to tolerate. But Hazel evidently did not realise that he was impudent. He was accustomed to lean on others; and now

he was leaning on the nearest fellow who was strong enough to take his weight, and might be willing to do so, and his precious pride required that he should be insulting about it!

"If you don't see the man," said Harry, as quietly as he could, "he will simply understand that you're not the fool he has taken you for, and he will clear off."

Hazel snarled.

"I don't want any more of that! Will you lend me the money or not? I'm going out to him, anyhow, to beg for time till—till to-morrow, if I can't pay him."

Wharton's eyes glinted. Till to-morrow meant till the weak, wretched fellow had had a chance to see his sister at Cliff House School. That consideration alone checked Wharton's rising anger.

"You won't take my advice, and not go out?"

"Look here, we're wasting time. It's getting on for dawn now. Will you let me have the money or not?"

Wharton paused a moment—a long moment. Naturally he was not keen on parting with more than half of an unexpected and generous tip. More than that it went sorely against the grain to have a hand in Hazel's dingy affairs, and to help in paying gambling debts to a swindling rascal. But he thought of the wretched fellow getting out his bike in the early morning and cutting across to Cliff House, to worry Marjorie with his miserable scrapes—and he made up his mind.

"I shall have to get the five changed," he said. "I've not changed it yet. Smithy will do that for me—he's got lots! Wait here!"

"Buck up, then!" breathed Hazel.

Wharton left the study. He was not long gone, but it seemed an age to the worried, miserable scapegrace he left behind him.

Hazel was wiping perspiration from his damp forehead when the captain of the Remove came back.

Without a word Wharton placed three pound notes in his hand and went out again. Neither did Hazel speak.

Harry Wharton went down to the Rag, to join his friends there, glad to be done with the scapegrace and his dingy troubles. Hazel was left to his own devices, little dreaming whither they were to lead him!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Beaks on the Warpath!

MR. PROUT, master of the Fifth, tapped at the door of Quelch's study and looked in.

Mr. Quelch glanced up at him in some surprise.

Prout was arrayed in a thick overcoat, with the coat collar turned up, and a muffler round his portly neck. Under his arm he had a thick stick. Prout, who was stout, looked stouter than ever in that big coat—indeed, elephantine.

"You are going out?" asked Mr. Quelch. "The weather is very disagreeable—quite misty and unpleasant." He hoped that Prout was not going to ask him to join in a walk in that very unpleasant weather, at nearly nine in the evening.

"I am, Quelch!" answered Prout. "I have looked in to ask you to accompany me—"

"I am somewhat busy—"

"No doubt, we are all busy!" agreed Prout. "But I am finding time for this affair, Quelch, and I should be glad of your company. We may catch the rascal."

"The rascal?" repeated the Remove master.

"Last evening," said Mr. Prout, "I went out with Hacker, but we had no success. Hacker complained of the cold, and we came in rather earlier than I intended. But to-night—"

"But what—?" Quelch seemed quite surprised to hear that the portly Prout was going rascal hunting. Rascals, no doubt, existed, and doubtless deserved to be hunted. But it was rather an odd occupation for a Form-master at a Public school.

"You have, of course, heard," said Prout, "of a man—a somewhat sinister character, I fear—who had been seen haunting the purlieus of the school for some days and nights past?"

"Oh!" said Quelch. He had heard the rumour. "But—"

"The fact is indisputable," said Prout impressively. "Coker, of my Form, saw the man lurking near the school yesterday—and I hear that Temple of the Fourth also saw him. The previous day he was seen by Potter and Greens of my Form. Before that, a Shell boy, Hobson, came on him lurking—undoubtedly lurking! In each case the description is the same—a man dressed in dark clothes, with a thick dark moustache."

"Oh!" said Quelch.

"Obviously, the man can be after no good," said Prout. "Whether he may be some burglar, watching for a chance to crack the crib—burgling an establishment is called cracking a crib, Quelch, by these gentry—"

"Quite so! But—"

"Whether he is watching for a chance to crack the crib, or whether there is some other explanation, the affair has a sinister aspect!" said Prout. "The explanation may be that he is some questionable character in touch with some reckless boy, or seeking to get into touch with some boy, Quelch!"

"I suppose it is possible! But—"

"I am keeping myself posted in the matter, Quelch. I learn that some boys of your Form, returning from a visit to

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Club House this afternoon, were followed—

"Indeed!"

"I learn that they saw the man who followed them and that he was a man in dark clothes, with a moustache," said Prout. "I have questioned Wharton—a very sensible lad. He tells me that the boys seized—he described it as coloured—the man, to make him explain what his object was—what he was up to, as Wharton expressed it."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"And the result?"

"The man made no explanation, but Wharton assures me that in the—the tussle, as he called it, the man's moustache became loosened, and almost fell off. The man was in disguise, Quelch."

Mr. Quelch looked thoughtful.

"It is certainly the same man," continued Prout. "He seems to be haunting the vicinity of the school—for what object? A bad one, evidently—sinister, Quelch."

"His object can hardly be good, I suppose, if he is really haunting the vicinity of the school!" said the Remove master, with a nod.

"My intention," said Prout, "is to catch the rascal and make him give an account of himself. If he proves to be some local bad character, Quelch, such as the man Lodgey, or the bookmaker, Banks, I think we may conclude that he is here to communicate, if he can, with some foolish boy, and I shall be justified, Quelch, in laying my stick across his shoulders."

"My dear Prout—"

"I shall take the law into my own hands," said Prout firmly. "I shall chastise the rascal if he is some public-house blackguard seeking to inveigle Greyfriars boys into disreputable ways. If he is a rascal of a deeper dye, his description may be given to the police, once we have seen him closely. I have a flash-lamp in my pocket. Will you accompany me? I should be glad to have a companion."

Mr. Quelch repressed a sigh. It was a damp and misty evening, and his study was very cosy and comfortable; the fire very cheery. But he felt that this was the call of duty.

If a questionable character was persistently hanging about the school, it was obviously a matter to be looked into.

"Very well!" said the Remove master.

He rose and joined Mr. Prout. A few minutes later the two masters, warmly wrapped against the cold, left the House. Quelch, like Prout, had a stick under his arm. Questionable characters, if encountered, might act in such a way that a stick would come in very useful.

It was dim in the quad, grey mists drifting on the March wind. Light from many windows came yellow in the mist. The window of the Rag was open, and the roar of voices came forth. The Remove were having a sing-song there, and seemed in great spirits. Fifteen or twenty lusty young voices joined in roaring the Barcroft School Song, which had rather caught on among the Greyfriars fellows. A score of Removites could make themselves heard when they shouted a chorus, and the roar came loud across the misty quad.

Mr. Quelch smiled genially. Mr. Prout grunted a little.

"Your boys are rather noisy this evening, Quelch," he remarked.

"Yes. It is very agreeable to hear them, is it not?" said Quelch, deliberately misunderstanding. "There is

something very pleasant about the spontaneous enjoyment of youth."

Mr. Prout grunted again, and let it go at that. The two beaks walked on to the masters' gate, shadowy under old trees.

The Fifth Form master glanced round as a sound came to his ears from the quadrangle.

"Did you hear?"

"I certainly heard a footstep," said Mr. Quelch, peering round.

"I hope it is not a boy of your Form out of the House at this hour, Quelch."

"Quite so," agreed Quelch. "And I hope it is not a boy of your Form, Prout."

Prout stiffened majestically.

"No boy of the Fifth Form is likely, Quelch—"

"And no boy of the Remove, I trust," said Quelch. "Possibly, however, it is a master taking a stroll. In any case, I hear nothing more. Let us proceed."

They proceeded.

Prout unlocked the masters' gate with his key, opened it, and the two masters stepped through the arched gateway, deep in the thickness of the wall.

Outside the road lay dim and misty.

Prout looked this way and that way, like Moses of old. So did Quelch.

They were outside the school wall now, ready to pounce upon the mysterious lurker, if he was putting in his mysterious lurking within their range of vision.

But it occurred to both of them, now they had fairly started on the trail, that a lot depended on chance. Unless the man did his lurking right under their noses, they were not likely to spot him.

Chance, however, befriended the tee hunters.

"Look!" breathed Prout.

At a little distance, half-hidden by the shadow of a tree by the wall, was a dark figure.

It seemed to be standing still.

Quelch started. Obviously no one could have any business there at nine o'clock at night—lurking in the shadow by the school wall. Had they spotted the mysterious lurker at the first shot?

Prout gripped his stick.

"Come!" he breathed.

Prout was not much of a sprinter. He had too much weight to carry for that. But he realised the need of hurry. The lurker might dodge away in the shadows as soon as he took the alarm. Prout wanted to get to close quarters before he dodged.

Prout rushed. After him rushed Quelch.

The figure under the shadowy branches started, turned, and stared. They had a glimpse of a face barred by a thick dark moustache.

It was only a glimpse. The next instant the man was running.

"Quick!" panted Prout. "That is the man! He must be the man—otherwise, why has he fled? Quick!"

Prout dashed in pursuit. Quelch dashed after him. There could be little doubt that, by great good luck, they had spotted the mysterious lurker. The next step was to snaffle him, and make him explain himself. That step, however, was not so easy. Prout, rushing on in darkness and mist, rushed right into the fleeing man before he could get clear.

There was a sharp, startled cry, like the yelp of a dog. The dark figure twisted, turned, and punched. Prout, unexpectedly caught under the chin, lost his footing, and rolled over, gasping.

He had not calculated on that; neither had Quelch. Prout rolled at Quelch's feet as the Remove master

came running on. Only a miracle could have prevented Quelch from stumbling over him. No miracle occurred. Quelch stumbled over him and crashed.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Oooogh!" gurgled Prout, as the Remove master's falling weight knocked the wind out of him. "Oooogh!"

"Oh!" repeated Quelch dizzily.

"Ow! Ah!"

He struggled to rise. He could see little in the dark. He rested one hand to raise himself, unaware that he was resting it on Prout's face. Prout was aware of it as his nose took the Remove master's weight.

"Wurrrgh!" gurgled Prout.

He heaved wildly, and Quelch lost his balance, and rolled.

Prout, gurgling and gasping, heaved to his feet. He peered round him. Quelch, spluttering, scrambled breathlessly up. Prout saw a dark figure in the shadows, and grasped him.

"Scoundrel!" he panted. "I have you! Resist, and I will stun you! Quelch, help me! Quelch, I have seized the scoundrel!"

"Will you kindly release me, Mr. Prout?" came the Remove master's voice, in grinding tones. "It is I that you have seized!"

"Oh!" gasped Prout.

He let go.

Quelch fielded his hat, which had fallen off. He jammed it on, and glared at Prout. Prout gasped for breath. Gasping, he stared round into the gloomy shadows. The mysterious lurker was gone.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Out of Bounds!

HAZEL trembled.

Standing still, with beating heart in the misty dimness of the quad, he listened.

But there was silence.

His escape had been narrow; but he had escaped.

The breaker of bounds had slid out of the box-room window, and dropped from the leads. He had waited till the coast was quite clear, and slipped out unseen. So long as he was back in good time for dorm there was not much risk in it. And he had ample time to get back, after meeting the disreputable Mr. Sanders, and handing him the three pound-notes. But as he groped through the misty quad the voices of Prout and Quelch came to his ears, and he knew that his footsteps had been heard.

His heart thumped painfully.

What Quelch and Prout were doing out of the House in the dim mist he could not guess. It was not an evening that any man would have chosen for a stroll. But there they were, between him and masters' gate, and it was over that arched gateway that he had intended to clamber. A mass of ancient clinging ivy made it easy there.

He dared not run; he dared not move, lest his footsteps should be heard again, and draw the two masters in his direction. He stood trembling and listening, fearful of hearing them approach, in which case he had to bolt, and chance it. If he was caught out of the House—

To his immense relief the two beaks went on their way. He concluded that they were going out, and he waited a few minutes to give them time to go.

Then he changed his direction, and groped away to the gloomy cloisters. Those dim old arches were not attractive or inviting at night; but he dared not go near masters' gate now.

He groped through the cloisters, and stopped at a spot that was well known to a good many Greyfriars fellows—especially to the Bounder, who had clambered over there many a time after lights out. Broken stonework in the wall gave foothold, and masses of old ivy handhold. On the other side was a narrow lane that ran beside the school grounds—with a plantation of firs and larches beyond it—a spot seldom or never trodden after nightfall. From that lane it was only a minute's trot to the road, and it was at the corner where they joined that he had appointed to meet the estimable Mr. Sanders.

He hoped that Sanders was still there. Hazel had expected to get out earlier, before, or during prep. He had had to leave it late; but he had little doubt that Mr. Sanders had waited.

Three pounds was not perhaps a large sum, but it was a considerable amount to the hanger-on at the Three Fishers, who seldom made half as much by plundering a "mug." Moreover, Mr. Sanders had hinted very plainly—a hint that amounted to a threat—that if Hazel did not come out with the money, he would come in for it. In that case, he must have waited.

The Bounder had, at least, the courage of his misdoings, and would have been a dangerous fellow to threaten. But Hazel was quite different. The barest possibility of such an exposure at the school scared him into a state of jumping nerves. He was almost frantically eager to see the man, pay him and see the last of him. After which the fright was likely to keep Hazel to the straight and narrow path—for a time, till the effect of it wore off.

Hazel clambered up the old wall. He dropped on the outer side. As he landed there, and stood for a moment catching his breath, he heard sounds from the road.

His heart thumped again. There was a sound of running feet. There was a sound of scuffling. There was a sound of a booming voice—Prout's voice.

The two masters had gone out of the gate, but they had not walked away, as he had expected and taken for granted.

They were still on the spot—why? Was it possible—was it barely possible—that they had run into Sanders, waiting in the shadows at the corner?

Hazel could have groaned aloud with terror and dismay.

Where he stood he was not a dozen yards from the corner, a narrow gap between dark trees on one side and a massive stone buttress of the school wall on the other. The lane was black, but there was a glimmer on the broad road beyond; it was not so dark there.

As he stood trembling and gasping, a running figure appeared for a moment at the corner; he barely glimpsed it.

It vanished in darkness; but he knew that it was coming down the lane; that it was coming towards him.

Was it Sanders?

Who else could it be? Whoever it was, he had run at the sight of the two Greyfriars masters, and dodged into the black lane beside the wall to escape detection. Could it be anybody but the rogue Hazel had come out to meet?

The pattering footsteps ceased. With a quickness of mind born of fear, he knew why. The running man knew that his footsteps might betray him in the silence of the night. Once safe

round the corner, he dropped into a walk and proceeded on tiptoe.

But he was coming on—directly towards Hazel, crouching against the stone wall. The wretched junior knew that.

It did not matter if the beaks did not follow him. But if they did—and found Hazel there?

He thought of clambering back over the wall. But he dreaded to be seen or heard.

Instead of that he backed close to the old stones, where a great clinging mass of ivy hung down, screening himself with the masses of ivy, unheeding its cold, damp clammy touch.

If they came now they would not see him or discover him. Sanders—if it was Sanders—would pass on.

He heard creeping footsteps. He heard a panting breath, not a yard from him. The man had stopped, and though Hazel could not hear him he knew that he was looking back.

Loud booming came the voice of Prout. The two Greyfriars masters were standing at the opening of the narrow lane.

"He went this way, Quelch!" Prout's booming voice came clearly. Hazel heard every word, and he knew that the panting man near him heard.

"I think he did, Prout!" Quelch's voice was not so loud, but it was sharp and clear and easily carried the distance.

"Follow me, Quelch! I have my stick ready—have you yours?"

"I have!" "Do not hesitate to knock the scoundrel down, Quelch! I shall not hesitate to stun him if he offers resistance."

"My dear Prout—" "We have him now, Quelch! We shall corner him in this lane. Follow me, Quelch."

Hazel heard a rustling of the ivy close to him. It swayed and parted. The panting man was seeking concealment there exactly as Hazel had done.

The terrified junior dared not speak; he dared not make a sound. If only—only he got out of this, he would never make a fool of himself again! But he was not out of it yet. Fool—thrice fool that he had been—he might have been joining cheerily in the uproarious sing-song in the Rag, instead of crouching here in darkness and terror! If they found him—and in hunting for the man they were after, were they not certain to find him—

The man was hidden in the ivy now, not two feet from Hazel. But he evidently did not know that the boy was there. Hazel could have touched him by stretching out his hand.

He did not doubt that it was Sanders. But he dared not risk an exclamation—a movement—even a rustle of the ivy. He remained perfectly still, scarcely breathing. But in his ears was the suppressed breathing of the man so near who did not know that he was there!

Were they coming? Prout's boom reached his ears again. "What—who—Rascal! What are you doing here?"

Hazel wondered if he was dreaming. Prout was booming at somebody—somebody at a distance! Was someone else on the scene—had Prout got on a false scent? The wretched scapegrace of the Remove fervently hoped so as he listened, with suffocated breath and pulsating heart.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Rough on Sanders!

SOAPY SANDERS, of the Three Fishers, was surprised. Mr. Sanders, indeed, was very much surprised.

He was loafing idly and impatiently, while he waited for his dupe to come out of the school.

Soapy was not a nice man to look at or to be near. There was a scent of stale whisky and tobacco about him; he was greasy and he seldom washed! Altogether he was a most unpleasant person. He had been a billiard marker—he had been a street bookmaker—he had been an unjust dealer in many things—he had, in fact, done almost everything except hard work. Work he disliked—especially hard work.

His friends called him Soapy, not because he was fond of soap—he disliked soap almost as much as he disliked work. A certain insinuating slyness had earned him the nickname of Soapy.

Hazel, like the young ass he was, thought Soapy rather a sportsman and a man of the world. Playing banker with Soapy was the quickest possible way of getting rid of one's pocket-money. Hazel had not been long in losing all he had that sportive afternoon at the Three Fishers. After losing all he possessed, he had gone on to lose what he did not possess. Hence his present trials and tribulations.

Soapy Sanders wanted those three pounds—if he could get them. In cash he had snaffled about fifteen shillings. Soapy did not work on the grand scale—he was no captain of industry, or prince of finance. Fifteen shillings paid him for the trouble of slipping cards in his sleeve and dealing from the bottom of the pack. Still, if he could frighten a further three pounds out of a silly "mug," Soapy was the man to do it.

He judged Hazel mug enough; and he had little doubt that the foolish fellow would slip out of the school after dark with the money for him.

If he did not, Soapy had his walk for his pains, and there was an end. Certainly, he had no intention of presenting himself at the school as he had hinted to Hazel that he would do. That was quite an empty threat, as Wharton had told Hazeldene. Soapy had no desire to be kicked out of the school gates or handed over to the custody of a police-constable.

But he had a long wait—and he began, at last, to wonder whether Hazel was coming out with the cash.

It was cold and chilly in the March evening, and Mr. Sanders grew colder, chillier, and more impatient.

He was to meet Hazel at the dark corner, where Fir Lane jutted off the road and passed along the wall of the old cloisters. For a long time Mr. Sanders waited at that spot, smoking cigarettes.

But his cigarettes were exhausted at last, and his patience very nearly so. Smokeless, tired, cold, Mr. Sanders waited and considered the question of staying or going.

If that young idiot was coming out with three pounds for him it was worth while hanging on. If he wasn't, obviously it was not worth while.

Mr. Sanders was deep in this dubious problem when the surprises began.

He was leaning against the fence of the fir plantation, deep in the dusk of the trees at the dark corner, when a figure, running fast, loomed through the



Swipe, swipe, swipe! Thrice Mr. Prout's stick came down on Soapy's shoulders as he dodged frantically away. At each hefty swipe the hapless rascal let out a terrific yell. Then, with an amazing turn of speed, he raced ahead of Prout, and vanished into the night!

shadows, whipped round the corner, and bolted like a scared rabbit down the narrow lane.

There was some "row" on—he heard scuffling and panting from the road. Mr. Sanders wondered what was up, but without being deeply interested.

Then Prout and Quelch happened. They arrived at the corner, apparently in pursuit of the man who had dodged into the blackness of the lane by the cloisters.

From the darkness under the overhanging branches Soapy watched them, wondering what the game was.

He heard the booming of Prout and the barking of Quelch. He guessed that they were schoolmasters belonging to Greyfriars.

Who the running man was, and why they were pursuing him, Soapy did not know. It did not occur to him that if he was seen he might be taken for the man who had run.

But that was precisely what happened.

Mr. Prout about to stride down the dark lane, stick in hand, caught a glimpse of the loafing figure under the tree at the corner.

Immediately Mr. Prout saw it all—or fancied he did!

The running man had not gone down the lane, as supposed—he was skulking in the shadows there, ready to dodge away on the road when the pursuers had followed a false scent! That was how it seemed to Prout.

Very nearly, Prout thought, he had fallen to this trick! But not quite! He had spotted his man.

It was a mistake. Soapy was not his man. But it was a very natural mistake.

Some mysterious man had been lurking about the school. Prout was not likely to guess that, on this particular evening, two men were lurking about

the school. The first man, certainly, was the mysterious lurker! Soapy Sanders was appearing on this scene positively for one occasion only. But Mr. Prout did not know all that, of course! He fancied that he had spotted his man! He was certain that he had spotted his man! He boomed and bore down on Soapy.

Hazel, hidden under the ivy, down the narrow, dark lane, heard him boom, and wondered what was up. Mr. Sanders was left in no doubt as to what was up!

Prout barged under the tree, stick in hand, followed by Quelch.

Soapy, in surprise and alarm, detached himself from the fence. He began to wish that he had not, after all, waited so long for his "mug."

"We have him, Quelch!" boomed Prout.

"We have, indeed!" said Mr. Quelch. "Stand where you are, my man. If you attempt to get away you will be forcibly prevented."

"Look 'ere——" said Soapy, in dismay

"Stand where you are!" boomed Prout, as Mr. Sanders made a movement to retire from the spot. He brandished his stick. "I will not stand on ceremony with you, you rascal. I will stun you if you attempt to escape!"

Soapy hopped back to the fence in a great hurry. Quelch hopped as swiftly, in another direction. Both of them had a narrow escape from Mr. Prout's brandished stick.

"'Ere, mind what you're at!" howled Mr. Sanders. "Don't you git crackling a bloke's 'ead with that stick!"

"Prout!" gasped Quelch. "Take care!"

"Secure him, Quelch! Take him by the collar!" exclaimed Prout. "I have a flashlamp here. We will ascertain his identity."

"Keep that stick away, please!" said

Mr. Quelch, with asperity. I refuse—I absolutely refuse—to come near while you are brandishing that stick, Prout!"

"Pooh, pooh, my dear Quelch! secure him!" boomed Prout. "We have the scoundrel now. He shall be made to give an account of himself. Hold him fast!"

Mr. Quelch, with a wary eye on Prout's deadly weapon, stepped to Soapy Sanders and grasped his coat-collar.

"Look 'ere——" protested Mr. Sanders.

"Silence, my man!" said Mr. Quelch. "Unless you can give an account of yourself you will be given into custody."

"I ain't doing any 'arm 'ere, am I?" hooted Mr. Sanders. "Can't a bloke stop to light a cigarette without being 'andled by a pair of silly old coveys? You let a man alone on the king's 'igh-way!"

"A false statement!" boomed Prout. "Only a few minutes ago you pushed me over on the road and fled!"

"I did not!" howled Mr. Sanders, taken quite aback. "That must 'ave been the bloke what 'ooked it down this 'ere lane. Get arter him, if you want 'im, and leave a cove alone."

"A palpable trick!" snapped Prout. "There was no other man here. You are not likely to deceive us so easily."

"I tell you——" howled Mr. Sanders. "Have you that flashlamp, Prout?" asked the Remove master impatiently.

Prout was going through pocket after pocket. Apparently, he did not quite remember in which of those numerous pockets he had bestowed the flashlamp.

"I have it here, somewhere. Hold him while I am getting it!"

"I have him safe. But please hasten."

Prout groped, and groped.

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(Continued from
page 13.)

"You let a bloke go!" persisted Mr. Sanders.

"Explain why you are here, lurking about the school," snapped Mr. Quelch. "Jest stopped to rest and light a cigarette—"

"That is false!" said the Remove master quietly. "You are here for some reason, and you will be compelled to explain the reason. This is not the first time you have been here during the past few days—"

"I ain't never—"
"That will do! Cannot you find that lamp, Prout?"

Prout found it at last. He extracted it and turned on the light. A sudden bright beam dazzled Mr. Sanders, catching him in the eye.

He blinked in the light. Both the Greyfriars masters stared at him, his stubbly, pimply face now fully illuminated. Both of them recognised him as a local bad character, whom they had seen about a good many times.

"I know you!" boomed Prout. "I do not know your name, but I have seen you—a public-house loafer, Quelch—"

"I have heard the man's name," said Quelch. "It is Sanders. I remember hearing that he has been charged at the police court with pilfering at Wapshot Races."

"They never proved nothing!" protested Mr. Sanders. "And it ain't no business of yours, anyhow!"

"Rascal!" boomed Prout. "I have seen you at the Three Fishers—a low resort. Why are you here?"

"It is useless to question him, Prout," said Mr. Quelch quietly. "Such a character would not be likely to tell the truth. And it is obvious why he is here. He is in communication with some Greyfriars boy—"

"Obviously!" said Prout. "As I suspected. Some foolish boy has fallen into this unmitigated rascal's clutches."

"It is perfectly clear," said Mr. Quelch.

"No doubt a boy of your Form, Quelch."

"More probably a boy of your Form, Prout!"

"Really, Mr. Quelch—"
"Really, Mr. Prout—"

"Look 'ere, you leggo a covey's collar!" said Mr. Sanders, quite alarmed at the turn affairs were taking. "I don't know nobody at your blooming school. You leave a bloke alone—see?"

"Quelch! No doubt you are glad now that you joined me in this enterprise," said Prout. "There can be no doubt as to this disreputable rascal's object in lurking here."

"None," agreed the Remove master. "I shall chastise him," said Prout, "with this stick."

"Very good!" said Mr. Quelch. There was a roar from Soapy. That idea, which seemed very good to Quelch, did not recommend itself at all to Mr. Sanders.

"Ands orf!" roared Soapy. "Why, I'll 'ave the law of yer! You 'it me with that there stick and you'll see what 'appens."

Soapy was right there! Prout did hit him with the stick, and he did see what happened.

Quelch released the man's collar and stepped back, leaving him to Prout.

Prout swiped with the stick. Soapy yelled, howled, and hopped!

In point of fact, the two beaks had snaffled the wrong man! Nevertheless, they were right in their conclusion as to Soapy's object in being there. And there was no doubt that Soapy deserved what he got from Prout.

Anyhow, he got it. Swipe, swipe, swipe!

Thrice the thick stick came down, swiping, on Soapy Sanders' shoulders as he dodged frantically away.

He bolted. After him charged Prout! Swipe, swipe!

Twice again the hapless rascal got it. At each hefty swipe he let out a terrific yell. Then, with a turn of speed that left the portly Prout standing, the howling rascal vanished into the night.

Prout stopped, and panted. His exertions had rather winded him. He puffed and he blew.

"My dear Quelch—groogh!—we have—urrgh!—I am somewhat bib-bib-bib-breathless—ooogh!—we have been successful—"

"Quite!" agreed Mr. Quelch. "The rascal has had a lesson," said Mr. Prout. "I think he will not venture to lurk about Greyfriars again, Quelch."

"Probably not."

The two masters, both of them feeling very satisfied with that happy outcome of the excursion, walked back to masters' gate, and went back into the school. Soapy Sanders, far from satisfied, was hitting the open spaces at great speed. And Hazeldene of the Remove, crouching in the ivy, wondered with dizzy amazement whether he was dreaming.

He had heard it all—every word! He knew that Prout and Quelch had found Mr. Sanders and put him to flight. But who, then, was the breathless, panting fugitive, crouching less than a yard from him in the clustering ivy?

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Missing Man!

HAZEL, hardly breathed. Silence had fallen. Mr. Sanders was far away.

Prout and Quelch had gone in. But Hazel dared not stir.

Less than a yard from him crouched the man who had run down the lane from the road, for whom the two masters had mistaken Soapy.

Evidently, they were satisfied that they had got the right man, for they had gone in, letting the matter drop at that point.

And the man was here—here at Hazel's elbow in the clustering ivy. Who—what was he?

Hazel could not stir without revealing his presence. He dared not do that, in his terror of the unknown figure so close at hand. Who was the man—who and what could he be? Hazel only hoped that he would go.

The ivy rustled as the man moved. He was going. Reassured by the silence, he was stirring.

A hand touched Hazel as the man groped.

He could not repress a startled cry. It was echoed by an exclamation from his unseen neighbour.

Hazel's heart almost died within him. He was discovered. He would rather have been discovered by his Form-master than by this unknown, mysterious figure of the night.

A sudden light flashed out. It was a tiny beam from a small electric flash-lamp in an unseen hand. The light flashed on the junior's face.

A panting cry followed. "Hazel!"

Again it seemed to the junior that he must be dreaming. This unknown man, whoever he was, knew him—knew him, too, by the familiar name by which he was called in his family. His name was Peter, but he was always called Hazel by his relations and friends; even Marjorie called him Hazel. Who was this man who knew him so familiarly?

He staggered against the stone wall, utterly bewildered. Who was this man—who could he be?

"Hazel!" The man repeated the name in tones of wonder and, as the junior could detect, satisfaction and relief. "It is you, Hazel—you!"

There was a familiar tone in the voice. Hazel knew that he had heard it before. But who—

"Who are you?" he panted. "Look!"

The unseen man turned the light on his own face. Hazeldene stared at him. He saw a white, harassed face, barred by a dark moustache.

The moustache was unfamiliar, and for the moment it puzzled him. But he knew the features.

"Uncle John!" breathed Hazel, bewildered.

The light was shut off. John James Hazeldene slipped the flash-lamp back into his pocket.

He stood breathing deep and hard. Hazel pressed his hand to his damp forehead. It was his uncle, whom he had last seen at Brighton in his holidays, who stood there by the wall of the Cloisters.

Back into his mind flashed the S O S of the wireless. He had given that no heed.

His mind had been full of his own troubles for him to heed it. And it had seemed impossible that anything had happened to his uncle at Brighton, from whom he had had a letter hardly a week ago.

But he knew that the S O S was no mistake—as, indeed, he might have known all the time if he had given the matter any thought. His uncle was missing, and he was being inquired after.

And he was here! Missing from home, missing from Brighton, inquiries for him broadcast on the wireless—and he was here! Hazel felt his brain reeling under the bewildering mystery of it.

"It—it—it's really you, uncle?" he stammered.

"Don't you know me?"

"Yes, yes! But—what are you doing here? What does it mean? Why have you left Brighton—?"

Hazel broke off. He had heard of the rumour among the fellows of some unknown man lurking about the school. He knew who it was now. He remembered that Wharton had told of a man who had followed the chums of the Remove from Cliff House. This was the man—his uncle!

What could it mean?

"I've been trying to get in touch with

you, Hazel." The man's voice was low, unsteady, but clear. "I've hung about the school for days and nights. I—I've hung about Cliff House, hoping to see Marjorie. But—"

"Why couldn't you come to the school if you wanted to see me?"

Hazel asked the question dully, knowing that there must be some terrible, some overwhelming answer to it. Not for a light reason was John James Hazeldene acting in this strange way.

"I couldn't."

"Why not?"

"You've heard—nothing?"

"No," breathed Hazel. "What—what's happened?"

The man did not immediately reply to that question.

"It's not made public yet, then. I've

seen nothing in the papers, and you've heard nothing."

"But what—what—"

Hazel's voice died. What awful thing could have happened to cause his uncle to disappear from his home and lurk in a place where he was not known, disguised?

His heart was like lead in his breast. He forgot Sanders now; he forgot why he was outside the school walls at that hour.

His own trouble, which had loomed so large a short time ago, was as nothing to this—a mere trifle. He realised that.

What had happened?

"I had to see you, Hazel!" There was a tone of apology in the muttering

voice. "I—I've hung about for days, but—"

"It was you—you—"

Hazel choked.

"I thought I was in luck this afternoon. I saw a number of boys leave Cliff House, and knew that they were Greyfriars boys. I followed them, hoping to see you among them; but you—"

Hazel realised that this meeting would have come earlier had he not deserted the Cliff House party that afternoon.

"But w—what—" he muttered.

"I—I had taken a desperate resolve. I had to see you, Hazel. I—I was going to enter the school under cover of darkness, and—and—"

(Continued on next page.)



Come on, you football enthusiasts! Old "Flag-wagger" is waiting to solve those intricate Soccer problems for you. Send in your queries to "Linesman," c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

WHERE SHOULD THE CAPTAIN PLAY ?

THERE are several questions in my post-bag this week which have reference, in some way or another, to the captaincy side of football, and there are many interesting things to be said by way of replies to these questions. I have said, on a previous occasion, that so far as first-class football teams are concerned, the tendency of these times is for the captain to be more of a figure-head than was formerly the case.

The pre-match talks on tactics, and the decisions made beforehand as to the methods to be employed, relieve the captains of many of the big teams of their responsibilities in some directions. This, however, does not apply, to the same extent, to football teams lower down the scale. And to answer a question from C. W. Blount, of Belfast, I give it as my opinion that the most suitable position for the skipper of a football side to play in, other things being equal, is that of centre-half.

The player at centre-half is always at the heart of operations, and is undoubtedly in the best position to communicate any ideas he may have on methods to the rest of the team—whether defenders or attackers.

Strangely, however, England teams in the recent past have been largely captained by full-backs. Hapgood, the left full-back of Arsenal, was the captain of the England side against Ireland in the recent International match, and other full-backs who have skippered England sides of late have been Cooper and Blenkinsop, both of whom are, at the moment, on the staff of the Liverpool club.

THE ADVANTAGE OF WINNING THE TOSS !

AN interesting letter on a captaincy question reaches me from a "staunch reader" in Cheshire. "I am the captain of my Form's team," he writes, "and as such it is often

my duty to decide which way my side shall kick after winning the toss. Usually, I play against the wind, sun, slope, or against any other conditions during the first half of the game. I figure it out that as long as these things have to be played against sooner or later, it is better to do so while the players are fresh. I have noticed, however, that captains of the leading teams usually play with the advantages on their side in the first half. Which do you consider best ?"

While I would not go so far as to say definitely that my form captain friend is wrong, I am on the side of the skippers of the first-class teams in this connection. True, if there is a strong wind blowing, it has to be played against for at least half the game.

I asked the skipper of one of our leading sides why he always decided, on winning the toss, to play with the wind. His reply was, to my mind, conclusive.

"The fellows who have to play through the first half against the elements may get so tired with their efforts that they are unable to take full advantage of the conditions when they turn in their favour. I like my team to play, in the first half, with the wind behind them. They may then, without expending too much effort, get well in front, and will still be comparatively fresh after the interval to resist the efforts of opponents who have been highly tried, physically, during the first half."

In my view, that is the conclusive argument for having the wind at your backs during the first half if the toss is won. The same argument applies concerning a slope in the ground; play with it to get on top in the first half, and leave the others to do the battling while they are fresh. If there is neither wind nor slope, but merely the sun to contend with, obviously it is better to have it at your backs during the first half, as there is always the possibility of the clouds rolling up to obscure the sun in the later stages of the game.

REAL CAPTAINCY !

NOT often do I get questions from MAGNET readers about old-time players, but I have one in my post-bag this week concerning Ernest Needham, a one-time stalwart of Sheffield United. A. Squires, of Peterborough, asks me to settle an argument as to whether Needham was a recognised centre-half or wing-half. In reply, the recognised position of Needham when he played for Sheffield United and for England was left-half. And what a left-half he was, to be sure, as well as a great captain !

Seeing that we have been talking to-day about captains and their ways, I cannot do better than refer to an historic match in which Needham's captaincy paved the way to Sheffield United winning the Cup. This was in 1899. United had to play Liverpool in the semi-final, and one of the replayed games was on the Bolton Wanderers' ground. When there was less than a quarter of an hour left for play, Liverpool were two goals ahead, but Needham did not despair. He ordered a complete change of tactics which can be summed up in the words: "All up in attack."

Foulke was left to guard the goal, and Thickett remained as a full-back. But the rest of the Sheffield United team were sent up in attack, and such was the pressure brought to bear on the Liverpool goal as the result of such tactics that the ball was forced into the Liverpool net twice in the last eight minutes, and a game which seemed lost was saved.

Especially in a Cup-tie, it is no use playing on defence when the side is in arrears and the end is drawing nigh. Desperate measures are then called for. I am glad my reader friend recalled Ernest Needham, as his letter brought back to my mind an instance of real captaincy.

A Birkenhead reader is puzzled about a referee's decision given in a game in which he played not long ago. A shot was sent in which the goalkeeper, who was lying on the ground, could not possibly have saved. However, a full-back rushed up and hit the ball with his hand. The ball, however, bounced off his hand and went into the net, and the referee awarded a goal. I am asked whether this was a correct decision, or whether a penalty kick should have been awarded.

The decision was a good one. Referees are given definite instructions that in giving decisions they should not penalise the innocent side. Therefore, although an offence which justified a penalty kick had been committed, the referee was quite right in allowing a goal when the ball passed over the line from the full-back's hand.

"LINESMAN."

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Hazel shuddered. What would the fellows have thought had his uncle been detected entering the school like a thief in the night? This was bad enough, but it was better than that.

He groaned aloud.
"Why did you want to see me? Why—"

"First of all," said John James Hazeldene in a quiet tone, not without a touch of dignity, "to tell you, with my own lips, Hazel, that I am innocent!"

"Innocent!" groaned Hazel.

That meant that this man, his near relative, was accused of something! Of what?

"Yes, yes! Believe me my dear boy—believe me! I am as innocent as you are! Believe me, Hazel!"

There was a pleading note in his voice, but it was lost on Hazel. He was thinking of himself, of disgrace and shame, of the finger of scorn pointed at him in his school. What had this man done?

"Will you tell me what's happened?" Hazel almost snarled.

The answer came, stunning:

"There is money missing at the bank—a large sum! They believe that I am guilty! I—I had to run for it, or—"

"Or what?" Hazel's voice was husky and unnatural.

"Or I should now be in custody!" whispered John James Hazeldene.

Hazel pressed his burning forehead to the cold stone of the wall. He was feeling as if his brain would burst.

From the school came the distant sound of a bell.

Hazel started.

"That's dorm—dorm in five minutes! I've got to get in! I shall be missed! I—"

He grasped the ivy to clamber. A hurried hand was laid on his arm.

"Hazel, I must see you—speak to you! For the love of mercy, Hazel, don't turn down a despairing man! I must have help! Hazel—"

Hazel gritted his teeth.

"I've got to get in! I shall be missed—and sacked, very likely! Leave me alone! I'll see you to-morrow—somewhere!"

"Where? When?"

"After class—outside the school somewhere! Let me go! I can get out at five o'clock! Wait for me at the old oak in Priardale Wood—you remember I showed it to you when you came here last term! Wait there!"

Hazel tore himself away, clambered over the ivy, and dropped within the wall. He stumbled blindly through the dusky mist towards the House.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Under the Shadow!

"Who wouldn't be a sportsman?" asked Peter Todd. Some of the fellows laughed in the Remove dormitory.

Hazel did not even hear Peter's little joke. If he heard the laughter, he did not heed it.

He was like a fellow in a dream.

By sheer good luck, he had got back into the House in time to join the Remove before they went up to dorm. It was a matter of minutes, but he had done it. Loder of the Sixth was seeing lights out for the Remove that night, and Gerald Loder was thinking more of his own affairs than of his duties as a prefect. Now he was chatting in the

passage with his pal Walker while the Removites turned in, and he had not even glanced at Hazeldene, or even Loder would have noticed that there was something amiss with the junior.

All the Remove, of course, noticed it. The Bounder smiled sarcastically. Some fellows looked contemptuous. Some grinned. Some cracked little jokes, like Toddy. If this was how a sportsman looked after being sportive, it really did not seem as if there was much in it!

Everybody knew that Hazel had "played the goat" that day, and was up against it in consequence. He hardly troubled to keep his miserable worry a secret. In fact, he could not. When Hazel was down on his luck, that fact was always to be read in his face. Which excited more contempt than sympathy in the Remove. A fellow was expected to keep a stiff upper lip, whatever came to him—certainly not to wear his heart on his sleeve.

Sitting on the side of his bed, taking his boots off, Hazel seemed unconscious that he was looked at on all sides; that he was, in fact, getting the spotlight. Skinner began to sing:

"When I go on the razzle,
The gay razzle-dazzle!
Oh, don't I feel merry and bright!"

And there was a loud chuckle.

"Chuck it, Skinner!" said Bob Cherry. "Buck up, Hazel, old bean—you'll be last in bed."

Hazel did not heed.

Wharton would have spoken to him, and asked him how matters had gone; but it was impossible to speak, unheard, by a dozen other fellows. He was worried by Hazel's looks.

It was clear that the three pounds had not extracted him from his trouble. The dark cloud had descended on him thicker than ever.

Of what had happened outside the school walls, Wharton had, of course, no idea. He supposed it was still the affair of Sanders that was worrying Hazel. In point of fact, Hazel had almost forgotten the existence of Soapy Sanders.

Loder looked in at last.

Everybody was in bed by that time, but Hazel. Loder snapped at him.

"Don't keep me waiting, Hazeldene."

Hazel turned in.

Loder put out the lights, and shut the door and went, glad to be done with the Remove. After he was gone there was a buzz of talk from bed to bed.

"Anybody been backing losers?" asked Skinner.

"Shut up, Skinner!" granted Johnny Bull.

"Look here, Hazel, you silly ass!" said Vernon-Smith. "You'd better pull up. If you show a face like that to Quelch in the morning, he will spot you like a shot."

"Up before the Beak, and the jolly old sack!" said Snoop.

"Who wouldn't be a sportsman?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give the chap a rest, you fellows," said Harry Wharton. "What's the good of rubbing it in?"

"I say, you fellows, did you hear about Prout?" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I heard him jawing to Hacker and Capper, just before we came up. Prout's no end bucked! I say, I wonder if that man Sanders was hanging round to see Hazel? Was he, Hazel?"

Harry Wharton started.

"What's that about Sanders?" he exclaimed.

"Prout and Quelch went out to look

for the blighter who's been hanging about the school!" chuckled Bunter. "From what Prout was telling the other beaks, they got him, and Prout laid into him with his stick! Ho, he, he! It was that beery blighter Sanders at the Three Fishers. You know him, don't you, Smithy?"

"You silly ass" grunted the Bounder.

"Well, I suppose you know him, old chap, as you go to the Three Fishers sometimes to play billiards with Pon, of Highcliffe. Was he hanging about the school to see you, Smithy?"

"You blithering owl!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Skinner. "Did Prout drop on a pal of yours, Hazel? Is that why you're looking so merry and bright?"

No word came from Hazeldene. It was doubtful whether he heard the jests and gibes. The talk ran on, from bed to bed, but he neither listened nor spoke. He was still wide awake when all the rest of the Form had dropped off to sleep.

His eyes stared into the darkness of the dormitory.

Sanders—what did Sanders matter? Indeed, from the fact that the rascal had taken a thrashing from Prout, and bolted, it looked as if Wharton had been right—that his threat had been an empty one, and he dared not show up at Greyfriars at all.

Anyhow, it mattered little—now! A deeper, darker cloud of trouble was on Hazel's mind and heart. His relative—a near relative, a man who bore his name, was a fugitive from justice! Obviously, that was the only explanation of John James Hazeldene's proceedings. Innocent or guilty, he was believed guilty, and he was a hunted man. If it all came out—and it must surely come out—what then?

It did not occur to the selfish fellow that he was thinking wholly of himself! His uncle had been a kind man to him—he had had many holidays at Brighton, many a tip from Uncle John. Certainly it was serious enough, terrible enough, to be disgraced at his school by the action of a relative. But the same cloud was over his sister Marjorie, at Cliff House, if it came to that! And Hazel was not thinking of her! As usual, he was thinking of himself, and no one else.

Innocent! The man said that he was innocent in the same breath that he said he was believed guilty and had had to run! Innocent men were not believed guilty, and did not have to run! Not that it mattered much, one way or the other, so far as Hazel could see—if he was believed guilty, and found guilty, it came to the same thing for the relations on whom the shadow of his disgrace would fall! How could he ever hold his head up again at Greyfriars afterwards?

He did not ask how could Marjorie hold her head up at Cliff House. That would have flashed at once into the mind of a fellow like Bob Cherry or Harry Wharton. It did not flash into Hazel's.

If only he had never seen the man—never gone out that mad night—never learned of this— He might have kept clear of it! He was going to keep clear of it, as far as he could!

His distracted mind worked to that point!

Help—help a man hunted by justice! Mix himself up in a disgrace, that was bad enough, anyhow! Not likely! If only he had not met the man—if only he had not been fool enough, idiot enough, mad enough, to get mixed up with that dingy rascal, Sanders. But



A CHIP OF THE OLD BLOCK!

“Run away a minute, Bessie dear!” said Marjorie Hazeldene. “Hazel has something to tell me.” “Hadn’t I better mind your purse?” asked Bessie Bunter. “What?” “Well, I know you’ve got nearly a pound,” went on Bessie. “Not that I’ve looked in your purse, you know!”

for that, he would never have gone out of bounds—never have seen the slinking fugitive. Bad enough to see in the papers that he had been hunted down and arrested—bad enough without being mixed up in it.

Hazel’s feeling towards the man was concentrating in bitter resentment and anger.

He had to keep clear of him—quite clear! He must warn Marjorie to keep clear of him—he remembered Marjorie’s existence, with that thought coming into his mind. John James had admitted that he had hung about Cliff House, as well as Greyfriars—indeed, that was how he had come to fall foul of the Famous Five that afternoon! If he saw neither of them, he would go—surely he would go!

Marjorie must be warned, put on her guard.

He would have to speak to her plainly. She was fool enough—all girls were fools—to be sorry for the miserable wretch, and do something silly. Hazel was sorry for him, if it came to that; but he was going to do nothing silly, and neither was Marjorie. He had to see her at once and warn her. Luckily, he had a lot of influence over her; he could prevent her from making a fool of herself! As for the appointment at the oak in the wood, that was washed out—he would take good care not to go within a mile of it!

The wretched boy slept at last.

When he did sleep, it was soundly; and it seemed to him that his eyes had been closed only a minute when they opened again at the clang of the rising-bell, in the windy, March morning.

He turned wearily out of bed.

Harry Wharton’s eyes were on him when the Remove went down. There was the usual rush to be in time for prayers. After that the captain of the

Remove found an opportunity of speaking to Hazel.

“Isn’t it all right now, Hazel?” he asked quietly.

Hazel stared at him.

“What?” he snapped. “What do you mean?”

“Did you see Sanders last night?”

“No!”

“Then Prout—”

“That old fool barged in and scared him away!”

“Then you haven’t paid him?”

“Eh? No! What does it matter?”

Which was surprising enough to the captain of the Remove, after his experience with the scapegrace the previous day!

“You don’t think it matters now?” he asked.

“I don’t care, anyhow! Leave me alone!” muttered Hazel irritably.

“I’ve got to get leave from Quelch to go out after breakfast—”

He was hurrying away when Wharton caught his arm.

“Not to see Sanders?” he exclaimed.

“No, you fool!” snarled Hazel.

“Leave me alone!”

“Hold on a minute!” said Harry quietly. “If Sanders doesn’t matter—and I don’t suppose he does, if you’ve got a little nerve—what else is the matter? Is there something else?”

“Mind your own business!”

Wharton’s face flamed crimson. It was utterly against his inclination, utterly against the grain, that he had allowed Hazel to drag him into his dingy affairs. This was his reward!

He let go Hazel’s arm, and involuntarily his fists clenched. But he unclenched them again.

“I’ll mind my own business fast enough, you cheeky cur!” he said, between his teeth. “Get away from me!”

He turned his back to Hazeldene.

There was something else, he knew that now; something that worried and terrified the wretched Hazel more deeply than the dingy affair of Sanders. What it was, Wharton did not know, and did not want to know—and was determined not to know! Even for Marjorie’s sake he felt that he could not stand Hazel any more.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Blow for Marjorie!

MARJORIE HAZELDENE looked round quickly.

Miss Clara Trevlyn, of the Fourth Form at Cliff House School, sniffed.

It was quite an audible sniff!

Barbara Redfern smiled, and her smile was reflected on the face of Mabel Lynn.

They knew why Clara sniffed.

Clara was Marjorie’s best chum, but all the chumminess in the world could not make her like Marjorie’s brother.

The four girls were in the garden at Cliff House. With them was a plump girl who bore a remarkable likeness to William George Bunter, of the Greyfriars Remove, and to Sammy Bunter, of the Second Form. Bessie Bunter blinked through her big spectacles at the Greyfriars junior who was coming down the path.

“I say, you girls, that’s Marjorie’s brother!” she remarked. “I say, Marjorie, why didn’t you tell us he was coming?”

“I didn’t know,” answered Marjorie. Her eyes were rather anxiously on Hazel’s face. In the bright sunlight it looked pale and worn and harassed.

Her own bright face clouded.

She had wondered, when Hazel failed

to turn up to tea the day before, whether it meant that he was getting into a new scrape. He looked now as if it meant precisely that.

Miss Clara had no doubt of it. She knew a good deal of Hazel and his ways. She had no doubt whatever that the scapegrace was in some new trouble, and had come to land it on Marjorie, as usual. Which irritated Miss Clara excessively. Hence her audible sniff!

Hazel came up to the group. He barely raised his hat to the other girls, looking at his sister.

"I want to speak to you, Marjorie!" he said.

"Very well," said Marjorie.

Barbara and Mabel were already moving away. Miss Clara hesitated, perhaps thinking of giving Marjorie's brother a piece of her mind; but she followed the others. Bessie Bunter did not go. It was not only in looks that Miss Bunter resembled her brothers at Greyfriars. She took a deep and abiding interest in affairs that did not concern her.

"I've had a letter from the mater, at Cannes, and Quelch gave me leave to come over and see you!" added Hazel, rather loudly.

The words were intended to reach Babs and Mabs and Clara. They did reach them, but did not convince them. All of them knew that a letter from his parents abroad would not have brought Hazel over to Cliff House that morning.

"I say—" began Bessie Bunter.

Hazel drew his sister away. Bessie, however, rolled after them.

"I say—" she recommenced.

"Run away a minute, Bessie dear!" said Marjorie. "Hazel has something to tell me."

"Hadn't I better mind your purse?" asked Bessie, blinking at her.

"What?"

"Well, I know you've got nearly a pound," said Bessie. "Not that I've looked in your purse, you know—"

"Go away!" said Marjorie. For once she snapped.

"Well, you know how soft you are, old thing!" argued Bessie. "The last time Hazel came to see you he cleared you out—"

"Be quiet!"

"Well, you know he did!" said Bessie. "I jolly well saw him, and heard him, too! It was seven shillings and sixpence, and—"

Marjorie, with a pink face, walked away with Hazel, whose face was crimson.

"I say, don't walk so fast!" gasped Bessie Bunter. "I was going to say that—"

Hazel and Marjorie did walk fast, however, and disappeared down another path in the garden shrubberies.

Bessie was left gasping.

"Fat little beast!" growled Hazel. "Just like her brother at Greyfriars! I—I say, Marjorie—" He paused, hesitating.

"Yes, what is it, Hazel?" asked Marjorie patiently. She had no doubt what it was, and her face clouded.

Her brother sneered.

"It's not that!" he snapped. "I suppose a fellow can come to see his sister without borrowing money of her every time?"

Marjorie might have rejoined that her affectionate brother did not often see her for any other reason. But she did not think of doing so. She waited for him to go on.

"Have you heard anything?" he asked, in a low voice. "Not from the pater or mater—I don't mean that—"

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"You said you had had a letter from mother at Cannes—"

"Yes, I said so," answered Hazel irritably. "So I had, a few days ago! I've forgotten what was in it. I told Quelch that to get leave out. I had to tell him something. Those girls, too, they'll wonder why I've barged in here this morning. I said that to stuff them. I'm not likely to let them know why I really came."

Marjorie was silent.

"I mean about Uncle John, at Brighton!" muttered Hazel. "You haven't heard from him—or seen him?"

"No!" Marjorie raised her eyebrows. That was not in the least what she had expected to hear.

"He's in trouble!" muttered Hazel. "I've seen him! I—I was out of the school last evening, and—and ran into him. He—he's hanging about here secretly—"

"But what—why—" Marjorie was amazed.

"I've come over here to warn you!" breathed Hazel. "He's had to cut and run from Brighton! He told me so! He says there's money missing from the bank, and—and they think that—that he—"

"Hazel!"

"He said he was innocent—fat lot

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that matters if they get him and send him to prison! I suppose he did it if they think he did! Anyhow, he's on the run!" groaned Hazel. "Dodging the police, I suppose, though it's not been made public yet. They were asking for him on the wireless yesterday! Anybody might have heard. I say, Marjorie—"

The girl stood quite still. Her face had grown white. Hazel, in his deep concern for himself, did not realise what a stunning blow he had struck.

"Marjorie! It's rotten of him—rotten to come here! Thank goodness our people are abroad, and he can't stick them! But—he says he wants help—I suppose that's what he's here for. You or me—I dare say he doesn't care which of us he drags into it," said Hazel bitterly. "Rotter—rotter—to land it on somebody else like this!"

Marjorie looked at him, but did not speak. For the moment she could not. Neither would she have pointed out that Uncle John James was not the only member of the family who landed his troubles on others. It was the act of a weak character, no doubt; but it did not lie in Hazel's mouth to reproach his uncle with it.

"I—I was so taken aback I—I said I'd see him again!" muttered Hazel. "Of course, I can't! And I won't!

Goodness knows what will happen if he goes on hanging about here. He's got a false moustache on. Think of that! If he was decent, this is the last place he would come to! I suppose he wants to get out of the country! He will want us to help him! We can't!"

"He is innocent, Hazel!" said Marjorie quietly. "Nothing will ever make me believe that Uncle John has done wrong."

Hazel shrugged his shoulders irritably. "It comes to the same thing, I tell you, if the police are after him."

"But are they?" asked Marjorie. Her head was cooler and steadier than her brother's, and she was not thinking wholly of herself like Hazel. "If it was a police matter, it would surely be in the papers."

"Somebody's after him, or he wouldn't be on the run, and in hiding."

"Yes, I—I suppose so. But—"

"What's the good of talking! Girls can do nothing but talk! I came here to warn you not to go out—to take care to keep clear of him—I shall take jolly good care, I know that! If he can't get in touch with either of us, he will clear—at least, I hope he will."

"But you say you arranged to meet him again."

"That's washed out, of course! I was taken by surprise. He ought not to have asked me, or seen me at all—you know that."

"Where were you going to meet him?"

"What does that matter? Under the old oak in Friardale Wood, if you want to know!" said Hazel irritably. "I shan't go near the place."

"When?" asked Marjorie quietly.

"At five o'clock this afternoon—after class! But I shan't go! What are you asking me for?"

"He will wait there?"

"Let him wait!" said Hazel viciously. "I wish him joy of it! It's little enough he will see of me."

"Hazel! He cannot have done wrong—it is some dreadful mistake—and he has been very good to us. When father was in difficulties it was Uncle John who helped us through—both of us would have had to leave school at one time, if he had not come to father's help."

"What's the good of raking that up now?" asked Hazel. "What he may have done for us doesn't give him any right to land his disgrace on us, does it?"

"No; but—"

"It will be awful, anyhow. But if either of us gets mixed up in it—you can see for yourself!"

Marjorie's lip quivered.

"It may not be as bad as you think, Hazel! He cannot have been openly accused, or it would be in the newspapers. In any case, if he is in need of help—at least we must hear what he has to say—what he wants us to do!"

"You fool!" Hazel fairly snarled. "Are you advising me to meet him this afternoon—meet a hunted man? Are you mad?"

"No!" said Marjorie, with a deep breath. "But one of us must see him, Hazel!"

He stared at her.

"You?" he stammered.

"Yes, if you do not wish—"

"Oh, you're mad!" panted Hazel. "I tell you, we've got to leave him alone—we've got to keep clear of him and his disgrace—as clear as we can. I came over here especially to warn you—I tell you—"

"Oh, here you are!" Bessie Bunter came rolling down a path in the shrubbery. "I say, Marjorie—"

Hazel lowered his voice to a whisper: "I've got to get back! I've warned

you! Don't make a fool of yourself. I was afraid you would. Girls have no sense! Well, I've warned you!"

He turned away with that and hurried off. Bessie Bunter blinked after him through her big spectacles, and then blinked at Marjorie.

"I say, Marjorie— Why?"—Bessie's eyes opened wide behind her spectacles—"I—I say, old thing, you're not blubbing, are you?"

"No!" gasped Marjorie, setting her lips. "Nothing of the kind!"

"I say, I loathe that brother of yours," said Bessie. "I say, has he bagged the whole pound? You look just like blubbing, I can tell you! I say, Marjorie, old dear, I've got some chocolate—have some of my chocolate, old thing!"

The sight of a sticky chunk, held out generously in a grubby, fat hand, brought a faint smile to Marjorie's pale face. But she shook her head, and walked away quickly. Bessie blinked after her dubiously through her spectacles. Then she blinked at the chocolate in the grubby hand, also dubiously. Finally she seemed to make up her mind—and ate the chocolate.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Grimes Wants to Know!

HENRY SAMUEL QUELCH, the master of the Remove, eyed Hazeldene several times in class that morning.

Every time he looked at him the expression on Mr. Quelch's brow was a little grimmer than before.

Hazel did not observe it—he was too deep in his own miserable thoughts. Other fellows observed it—and Skinner winked at the Bouncer, who grinned, while Harry Wharton felt rather anxious.

In spite of his determination to have nothing further to do with Hazel and his dingy affairs, the captain of the Remove could not drive them quite out of his mind.

If Hazel came a mucker at Greyfriars it meant a heavy blow for his sister at Cliff House; and Wharton was concerned for Marjorie, if not for Hazel.

It was obvious that Quelch was suspicious.

What had leaped to the eyes of all the Remove was hardly likely to escape the gimlet eye of Henry Samuel Quelch.

And Hazel, in class that morning, really seemed to be asking for it. He fell into deep, moody thought—he gave random answers—he made such a series of mistakes and blunders as even Billy Bunter had never been guilty of.

That he had something on his mind was perfectly clear to anyone who took any notice of him at all, and Quelch took a good deal of notice, and very keen notice.

Quelch, of course, knew that the dingy Sanders must have been hanging about the school to see some Greyfriars fellow. He remembered the footstep that he and Prout had heard in the quad in the mist last night. Hazel had been under suspicion on previous occasions. Now he was looking as if he were going to execution. Quelch would have been much less keen than he was if he had failed to put two and two together.

Nobody in the Remove was surprised—except Hazel himself—when, on the Form being dismissed for break, the Remove master called to Hazel to stay behind in the Form-room.

The juniors marched out, leaving Hazel standing by Mr. Quelch's desk, the colour coming and going in his face. Quelch, sitting at the high desk, eyed him, but did not speak till the rest of the Form were out of hearing.

"What is the matter with you, Hazeldene?" asked the Remove master quietly.

"Nothing, sir."
"You do not look as if nothing was the matter with you, my boy." Quelch's voice was not unkindly. He knew that Hazel was a weak and irresolute fellow, and experience had taught him to make allowances for human weakness. "You look as if you were in great trouble."

No answer.
"Last night," said Mr. Quelch, "a disreputable character was found waiting by the school wall. You have heard of that—I believe the matter has been talked of among the boys?"

"Yes, sir!" breathed Hazel.
"Do you know anything of this man? His name is Sanders."

Hazel choked.
"He was here, there can be no doubt, to communicate with some boy in the school. Are you the boy concerned?"

No reply.
Mr. Quelch waited for an answer. It did not come. His face grew less kindly and more grim.

"I must insist upon an answer, Hazeldene," he said. "This is a very serious matter."

"N-n-no, sir!" stammered Hazel. He hardly realised that he was speaking falsely. He dared not tell the truth.

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch, compressing his lips. "I hope that you are speaking truthfully, Hazeldene. I shall ask you no more questions. But I shall give you a warning. I have communicated with Inspector Grimes, at Courtfield, explained the matter to him, and asked him to speak to the constable on the beat."

Hazel started violently.
"If that man, or any other man of the same character, is detected lurking near the school," said Mr. Quelch quietly, "it will be a matter for police investigation. You will realise how very serious it would be for a boy in the school to be concerned in such a matter. If you have told me the truth—well and good! If not, you are now warned of the possible consequences of wrongdoing! Think over this, Hazeldene. You may go now."

Hazel almost staggered from the room.

Mr. Quelch, with a very serious face, walked to his study.

He stood at his study window for some minutes, looking out into the quadrangle. At a distance, Harry Wharton & Co. and some more of the Remove were punting a footer, with cheery faces and yells. He saw Hazeldene pass them, with clouded face and slouching gait, his hands deep in his pockets. Bob Cherry roared to Hazel to join up, but he slouched on, unheeding.

The Remove master shook his head gravely.

Buzzzzzz!
He turned from the window at the sound of the telephone-bell, and picked up the receiver.

"Inspector Grimes speaking from

Courtfield," came through. "Mr. Quelch—"

"Speaking!"
"About that matter you spoke of this morning, sir—sorry to take up your time—but if you can tell me anything further—"

"In what way?" asked Mr. Quelch, rather surprised. He had not expected this little matter to interest the police-inspector very much.

"The fact is, sir, that the matter may be of some interest to us. From what you told me, a man has been hanging about the school for some days past."

"The man Sanders," answered Mr. Quelch. "He was detected last night by Mr. Prout and myself, as I told you—"

"I have seen Sanders, sir, since you called me up, and he assures me that he has never hung about the school, except on that one occasion when he was caught by you and Mr. Prout."

"You would not accept the word of such a character, Mr. Grimes?"

"Scarcely, sir. But there is some reason to think that he may be stating the facts. It is possible that some other man may have been on the scene; I have a certain reason for thinking it possible."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch.
"From what you stated, several boys at different times have seen the man hanging about."

"That is so."
"Does their description of him tally wholly with the description of the man Sanders?"

Mr. Quelch thought for a moment.

"No," he said, after a pause, "not wholly, Mr. Grimes. Indeed, I should not have supposed the man to be Sanders had we not caught that rascal on the spot. That seemed to me to settle the matter definitely, however."

"No doubt. But if there was another man—" There was a keen note in the inspector's voice. "If you can give me any hints, it may help us to get hold of a certain party we are very anxious to see, sir."

"I would gladly do anything in my power, Mr. Grimes," said the Remove master. "The boys who have seen the man appear to have caught only glimpses of him, except on one occasion. Yesterday, I have been told, some boys

(Continued on next page.)

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of my Form came into actual contact with him and they must certainly know whether he was Sanders or not."

"Good!" said Mr. Grimes.

"If you will hold the line I will question them."

"Certainly!"

Mr. Quelch put down the receiver, stepped to his study window, and called to Harry Wharton.

The captain of the Remove left the punt about and came running up to the window.

"Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, "I have been told that while you and your friends were out of gates yesterday you came in contact with a person who was following you."

Wharton coloured.

"We—we bagged him, sir," he stammered. "We thought he must be a footpad, or something of the kind, and—"

"I am not blaming you, my boy. I simply desire to know who and what the man was. Have you ever seen a man named Sanders?"

"Yes, sir; he's pretty well known round about here. I've seen him hanging about the towpath."

"Was he the man who followed you yesterday?"

"Oh, no, sir!" said Harry in surprise. "Quite a different man."

"You are sure of that, Wharton?"

"Oh, yes, sir! He was smaller, better dressed, and a different class altogether. I can't imagine what he was up to, but he looked a respectable man," said Harry. "We noticed he had a false moustache on; it nearly came off in the tussle. We thought that jolly queer."

"Thank you, Wharton."

The junior went back to his friends. Mr. Quelch picked up the receiver again and repeated to Inspector Grimes what the captain of the Remove had told him.

"By George!" said the inspector, and Mr. Quelch detected the deep note of satisfaction in his voice. "It looks—" He broke off. "Thank you very much, Mr. Quelch. You may be assured that the constable on the beat will keep a sharp eye—a very sharp eye—open for any suspicious characters hanging about the school."

And Mr. Grimes rang off, leaving the Remove master somewhat puzzled. He was quite unaware that a gentleman of the name of Hazeldene was "missing," at the same time as a large sum of money, from the Brighton and County Bank, and that Mr. Grimes, knowing that that missing gentleman had a relative at Greyfriars, had been uncommonly interested by the news that a mysterious person was hanging about the school.

Hazel, by his folly, had drawn official attention to the very last spot to which he would have wished it to be drawn.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Up to Wharton!

"KEEP out!"

Wharton spoke curtly.

Hazel stopped in the doorway of Study No. 1.

Harry Wharton's manner was uncomplimentary. Frank Nugent smiled faintly. The two juniors had run up to the study after class to write the lines Wingate had given them the evening before. Hazel was the cause of that imposition but if he knew it he certainly did not care.

"Look here, Wharton—" muttered Hazel, apparently surprised and taken aback by the greeting he received.

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"You dragged me into your rotten business!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "Since then you've told me to mind my own affairs! You can't have it both ways."

"I—I never meant—"

"I don't care what you meant! I'm fed-up with you! Keep out of my study!"

Hazel stood in the doorway, his face so pale and harassed that Wharton's heart smote him the next moment. He did not enter—but he did not go.

"Well, look here—what is it?" asked Harry, relenting. "Come in if you like. You can't expect to please a fellow, I suppose, by telling him to mind his own business after landing your rotten troubles on him."

Hazel came in.

"It's not about myself," he muttered huskily; "it's Marjorie—"

"Oh!" Wharton's expression changed. "What—"

"I—I want some advice—help—I don't know what! You've got a lot of influence over Marjorie—more than I have, I think," said Hazel bitterly. "I'm her brother, but she takes no notice of my opinion. If she makes a fool of herself goodness knows what will happen! I—I feel at the end of my tether."

"You silly ass!" said Frank Nugent. "Marjorie's got more sense in her little finger than you ever had in your brain-box."

"Go ahead, Hazel," said Wharton quietly. He could only conclude that the wretched scapegrace had dragged Marjorie into his troubles.

"I—I want to speak to you alone. I can't shout it out to all the Form," muttered Hazel.

"You can speak before Nugent."

"I can't—and won't!"

Nugent looked at him and then rose quietly from the table.

"Look here, Franky, don't go!" exclaimed Wharton. "It's all rot! And I'm not going to have any secrets with Hazel—"

"If you understood—" muttered Hazel.

"I shall understand if you tell me. And you can tell Nugent, too. You know we've no secrets from one another."

"I can't!"

"I'd better cut, old chap," said Frank. "I can do my lines in Oggy's study."

Wharton grunted impatiently, but he nodded assent. Nugent left the study, and Hazel carefully closed the door after him.

Then he turned and looked at Wharton, but he did not speak. Now that he had the opportunity it seemed impossible for him to get it out—whatever it was.

"I've got lines to do," said Harry. "For goodness' sake, cough it up, Hazel! If you've landed some trouble on Marjorie, of course I'll do anything I can."

"I haven't."

"Oh! Then what is it—money?"

"Money? No! That reminds me."

Hazel drew three pound notes from his pocket and threw them on the table. "That's yours. I don't want it now. I'm not going to pay anything to that swindling rogue Sanders. I don't care what he does!"

Wharton smiled faintly as he put the currency notes into his notecase. All the school knew of Mr. Prout laying his stick about Soapy Sanders. Hazel had lost his fear of the man simply because he understood now that there was nothing to be feared from him.

"I—I—I saw him when I was out of bounds last night—" muttered Hazel.

"Sanders?" asked Harry, mystified.

"No, no, no; the other man."

"The man who followed us—the man we handled?"

"Yes!" Hazel's pale face flushed and became pale again. "I—I said I'd see him again. But—but I won't. I went over to Cliff House to tip Marjorie to keep out of his way, but—but I believe she's going to see him—" He broke off at the blank, utter amazement in Wharton's face.

"What on earth are you talking about?" asked Harry. "Inky thought the man was trying to spot some fellow he knew. Were you the fellow?"

"Yes."

"Then you know the man?"

"Yes, yes!"

"And Marjorie knows him?" asked Wharton blankly.

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"Who is he, then?"

Hazel opened his lips and closed them again. He had come there to tell his dismal secret—leaning on a stronger nature than his own, as usual. But his tongue seemed to cleave to his mouth.

"I can't understand if you don't explain, Hazel," said Harry as patiently as he could. "If you don't want to tell me, goodness knows I don't want to know."

"I—I do! But—but—"

"But what?"

"You'll keep it dark—even from Nugent!" said Hazel huskily. "It—it may never get into the papers—I don't know—there's nothing so far, at any rate! And on the wireless they only said he was missing—nothing more than that. I think I should die of shame if they knew up and down the school. My uncle—"

"Your uncle!" repeated Wharton. "What do you mean?"

"You've heard us speak of him—Uncle John at Brighton. He's in the Brighton and County Bank there. We've had holidays with him—Marjorie and I—you've heard—"

"What about him?" Wharton remembered the S.O.S. "Oh! You mean that he's missing—you're alarmed about him—"

"No, no, no!"

"Then what—" It came into Wharton's mind with a rush, and he jumped. "You don't mean—"

He stared at Hazel.

"Yes," almost whispered Hazel.

"He's the man! He—he—he's suspected of something at Brighton—he says he never did it—but—but they're after him."

"Good heavens!" muttered Wharton.

"I—I ran into him when I went out to see Sanders—last night—how I wish I hadn't!" groaned Hazel. "I don't quite know how the matter stands—there can't be a warrant out for him—but—but he's on the run! He's been hanging about here, trying to get into touch with me—I had only a few words with him—he wants help of some sort. Of course, I can't get mixed up in it. Would you?"

"That depends," said Harry. "If people were idiots enough to accuse my uncle, Colonel Wharton, of anything, I'd stand by him against all the world. But you know your own uncle better than I do."

Hazel winced.

"If he's innocent, it must look bad, or he wouldn't be on the run," he said. "I tell you I can't get mixed up in it, or Marjorie either. But she got out of me where I fixed to meet him, and—and I believe she's going, as I said



The door flew open suddenly, and Frank Nugent looked in, with a startled face. "You're wanted in Quelch's study, Hazel," he said. "Inspector Grimes is with Quelch!" Hazel's face became ghastly. "Not—not a police inspector——" "Yes," answered Nugent. "Old Grimey from Courtfield!" Hazel staggered, and leaned on the table for support.

I wouldn't go. I can't stop her—she won't take any notice of me when she makes up her mind. You know how obstinate girls can be when they think they're in the right."

"If Marjorie thinks she's in the right, she is in the right," answered Harry. "I'd trust her judgment sooner than yours."

"It doesn't make any difference. We've both got to keep clear of a man who's being hunted!" said Hazel shrilly. "She won't listen to me—but if you advised her—she thinks a lot of your opinion. Tell her what I've told her—make her understand——"

Wharton understood now what Hazel wanted. But he was not at all sure that he was going to do what was wanted.

"You'll do it?" asked Hazel eagerly. "It's not easy to tell you this—but—but I want you to help me. Make Marjorie keep clear of him. If he can't get any help here, he will go—he's sure to go. He's going to be at the old oak in Friardale Wood, at five—you know the place. If you'd cut across on your bike, you'd be in time to stop her, if she's going——"

"Marjorie knows best——"

"Oh, don't be a fool!" almost shrieked Hazel. "I thought you'd understand, or I'd never have told you. Suppose it came out that she's helped him! It may be against the law, for all I know! She would be dragged into it—and that means that I should be, too! How do you think I could ever hold my head up here again, after that?"

Wharton's lip curled. It seemed natural to Hazel to think of himself first. It did not seem so natural to the captain of the Remove.

"Look here, Hazel," he said. "Very likely you're making a mountain out of a molehill. That SOS yesterday only said that your uncle was missing. It

can't be more than a suspicion so far, and very likely he's made it worse by bolting. Anyhow, if Marjorie thinks she ought to see him, and hear what he has to say, she's right. She's got more sense than you, and more pluck, too."

Hazel clenched his hands.

"Then you won't help me?"

"I can't butt in, unless Marjorie asks me to. How can I?" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "I think——"

The door flew open, and Frank Nugent looked in, with a startled face.

"Hazel still here?" he asked. "Oh, here you are! You're wanted, Hazel."

"Oh, shut up! I can't come!"

"It's Quelch—in his study——"

"Hang Quelch!"

"Old Grimey is with him!" said Frank. "You'd better go."

"Inspector Grimes!" Hazel's face became ghastly. "Not—not a police-inspector, from——"

"Yes—old Grimey from Courtfield."

Hazel staggered and leaned on the study table for support. His knees sagged under him; his face was ghastly.

"What the dickens——" exclaimed Nugent, in amazement. "What——"

Hazel groaned.

"Then it's all up!" he muttered.

"All up! It will be all over the school— Oh, heavens!"

He staggered out of the study. Frank stared after him and then looked at Wharton. Wharton's face was darkly clouded. After what Hazel had told him, he could have little doubt what the police-inspector's call meant. He had come to see Hazel—it could mean only one thing! In some way Mr. Grimes knew or suspected that John James Hazeldene was in the neighbourhood of Greyfriars School—

and that Hazel might know something about it.

Did that mean that there was now a warrant out for the missing man?

Wharton shuddered.

"Harry—what——" breathed Nugent.

"I can't tell you—it's Hazel's secret! Let me think!" muttered Wharton.

He glanced at his watch.

It was ten minutes to five! Hazel, irresolute as usual, had left it too late before he spoke, even if Wharton had been willing to do as he wanted. There was no time to stop Marjorie, if she was going to keep the appointment at the old oak in Friardale Wood.

Hazel was with his Form-master and Mr. Grimes—the weak-willed, selfish, frightened fellow, under the steely eyes and searching questions of the police-inspector! Would he—could he—keep a secret in such a situation? Wharton knew that he would not and could not! In a very few minutes Mr. Grimes would extract from Hazel all that he knew—including the appointment to meet the hunted man at the old oak in the wood.

Wharton clenched his hands. He knew it was certain—and then? Mr. Grimes had not come to the school for nothing—he was not wasting his time! He wanted something—and what he wanted could only be John James Hazeldene! And if he drew the facts from Hazel, as he certainly would, he would head direct for the appointed place, and—

Marjorie would be there!

For two or three minutes Harry Wharton thought it over. Frank Nugent watched him in wonder, without speaking. It did not take Wharton long to make up his mind. He ran to the door of the study.

"Harry!" exclaimed Nugent.

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"Can't stop now!"

He ran down the stairs.

Harry Wharton was wheeling out his bike when Inspector Grimes came out of the House, with a quiet expression of grim satisfaction on his ruddy features, and strode away to the gates.

Mr Grimes started, at a swinging stride, for Friardale Wood, and did not take any particular notice of a Greyfriars junior who whizzed past him on a bicycle. But Harry Wharton took note of Mr Grimes, and of the direction in which he was heading—and he drove at the pedals till the bike fairly flew.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Just in Time!

MARJORIE HAZELDENE stopped under the spreading branches of the old oak, by the path in Friardale Wood.

It was a few minutes to five.

The path was a narrow track, seldom trodden, winding through the wood; the spot a very lonely one. Utterly lonely it looked as the girl arrived, breathing rather quickly, a flush in her cheeks.

No one was to be seen—but that did not prove that John James Hazeldene was not on the spot. In the circumstances, it was likely that he would be early, but that he would keep out of sight while waiting for his nephew to arrive.

If he was watching from the thickets he could not fail to see the Cliff House girl as she stood waiting.

Less than a minute elapsed before there was a rustle, a mass of bushes parted, and a man stepped into view.

"Marjorie!" he exclaimed.

Watching for the arrival of his Greyfriars nephew, he had witnessed the arrival of his Cliff House niece.

Marjorie scanned his face anxiously—and read its worn, harassed look—the lined forehead and sunken eyes.

It was not a strong face—it was a good deal like Hazel's, and in nothing more like than in its irresolution. Normally, it was a kindly and amiable face. But it was not that of a man capable of standing up firmly to sudden and unexpected trouble.

"You are here, Marjorie!" He interrupted her greeting. "I was amazed to see you come—how did you know?" He broke off, and answered his own question, "Hazel told you!"

"Yes!" said Marjorie.

"Why did he not come? Did he send you?"

"He—he could not come." Marjorie coloured painfully. She would not admit even to herself, that her brother would not keep the appointment he had made, because he was weak and selfish and scared.

But Mr. Hazeldene probably guessed.

"You mean—he would not come—he has changed his mind—and he has sent you—I might have expected something better of my own nephew!" he said bitterly. "If his father were in England now, he would help me. But you cannot—a schoolgirl. It was foolish of him to send you—"

"He did not send me, uncle—I—I came!" said Marjorie quietly. "I had to see you—to know what has happened! I know that you are innocent, whatever it is."

He gave her a grateful look.

"I am afraid that Hazel does not feel so sure of it!" he said. "But you know me better, my dear! You know that I would cut off my hand rather than touch money that is not mine."

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"I know it!" said Marjorie. "But—what—"

"Money is missing—I was called into the manager's office—I am suspected—I do not yet know whether it is placed in the hands of the police, but I think it must be, by this time," he said hurriedly. "Never mind the details—that is how the matter stands—five thousand pounds in banknotes is missing, and they think—" He broke off. "It looks—it looks—I know what it looks like! The money was in my hands, and it is gone!"

"But if you faced it—"

The look that came over his face at the suggestion reminded her of her brother. He was not the man to face it!

"I tell you it would be useless—it has been planned I believe to put it on me—it means condemnation—prison!" He shivered. "I tell you, the evidence is overwhelming—the manager, my friend for twenty years, believed that I was guilty—indeed, I think he meant to give me the chance to run, before calling in the police—I did not lose the chance! I was watched—I know I was watched—but I got out of Brighton—in disguise." His hand went to the false moustache on his upper lip. "Now—even if I wished, I could not go back—what does my flight look like?"

Marjorie sighed.

She did not believe that evidence could be so overwhelming against an innocent man. But by his flight, the unhappy man had made it overwhelming.

Innocent or guilty, who could fail to believe him guilty, when he had fled—throwing up everything to save himself?

An hour of panic had condemned him! Now, doubtless, it was too late to undo that mistake! But if he had stood firm—as an honest man was expected to do—

"I am glad to see you, my dear girl!" His voice was hurried, jerky. His nerves were on the jump. "If only to hear you say that you believe me—"

"Yes, yes! But—"

"I have tried several times to see you, about your school—so that you could get word to Hazel. He could help me—if he liked! I must get away—we are on the coast here—a boat can be hired to land me on the French coast—I can take my chance after that! I have friends in France who will stand by me—men I knew in the War. If the truth comes out, I can return—but till then—till then—"

He broke off, and resumed in the same hurried tone:

"I wanted to get word to Hazel—he could help me! But I see now that he will not—he was always weak, always irresolute—never able to face trouble or difficulty like a man—" It seemed to occur to John James, as he was speaking, that in that Hazel rather resembled his uncle, for he broke off again, flushing. "I will not judge him! But I have lost my hope in him—I must contrive for myself! You shall not be drawn into it, Marjorie—you a school-girl."

"But—"

"No! No! I am glad I have seen you, my dear—but go now—go! You shall not run the slightest risk of being dragged into my disgrace! I shall contrive somehow—"

His voice died away, at the sound of a bicycle on the narrow grassy path. He spun round in alarm.

"Only a schoolboy!" he breathed.

"Harry!" whispered Marjorie. Her startled eyes fixed on the cyclist.

"You know him?"

"It is Harry Wharton, of Greyfriars—"

friend of my brother's!" Marjorie caught her breath. "He is coming here—can Hazel have told him—"

She stood watching the Greyfriars junior, as he came. The bike flew along the grassy path.

As Wharton drew nearer, John James Hazeldene recognised him as one of the juniors who had seized him in Friardale Lane the day before. He breathed hard.

With a rush and a whirr, Harry Wharton dashed up. He jumped from the bike, letting it reel against the thickets that lined the path. Panting, he ran to the two still figures under the oak tree.

"Marjorie!" he panted. "I came—"

"Hazel has told you—"

"Yes! This is your uncle?"

"My uncle—an innocent man!" said Marjorie, in a low, but firm voice. "If you know—"

"I came to warn you!" panted Wharton. "You must not be here when Inspector Grimes comes—"

"Inspector Grimes!"

"He is coming here!" breathed Harry. "I passed him on the way—I beat him on the bike, but he will be here—he—he found out somehow." Nothing would have induced Wharton to tell Marjorie how Mr. Grimes had found out what he knew. "He knows that—that your uncle is here—I'm sure of that—I passed him coming in this direction!"

The hunted man gave a groan.

"I am lost!"

Wharton looked at him. If there was a touch of scorn in his look he could not help it. This man was Hazel over again, grown older!

"If you are in danger, sir, you are warned," said Harry quietly. "I don't know whether I've done right or wrong, but I had to come and warn Marjorie. Marjorie, you mustn't be found here. For goodness' sake—" The girl did not stir. "Marjorie, it would mean a fearful row at Cliff House. You can't let yourself be drawn into this—"

"Go, my dear child—go!" breathed the man. "I will take my chance. Go!"

He darted into the underwood and vanished.

Marjorie gave a cry.

"He is gone," said Harry. "Marjorie, my dear girl, if Grimes finds you here, what will he think? For goodness' sake—"

She nodded, and they hurried away up the path together, Wharton wheeling his bicycle.

Five minutes later a stout, portly figure emerged from the wood and scanned the space under the oak. Inspector Grimes looked round him long and hard looked at his watch, and then backed into the thickets—and waited!

Mr. Grimes' impression was that Hazel's uncle had not yet arrived to keep the appointment, and, keeping in cover, Mr. Grimes waited for him to arrive.

He waited long. It was not till darkness was falling that Mr. Grimes realised that there was nothing doing and took his homeward way in a very disgruntled frame of mind.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Secret to Keep!

HARRY WHARTON reached Greyfriars in time to answer his name at calling-over.

When the fellows came out of Hall his friends gathered round him.

(Continued on page 28.)



THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Aboard the Sea Spider, the strangest and most deadly steel craft ever constructed to move under the seas, Ulverst, the greatest U-boat commander Germany ever had, accompanied by a competent crew of men, sets out to wage war against the world. The first vessel to fall a prey to the Sea Spider is the bullion-carrier Minneapolis. While transferring the bullion boxes from the sunken vessel, one of the Spider's divers is attacked by a swarm of dreadful, human-like sea creatures, fully six feet in length. Ulverst makes a heroic attempt to rescue his shipmate, but fails. Driving on through the surging seas in mid-Atlantic, the Spider eventually reaches the ruins of a vast underground city—the lost city of Atlantis. Accompanied by Wesel, his second-in-command, and Surgut, Ulverst is exploring the vaults which house the treasure chests when a monster crab appears suddenly from out of the darkness. Returning to the Spider, the trio prepare a high explosive. This is deposited in the vault and Braden presses a button which explodes the charge.

(Now read on.)

WEALTH UNTOLD!

HERE came no sound to the three clad in their heavy diving suits. But a moment or two after Braden had pressed the button which fired the charge there came a swirl of troubled water which lifted them off their feet and carried Surgut against the smooth steel sides of the crouching Spider.

The swirl passed, and, none the worse for his slight misadventure, Surgut joined Ulverst and Wesel again and plodded with them back to the scene of the explosion.

The sight which met their eyes proved how effective had been Ulverst's method of disposing of the guardian of the vault, for the creature had been literally blown to pieces.

It must have been crouched right over the explosive when the charge was fired, for the water which filled the vault was as black as ink caused by the fluid from the creature's body, and thick with floating masses of flesh, shell and claw.

As for the chests, they had escaped serious damage owing to the explosion striking upwards.

As Ulverst attacked one of the chests with his axe and wrenched open the lid, he gave a stifled cry of triumph. For the chest was filled to the brim with jewels and precious stones, rings, necklaces, golden candlesticks, small golden statuettes, and exquisitely carved amulets, all of which shone and glittered in the beam of Ulverst's torch.

There were hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of stones and jewels in that one chest alone, as Ulverst saw, and it was with an almost vicious determination that he went to work smashing open the others.

He was assisted by the eager Surgut and Wesel, and within an hour the trio had laid bare treasure which could not be worth anything under a million pounds. And that was just a rough estimate arrived at by judging the value of the chests' contents by the top layers.

Signalling to Wesel and Surgut, the jubilant Ulverst then led the way out of the vault and into another. Here

again were chests. But these, on being opened, were found to contain only pulp, which had once been parchments.

Such is the perversity and greed of man, that the sight of that useless pulp, which might have been more priceless treasure, threw Ulverst into a rage.

From that vault he shuffled into another, taking good care now to ascertain first that he and his two companions had the place to themselves.

Again they found chests, some of which, when opened, disclosed ruined and sodden robes and ermine, whilst others were filled with gold and silver coins.

The supply of oxygen becoming at length dangerously low, Ulverst signalled for a return to be made to the Spider, and when he and his companions were safely aboard and had taken off their diving suits, he exultantly told the jubilant crew what he had found.

"There's wealth there to make every man aboard rich beyond his wildest dreams!" he cried. "There's the treasure of age-old kings in those vaults, and it's ours—ours!"

For three days the Spider lay on the ocean floor, coming up every night to the surface to let air into the boat.

During those three days the work of transferring the treasure from the chests to the Spider went steadily on.

The men worked in relays, and their jubilation was as great as Ulverst's as they gathered in the riches which for countless centuries had laid down there in the depths, hidden from the gaze of man.

The work was not carried out without tragedy, however, for one man was crushed by a monster conger which came snaking at him from out of the murk.

That was the risk the men had to take in order to possess themselves of gold, and although the dreadful fate of their comrade made many fear for themselves, Ulverst was relentlessly determined to have the treasure aboard, no matter what the cost, and he ruled with an iron will those three days the Spider spent down in the drowned city of Atlantis.

There was only one man aboard, how-

ever, who, although he was vastly pleased, did not share in the general jubilation. And that was Professor Dubowsky.

He had heard of the chests of pulp, and he deplored the destruction of parchments which would undoubtedly have given to the world a new and amazing history of a people who were now gone for ever, and of whom no trace remained.

In the eyes of the professor those parchments would have been worth far more than the treasure, and willingly would he have bartered every stone and jewel to have them preserved intact.

On the third night the Spider surfaced, and with wealth untold aboard, turned her blunt bows northwards towards Ice Rock.

The voyage home was accomplished without incident, and surfacing off the island to let the workers there know that she was home again, the Spider dived and crawled into the vast cave which was her lair.

Mechanics, fitters, and engineers were waiting ready to give the Spider a thorough overhaul, for she had been long at sea, but Ulverst declared a two-day holiday, which was to be devoted to drinking and carousing in celebration of the rich hauls with which the Spider had returned.

That night, then, after the treasure and the bullion boxes of the Minneapolis had been transferred to the treasure cave on the island, the men embarked on a wild and drunken orgy which was to have serious results for Ulverst, had he but known it.

The professor held himself rigorously and disdainfully aloof from the carousing. It was unnecessary, he thought, and disgusting.

Retiring to the sparsely furnished cave which served him as quarters, he proceeded to make a close examination of the sea beast which had been captured after the sinking of the Minneapolis.

He had had the creature roped and hoisted up from out of the Spider and

installed in one of the water tanks which he had placed in his cave.

It was still alive in spite of its captivity, which, to the professor's delight, seemed to have no ill effects on it at all.

"The creature is almost human," he said to Valendorf, as the pair of them stood staring down into the tank at the brute, which returned their gaze with its great unwinking eyes. "Look at that split tail which gives it the appearance of having legs. And observe the two arm-like growths. This has been a find indeed, Valendorf!"

Valendorf shuddered. On the cruise, even when homeward bound, there had been little or no opportunity of making a careful examination of the sea beast, but now that he contemplated it in the brilliant illumination of Dubowsky's cave, Valendorf felt strangely uneasy.

As the professor had said, there was something almost human about the creature which lay floating on its back in the tank, glaring up at them with cold, fish-like eyes, which Valendorf could have sworn were filled with hate.

Even as he watched, one of the arm-like protuberances moved, and the webbed and yellowish claw closed as though the creature were threatening.

"It's nerves, I suppose!" muttered Valendorf. "I am nervy after that cruise, and I know it, but if I were you, Dubowsky, I'd kill the thing and have done with it."

"Yes, I am going to kill it," assented Dubowsky, "and you shall help me dissect it. I am certain we will find a brain and glands of human formation. But first I wish to experiment with it alive. I want to test its reactions to sound, light and pain. Man, didn't you hear it moan when first we got it out of the diving chamber? It has vocal chords like a human being, I know it has!"

"If you take my advice you'll kill it out of hand—and kill it now," replied Valendorf. "The brute gives me the creeps!"

"Oh, come!" said Dubowsky, laughingly. "This is not like you, my friend. Why, what is there to be frightened of?"

"I don't know," confessed Valendorf, "but to me the thing looks the very incarnation of evil. Mein geist, I almost believe it knows we're talking about it!"

Dubowsky cackled delightedly.

"Yes, indeed!" he cried.

Producing a penknife, the professor pricked the creature in the belly with the point of the blade.

The brute writhed and sank at once to the bottom of the tank, where it lay staring up at the two faces peering down at it.

"You see, it is not impervious to pain," cried Dubowsky. "It felt that prick, Valendorf!"

"For goodness' sake, man, don't play about with it!" burst out Valendorf. "Finish it off now, and we'll dissect it to-morrow!"

He passed his hand wearily across his brow. It must be the strain of the cruise, he told himself, but the brute definitely frightened him.

But why should he be frightened? There was nothing the beast could do. It was safe enough in the tank, and it could not live out of it. At least, not for any length of time. They had had ample proof of that aboard the Spider.

"I think I'll turn in," he said, moving away towards the curtained entrance of the cave. "I'm very tired!"

Waiting until he had gone, Dubowsky

returned to his absorbed contemplation of the sea beast. What a nervy fool Valendorf must be, he reflected. There was nothing to be afraid of in the creature which lurked there at the bottom of the tank. Nothing at all!

But as he watched, even Dubowsky admitted to himself that there was something sinister and malevolent in those wide, staring eyes which glared up at him.

"Pooh! It is just the beast's expression!" he exclaimed impatiently, and, turning away, went in search of a stick or rod with which to stir it into action.

As he quitted his cave there came to his ears the sound of revelry from the big communal cave.

"What fools!" he snapped. "Just drunken animals—and Ulverst's no better, to allow it!"

In the Nick of Time!

IT was late that night when Dubowsky eventually turned in.

He had carried out various experiments on the sea beast, including that of its reaction to pain, and with a great gash in its belly the thing lay squirming on the bottom of the tank.

It was always Dubowsky's custom to read for half an hour before going to sleep, and as he lay on his camp bed, his book held in his long, tapering fingers, a splash in the tank attracted his attention.

The beast had risen to the surface, and, raising its head, was staring at him with its great, unwinking eyes. The mouth—that horrible gash on the underside of the head—was open, and the gills were opening and shutting as the thing breathed in the air of the cave.

Dubowsky rose to a sitting posture. He had been right. The thing had a brain, which could reason intelligently. Whilst he had been conducting his experiments it had cowered on the bottom of the tank, but, finding at length a respite, it had raised its head to see what had happened to its tormentor.

Thus reasoned Dubowsky, and there was little fault to be found in such reasoning. But as he watched, his delighted eyes staring across the cave into the fish-like, glaring ones of his sea beast, the thing sank back into the tank, and was lost to view.

"Now, if only Valendorf had seen that!" chuckled Dubowsky. "I will wager he won't believe me when I tell him in the morning."

He lay down again and resumed his reading, but eventually, conscious of an overpowering drowsiness, he closed the book and, switching off the light, settled down to slumber.

He was asleep almost immediately, and as silence, deathly and profound, settled in the cave, the captive sea beast rose again to the surface.

It is possible here only to describe what actually happened, yet much could be written on the instinct, intelligence, driving force—call it what you will—which caused the creature to act as it did.

Raising its head out of the water, the beast stared across the cave towards Dubowsky's bed. It could probably see in the darkness, as its optic nerves were so constructed as to enable it to see in the murky twilight of the eternal depths, which was its home.

Anyway, be that as it may, the beast suddenly reared itself up out of the water, like a sea lion, and, pushing its

arm-like protuberances over the edge of the tank, fell, with a heavy thud, to the floor of the cave.

Had Dubowsky not been sleeping so heavily, he must have heard that thud, but even if he had done, it is doubtful if he would for one moment have suspected what caused it.

Using its arm-like protuberances to drag itself along, the beast commenced to slither slowly and laboriously in the direction of Dubowsky's bed.

Its great, gaping mouth was open. Its gills were moving laboriously, and it was beginning to gasp. But with a dreadful determination, it kept on towards the camp bed and the sleeping man who had kept it captive and tortured it that night.

Nearer and nearer it slithered, its painful gasps deepening now to almost human-like moans as it fought against the unnatural element of air in which it moved.

Dubowsky, stirring restlessly, suddenly opened his eyes. Had he been mistaken, or had he heard a noise in the cave? Yes, there it was again. A long-drawn, sobbing moan by his bed!

He raised himself on his elbow, and as he did so something reared up in the darkness and fell on him with almost suffocating force.

In one split second Dubowsky smelt the foulness of the thing, felt the cold, slimy belly dragging over him, then he screamed—screamed in stark and awful terror.

Valendorf, whose quarters adjoined Dubowsky's, heard that scream and started up in bed, not knowing whether he had dreamt it or really heard it.

The scream was not repeated, but as Valendorf listened with straining ears he heard long-drawn, sobbing moans, like some great creature in agony.

Leaping from the bed, his face white with apprehension, he switched on the light, snatched his gun from his belt-holster, and dashed into Dubowsky's quarters.

He knew where the switch was, and as his groping fingers closed on it, he snapped it down. Next instant, as the cave was flooded with blinding illumination, he gave a cry of horror, for, sprawled on top of Dubowsky, on the bed, was the sea beast, its head lowered, its great slit of a mouth groping for its victim's throat.

Springing across the cave, Valendorf smashed the muzzle of his heavy automatic against the creature's head and pressed the trigger.

Six shots, in all, he fired, the bullets ploughing through the beast's head, tearing a hole through which one could have thrust a fist.

The beast quivered, then slumped heavily, its whole crushing weight on Dubowsky. Throwing away his still smoking gun, Valendorf seized it, and, exerting all his strength, dragged it off its victim.

It fell heavily to the floor, a limp and lifeless carcass. But Valendorf had no eyes for it then. His whole attention was given to Dubowsky.

At first he thought the man was dead, but his expert fingers found a faint pulse, and dashing back into his own cave, he returned with a phial of brandy which he held to the livid lips of the unconscious man.

The raw spirit, forced between Dubowsky's teeth and trickling down his throat, served to send the blood coursing again through his veins, and after another dose of the restorative, his eyes flickered

open, stared uncomprehendingly up at Valendorf, then suddenly riveted themselves on him in dilating horror.

"Mein geist!" gasped Dubowsky. "I—I thought—"

"You didn't think at all," cut in Valendorf grimly. "The brute attacked you!"

"No!" screamed Dubowsky, starting up in bed. "No, it is impossible—it couldn't have done—"

Abruptly the words died away as his eyes took in the carcass of the sea beast lying on the floor.

"It—it attacked me?" whispered Dubowsky hoarsely.

In panic he gripped Valendorf.

"It's dead, isn't it?" he cried. "It is dead—it is dead?"

"Yes, it's dead," answered Valendorf. "I blew a hole through its head. I told you your sea beast was dangerous, Dubowsky!"

Dubowsky made no reply. He had sunk back on the pillow, his face ghastly.

"To think that it—it came for me," he whispered through chattering teeth. "Mein blut, Valendorf, what must have been its thoughts when I cut its belly to see if it reacted to pain?"

"Don't!" said Valendorf sharply. "It's a lucky thing for you that I heard you call out. What are we going to do with the carcass?"

"Get it out of here," replied Dubowsky shakily. "No, not the tank. I couldn't sleep if I knew the thing was left in here. To think it attacked me. It must have meant to all the time. Donner, the thought is horrible!"

The professor was trembling as though with the ague, and Valendorf gave him another drink of brandy. The spirit helped him to get a grip on himself and his voice was more composed when next he spoke.

"Ring the bell, Valendorf," he whispered, "and have the beast dragged out of here. No, don't leave me. I dare not stay here alone with the brute."

"No, I won't leave you," promised Valendorf, and crossing to the table he pressed the bell.

There came no white-jacketed steward in response to the ring, and the explanation suddenly dawned on Valendorf.

"Everybody's carousing," he said. "There is no duty for anyone to-night! Dress yourself, and we will go and summon assistance."

Dubowsky was garbed at length, however, and leaning on Valendorf's arm, made his way from the cave and out into the bitter chill of the Arctic night.

Reaching the big iron doors of the cave, Valendorf opened the little wicket one set in them, and followed by Dubowsky, stepped into the cave which was crowded with men and thick with the mingled fumes of liquor and tobacco.

What drew the astonished gaze of Valendorf, however, was the sight of Ulverst standing at the head of the long trestle table which ran almost the whole length of the cave, for there was a gun in Ulverst's hand and it was poked into the paunch of a huge, bearded fellow whom Valendorf recognised as Korst, the man in charge of the power house.

Not a man was moving, not a man was speaking. Every eye was on that pair at the end of the table, and in the deathly stillness Dubowsky's voice rang out shrilly:

"What's happening here?"

Trouble Ahead!

IT was Ulverst who answered him, glancing in his direction for one fleeting instant.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he said. "Come here!"



As Ulverst wrenched open the lid of the chest he gave a startled cry of triumph at the sight of the sparkling jewels that met his gaze!

Pushing and elbowing his way through the press of men which opened to give him passage, Dubowsky reached Ulverst who still had his gun thrust into Korst's stomach.

"What fool's game is going on here?" he snarled. "Have you to keep order by the gun now, Ulverst?"

"Scarcely!" replied Ulverst coldly. "Korst, in his cups, has gone so far as to threaten me. He stands his liquor badly, I'm afraid!"

"But why did he threaten you?" snarled Dubowsky. "Answer me, man. Mein blut, as though I haven't had enough trouble to-night. What's the matter with him?"

"He wants us to abandon Ice Rock," replied Ulverst; then to the drink-flushed and sullen Korst. "Tell Professor Dubowsky your suggestion!"

"What I say is this," growled Korst. "We've got enough treasure on this island now to satisfy all of us when it's shared out. So I say pack the game up now before it is too late. Another job like the Minneapolis, and the navies of the world will be looking for us. Apart from that, suppose a whaler calls in here? That's a risk we've always got to take. Well, take it no longer, say I. Share out the loot and let's quit when we can. One day it's going to be too late!"

Dubowsky stared at him. "Do you speak for all the men?" he demanded.

"Yes, for a lot of them," growled Korst. "We want to live to enjoy what we've got, not hang in chains through trying to get more."

Dubowsky rubbed his chin thoughtfully and glanced at Ulverst.

"There's sense in what he says," he remarked.

"Yes, I expected that from you," snapped Ulverst. "Well, I say, no. We do not quit yet. There's wealth un-

told still to be got from the seas and we're going to get it. A million apiece for myself and my officers and a hundred thousand pounds for each man is what I aim at."

"I don't want a hundred thousand pounds," snarled Korst. "What's a hundred thousand pounds going to do for me if I'm taken? I'm content with what we've got now, and I say share it out and let's quit!"

A growl of approval came from many of the men in the crowded cave, and sensing now that Korst would not be rash enough to attack him, Ulverst withdrew his gun and swung on them.

"Listen to me, you fellows!" he cried. "Korst says that he will be content with what we have already. Some of you agree with him. Well, I will tell you this, that when it is shared out amongst you, and each man has received his share, that share will amount to little more than a few thousand pounds!"

"That's a lie!" cut in Korst roughly. "You've told us yourself that the treasure you took from that undersea city is worth more than a million."

"Yes, you fool, so it is," answered Ulverst patiently; "but it has to be converted into cash. What good would those rings and jewels and stones be to any of you? How could any of you account for such things being in your possession? You'd be arrested at once on suspicion. Those things have got to be disposed of quietly and carefully, a job which might take years. What we want is bullion, and more bullion, and whilst we are getting it by attacking ships on the high seas, I will put in motion the machinery for disposing of the treasure of Atlantis."

He turned again to the men. "Don't you see," he demanded, "how impossible it is to quit now? Ask yourselves, could any of you take your share

of those jewels and stones and dispose of them with safety? You know you couldn't, and the total value of the bullion which we took from the Minneapolis is only two hundred thousand pounds. We would have taken more had not this colleague and co-partner of mine—he indicated Dubowsky—"given the order to abandon the wreck whilst I lay unconscious."

"We could do nothing else!" snapped Dubowsky. "The wreck was surrounded by those sea beasts!"

Then recollection of his present mission returned to him, if it had ever been absent, and he blurted out:

"But we will talk of all this later. I had a most dreadful experience. That sea beast which we captured got out of its tank as I slept and attacked me. If it had not been for Valendorf here I would have been killed!"

The men gaped at the professor as he related his experiences.

As far as Ulverst was concerned, the incident created a welcome diversion, for when Dubowsky had concluded, there arose a babel of voices discussing not Korst's demand to abandon Ice Rock, but the escape of Dubowsky from the murderous attack made on him by the sea beast.

"All right," said Ulverst, "take some of the men and have the creature removed from your cave. It was madness to bring it here, as I told you in the first place."

"Madness?" repeated Dubowsky, who by now had almost fully recovered from the shock he had experienced. "Madness, do you say? It only proves that I was right when I gave the order to abandon the Minneapolis. The creatures had brains, intelligence, and they would never have abandoned the wreck whilst we remained there!"

With that, he selected half a dozen men, and turned to depart, pausing for a final word with Korst.

"In spite of what Ulverst has said," he remarked, "I think if the men are content with the bullion and treasure now obtained, we will consider abandoning this base. We will discuss the matter later!"

Casting a vengeful and triumphant glance at the tight-lipped Ulverst, he quitted the cave.

Ulverst turned to Korst. "As Dubowsky says," he observed, "we will discuss the matter later. Probably to-morrow. Will that satisfy you?"

"Yes, if it is discussed!" growled Korst, and slouched away to his seat at the table.

Ulverst touched Wesel on the arm. "Come!" he said quietly. "I want a word with you in my quarters."

(Don't miss next week's gripping chapters of this popular adventure story, chums!)

A SCHOOLBOY'S SECRET!

(Continued from page 24.)

Aware that something was "up," they naturally wanted to know what it was. But the captain of the Remove could not tell them. Keeping secrets was not much in his line; but he had to keep this secret, which was not his own.

"Where did you bolt off to?" asked Bob Cherry. "I saw you scuttling off on your jigger. Had a telegram, or what?"

"Oh, no. Nothing!"

"You scudded off on your bike as if you were riding in a race, for nothing?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Well, yes—no—that is—" Wharton stammered.

"Keeping secrets from your old pals?" asked Bob, in astonishment.

"Well, you see—"

"The seefulness is not terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Wharton," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Wharton was silent and crimson.

"It's Hazel!" growled Nugent.

"Hazel's at the bottom of it. Look here, Harry, if you're letting that shady ass land you in his scrapes—"

"I'm not in any scrapes."

"Well, what's up, then?" asked Nugent, rather gruffly.

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"I—I'd rather not tell you fellows, if you don't mind," said Harry. "The fact is, it's not my secret. Let it drop."

"Ass!" said Bob.

"Fathead!" said Johnny Bull.

"If that cad, Hazel, puts his cheeky nose into our study again I'll jolly well pull it for him!" said Nugent.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"It's all right," he said. "Cut along to the Rag, you men. I'll join you there in a few minutes."

Hazel had gone up to the studies. Wharton was anxious for a word with him before he was done with him for good.

In a puzzled and not very satisfied frame of mind, the Co. left him. The captain of the Remove went up to the studies, and found Hazel in Study No. 2. He was alone there, and Wharton felt a twinge of compassion at the sight of his pale face. A flash of weak anger came over that miserable face at the sight of Wharton.

"What do you want?" snarled Hazel. "You refused to help me when I wanted you to; you can leave me alone now. I suppose you've guessed that

they screwed it all out of me. What was a fellow to do with Quelch on one side of him and Grimes on the other? Are you going to tell me I was a rotter to let it out about my uncle? I tell you I couldn't help it! What business is it of yours, anyhow?"

"I'm going to tell you that I guessed what you would do," said Harry quietly. "And—"

Hazel gave a groan.

"I couldn't help it, I tell you! Both of them at me! It—it shipped out, too. I never meant to give him away. I've been lucky to pull through. Quelch has let me off about going out of bounds last night. I dare say he could see that I couldn't stand any more. Not that I care! If they've got him—if they've found Marjorie with him there—it will be all over the shop fast enough—"

"They did not find him there," said Harry quietly. "And they did not find Marjorie there!"

Hazel stared at him.

"How do you know? You can't know! I tell you Grimes got it all out of me and went straight off to collar him. And if Marjorie was there it means a row for her at her school."

"Grimes did not go so fast on foot as I went on a bike," said Harry.

Hazel jumped.

"You—you mean— Oh! Then—then he's not—not—not—" Hazel panted. "What's happened?"

"Nothing's happened," said Harry. "If Grimes got to the old oak, as I suppose he did, he found nobody there. That's what I came up here to tell you."

He turned to the door.

"Oh!" gasped Hazel. "You—you did that for me—"

"No, I did it for Marjorie."

"I suppose you wouldn't have done it for me. No. I don't care, so long as he gets away. Surely he'll have sense enough to clear out of this neighbourhood now he knows that they're after him here. If he's taken at a distance it won't be so bad."

Wharton stayed to hear no more of that. He left the study, leaving Hazel in a greatly relieved frame of mind.

He wondered, as he went down to the Rag, whether Hazel was right—whether the hunted man would take the chance of getting away from the place. For Marjorie's sake, he fervently hoped so. Surely the man would go while the going was good. But only the future could tell.

THE END

(Next week's yarn of the chums of Greyfriars is entitled: "HONOURS EVEN!" and its excellence is sure to make this series the finest Frank Richards has ever written for the MAGNET. Avoid disappointment by ordering your copy in good time chums!)

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"I'M A BOUNDER, BUT—"

They call me the Bounder, and they're not far wrong. I cheerfully admit that I very often am a complete Bounder.

I don't go out of my way to be polite to any man, and if it's a question of being impolite, I think I can do it as well as anyone at Greyfriars!

I have a magic gift for hurting fellows' feelings and rubbing them up the wrong way. The strange thing about it is that I do it deliberately.

There's hardly a man in the Remove I haven't quarrelled with at some time or other, and I've scarcely ever been on good terms with everybody at the same time.

I've done the most outrageous things. I've smoked, gambled, defied every beak I ever knew and broken practically every law of the school.

I've waged war at times on fellows who have done me good turns by the dozen; and, on the other hand, I've chummed with chaps I know full well would go out of their way to do me harm.

Oh, yes, I'm a Bounder, right enough—a real outside in Bounders, so to speak!

And yet— Somehow, without feeling at all proud about it, I have an idea that the Remove wouldn't be the Form it is and Greyfriars wouldn't be the school it is without me.

I'm a Bounder—but I do make things hum. And, modest though I be, I know that fellows like me for that!

Just ask any Greyfriars man which he'd prefer—a perambulating vegetable who had never done wrong in his life, or the Bold Bad Bounder! You'll soon see if I'm right!

SLOGGEM HALL'S TRIUMPH!

By DICKY NUGENT

"Impossible!" The word left Dr. Birchmell's lips like a bullet leaving a gun.

Sloggem Hall, the seven-foot tall booby of the Fourth Form at St. Sam's, bared his yellow fangs in a sinical smile.

"Impossible be blowed!" he said, in his deep, rumbling voice that seemed to come from the very bowels of the earth. "It's the easiest thing hout for an 'eadmaster to order a noo election for a Form kaptin. You Joll Jolly 'o's fired an' arrange a noo election."

Dr. Birchmell clenched his fist and struck a defiant attitude.

"Sorry, but it can't be did, Hall," he said. "The ancient traditions of St. Sam's, dating back to the time of William the Conqueror, utterly forbid the headmaster to concern himself with junior politics. I won't do it!"

"You will!"

"I jolly well won't!"

"You jolly well will!"

Dr. Birchmell was about to go on to say that he'd see that he jolly well didn't, but before his lips could frame the words he pulled himself up with a start. A bright little object glissening in the open paw of the giant of St. Sam's had attracted his noiss—and as the Head saw what it was, an avarishus gleam came into his greenish eyes.

"Bless my sole!" he eggscclaimed, a little breathlessly. "It's a half-crown!"

Sloggem Hall nodded.

"I was goin' to make you a present of it after you'd arranged a noo election," he said. "But seein' as the traditions an' all the rest of it prevent you, I'm goin' to put it back in my pocket."

Dr. Birchmell stroked his beard thoughtfully and looked shiftily over his sholder to see that nobody was coming into the study.

"Hem! Well, of corso, Hall, there are



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BE QUICK ON THE UPTAKE—

BUT NOT WHILE QUELCHY'S NEAR

Before the school inspectors called to do their stuff last week, the Head gave us a few tips.

"Accuracy in your replies to the inspectors' questions is, of course, desirable," he said. "But I should like you all to understand that the questions are often put not so much to test your knowledge as to see what aptitude you show in rising to an occasion."

"The inspectors are quite well aware that encyclopaedic knowledge is not to be expected from juniors; and very often a reply that is apt and to the point will meet with their whole-hearted approval even though it is not strictly correct."

Putting it in ordinary, everyday language, the Beak told us to be quick on the uptake—to do a rapid think and have a shot at it, even though we didn't know the answer!

Naturally, when the inspectors turned up, we did our level best to carry out those instructions in both letter and spirit.

For instance: "What king suffered the sorrow of having his son go to a watery grave?" asked the Remove inspector.

And Skinner answered: "King John. He lost his Jules in the wash!"

"What," asked the inspector, getting on to mental arithmetic, "is eight and five and two and one?"

"Half-a-guinea!" replied Tom Brown, a split second later.

"What," asked the inspector, of Dick Rake, "do you know about Moore?"

Without a moment's hesitation Rake told him: "It's what Oliver Twist asked for!"

And in English Grammar: "What is wrong with this sentence: 'We was not thinking of football?'"

Back came Bob Cherry's reply like a shot: "It should be: 'We WAS thinking of football,' sir!"

These few examples will give you a slight idea of the aptitude we showed in dealing with difficult questions. The Remove rose to the occasion wonderfully well. By the time the inspector buzzed off, we were feeling quite bucked with ourselves.

You'd have thought Quelchey would have been delighted, wouldn't you?

But he wasn't.

For reasons which we still can't fathom, he came down on us like a ton of bricks as soon as the inspectors had left the school, and gated us for the next "halfer"!

Before we start being quick on the uptake again, we're going to make sure that Quelchey's nowhere near!

(Continued from previous column.)

up over a low wire fence round a flower-bed as he walked along with his eyes upwards in my direction.

My final impression before touching the ground was of fellows cheering and grabbing my ankles. The junior section of the school fire brigade had stood below with a tarpaulin held out for me in case of accidents—but, as it turned out, the help they had to give me was in getting me down instead of holding me up!

The impressions which still remain are those made by Mr. Quelch when he interviewed me afterwards. I need hardly mention that he made them with a cane!

In conclusion, I should like to say that the rumour that I shall shortly dive off the roof of the School House on a flaming motor-bike into a bucket of water is entirely without foundation.

MY PARACHUTE DIVE

By DONALD OGILVY



I've been asked to give you my impressions of the recent parachute dive I made off the roof of the School House, so here goes. My first impression, just before the start, was that of the need for speed. I was bent on trying out my home-made parachute as I had just heard that Wingate was dashing up the School House stairs two or three at a time to stop me!

After taking affectionate, though hurried, leave of my friends, who had assembled on the roof to see me off, I took a run along the parapet to the corner and jumped, pulling the special quick-action ripcord as I did so.

I got a momentary impression that it hadn't acted; then I felt I was floating instead of falling, and knew I was mistaken.

It was a queer sensation, descending smoothly through the air at the side of the old School House. I saw things from an entirely new angle, I can assure you! It was funny, too, to see the sensations I created on the other side of the windows I passed en route. Several fellows staggered back as though I was a visitor from another world.

The quickest to recover from the first shock incidentally, was Coker, who put his head out of the window of the Fifth games study and rather pointlessly yelled out: "Come back, you silly young ass!"

Half-way down, I heard Wingate's gasping voice from the roof saying: "Thank goodness the young freak's safe!" At the same moment I looked down and saw Gosling trip

(Continued at foot of next column.)

eggseptions to every rule," he said, as his hand stretched forward to snatch the coin from Sloggem Hall's hand. "Reconsidering this matter, I feel that there are strong reasons for making an eggseption now. Thanks, awfully!"

"You're goin' to order a noo election for the kaptincy of the Fourth?" asked Sloggem Hall, watching his half-crown vanish into one of Dr. Birchmell's pockets.

The Head nodded vigorously.

"Yes, rather. It will be a plezzure to render you this small serviss, Hall, I can assure you," he grinned. "It shall be done in a brace of shakes—possibly sooner! See!"

He pressed a button for Binding, the page.

While they waited, Sloggem Hall sidled up to him, wearing a very crafty eggsepression on his fiz.

"Of course, this duzzent solve all my problems, old covey," he said, with a slite leer. "Now I've got the election fixed, the next trouble is getting the Fourth to vote for me as their kaptin. If you could 'elp me over that, in some way—"

Dr. Birchmell's skollerly face became very stern.

"You are suggesting that I should commit some vile and nefarious act of dishonnesty to ensure that you are elected, Hall? Never!"

"Of corso, I should present you with another 'arf-crown the moment I was elected," growled Sloggem Hall. "Possibly five bob!"

"Ah! That makes it different, of corso," remarked the Head, grinning once more. "One can be too skrew-pulous, after all! You may rely on my cordial assistance, Hall—and I sincerely hope that that will enable you to achieve your ambition to become kaptin of the Fourth! Trot in, fathhead!" he concluded, in response to a timid rapping on the door.

"Which you rang for me, sir?" said Binding, the page, looking round the door.

"Yes. Give orders for the Fourth Form to assenbual in their Form-room, Binding," said Dr. Birchmell. "Tell them the occasion is an important one—the election of a new Form kaptin—and rekwest them to wait till I arrive before they do anything."

"Would you believe it?"

George Gatty, of the Second, claims to have kept a top spinning for three and a half hours non-stop! It is not known if this is a record—but there is no doubt that Gatty neglected his "prep" to perform the feat—and collected a "record" licking in consequence!

Temple, Dabney, and Fry, of the Upper Fourth, have never so far defeated Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove, on the river. They extended a fresh challenge the other afternoon—but were left at the start, Temple catching a terrific "crab" and shooting backwards in the boat!

When Bulstrode took up archery, he fancied himself a dead shot—till he accidentally sent an arrow through Mr. Proust's open window, narrowly missing the Fifth Form master! Bulstrode fled—"like an arrow from a bow"—and his bow and arrows have not been seen since!

Asked to play the part of a Chinese bandit in a Remove Dramatic Society production, and pretend to behold Bolsover major, Wun Lung looked so murderous that Bolsover, who has often bullied Wun Lung, backed out, refusing to take the risk. Wun Lung looked quite disappointed!

When Horace Coker offered to stroke a Fifth Form crew, he had a job to get seven other fellows to join him. Coker cracked an oar at the very first practice, though—and the rest of his crew nearly "cracked" with laughter! For once it could not be said that Coker "crew"!

Fisher T. Fish thought he had found a new money-making scheme when he rigged up an ice boat, and took "passengers" sailing on a frozen pond near Greyfriars. When he took Bunter on board, however, the ice cracked—and both Fishy and his scheme were completely "sunk"!

"Yessir!" gasped the startled Binding, as he hurriedly retreated.

There was amazement and distonishment in the Fourth when Binding delivered his message. There was only one fellow the Fourth were ever likely to elect as kaptin, and that was Jack Jolly; and why Dr. Birchmell should go to the trouble of holding a new election when the result was a four-gone conclusion was a mistery.

"He must be off his rocker," was Jolly's opinion.

"He always was," grinned Merry. "But he must be even more so than usual to-day. That's what it is!"

Jack Jolly shook his head rather dewbiously. "I think there's more behind it than that, you fellows," he said. "I have an idea that that grate boolying lout, Sloggem Hall, has something to do with it."

The Fourth Form soon received proof that Jack Jolly's forecast was correct. No sooner had they assenbualled than Dr. Birchmell russed in—and behind him marched the giant of the Fourth!

The Head got to bizziness at once.

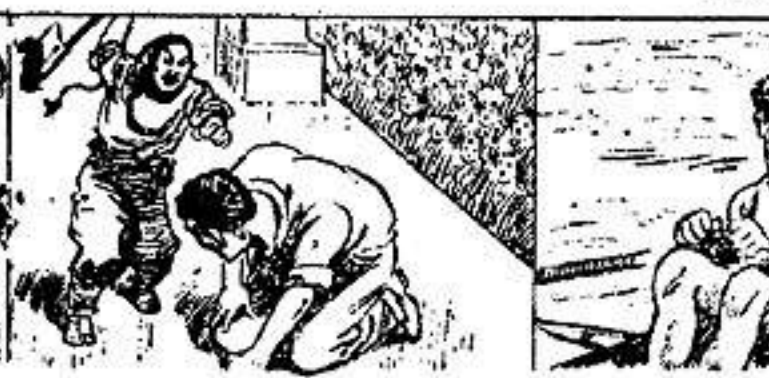
"Jentlemen, chaps, and fellows!" he cried. "I have decided to put an end to a grate injustiss. For some time I have felt that it's a sheer farce for Jolly to remain kaptin of the Fourth when everybody knows he wouldn't stand an earthly in a new election. For that reason I have decided to declare the kaptincy vacant and give you a chance to eggsepress your real views."

The Fourth-Formers gasped. In their time they had heard the Head say many serprizing things—but nothing quite so serprizing as this!

"Just to save time," went on Dr. Birchmell, "I will myself nominate the boy on whom I think your choice will fall. He is a boy of grate charm and of kindly and gentle-disposition. A more honest lad it is impossible to imagine. Jentlemen, I have much pleasure in nominating Sloggem Hall!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Fourth-Formers roared. They couldn't help it. Dr. Birchmell's glowing description of the booby of the Fourth struck them as awfully funny.



George Gatty, of the Second, claims to have kept a top spinning for three and a half hours non-stop! It is not known if this is a record—but there is no doubt that Gatty neglected his "prep" to perform the feat—and collected a "record" licking in consequence!

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