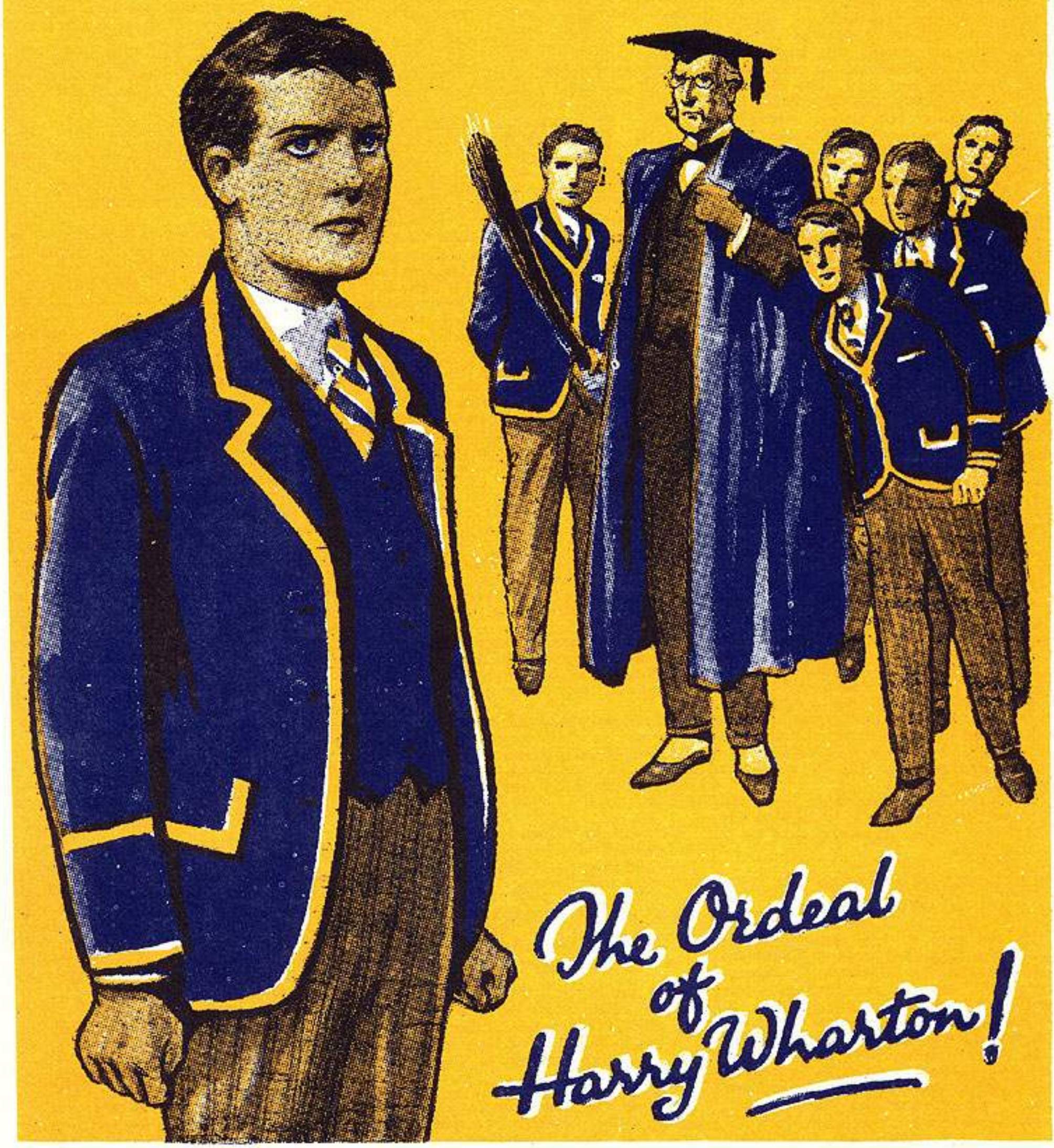
"HARRY WHARTON'S ENEMY!" *Dramatic School Story, featuring the CHUMS OF GREYFRIARS*

The Magnet 2D



The Ordeal of Harry Wharton!

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Come Into the Office, Boys—and Girls!

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.

HAVE you ever heard of

THE WORLD'S WORST MOUNTAIN,

chums? If not, the following information might interest you. For nearly a hundred miles around this mountain—known as Koh-i-Tafatan—no man, beast, bird or reptile can live. The reason is that this mountain not only emits lava from its crater, but also exudes dense volumes of salts of ammonia, which burns up all plants, and suffocates all living things within its area of devastation. This mountain is on the British-Persian frontier, but no troops are stationed there, for it would be impossible for them to live. Every now and again it breaks into eruption, and the first news of what is happening comes from the sight of flocks of frightened birds, which hasten away from the neighbourhood the moment the mountain begins to erupt. It was in eruption a few weeks ago, and may possibly still be erupting when you are reading this little chat of mine.

I had a most interesting letter this week from

MY OLDEST GIRL READER,

who signs herself "A Stockport Reader." Believe it or not, chums, she has been reading the good old MAGNET ever since it came out—and that is more than twenty-seven years ago. She was fourteen years of age when she began to take in our paper, and since then she has bought it regularly every week. She says she is quite as interested in it now as she was at the age of fourteen. I take my hat off to this Stockport reader, and I hope the good old MAGNET will continue to interest her for many more years to come. Letters like these give me a real thrill out of life. Now, my lady readers, are there any more of you who can equal this fine record?

A Colchester reader, who has been interested in my remarks concerning the meaning of various surnames, asks me if I can tell him

THE LONGEST SURNAME IN THE WORLD.

To the best of my knowledge the record is held by an American. Americans always seem to try to possess the biggest things in the world. Anyway, this gentleman, who lives at Pontiac, in Michigan, rejoices in the name of Glafkos Pappathaodorokomundonicolucopoulos.

He is very touchy about his name, too, and gets furious with anyone who tries to shorten it. The trouble is that his children are at school, and the masters have decided that this surname is too much of a mouthful for them. So they have shortened the name of the children to Propappas. Now their father is alleging that his children have "entered into a conspiracy" with their teachers to steal twenty-five letters from his name. Well, what would *you* do if your name was Pappathaodorokomundonicolucopoulos?

THERE'S still plenty of romance in the world. Have you heard of

THE GOLD STATUE OF CANTERBURY,

which, although it has been on public view for 550 years, has only just been discovered? This is how it happened. On the tomb of the Black Prince, in Canterbury cathedral, there is a life-sized effigy of the Black Prince. For some unknown reason, this effigy has not been cleaned for 550 years. A little while ago, the authorities thought it was time it was cleaned. They imagined that it was made of some black material. Judge of their surprise, then, when they found out that the effigy was made of pure gold which had been hidden by a coating of protective enamel and centuries of grime. It is in almost perfect preservation, and is one of the most wonderful examples of fourteenth-century craftsmanship in existence. The value of it is so great that it is incalculable.

Now for a few

RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to shorter queries which have been sent in to me from various readers.

Which is the Rainiest Place in the World? The record for having the largest rainfall in the world is held by Cherra Punji, in Assam.

Is Tapioca Poisonous? Not, of course, in the way in which we eat it. But it is true that before tapioca is prepared for making into puddings, it contains a deadly poison which has to be extracted from it.

Which is the Tallest Spire in England? The spire of the cathedral at Salisbury. It is 404 feet in height. Salisbury is also called New Sarum.

What is a Sea-Dragon? A small fish found in Indian seas. It is very wide, and has two wing-like fins, which have given it its peculiar name.

What and Where is San Marino? It is a small independent republic in Italy, only thirty-eight square miles in area. It claims to be the oldest state in Europe. It is the last survivor of the Italian republics.

What is the Iron Cross? A German military order. At one time it was very scarce, but during the Great War nearly three million of these decorations were awarded in Germany.

HERE is a rather interesting query. Harry Jones, of Chelmsford, is interested in

THE PRESS GANG,

and someone has told him that it is still legal for men to be impressed for service in the British Navy. Although this seems amazing, it is perfectly true, although the power of impressing men into Naval Service has not been carried out since 1815. The laws which enforced the work of the Press Gang have never been repealed. Whenever men were required for the Navy, a detachment of sailors, under the command of an officer, and armed to the teeth, went ashore, descended upon the known haunts of seafaring people, and forcibly carried them off. The Press Gang was most unpopular, and the whole of the district would rise up in arms against them. Landsmen were also sometimes impressed, although, naturally, the Press Gang preferred to take Merchant Service seamen between the ages of fifteen and fifty-five. Apprentices of under two years service were not allowed to be impressed.

But, even though it is still legal to impress men into the Navy, I don't think we are ever likely to see the Press Gang in operation again.

In answer to Fred Halls, of York, here is some information concerning

THE BLACK REPUBLIC,

which is the name given to Haiti, in the West Indies. It was originally populated by natives, but the Spaniards practically exterminated them, and then introduced negro slaves to take their place. Later on, the French settled on the island, but the negroes rose in revolt, and turned them out, setting up a negro republic. From that time onward the history of Haiti was one of continual revolution and bloodshed. One particular negro president had a habit of ordering men to march over the brink of a precipice—just to prove how loyal they were to him. If they refused to march to certain death, he had them shot.

There was so much bloodshed in Haiti that the United States of America eventually interfered in 1915, and now the Americans have a virtual protectorate over the country, although the Haitians elect their own president and National Assembly. The official language is French, but the army is commanded by officers who are partly drawn from the U.S. Marines and Navy. Until America interfered, it was a most dangerous country for a white man to visit. The "whites" were treated like dogs, even being made to get off the pavement to make way for the negroes.

Now for next week's programme. To begin with there is

"THE HERO OF THE HOUR!"
By Frank Richards,

another splendid yarn of the chums of Greyfriars, which, as you can imagine, is packed with exciting situations. Most of your favourite characters have prominent parts in this story, and if you haven't already ordered your MAGNET in advance, the best advice I can give you, is to do so immediately.

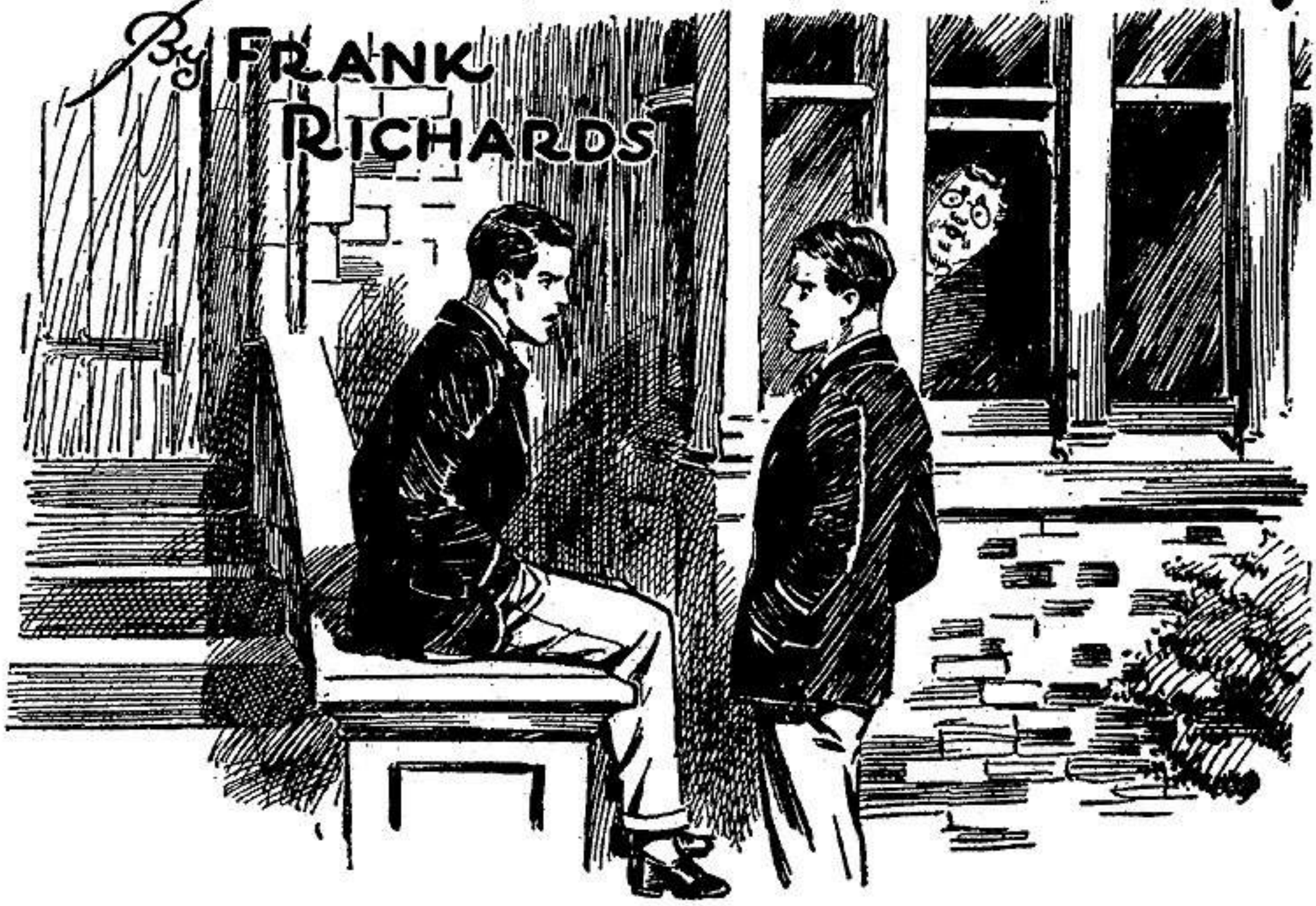
There will be a "Greyfriars Herald" supplement as usual, another first-class instalment of our popular adventure story: "Moose Call!" and another "Interview in verse" by the Greyfriars Rhymester. Many queries which I have been obliged to hold over for lack of space will be answered, so don't hesitate to write to me if there are any questions you would like me to answer.

YOUR EDITOR.

A SENSATIONAL COMPLETE SCHOOL-ADVENTURE YARN YOU'LL ENJOY!

HARRY WHARTON'S ENEMY!

By FRANK RICHARDS



An Unusual Story of Schoolboy Adventure, featuring Harry Wharton & Co., the Popular Chums of Greyfriars.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.
Chalky!

SKINNER jumped

He was fairly caught!

Skinner was not as a rule easy to catch, but this time his luck was out.

Standing at the door of Study No. 1 in the Greyfriars Remove—Wharton's study—Skinner was chalking on that door.

Class was just over; most of the fellows had gone out into the quad in the bright May sunshine. Skinner was the only fellow who had come up to the studies. Harry Wharton had stayed behind in the Form-room to speak to his Form-master Mr. Quelch—or, rather, to be spoken to by that gentleman. So Harry Wharton was the last fellow in the Remove whom Skinner expected to come along just then.

And it was Wharton who came!

Quelch was through unexpectedly soon, apparently. And Wharton, instead of joining his friends in the quad, was coming up to his study for something. It was just Skinner's ill-luck.

At the sound of footsteps Skinner turned his head. He did not care much what fellow it was coming so long as it was not Wharton. But it was Wharton! And Skinner jumped.

The captain of the Remove stared at him for a moment, surprised by his alarm; then he glanced at the inscription on the study door and noted the stick of chalk in Skinner's fingers—and his face grew grim.

"Only—only a joke!" stammered Skinner.

The chalked inscription ran:

WHO WANTS WHARTON?
NOBODY!

Harry Wharton's face set harder. This was not the first time that a surreptitious message had been chalked on his study door. There was trouble in the cricketing fraternity in the Greyfriars Remove. Every man in that Form who played cricket, including Wharton's own friends, was worried, or troubled, or annoyed or exasperated by his fixed determination not to play the new fellow, Stacey, in the eleven.

In view of the great service Colonel Wharton has done him, Ralph Stacey should be Harry Wharton's best friend. But the new boy in the Remove is Wharton's biggest enemy—keen on making a figure at Greyfriars, and keener still on putting his relative and rival in the shade.

Stacey being the best junior cricketer ever known in the school, and Wharton's reason being supposed to be nothing but personal dislike, such feelings were natural. So the captain of the Remove rather expected fellows to kick; and, considering that he had rather a passionate temper, he was very patient with the cricketing fellows on that subject, and hitherto he had supposed that it was some disgruntled cricketer who had left those chalked messages for him.

And now he had caught Skinner at it!

Skinner was no cricketer. Nothing would have induced him to play that game—or any other—except on compulsory occasions, and often he had been whopped for cutting games practice. He did not care two straws whether Greyfriars beat Highcliffe, or the reverse; he did not care a bean whether Wharton played Stacey, or didn't. He was just taking advantage of the trouble going on in the Remove to give the captain of the Form a dig—in the back, as it were.

Wharton's face grew grimmer and grimmer; Skinner's grew more and more uneasy.

"I think we'll rub that out!" said Harry at last.

He grabbed Skinner by the back of his collar.

"Hands off!" yelled Skinner.

The captain of the Remove did not heed; he propelled Skinner towards the study door.

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Skinner's nose tapped on the door; then his face rubbed on it. Skinner yelled and struggled.

Wharton was rubbing out the chalked message—using Skinner's face as a duster!

Skinner dropped his stick of chalk, he struggled, and clutched, and clawed; but the grip on the back of his neck was like the grip of a vice. Skinner's features rubbed chalk—and rubbed it hard.

"Oooooogh!" gurgled Skinner. "Oh, you rotter! Leggo! Urrrgh! You rotten bully, leggo!"

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"You sneaking rat!" he answered. "If you'd put your hands up I'd dust the passage with you! What do you care about cricket, you slacking worm? You never touch a bat if you can help it! You're backing up that cad Stacey—and you don't like him any more than you do me! He pulled your nose the day he came, and I had to stop him ragging you! And now——"

"Urrggh! Stoppit! Wurrgh!"

Rub, rub, rub!

Wharton was angry. He had had a good deal to try his temper of late. He was on bad terms with many of his Form. He had been looking forward to the cricket that term, and the cricket was all at sixes and sevens. Yet if it had been one of the cricketing fellows who chalked that "notice to quit" on his door he would have taken it quietly. Some of the fellows wanted him to resign the captaincy, though not a majority. But it was altogether too "thick" to get this sort of thing from a slacker, a weedy waster, like Skinner.

He rubbed and rubbed with Skinner's features, obliterating the chalk on the oak.

Skinner kicked and struggled and gurgled and yelled.

Rub, rub, rub, rub!

"Oh, you rotter! Yarooh! Leggo! Urrgggh!"

Skinner's frantic yells rang far and wide. From the bottom of his heart Skinner wished that he had never chalked on the door of Study No. 1—or, alternatively, as the lawyers say, that he had made quite, quite sure that the captain of the Remove was safely off the scene. He had counted on Quelch keeping him for a "jaw"—Wharton this term was rather in Quelch's black books, for some reason unknown to the rest of the Form. Skinner put all his beef into his wild yelling in the hope that it might reach the ears of authority.

Unluckily, it did!

There was a step on the Remove staircase, and Mr. Quelch came rustling up to see what the row was about.

Skinner was making too much noise for Wharton to hear him coming. The Form-master came across the Remove landing—and started and stared as he saw what was going on at the door of Study No. 1.

He whisked forward.

"Wharton!" he thundered.

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Release Skinner at once!"

Wharton released Skinner. That hapless youth staggered across the passage, gasping and spluttering, his face chalky and grubby—and crimson through the chalk and grubbiness.

Mr. Quelch glanced at him and fixed his eyes on Wharton; his look was like sharp steel.

"Wharton, I have had reason to find very serious fault with you this term!" he rapped. "I am sorry to see that you are now guilty of bullying."

Wharton faced his Form-master with set lips.

"You are mistaken, sir," he said coolly.

"What—what?"

"You have had no reason to find fault with me this term, sir," said the captain of the Remove in the same cool tone.

"Wharton!"

"And I am not guilty of bullying."

Mr. Quelch gazed at him. This was a new kind of language from his Head Boy. Skinner blinked. He had never heard a Remove man talk to Quelch like this before.

"Wharton," gasped Mr. Quelch, "how dare you be impertinent! I find you ill-using a boy not so strong as yourself——"

"Nothing of the kind, sir."

"I can believe my own eyes!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "And I warn you, Wharton, that insolence will not be tolerated. You have changed very much this term, Wharton—and very much for the worse! Go down to the Form-room at once! You are detained till six o'clock!"

"If you'll let me explain——"

"I will listen to no more impertinence, Wharton! Go down to the Form-room this instant!"

Mr. Quelch pointed to the stairs. Wharton seemed to hesitate for a moment; then quietly, but with a set face, he went down the stairs, and his Form-master followed him. Skinner went away to get a wash—and grinned as he went.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Cutting Detention!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

The Co. were waiting for Wharton in the quad when Billy Bunter rolled up, with a grin on his fat face.

Bunter seemed amused.

"Waiting for Wharton?" he asked.

"Yes; he's a jolly long time!" said Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he!"

"Well, where does the laugh come in, you fat ass?" inquired Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows—— He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "It's no good waiting for Wharton!"

"Why not?" demanded Frank Nugent.

"Quelchy's bagged him!" grinned Bunter.

"Quelchy!" repeated Bob. "Quelchy kept him to jaw in the Form-room! He can't be keeping him all this time!"

"The jawfulness of the esteemed Quelch is sometimes terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You see, he's detained," explained Bunter, blinking at the Co. through his big spectacles. "I saw Quelch march him back to the Form-room. He's been bullying some chap——"

"What?" roared Bob.

"I heard Quelch say so when he took him in!" grinned Bunter. "I dare say he's been rowing with Stacey again—he's always rowing with Stacey! They used to row in Study No. 1, and it's just the same now Stacey's in Study No. 3. I dare say it's all Wharton's fault! He used to row with me when I was in Study No. 1, you know! That's why I changed out! How do you stand him there, Franky?"

Frank Nugent made no answer to that question in words. He took the fat Owl of the Remove by the collar, twirled him round, and planted a foot on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars School.

"Yooop!" roared Bunter. "Beast!"

"Don't go!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I haven't kicked you enough yet, Bunter. Wait for me!"

Billy Bunter did not wait for Bob! He departed in haste!

The Co. looked at one another. They had arranged a ramble after class, but that ramble in the woods was knocked on the head now if Wharton was under detention.

"It's rotten!" said Bob, dismally. "Quelch seems to have his knife into Wharton this term. Goodness knows why!"

"Bother that man Stacey!" growled Nugent.

"Well, dash it all, Stacey doesn't seem to hunt for trouble!" said Johnny Bull. "He's changed out of Wharton's study, and he can only have done that to keep from rowing. Russell and Ogilvy get on all right with him in Study No. 3."

Nugent was silent. The fact was that every fellow in the Remove could "get on all right" with Ralph Stacey except his relative, Harry Wharton. Frank was a loyal chum; but even he doubted a little whether the fault was all on the new fellow's side.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's Stacey!" exclaimed Bob. "Let's ask him."

A handsome, athletic junior in flannels came out of the House with a bat under his arm. He was so like Harry Wharton in appearance that fellows sometimes had to give him a second look to make sure that he was not the captain of the Remove.

That striking resemblance was a thorn in the side of both the relatives, and it had already led to trouble more than once before the term was three weeks old.

Stacey gave the Co. a cheery nod. He looked good-tempered enough, and he had very pleasant manners; and it was a little difficult for fellows to understand why his relative, Wharton, could not pull with him better.

"Going down to the nets!" asked Bob.

"Yes." Stacey smiled. "That's all the cricket I can get here, as it seems that I'm never to figure in the matches."

The Co. looked uncomfortable. It was their opinion, as well as that of all the Remove, that it was sheer rot for a cricketer of Stacey's quality to be left out of the matches. However, they were not there to speak on that thorny subject.

"Have you been rowing with Wharton again?" asked Bob.

"I've been trying not to!" answered Stacey, laughing. "But it's not really easy. I haven't seen him since class."

"Bunter says he's detained for a row with some chap——"

"Not little me this time, then!" said Stacey. "Perhaps he's found some other man in the Remove who can play his head off at cricket! Result—a row for the happy victim and a rest for me!"

With that remark, which no member of the Co. could consider a pleasant one, Stacey walked on and left them.

"That chap wants his head punched!" muttered Nugent. "He makes out that it's cricket that's at the bottom of the trouble, as if——"

"All rot!" said Bob. "Wharton would be jolly glad to bag a good man for the team if it wasn't for the trouble between them. Of course, that oughtn't to be allowed to interfere with games."

"I should jolly well say not!" grunted Johnny Bull. "There will be a lot of trouble if Stacey's left out of the Highcliffe match!"

"He's left out!" said Nugent curtly.

"Then there'll be trouble!"

"Oh, never mind that now!" said Bob. "Let's go and speak to Wharton."

"Can't speak to a man in detention."

"I can see him at the window!"

The window of the Remove Form-room was open, and Bob spotted the captain of the Form standing there, looking out into the quad. The four juniors cut across to the window.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the trouble, old chap?" asked Bob, looking up, rather dismayed by the black look on Wharton's face.

Wharton smiled sarcastically.

"I'm detained till six! I've got some jolly old Latin conjugations to write out till then."

"But what for?" asked Nugent.

"Bullying!" answered Wharton.

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"Ask Quelch! He caught me at it, and, as a dutiful Form-master, what could he do but give me a detention? He had no time to inquire into the matter—beaks are very busy men, you know!"

"You mean," said Johnny Bull, in his slow, thoughtful way, "that you cheeked him!"

Wharton coloured.

"Man shouldn't cheek a beak!" said Johnny, shaking his head.

"Rats!"

"The ratfulness is not terrific, my esteemed Wharton!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gently. "Execrable and excellent Form-masters have to be given their ridiculous heads, like ludicrous horses."

"But who?" asked Bob.

"Skinner was chalking some impudence on my study door, when I went up and I rubbed it out with his face! He yelled and brought Quelch! You fellows starting now?"

"Well, we won't go without you——"

"I'm coming!"

"Don't be a goat!" said Johnny. "How can you come when you're in detention?"

"I'm not going to be detained for nothing!" answered Wharton coolly. "I'm going out, all the same."

There was alarm in the faces of all the Co. Breaking detention was a serious matter at Greyfriars, as at any school The expression on Wharton's face made them very uneasy. It was clear that he was smarting under a sense of injustice, and in a reckless mood.

"For goodness' sake, old chap, don't be a goat!" said Frank. "Quelch may give you a look in, and miss you——"

"I've no doubt he will," answered Wharton coolly. "I could see in his eye that he suspected I was going to cut when his back was turned."

"Then very likely you'll walk right into him."

"Not if I drop from the window."

"Don't do it," said Frank earnestly. "Quelch seems to be rather down on you this term; but there's no sense in giving him reason. We can out out that walk—we'll go and get some cricket till you come out"

"Oh, good! You can go and watch Stacey doing his wonders. I've just seen him go down!" said Wharton sarcastically. "Cut out the walk if you like—I'm not going to! I——"

"Wharton!" It was a severe voice within the Form-room! Evidently Quelch was already giving the detained junior a look-in. "Come away from that window at once! You have not commenced your task."

Wharton disappeared from the window.

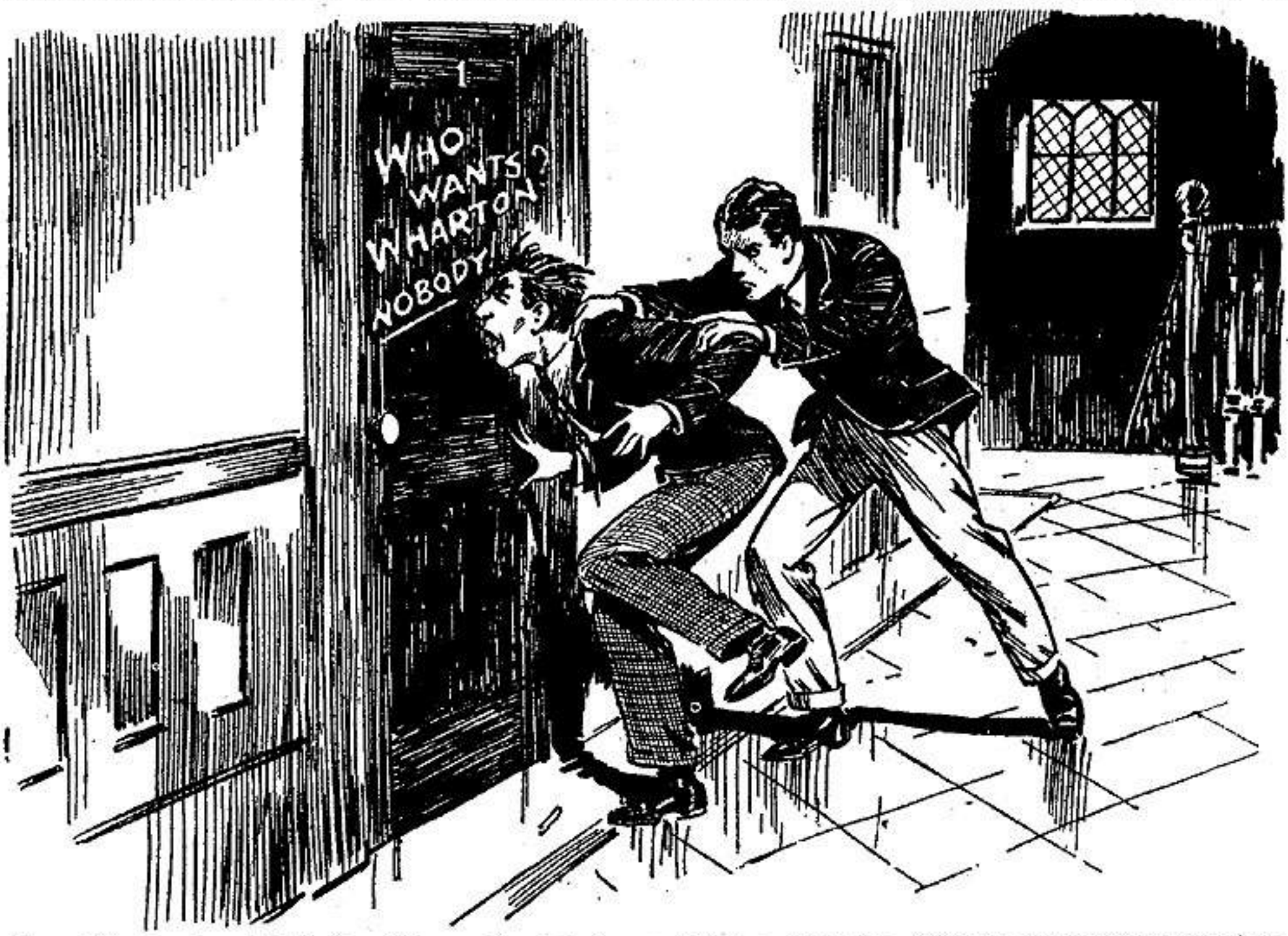
The Co. walked away in a worried mood. Quelch had his eye on the junior in the Form-room, and that junior's friends were rather glad of it. Wharton was in a mood in which he needed saving from himself! Not in the brightest of spirits, the Co. changed for cricket, and went down to join Stacey and the other fellows at the nets.

And—sarcastic as Wharton's reference to the new fellow had been—they did find some keen interest in watching Stacey do his "wonders."

Potter of the Fifth was giving him some bowling—and Potter was a man who sometimes played for the First! But he handled Potter's bowling with ease. The Co. put in some fielding practice, always useful to a cricketer, and rather likely to be neglected by many cricketers. When Wharton, looking from the Form-room window again, cast his eyes in the direction of the nets, he had a distant view of Potter bowling, Stacey hitting, and his friends fielding—a view which seemed, by the expression of his face, to give him no pleasure whatever.

So his own pals had turned him down for that fellow! That was what it looked like in his bitter and resentful mood. If he had been undecided before, he was quite decided now.

Quelch had looked in once! Doubtless he would look in again. If he did, he would find the detained junior gone. Coolly and quietly Wharton dropped from the Form-room window, took out his cap from under his jacket, and put it on and scudded.



Harry Wharton glanced at the inscription on the study door, and his face grew grim. "I think we'll rub that out!" he said, grabbing Skinner by the back of his collar. "Hands off!" yelled Skinner. The captain of the Remove did not heed. He propelled Skinner towards the door and used his face as a duster.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

BILLY BUNTER rolled down to the nets, and stood watching the cricketers through his big spectacles.

A good many fellows had gathered to watch Stacey—he was always worth watching when he had a bat in his hands. There was no doubt that the new fellow was a first-class cricketer, and there was little doubt, too, that he liked to let the Removites see what they were losing by leaving him out of the team. Indeed, when they saw him with either bat or ball, the Remove men could only tell one another that Wharton was a prize idiot to think of not making use of such a man.

Billy Bunter, however, was not keenly interested in cricket—neither was he so great an admirer of Stacey as other fellows were. Bunter was persuaded that he could do as well, if not better, if he chose to take the trouble. But for various reasons he did not choose!

"I say, you fellows!" called out Bunter more than once, unheeded.

Bunter had news for the Co.—he loved to carry news, especially news of a startling or dismaying nature. But the cricketers did not heed Bunter, and he squeaked unregarded, till Frank Nugent happened to come in his direction after the ball.

"Chuck that in, Bunter!" he called out.

"I say, old chap——"

"Chuck that ball in, fathead!"

"I say, Wharton's cut——"

Frank forgot the ball at once. It was dismaying news, if true, and his conscience pricked him a little, too! In his keenness on fielding for Stacey, he had rather forgotten his chum detained in the Form-room and the reckless words he had spoken at the window.

"Wharton—cut!" he repeated.

Bunter grinned.

"Yes, rather! I saw him—scudding like anything! I called to him, but he only scowled at me—you know his rotten temper——"

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Nugent!"

"Send that ball in, Franky!" bawled Bob Cherry. "I say, are you going to send that ball in, fathead?"

"Bother the ball!" growled Nugent. "Bless the ball!" He walked off the field, leaving the ball where it lay.

His friends stared after him. Vernon-Smith cut after the ball and returned it to Potter. Bob and Hurree Singh and Johnny cut after Nugent.

"What the dickens is the matter now?" asked Bob.

"Bunter says——"

"Bother Bunter!"

"He says Wharton's cut!"

"Oh, the ass!"

"I say, you fellows, there'll be a fearful row!" cackled the fat Owl of the Remove. "I say, Quelch's awfully stuffy with him already! I say, this will mean a Head's flogging! What?"

Bunter seemed rather amused at the idea.

"Oh, shut up, you fat frog!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Beast!"

Leaving his friends, Nugent cut away to the House. The Remove Form-room window was still wide open, and Frank jumped up to the sill, caught hold, and looked in. The Form-room was empty.

On Wharton's desk lay a Latin grammar, open, and beside it a half-written paper of Latin conjugations. He had commenced his task—and left it unfinished—and he was gone.

Nugent dropped back in utter dismay. His face was deeply clouded as he rejoined his friends.

"He's gone!" asked Bob.

Nugent nodded silently.

"Oh, the ass! The silly ass!" breathed Bob. "Quelch is bound to spot him—he's suspicious already! I—I suppose he's gone out of gates—no getting after him and lugging him back."

"The lugfulness is not the esteemed possibility," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, shaking his dusky head. "The esteemed Wharton is asking for it."

"Begging and praying for it, you mean!" growled Johnny Bull. "I don't know why Quelch is down on him so much this term; but we all know he is——and now this——"

The four juniors stood in a dismayed group. They had forgotten cricket now. All their concern was for their headstrong chum, whose act of defiance was likely to have very serious results.

In his angry and reckless mood, Wharton had probably given no thought to the consequences—but they had to be faced, all the same. As soon as Quelch looked into the Form-room again and missed him, he would report the matter to the Head. That could scarcely mean anything less than a flogging—after which Wharton could scarcely remain Head Boy of the Remove. Head Boy of a Form at Greyfriars was supposed to stand for discipline, not for the outraging thereof.

"Anything up?" asked a cool, pleasant voice, as the chums of the Remove stood discussing the matter in a worried and uneasy group.

They looked round. It was Stacey—looking a little flushed and very handsome, and fresh as paint after slogging at the nets.

Stacey smiled.

"Excuse my barging in," he said, "but you look as if the skies had fallen. I heard Bunter——"

"Then you know what's up!" said Bob gruffly. "I suppose that fat Owl is telling everybody! If it gets to Quelch that Wharton's cut detention——"

"No need for it to get to him!" said Johnny Bull. "He's certain to look into the Form-room again, and may go any minute."

"And then all the fat will be in the fire!" groaned Bob. "This will just put the tin hat on it."

Stacey looked at the dismayed Co. with a rather curious expression on his face that was so like Wharton's.

"If a fellow could help——" he said.

"Nothing doing!" answered Bob. "I suppose you're not very keen on helping Wharton, if you could."

"Why not?" said Stacey. "We're not friends, but it's up to one Remove man to help another out of a scrape if he can. Wharton doesn't like me, any more than I like him, but he chipped in when the Highcliffe fellows bagged me the other day and started ragging. One good turn deserves another."

"You can't do anything——"

"I think I can."

"Well, what?" asked Nugent. He did not see what Stacey, or any fellow, could do in the circumstances, but he was eager to catch at a straw.

Stacey gave a nod towards the Form-room.

"The window's open," he said. "I suppose Wharton cut that way. A fellow could get in the same way."

"What on earth good would that do?" asked Bob. "I tell you Quelch will look in and see that he's gone——"

"Who goes there?" The sentry took
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"Well, if he saw me——"

"You!" ejaculated all the Co. together.

"Little me!" smiled Stacey. "Those Highcliffe cads took me for Wharton the day they ragged me—why shouldn't Quelch?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"He knows us apart in Form," said Stacey, "but if he looks in for Wharton, he will expect to see Wharton there—and the likeness will do it—what?"

"If he catches you out——"

"I'll chance that."

The Co. looked at him and at one another. It was a way out of the trouble of which they would never have dreamed—and it looked like a winner, if Stacey was willing to take the risk.

"Easy as pie!" said Stacey coolly. "I can keep my back to the light, and scowl a bit—that will look all the more like Wharton——"

"Oh, don't talk rot!" grunted Nugent, while his companions grinned.

"You'll have to get changed," said Bob. "Wharton wasn't in flannels."

"I can change pretty quick. If Quelch hasn't spotted already that he's gone, it's all serene. Look here, one of you fellows go to Quelch in his study and keep him jawing a bit. Ask him something about deponent verbs."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've got an exercise for Quelch," said Johnny Bull. "I can take it to him—I'll cut in and get it, if—if you mean it, Stacey!"

"Of course I do. I'll get changed." Stacey ran into the House.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Bob. "I—I—I say, he's not half a bad sort! If he gets by with it——"

"I don't see why he shouldn't!" said Frank. "It's none too light in the Form-room, and with his back to the window, and Quelchy expecting to see Wharton there——"

"Right as rain!" said Johnny. "I'll get that exercise, and cut off to Quelch and keep him busy."

Johnny cut after Stacey. Bob and Frank and Hurree Singh remained in a group by the Form-room window. They were rather anxious and excited. The stunt looked like being a success—if Quelch had not yet gone to the Form-room. And they could not help feeling that it was fearfully decent of Stacey!

If he wanted trouble for his rival and enemy, there was the trouble ready-made; there was no doubt about that. Trouble, black and heavy, waited for Harry Wharton when he came in. And Stacey was saving him from it, if he could—and at a risk! For if Quelch spotted the change of identity in the Form-room, Stacey would get it as severely as Wharton for what Quelch would consider disrespectful trickery

"I say, you fellows——"

Bunter rolled up. Bunter could see that there was something "on." Short-sighted as he was, the Owl of the Remove had almost the eye of an eagle for anything that did not concern him.

"Oh, get out!" snapped Bob.

Bunter was not wanted on the scene in a matter that could not be kept too carefully secret.

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Buzz, you fat bluebottle!" said Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

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

Bunter jumped back actively.

But he did not depart. His curiosity was aroused. At a safe distance he blinked inquisitively through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, what's up?" he demanded. "I jolly well know that Wharton has cut—I saw him dropping over the wall! He never went out by the gates—Gosling would have spotted him. He, he, he! I say——"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he comes!" breathed Bob.

Stacey had changed with wonderful rapidity. He came cutting round the House, and Bunter blinked at him.

Having seen Stacey in flannels on the cricket ground, not ten minutes ago, and unaware that he had chucked cricket, Billy Bunter rather naturally took him for his double—especially as Stacey ran straight at the Form-room window, jumped up, and climbed in.

"I say, you fellows, he's come back!" exclaimed Bunter. "I say——"

"If you gabble a word about this, you fat idiot, I'll burst you all over the quad!" hissed Bob Cherry.

"Mum is the esteemed word, my idiotic Bunter!" said the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Bunter blinked at them, puzzled.

"Eh! Quelch won't know that Wharton's been out of the Form-room at all, now he's got back, will he?" he said. "Nothing to worry about."

The three juniors stared at him. Then they grinned. They realised that Bunter supposed that it was Wharton who had clambered in at the Form-room window. It was a good augury of success.

"Oh! Ah! Exactly!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Race you to the tuckshop, Bunter. What about a ginger-pop?"

"What-ho!" said Bunter promptly.

And he followed the juniors off the scene—with the fixed belief in his fat mind that Harry Wharton was sitting in the Remove-room at detention. And the juniors hoped that Mr. Quelch, when he looked in, would share that belief.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Prout in Peril!

"OLD ass!" muttered Harry Wharton.

That disrespectful description applied to Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth Form at Greyfriars School.

Wharton was walking along the footpath in Friardale Wood, with his hands in his pockets and a glum frown on his brow, when he sighted Prout.

He was not enjoying his outing.

Angry resentment of injustice had caused him to act recklessly and unthinkingly: but reflection had followed. Reflection, unfortunately, came too late to be of any use.

He did not want a ramble on his own without his friends. He did not really want to treat Mr. Quelch with disrespect. And certainly he did not want to be taken before the headmaster for judgment as a reckless young rebel against authority.

That sort of thing might suit the Bounder; but it was not in Wharton's line at all. He realised that he was guilty of an act of thoughtless folly; but he did not quite realise this till he was a mile from the school, walking in the woods. Then it was too late.

He was wondering now whether there was a chance of getting back undiscovered. But he knew there was no chance. He knew that Quelch suspected him of that very recklessness, and that an eye would be kept on the Form-room. If he had not been missed already he was absolutely certain to be missed before he could get back. He was "for it," and what he had bitten off, so to speak, he had to chew.

And yet—— Suppose there was a chance—suppose Quelch, for instance, got jawing with some other beak, or went to see the Head—lots of things might keep him from going to the Form-room before six, when he had to release the detained junior.

If there was a chance it was a slim one—but was it not worth trying—for a fellow, who, at the bottom of his heart, was not hunting for trouble with the school authorities, and who had already repented of a hasty action?

Wharton was thinking of it, undecided, when Prout came rolling down the footpath towards him. Portly and weighty, Prout puffed as he rolled.

Wharton gave him a far from amicable look.

If there was a chance of getting back, of undoing what he had done, it was obviously necessary not to be spotted out of the school by a Greyfriars master.

Prout was not his Form-master, and did not even know that he was supposed to be in detention. But he was a talkative old ass—and might let it slip in talking to Quelch. He might, indeed, even know that Wharton was under detention—a good many eyes had seen Quelch taking him to the Form-room, and Prout's might have been among them. In that case, he was quite certain to mention to Quelch that he had seen Wharton out of bounds.

These thoughts flashed very quickly through the junior's mind as he looked at the portly form coming on with its majestic roll—and Wharton acted quickly. He backed out of sight behind a tree. He believed that Prout had not seen him, so far, and it was wiser to keep out of sight.

Prout came rolling on.

That he had not noticed the junior on the footpath was soon clear, for he did not glance towards the tree behind which the captain of the Remove had taken refuge.

Prout rolled on, unconscious that there was anyone else about.

Wharton, peering round the trunk, watched him, with a faint grin. Prout rolled on and past, and his portly back was now towards Wharton.

It was a great relief, for in those moments the truant had made up his mind; he was getting back into detention if he could!

As he waited for Prout to get clear, before stepping out of cover, there came a sudden patter of feet on the footpath.

A running man passed the tree behind which the schoolboy stood.

Wharton glanced after him.

He was rather a rough-looking customer; one of the rowdies who came into the neighbourhood when the Wapshot races were on.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Wharton.

The man's eyes were fixed on Prout's portly back as he ran. Wharton wondered whether he had followed Prout intentionally into the lonely depths of the wood.

Prout was a prosperous-looking man—a handsome prize for a footpad, and the racing man looked none too good for it.

If that was his object, he could not have tracked the Fifth Form master to a more convenient spot—for they were now in the heart of the wood, half a mile from the Pegg road on one side, and Friardale Lane on the other.

Prout, at the sound of running feet behind him, glanced over a podgy shoulder. He came to a halt, still in sight of the junior behind the tree, and

stepped to the side of the path, to allow the rowdy to pass—evidently not liking his looks But the running man stopped also.

He had a short stick under his arm. He slipped it down into his hand as he faced the startled Form-master of Greyfriars, and gave a hurried glance up and down the path. Then he crowded Prout.

"Stand back, my man!" said Prout, with dignity, as he was crowded back against a tree. "What——"

"'Nuff said, old codger!" said the Wapshot man. "Hand it over—sharp!"

Lonely as the woodland footpath was, the ruffian was evidently in fear of interruption.

Prout stared at him majestically. Prout was not quick on the uptake.

"Hand what over?" he demanded. "What do you mean?"

"All you've got about you, you old fool you!" was the answer. "I'd as soon crack your silly old nut as not! I tell you, I've been cleaned out, clean as a whistle, by the bookies at Wapshot this arternoon—clean as a whistle!"

Prout's plump face purpled.

He understood now.

"You—you—you rascal!" stuttered Prout. "You—you ruffian! Do you imagine for one moment that I am a man to submit to robbery? Upon my word——"

Prout, when his plump chin once got going, was accustomed to carrying on to great lengths. But Prout's accustomed eloquence was cut short on this occasion. The man with the stick was pressed for time, if Prout was not.

He made a sudden swipe with the stick, and Prout's hat cracked under it. The Fifth Form master staggered, gasping; and, as he staggered, the ruffian grasped him by the shoulder and upended him into the grass. Prout crashed with a crash that almost shook Friardale Wood.

A second more, and a knee was planted on Prout's ample waistcoat and the stick was flourished over his upturned face.

"You giving any more trouble, you old idiot—you?" snarled the footpad. "By gum, if you will have it——"

Prout was elderly, Prout was plump, but Prout was game! He began to struggle fiercely. With a savage glitter in his eyes, the footpad swung up the stick, aiming a blow.

He did not hear swift footsteps on the grass behind him. Harry Wharton, darting at the ruffian's back, reached him just in time. Over the ruffian's head, he grasped the upraised stick, and, taking the rascal quite by surprise, wrenched it away.

A howl of startled rage broke from the footpad, thus suddenly and unexpectedly deprived of his weapon.

He whirled round at Wharton. A moment more, and a fierce and muscular grasp would have been on the schoolboy.

Sturdy as he was, he would have crumpled up in that grasp like a reed. Wharton was well aware of that; he was nothing like a match for the ruffian, and he acted promptly. The stick was in his hand, and he used it! With all the strength of his arm he struck, and the ruffian received his own weapon crashing on his head.

He gave one gurgling gasp, rolled off Prout, and collapsed in the grass of the footpath.

He was stunned.

Wharton had forgotten for the moment that he did not want Prout to spot him. He had had hardly any choice in the matter, as he could scarcely have remained idle while an elderly man had his head cracked by a ruffianly footpad.

But as Prout, dizzy and gasping, sat up, he remembered!

Prout, dazed and dizzy and confused, gasped and blinked and gurgled. Wharton turned instantly away and whipped into the wood.

"Urrggh!" gurgled Prout faintly. "Wurrggh!"

Wharton vanished.

He hoped that Prout had not recognised him; he might hardly have seen him at all. He was out of sight in a second, and, tossing the cudgel away into the thickets, he ran. The footpad was stunned, safe for a good five minutes, at least—ample time for Prout to get clear when he had finished gurgling for breath. The captain of the Remove left him to it, and vanished in the green wood.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Quelch is Satisfied!

MR. QUELCH was surprised, but he was pleased.

Deponent verbs were not popular in the Remove. No Latin verbs were really liked in that Form, and those irritating verbs which are passive in form, but active in meaning, were the least liked of all. Yet here was a member of his Form in search of knowledge on that very subject.

Quelch, though surprised, could not help feeling pleased with Johnny Bull.

As a dutiful Form-master, he had to disregard the unpopularity of deponent verbs in his Form. Certain fellows who were backward in deponent verbs—among them Bull—had been set exercises on that entrancing subject. Quelch, of course, expected the exercises to be done, but he did not expect keenness.

And here was keenness; for Johnny Bull, at a time when he might have been playing cricket, or ragging in the passages, or knocking Coker's hat off in the quad, had brought his exercise to his Form-master's study to beg a little assistance with the same—an action only to be accounted for by his keenness to master that intricate subject!

It was a quarter past five. Wharton's detention had still three-quarters of an hour to run Mr Quelch, strongly suspecting him of intending to break detention, had looked in once, and found him at the window; now he was about to look in again, to make sure that the mouse was still in the trap, so to speak.

But he could hardly disregard the keenness of a junior who wanted to know all about deponent verbs!

With his crusty face melting into quite an agreeable smile, Mr. Quelch sat down again. He was going to give Wharton a look-in; but ten minutes sooner or later made no difference—so far as Henry Samuel Quelch knew!

For ten minutes, therefore, he sat, kind and patient, elucidating deponent verbs to Johnny Bull, who listened with rapt attention, and felt that he was deserving of a place in the noble army of martyrs!

"Thank you, sir!" said Johnny Bull at last "You're awfully kind, sir!"

"Not at all, Bull—not at all!" said Mr Quelch graciously. "I am very glad to give you assistance. I am very glad to see you taking a serious interest in this important subject, Bull!"

Johnny Bull's serious interest in that important subject evaporated as soon as he was outside Quelch's study.

Dismissing deponent verbs from his mind as if they were not important at all, Johnny hurried away to rejoin his friends. He had kept Quelch busy for over ten minutes—ample time for Stacey to carry out his wheeze.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, from the doorway of the school shop. "This way, Johnny, old bean!"

"All serene?" asked Johnny, as he arrived.

"The serenefulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Singh. "But not a word, my esteemed Johnny! Speechfulness is silvery, but silence is the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the well!"

Johnny nodded and grinned, and joined his friends in a ginger-pop. All was serene—if the scheme worked! The chums of the Remove could only hope that it would work.

The smile lingered on Mr. Quelch's face as he left his study after Johnny was gone. But it faded away as he drew near the Remove Form Room.

A very grim expression replaced it.

He had strongly suspected, when he saw Wharton at the Form-room window, that the junior was thinking of breaking out of detention. He hoped that that suspicion was unfounded. But if it proved to be well founded, Mr. Quelch was going to deal with the matter with an iron hand.

He already had cause—or believed that he had cause—to be dissatisfied with Wharton. And Wharton, without exactly intending it, had "cheeked" him over the affair of Skinner in the Remove passage. If he had added to his offences by breaking out of detention, he was booked for extremely severe measures—beginning with a flogging from the Head, and continuing with a prolonged "gating."

Quelch was fully prepared to find the Form-room empty when he opened the door and looked in.

Being a just and, at bottom, a kind-hearted man, he was relieved to find that it was not empty.

A junior sat solitary at one of the desks, pen in hand, writing out Latin conjugations.

His face was in shadow, his back being to the window, and his head was bent, in which circumstances Quelch, though his eyes were keen, could not possibly have told whether it was Wharton or his relative, Stacey, who was sitting there—had he doubted.

Naturally, he did not doubt.

He expected to see Wharton there, if he saw anybody; and certainly he never dreamed of the trick that was being played, especially as he knew that the "doubles" of Greyfriars were on the worst of terms personally.

His grim brow cleared as he saw the junior sitting there, industriously at work.

The junior did not seem to hear the door open or to see Quelch. With bent head, he went on writing.

Mr. Quelch did not speak. There was nothing to say. As he found the junior there, in fact, he was rather glad that Wharton did not see him looking in—this business of keeping a suspicious eye on a boy was not pleasant to Mr. Quelch.

Having looked, he stepped back, and drew the Form-room door shut and departed—in silence.

Not till the door was shut did Stacey look up. He grinned at the shut door.

He had been perfectly well aware of the scrutiny of the two keen gimlet eyes from the doorway, though he had given no sign of it. It was a relief to him that Quelch contented himself with looking in. Had he entered and spoken, the ordeal would have been a good deal

Harry Wharton, darting at the ruffian's back, reached him just in time. He grasped the upraised stick and wrenched it away. Then, with all the strength of his arm, he struck, and the ruffian received his own weapon crashing on his head. He gave one gurgling gasp and then rolled off Prout! "Oooooh!"

more difficult and perilous. Stacey had nerve enough to carry it through—he had nerve enough for anything—but he was glad that it had not been needed.

He grinned, and resumed scribbling. Even in their handwriting the two relatives were alike, and it was easy for Stacey to continue the paper that Wharton had started in a "fist" that would pass for Wharton's.

It was a weary business, sitting alone in the dusky Form-room, with the bright May sunshine streaming down out of doors, grinding out tiresome Latin conjugations. A fellow might do such a thing for a pal—but Wharton was no friend of his. He disliked him—intensely, and Wharton repaid his dislike with interest.

Why was he there, then, saving his rival from a terrific "row"? To get himself regarded as a good-natured fellow and a sportsman, willing to do a good turn, even for an enemy, to put Wharton hopelessly in the wrong in their "feud"? No doubt these were Stacey's reasons. But he had other and better reasons. His motives were mixed—some good, and some bad—and possibly the good predominated.

Anyhow, there he was—and he had saved Wharton from getting it in the neck, at the very serious risk of getting it in the neck himself! For he had no delusions about what would happen to him if Quelch found him out. Pulling a Form-master's leg to this extent was not a trifling matter. It meant a flogging, and the loss of his Form-master's good graces—which he had, so far, very carefully cultivated.

He scribbled, and scribbled.

It was a quarter of an hour later that a shadow fell across the window.

Stacey very carefully did not look round, but he knew that Mr. Quelch, walking in the quad, had cast a glance in at the window. Quelch was a tall gentleman, able to glance in in passing.

This time he had had a back view of the junior, industriously at work at his desk.

Stacey grinned again over his conjugations.

But as six o'clock drew near he began to feel a little uneasy. Surely that hot-headed ass, Wharton, would come back before six!

If not, Stacey had to face the ordeal of a closer inspection, when Quelch came in to dismiss him from detention.

Then, as a shadow passed the window again, he realised that Mr. Quelch was walking on the path that ran under the Form-room windows—pacing to and fro there, as he not infrequently did!

If Wharton had come in he had no chance of getting back to the Form-room unseen! Stacey was for it now!

He shrugged his shoulders. He had nerve enough for it, anyhow! But again he was in luck!

As six o'clock struck from the clock tower Mr. Quelch paused in his pacing and looked in at the open window.

"You may go, Wharton!" he said.

Stacey rose to his feet.

"You may leave your paper on the desk," added Mr. Quelch.

Stacey did not answer His voice was a good deal like Wharton's, but he did not care to risk it, if he could help it. He crossed quickly to the Form-room door.

An answer was not actually necessary, but Quelch, naturally, had expected the junior to say "Yes, sir!" or "Very well, sir!" As the detained junior left the Form-room without a word or look, Mr. Quelch, at the window, frowned, and he was still frowning as he resumed pacing. It was another example, he concluded, of the boy's sullen temper!

Stacey, glad to get out of danger, and caring nothing what impression he left on the Remove master's mind, scuttled away. His ordeal was over, and he had come through safely. He went up to his study—No. 3, in the Remove. Russell and Ogilvy were there, finishing a study tea.

"Where the dickens have you been?" asked Russell. "I thought you were coming in to tea after the cricket."

"Been out of gates?" asked Ogilvy. "Or having another row with Wharton?" asked Russell, with a grin.

"Wharton's in detention," said Ogilvy. "I heard that he got jugged for ragging Skinner. What have you been doing, Stacey?"

"Latin!" answered Stacey, with a laugh.

At which Ogilvy and Russell laughed, too. Stacey, as he sat down to tea, turned the subject to cricket, and the Highcliffe match.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

HARRY WHARTON dropped in quietly over the Cloister wall. He had lost no time, having once made up his mind what he was going to do. It was barely half-past five when he dropped in—the very time, in point of fact, when Mr. Quelch was glancing in at the Remove Form-room door—at Stacey!

He had ample time to get back into detention, and to get some of those dismal conjugations written out—if the coast was clear! It had been clear enough when he left. He had hoped to find it the same on his return. As for Prout, he could only hope that the Fifth Form-master had not noticed who he was At the most, Prout could only have had a glimpse of him under the shady branches.

No one had seen him leaving the

school, excepting Bunter! Bunter, of course, tattled of everything, but only among the other fellows. Quelch was not likely to learn anything from him, or any other Remove fellow. It was all right, if he got back undiscovered by Quelch.

It is easier to get into a trap than to get out, but on this occasion it looked as if it was easier to get out than to get in! Coming in sight of the Form-room windows, Wharton had a view of the Remove window, still invitingly open—but also a view of Monsieur Charpentier, the French master, on the path, in conversation with Capper, the master of the Fourth.

Clambering into a Form-room window under the astonished eyes of two masters was scarcely practicable.

Wharton retreated, considered the matter for a few minutes, and then cut round the House. If he could not get in by the window he might be able to get in by the Form-room door—but he had to reach it first. Walking into the House in the usual way might spell walking into the view of Quelch, which, of course, he did not want to do.

By a back door, unnoticed, he got in, and with cautious footsteps entered the Form-room passage—and immediately backed behind a corner again. Quelch, having looked into the Remove-room, had not gone back to his study. He had stopped to speak to Hacker, the master of the Shell. Really, there was no reason why two Form-masters of Greyfriars should not chat amicably for a few minutes, after they were finished with their classes, but it was extremely irritating to Wharton.

He wondered whether Quelch had looked into the Form-room. He was quite near it! If he had, the game was up, for Harry, of course, had not the remotest idea that Stacey was there in his place.

With Quelch and Hacker chatting in the passage, looking as if they were "set" for an innings, so to speak, there was no way into the Remove-room by the door for the unfortunate truant who was so keen now to undo his rash and reckless act.

Window and door both being barred, as it were, there remained only the chimney, which was rather too desperate a resource! In the hope that Mossoo and Capper might have cleared off by that time, Wharton got out of the House again, by the same back door, and went round the building.

Mossoo and Capper had indeed cleared off, but a more unwelcome figure was there—that of Quelch!

Quelch was passing up and down the path under the Form-room windows! He had his hands clasped behind his back, and seemed to be thinking—perhaps on the subject of the celebrated "History of Greyfriars," which was the great literary work of his life.

Wharton breathed hard.

There was no chance at the window, that was certain! But, with Quelch out of the House, there was a good chance at the door again! But even as that happy solace occurred to him he saw Mr. Quelch stop at the open Form-room window and look in

His heart sank like lead.

Whether Quelch had visited the Form-room or not during his absence, the game was up now! Looking in at the window, he would see that the detained junior was not there!

It was the finish! It was always easier to play the fool than to get back to the path of wisdom afterwards!

Wharton, from a distance, stood staring at Quelch's back for some dismal moments. Then he turned away.

It was useless to get back into detention now, whether Quelch cleared off or not. Wharton went into the House—openly now, careless whether he met Quelch's eyes or not. But as Quelch was still pacing under the Form-room windows till six struck, he did not see him. Indeed, had he seen him he would probably have taken it for granted that he was his double—Stacey—as he firmly believed that Wharton himself was sitting at his desk in the Form-room!

The captain of the Remove went up to his study. No one was there, but he did not want company. Frank Nugent, not having the faintest idea when Wharton might come in, had gone to Bob Cherry's study to tea, and the Co. were all in Study No. 13.

Wharton was not thinking of tea. He was thinking of the disaster he had carelessly, wilfully, brought on his own head.

Quelch had looked into the Form-room! That meant that he knew that Wharton had cut detention! There was not the slightest hope of the Remove master overlooking such an offence. When he saw him again, at calling-over, he would tell the culprit to follow him to his study. Call over was not far off now. Wharton moved restlessly about his study while he waited for the bell.

What an ass he had been! That was his chief thought. Asking for more trouble, when he had enough on hand already. That had been caused by Stacey. But Stacey had nothing to do with this—this was due to his own headstrong temper. It was not a happy reflection.

But it was done now, and he could only make up his mind to go through what was to follow, keeping a stiff upper lip.

He heard a tramp of feet in the passage and Bob Cherry's cheery voice. The fellows were going down.

They did not know that he had come in. He did not open the door as they passed. They had advised him to give up his reckless intention, and he had disregarded their advice—like a hot-headed ass! That, no doubt, was what they thought him! Possibly he would not have acted as he had done, but for that glimpse of them on the cricket ground, fielding for Stacey. Yet why shouldn't they field for Stacey? It was as good practice at fielding as they could get, and, as cricket captain, he had always been very keen on keeping his men up to the mark in that useful, but often neglected, branch of the game. No use thinking of that now!

He left the study at last. One fellow was coming down the passage—as the bell rang. It was Skinner, who had stayed to finish a cigarette in his study before going down.

Skinner gave him an inimical look. He had not forgotten the use of his face as a duster on the study door. His nose was still feeling a little raw.

"So you funked it, after all!" said Skinner, with a sneer.

Wharton glanced at him. He did not want another row with Skinner, and he did not understand the remark.

"Funked what?" he asked.

"I heard from Bunter that you'd cut detention," said Skinner. "You got back pretty quick, before Quelch spotted it. I fancied you would."

Skinner had not, in fact, fancied anything of the kind. He had fancied that Wharton would stay out of detention, and hoped that he would get a flogging for the same. Skinner was in a state of disappointment.

"Got back?" repeated Wharton blankly.

"Didn't you?" sneered Skinner. "I heard Bunter telling them in the tuck-shop that he saw you get in at the window again."

"I wish he had!" said Harry.

"Well, he did—not much good making out that you had the nerve to stay out when you were seen sneaking in again!" jeered Skinner, and he went on towards the stairs.

Wharton followed him down, puzzled, and joined the crowd heading for Hall. Why Bunter had fancied that he had seen him getting back into the Form-room was a mystery to him.

He took his place in the Remove in Hall. Frank Nugent gave him a cheery grin, much to his surprise. Considering what was coming to him, he expected to see Frank looking worried and troubled.

"All serene!" whispered Nugent.

"Is it?" said Harry rather grimly.

"Thank goodness you're back in time for roll!" said Frank. "It will be all right now! I'll explain later——"

"Silence!" called out Wingate of the Sixth.

Mr. Quelch was taking the roll. When he came to Wharton's name, the captain of the Remove answered "Adsum," amazed to note that his Form-master gave him no special attention. He had quite expected to see the gimlet eyes fix on him with a glitter in them.

Neither, after roll was called, did Mr. Quelch take any heed of him. He was not singled out and told to go to his Form-master's study. Was Quelch letting the matter pass? That was impossible! What on earth did it mean, then? The captain of the Remove went out of Hall with his friends, utterly puzzled and mystified. He had escaped the consequences of his rashness—that was growing clear—there was nothing to come! But how, and why, was a deep mystery to him.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Grateful Prout!

"MY dear Quelch——"

Prout spoke effusively, as he rolled in the Remove master's study. Prout was in an effusive mood.

Often and often Prout had had to complain to Quelch of various delinquencies in members of his Form. The Remove, in the senior Form-master's opinion, were a set of young sweeps, and Quelch did not keep them sufficiently in hand. But though Prout was the man to find fault where fault existed, and sometimes where it did not, he was also the man to give honour where honour was due. And honour was due to the Lower boy who had so courageously and so effectually come to his rescue when the footpad attacked him in Friardale Wood. Prout was full of it.

That was natural enough, for Prout would have been seriously damaged, and undoubtedly robbed, had not that schoolboy rushed in at the right moment and acted so promptly and effectively. Prout still shuddered at the thought of that uplifted cudgel coming down on his head and cracking his majestic nut, as assuredly it would have done, had not a ready hand stopped it in time. Prout was pompous, but Prout was grateful.

Quelch looked at him. Quelch, a matter-of-fact man, had little use for effusiveness, or emotion of any kind;

neither did he enjoy lengthy chats with Prout. He only wondered why the beaming Prout had barged into his study, and wished he hadn't.

"My dear Quelch, you have heard nothing?"

"Of what?" Quelch, as usual, was short and sharp.

"The brave lad has not spoken of it?"

"Eh?"

"A gallant lad, Quelch, a credit to your Form!" said Prout.

Quelch stared, amazed, but relaxing a little. Like any Form-master, he was prepared to hear, with approval, that any member of his Form was a credit to it. And this was a most unusual opinion for Prout to express.

"But who—what?" asked Quelch. "What has happened, Mr. Prout?"

"I have been in danger, sir!" said Prout impressively. "After class, sir, I took a walk to Pegg. I walked home by the footpath through Friardale Wood! I was attacked——"

"Attacked!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"Attacked, sir," said Prout, "by a ruffian!"

"Goodness gracious, sir!" said Mr. Quelch.

"One of those rowdy characters who come into the neighbourhood, sir, when there are races at Wapshot," said Mr. Prout. "A burly, hulking, desperate ruffian, sir! I have given his description to the police, though I have little hope that they will ever see anything of him—no doubt he has gone long ago. However, we must hope for the best."

"But what——"

"This hooligan, sir, this ruffian, this unmitigated scoundrel, attacked me in the wood, in a lonely spot far from help!" said Prout. "I trust that I should have been a match for him—rather more than a match, I fancy—but he was armed with a cudgel. He knocked me down with the cudgel——"

"Is it possible?"

"Fortunately, sir, my hat took the force of the blow! The hat is completely ruined—but it saved my head! However, I fell! Immediately the villain pounced on me, and lifted his cudgel to stun me with a blow!"

Prout paused impressively.

"At that moment, sir, a boy whom I had not previously seen, rushed at the scoundrel, grasped his arm, and stopped the blow!"

"A boy of my Form?" Quelch was interested now.

"Yes, sir—a Remove boy! Seizing the cudgel from the ruffian, he struck him on the head with it, stunning him."

"A prompt action, showing both courage and presence of mind!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Precisely so, sir! Had not the boy got in that fortunate blow, I tremble to think what would have happened to him at the hands of that desperate scoundrel. He ran the risk of serious injury. Fortunately, the ruffian fell senseless. Why the boy disappeared instantly into the wood, I cannot say—but he went before I had an opportunity of speaking to him—I was somewhat breathless——"

Quelch had no doubt of that.

"Having recovered my breath, sir, I left the spot," continued Prout. "The ruffian lay senseless where Wharton had——"

"Wharton?"

"Where Wharton had struck him down. I have learned since, however, that he was gone when Police-constable Tozer arrived to take him into custody. No doubt he recovered his senses in the interval."

"Did you say Wharton?"

"Wharton, sir, of your Form!"

"You are sure you recognised the boy, Mr. Prout?"

"Quite, sir! I saw him only for a moment—but I am sure that it was Wharton!"

"At what time did this occur, Mr. Prout?"

"Between five and half-past, sir! I remember hearing the half-hour strike from the village as I was on my way to Mr. Tozer's after leaving the spot."

"There is some mistake in that case," said Mr. Quelch. "Wharton, of my Form, has been in detention since classes, and was not released until six."

"As near as I can judge, sir, the incident occurred at a quarter, or perhaps twenty minutes past five," said Mr. Prout.

"At half-past five, Mr. Prout, I looked into my Form-room to ascertain that Wharton was at his task. He was there."

"Indeed, sir. I can scarcely have been mistaken. If it was not Wharton, it was a boy with an astonishing resemblance to him."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"That is easily accounted for, Mr. Prout. Undoubtedly it was Stacey."

"Stacey," repeated Mr. Prout.

"A relative of Wharton's, who came into the Remove this term," explained Mr. Quelch. "His remarkable resemblance to Wharton caused some confusion at the beginning of the term. They were several times mistaken for one another."

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Prout. "I remember now. I have heard of the boy. The boy who has caused a great deal of remark by his cricketing abilities, is it not?"

"That is the boy, sir. His name is Stacey."

"If Wharton was in detention——"

"He certainly was."

"Then it must have been Stacey who gave me that invaluable assistance, sir. The mistake was natural."

"Oh, quite so!" said Mr. Quelch. "If you are sure that the boy looked like Wharton—as he must have done, if you mistook him for Wharton—there can be no doubt that it was Stacey."

"Then it is to Stacey that my grateful thanks are due," said Mr. Prout. "The boy's name, after all, matters little. It was a boy of your Form, sir, and I am bound to say that his action—his courage, sir, his promptness, his presence of mind—reflect great credit on him, and on his Form, sir. But for his intervention I should now be lying in the hospital, seriously injured—perhaps with a fractured skull." Mr. Prout passed a plump hand tenderly over his majestic head, where there was a contusion. "You had heard nothing, sir, of this incident?"

"Nothing," said Mr. Quelch.

"I must see the boy, sir," said Prout. "He gave me no opportunity of speaking. Modesty, perhaps, and the desire to avoid my thanks. But I must thank him, sir. Most certainly I must express my gratitude."

"I will send for him, if you wish, sir. Or if you prefer to see him less formally, his study is No. 3 in the Remove."

"I will go to his study, sir," said Prout, rising. "I must lose no time in expressing my opinion—my high opinion—of his courage and presence of mind—my gratitude, sir, for an inestimable service."

Prout rolled out of the Remove master's study, and headed for the stairs. He left Mr. Quelch in a very pleased mood.

Quelch was glad to hear of anything to the credit of his Form. And this was very much to its credit. He was glad to hear that the new boy, Stacey, of whom he had formed a high opinion, was worthy of that high opinion. He had been thinking of late that Stacey was better fitted, in many ways, to be Head Boy of the Remove than his relative, Wharton. Now he was feeling almost sure on that point.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

HARRY WHARTON, in Study No. 1, stared at the Co.

They had dragged him off to the study after calling-over, to explain. Utterly mystified by his unexpected escape from the vials of Quelch's wrath, Wharton realised that his chums had something to tell him on that subject, though he could not begin to guess what it was. But it was not an explanation that could be made where there were other ears to hear. What would happen if Quelch discovered the trick that had been played, would not bear thinking of. And if it became the talk of the Remove, it was very likely to reach Quelch's ears sooner or later. It was a matter that could not be kept too dark.

"It's all right, old man," Bob Cherry began. "I suppose you expected Quelch to jump on your neck."

"Of course I did," answered Harry. "I know he looked into the Form-room. I saw him at the window when I came in, so he knows——"

"He doesn't!" grinned Bob.

"The knowfulness is not terrific," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Quelch's venerable leg has been pulled."

"He must have seen that I wasn't in the Form-room."

"He saw you there," grinned Johnny Bull. "At least, he thinks he did."

"What the thump do you mean? I wasn't!"

"Stacey was."

Wharton jumped.

"Stacey!"

"Stacey, of that ilk," chuckled Bob. "See? He squatted there in your place, did your jolly old Latin, and Quelch never smelled a rat. Right as rain."

"Stacey!" repeated Wharton blankly.

He began to understand.

His relief at escaping the consequences of his rashness was great. It was not only the flogging—though no fellow, of course, wanted a flogging. But he did not want to set himself up as a rebel against authority, like the Bounder. Once he was cool he loathed the idea of it. If, somehow, by some miraculous luck he had got through, it was an immense relief at the present moment, and a chance to avoid similar folly in the future. But the news that he owed his escape to Ralph Stacey came as a blow to him. His brows darkened.

"You asked Stacey?"

"Nothing of the kind," said Nugent hastily. "We never even thought of such a dodge. It was Stacey's idea."

"He thought of it, and suggested it," explained Bob. "Of course, we jumped at it."

"The jumpfulness was preposterous!"

"I wish you hadn't!" said Wharton curtly. "What the thump did the fellow do it for?"

Bob compressed his lips a little.

"What does any fellow do another fellow a good turn for?" he asked. "Because he's a decent chap, I suppose."

Wharton's lips curled.

"Is Stacey a decent chap?" he asked.

"I think he's proved he is," said Johnny Bull tartly. "It's not every fellow who would risk a flogging, and sit in detention for an hour, for a chap who never has a civil word to say to him."

"So he took over my detention, and pulled Quelch's leg." Wharton breathed hard. "Then it was Stacey that that fat fool, Bunter, saw climbing in at the Form-room window?"

"He thought it was you, of course."

"Yes; he told Skinner so. All the fellows think so, I suppose."

"All who have heard about it, certainly," said Bob, "and a jolly good thing, too."

"Then, if I'd got back into detention, as I tried to do, I should have found Stacey there," said Harry. "I never dreamed—— So that's why Quelch has let the matter drop. He doesn't know I've been out of detention at all."

"And never will," said Bob.

Wharton looked at him.

"He will," he answered coolly, "because I'm going to his study now to tell him."

"You're what?" roared Bob, in consternation.

Wharton's eyes gleamed.

"I never asked Stacey to butt in. I'm not going to be under an obligation to the fellow. Like his dashed cheek, if you ask me!"

"Look here, Wharton——"

"I don't know why the fellow did it, unless it was to put me under an obligation. He knows how I should hate that."

"That's rot!"

"He meant to do you a good turn."

"And he's jolly well done it, too."

"The donefulness is terrific!"

The Co, all spoke at once. Wharton was angry, and they were getting angry, too. Wharton's lips set hard.

"If he meant to do me a good turn, I never asked him to," he said. "I'd be flogged a dozen times rather! I'm going down to Quelch now. If Stacey hadn't played this trick he would have found me out. And now he's going to find out. I'm going to owe nothing to Stacey."

He strode to the door.

Bob Cherry jumped past him, and put his back to the door before the captain of the Remove could reach it.

Wharton's eyes gleamed at him.

"Let me pass!" he breathed.

"Hold on!" said Bob quietly. "This isn't a time for your jolly old tantrums. Leave off thinking about yourself and your precious pride for a minute or two, and think of the fellow who's pulled you out of a scrape. You can take all the floggings you like. But what about Stacey?"

"Well, what about him?" snapped Wharton.

"If Quelch hears that you cut detention, he will know that it was Stacey sitting in the Form-room making a fool of him. What do you think Quelch will think of that?" demanded Bob. "He will go right off at the deep end. You can't land Stacey into a fearful row with Quelch, because he's done you a good turn, and saved your bacon."

"He should have minded his own business!" exclaimed Wharton passionately.

"Well, after this, any man who wants to do you a good turn may learn to mind his own business and leave you to take what's coming to you!" said Bob scornfully. "But you're not going to get Stacey up for a Head's flogging."

"Harry——" exclaimed Nugent.

"My esteemed Wharton——"

Wharton clenched his hands. He felt himself caught in a net. It was easy enough to imagine Quelch's towering wrath, if he discovered that he had been made a fool of. That wrath would descend like a torrent on Stacey's devoted head. What seemed in the eyes of the juniors a good turn to save a fellow from a row, would seem very different in the eyes of a Form-master. To Quelch it would appear an act of unexampled disrespect—a deception. He would be intensely exasperated and humiliated at having had the wool pulled over his eyes. He could not go to Quelch!

"You can't give Stacey away, Harry!" said Nugent quietly.

That was what it came to—if he went to Quelch and owned up that he had cut detention, it would be giving Stacey away—to severe punishment. There was no doubt of that.

"The rotter!" muttered Harry.

"Oh, don't talk rot," said Johnny Bull gruffly. "The fellow's all right! He's got you out of a fearful row, and you only got into it from your rotten temper—because you can't toe the line like other chaps."

"My esteemed Johnny——" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Grunt from Johnny—an emphatic grunt!

"You can't go to Quelch!" said Bob.

"No!" said Wharton, between his teeth. "I can't go to Quelch! But I can go to that interfering, cheeky cad and tell him what I think of him for barging into what doesn't concern him."

Bob stepped away from the door.

"If you want to make yourself out an ungrateful rotter, there's nothing to stop you!" he grunted.

Wharton made no reply to that. With a flaming face he left the study and tramped along to Study No. 3.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Noble Boy!

"LIKE this!" said Stacey.

He was standing in Study No. 3 with a cricket ball in his hand. He was in front of the door, a yard or so from it. Russell and Ogilvy were watching him keenly.

Both of them were keen on cricket—both had a deep admiration of the way Stacey played that great game—and both were rather honoured by having him in Study No. 3. They found Stacey very agreeable—a great cricketer, but not given to "side"; always ready to show a fellow anything, without at the same time putting on the air of an expert, or being of superior gifts. Russell and Ogilvy were friendly with Wharton; but they regarded him rather as a disgruntled ass for not liking a really decent chap like Stacey!

Now the great man was showing them a trick in bowling—and they were all eyes. He was not going to bowl, of course—there was no room in a junior study for that. Stacey was as good at bowling as at batting—rather a magician with the leather as with the willow. He was illustrating a delivery without letting the ball leave his hand.

It was at that moment that Wharton's angry face and gleaming eyes appeared at the half-open door.

Russell and Ogilvy, standing back in the study, did not see him; Stacey, of course, did not see him, having his back to the door; but Stacey did see his reflection in the study looking-glass that was just opposite the door.

A glimmer shot into Stacey's eyes as he glimpsed the reflection of that flushed and angry face.

He knew in a flashing second that Wharton's friends had told him of the dodge in the Form-room—that Wharton, as he fully expected, was bitterly annoyed by it—and that the angry junior was coming to his study to "row." All this flashed through Stacey's mind in the split second in which he glimpsed Wharton's reflection in the glass.

Knowing perfectly well that Wharton was about to enter, but appearing cheerfully unconscious of the fact, Stacey flung his hand with the ball in it as Wharton came in.

Crack!

The back of his hand, weighted by the cricket ball, struck fairly on Harry Wharton's nose, and sent him staggering in the doorway.

Wharton gasped.

Stacey uttered an exclamation, expressive of surprise.

"What the thump—I've knocked my hand——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Russell. "It was on Wharton's boko!"

"Cosh!" grinned Ogilvy.

"Oh, sorry!" Stacey looked at Wharton. "Sorry—if you'd knocked——"

Wharton's face, already flaming, fairly blazed. It looked like an accident; Russell and Ogilvy had not the slightest doubt that it was an accident—but the captain of the Remove did not believe so.

"You cheeky rotter!" he roared, and he strode into the study with his fists clenched.

Stacey raised his eyebrows. It was his usual game to assume additional calmness when Wharton got excited. It had an intensely exasperating effect on Wharton; also, it helped to put him in the wrong.

"I've said I'm sorry!" drawled Stacey. "How was I to know that you were just going to barge in? You never come to this study—at least, you've never been here since it's been my study——"

"You knew——"

"I've no eyes in the back of my head!" Stacey pointed out calmly. "If you'd knocked——"

"The door was open——"

"Fellows knock all the same," drawled Stacey.

"You banged my nose on purpose."

Stacey shrugged his shoulders.

Wharton was almost trembling with rage. It was true that he might have knocked—but the door was half-open, and fellows did not stand on a lot of ceremony in the Lower Fourth. Also he had been too angry to think of it. He was convinced that Stacey had seized the opportunity to humiliate him. But from both Russell and Ogilvy came warm expostulations.

"Chuck it, Wharton!" exclaimed Dick Russell. "What's the good of rowing with a man for nothing? Stacey never saw you——"

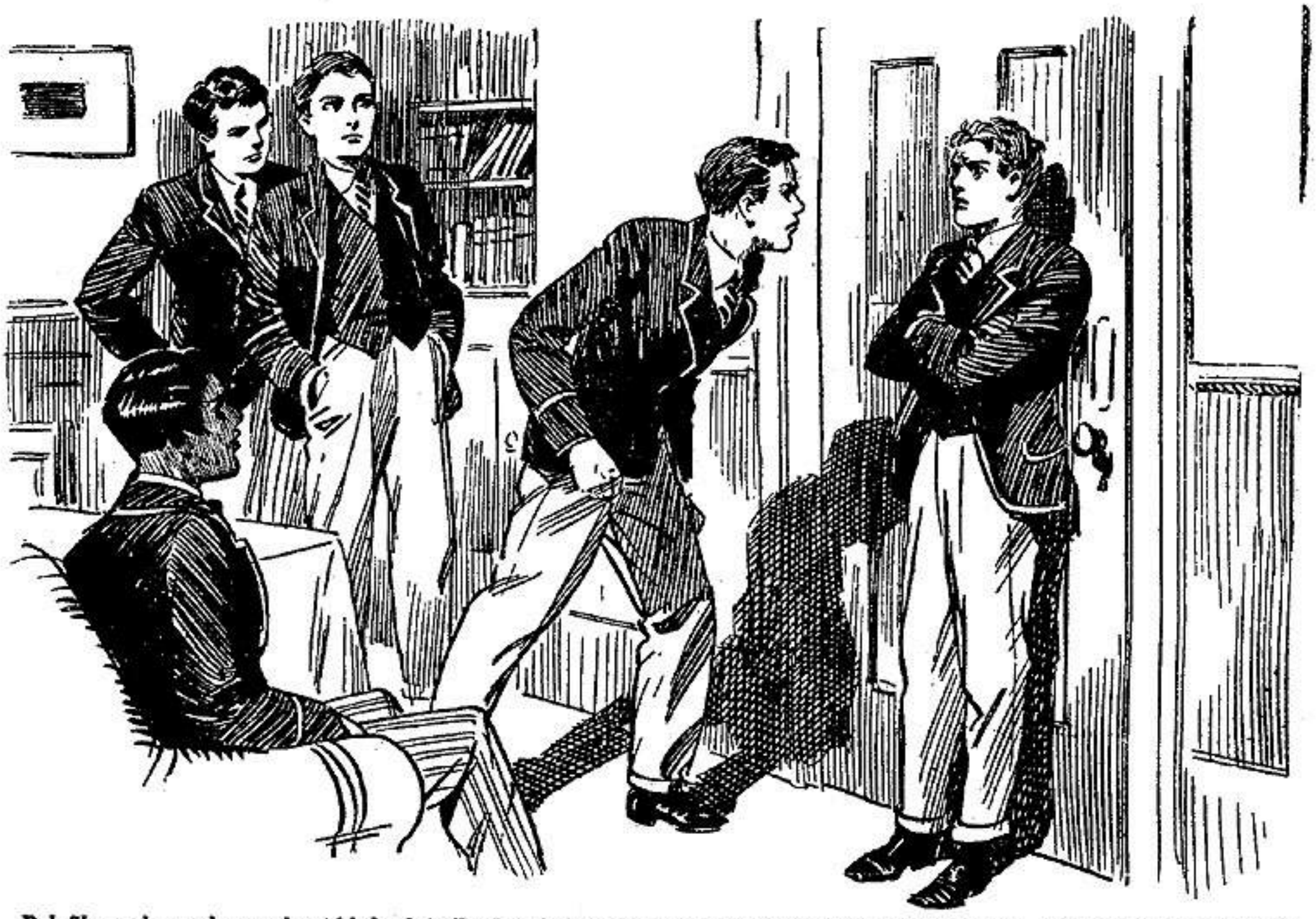
"Accidents will happen," said Ogilvy. "Look here, Wharton, we're glad to see you in our study so far as that goes; but if you've come to rag with Stacey, the sooner you bunk the better."

Wharton panted. The incident was trivial—he had to let it drop as an accident—though he was quite sure that it was no accident. But it added to the angry bitterness that already ran riot in his breast.

"I've come here to speak to you, Stacey!" he said, between his teeth. "I hear from my friends that you've been barging into my affairs—and I want to tell you plainly to mind your own business. It was like your dashed cheek and impudence——"

"Shush!" exclaimed Russell. "'Ware beaks!"

There was a heavy tread in the passage—the unmistakable tread of Prout, master of the Fifth. That tread could belong only to Prout, or to an



Bob Cherry jumped up and put his back to the door before the captain of the Remove could reach it. Wharton's eyes gleamed at him. "Let me pass!" he breathed. "Hold on," said Bob, quietly, "this isn't a time for your jolly old tantrums. Leave off thinking about yourself and your precious pride, and think of the fellow who's pulled you out of a scrape!"

elephant! The latter theory was inadmissible; so it was Prout!

What the Fifth-Form beak wanted in Remove studies, was a mystery; but it was a beak, and Wharton checked his angry words.

"That's Prout!" said Ogilvy. "What the thump does he want here?"

The heavy tread came on and stopped at the door of Study No. 3. The door was wide open now; and the portly figure of Prout framed itself in the doorway. Wharton, nearest the door, looked at him.

"My dear boy!" exclaimed Prout, gazing at Wharton and not noticing the other fellows in the study for the moment. "My dear Stacey——"

It was quite a natural mistake of Prout's. Quelch had told him that Study No. 3 was Stacey's study—and this was Study No. 3. He was looking for a boy who almost exactly resembled Harry Wharton, and supposed that he had found him.

Wharton stared at him blackly. He loathed being taken for Stacey. Stacey, farther in the room, grinned. He did not relish the resemblance, either, but he found Wharton's irritation amusing.

"I'm not——" began Wharton savagely.

"Give me your hand, Stacey!" boomed Prout. "Your hand, my boy! Brave and gallant lad!"

Prout had a touch of the dramatic in his nature. He rather liked the idea of this little scene. Schoolboys in general loathe anything in the emotional line; but Prout did not share that feeling. Prout was going to make quite a nice little scene of this! He stretched out a plump paw to the junior he supposed to be Stacey.

Wharton glared at it.

"I'm not Stacey!" he hooted.

"Eh, what?" Prout blinked. "I understand that this is Stacey's study, and that Stacey——"

"I'm Wharton!"

"Oh!" snapped Prout, far from pleased by the junior's look and tone, and little guessing that he was speaking to the fellow who had rescued him from the footpad. "You are Wharton, are you? Well, it is certainly not you that I desire to see, but your relative—Stacey! Is Stacey here?"

"Yes, sir!" said Stacey, wondering what on earth the Fifth Form beak wanted him for.

"Stacey!" Prout's glance passed Wharton and fixed on the junior who so resembled him, and who certainly, at that moment, appeared better-tempered and better-mannered. "My dear Stacey! I am here, my boy, to thank you!"

"To—to—to thank me, sir!" stuttered Stacey.

Russell and Ogilvy stared. What Prout was driving at mystified the whole study.

"Yes, my boy, yes!" said Prout, beaming. "You left me so suddenly that I had no opportunity of speaking to you in the wood——"

"In—in—in the wood!"

"No doubt you have told your friends." Prout glanced at Russell and Ogilvy, ignoring Wharton. "Perhaps, however, you have not! Modesty, unassuming modesty is very becoming to a brave and generous-hearted boy! But I shall not allow you, Stacey, to hide your light under a bushel—I shall certainly not allow it! I owe you my thanks, my grateful thanks, and I am glad that your friends are here to hear me express them."

Stacey blinked at him. All this was Greek to Stacey, and it is painful to relate that he wondered, for a dizzy moment, whether Prout had been drinking!

Wharton started a little. It dawned on his mind what Prout was driving at—and it could only mean that the resemblance caused him to believe that it was Stacey who had floored the footpad. Prout, after all, had seen him, though he had hoped that Prout hadn't; but for some mysterious reason he supposed that his rescuer was Stacey!

Stacey stood dumb with wonder. But Ogilvy chimed in.

"What has Stacey done, sir?"

"I will tell you!" boomed Prout. "This afternoon I was attacked in Friardale Wood by a desperate footpad—a hulking, desperate ruffian. I was felled by a cudgel! I should have been terribly injured but for that brave lad Stacey, who rushed to the rescue, regardless of the danger to himself.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Russell. "So that's what you were up to after the cricket, Stacey, and you wouldn't tell us where you'd been!"

"I—I——" stuttered Stacey.

"My first impression," continued Prout, "was that it was Wharton who had come so bravely to my aid! I was deceived by the resemblance——"

"Oh!" gasped Stacey. He grasped it now. It must, of course, have been Wharton—that was what he had been up to while he was cutting detention!

"But on reporting the matter to my colleague, Quelch, I learned that Wharton was in detention at the time," went on Prout, "and so I became aware of the identity of my brave—my gallant rescuer! Stacey, you are a noble boy!"

(*Continued on page* 16.)

(*Continued from page* 13.)

Stacey suppressed his feelings. Had he really rescued Prout it would have made him feel rather ill to hear himself described as a noble boy! Prout had been dealing with boys for thirty or forty years, without yet learning to understand them. The fact that Prout had got it wrong added to Stacey's discomfort. To be called a noble boy deservedly was bad enough; to be called a noble boy undeservedly was really awful!

"Give me your hand, Stacey!" said Prout. He proceeded to do the pump paw act over again. "Your hand, my brave lad! Receive my thanks—my gratitude! My grateful esteem, Stacey!"

"But, sir, I——"

"Your hand!"

"I never——"

"Your hand!" Prout shook hands with Stacey. It was impossible to resist Prout. "Once more, Stacey, my thanks—my grateful thanks! I have told my colleague, Quelch, that you are a credit to his Form! I repeat it in the hearing of your friends! Greyfriars should be proud of you!"

And Prout, leaving off talking at last—for in this world everything comes to an end, and there was a limit even to Prout's eloquence—rolled out of the study! He left Stacey crimson, Russell and Ogilvy staring, and Harry Wharton laughing.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.
Nice for Nobody!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Prep!" said Nugent.

"Oh, blow prep!" said Billy Bunter. "I say, have you heard about Stacey?"

Bunter was full of news! He barged into Study No. 1 with that news in prep. Prep was tiresome rot, in Bunter's opinion, and he did not give it a lot of attention, having a happy system of trusting to luck in the Form-room. And Bunter wanted particularly to note the effect of his news on Wharton—the fellow who barred Stacey! It was calculated, Bunter amiably considered, to put Wharton's nose out of joint!

Harry Wharton looked up from his work with a smiling face. He could guess Bunter's news in advance. His friends had been surprised, and relieved, to see him come away from Stacey's study laughing. He had told them nothing, but they had been glad, at least, to know that there had not been the expected row.

"What's the latest, Fatty?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"That man Stacey is a splendid chap!" said Bunter impressively. "Pluck, if you like! What do you think he was doing while you were in detention this afternoon, Wharton?"

Frank Nugent laughed. Bunter, like all the Form outside the select circle of the Co., was still in ignorance of the trick that had been played on Quelch. Bunter was the last fellow at Greyfriars to whom the facts could have been confided. Telling Bunter was telling the world.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," said Bunter warmly. "You mayn't think much of it! I do! Having plenty of pluck myself, I can admire pluck in another chap! Stacey might have been jolly well hurt! 'Tain't every fellow that would tackle a hefty footpad for an old donkey like Prout!"

Wharton laughed and Nugent stared. This was the first Nugent had heard of the footpad.

"What are you burbling about?" inquired Frank.

"Oh, really, Nugent——"

"Who tackled a footpad?" demanded Nugent.

"Stacey did!" declared Bunter. "It was while Wharton was in detention, and——"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I've heard it from Russell and Ogilvy," said Bunter. "They've told a lot of the fellows! Stacey's said nothing—doesn't seem to like the subject, from what I hear! Not a man to brag, you know—I can understand that! It's the same with me! I've often done jolly plucky things, you know, and never said a word about them——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle!" said Bunter. "Well, I can jolly well tell you that the fellows think a lot of Stacey! It seems that Prout came to his study to gas about it——"

"You were in Stacey's study when old Prout came up, Harry!" said Frank, looking at his chum.

Wharton nodded.

"Then what——"

"Oh, Wharton was there, was he?" said Bunter. "And he hasn't told you? I suppose he wouldn't—he doesn't want to sing Stacey's praises! He, he, he! You know what Stacey did, Wharton?"

"Oh, quite!" said Harry, laughing.

"Well, what did he do—or rather, what was he supposed to have done?" demanded Nugent.

"No supposing about it," answered Bunter. "He rescued Prout from a fearful ruffian who was robbing him in the wood. It must have been after he was at the cricket—I remember seeing him there. I looked for him afterwards at tea-time—you needn't cackle—but the fellows in his study thought he had gone out of gates. I know he had—now! Well, he rescued Prout—ran a fearful lot of risk, from what I hear—and old Prout is telling all Greyfriars about it! Rather puts your nose out of joint, Wharton, what?"

"Not a lot."

"Well, you're jealous of his cricket, you know. Isn't that why you're leaving him out of the team? And now——"

"You fat owl!"

"You can call a fellow names, but I'd like to see you do what Stacey did!" said Bunter scornfully. "Russell says that old Prout called him a noble boy! He, he, he! That's a bit thick! All the same, it was jolly plucky, and he can't help Prout being an old ass! Of course, I'd have done the same in his place," added Bunter. "But would you? I jolly well doubt it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wharton.

"Cackle!" said Bunter, with a sniff of scorn. "Stacey goes and rescues fat old Prout in fearful danger, while you're sticking in a Form-room for ragging Skinner! I can jolly well tell you that he shows up better than you do—and I can tell you that all the fellows think so, too!"

And with that, Bunter rolled out of Study No. 1, to carry his news farther up the passage, in the hope of finding some Remove man who had not yet heard it.

Nugent whistled. He looked very curiously at his chum.

"It was you, of course!" he said. "It can't have been Stacey, as he was in the Form-room in your place. It was you!"

"Of course it was," grunted Wharton. "There was nothing in it, only Prout is an excitable old ass. I never ran the slightest risk—I took the brute entirely by surprise and tapped him on the nut before he could get hold of me. Nothing in it at all."

"If you hadn't tapped him quick enough——"

"Well, I did!" said Harry. "I was afraid that old ass Prout had seen me, and might give it away that I was out of detention. I've told you that I changed my mind and tried to get back——"

"He did see you, that's clear."

"Must have, as he fancies Stacey was the giddy rescuer! Well, Stacey's welcome to Prout's gas. I don't want it."

"It's rather rotten for him," said Frank slowly. "It puts him in a beastly position—getting a lot of credit for nothing."

"I don't suppose he'll mind," said Wharton, with a curl of the lip. "Anyhow, he's asked for it. Nobody wanted him to barge in." He laughed sarcastically. "I'd rather Prout called him a noble boy than me."

"Bother Prout!" said Frank, and with that the subject was dropped and prep resumed.

When that infliction was over, Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh came along to the study. Their looks told that they had heard the news.

"This is a pretty kettle of fish, you men!" Bob remarked. "You've heard about Stacey, of course—and Prout——"

"Rather amusing, isn't it?" said Harry. "I dare say Prout has told all Greyfriars by this time what a noble boy Stacey is."

"It's rotten for the chap," said Johnny Bull. "He can't even tell his friends how the matter really stands without risk of it getting to Quelch. Once that trick gets talked about up and down the Form——"

"The rottenfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "You were a preposterous ass to cut detention, my esteemed Wharton."

"Very likely; but old Prout's nut would have been cracked if I hadn't."

"By gum!" said Bob. "There's that, too! Nobody wants old Prout's nut cracked, though there's precious little in it. I suppose the least said the soonest mended. Everybody will have forgotten it by the end of the week. Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Stacey!"

Stacey looked in at the door. His look was not so equable as usual. If Wharton had supposed that he was willing to bag a little cheap glory to which he was not entitled, he could see now that such was not the case. It was clear that Stacey was deeply irritated by the unexpected turn the matter had taken.

"Look here! What's going to be done about this, you men?" asked Stacey, coming into the study and closing the door. "That old ass Prout—— You needn't grin like an ape, Wharton. It's not funny for me."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"You barged in without being asked," he retorted. "You jolly well knew that I should hate to have you get me out of a scrape. I fancy that's chiefly why you did it. Now you can take what's come to you. Nobody knows the facts

except these fellows, and you can tell the rest, if you like——"

"That means trouble with Quelch!" said Stacey savagely. "If what I did is jawed through the Form, Quelch will hear sooner or later. I'm not looking for trouble with Quelch!"

"No. You prefer to land your troubles with Quelch on me!" said Wharton bitterly—a remark that caused his chums to look at him. "Well, now you can do just as you jolly well please. I'm willing to go to Quelch and own up that I cut detention—I've only kept my mouth shut because I can't give you away. But I'll go like a shot if you say the word."

"That won't do," said Stacey. "I've got you out of a jolly serious row, and you know it. And you can't land me in one in return. Quelch would be as mad as a hornet."

"Quite—and not likely to make you Head Boy when he hoofs me out!" said Wharton sarcastically. "That's coming—and it's what you're aiming at. You'd certainly spoil your chances by telling Quelch that you made a fool of him this afternoon."

"Least said soonest mended!" remarked Bob Cherry.

"Speech is silvery, but silence is the stitch in time that saves ninepence!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"It can't go on like this!" muttered Stacey.

"Let's go to Quelch together and tell him the facts!" suggested Wharton.

"Oh, don't be a fool!" snapped Stacey. He gave the captain of the Remove a dark look, swung out of the study, and banged the door after him.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Trouble Coming!

WINGATE, at the first-eleven net, swiped.

Smack!

Leather met palm.

Stacey of the Remove held up the ball.

There was a roar:

"Well caught! Oh, well caught!"

The Greyfriars captain blinked.

Remove men were fagging at fielding for first-eleven men at the nets. The Famous Five were there, and Smithy and Stacey and several more fellows. It was useful to the first-eleven men to have juniors fagging at fielding, and it was useful to the Remove men to get such good practice—though plenty of them did not yearn for it.

Harry Wharton & Co., however, were keen—and Stacey was keen. Catching out Wingate, the mightiest batsman at Greyfriars, was no easy matter. It was not, perhaps, wholly gratifying to the great man of the Sixth to be caught by a junior. Stacey had done it—and he looked as if he had done it with ease. But whatever Stacey brought off on the cricket field he looked as if he did it with ease.

"Well, my hat!" said Wingate.

"Some kid that, old man!" grinned Gwynne of the Sixth.

"Real mustard!" agreed the captain of Greyfriars.

Stacey, having sent the ball back to the bowler, gave Harry Wharton a look. Wharton affected not to see it.

But he knew what that vaunting look meant. The fellow who caught out the captain of the school was no ordinary cricketer. He was making it clear to Wingate, the Head of the Games, that he was whole streets ahead of any other man in the Remove. Lower boy as he was, Stacey was much in demand for senior bowling practice—and he had bowled first-eleven men. Now he had demonstrated his quality in the field. A cricket captain who left such a man out of his team was likely to find thorns in his path. And Wharton was still quite decided to leave Stacey out.

When Wingate came away from the net, Stacey went on fielding with the other juniors, but the Greyfriars captain called Wharton aside. The captain of the Remove guessed what was coming and his face hardened. Standing up against the captain of the school was a difficult matter—but the Remove captain was going to do it.

"I've been going to speak to you, Wharton," said Wingate. "You've got a fixture on with Highcliffe School soon."

"Yes, Wingate."

"Of course, I've heard that you and Stacey bar one another. It's not any bizney of mine, but it's pretty bad form for relations to bar one another at school," said the Greyfriars captain. "Never mind that, though. But about the cricket. I'm told that Stacey isn't playing in your eleven."

"That's so."

"Well, I want to know why not."

"It's generally left to a cricket captain to pick his men, I think."

"Quite!" assented Wingate. "But there's a limit, and you know it. You don't claim to have more power in your hands than I have in mine, I suppose—terrific big gun as you are."

Wharton coloured.

"If I left a man of that quality out of the first eleven," said Wingate, "Lascelles would want to know why. I shouldn't like to tell the games master that it was because I disliked the man. See?"

Wharton made no answer.

"I happen to be Head of the Games," went on Wingate. "I've got a certain responsibility in these matters. If a junior skipper doesn't play the game I have to call him to order. You know that. Well, I want to know why you're leaving out a man who can play the heads off the rest of your Form."

"His cricket is all right," said Harry.

"You needn't tell me that—I've got eyes. And I don't think you're fool enough not to see what everybody else can see with their eyes shut. If his cricket's all right, why are you chucking him?"

No reply.

GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

There's always trouble brewing when our clever rhymester goes interviewing. This week he calls on

GEORGE BULSTRODE,

of Study No. 2, in the Remove Form.

(1)

Once Bulstrode bore the honoured name
Of Captain of his Form,
But Bulstrode wouldn't play the game,
So when a rival skipper came
He took the class by storm,
And Harry Wharton was elected
As all (but Bulstrode) quite expected.

(2)

In those days Bulstrode was a cad,
He threw his weight about.
But now old George is not so bad,
In fact, he's quite a decent lad,
He's changed a bit, no doubt!
Although he's still, to be quite candid,
The slightest fraction heavy-handed.

(3)

Now if you read, two weeks ago,
My interview with Brown,
George Bulstrode kicked me, as you know,
Because I wolfed his tea, and so
I hoped he'd simmered down!
Alas, there's always trouble brewing
Whenever I go interviewing!

(4)

As I had feared, he glared at me
When I looked in the door;
"It isn't tea-time yet," said he,
"So if you want to pinch our tea,
Come back at half-past four!"
He then picked up a tennis-racket
And eyed my head, as though to whack it!

(5)

I smiled and said: "Good morning, sir!
That was a slight mishap,
A kind of error, as it were,
Misunderstandings will occur,
Forget it, my dear chap!
Now tell me all about your battin',
And how you're getting on at Latin!"

(6)

Good-naturedly he then unfroze
And told me on the spot
He'd like to punch old Virgil's nose,
(And Quelchy's also, I suppose),
For thinking of such rot!
(It seems he'd had an hour's detention
For mucking up the Third Declension.)

(7)

He told me he kept goal a bit
For Wharton's junior team,
Though Squiff was mostly picked for it,
Whose play—as Squiff would quite admit—
Was nothing but a scream!
He played as well as he was able—
(He stopped, and goggled at the table.)

(8)

It chanced that he had put on there
A box of chocolate creams,
They lay, unheeded, near my chair,
And—absent-mindedly, I swear—
I'd sampled them, it seems!
And when I woke to what I'd done—
Great Scott! I'd eaten every one!

(9)

I rose in haste, and with a roar
George Bulstrode rose as well!
I made a bound to reach the door,
He got there first! And on what more
Occurred I will not dwell!
I crawled away from the disaster
In urgent need of sticking-plaster!

"The kid seems decent enough," went on Wingate. "Nothing against him in any way that I've heard of. And yesterday, from what I hear, he did a splendidly plucky thing—— What are you grinning at?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"Well, don't grin at nothing when I'm talking to you!" said Wingate gruffly. "I hear that the kid tackled some hefty footpad who attacked Prout in the wood, and if you can't see that it was plucky, because you bar the chap, it doesn't do you any credit. The other fellows in your Form seem to think it was plucky—and I think so."

"It was nothing——"

"Cut that out!" snapped Wingate. "I'm rather surprised at you, Wharton. This sort of thing isn't what I should have expected of you. You might do the kid justice, even if you dislike him."

Wharton did not answer. As the fellow who had done that plucky thing, he was entitled to say that it was nothing. But as Stacey was supposed to have done it, the remark did not come gracefully from Wharton.

"From what Prout says, the kid ran a lot of risk," said Wingate warmly. "He got in a lucky knock, and stunned the brute; but if he hadn't been quite so quick, he would have got smashed up. Do you call that nothing?"

"Yes, I do," said Harry.

"Then I don't agree—and you'd better say no more. Let's get back to the subject. Stacey, on his form, is entitled to a place in the eleven—more than you are yourself, if you want plain English. His form's good enough for the first eleven if he were older and stronger. Are you going to tell me that you're throwing such a man away because you bar him?"

"No!"

"Then why?" demanded Wingate. He was far from pleased with the captain of the Remove, and his manner was curt.

"There are reasons—reasons that seem to me good!" said Harry quietly. "I think I ought to be trusted."

"Reasons that you can't tell the head of the games?" asked Wingate sarcastically.

Wharton paused.

"Yes," he answered at length.

"Well," said Wingate, "that's not good enough! I shan't be in a hurry to barge in, but I shall think this matter over, and you can depend on this, Wharton, if Stacey doesn't get fair play from you of your own accord, I shall see that he gets it, whether you like it or not. You'd better think that over, and save trouble."

With which the head of the games stalked away without waiting for an answer. Wharton, with set lips, rejoined the fieldsmen. It was plain that there was trouble to come; but his determination was unshaken.

When the practice was over, the Remove fellows walked back to the House, and Vernon-Smith uttered what was in the thoughts of the rest.

"You saw Stacey, Wharton?"

"I'm not blind."

"Glad to hear it," said the Bounder sarcastically. "I fancied that you might be! Is Stacey playing at Highcliffe?"

"No!"

"You're dragging your family troubles into the cricket matches?" asked the Bounder.

"Mind your own business!"

The Bounder breathed hard and left the other fellows. The Co. looked very uncomfortable as they walked on with the captain of the Remove.

Peter Todd came up to them.

"Wharton, old man," said Peter, "speaking as a friend——"

"That means that something unpleasant is coming, I suppose!" said the captain of the Remove.

Peter grinned.

"Well, I'll try to be nice," he said. "Look here, old chap, what I mean is, you're not doing yourself justice. You're not the man to be jealous of a fellow's form at cricket."

"Thanks!"

"But you're trying your hardest to make the fellows believe that you are. You simply can't leave Stacey out."

"I simply can—and will!"

"After what he did yesterday, too," said Peter. "Dash it all, the fellow goes about rescuing fat Form-masters, and covering himself with glory. You'll make fellows believe that you're jealous of that, too. The chap's a first-class cricketer—and now he's shown that he has heaps of pluck——"

"Oh, rot!"

"Well, he has," said Peter sharply, "and if he'd got hurt in that row yesterday, as he might have, you'd look a pretty rotter, running him down as you do."

"He wasn't in much danger yesterday," said Harry.

"You can say so if you like, but other fellows don't think so," said Peter hotly. "Stacey isn't saying a word about it himself—he snaps a fellow's head off if a fellow mentions it to him. He's not a man to swank. But everybody knows what he did."

"Rubbish!"

"Well, if you want to know what I think——"

"I don't!"

"I'll tell you all the same!" roared Peter. "You're acting like a jealous rotter—that's what you're doing! Stacey did a plucky thing while you were jugged for bullying a weedy snipe like Skinner. And he shows up better than you do, and all the Remove say the same."

"Let them!" said Harry indifferently. "You're asking to have your nose punched."

"Get on with it!"

That was enough for Peter! He jumped and hit!

Wharton's arm came up like lightning. Up went Peter's, knocked hard. His chest collided with Wharton's, and Wharton grasped him, up-ended him, and sat him down in the quad, with a heavy bump.

"Oooooh!" gasped Peter, winded.

"For goodness' sake——" exclaimed Nugent.

Peter spluttered, sitting in the quad, and hardly knowing how he had got there. Frank grasped Wharton's arm and dragged him away.

"Let him get on with it, you ass!" snapped Wharton.

"Don't be a fool!" said Johnny Bull gruffly. "Are you going to row with every man in the Remove?"

"Why not?"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Bob savagely.

And the Co. gathered round their leader and fairly barged him into the House, while Peter still spluttered.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Coker Wants to Know!

"WHICH are you?"

Horace Coker of the Fifth Form asked that question as he put his fat head in at the doorway of Study No. 1 in the Remove.

Harry Wharton was alone in his study—alone, with uncomfortable thoughts. He gave Coker something very like a scowl.

Coker's question implied that he did not know whether the junior in the study was Wharton or Stacey, as no doubt he didn't. The great man of the Fifth naturally did not see juniors of the Remove very often at close quarters, and the resemblance was puzzling. Indeed, on Stacey's first day at Greyfriars, Coker of the Fifth had mistaken him for Wharton, and handed out to him a whopping due to the captain of the Remove.

But Coker's question had an exasperating effect on Wharton. That unlucky resemblance to his relative had caused him endless trouble this term. It had caused Stacey trouble—such as Coker's whopping, and a ragging from a Highcliffe mob who had taken him for Wharton. But it was worse for the captain of the Remove, owing to the fact that Stacey—strictly under the rose—was a bit of a scapegrace on the Bounder's lines.

It was not known in the Remove why Quelch was down on Wharton this term—even Wharton's own pals did not know that Quelch had spotted a junior out of bounds, at the Three Fishers up the river, and believed that it was his Head Boy—which, in fact, it was not!

Mistakes like Coker's did not matter very much; but a mistake like that, on the part of a Form-master, was serious.

Now that wretched resemblance had caused more trouble. Stacey, whether from good motives or bad, or a mixture of both, had saved Wharton from a row, by substituting himself in the detention-room.

A favour from Stacey, had only an irritating and exasperating effect on the captain of the Remove. And unexpectedly, Stacey had captured the credit of the rescue of Prout. Not that Wharton cared a doughnut about the credit, or wanted any of Prout's effusive "gas"—he was glad to be relieved of that. But it had set Stacey up on a sort of pedestal in the Remove, and put Wharton in a worse and worse position towards him. It was hardly possible for Wharton, who had done the deed, to join in praises of it; but belittling it when Stacey was supposed to have done it looked rotten enough.

Coker of the Fifth marched into Study No. 1 in high good-humour, but he met with nothing of the sort. Wharton's look could only be described as a scowl—indeed, he came near grasping the nearest cushion and buzzing it at Coker's cheery visage.

Coker stared at him.

"I asked you a question, Wharton or Stacey, whichever you are!" he snapped.

"Go and talk out of the back of your neck in some other study, then!" answered Wharton. "And take your silly face away from that door."

It was not polite!

But Wharton was not in a polite mood. He was, in fact, in such a disgruntled mood, after his talk with Wingate and his row with Toddy, that his friends had sagely left him to himself after tea. There was peril of a "row" within the happy circle of the Co., which certainly would have done no good.

Less discourtesy than that from a junior of the Lower Fourth would have roused Coker's ire. He came farther into the study, looking very grim.

"I don't want any cheek from a fag!" announced Coker. "I've a short way with fags, and you'll jolly soon find it out if you don't keep a civil tongue in your head, young 'un! I suppose you're Wharton, from your manners, though you look like your cousin——"

"We're not cousins!" snapped Wharton.

"I don't care whether you're cousins

Wharton grasped Peter Todd, upended him, and then sat him down in the quad, with a heavy bump. "Oooooh!" gasped Peter, winded. "Are you going to row with every man in the Remove, Wharton?" asked Johnny Bull, gruffly, as Todd sat spluttering in the quad, hardly knowing how he had got there.

or not. Now, look here," said Coker, "if you're Wharton you can go and eat coke. If you're Stacey, I want you. You needn't be shirty about that whopping I gave you—that was a mistake; if you're Stacey, I mean——"

"Idiot!"

"I took you for Wharton, who had cheeked me—I mean if you're Stacey! If you're Stacey——"

"Dummy!"

"If you're Stacey, I want you to come to tea in my study," said Coker. "So you can leave off scowling, you young ass! I've heard what you did for my Form-master yesterday——"

"For goodness' sake drop that subject!" almost howled Wharton.

Coker smiled genially.

"So you're Stacey! Right! It's quite right not to want to swank about what you did, and I understand you don't want fellows to keep on praising you for it——"

"There's the door!"

"Draw a line, you know!" said Coker. "I don't want any cheek, even if you did save old Prout from getting his nut cracked. Did you—yes or no?"

Wharton did not answer that question. To say yes was the same as saying that he was Stacey; and to say no was hardly possible, as he actually had done it. He almost wished that he had left Prout's nut to be cracked.

"It was a plucky thing," said Coker, apparently satisfied now that he was speaking to Stacey. "Jolly plucky! Prout's doing a song and a dance about it. He's rather an old ass. Still, it was jolly plucky! I don't get on with Prout in the Form-room; but he's my beak, and you saved him from getting his silly old nut cracked, didn't you?"

"Oh, rats!" That was a non-committal answer.

"Well, I said to Potter and Greene: 'Look here, what about having that Remove kid to tea? Show the kids what we think of his pluck.' They agreed," said Coker. "I'm not in the habit of having scrubby fags to tea, but I'm making an exception in your favour, Stacey."

"Chump!"

"I've had a hamper from my Aunt Judy—ripping lot of stuff! Come along!" said Coker. "I'm asking you to tea, Stacey."

"You blithering idiot!" bawled Wharton. "I'm not Stacey!"

Coker jumped.

"You're not Stacey!" he roared.

"No, you benighted ass!"

"Then what do you mean by making out that you were Stacey, and letting me run on?" demanded Coker wrathfully. "You're as like as two peas!"

"Only to a silly squint-eyed owl!" said Wharton, which was not only far from polite, but far from elegant.

Coker breathed hard. He had taken quite a considerable amount of cheek from this junior, in the belief that he was Stacey. He had no use for cheek from Wharton.

"You cheekly little sweep!" said Coker. "Where's Stacey? Isn't this his study?"

"It was, but he's changed out, thank goodness! I was glad to be shut of him—as glad as I shall be to get shut of you."

"You're not shut of me yet," said Coker grimly. "You can't sauce a Fifth Form man like that, and get away with it. I'm going to teach you manners before I go and look for Stacey, young Wharton."

Coker advanced on the captain of the Remove with the intention of teaching him manners—by drastic methods.

Wharton's hand was on the cushion, and as Coker advanced he whipped it up and buzzed it straight at Horace Coker's wrathful countenance.

There was a terrific crash and a fearful yell as the cushion established contact with Coker's nose. There was another crash as Horace Coker went backwards and sat down on the floor of Study No. 1.

Wharton jumped forward. In a twinkling he had grasped Coker's collar, and Coker's sitting attitude was changed for a horizontal one, and his head was banging on the carpet.

Bang, bang, bang!

Three terrific bangs and three fearful howls from Coker awoke the echoes of the study and the passage.

Wharton did not stop for more. A scrap with the burly, brawny Fifth Form man was not a practical proposition. Having given Coker something to remember him by, as it were, Wharton whipped out of the study. He stepped into Study No 2, where Tom Brown and Hazeldene were finishing tea.

Coker, in a state of wild confusion and wrath, sprawled and spluttered, rousing the echoes. Then he scrambled to his feet, and in a state of fury, to which no words could have done justice, rushed forth from Study No. 1 in search of Wharton, with the fell intention of smiting him hip and thigh, pulverising him and spifficating him.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Jam for Coker!

STACEY glanced out of the doorway of Study No. 3 with a sarcastic smile on his face.

The uproar from Study No. 1 had reached a good many other studies, and several fellows looked out at study doors. In Study No. 3 they were getting tea—Ogilvy boiling eggs, Russell making

toast, and Stacey opening the jam—which occupation he suspended to look out, as sounds like earthquakes and tornadoes came along the passage.

"What on earth's that fearful row?" asked Russell over his shoulder.

"Wharton's study," answered Stacey.

"What a man he is for rows!" said Ogilvy. "Where's the egg-timer? Wharton's been rowing ever since term started. I hear he was scrapping with Toddy in the quad, only his friends dragged him away."

"One way of enjoying life, I suppose," said Stacey, with a shrug of the shoulders. "I shouldn't care for it myself."

"But who's he rowing with?" asked Russell. "Not with his pals, surely! Even Wharton——"

Stacey did not answer. His eyes were on a rather untidy figure that barged out of Study No. 1 like a wild bull. It was Coker of the Fifth, with torn collar, untidy hair, and a face as red as a beetroot with rage. Stacey smiled. Coker's aspect struck him as comic.

"Where's——" Coker was beginning, staring round for the vanished captain of the Remove.

He did not finish the question. He did not need to, as he saw Stacey! Having taken Wharton for Stacey in the study, he took Stacey for Wharton in the passage. Stacey was grinning, but the grin disappeared from his face as if wiped off by a duster; as Coker of the Fifth hurtled at him.

"Now, then!" gasped Coker.

"Here—what—hold on—yaroooh!" yelled Stacey, as the hefty Horace grasped him and whirled him across the passage.

"I'll teach you to bang my head!" roared Coker.

"I—I—— Ooooogh!"

Stacey was sturdy, but he was no use in Coker's mighty grasp. He spun to the wall, which his head smote with a horrid bang.

He yelled frantically.

Bang, bang! went his head again. Nothing doubting that he had got hold of the fellow who had banged his head on the floor, Coker banged that fellow's head on the wall with energy.

Stacey's yells rang far and wide.

"Bang a Fifth Form man's head—what?" roared Coker. "By gum, I'll teach you! I'll spifficate you! I'll pulverise you! I'll——"

Bang bang!

Coker was not only repaying the debt, but repaying it with interest.

Fortunately for Stacey there was help at hand. Russell dropped the toast, Ogilvy left the eggs to boil hard, and both of them rushed out into the passage to the rescue of their study-mate. They grasped Coker together, and dragged him off.

"Leggo!" roared Coker. "I'll smash you! I'll——"

Russell and Ogilvy did not let go, and Coker proceeded to smash them.

There was a rush of feet in the passage. Vernon-Smith and Redwing came speeding out of Study No. 4, Peter Todd from Study No. 7, Bob Cherry and his friends from farther up the passage. The door of Study No. 2 was thrown open, and Tom Brown and Hazeldene rushed out, Harry Wharton remaining in the doorway looking on.

There was a rather satirical smile on Wharton's face. The yelling in the passage had apprised him of Coker's mistake. Stacey had met Coker's infuriated eye at an unfortunate moment for himself. Certainly Wharton would have lent him aid, had it been needed. But Stacey was free from Coker now—leaning on the passage wall, rubbing his head—while Coker had disappeared under a swarm of Removites.

Under that swarm Coker heaved, and roared, and bellowed. Coker, not always a peaceable chap, had come to the Remove studies with perfectly peaceful intentions. But Coker was unfortunate in these matters. He had woke up one of the wildest rows of his stormy career.

"Woooogh!" came spluttering from Coker. "I'll—grooogh—smash you! I'll—ow-ow-wow—spifficate the lot of you—urrrggh!"

"Bump him!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Bang him!" yelled Toddy.

"Jump on him!"

"Squash him!"

"I say, you fellows, lemme get a kick! I say, you might let me get a kick in! Gimme room to land him one, you fellows." Even Billy Bunter was eager for the fray, Coker being so extensively and safely held.

For several minutes, Horace Coker led the life of a football and punchball combined. They were wild and whirling minutes, and Coker did not enjoy any of them. Nobody wasted time inquiring what the trouble was—Coker was there and they mopped up Coker.

"Ow! Wow! Yow!" came from Stacey, as he rubbed his damaged head. Horace had banged it on the wall, not wisely, but too well.

"Urrggh! Leggo!" came in muffled accents from the suffering Coker. "I'll—— Oooogh, I'll—— Wooogh! I'll—— Gurrrgh!"

"Hold him!" gasped Stacey. "I've got a pot of jam here——"

"Good egg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Stacey stepped into his study for the newly opened pot of jam. He came quickly back with it, and up-ended it over Coker's flushed and furious face as six or seven Remove fellows held him pinned down to the floor.

Jam rolled out on Coker's face.

"I—I say—you young villain, I'll smash you!" yelled Coker, as he saw the jam coming. The next moment he was giving horrid, suffocated splutters, as a stream of jam dropped into his mouth. "Gurrrrrggh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wurrrrggggh!"

"Like jam?" asked Stacey.

"Moooooooogh!"

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

Jam was ladled over Coker's features. He was of the jam, jammy! Some went into his hair, and some down his neck. It was rather a waste of jam—still, Coker was welcome to it. Stacey, with an aching and spinning head, did not spare him. Why Coker had charged him like a mad bull, he did not know; but he knew that he was going to make Coker sit up for it! And he did!

"Urrrgh!" The chuckling juniors released Coker at last, and he staggered to his feet, clawing jam. "Wurrgh!"

"Now kick him out of our passage!" exclaimed Stacey.

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows, give me room," squeaked Billy Bunter. "I haven't got one in yet——"

"Urrgh! You young rotters!" spluttered Coker. "I'll—oogh!—smash you! You young villain, Wharton——"

Harry Wharton, in the doorway of Study No. 2, with his hands in his pockets, laughed. He found Coker's little error entertaining. Coker was still labouring under that error.

"You cheeky ass!" exclaimed Stacey. "We'll jolly well kick you back to the Fifth! What the thump do you mean by snaffling a chap and banging his head, you dangerous maniac?"

"You jolly well know," gasped Coker. "I came here to ask Stacey to tea, and—you—ooooghhh!"

"You—what?" stuttered Stacey.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a shriek of laughter in the Remove passage.

Stacey stared at the Fifth Former blankly. If Coker had come there to ask him to tea, his way of doing it had been rather remarkable.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Oh, my summer bonnet! He came to ask Stacey to tea——"

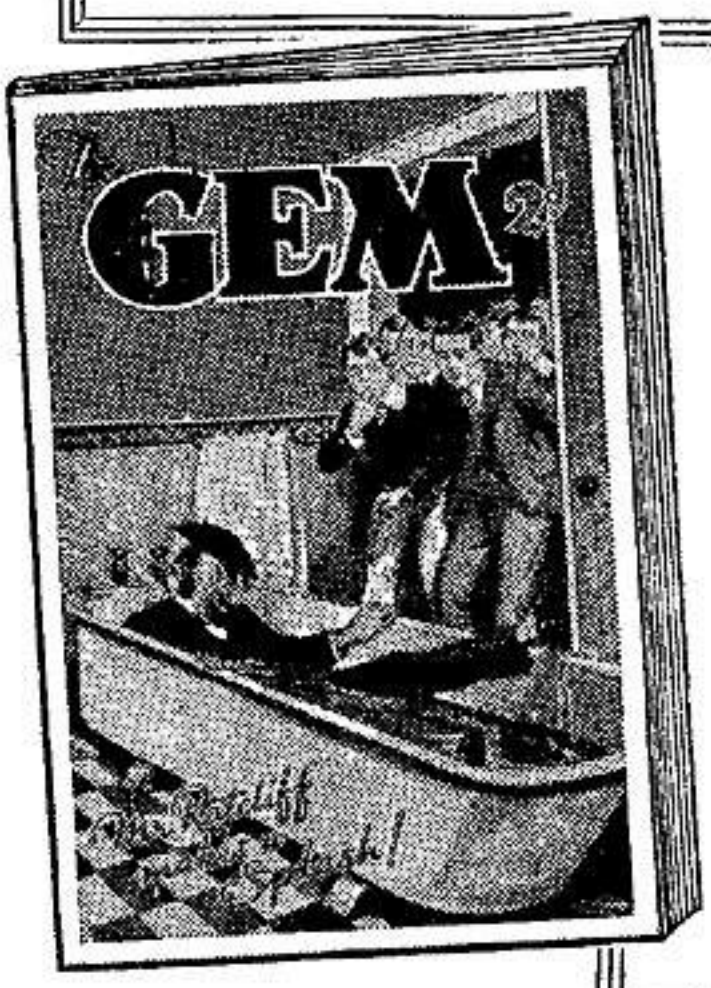
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You blithering ass!" howled Stacey. "If you came to ask me to tea——"

"Not you, you young rotter—Stacey I——"

"I'm Stacey——"

The Master Who Bathed in His Clothes!



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"You're Stacey! You told me you were Wharton when I saw you in the study—wharrer you mean——?" gasped Coker.

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Removites.

"You—you—you ass! I suppose you saw Wharton in the study——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker blinked through the jam. The juniors were doubled up with merriment. Coker had come up to ask Stacey to tea in the Fifth—but it was not probable that he would issue that generous invitation now—not after getting Stacey's jam all over his face, in his hair, and down his neck. The Remove fairly rocked with merriment.

"You—you—you're Stacey——" stuttered Coker.

"Yes, you ass!"

"Then you're as cheeky a young scoundrel as Wharton!" roared Coker. "Do you think you can jam me all over?"

"Looks like it!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"The lookfulness is terrific."

Coker, it seemed, had not had enough, even yet! Jammy and furious, he hurled himself at the junior who had jammed him—evidently not caring now whether he was Stacey or Wharton, so long as he gave him toco.

But it was Coker who got the toco.

As he renewed hostilities, the Remove crowd piled on him as one man, and Coker was swept along the passage to the landing. He went across that landing with flying arms and legs. There the Removites left him for dead, as it were.

Potter and Greene, in Coker's study, were waiting for him to come back with Stacey. Privately, they thought it rot having a Remove kid to tea—but they gave Coker his head, as usual. But when Coker gladdened their eyes by his reappearance, Stacey was not with him—and he was in a disordered, jammy, and sticky state, that made Potter and Greene jump as they beheld him.

"What the dickens——" exclaimed Potter.

"Urrggh!"

"Is Stacey coming to tea?" asked Greene.

"Urrgh! Don't talk to me about the young scoundrel!" gasped Coker. "He's the—gurrgh—worst of the—woooogh—lot! Oooooch!"

Stacey did not come to tea with Coker! He was winning golden opinions up and down Greyfriars, but he had lost Horace Coker's good opinion—for good!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Gets the News!

BILLY BUNTER blinked from the half-open window of the Rag into the sunny quad and grinned.

It was morning break; and everybody but Bunter was out of doors. Billy Bunter preferred to take his exercise sitting down; and he was squatted in the window-seat of the Rag, blinking into the quad through his big spectacles, when he beheld the little scene that caused a fat grin to overspread his podgy visage.

Harry Wharton was standing a few feet from the window with his back partly turned to it. Bunter had a view of his profile, and discerned a scornful, contemptuous smile thereon. Blinking further, the fat junior spotted Stacey, at a little distance, and noted that Blundell, the captain of the Fifth, had stopped to speak to him.

He did not catch Blundell's words, but he could guess the topic. Blundell, a great man of the first eleven, a tremendous "blood" was not given to speaking to mere juniors in the quad. Generally he passed such small fry by, like the idle wind which he regarded not. It was that tale of derring-do—the rescue of Prout—that caused the captain of the Fifth to take note of the existence of Stacey of the Remove, and stop him in the quad to speak a few gracious words.

Hence Wharton's scornful smile.

Stacey's manner was modest and deprecating—quite that of a fellow who had done something decent, but did not want to be praised for it. Considering that he hadn't done it that manner was, perhaps, sufficient to cause Wharton's lip to curl with disdain. He could hear what Blundell was saying, and he could not help wondering how Stacey could stand it, without blurting out the facts, regardless of consequences.

Stacey's position, undoubtedly, was a difficult one.

He was determined that the facts should not come to light, and that he would have no trouble with Quelch. That made it necessary to carry on with what was getting very like a deception.

At first, it had irked him and annoyed him—Wharton had seen that for himself. He had not wanted to bag credit that was not his due, and he had felt irritated and embarrassed by the situation. But that feeling seemed to have changed.

The episode had given him a leg-up in the school—it had won him admiration in the Remove, the esteem of his Form-master and of Prout, a good deal of notice from Fifth Form men—words of commendation from Wingate, the captain of the school. It was, in fact, extremely useful to Stacey, who was ambitious, and very keen on making a figure at Greyfriars—still keener on putting his relative and rival into the shade.

So, having satisfied his conscience with the argument that it was impossible now to set the matter right, Stacey was accepting the situation as if it was genuine—as his manner to Blundell fully showed.

Billy Bunter grinned. To his fat mind, the explanation of Wharton's scornful look was easy; he was jealous of the chap, and grudged him his meed of praise. Indeed. Bunter was not the only fellow in the Remove who took that view.

Only the Co. knew the facts, and they were bound to silence; the other fellows only know that Stacey had done a decent thing, and that Wharton spoke of it contemptuously. Any fellow seeing him now might have got the same impression as Bunter from his looks.

It would have been wiser in Wharton to mask his feelings on the subject, but he was not in a prudent state of mind these days. Both Stacey and Blundell saw him standing there, and saw his lip curl with scorn. Stacey coloured deeply; and Blundell, frowning, turned angrily towards the captain of the Remove.

"You cheeky little sweep!" said Blundell. "What does that mean? Can't you do anything but sneer at a fellow in your Form who has done a thing that I've no doubt you'd have thought twice about doing?"

Harry Wharton laughed. As he, actually, had done the thing in question, that remark had its amusing aspect.

Blundell glared at him.

"I've heard about your rotten jealousy of this new kid, Wharton!" he snapped. "I hear that you keep him out of Remove cricket; and all the school knows that he can play your head off. Now I hear that you jeer at what he did for my Form-master the other day. It seems that you can't give him credit for anything."

"Not for that, certainly!" said Harry

"You know what he did——"

"Not at all! I know what he's supposed to have done. That's quite a different thing."

"Are you going to make out that he never helped Prout when he was set on by those hooligans from Wapshot?" demanded Blundell.

"Why not?" asked Wharton, with a sarcastic smile.

"Well, my opinion is that you're a young rotter, then!" growled Blundell. And, with a frown at Wharton and a nod to Stacey, the captain of the Fifth stalked away.

Wharton fixed his eyes on Stacey's flushed face.

"Enjoying it—what?" he asked.

Stacey compressed his lips.

"You jolly nearly gave it away to Blundell then!" he said in a low, savage tone. "Look here, Wharton, let's have this plain. You know perfectly well that I never wanted this——"

"You seem to like it now you've got it."

"It can't be helped now. I'm not going to make Quelch wild with me by letting him know. That means that it's got to be kept dark If you keep up this sort of thing somebody will tumble sooner or later. What will it make me look like if it comes out that I never helped Prout, after all the gas and jaw on the subject?"

"It will make you look a fool," said Harry—"and serve you right, too! Do you expect me to join in the chorus of praise, making you out to be a sort of hero for what you never did?"

Neither of the juniors noticed the fat face and the glimmering spectacles at the half-open window of the Rag—and Billy Bunter did no make his presence known.

He was breathless with astonishment at what he was hearing, and breathlessly anxious to hear more. Evidently there was something behind the scenes that Bunter did not know—and he wanted to know!

"I don't suppose it was anything, if you come to that!" snapped Stacey. "Prout's an old gasbag, and I don't believe for a moment that you ran any risk."

"Quite! And you ran still less, as you were sitting in the Form-room at the time, making Quelch believe that I was there."

"I was doing you a good turn——"

"You should have waited to be asked. I'd rather have owned up to Quelch that I cut detention. I couldn't, because it would get you into a row for pulling his leg. You ought to own up now they're making this idiotic mistake. I'm willing if you are."

"Well, I'm not!" said Stacey savagely.

"No, you don't want to part with the kudos now you've got it," said the captain of the Remove scornfully. "It puts you in a good light, and me in a bad one—and you're going to use it for all it's worth. Well, I shall say nothing; but if you expect me to tell lies about it, you'll be disappointed. I'm not going to pretend to believe that you did a thing that you didn't do—and that I did myself, as a matter of fact."

And with that the captain of the Remove turned on his heel and walked away. He left Stacey standing by the window of the Rag with clenched hands and glinting eyes.

"He, he, he!"

Stacey gave a sudden jump—or, rather, a bound—at that unmusical cachinnation from the window of the Rag.

He spun round and stared at the fat, grinning face of William George Bunter; he stared blankly.

"He, he, he!" Bunter was amused. "I say, Stacey, is that how it was? He, he, he! It was you I saw getting in at the Form-room window that day. And I thought it was Wharton; and those chaps made out it was Wharton. He, he, he! I say, old Quelch would be fearfully wild if he knew"

Stacey could only stare at him in utter dismay. Bunter knew now—and that meant that all Greyfriars would know soon!

"And it was Wharton who butted in and rescued old Prout!" chortled Bunter. "No wonder he cuts up rusty when the fellows keep on singing your praises! He, he, he! I say, Stacey, you're an awful spoofer, ain't you? Making out that you rescued old Prout, when it was Wharton all the time! He, he, he! I wonder what the fellows will say when they know? They'll say——Yaroooooh!"

Stacey reached up and landed his open palm with a terrific swipe on the fat face looking down at him.

Bunter ceased to grin on the spot.

He gave a fearful yell and tumbled backwards and disappeared from the window. There was a heavy bump within the Rag.

"Yooo-hooop!" floated out of the window. "Ow! Beast! Whoo-hoop! Wharrer you hitting a fellow for? Yo-wo-wo-wwwoop!"

Stacey drove his hands deep into his pockets and tramped away, leaving Bunter to yell. All the fat was in the fire now.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bottled!

MR. QUELCH in third school that morning had his eye very severely on Bunter; he was wrathy with Bunter.

Bunter was always rather a bother in class. His inflexible determination not to learn anything might have worried any Form-master, his propensity to chatter was another worry. Quelch liked silence and fixed attention in his Form-room; he never got either from Billy Bunter.

But never had Bunter been so exasperating as he was in third school on this particular morning. He was not only eager to chatter and whisper as usual, but seemed bursting to chatter and whisper.

The fact was that Bunter had not been able to tell the tale yet; he was in possession of a startling item of news which he had had as yet no opportunity to impart to anyone. By the time Bunter had finished rubbing his fat face, smacked by Stacey in the Rag, the bell had rung for classes—and Bunter had been a minute or two late for class.

Bursting with startling news, Bunter had to bottle it up—and keep it bottled for a whole hour! Which was practically an impossibility to Bunter. Twice, thrice, he began to whisper to fellows near him, and Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eye singled him out. Twice, thrice, the Remove-master spoke to Bunter in warning tones, the warning growing more pronounced each time. Twice, thrice, the fat Owl unwillingly corked it up again as it were.

But he could not keep it corked up.

When Quelch turned to his desk for a moment Bunter whispered to Skinner:

"I say, it was Wharton all the time!"

Which remark simply mystified Skinner, as he had not the remotest idea of what the fat Owl was alluding to.

Quelch spun round from his desk.

"Bunter, you are talking again!"

"Eh? Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I only said to Skinner——"

"Take fifty lines, Bunter."

"Oh lor'!"

English history was resumed, and Bunter was silent for a few minutes.

The Remove were doing the reign of Queen Anne—in which Bunter was not in the least interested. He knew that Queen Anne was dead—at least, he had heard so—and he wanted to know no more about her. On the other hand, he was deeply, thrillingly interested in the affair of Stacey and Wharton—as the fellow who knew, and who could startle and astonish all the other fellows if he could only get it out.

"I say, Snoopey!" Unable to keep silent, Bunter whispered to Snoop on the other side. "I say, it wasn't Stacey at all!"

Snoop only blinked at him, as mystified as Skinner.

"Stacey makes out it was him!" whispered Bunter, regardless of grammar as of Quelch. "But it wasn't! It was Wharton all the time!"

"Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

"What were you saying to Snoop, Bunter?"

"Oh, nothing, sir! I never opened my lips! I only said——"

"Take a hundred lines!"

"Oh dear!"

Once more there was English history—with Quelch's gimlet eye gleaming balefully at Bunter, and most of the fellows grinning and rather curious. Everybody could see that Bunter was bursting with something, though they could not guess what. Only Stacey could guess.

Nearly ten minutes passed before Bunter broke out again. Bottling it up longer than that was impossible. But Skinner on one side, Snoop on the other, kept turned away from Bunter, dreading to draw the gimlet eye on themselves. Bunter leaned over his desk and whispered to Vernon-Smith, in front of him.

"I say, Smithy! I bet you never knew it was Wharton. You thought it was Stacey, and it wasn't——"

"Shut up, you fat ass!" breathed the Bounder, as Quelch's gimlet eye gleamed round. "Quelchy's watching you."

"But I tell you it wasn't him. He made out that it was him, but it wasn't——"

"Bunter!" Mr. Quelch's voice might have been likened to the growl of a tiger in the jungle. "Bunter, stand up!"

"Oh lor'! I mean, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I wasn't speaking, sir! I never said a word to Smithy, sir—not a syllable! Smithy will tell you the same, sir—he heard me——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Bunter, you persist in talking in class! Now, tell me at once what you were saying to Vernon-Smith!"

"Nothing, sir!"

Rap!

A pointer established contact with a set of fat knuckles. There was a wild howl in the Remove Form-room.

"Yoooooop!"

"I insist," said Mr. Quelch, "upon knowing your reason for this absurd and persistent chattering, Bunter! Repeat immediately what you said to Vernon-Smith! What was it?"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bunter, I warn you!" Up went the pointer.

"I—I never said anything, sir—I mean I only said it wasn't him, sir!" stuttered Bunter.

"You said what?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"I—I said it wasn't him, sir!"

"Have you no regard whatever for the rules of English grammar, Bunter?"

"No, sir—I mean, yes, sir! Lots!" gasped Bunter.

"Do you not know the difference between the nominative case and the accusative case, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped the confused Owl. "It—it's passive in form, but active in meaning, sir."

There was a shriek from the Remove. Bunter, like the rest of the Form, had lately suffered under Quelch and deponent verbs. In his present state of confusion he was getting mixed.

"Silence!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "This boy's stupidity is not a subject for merriment!"

On that point the Remove did not seem to agree with their Form-master. But Quelch's glare was not to be argued with, and there was silence.

"Now, Bunter, what did you mean by your ridiculous and ungrammatical remark to Vernon-Smith?"

"N-n-nothing, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"What were you speaking of, Bunter?" That question showed how angry Quelch was. In calmer moments he would have said "Of what were you speaking?"

"Oh, nothing, sir! I wasn't going to tell Smithy about Stacey, sir! I—I don't really know it wasn't him."

Stacey's face was set and almost white. He had no doubt that it was all coming out now. The other fellows simply stared. They had not the remotest idea of what Bunter was driving at.

"About Stacey!" repeated Mr. Quelch blankly.

"Yes, sir! I mean, no, sir!" babbled Bunter, in a mingled state of terror and confusion. Bunter wanted to tell the Remove; but he did not want to tell the Remove-master. Even Bunter's fat and fatuous brain could understand that it was a serious matter if it came to the ears of authority. Floggings for both the juniors concerned was the most probable result if Quelch got on to it. "I—I—I didn't mean Stacey, sir! Or—or Wharton! The—the fact is, sir, I—I don't know anything about it!"

"About what?" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Anything, sir!" gurgled Bunter. "I—I dare say it was Stacey, just as he makes out! I never heard him talking to Wharton. I wasn't in the Rag at all in break, and I never looked out of the window! Besides, fellows shouldn't talk under an open window if they don't want fellows to hear. Not that I heard anything, sir—I—I wasn't there!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Wharton.

He understood now, as well as Stacey. The Co. had a glimmering of it. But the rest of the Form were still in the dark.

"It appears," said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice, "that you have overheard a private conversation between two other boys, Bunter, and that it is that which you are so eager to repeat in class!"

"Oh, no, sir! I wasn't going to tell anybody that it wasn't him——"

"I have no idea of what you are speaking of," said Mr. Quelch. "Neither do I desire to know! I understand now how the matter stands."

Potter and Greene fairly jumped at the sight of Coker covered from head to foot with jam. "What the dickens——" exclaimed Potter. "Urrggh!" "Is Stacey coming to tea?" asked Greene. "Urrggh! Don't talk to me about the young scoundrel!" gasped Coker. "He's the—gurrggh!—worst of the—wooogh!—lot! Ooooch!"

"Oh, good! I mean, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter. "M-m-may I sit down, sir?"

"You may not, Bunter! You will stand out before the Form!"

"Oh lor'!"

Bunter rolled out in dismal apprehension. The fact that Mr. Quelch took a cane from his desk looked as if his apprehensions were well-founded.

"Now, Bunter——"

"Ow!"

"You will bend over that desk, Bunter!"

"Wow!"

Whack, whack!

"Yaroooooop!"

"That," said Mr. Quelch, "is for listening to a conversation not intended for your ears, Bunter! You need not rise—I have not finished yet!"

"Oh lor'!"

Whack, whack!

"Whooop!"

"That," said Mr. Quelch, "is for repeating, or attempting to repeat, private matters that you have learned by surreptitious methods!"

"Oh dear!"

Whack, whack!

"Yaroooooop!"

"That," said Mr. Quelch, "is for inattention in class!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

"You may now go back to your place, Bunter, and if you speak another word during this lesson, I shall cane you more severely!"

"Wooooooogh!"

Bunter went back to his place. He wriggled painfully as he sat there. He did not speak another word during that lesson. After being so faithfully dealt with by Quelch, even Bunter was able to keep it bottled up. And it was still corked, so to speak, when the Remove were dismissed after third school.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Brought to Light!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter fairly yelled when he got out into the quad.

For a whole hour startling news had been bottled up in Bunter Now it came out! In the quad a crowd of fellows surrounded him. All the Remove were curious to hear what it was that the fat Owl was so eager to impart.

Stacey made a movement towards Bunter, with his fists clenched and his eyes gleaming. But he realised the futility of it. Bunter could be punched, like a fat punchball, but Bunter could not be kept silent! It was a physical impossibility for Bunter to keep a secret. The game was up.

Harry Wharton, with a faintly mocking expression on his face, came up to the new fellow while Bunter was squeaking excitedly to an interested crowd.

"It's out now, Stacey!" said the captain of the Remove quietly.

Stacey gave him a black and bitter look.

"That fat fool must have been listening while we were talking in break," said Harry.

"I dare say you knew he was!" said Stacey bitterly.

"You know I didn't!" answered Wharton calmly. "But he's gabbling it out to all the fellows now. It will be up and down the school soon, and it's only a question of time before Quelch hears of——"

"I know that!"

"We're both in this up to the neck," said Wharton. "I'm as deep in the mud as you are in the mire. I'll do as you like in the matter. If you choose, I'll go to Quelch with you now, or you can leave it till he hears—it won't be long, at this rate."

"I'm not going to Quelch with you!" muttered Stacey.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Please yourself!" he answered. "It can't be gabbled all over the school without the beaks getting hold of it, you know that. But if you think there's still a chance of keeping it dark, leave it at that!"

And Wharton left him without another word. He joined the Co., who were looking worried and dismayed.

"All the fat's in the fire now!" grunted Johnny Bull. "You might have been a bit more careful not to let it out, Wharton."

"Did I let it out?"

"Well, it seems that Bunter heard you and Stacey——"

"How was I to know that Bunter was eavesdropping?" snapped Wharton. "Stacey started the subject—I answered him. Am I to blame because that fellow has been spoofing the whole school, and now he's found out?"

"Well, there'll be a beastly row about it," said Bob. "You'll bag that flogging, after all!"

"I know that!"

"And Stacey!" said Nugent. "My hat! Quelch will be wild with him! You'll both get it in the neck! Look here, the best thing is for both of you to go to Quelch at once and own up. Quelch may go easier, then, than if he finds it out for himself, as he's bound to soon."

"That's right!" agreed Bob.

"The rightfulness is terrific!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You owe Stacey that much, Wharton," said Johnny Bull. "I think——"

"Do you?" said Wharton, sarcastically. "Not in your line, is it?"

"Look here, you ought to go to Quelch with Stacey——"

"Better tell Stacey that! I've asked him, and he won't go," said the captain of the Remove curtly.

"Oh!" said Johnny, rather taken

aback. "Best thing he could do, and you as well! I should have thought——"

"You should have—but you never do!" retorted Wharton.

It was just as well that there came an interruption before Johnny could reply to that. Five or six Remove fellows detached themselves from the excited group round Bunter, and rushed across to the Famous Five. That group was augmenting in numbers, fellows of other Forms coming along, as well as Remove, to see what the excitement was about.

Billy Bunter for once, was the centre of things—the cynosure of all eyes! Bunter was enjoying himself.

"Here he is!" shouted Peter Todd. He led the rush of half a dozen Removites towards the captain of the Form. "Here, Wharton——"

"Wharton!" exclaimed Vernon-Smith.

"Was it you?" demanded Squiff.

"Has Bunter got it right?" exclaimed Hazeldene.

Wharton did not answer. Until Stacey agreed to speak out, he had the secret to keep—little use as there was in keeping it now.

"Is Bunter telling the fellows the truth?" demanded the Bounder.

"Does he ever?" drawled Wharton.

"Well, never mind whether he does ever—is he now?" asked Smithy. "Was it you biffed that footpad——"

"And rescued old plump Prout?" asked Peter.

"Did Stacey stick in detention for you?" exclaimed Squiff. "Jolly good-natured of him if he did!"

"Wharton let him have his giddy glory as a jolly old reward!" chuckled the Bounder. "He's got Prout's gas!"

"What about it, Wharton?" asked three or four fellows.

"Nothing about it!" answered Harry. "If you're interested in Bunter's gabble, go and listen to it. I've got nothing to tell you."

"You can tell us whether he's got it right or not!" hooted Peter. "Can't you use your silly tongue?"

"I can—but I won't!" answered Wharton coolly.

"Do you fellows know?" asked the Bounder, looking at the Co.

"Oh, let it drop!" grunted Bob Cherry.

"Let's go and ask Stacey!" said Russell.

Nothing being obtained from Harry Wharton & Co., the fellows rushed off for Stacey. But they did not find him. Stacey was not anxious to be interviewed by his Form-fellows just then, and he had gone into the House and disappeared from sight.

The new fellow in the Remove was in a very unenviable frame of mind.

In the fixed belief that the facts would never come to light, he had allowed the deception to go on—and now the facts were coming to light! Apart from trouble with Quelch, which was serious enough, he was going to look a fool to all the Form—as a fellow who had allowed them to believe that he had done a thing he had not done.

He was not seen again till the bell rang for dinner. Then he joined Wharton on the way to the dining-room.

"I've got to speak to you, Wharton," he said, in a low voice; and he gave Wharton's companions a look—and the Co. walked on ahead.

"Well?" said Harry curtly.

"That fool Bunter has gabbled the story all over the shop now! That can't be helped! But everybody knows what a liar and a fool he is! If we deny it——"

"Deny it!" repeated Wharton, his eyes flashing.

"Oh, don't come the hoity-toity now!" said Stacey savagely. "The thing's too serious for that! Everybody will think Bunter is lying, if we say so. A fellow who listens behind a window and tells tales, deserves to be set down as a liar! Your friends will hold their tongues. All we've got to do is to say that it's one of Bunter's silly yarns—and all the fellows will believe us. That will see us both clear."

Wharton breathed hard and deep.

"Tell as many lies as you like," he said. "I'll tell none! I'll hold my tongue and refuse to say anything—but that's the limit! I shall not say that Bunter is lying when he's telling the truth."

"You rotter!" breathed Stacey.

"It's your own doing," said Harry. "If you'd come with me to Quelch, as I wanted, when Prout first made his idiotic mistake, it would never have come to this. If you can get out of the scrape by lying, tell mountains of them, if you like—I won't!"

Stacey clenched his hands.

"Mind, if you let me down in this, I'll do the best I can for myself—and you can look out for yourself!" he hissed. "I tell you——"

"Don't talk to me—you make me sick!" snapped Wharton, and he quickened his pace and overtook his friends.

Stacey, with a black brow, followed him into the dining-hall. At the Remove table he was the centre of all eyes.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Flogging For One!

MR. QUELCH glanced at Stacey in some surprise.

After dinner the new boy in the Remove followed him to his study. A good many Removites, anxious to speak to Stacey, had to wait. Billy Bunter's surprising revelations were the one topic in the Form at present.

"What is it, Stacey?" asked Mr. Quelch kindly.

"May I speak to you, sir?"

"Certainly, my boy!"

Quelch motioned to Stacey to follow him into the study. He sat down, and the new fellow stood before him, with a flushed face.

"I've got a confession to make, sir," said Stacey.

"Indeed!" Quelch raised his eyebrows and smiled a little. "Nothing very serious I imagine, my boy."

"I'm afraid you may think it serious, sir! May I begin by telling you why I did it? I know you will be angry, sir! But I should like you to know that I had what seemed to me a good motive."

Mr Quelch looked puzzled.

"Please be more explicit, Stacey," he said.

"You are aware, sir, that I am dependent on Colonel Wharton, and that he pays my fees at this school," said Stacey. "He is very anxious that I should be good friends with his nephew, and I hope I have tried—though it hasn't turned out very well. But—but I am very grateful to Wharton's uncle, sir, and for that reason it came into my head the other day to get Wharton out of a scrape——"

"To what do you refer, Stacey?"

"The other day, sir, Wharton was under detention. He is ready to confess to you that he cut detention—indeed, anxious to do so—so there is no harm in my telling you, as he intends to do so himself."

"Wharton did not cut detention, as you express it, Stacey. Two or three times, at least, I looked into the Form-room during his period of detention and saw him there."

"You saw me, sir."

Mr. Quelch almost jumped out of his seat.

"You!" he ejaculated.

"I'm afraid it was very wrong, sir!" said Stacey humbly. "But Wharton having cleared off, and his friends being very anxious, I—I had the idea of saving him from a row by taking his place."

Mr. Quelch gave Stacey a fixed stare. Thunder gathered in his brow.

"Stacey! Is it possible? Do you dare to tell me that you took advantage of your likeness to Wharton to substitute yourself for him in detention—to deceive me—to make a fool of your Form-master?"

"Yes, sir. I'm sorry, but I did."

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Stacey! Such an act of deception—of disrespect—of impertinence—bless my soul! You did this——" He gasped, as he slowly assimilated it. "Then—then it was you—you I saw in the Form-room—was Wharton out of gates?"

"He was, sir!"

"And why have you come to tell me this, Stacey?" thundered Mr. Quelch. "Do you imagine that you will escape punishment for such a deception?"

"No, sir! But—but I had to own up! You see, sir, it happened that Wharton did something while he was out of detention—you remember, Mr. Prout, sir——"

"Bless my soul! Then—then that was Wharton, as Mr. Prout supposed in the first place!" gasped the Remove master.

"That is why I have come to you, sir. Nothing would have been said otherwise. I can't let the fellows go on thinking that I did what Wharton did—it puts me in such a rotten position. So—they all know now, sir, how the matter stands, and—and I'm telling you. I can't let fellows go on putting down to me credit that's due to Wharton."

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. He remembered Bunter's antics in the Form-room in third school. "I suppose that that was what Bunter had in mind——"

"Bunter knows, sir, and a lot of other fellows, too. I want everybody to know, and—and I know I shall be flogged, sir, but—but that's better than making out I did a thing I never did."

Mr. Quelch sat silent.

Stacey had told the truth, so far as that went; Bunter knew, and a lot of other fellows, too! But he did not mention how Bunter knew—and that the "lot of other fellows" had got it from Bunter. As he had said to Wharton, he was doing the best he could for himself.

He waited, with an expression of humble contrition on his face, that hardly expressed his real feelings.

Mr. Quelch spoke at last.

"What you did, Stacey, was very wrong—very disrespectful to your Form-master. I am willing to believe that you did not realise that it amounted to a deception—but that was what it was. I make full allowance for your motive—your gratitude to Wharton's uncle, who has befriended you. But——"

Mr. Quelch paused.

"But," he resumed, "you have come to me of your own accord, and confessed—and certainly, as your motive for doing so is simply a desire not to reap credit to which you are not entitled, I am bound to commend you for your frankness. In other circumstances,

(*Continued on page 28.*)

"MOOSE CALL!"

By HARRISON GLYN

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

Selwyn Gore and his younger brother, Colin, learn from Isaac Snugger, a Tomahawk solicitor, that their Uncle Amyas, a gold prospector, has been murdered in Canada. Snugger also informs them that Amyas Gore had, in the presence of his trusty friend, Mountain Lion, a Sioux Indian, made out a will, leaving his claim up in the Sunrise Mountains to the two brothers. Determined to settle accounts with the murderers, Selwyn and Colin leave for Canada in company with Snugger. Following a thrilling adventure in Tomahawk, the trio set out for Moose Call. En route they are held up by a snowstorm and forced to make camp. During the night they are attacked by two men who set fire to their car and tent and then make good their escape. Apportioning out what little remains of their belongings, they continue their journey.

(Now read on.)

Mountain Lion, The Indian!

THE sun blazed down in golden glory, but, despate its heat, the snow showed no sign of melting.

The trio did not always keep to the road, for the drifts lay deep and level with it on either side, and every now and again Colin or Selwyn would plunge down into them. It was Isaac Snugger who made easiest and most rapid progress, gliding along on his one snowshoe, and using it in an odd lame duck kind of way.

They left the fir-clad slopes of the hills behind, and were soon out in the flat plain. For hours they trudged on, only stopping once to open a tin of corned beef, which they divided equally. For drink they melted snow in pannikins. The rations were scanty, and they marched on again, their hunger unappeased.

In all that wild waste land they saw no sign of a house, or a ranch. The distant hills were too far away for them to hope to reach, and the drifts that lay between too deep to pass.

Towards the wane of the afternoon it grew cold again. After the sun had sunk to rest in a blaze of roseate glory, it was bitter.

The light lingered long, and then the moon soared up. They kept on the march, for they might have died had they stretched themselves out in the snow.

When at last they saw some hills ahead, tree clad, and not far off the road, they blinked the sleep out of their eyes, and hurried. And there at last they found a sheltered spot, and stretched themselves out, dividing the coverings, and nestling close together for extra warmth. They were up on a ledge, where no prowling wolf could come without betraying its presence.

Too weary to eat, they were soon fast asleep.

The morning sun awakened them. They ate again from their scanty store, and once more pushed on.

Ahead of them the country began to change in character. Far to the left they saw the surface of a frozen lake, the thick ice coated with snow. Hills began to rise. But still there was no sign or trace of habitation. They met no travellers. They had the world to themselves.

No, not quite, for a while later, as they rested for a moment on the top of a rise, and looked back across more than twenty miles of open country, they saw something moving—something so tiny that at first they paid no heed to it.

It was just something that moved black against the snow, and after they had picked it up, Selwyn realised that it was coming along the road they had already traversed.

"It's a man!" he called out excitedly. "In fact, I believe it's more than one!"

Snugger felt for his glasses; but they had been burnt in the fire. The naked eyes would have to serve.

"It shore is movin'!" he cried. "If it's a man, he's certainly follerin' us!"

They watched and waited until the object came nearer, and they were able to make it out in detail.

"It's a dog team with a man, or two men, drivin' it!" shouted Snugger excitedly. "P'r'aps somebody's learned of our plight, and has sent help."

A disturbing thought occurred to Colin.

"I say, Snugger," he said, "supposing it's the men who burnt our camp?"

Snugger's chin worked its way up, and his eyes narrowed to slits, through which he eyed the boy critically.

"Waal, supposin' it is?" he growled. "Then I'm going to plop me down in the snow, take careful aim, and drill him, or them, clean full of holes like a colander."

It was a dog team sure enough, and Selwyn could make out now that a solitary man was following it.

"He'll come up with us in a few more miles," he said. "Let's push on. After all, our objective is Moose Call."

The surface of the road was loose under the snow, and the going hard. It began to run up and down like a switchback.

They had trudged down into a hollow where the snow lay thick, and were beginning the ascent of the slope beyond, when a stirring blood-curdling war-whoop rang out.

As they turned to look over the brow of the hill the dog team came in sight—nine shaggy huskies harnessed to a sledge, which they bore along as they strained and pulled at quite a fair rate of speed.

As the sledge met the down slope the running figure behind let out another terrifying cry. He was pounding along, a feather showing in his thick fur cap. Below the skin coat he wore leather trunks that ended in thick moccasins thrust through the straps of a pair of snowshoes. With great sweeping thrusts of his shoes the man came on, giving a tug at the gee pole to keep the loaded sledge true to the track.

It was as he took a long and searching glance at the man that Isaac Snugger swung up his Winchester, and fired in the air.

"Hurrah!" he yelled, his eyes blazing with excitement. "It's Mountain Lion, the Injun! He's kem back! That means spring time is near! Hurrah!

It's Mountain Lion! Now we'll soon be in Moose Call! Hey, Injun! I'm glad to see yer!"

The Sioux Indian's answering war-whoop rolled in cracking echoes over the snow-clad waste as the dog drawn sledge came on.

The Lonely Shack!

AT a sharp word of command, the dog team ceased to pull, and the sledge came to a standstill.

The shaggy dogs threw themselves full length in the snow, mouths open, tongues lolling, ears pricked up, their leader sweeping the rest of the team with approving eyes.

Selwyn smiled approval, for to him these dogs were almost human.

Then he took stock of Mountain Lion, of whom he had heard so much. According to Isaac Snugger this Sioux Indian was a man right out of the common, and Selwyn could well believe it.

His face was typically Sioux; high cheek bones, slightly hooked nose, wide jaw; eyes that seemed black, and held a fierce fire. The hair showed coarse and black and strong. Complexion copper, mixed with chrome. The mouth was big and full-lipped, and the teeth Selwyn saw when the Sioux greeted Snugger were perfect.

Mountain Lion pulled off his great fur gloves, and gripped hands with Snugger, after the fashion of the white man.

Isaac beamed.

"Why, Mountain Lion!" he said. "I am glad to meetcha, for we'd managed to get ourselves into a bit of a jam. I want you to meet the boys. You remember I told you I was going across the pond to bring back Amyas Gore's nevvies. Well, I've brung 'em. Hyar they are."

The Sioux turned his piercing black eyes on Selwyn and Colin, and his grim visage relaxed. He gripped hands, crushing each of theirs in fingers of steel.

"Glad to meet you," he said solemnly, and in perfect English. "I came upon the burnt wreck of a car and a tent in the glade where your tracks turned on to the road. That was no accident?"

"It certainly was not, Mountain Lion," answered Selwyn. "Two men crept down on our camp last night and fired the car and the tent. We shot at them, but I'm afraid we missed."

"Ugh!" grunted the Indian.

"How kem you to make the trail to Moose Call, Mountain Lion?" asked Snugger.

"The spring was near. I came into Tomahawk to see you, and heard you had started. So I followed."

"See any tracks in the snow?"

"I found the tracks of two cars. Some, almost filled, led out from the town. The others, fresh ones, came back towards it, but turned off along the road to Beaver Creek."

"Think the men who set fire to our camp came in it?" Snugger asked.

"Sure of it," replied the Sioux, his face as grave as a Sphinx's. "for the car was hidden half a mile from the road, and the men fired at me from that distance. I have done no white man harm, friend. Why should those men have tried to kill me unless they had set fire to your tent and did not want me to bring you aid?"

"Shot at you. Did they make good shootin'?" asked Snugger.

The Sioux shrugged his fur-clad shoulders.

"The bullets came close. But when I fired in reply, the men gave up, and I heard the car drone away."

"They tried to kill you," said Selwyn, "tried to burn us to death in our sleep. My brother and I were fired upon in Tomahawk. These men must be the two who killed my Uncle Amyas, Mountain Lion."

The Indian eyed him soberly.

"Did you love your Uncle Amyas?" he asked.

"I met him only once; I liked him; and the Gores are a clan. We mean to avenge him, Mountain Lion."

Again the stern visage relaxed, and the Sioux almost smiled.

"Ugh! It is well!" he growled. "But if I had not come with the sledge you might have died from exposure with your tent and your food destroyed."

"Follow us by accident?" Snugger asked.

"No. The sergeant of the Mounted Police told me how you had started out in a broken-down car with heavy snow threatening. I saw you were as mad as always, white man, and so I came. Good for you it is the car is burned."

Colin laughed.

"You're right, Mountain Lion," he said. "You don't like motor-cars?"

"Some," said the Sioux, jerking his thumb at Isaac Snugger. "Not his!"

Stooping, he began to uncover part of the sledge, threw some meat and biscuits to his dogs, then set out some stores, and brought to view two pairs of snowshoes.

"For you," he said, throwing a pair of shoes at Selwyn's feet. "And for you. Like you. Nice boys. Not afraid, eh?"

"Afraid of nothing on two legs or four, Mountain Lion," answered Selwyn.

They climbed upon the sheeted-in sledge and sat in the sun, eating their meal. Their hunger appeased, and the rest over, the boys fitted on their snowshoes. Then, packing away their arms and other belongings under the stout covers, they resumed the journey at greater ease.

The dogs pulled lustily. The sledge ran evenly over the unbroken snow, and the boys plunged after it, soon getting used to the shoes under the Indian's expert direction.

Isaac Snugger went on ahead of the dogs. Selwyn and Colin moved on beside the sledge. Mountain Lion had charge of the gee stick, with which he kept the sledge running true to the road.

The party took another rest towards the close of the afternoon, and then, as before, the snow set hard. It was freezing again.

"Moose Call," said Mountain Lion, pointing with his whip.

Selwyn looked, thrilled to think that the place where Amyas Gore had built his shack, found his gold, and then died, was at last quite close at hand.

The scene was sombre enough. To the left, the ground began to rise. Beyond a frozen lake of great size ranged a line of foothills, and behind the hills, high snow-capped mountains, whose crests were hidden in the clouds.

"Moose Call," said the Indian again.

"Where is my uncle's shack?" asked Colin.

"A mile from the lake, in a clearing at the foot of the hills."

"And Uncle Amyas' claim?" asked Selwyn.

The Sioux raised the point of the whip up higher.

"Up in the Sunrise Mountains. There. High up. You see a flat place, a plateau, just where the trees break away on the lower hills. It shows black. That is the place from which the bad white men hurled your uncle after they had shot him and robbed him of his gold."

Selwyn's handsome face hardened.

"Do you know where to find my uncle's claim?" he asked.

"Ugh! I must know it. I know every ravine, canyon, and pass in the Sunrise Mountains. I have roamed them ever since I was a boy. I tell the bearded white man to go to this place and to that, in search of the gold he coveted, and in one or other he found it. It should not be so far away from where the shack is built. If I could read I would know it."

"If you could read?" Colin repeated the words breathlessly.

"Before he died, before I went to Tomahawk to fetch the brave white man Snugger, Amyas Gore wrote about the claim. But I cannot read the writing of the white man. So I set the paper in a canister and buried it where none can find it. And it lies there now, cold, beneath the snow. That message should tell you where the gold is to be found."

"You buried a canister containing a message from Uncle Amyas, and you can find it again?" Selwyn's voice shook as he spoke, his blue eyes were on fire.

The Sioux lowered the whip and eyed him calculatingly.

"Does this gold, the curse of the white man, mean more to you than avenging your uncle's murder?" he demanded.

"Of course not! If I were offered all the gold there is in the world to forgo vengeance upon my uncle's slayers, I would not touch any of it," answered Selwyn indignantly.

"It is well," rejoined the Sioux.

His manner changed as he sprang nimbly to his feet.

"It is not far now," he said. "It will not be dark until a little before the dawn breaks. Soon the moon will rise. Let us be going."

They pushed on at a fair speed. Here and there they came to patches where the road lay bare, and stony. But mostly the runners slid on frozen snow, and the mountains loomed visibly nearer.

Overhead the stars twinkled with a brightness Selwyn had never known. The moon swung up. They reached the lake and skirted it.

Presently the Sioux stopped the team and the sledge, and pointed with his whip to a wood shack which was built in a narrow clearing on the foothills about a mile and a half away.

"Men have been building here," he said. "White men."

Snugger gave a gasp of surprise.

"What? Prospectors or settlers buildin' hyar, and in the winter?" he said. "That shack warn't there when I kem out with you to see Amyas die, Sioux."

"No," grunted the Sioux, scowling suspiciously. "Only the corner posts and the crossbeams were up then and firmly bedded. Now the building is complete. Men must have come out with sledge and finished it. But how many? And from where? And why?"

"You're askin' questions," growled Snugger, "and I can't answer 'em. I'd like to know if anyone's livin' thar just the same, and if so—why."

No smoke issued from the chimneys of

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the lonely shack, and the moon lit it up so strongly they could see that its windows were shuttered. Snow lay all around it, and on the weeping boughs of the pine-trees in amongst which it had been built.

They moved on once more, the snow crackling under the runners as the panting and tired dogs raced to the end of their journey.

The plateau from which Amyas Gore had been hurled by his murderers loomed up forbiddingly above the firs. On their right the ice-covered lake glistened blindingly. The towering mountains were close at hand. Then quite suddenly Amyas Gore's shack loomed up as they turned a bend among the pines.

The Work of an Enemy.

A GREAT open circular space like an amphitheatre had been cleared of trees, and in the heart of this stood a timber shack of considerable size.

Behind it an open, treeless path led to the foothills and the mountains. On one side of the shack a great kitchen garden had been dug, and in it dried-up, frozen, dead vegetables raised their heads starkly to the moon.

Beyond was a great stack of logs. Next to the house were stables and some sheds. Uncle Amyas must have taken a long time to build and create all this, Selwyn thought.

They approached the shack from the back. The front was half turned to the Sunrise Mountains.

Selwyn raced on as fast as the flat shoes and his tired limbs would allow. At his heels came Colin, and close up with them moved Isaac Snugger, who managed his snowshoes more easily than they. Isaac Snugger was like iron and literally untiring.

Behind came Mountain Lion and his dog team, the man shouting, the dogs yapping and snapping, for they knew they were in, the runners crackling through the frozen snow, which lay rather thinly here, Selwyn was surprised to find.

"Ugh, ugh, ugh! Hoi, hoi, hoi!" yelled the Indian, cracking his whip, and running with masterly ease in his shoes.

They swept round the side of the shack, and along it, and, as they came to the front, a window shutter slammed violently, driven by a sudden gust.

The Indian heard it and stopped his shouting. The mad barking of the dogs was stilled.

Selwyn felt his blood run cold. Colin leapt beside him.

"Did you hear that, Sel?" he asked.

Selwyn nodded, and, increasing his speed, raced pantingly right in front of the house, and then stopped as if he had been shot.

"Great Scott!" he cried. "Somebody's been here!"

"Thieves! Looters!" snapped Isaac Snugger.

The Sioux ranged his dog sledge up without a word, but his face was hard and threatening as he took stock of the scene.

The door of the shack had been torn from its hinges and lay a yard or two from the doorway in the snow. All the window shutters barring one had been broken away and thrown to the ground. The windows had been smashed. Snow had been blown into the large front room which stretched the whole width of the house, and nearly filled it.

"Bad white man bin in here!" grunted the Sioux.

"Boys," said Snugger, and there was a suspicious tremor in his voice, and he sniffed distressfully, "thar's an unwritten law among men who live in these parts, they don't allow a man to break down and smash up another man's shack. When you shut the doors and shutter the windows, and lock up a place and go away, usually it's sacred. An' if I could catch the durn skunk who's done this, I'd lynch him!"

They remained for a minute staring at the ravaged shack, then moved across to the stables. Here they discovered that the door had been forced, staple, hasp, and padlock having been torn away. But the door was on its hinges, though it had warped and was frozen in the snow.

The store shed next to the stables had been broken into and its contents hurled out piecemeal. Picks, shovels, hoes, forks, wheelbarrows, a sledge, bags of fertiliser, and a mass of junk of every description littered the ground all round.

Selwyn brought the lamp, and, switching on the light, flashed it about the place. The ground in the stables, stalls, and all, had been forked and turned over. Harness was littered about.

In the barn next door the floors had been rooted up.

The Sioux let his dogs loose, and the party went into the shack. Here Selwyn hung his electric lamp on a nail, and Colin brought another. The living-room was in a state of chaos. Some of the thick floor boards had been uprooted. The stones of the hearth had been dug up. Some of the brickwork of the chimney had been dislodged. A cupboard had been splintered open. Chairs, the heavy table, the iron stove, had been throw down. The pipe leading up from the stove through the ceiling and outside dangled precariously.

They went into the back room and the kitchen. Here the same story was told. Floorboards up, the furniture smashed or dismantled, drawers and shelves on the floor, and a litter everywhere.

The kitchen was in terrible upheaval. Pans, pots, canisters, bottles, glasses, jugs, and mugs smashed or thrown anywhere. The shelves swept clean, the drawers emptied.

"Someone has been searching here, Snugger," said Selwyn.

"Searching for something they didn't find, I should say," returned Snugger. "Mebbe it was that paper you said you hid, Injun."

"Mebbe!"

Snugger gazed uneasily round.

"Looks as if it'll take a long time to put all this to rights," he said. "But we'll start in the mornin'. We've got to do it. And while we're open to attack we'd better keep watch one at a time, 'cos there are bad men about."

They went out into the snow again, and left the breeze blow mildly upon their cheeks. According to Snugger, the snow would thaw good and fast in the morning. So much the better. They had reached Moose Call, and there was plenty of work to do.

The trio strode down the glade until they came in view of the new shack in the wood among the hills. It showed black, solemn, uninviting. But they saw no sign of life, heard no untoward sound, and went back again.

On the way Isaac Snugger remembered the burnt-out ranch he had visited after the burning of his car and the tent. He spoke to Mountain Lion about it.

"Never heard any talk about it in Tomahawk, Mountain Lion," he said.

"Dunno who lived there, or what happened. But it seemed strange."

"Bad men set the ranch alight," grunted the Sioux.

"What? You know all about it, then?"

"Two bad white men call at the ranch and ask for food and shelter," explained the Sioux. "The farmer, a man named Morgan, was away. His foreman fed the men, and then set them to chop wood. They refused, and he kicked them out. That night the men set the ranch on fire, and a servant and a child were burned to death. Morgan took his wife away; he had lost all his money in the ranch."

"And they never caught the two men who did it?" asked Snugger indignantly.

"They never caught them. The white man, Morgan, reported the matter in Beaver Creek, and a posse of the Mounted Police roamed the country for weeks looking for the two men, but they did not catch them."

Selwyn insisted upon taking the first watch that night. He muffled himself up in furs, encased his legs in heavy boots into which he crammed plenty of newspaper to keep his feet warm. Then he sought a sheltered corner in the open, and sat down there, with the Winchester rifle lying across his knees and a revolver in his pocket. There were two bad men about, killers and incendiaries, who were much too dangerous to be trifled with. With grim, set lips he decided that if any man came that way he would shoot first and ask questions afterwards.

The minutes crept slowly on. In a place where the snow lay thick, little mounds showed unevenly on the white surface. Mountain Lion's team of dogs had dug in under the snow to sleep.

* * * * *

In the morning, when the sun blazed up, the snow began to melt fast, according to anticipation. Before noon the foothills were clear, and only a little snow lay in the sheltered places on the mountains.

The trees dripped water. Soon the glade was clear of white.

The trio reset the floor-boards, plugged the screw-holes, and, resetting the door, soon had it swinging again on its hinges. They repaired the lock and made the door secure. The shutters were put up again, the furniture righted, the stove put back in place, and soon the shack was beginning to look shipshape again.

The pure, invigorating air made them ravenous, and they made big inroads on their stores at the midday meal, after which the Indian grunted, and, with a grim smile, said:

"Mountain Lion go shoot bear. Catch fish when the ice melts. Good!"

The meal over, Snugger put forward a suggestion.

"We can lock up the shack once more," he said, "and then go and see who's living over in that new place. We've a right to know what our neighbours are like, 'specially after what's happened hyar."

They shut the door and locked it; then, leaving the windows shuttered, started off for the new shack at a brisk walk.

They approached it without challenge, and, walking round it, saw no sign of its being occupied.

Selwyn banged loudly on the door, while Snugger rapped upon the window-shutters. Mountain Lion stood with his

gun ready to lift to his shoulder and fire in a flash.

No answer came.

Turning away, they explored the near-by wood. Here they came upon felled timber, but none of it had been newly dropped. The faint traces and tracks they found among the trees had been made some time. Whoever owned the place had evidently not wintered out.

Mountain Lion's keen eyes roamed the hills, and he uttered a guttural "Ugh!" which might have meant anything.

They went back again to the log hut and examined it. It was strongly built, and earth had been caked between the thick timber. It commanded not only the glade, but the road which ran in from the main trail to the shack Amyas Gore had built at Moose Call.

"Colin," said Selwyn, "I wish this new shack wasn't here. I've an uncomfortable feeling about it."

Mountain Lion overheard the remark and grunted.

"Easy to do what the bad white men did—burn it down," he suggested.

"We can't do that," said Colin.

The Sioux nodded.

"Can do," he insisted. "Good! Bad white men live here."

They found no trace of any white man, bad or good, and so they returned to their own shack. By this time all the snow had gone, and the dogs came leaping to meet them. Selwyn felt glad to see them there. They would act as watch dogs and give the alarm on the slightest provocation.

In the dismantled kitchen they had found a store of tea and coffee, and they made a brew now and ate. Then Selwyn remembered the canister the Indian had spoken about with the message in it.

"Find it," he said, his eyes sparkling with excitement. "If it is a message my uncle wrote we must see what it says."

(Watch out for further thrilling chapters of this amazing adventure yarn in next week's issue of the MAGNET.)

HARRY WHARTON'S ENEMY!

(Continued from page 24.)

Stacey, I should assuredly request the Head to administer a flogging for such an act. But——"

Another pause.

"I'm not expecting to be let off, sir!" said Stacey. "I only hope you will believe that I meant no disrespect to you, sir. After Colonel Wharton's great kindness to me——"

"I understand," said Mr. Quelch. "In certain respects, Stacey, you have raised yourself in my esteem by what you have told me. You may go now, my boy, and I shall consider how to deal with the matter."

Stacey went, leaving Mr. Quelch in a very thoughtful mood. He smiled as he went down the passage.

* * * * *

Harry Wharton did not escape so cheaply.

In afternoon school that day Mr. Quelch told him, or rather barked at him to stand out before the Form.

The captain of the Remove stood out. He guessed what was coming.

"Wharton!" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!"

"Did you leave the Form-room during detention on Tuesday?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Very well. Your action will be reported to your headmaster, and Dr. Locke will deal with you. You may go back to your place."

Wharton sat down again.

Prout heard that evening that a Remove junior was up for a Head's flogging after prayers in the morning. When Prout heard who it was, and why, Prout went to Quelch. It was Wharton and not Stacey, after all, who had saved Prout's majestic nut from being cracked, and Prout felt bound to weigh in.

But he weighed in in vain. Quelch was willing to admit that, from a certain point of view, it was fortunate that Wharton had been on the spot. But that did not alter the fact that he had cut detention and defied the authority of his Form-master. He was welcome to Prout's gratitude—hitherto bestowed in error on Stacey—he was welcome to the praise due for a plucky action—and he was also welcome, more than welcome, to the just punishment for a defiance of authority. Prout pleaded in vain.

In the Hall the following morning, Wharton took it from the Head—without a sound or a word. All the Remove witnessed it—Skinner, with a cheery smile, remembering the use of his features as a duster; Stacey with an expressionless face, the Co. with glum looks.

When the painful scene was over and the school dismissed, Harry Wharton walked out of Hall with a firm step. His friends gathered round him in silent sympathy. They went into the quad.

"Feeling bad?" asked Bob, rather fatuously.

"Oh! No! Fine!"

"'Hem!"

"It will wear off!" said Johnny Bull.

"Nothing to wear off for Stacey!" said Wharton bitterly. "Everybody thought he would get the same as I did! Why hasn't he?"

His friends did not answer. They did not know.

"Well, after all, you asked for it, cutting detention, you know!" said Johnny Bull; doubtless by way of comfort.

"I know that. I'm not grousing about the whopping. But——" Wharton's face was dark and bitter. "It seems that we're going to have two weights and measures—one for me and one for Quelch's favourite. Well, if Quelch wants trouble this term he can have it!"

To which Wharton's friends listened in silence, hoping that he would forget his wild words when the flogging had worn off. But the captain of the Remove did not forget.

THE END.

(The next yarn in this grand series is entitled: "THE HERO OF THE HOUR!" Make sure of enjoying it, chums, by ordering your copy of the MAGNET *in good time!)*

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THE NEW Greyfriars Herald

EXTRA GOOD EDITION

No. 139 (New Series). EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON. June 1st, 1935.

THE HEAD'S LITTLE RUSE!

By DICKY NUGENT

"Birchemall must go!"

Dr. Crule's voice rang out like a pistol-shot, as he glanced at the three seniors standing before him.

The tirant of St. Sam's was in a fiery mood. His eyes blazed, his cheeks burned, and a cigaretto smoldered between his lips. A grate nottid vain stood out on his forrid.

"Birchemall must go!" he repeeted savvidgely. "He must be got rid of by fare means or fowl. It's well over a week now since he barred himself out in his study rather than submit to me being made headmaster in his place, and he seems more firmly intrenched than ever. Something has jolly well got to be done about it. Do you savvy?"

"We savvy, sir!"

"Good!" Dr. Crule glanced round to make sure that the door was shut, then sank his voice to a wisper. "Now that that's understood, we can got down to brass tax. This afternoon, on Big Side, there is a kricket match—a kricket match between Masters and Boys. I have it, on very good orthority, that Dr. Birchemall will be playing for the Masters."

The three seniors—who happened to be Bounder and Toadey and Cringer, the biggest rotters in the Sixth—eyed the Head with cunning eggspressions on their dials.

"What do you want us to do, then, sir?" asked Bounder, with a leer.

"Kidnap him!" was Dr. Crule's sorprizing answer. "Kidnap him and take him as far away from the skool as possibul! It will be the first time he has left the Skool House since his barring-out began, and it's a hevven-sent opportunity to get rid of him once and for all! Now lissen!"

And the St. Sam's tirant started to give the rotters of the Sixth detailed instructions.

Let us leave these fowl plotters for a minnit, dear readers, to renew ackwaintance with the rebbel headmaster.

Dr. Birchemall's plight was getting desprit. His small store of tuck had vannished, and he had been living for sevveral days on old boots from the cupboard and ivy leaves from the winder-ledge.

"On this diet," muttered Dr. Birchemall, as he gazed gloomily out of the winder, "I shall be getting thin—and that will be too thick! If I don't have something to eat soon, I shall feel completely fed up!"

It was just as he made that remark that a timmid rap sounded on the door of his stronghold.

Crash! Bang! Wallop!

"Who's there?" asked the Head sharply. "Friend or foe?"

"It's me, sir!" came a horse wisper through the keyhole. "Jack Jolly. Let me in quick, before Doctor Crule spots me! I've brought a message from the masters!"

Dr. Birchemall hastily removed the furniture which he had used as a barricade, and then unlocked the door and allowed the kaptin of the Fourth to enter. His eyes gleemed as he saw that Jolly carried a hamper with him.

"Ah! Tuck!" he mermered gratefully. "You've just about savod my life, Jolly!"

"The masters had a whip round for it, sir," grinned Jack Jolly. "They all simporthise with you at hart, though, of corse, it wouldn't do to let the new Head know it. He's a broot, sir—a regular broot!"

"Eggsactly what I thought, Jolly!" nodded Dr. Birchemall, as he took an enormous bite at a pork-pie. "I oggspect you boys would be ghad to have me back, too, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, rather, sir! Of corse, you've been a bit of a rotter yourself in your time——"

"What!"

"But you've never been such a boolying tirant as Doctor Crule, and we'd rather put up with you than him! Now for the message, sir. It's the grate annual kricket match between Masters and Boys to-day, and the Masters are a man short. They want to know if you can possibly turn out for them!"

The rebbel headmaster drained the bottle of ginger-pop he had just opened before he answered. Then he shook his head.

"Give the masters my condiments, Jolly," he said, "and tell them that, much as I should like to lead them to viktory on Big Side this afternoon, I cannot leave my post. The barring-out must go on—and I'm staying here to see it through! Toll them, however, that to make up for my absence I have arranged for a friend of mine to take my

place. He is a cultered jentleman, and he is known as the Kaffir Kricket King! Can you remember all that?"

"Grate pip! It would be hard to forget it, sir!" eggsclaimed Jack Jolly, in a state of grate serprize. "I'll tell them, sir, and I'm sure they'll give your friend, the Kaffir Kricket King, a harty welcome! Now I must go!"

"Thanks for coming!" smiled the rebbel Head, whose skollarly fizz, for some reason, now looked very sly and artful. "See you this afternoon—or rather, the Kaffir Kricket King will see you!"

He larfed as he led the visitor out. Jack Jolly wondered why.

As soon as dinner was over that day, Bounder and Toadey and Cringer waited near the Head's study for Dr. Birchemall to come out, ready to nab him as soon as he appeared.

While they waited, a hewman figger covered in soot mite have been seen climbing out of one of the chimbley-pots on to the roof of the Skool House. The figger crawled over the roof to the back of the house, then descended by a ladder that was reared against the wall. Not a sole notissed the insident.

Ten minnits later the grate match began on Big Side. Prominent among the spectators was Dr. Crule. The tirant of St Sam's had turned up on the chance that Dr. Birchemall might escape the clutches of Bounder & Co.—in which case, Dr. Crule intended to take steps to deal with the rebbel himself!

But nobody in the least like Dr. Birchemall turned out for the Masters, so Dr. Crule's vigil was in vain.

In the usual way everybody would have felt grately disappointed at the absence of the Head. But this time there was a new attraction that soon made them forget all about Dr. Birchemall. That attraction was the Kaffir Krickot King! The crowd were soon larfing fit to bust over the commical antiks of this weerd krieketer.

Meerly to look at him was enuff to make a cat larf. He was as black as soot all over, even to his flannels, and he wore a black beard pasted in the middle and pulled round his ears and tied in a not on the top of his head! And when he played, the crowd faroly roared. His fondness for blind swiping and his habit of ignoring the decisions of the umpire reminded them of Dr. Birchemall himself!

Even Dr. Crule smiled sourly at his commical capers and remained watching till the end of the game. But as soon as the Boys had beaten the Masters by an innings and nine wickets, he remembered Dr. Birchemall again, and returned to find out whether his Sixth Form allies had been suxxessful.

The answer was in the negative. Bounder & Co. hadn't seen a sign of the rebbel Head. When Dr. Crule went out into the quad. again, he larned the reason why. There at the Head's winder was the Kaffir Kricket King, calmly rubbing off the soot from his dial to reveal the grinning face of the rebbel himself! Dr. Crule farely nashed his teeth with rage at the sight, and his fizz became simply feendish as Dr. Birchemall spotted him and larfed.

"Jevver get left?" chortled Dr. Birchemall.

And Dr. Crule had to konfess to himself that he had been left badly—thanks to the Head's Little Ruse!

(More larks in next week's "stirring" story—"Backing Up Birchemall!"—Ed.)

TOM REDWING describes

AMAZING SCOUT PAGEANT DUST-UP

The big crowds that turned up on Little Side last Tuesday to watch the Greyfriars Scout Pageant were treated to an unrehearsed turn that proved the hit of the day.

The star act of the programme was an attack by Redskins (played by Upper Fourth chaps) on a party of settlers (played by Removites). It had been carefully planned beforehand. Both sides had been trained to stage a most realistic fight, at the end of which the settlers were to put the Redskins to flight.

All went according to programme at first. The settlers came out of their dressing-tent near the cricket pavilion and pitched their camp in the middle of Little Side. Sentries were posted, and the rest of the camp "retired." Then came the sound of war-whoops from the direction of the Redskins' dressing-tent, which was hidden among the trees beyond the playing-fields. The Redskins appeared in full war-paint, waving tomahawks and bowie-knives. The alarm was sounded in the camp of the pale-faces and the fight began.

This was all in order and just as advertised on the programme. It was a most thrilling spectacle, and no one could have wished for a fiercer fight—both sides fought as if they really meant it!

Where the unrehearsed act came in was at the end of the fight. The programme said that the Redskins would be defeated, but when the time came for them to be defeated, they obstinately refused to accept defeat!

When the crowds realised the battle was going on after its due time, they saw the funny side of it. Cheers changed to laughs. Soon they were all roaring.

Eventually, the Redskins, who outnumbered the settlers by two to one, overran the camp and started roping up the gallant defenders. All this was accompanied by fighting of such violence that there was soon no doubt left that that it was real scrapping, and not the sham variety that had been arranged!

The Scouts who were not taking part in the act were staggered at first. The question they were all asking was, what had caused Temple and his men to ruin the act like this? At last, when it had got really serious and the Redskins seemed to have won the day, Tom Brown decided to make a move. He quickly collected together all the men he could find and led them to battle with the victors!

And when the battle had been fought and won, the Greyfriars Scouts saw why the Redskins had acted as they had.

They were not Greyfriars men at all, but Courtfield School kids, led by Dick Trumper. While the crowd had been occupied with the rest of the Scout Pageant, Trumper and his followers had attacked the Upper Fourth chaps in their dressing-tent, tied them all up, and donned their Redskin costumes!

It was a great jape on their part, and to a large extent it succeeded. But, thanks to Tom Brown, Greyfriars had the last laugh after all!

We can hardly credit the rumour that whenever Third Formers see Coker they run for their lives.

To us, it sounds an awful lot of "bunk"!

LORD MAULEVERER asks

WHY NOT PEDESTRIAN CROSSINGS FOR GREYFRIARS?

I'm going to ask the sportsmen who arrange things here if we can't start pedestrian crossings at Greyfriars.

There was a time, dear men, when a chappie could cross the quad. fairly safely. How the old place has changed!

A journey from the School House to the gates now is fraught with perils beside which the perils of a journey through a tropical forest pales into insignificance. (Phew! One more sentence like that and I shall be laid out!) To begin with, there are savage tripe-hounds, searching for fellows' trousers to try their teeth in. Then there are frenzied fags knocking cricket balls about in the most furious fashion.

There are cyclists, seeking, seemingly, to swell the sanny's sick-lists. There are podgy porkers prowling for pounds and promising postal-orders. (Chuck it, Mauly! If you don't mind your p's and q's we shall run out of p's and s's!—Ed.)

I'd better not mention dear old Coker and that champion chicken-slayer he calls a motor-bike, or I shall start getting worked up! I think I've said enough already, anyway, to convince any rational sportsman that pedestrian crossings that will keep out dogs, fags, hard-ups, and knock-downs are badly needed in the quad at Greyfriars.

So get busy, old beans! Let's stop making pedestrians cross—by making pedestrian crossings!

(Mauly's taken like this occasionally, chaps—usually when someone has stopped him snoozing!—Ed.)

"MONSTER" OF POPPER ISLAND

By FRANK NUGENT

But for the Famous Five chancing to have a boat out on the Sark last Wednesday, another "monster" legend as powerful as the Loch Ness one might have started. We were just in time to nip it in the bud!

Judging by the terror on Dupont's face when we ran into him rowing furiously away from Popper's Island, you'd have thought he'd seen a brontosaurus, at least!

"Mon dieu!" he gasped. "Keep away from ze islands, my friends! Somezing terrible ees zere—up in ze trees. I 'eard it—a monstaire or somezing——"

It appeared that he had gone to the island with Bolsover, his study-mate, and Bolsy had gone off on his own, exploring. Shortly afterwards, Dupont had heard a rustling in the trees and a fearful bellowing such as might have been expected of some unheard-of monster of the air.

"O poor Bolsover, I 'ear nozzing more," concluded Dupont sadly. "Zee monstaire eat 'cem up, isn't it? Zat ees what I zink, an' so I row away alone!"

Of course, there was nothing for it but to investigate.

We did. And when we heard the fearful howling and hooting from somewhere up in the trees, just as Dupont had described it, we couldn't wonder at his being scared.

But when we found the cause of it, all fears vanished. It was only Bolsover. He has taken up singing recently, and the fit seized him to climb a tree and do his daily practice up amongst the branches!

That was all it was!

Answers to Correspondents

"CURIOUS" (Third).—"Is Lord Mauleverer ever rude?"

Certainly. Only yesterday we saw him poke out his tongue at the school doctor!

"SENIOR" (Fifth).—"You Remove kids ought to be made to eat your own words."

Some of us do, old sport! We just heard Bunter saying he'd written a hundred lines for a feed!

STRANGE, BUT TRUE!

Bunter has a short memory for visiting relatives, but there's one uncle he'll never forget.

That's the uncle who gave him nothing to remember him by!

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

Billy Bunter was swanking so loudly about the family crest of the Bunters that Skinner took the trouble to confront him with a reference volume in which the Bunter crest was not listed. Bunter replied that his family were too exclusive to be listed—but Removites agreed that the Bunters had rightly been "excluded"!

Piet Delarey has shown brilliant form with both bat and ball this season, "coming out of his shell" in trial games with a vengeance! Usually a quiet fellow, the South African member of the Remove is possibly inspired by the visit of the South African cricketers. Against St. Jim's he clean bowled Tom Merry!

Gosling has "hoisted" dozens of juniors in Hall for floggings in his time, but he says Skinner holds the record for kicking up a shindy! Skinner hacked three prefects on the shins when they tried to grasp him—and it was all Gosling could do to hold Skinner in position! A case of the "cat" for the "wild cat"!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

Smallest in stature of the Removites, Wun Lung, the Chinese junior, is sneered at by cads like Skinner & Co. They would have to get up very early in the morning to outwit the Chinee, however, as they discovered when, entering his study to "rag" his books, they brought down a carefully prepared "booby trap" on their heads!

William Wibley's running commentary of a Remove cricket match relayed through a microphone in the cricket pavilion, was a tremendous success, and the onlookers roared at Wib's humorous comments through the loud-speakers. When Temple, of the Upper Fourth, got a "duck," though, "Wib" sportingly refrained from commenting!

Piet Delarey, the South African junior, chums with George Bulstrode and Tom Brown, who hails from New Zealand. They are three of the heftiest fellows one could wish to meet—Tom Brown excelling at football and cricket, Bulstrode at wrestling, and Piet Delarey at boxing. Delarey hits hard—as a Colonial should!