

BILLY BUNTER and HARRY WHARTON & Co. in "SAVED FROM THE SACK!"
another sensational school adventure . . .

The Magnet ^{2^D}



Whip Behind!



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.

MOST of my readers are cine-goers, but I wonder how many of them realise that if it wasn't for coal there would probably be no cinemas? Surprises you, doesn't it? Here are a few interesting facts about

COAL IN THE CINEMAS.

Do you know that chemicals which are derived from coal are used in the development of films? This is not the only part which coal plays in cinemas, for the actual figures you see on the screen are lighted up with coal-derived carbon arcs. So, without coal, the cinemas would be in a bad way.

Coal is one of the most amazing things in the world. A Bradford reader has written, asking me how many things are actually derived from coal. Well, in addition to the above, here are a few particulars of some of the by-products of coal:

Ice is made from coal-derived ammonia; pencils come from graphite, which comes from coal; motor-cars are driven by benzole on tarred roads—and both benzol and tar comes from coal; perfumes are made from coal gas; heavy oil for driving ships is another by-product of coal—in fact, the list is almost inexhaustible. Actually, nearly two hundred different substances have been isolated from coal, and many more will be discovered in the future!

Would you believe it, chums? I've just been sent some particulars about

THE MAN WHO "SWALLOWS" HIS NOSE!

What's more, I've seen a photograph of the man actually doing it! Needless to say, he doesn't cut off his nose and swallow it completely, but he certainly gets nearer to that than anyone else. This particular man possesses an extremely prominent under lip, so much so that he can twist it right up and get his nose into his mouth. Like most of these "stuntists," he is an American. He is not the only man who can "swallow" his nose. A Japanese named Morimote performs the same trick. The American, however, claims that he is the only man with teeth who can manage it. Well, he's welcome to it, so far as I am concerned!

EVER heard of THE RAVEN OF DOOM.

chums! It's rather an interesting yarn. This particular raven is a bird of ill omen which haunted the former royal family of Austria. It is said to have shown itself just before every tragedy which occurred to members of that family. It appeared in 1889 before a crown prince committed suicide. Two years later, while the empress was eating a peach in the grounds of a hotel, the raven swooped down and stole the peach. An hour or two later the empress was murdered. When Maximilian, a son of the emperor, was asked to go to Mexico to become emperor there, the raven appeared before him the

evening before he left Vienna. Maximilian was executed by the Mexican republicans. The most famous appearance credited to the raven, however, is that it appeared to the Archduke Franz Ferdinand at Sarajevo in 1914, and the assassination of Ferdinand followed, which, incidentally, was the beginning of the Great War!

One of my Harrogate readers, who evidently likes pulling his chums' legs, sends me along this amusing

TUMBLER TRICK.

Put two tumblers about eighteen inches apart near the edge of a table, and stand your chum in front of them with a hand resting on each tumbler. Then ask him to pick up the two tumblers and reverse their positions, putting the right-hand one in the place of the one on the left, and vice versa, without crossing his arms!

You'll find his efforts to do this will be amusing, and he'll probably tell you that it's impossible. You then prove that it can be done. All you have to do is to stand with your back to the table, put your hands behind you, and pick up a tumbler in each hand. Then turn round until you face the table, and put the tumblers down again.

You will have reversed the positions of the tumblers without crossing your arms!

The same reader, after telling me the above trick, then tries to "pull my leg." He asks me if I can tell him which is

THE LIGHTEST SHIP AFLOAT!

The answer may surprise some of you. The lightest ship afloat is the French liner *Normandie*, which is the largest boat in the world. Seems amazing to call her "light"—until you realise that the electricity generated aboard this liner is sufficient to provide light, heat, and power to a city as large as Liverpool! She carries many more lights aboard her than any other vessel. Consequently she must, despite her tremendous weight, be the "lightest" vessel afloat!

Talking about lights, have you ever heard of

THE VOLCANO THAT SUPPORTS A TOWN?

In the province of Pisa, Italy, there is a town called Larderello, which is built on the sides of an active volcano. The commercially minded townfolk decided to make use of the volcano, and they promptly proceeded to harness it. The result is that they are able to get all their heat, power, and light from the volcano—and much more than they need themselves. They sell the surplus to other towns, with the result that they obtain so much money that they do not need to pay taxes or rates. Furthermore, borax is obtained from the "blow holes" of the volcano, and this, too, is sold. So the volcano is acting like a godfather to the town—until it gets annoyed about something! If that should happen—well, I don't think I'd like to live on a volcano, would you?

HOW do you fancy yourself at spelling, chums? Here's a way of taking down any fellow who prides himself on never making mistakes when it comes to spelling. It isn't a trick, but we might call it

A SPELLING PUZZLE!

Ask your chum to write down the following sentence:

"A harassed cobbler met an embarrassed pedlar in a cemetery, measuring with unparalleled ecstasy the symmetry of his uncle's ankles."

It's a bit of a mouthful to say, I admit, but it's a harder job to write it down. If anyone can do it without referring to a dictionary, then you can take it that they're "some" speller. But you'll be surprised at the number of people who flop badly when they try to spell some of the words. They won't boast about their spelling prowess afterwards, unless they've heard of the stunt before, and have swotted up the correct spelling.

Many more readers have written in asking me further questions about

SURNAMES AND THEIR MEANINGS,

so here is a further selection:

Somers is what is known as a "place name." It means that the original bearer of this surname came from St. Omer.

Sinclair is a similar name, and comes from St. Clair. **Sinkler** is another form of the same name.

Tolley came from the name **Bartholomew**. It is a shortened form of the second syllable.

Hancocks comes from the German and Flemish **Hans**, which is another form of **John**. So, strange as it may seem, this name is almost the same as **Johnson** and other names of that type. **Hankin** is another form of the same name.

Petifer comes from the word "foot," and means the man with the small foot. **Petifer** is another way of spelling the same name.

Menkman originally meant "the servant of the monk." **Priestman** is a similar name.

Packman was the name given to a wandering salesman. **Copeman** is derived from the same source.

I am afraid that is all the space I have at my disposal this week, so if your name has not yet appeared, keep a look-out, and I will do my best to publish it in due course.

In the meantime, I expect the principal question you want me to answer is: "What is in store for **MAGNET** readers next week?" Well, here goes. Topping the bill is—

"HARRY WHARTON WINS THROUGH!"

By Frank Richards,

which, incidentally, is the final story in our series dealing with the feud between Wharton and his rival and "double," **Ralph Stacey**. Bringing every ounce of cunning to bear, Stacey goes "all out" in an effort to "put paid" to his relation. But Wharton is white all through, and—but there, to divulge more of the plot would spoil the finest yarn Frank R. has ever penned. As a fitting wind-up to this popular series I have got our artist to do a special head and shoulders studio portrait of **Harry Wharton**. It will appear on the cover of next Saturday's issue of the **MAGNET**. This alone should induce my thousands of readers to place an early order for the **MAGNET**.

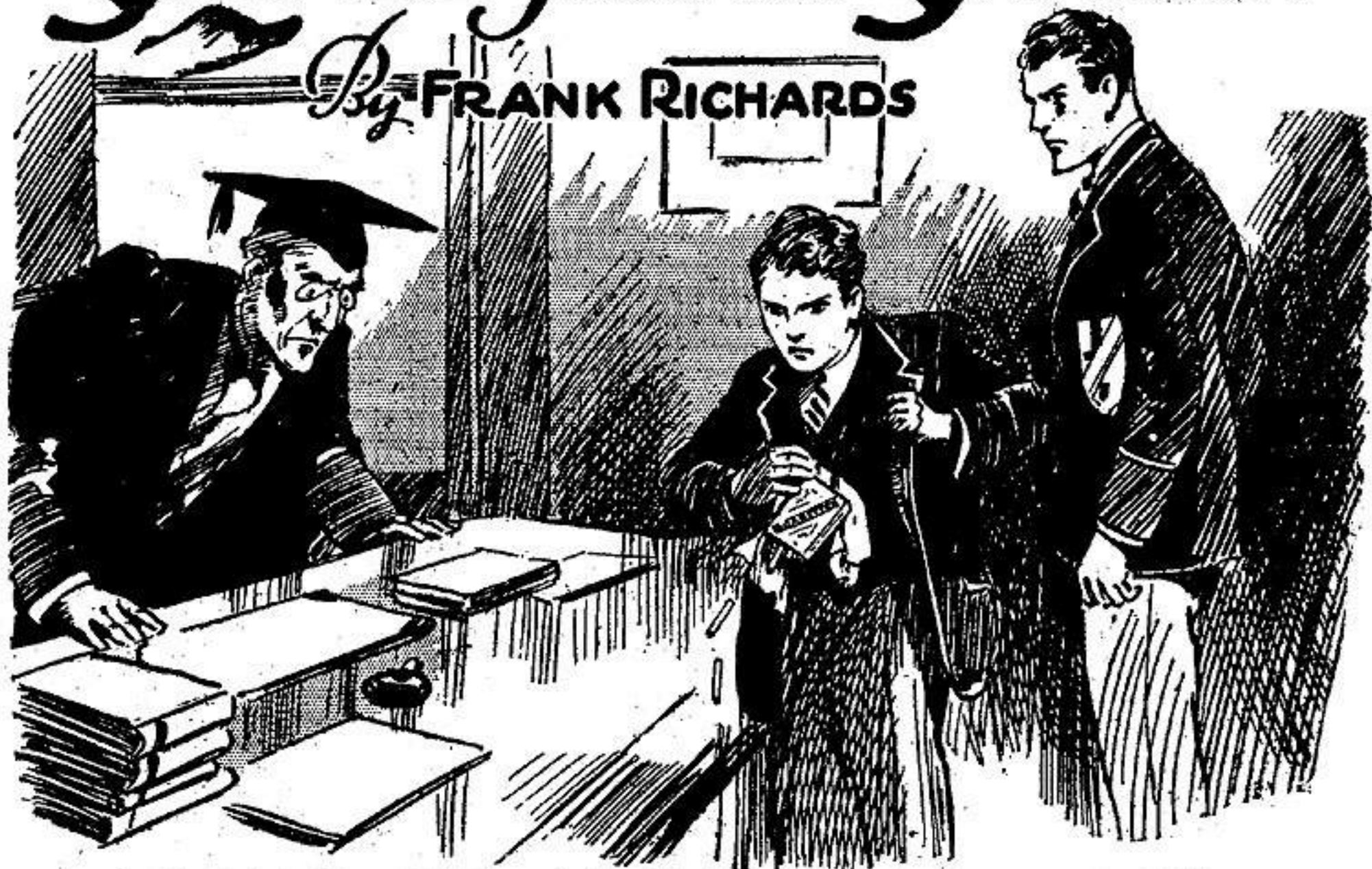
"**Moose Call!**" gets better and better every week, and there are more full-of-thrills chapters in store for you next Saturday. What's more, you will enjoy to the full the splendid "Greyfriars Herald" supplement, the Greyfriars Rhymer's special interview and another little chat with

Yours truly

THE EDITOR.

SAVED from the SACK!

By FRANK RICHARDS



—Featuring Harry Wharton & Co., the World-Famous Chums of Greyfriars.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Got Him!

"THAT sportsman looks excited!" remarked Bob Cherry.

Bob was right.

The "sportsman" did!

He appeared suddenly in the open gateway of Greyfriars School, and stood staring in.

Harry Wharton & Co., standing in a group near the gates after class, were discussing a matter now of great interest at Greyfriars—the coming holidays. But they forgot all about the holidays as they looked at the stranger in the gate.

He was a stout, red-faced gentleman of agricultural aspect. He wore gaiters, and carried a cart-whip in his hand. His face, naturally ruddy, was red with excitement and wrath, almost crimson. He stood and stared—or, rather, glared in—much to the surprise of the Greyfriars fellows. There was no reason why a farmer should not stop and look in if he liked—and if the manners and customs of Greyfriars interested him. But it was surprising to meet such a glare of concentrated wrath from him.

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter rolled up to the Famous Five. "I say, that's old Piker, from Piker's Farm—you know, where they have those lovely apples!"

"You've been pinching his apples?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Is he after Bunter?" grinned Frank Nugent. "He looks fearfully wrathful about something. If you've been snaffling his Ribston pippins, Bunter, you—"

"I haven't!" roared Bunter. "I

couldn't reach them over the fence—I mean, I'm not the chap to pinch apples, I hope! Nothing of the sort!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! He's coming in!" exclaimed Bob.

"Coming this way, too!" said Frank Nugent. "Look out, Bunter! Perhaps he saw you reaching over the fence, and didn't know that you weren't the chap to pinch apples—"

Give Ralph Stacey a chance to score over his rival and relative—Harry Wharton, of the Greyfriars Remove—and he seizes it as a hungry dog seizes a bone. His latest attempt to bring disgrace on the shoulders of his double is really the outside edge!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter gave the farmer a startled blink through his big spectacles. But he gave him only one blink! Then he flew.

Mr. Piker, of Piker's Farm, was striding in. He was grasping his cart-whip in quite a businesslike manner. His expression, which in its natural state was probably good-humoured, was now absolutely ferocious. And he was heading direct for the group of juniors.

That was enough for Bunter. Bunter headed for the House at a speed which showed that, in certain circumstances,

he had a chance for the school 100 yards.

The angry farmer twirled his cart-whip, and it whistled round the tightest pair of trousers at Greyfriars.

"Yaroooh!" yelled Bunter, his fat little legs moving like clockwork.

The Famous Five chuckled.

Gosling jumped out of his lodge. He stared at the visitor, and then hooted at him:

"Hi! You!"

Mr. Piker, of Piker's Farm, paid no heed to the ancient custodian of the gates of Greyfriars. He strode on, regardless.

Bunter vanished. But Mr. Piker did not seem interested in Bunter. He seemed interested in the Famous Five of the Remove—or, rather, in one member of that celebrated company. His glare concentrated on Harry Wharton as he came striding up.

Which was more surprising than ever, Billy Bunter might have been sampling the apples at Piker's Farm, but Harry Wharton certainly had not. He did not even know Mr. Piker by sight, and had no acquaintance whatever with his orchard. But though Wharton did not know Mr. Piker, it looked as if Mr. Piker knew Wharton. He stopped in front of him, glaring.

"Got you!" he snorted.

"Eh—what?" ejaculated Wharton, in surprise.

"You young raskil!"

"Wha-at?"

"It's you!" snorted Mr. Piker.

"My dear man," said Wharton, "I haven't been after your apples! I prefer my apples ripe!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,432.

"Who's talking about apples?" roared Mr. Piker.

Apparently, it was something more serious than apples that had brought Mr. Piker to Greyfriars that afternoon.

"Well, what's the row?" asked Harry.

"The rowfulness appears to be terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "Perhaps the esteemed and idiotic Piker will explain!"

"You!" roared Mr. Piker. "I see you! With my own eyes I see you! Got you!"

The next moment he had "got" Harry Wharton. There was no mistake about that, for he jumped at him and grasped him in a hand like a ham—a powerful hand that there was no resisting. In his other hand the cart-whip whistled. It came down on Wharton with a mighty smite.

Whack!
"Oh crumbs!" Wharton roared, and struggled fiercely. "Rescue, you men! Drag him off! Yaroooh!"

Whack! Whack!

The Co. seemed petrified for a moment. Whatever had happened at Piker's Farm—and it seemed that something serious must have happened—it was a high-handed and amazing proceeding for Mr. Piker to come up to the school with a cart-whip. He had only to lay a complaint before the headmaster, and leave the matter of punishment in that gentleman's capable hands.

Perhaps Mr. Piker was one of those persons who believe that, to have a thing well done, you must do it yourself. Anyhow, he was doing it, and he was doing it well!

Wharton was strong and sturdy, but he crumpled up in the farmer's muscular grip. He would have suffered severely from that cart-whip had not the Co., recovering from their astonishment, rushed to the rescue.

Three terrific whacks had already been administered. Mr. Piker was not satisfied with three; he yearned for more, like a tiger that had tasted blood. But he was interrupted.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent and Hurree Singh, grasped him all at once. By main force they dragged him away from Wharton.

Wharton tottered breathlessly.

"Ow! Oh! Ow!" he gasped, "Hold the old ass! Wow! Sit on him! Oh!"

It was not easy to hold the excited Mr. Piker.

Four juniors clung to him like cats; but he was a hefty and powerful man. He surged to and fro, the juniors clinging to him. Fortunately, he was not able to use his whip.

"Gerroff!" he roared. "Leggo! I've come here to thrash that young raskil! I'll thrash the lot of you! Gerroff!"

"Hold him!" gasped Bob.

"Pin him!" panted Johnny Bull.

The farmer struggled, and the juniors struggled. There was a roar in the Greyfriars quad. Fellows of all Forms came racing up from all sides. A swarming crowd surrounded the exciting scene.

"What's the row?"

"Who's that bargee?"

"What the thump—"

Wingate of the Sixth, captain of Greyfriars, came striding up, frowning with wrath. Such a scene in the school quad was unprecedented.

"What's this?" roared Wingate. "Stop this at once! Who's that man? Let him go! Do you hear?"

"I say, he's jolly dangerous!" gasped Nugent.

"Let him go at once!"

The Co. released Mr. Piker. He stood gasping for breath.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,432.

"Now, my man—" rapped Wingate.

Mr. Piker gave him a stare, and then a shove. Wingate, big Sixth Former as he was, staggered from that shove and sat down in the quad. Then Mr. Piker hurled himself at Wharton again.

Whack!

Mr. Piker got in only one whack this time. The Famous Five grasped him as one man. Vernon-Smith, Peter Todd, Tom Brown, and Squiff rushed in and grasped him, too. Coker of the Fifth lent a hand. Temple, Dabney, and Fry of the Fourth joined up. Other fellows would have grasped also, but there was no more grasping room.

In so many hands, even the muscular Mr. Piker was done. He struggled, he staggered, and he collapsed.

He struck the quad with a heavy bump and sprawled, and half a dozen fellows sat on him to keep him there. Under them, Mr. Piker heaved and panted. But he was hors de combat now. They sat on him, and sat tight—and Mr. Piker was heaving under them like a stormy sea as Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, came rustling up.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Startling Accusation!

MR. QUELCH gazed at the scene. The excited crowd of Greyfriars fellows made room for him to approach. He stood and gazed at the fellows who were sitting on Mr. Piker—and at such portions of Mr. Piker as were visible. Quelch seemed hardly able to believe his eyes. His lips were tightly set.

"Who—who—who is that man?" articulated the Remove master.

"Some escaped lunatic, I should think, sir!" said Coker. Coker was sitting on Mr. Piker's head, and muffled sounds of fury came from underneath him. "He's jolly dangerous! But we've got him safe."

"The safe-fulness is terrific!" gasped Hurree Jamset Ram Singh from his seat on Mr. Piker's heaving ribs.

Wingate staggered up breathlessly.

"I think it's Farmer Piker, sir!" he said. "Goodness knows why he has come here and kicked up a shindy! A very respectable man, I believe—"

"Release him!" yapped Mr. Quelch.

"Better keep him safe, sir!" suggested Coker. "He was laying about him with a big whip!"

"Release him immediately!" barked Mr. Quelch.

The juniors got off Mr. Piker. But Coker of the Fifth did not shift. Coker knew best—as he generally did. And he did not see taking orders from any Form-master but his own.

"You see, sir—" argued Coker.

"Do you hear me?" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir, I hear you all right!" assented Coker. "But I was going to say— Yarooooop!"

Coker had not really been going to say that. He said it quite unintentionally as he leaped into the air like a kangaroo.

"Yooooop!" roared Coker. "Wow! Yarooooop! I'm bitten! Whoo-hoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yow! Ow! Wow! I—I'm bitten—I— Oooogh! Ow!"

Mr. Piker sat up. The other fellows had got off, and Coker got off quite suddenly. Coker was bent almost double and wriggling like an eel. Mr. Piker, clearly, had tired of having Horace Coker sitting on his face, and he had taken quite efficacious measures to shift him.

"Wow!" roared Coker. "Ow! I say— Wow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cease that ridiculous noise, Coker!" yapped Mr. Quelch.

"Ow! I'm bitten—"

"Stand aside! Now, Mr. Piker—if your name is Piker—explain what this outrage means before I send for the police!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Piker heaved himself to his feet.

He had lost his whip and his hat, and he was untidy and dishevelled and breathless. But his wrath seemed as intense as ever, and he glared round for Wharton! Wharton was rubbing the places where the whip had whacked. He had not the faintest idea why Mr. Piker had attacked him—but for the moment he was thinking less of Mr. Piker's mysterious motives than of the damage Mr. Piker had done.

The Remove master planted himself directly in front of the angry farmer. Mr. Piker made an effort to calm himself. There were a hundred fellows round him now, all ready to collar him if he showed signs of violence. Mr. Piker hadn't a dog's chance, and he realised it.

"Now explain yourself!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"That young raskil!" gasped Mr. Piker. He pointed a forefinger at Harry Wharton. "That young villain, he—"

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!" gasped Harry.

"What have you done to this man?"

"Nothing, sir!"

"What?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Nothing! I've never seen him before that I know of!" gasped Wharton. "I don't know why he's pitched into me, unless he's mad."

"Gaw!" ejaculated Mr. Piker, staring at him. "He says he don't know! Gaw! Of all the young liars I've—"

Mr. Quelch's face set bitterly. He was not surprised that Wharton was the cause of this disgraceful scene—he was not surprised at anything in Wharton this term.

Was not Harry Wharton, once his trusted head boy, now the worst boy in the Remove—indeed, in the whole school?

Quelch, at least, had no doubt that he was.

And it was plain to other eyes as well as Quelch's that Mr. Piker was astonished and disgusted by the junior's denial.

The farmer was excited and angry; but it was obvious that he was an honest man, that he believed what he stated, and that he had some real cause for anger.

"Wharton," rumbled Mr. Quelch, "I command you to confess at once what you have done."

Wharton's face set stubbornly.

"I've done nothing!" he snapped.

"Mr. Piker, tell me what this boy has done. Nothing can excuse your action in coming here and acting violently," said Mr. Quelch severely, "but if you have just cause of complaint—"

"I came here to thrash him!" roared Mr. Piker. "I brought my whip along to give him a good hiding! Where's that blooming whip?"

"If the boy has deserved punishment, Mr. Piker, I shall deal with him as his Form-master—or, if the matter is very serious, his headmaster will deal with him!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "You will be allowed to exercise no violence here, sir! I warn you of that! Now tell me what he has done!"

"The young raskil—"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Wharton.

"Be silent, Wharton!"

"I'm not going to be called a rascal!" roared Wharton. "If the old donkey

thinks I've done anything let him say what it is."

"The young villain——"

"Such expressions are out of place here, Mr. Piker. Tell me at once what this boy has done."

"Set fire to my barn!" roared Mr. Piker.

"What!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Great pip!"

There were exclamations of amazement on all sides. Wharton's was the most amazed face of all. He fairly blinked at the farmer.

"Goodness gracious!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "It is possible? I can scarcely believe——"

He was looking for Ralph Stacey of the Remove—his "double."

He understood now—in a flash!

Mr. Piker evidently believed what he said. He believed that he had seen Harry Wharton smoking in his barn.

There was only one explanation, to Wharton's mind. It was one more of the incessant mistakes that had arisen that term through his having a double at the school. But Stacey was not to be seen in the surrounding crowd.

"You admit this, Wharton?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"No!" panted Wharton. "I've never been in Mr. Piker's barn—I've never been on his land at all——"

"Do not dare to be impertinent, Wharton! Have you been out of gates?"

"I have not."

"Was anyone with you in your study while you were writing lines?"

"Do fellows stick in a study on a July afternoon if they can help it?" snapped Wharton. "My friends were at the cricket till I came out."

Mr. Quelch's lip curled bitterly. It was clear that he did not believe the statement of the worst boy in his Form, that he had not been out of the gates since class.

"Send for Stacey and ask him whether he has been out of gates!"



Harry Wharton & Co. released Mr. Piker, as Wingate came striding up. "Now, my man——" rapped out the captain of Greyfriars. The farmer gave him a stare, and then a shove. Wingate, big Sixth Former as he was, staggered from that shove, and sat down in the quad. Bump!

"You like to come along and look at the ashes?" hooted Mr. Piker. "That there young raskil did it! I don't mean that he set it afire a-purpose! But what did he s'pose was going to happen, smoking cigarettes among a lot of dry straw? I ask you!"

"Smoking cigarettes!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"The man's mad!" said Harry Wharton, in sheer wonder. "I've never smoked cigarettes or anything else."

"Gaw! He says he ain't smoked cigarettes!" gasped Mr. Piker. "And I see him with my own eyes, I did! Sitting in my barn a-smoking like a young furnace, he was!"

"You—you saw him!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Jest as plain as I see you now!" roared Mr. Piker. "He's the boy. How'd I know him here if I hadn't seen him there? I ask you!"

"Oh!" exclaimed Wharton.

He stared swiftly round the crowd of Greyfriars fellows gazing on open-eyed.

"Gaw!" gasped Mr. Piker. "Hark at him!"

"You've made a mistake!" said Harry. "You saw another fellow——"

"Gaw! Ain't he a young raskil, a-lying like that?" exclaimed Mr. Piker. "I tell you, sir, I see him face to face not a hour ago. I comes along to that barn and hears somebody moving. I looks in, and there he was, smoking cigarettes! I gets after him, and he dodges, and I chases him off my land! Then I see that the barn is afire. He dropped the cigarette he was smoking in the straw when I chased him out of the barn! Somebody's got five pounds to pay for the damage! And I tell you——"

Mr. Quelch held up his hand.

"Do you deny this, Wharton?"

"Of course I do!" snapped Harry.

"Where have you been since class?"

"In my study, writing lines until a quarter of an hour ago. You don't often leave me without lines to write this term!" said Wharton savagely.

exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You've asked me! Now ask him!"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "I will not allow you to drag the name of my head boy into this disreputable affair Wharton!"

Wharton's eyes blazed.

"That man says that he recognised me! Let him see Stacey, and then hear what he says!"

"That's fair, sir!" ventured Bob Cherry.

"Take a hundred lines, Cherry!"

"Oh!"

"Look here, sir," exclaimed Johnny Bull, "if that man Piker saw Stacey in his barn——"

"Take a hundred lines, Bull!"

"Oh, put it down to me!" exclaimed Harry Wharton with savage bitterness. "I've got to answer for all that Stacey's done this term—pub-haunting and breaking bounds, and now smoking in a barn and setting it on fire! I've

never been anywhere near the man's barn—"

"Hark at him!" said Mr. Piker. "Jest hark!"

"You saw another fellow who looks like me, you fool!" shouted Wharton.

"Gaw! You making out you got a twin?" sneered Mr. Piker.

"Enough!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Mr. Piker, you shall place this matter before the headmaster. Come with me! Wharton, follow me! Dr. Locke shall decide whether you are a fit boy to remain in this school."

Mr. Piker, it was plain, would have preferred to handle Wharton personally. But the Remove-master drew him away towards the House. Harry Wharton, with a black brow, followed.

The crowd in the quadrangle was left in an excited buzz. It was the same old question that had caused trouble at Greyfriars all through the term—since Ralph Stacey had come to the school. One of the doubles of the Remove was a thorough young rascal—but which?

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Before the Beak!

"SEND for Stacey!"

"Dr. Locke!"

"Send for Stacey!" repeated the Head firmly.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips hard. It was not for him to argue the point with his chief, but never had he felt more disposed to do so.

In the Head's study, Mr. Piker stood—a little calmer now, awed by the majestic Head. He had told his tale—Harry Wharton standing silent while he told it. To Mr. Quelch the

tale was convincing enough. The man had seen Wharton face to face—now he identified him without hesitation. Harry Wharton's denial counted for nothing with his incensed Form-master. Fortunately for Wharton, it weighed more with the Head.

Dr. Locke was intensely irritated and annoyed. The strange case of the doubles of Greyfriars had given him plenty of worry that term. It was such a difficulty as he had never experienced before in his long career as a schoolmaster, and the Head, seldom at a loss, had to confess himself at a loss how to deal with it.

Certainly he wished that Stacey had never come to the school at all and caused this strange confusion. Probably he would have been relieved had the new junior left. But certainly he would not send him away—a boy who rejoiced in the high opinion and trust of his Form-master.

Neither could he send Harry Wharton away, unless the case against him was clearly made out. And a headmaster had to be just.

Until there was certainty on the disputed point he could do nothing. It was troublesome and irritating, but he was not the man to risk committing an injustice merely to save himself trouble.

"Kindly ring the bell for Trotter, Mr. Quelch," he said.

Suppressing his impatience, Mr. Quelch kindly rang the bell for Trotter. The House page, when he appeared, was sent to fetch Stacey of the Remove to the study.

The Remove-master gave Wharton a dark look. Wharton's eyes gleamed defiance in return. Both of them knew that when Stacey came, Mr. Piker, now so certain that the culprit

was Wharton, would be astonished and doubtful.

Lately Wharton had had a black eye, which had enabled fellows to pick out "which was which" easily enough. But that discoloured eye had been cured now—there was no trace of it left. Wharton could have wished that it still lingered. That would have made it impossible for Stacey to get away with trickery in this instance.

There was a tap at the door, and a junior entered—a junior so like Harry Wharton that Mr. Piker fairly gaped at the sight of him.

"Gaw!" ejaculated Mr. Piker. He stared at Stacey—then at Wharton—then at Stacey again! He rubbed his nose in bewilderment.

Stacey did not glance at him, and did not seem to observe that he was in the room at all. If, only an hour ago, Mr. Piker had been chasing Stacey off his land, there was nothing in the junior's manner to indicate anything of the kind. He stood respectfully before his headmaster's writing-table.

"You sent for me, sir?"

"Yes, Stacey!" said the Head, looking at him intently. "I must question you, my boy. Have you been out of gates since class in your Form-room?"

"Yes, sir!" answered Stacey. Wharton gave him a quick look. He had expected an answer in the negative.

"Did you go alone?"

"No, sir."

"Who was with you?"

"Russell and Ogilvy of my Form, sir."

Mr. Quelch's bleak face broke into a smile! Harry Wharton stared, dumb.

Ogilvy and Russell, who shared Study No. 3 in the Remove with Stacey, were friends of his—they liked him and trusted him. They were his stoutest champions in the Remove, and scouted scornfully the mere idea that he was a "black sheep." They were two of the most decent fellows in the Form, and certainly would not have been mixed up in such a matter as cigarette-smoking in a barn. If they had been with Stacey—

Dr. Locke's eyes turned on Wharton more grimly.

"You still deny that you were on Mr. Piker's land, Wharton?"

"Certainly I do, sir!" gasped Wharton. "And—and I don't believe that Ogilvy and Russell were with Stacey either. They're both decent chaps, and if they'd been with him, he'd never have dared—"

"Silence, Wharton!" barked Mr. Quelch. "It is fortunate, sir, that Stacey was not alone in his walk after class to-day. It proves beyond doubt that the culprit in this case is Wharton."

"It proves nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Wharton. "Dr. Locke will see justice done, sir, if you will not."

"Boy!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Silence, Wharton!" said the Head sternly. "How dare you even imply that your Form-master would treat you with anything but justice."

"I tell you, sir, Stacey is lying!" exclaimed Wharton passionately. "Mr. Piker never saw me on his land—so he must have seen Stacey! Nobody else could have been taken for me."

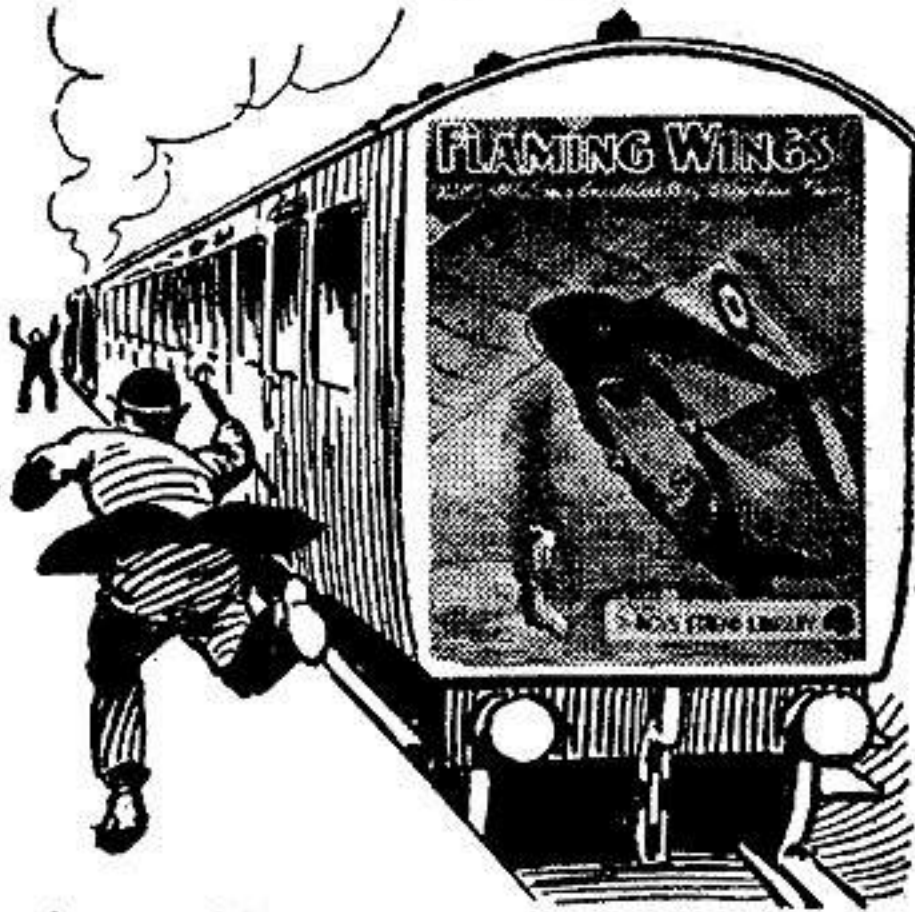
"Mr. Piker has identified you, Wharton!" snapped Quelch.

"Let him speak now—now that he can see both of us!" exclaimed Harry. "Mr. Piker, you are an honest man—look at us both and say whether you can tell Dr. Locke which of us was smoking in your barn."

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The farmer gazed at the two juniors, standing now side by side. He rubbed his chin and rubbed his nose, and blinked! It was evident that he was completely puzzled.

"Gaw!" he said. "Them two must be twins! It's no good—I can't undertake to say which it was! If I made a mistake, I'm sure I beg the young gentleman's pardon for laying my whip round him. How was I to know he had a twin? One of them was the boy—"

"You cannot say which?" asked Dr. Locke.

The farmer shook his head.

"Honest, sir, I can't!" he answered. "I thought it was that lad, that I laid my whip on, and if I was mistook, I'm sorry. Now that I see the other, I can't say, and that's the truth, sir."

"Have you seen this man before, Stacey?"

"No, sir."

Dr. Locke suppressed a sigh. It was a puzzle, and he was no nearer a solution than before. Mr. Quelch weighed in:

"You have heard Stacey's statement, sir, that he was not alone! Russell and Ogilvy, of my Form, went out with him."

"They will bear out your statement, Stacey?"

"Certainly, sir," said Stacey. "Why shouldn't they?"

"Will you send for them, sir?" exclaimed Wharton.

"It is quite unnecessary, sir!" said Mr. Quelch.

The Head paused. It seemed impossible that any fellow could have made a statement so easily put to the test, unless it was true. But the Head was there to administer strict justice.

"I will send for them," he said.

And Trotter was summoned again and sent for Russell and Ogilvy. In a few minutes those two youths arrived.

"Russell, Ogilvy," said Dr. Locke. "Stacey states that you went out with him after class to-day. I desire to know whether you corroborate the statement?"

"Yes, sir!" said Russell.

"Certainly, sir!" said Ogilvy.

Harry Wharton could only stare at them. He felt as if his head was turning round. Mr. Quelch's voice came, cutting the tense atmosphere like a knife.

"The matter is settled now, sir, beyond a doubt. Wharton is guilty!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Not Proven!

HARRY WHARTON stood dumb. He had not been out of gates. He had been in Study No. 1, in the Remove, wearily writing lines, ever since class, till a short time ago. Seldom a day passed, this troubled term, without some such punishment falling upon him. His Form-master distrusted him, and he repaid distrust with sullen defiance; and there were faults on both sides. Naturally, no one had been in the study with him—his friends had gone down to the cricket, leaving him to get through by tea-time.

But there was nothing to prove that he had not left the study and gone out of gates. He might easily have done so unobserved. Indeed, if he was the black sheep he was supposed to be, it was very probable that he had.

Dr. Locke's brow was growing sterner and sterner. Mr. Quelch, already long ago convinced, only waited for sentence to be pronounced.

"Have you anything to say now, Wharton?" asked the Head icily.

Wharton tried to pull himself together. It was—it must have been—Stacey whom Mr. Piker had seen in his barn. No one else in the wide world could have been mistaken for Harry Wharton. He had not believed that Russell and Ogilvy had been with the fellow—now he had to believe it. He tried to think.

"What can the wretched boy say, sir?" said Mr. Quelch. "He is now at the end of his subterfuges."

Wharton's eyes flashed at him. The words stung him like the lash of a whip. Russell and Ogilvy were looking at him contemptuously. Their view was that he was trying to put some of his misdeeds on his double, as they believed he had done before. He did not heed them.

"If you have nothing to say, Wharton—" came the Head's deep voice.

"What I've said is true, sir!" panted Harry.

"Do you cast doubt on the evidence of these two boys of your Form?" asked the Head sternly.

"No. I know they'd tell the truth. But—but they can't have been with Stacey—"

"They have said so."

"Then they can't have been with him all the time, sir!" exclaimed Wharton, a light breaking on his mind. "Ask them whether they were with Stacey all the time he was out of gates."

"This boy's endless prevarications, sir—" began Mr. Quelch.

"One moment, Mr. Quelch. I shall certainly put the question to these boys," said Dr. Locke quietly. "No shadow of doubt must remain before such a punishment as expulsion is inflicted. Russell, Ogilvy, did you remain with Stacey all the time after you went out of gates until he came back to the school?"

Stacey's face set a little.

"Oh, no, sir!" said Russell. "We walked down Friardale Lane with Stacey, but he didn't go all the way to the village with us."

Wharton could almost have laughed. It was simple enough, after all. Stacey had hoped to get through without that point being raised. A very perceptible change came over Dr. Locke's face.

"Did both of you leave Stacey in the lane?"

"Yes, sir," said Ogilvy. "We were going down to Uncle Clegg's in the village, and Stacey went over to Pegg."

"Then you were not with Stacey while he was out of gates, except for a short time!" exclaimed the Head. "Stacey, I understood from what you said that these boys were with you all the time."

"I did not say so, sir," answered Stacey calmly. "You asked me if I went out alone, sir, and I told you that Russell and Ogilvy went with me."

"That is true, certainly," said Dr. Locke. "But I had the impression—However—" He paused and drummed on the table with his fingers.

Wharton breathed more freely.

He knew now why Stacey had admitted that he was out of gates—because two fellows in the Remove knew. And he knew that the trickster had intended to give the Head the impression that his friends had been with him all the time. It seemed to him, too, that Dr. Locke had the same suspicion. His look at Stacey's face was very keen and searching.

"Where did you go, Stacey, after you left your friends?"

"I walked down to Pegg, sir, to look at the ship in the bay."

"Did you go to Mr. Piker's farm?"

"No, sir."

The Head was silent again. From Friardale Lane it was hardly more than a step to Piker's Farm. That Stacey had not gone there, rested only on his own assertion. His assertion, convincing

to Mr. Quelch, weighed no more with the Head than Wharton's.

Dr. Locke made a sign to Russell and Ogilvy to leave the study. The door closed on them.

There was silence in the study. Mr. Piker was still blinking in a bewildered way at the two juniors—either of whom might have been the mirrored reflection of the other. Evidently he was trying to make up his mind which of them he had seen on his land, and was in a state of hopeless doubt. Dr. Locke turned his eyes on him.

"You cannot positively identify either of these boys, Mr. Piker?"

"Honest, sir, I can't," answered the farmer.

"You will realise that neither can be punished for what has happened if the culprit cannot be identified."

Mr. Quelch set his lips in a tight line. He knew what was coming now—no sentence for the junior he firmly believed to be guilty.

Mr. Piker scratched his head, perplexed.

"I s'pose you're right, sir," he admitted. "And I'm sorry if I've laid my whip round the wrong boy, sir. But setting fire to a man's barn—"

"Then—" said the Head.

"But the damage will have to be paid for, sir," said Mr. Piker, with returning signs of excitement. "It won't be under five pound, sir, and I can't afford to lose it."

"The damage will certainly be paid for, Mr. Piker," said the Head. "As it happens, the same gentleman is responsible for both of these boys, and whichever of them did the damage, Colonel Wharton will make it good."

"That's all right, fur as it goes, sir," assented Mr. Piker. "But one of them young raskils wants a thrashing, sir—I do say that."

And Mr. Piker took his hat and went to the door. He gave a final glance back at the doubles of Greyfriars, shook his head hopelessly, and went out.

"Is this matter to remain in doubt, sir?" asked Mr. Quelch, when the perplexed farmer was gone.

"I see no alternative," answered the Head quietly. "One of these boys is deceiving you, and deceiving me—I cannot undertake to say which. Your high opinion of Stacey weighs, of course, very much with me—but I cannot forget, sir, that you had an equally high opinion of Wharton before his relative came to this school. But—"

There was a long pause.

"But," resumed the Head in the same quiet tone, "this state of affairs cannot continue indefinitely. I shall request Colonel Wharton to come heré and judge between these boys—one his nephew, the other a distant relative. One of them must leave the school at the end of this term and not return the following term. I cannot expel a boy without absolute proof. But I cannot allow this preposterous state of affairs to be renewed next term. Colonel Wharton must find another school for one of them after the holidays. It is for him to decide."

Harry Wharton felt his heart sink. If his uncle stood by him, all would be well. Stacey would be gone, and his troubles at an end. But—

"Wharton, Stacey, you may go," said the Head.

They left the study, leaving their Form-master with Dr. Locke. In the corridor they looked at one another—Wharton with a grim, knitted brow, and Stacey with a mocking smile on his face.

"A narrow escape—for one of us!" drawled Stacey.

"You cur!" breathed Wharton. "You plotting rat! You dare not tell the

Head the truth, but haven't you the decency to tell my uncle—"

Stacey laughed and walked away. Harry Wharton clenched his hands—but he unclenched them again. What was the use of a row? It would only put him more in the wrong than ever.

He tramped out savagely into the quad.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Study Row!

FISHER T. FISH snorted.

He was annoyed.

The business man of the Remove was busy in Study No. 14, when there was a tramp of feet in the passage, and the door was hurled open.

The Famous Five appeared in the doorway. Johnny Bull had a parcel under his arm.

As it was tea-time, Fishy really ought not to have been surprised by the fact that Johnny had arrived in his own study to tea, and brought his friends with him. But Fishy, as aforesaid, was busy.

Fisher T. Fish's favourite occupation was counting his money. That was how he was occupied now.

The end of the term being near, it was a matter of great interest to Fishy to ascertain exactly how he stood financially. It was one of Fishy's businesslike customs to make small sums by lending shillings and half-crowns among the fags at a penny or twopence a week interest. He had been caned for it by his Form-master, and kicked for it by his fellow Removites. But there was no stopping Fishy for long—the prospect of a profit had an irresistible attraction for the oute, spry youth from New York.

Deep in financial matters, Fishy did not like being interrupted. He glared at the juniors in the doorway.

"Git!" he suggested.

"We've come in to tea, fathead!" answered Johnny Bull.

"Look hyer!" yapped Fisher T. Fish. "Can't you tea in Study No. 1, as you generally do? Or in Cherry's study? I'm busy."

"The busyfulness appears to be terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a dusky grin at the study table.

Fishy's financial resources were set out on that table. There were a dozen little heaps of coppers, several heaps of shillings and half-crowns, two or three ten-shilling notes, a pound note, and, under a paper-weight for safety, a five-pound note. Fishy evidently was better "fixed" financially than most fellows in the Lower Fourth.

"Whose money is that?" asked Bob Cherry.

Fishy glared.

"Mine!" he hooted.

"Shylock!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I guess—"

"Worm!" remarked Harry Wharton.

"You mind your own bizney, Wharton!" snapped Fisher T. Fish. "You ain't head boy of the Remove now, and you ain't got no call to horn in—see?"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders. Stacey was head boy now, and it was up to him to see that Fishy did not carry on his moneylending business. Judging by the little piles of cash on Fishy's table, he had done well out of that peculiar business during the term. And Stacey had not bothered him.

"Well, clear that table," said Johnny Bull. "We want it for tea."

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"I guess you can hop along to another study," yapped Fisher T. Fish. "Can't you see I'm busy?"

"Let's get out!" said Harry.

Johnny Bull gave an angry grunt. He was standing the spread on this occasion, and naturally he was going to stand it in his own study.

"Rot!" he snapped. "This is my study, isn't it? We've come here to tea, and we're staying here to tea. Shift that rubbish, Fishy."

"Rubbish!" repeated Fisher T. Fish. He was accustomed to the boneheadedness of the old country. But for a fellow to describe money as rubbish seemed to Fishy the limit, even in British boneheadedness.

"You pesky piecan—"

"Are you shifting it?"

"Nope!" roared Fisher T. Fish angrily. "Ain't I in the middle of my accounts? You beat it along the passage!"

"I say, you fellows!" Billy Bunter blinked in at the doorway through his big spectacles. "I say, I've been looking for you! I was going to ask you fellows to tea in my study; only I've been disappointed about a postal order—"

"Scat!"

"But, look here!" said Bunter. "If you like, I'll come to tea with you today, and you can tea with me tomorrow instead. My postal order will be here in the morning. I say— Oh crikey!" Bunter broke off as his eyes and his spectacles fixed on the little piles of money on the table. "I—I say, Fishy, old chap, is all that yours?"

"Yep!" grunted Fishy. "And I guess it's going to stay mine."

"I give you two minutes to clear the table," said Johnny Bull. He set his parcel down on a chair, and began to unpack. "One of you fellows cut off and fill the kettle. The spirit stove's in the cupboard."

At a tea-party in a Remove study every fellow lent a hand. While Johnny unpacked the good things he had brought in from the tuckshop, Frank Nugent took the kettle to fill at the tap in the passage. Harry Wharton sorted out the spirit stove for boiling the same, and Bob Cherry disinterred a bottle of methylated spirit from the coal-locker; and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh handled the crockery from the cupboard.

Fishy regarded those preparations with a baleful eye.

It was frightfully annoying for a guy in the middle of important accounts to be interrupted and bothered like this. Fishy had been enjoying those accounts. He loved to gloat over little piles of cash. And the five-pound note under the paper-weight was a thing of beauty, and a joy for ever, in the eyes of Fisher T. Fish.

Billy Bunter blinked at the cash with equal interest.

But it was not the same kind of interest as Fishy's. Fishy loved money for its own sake. Bunter regarded it simply as a useful means to an end—the end being tuck. Bunter, when he had money, never kept it long. Fishy kept it as long as he could. He hated parting with it, even for value received.

"I say, Fishy—" murmured Bunter.

"Park it!" snapped Fishy.

"I told you I was expecting a postal order, old chap—"

"Pack it up!"

"It's bound to come to-morrow morning," explained Bunter. "It's from one of my titled relations, old fellow."

"Swallow it!"

"Well, look here, old chap! You lend me that fiver—"

"Forget it!"

"I don't mind paying interest on it," said Bunter eagerly. "Any interest you like, old fellow."

Fisher T. Fish snorted. That sounded like a good offer; but not to the businessman of the Remove. He did not want William George Bunter on his list of clients. Both the loan and the interest would have to wait till Bunter received his celebrated and long-expected postal order. That was altogether too distant a prospect for a businesslike man like Fishy.

"Is it a go?" asked Bunter, stretching out a fat hand towards the five-pound note.

His little round eyes were almost popping through his big round spectacles at that banknote. The amount of tuck it represented dazzled Bunter.

Rap!

Fisher T. Fish grabbed up a ruler, and brought it down with a sharp rap across a set of fat knuckles.

"Yooop!" roared Bunter.

The fat hand was withdrawn quickly. Billy Bunter sucked his damaged knuckles, and glared at Fisher T. Fish with a glare that almost cracked his spectacles.

"Ow! Beast! Wow!" roared Bunter.

"You keep your paws off my spondulics!" snapped Fishy.

"Ow! Beast! Shylock!" howled Bunter. "Wow! Think I'd touch your rotten money that you make by moneylending, you rotter? I'm a bit more—wow!—particular than that—Ow! Beast!"

Bunter sucked his fat knuckles frantically. That sharp rap from the ruler had hurt.

"Now, then!" Johnny Bull came towards the table. "Time's up, Fishy!" Fishy glared at him.

"Ain't I told you to beat it, and leave off interrupting a guy?" he howled. "I guess I'm using this hyer table, and I reckon— Oh, wake snakes! Jerusalem crickets! Stop it, you slabsided jay!"

Johnny Bull grasped the end of the table, and tilted it up. The contents of the table-top shot off in a shower.

Coppers and silver, pound note and ten-shilling notes, and five-pound note were scattered far and wide over the study carpet.

Fishy gave a yell of fury and dismay. The money, of course, could be picked up again. But a penny or a sixpence might have rolled into some inaccessible spot. And the loss of a penny would have given the business man of the Remove a severe pain.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter.

"You pesky mugwump!" roared Fisher T. Fish, jumping up from his chair. "Look what you've done! All my spondulics—"

Fisher T. Fish was not, as a rule, a fighting man. There was no sort of a profit in scrapping. But the worm will turn, and there was no doubt that Fishy was rather a worm. Fishy's fury boiled over. He made a jump at Johnny Bull, clutched him, and got his head into chancery.

Thump, thump, thump, thump!

"Whooo-hoop!" roared Johnny, struggling.

Frank Nugent came back with the filled kettle. He stared at the wild scene in Study No. 14.

"What the dickens—" he ejaculated.

Thump, thump!

"Stop them!" gasped Harry Wharton.

The juniors rushed to separate the combatants. Billy Bunter blinked at them and grinned. Then his eyes fell



"Look here, old chap, you lend me that fiver," said Bunter, stretching out a hand towards the five-pound note. Rap! Fisher T. Fish grabbed up a ruler, and brought it down with a sharp rap across a set of fat knuckles. "Yooop!" roared Bunter, withdrawing his fat hand quickly.

on the five-pound note lying almost at his feet.

He stooped and picked it up.

He chuckled a fat chuckle.

Bunter, of course, had no felonious designs on that fiver. Nobody's tuck was safe from Bunter, but he would no more have pinched a fellow's cash than he would have held up a bank. Even Bunter understood the difference between "meum" and "tuum" when it came to cash.

The bright idea in Bunter's fat mind was to punish Fishy for that rap on his fat knuckles by making him think that his fiver was lost.

Such a blow would hit Fishy where he lived, as he would have expressed it in his own language. It would cause him days of anguish and nights of sleepless woe! And serve him jolly well right!

Bunter, with the crumpled banknote in his fat hand, blinked round the study. Nobody was heeding him at the moment. Johnny Bull and Fisher T. Fish were punching one another frantically, and Wharton, Nugent, Bob, and Hurree Singh were grabbing at both of them to drag them apart.

The fat Owl of the Remove stepped to the book-shelf. Among the dozen or so volumes there, was one entitled "The Goodness of George."

It was a beautiful gilt-volume, presented to Johnny Bull by his affectionate aunt, Miss Bull, who was, like many kind old ladies, totally unacquainted with boyish tastes in literature.

Johnny, needless to say, had never even opened it.

It adorned the book-shelf unread. Fellows would borrow one another's "Holiday Annuals" till the volumes were dog-eared, but nobody had ever wanted to borrow that beautiful gilt

volume. Neither Johnny Bull nor any other fellow in the Remove was interested in the goodness of George!

Bunter cheerfully slipped the fiver between the pages of that volume, and left it there.

Then he stood leaning on the book-shelf, surveying the struggle in the study with a fat grin—looking forward with happy anticipation to Fishy's fury and dismay when he failed to find his fiver on the floor.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Fearful for Fishy!

"O W, let up, you guys!" howled Fisher T. Fish.

"Leggo!" roared Johnny Bull.

The combatants had been dragged apart.

Harry Wharton had Fishy by the back of the neck. Bob and Frank and Hurree Singh were holding back Johnny.

Johnny needed more holding back than Fishy did!

His nose was spurting red, and his eyes gleamed with the light of battle. Fishy's attack had taken him rather by surprise, and some damage was done. But Johnny had put in a few hefty punches, which had caused Fishy's warlike ardour to evaporate. While Johnny was burning for the fray, Fishy had cooled down. Johnny wanted more, and Fishy felt as if he had had too much already.

"Let me get at him!" howled Johnny. "I'm going to smash him up! Look at my nose!"

"You pesky jay!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Let up, I'm telling you! Look at all my spondulics, all over the dog-goned floor!"

"Chuck it, old man!" said Bob Cherry soothingly.

"The chuckfulness is the proper caper, my esteemed and idiotic Johnny," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You guys help me collect them spondulics!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "If any of them spondulics get lost, I guess you'll have to make it good."

Johnny dabbed his nose with his handkerchief. But he calmed down, and his friends released him.

"I've a jolly good mind—" he growled.

"What about tea?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, all right!" grunted Johnny.

Fisher T. Fish was already on his hands and his bony knees, grabbing up scattered cash.

"I say, you fellows, let's have tea," said Billy Bunter. "I say, if you've got sosses there, I'll cook them for you."

"Go it, fatty!"

"I'm telling you guys, you help me find my spondulics!" howled Fisher T. Fish, in great excitement.

"Go and eat coke!"

"I guess—"

"Guess again!"

"I'll tell a man—"

"Shut up!"

As a hint to Fishy that his conversation was superfluous, Bob Cherry reached out with his foot. Fishy, on his hands and knees, was well placed to take the hint.

Thud!

"Yarooop!"

"Now ring off!" said Bob.

Fisher T. Fish, breathless with fury, rang off. While Bunter, grinning, cooked sausages, and Nugent boiled eggs, and Bob sliced bread-and-butter, the junior from New York scuffled over the carpet, collecting notes and coins.

The pound and the ten-shilling notes
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were duly collected. Coppers and silver were gathered up and arranged in little piles on the window-sill for counting. But one article was still missing—the five-pound note!

Fishy was not, however, alarmed as yet. Obviously, the five-pound note was still in the study, and only needed further search.

Having recovered the rest of his wealth, Fisher T. Fish proceeded to make further search for the fiver.

By that time the juniors were sitting round the table at tea. They wanted their tea, having healthy youthful appetites, and did not waste any attention on Fisher T. Fish, scuffling and scrambling over the floor. Only Bunter, every now and then, gave him a sly blink, and grinned.

Fishy searched and searched.

It was a warm July afternoon, and Fish, scrambling about the study bent double, was soon hot and perspiring.

He did not, naturally, think of looking inside a book on the book-shelf. By no possibility could a banknote have fallen in such a spot!

He came to the table at last. Six fellows sitting round it filled up all the space.

"Shift, you guys!" yapped Fishy.

"Go and eat coke!" answered Johnny Bull.

"My banknote's under that table!" howled Fishy. "I've searched everywhere else, so it must be under the table! Shift, and let a guy look!"

"Look, and be blowed!" grunted Johnny.

"Shift, I'm telling you!"

"Shut up!"

Fisher T. Fish breathed hard. But he was not disposed for more war! He insinuated his bony form between two chairs and squeezed under the table, to search amid innumerable feet.

"Ow!" he yelled suddenly.

"What on earth's the matter?" exclaimed Harry.

"Yow-ow! Some doggoned guy kicked me on my year!" yelled Fishy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess——" shrieked Fishy.

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. And he landed out again with a foot.

"Yarooop!"

"Here, look out!" roared Bob Cherry, as the table heaved and the crockery began to dance.

The tea-party jumped up and grasped the edges of the table to save it. Fisher T. Fish crawled out with a red, dusty, furious face. He rubbed his bony chin, where Bunter's second lunge had landed.

"I guess——" he roared.

"Look here, we're fed up with you and your putrid money!" shouted Johnny Bull. "Collar him, you fellows, and bump him!"

"I guess I got to find that fiver!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish. "You galoots figure that I'm leaving a fiver lying around loose?"

"Oh, shift the table!" said Harry Wharton.

The juniors shifted the table aside. They sat down to tea again, leaving the space where the table had stood clear for Fishy to search.

He searched—in vain!

He rose to his feet at last, and fixed his cold, fishy eyes on the tea-party, with a deadly glitter in them.

"Say, you pesky guys——" began Fishy.

"Shut up!"

"I guess I want that fiver."

"Look for it, then."

"I'll say I've looked everywhere for that fiver!" said Fisher T. Fish savagely. "And I'll mention that it

ain't to be found! And I guess I want the guy that's pinched it to hand it over!"

"WHAT!"

The tea-party fairly glared at Fisher T. Fish. Hitherto they had regarded Fishy's frantic search for his scattered wealth as rather funny, but at that unexpected accusation the matter ceased to be funny on the spot.

"Don't I speak plain?" howled Fisher T. Fish. "I've got the rest, but I ain't got the fiver. That fiver fell on the floor, and it ain't on the floor now. One of you pesky jays has picked it up, and I'm telling you if you figure you can pinch my fiver, you got another guess coming!"

"Why, you—you—you——" gasped Wharton.

"Smash him!" roared Johnny Bull.

As one man the Famous Five rushed at Fisher T. Fish. They grasped him all together, swept him off his feet, and bumped him on the floor.

Fisher T. Fish yelled wildly.

Bump!

"Yarooop!"

"Now chuck him out!" shouted Johnny Bull.

"He, he, he!" chortled Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I'll open the door! He, he, he!"

Bunter opened the door wide. Fisher T. Fish, struggling and wriggling like an eel in five pairs of hands, was hurled forth.

There was a crash in the passage.

Slam!

"Yurrrrgh!" spluttered Fisher T. Fish. For several moments he lay gasping on the passage floor; then he scrambled up, tore open the door of Study No. 14, and glared furiously into the study.

"Look here——" he yelled.

Johnny Bull grabbed the loaf from the table and hurled it with deadly aim; it thudded on Fisher T. Fish's long, sharp nose.

"Wurrrrrrgh!" spluttered Fisher T. Fish.

He staggered back into the passage. That long, thin nose felt as if it had been driven through the back of his bony head. He clasped both hands to it and moaned with anguish.

"Look in again, and you'll get the jampot next!" roared Johnny Bull, and he slammed the door.

Fisher T. Fish did not look in again; he did not want the jampot! The party in Study No. 14 finished their tea in peace.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Head Boy is Called In!

RALPH STACEY moved restlessly about Study No. 3, his hands driven deep into his pockets.

His handsome face, always calm, and generally smiling when seen in public, was clouded, troubled, and angry. His anger, however, was directed chiefly against himself and his own folly. Several times he muttered aloud "Fool!" and it was himself that he addressed. He was alone in his study.

Had Russell, or Ogilvy, come in he would have banished care—at least, its outward aspect—and turned a smiling, care-free face to his friends. He was a finished actor. But alone he could allow his gloomy thoughts to darken his face—which in these moments did not look so much like Harry Wharton's.

As he paced to and fro in Study No. 3 Stacey had a vague idea that some row was going on up the passage. But he gave that no heed; his thoughts kept him busy.

It was a couple of days since the visit of the irate Mr. Piker to Greyfriars School. The affair had rather died out as a topic, but both Wharton and Stacey had to remember it.

Either Stacey or Wharton was to be taken away at the end of the term—close at hand now. That was the decision of the Head; he would find neither guilty on insufficient evidence, but one had to find another school to end the strange and embarrassing state of affairs.

It would be a heavy blow to Harry Wharton to leave his old school and his old friends. It would not have been anything like such a blow to Stacey, a new fellow in the school that term. But——

His game would be up.

The bitter envy and malice of the "poor relation" had been glutted by the harm he had done his relative and double that term; but that was not the end of his game, it was only the beginning.

Mapped out in his scheming mind was a plan to cut his rival out at home at Wharton Lodge in his uncle's favour; to take his place as the rich man's heir. All had gone well so far. But if they separated, if they went to different schools, how was he to carry on?

Obviously he could not.

Wharton at another school—Rookwood or St. Jim's, perhaps—would be out of reach of his double's treachery.

Worse than that, he would soon prove by his conduct at his new school that he had been misjudged at Greyfriars; that, in spite of appearances, it was his double who was guilty of wrongdoing. And Stacey, unless he altered his ways, would be booked for discovery sooner or later, having no longer a scapegoat on whom to land his misdeeds.

He had the short remainder of that term to work in to carry out his schemes, if he could; after that his teeth would be drawn.

"Fool!" he repeated for the tenth or eleventh time.

Like many a cunning rascal, Stacey had over-reached himself with his cunning. He had been successful, but his success was more apparent than real. Whether he went, or whether Wharton went, his game would be up at the end of that term, and in the long run Wharton would regain all that he had lost in his uncle's esteem.

Stacey was not wholly bad. Apart from anger and chagrin at the prospect of defeat, there was some element of decency in him that revolted at the part he was playing; he felt sometimes sick of it all.

At such times he would have been almost glad to throw up his new life and return to his wandering, shiftless mode of existence with his disreputable and spendthrift father.

But, much as he prided himself on his astuteness, his chief thought now was what a fool he had been. He had had a varied experience for one so young, but his experience had not taught him yet that roguery is always, in the long run, folly.

He knew that he had not passed unscathed from that interview in the Head's study a couple of days ago.

What a fool he had been! Russell and Ogilvy liked him. They were good fellows; but they bored inexpressibly the fellow who, only a few months ago, had been accustomed to late hours and unhealthy excitement. He could not settle down at Greyfriars like any other schoolboy. He had left them on that occasion to smoke cigarettes, out of sight in a barn, and by an unlucky chance Mr. Piker had found him there, and he had dropped a lighted cigarette

in the straw when he ran. And this time he had not succeeded in landing it on Wharton; it was left in doubt which was guilty.

Mr. Quelch believed in him, but the Head doubted. And would Colonel Wharton doubt? He could not tell.

But one thing was clear—unless he was to throw up his scheming altogether, he had to get through by the end of that term. He could not afford half-measures now; he had to take any chance that came his way. But would any chance come his way? There was one thing that would break the old colonel's attachment to his nephew—if Wharton was expelled in disgrace. If that could be engineered—

Stacey shivered a little.

If it came to the pinch, could he be so coolly, wickedly unscrupulous? He did not feel sure of that.

His wretched reflections were suddenly interrupted. The study door flew open with a crash.

Stacey spun round savagely towards the door.

"You silly ass!" he shouted. "What do—"

It was Fisher T. Fish who barged in. Stacey stared at him in amazement. The American junior was wildly excited.

"Say, big boy, I guess I want you—and want you bad!" panted Fishy.

"Get out, you bony freak!" snarled Stacey.

"I guess you're head boy of the Remove," howled Fisher T. Fish, "and I'll say I want you to handle this! I'll tell a man, if I don't get my banknote back I'll go to Quelch! I'll go to the Head—"

"What the thump do you mean?" snapped Stacey.

"You mosey along to my study, and talk to them guys—Wharton and his crowd!" hooted Fisher T. Fish.

"Wharton?" Stacey's eyes flashed at the name. "What about Wharton?"

"I ain't saying it's Wharton—but it's one of them!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "One of them guys has pinched my five-pound note. I'm telling you."

Stacey gazed at him. For a second he felt a throb of wild excitement. Was it possible—Wharton—if it was—

But the next moment he was cool again. The wish was father to the thought—and the thought left his mind at once. He knew that it was not possible.

"Don't be a fool!" he said roughly. "Nobody in the Remove would touch your money. If you've lost a note, go and look for it, and hold your silly tongue."

"I'm telling you!" yelled Fisher T. Fish. "One of them has got it, and they got to shell out afore they quit. You're head boy, and you got to handle it, or I'll call in Quelch."

Stacey was very near to taking Fisher T. Fish by his bony neck, and bundling him head and crop out of the study.

But he paused. There was nothing in this—there could not be! But if there was the remotest chance of scoring over his enemy, he was not going to let it pass.

"Tell me what's happened!" he snapped.

Fisher T. Fish told him, in a voice almost breaking with emotion. The loss of five shillings, or of fivepence, would have caused Fishy deep anguish. The loss of such a sum as five pounds was likely to break his transatlantic heart.

"I'll come!" said Stacey, abruptly.

And he went up the passage with Fisher T. Fish.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Stacey Asks For It!

"I SAY, you fellows! Any more cake?"

"No, you cormorant!"

"Any more biscuits?"

"No, you fat porker!"

"Any more anything?" demanded Billy Bunter.

"No!"

Bunter grunted and rose.

"Well, I don't call that much of a feed," he said. "I should have stood you fellows a better spread than that if my postal order had come."

"Still hungry?" asked Bob Cherry, sarcastically. The well-spread table in Study No. 14 had been cleared to the last crumb. There was seldom a crumb left, at any tea-table, when Billy Bunter asked himself to tea.

"Well, it's not much I eat, as you know," said Bunter. "But I could manage a little more."

"Go and eat coke!" suggested Bob.

"Beast!"

"Take your face away, anyhow!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Yah!" Billy Bunter rolled to the door and turned to blink at Harry Wharton through his big spectacles. "Look here, Wharton, if Bull's coming home with you for the holidays, I'm not at all sure that I shall come. I can't stand a fellow with manners like a grizzly bear."

"You won't come if Johnny does?" asked Wharton.

"No!" said Bunter. "I won't!"

"In that case I'll make Johnny come, if I have to carry him on my back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "Look here—if you chuck that cushion at me, Bull, I'll— Yaroooooh!"

Bunter dodged out of the door, the cushion catching him as he dodged. Johnny Bull fielded it, but the door slammed before he could deliver another shot.

"Beast!" came a howl through the keyhole.

Then Bunter was gone.

"About the hols," said Harry Wharton, with rather a clouded face. "We want to be all together—"

"The togetherness is the sine qua non!" remarked Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"That cad Stacey will be at Wharton Lodge!" said Harry. "I believe his father's abroad; anyhow, my home is his now. I don't know how you fellows will stand him, if you come. It will be pretty rotten."

"Cut it out, then!" suggested Johnny Bull. "You come and stay with us, one after another, and give the rotter a miss all through the hols."

"Not a bad idea!" said Frank

Nugent. "You can hardly be at home with the fellow without having rows; and that won't do you any good with your uncle."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"I should have to go home for a few days," he remarked. "My uncle's rather crusty with me now; but Aunt Amy's the same old dear as ever; and I don't want to neglect her. But after that—" Wharton paused.

He knitted a worried brow; and went on, slowly.

"My uncle's got to decide between Stacey and me. Goodness knows whether I shall be coming back to Greyfriars next term."

"Dash it all, the old bean's bound to stand by you," said Bob warmly. "If he takes either away, it will be Stacey."

"Not if he believes that I'm the black sheep!" said Harry, bitterly. "And he will get all that from Quelch, if not from the Head! And the Head's jolly well fed up with both of us, and no wonder! I think—"

The door opened, interrupting him. Fisher T. Fish tramped into the study, followed by Ralph Stacey.

"Have you come back for some more, you bony blighter?" demanded Johnny Bull, in a deep, growling voice.

"I guess I've come back for my five-pound note!" hooted Fisher T. Fish. "And I've brought the head boy to see it handed over to me."

The Famous Five were all on their feet at once. Harry Wharton's eyes glinted at his double.

"Keep your wool on, you fellows!" said Stacey. "It seems that Fish has lost a banknote in this study—"

"No bizney of yours!"

"As head boy of the Remove, I'm

(Continued on next page.)



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bound to look into it when Fish asks me to do so," answered Stacey, calmly. "You know that as well as I do, Wharton! Or have you forgotten that you're no longer head boy?"

Wharton breathed hard. "You can cut all that out, Stacey!" said Frank Nugent sharply. "If you want to help Fish hunt for his banknote, we're not stopping you."

"We'll get out, and let you get on with it!" said Wharton contemptuously. Stacey gave him a sharp look.

"Better not!" he said. "What do you mean, better not?" "I mean what I say! Fish says that he has searched the whole room, over and over again, without finding the banknote."

"Well, and what about that?" asked Harry, quietly, but with a dangerous gleam in his eyes.

"If Fishy is right, the banknote must have been picked up!" said Stacey. "I think you fellows had better turn out your pockets before you go."

"I guess so!" said Fisher T. Fish emphatically.

"Turn out our pockets!" repeated Wharton. "Why, you cur, do you dare to hint that one of us might have Fishy's banknote in his pocket?"

"I'm not hinting—I'm speaking out plain," answered Stacey coolly. "That banknote has got to be found before any fellow leaves this study. That's my order, as head boy of the Remove."

"That's your order, is it?" said Harry, his eyes flaming. "Well, I'll show you exactly how much I care for your orders, you cad! Stand out of my way, or I'll knock you out of it."

He strode straight at the door. Stacey, standing directly in his path, did not move.

"You're not to leave this study!" he rapped. "Will you stand aside?"

"No!" "Hold on, Harry," exclaimed Nugent hastily. "As that fool Fishy hasn't found his rotten banknote, perhaps we'd better see it found—"

"Do you think I'm taking orders from that cur?" roared Wharton. "Is any man here going to let him say we've pinched Fishy's money? I'd rather knock his rotten cheek back down his throat! Stand aside, Stacey!"

"I guess—" howled Fisher T. Fish. With a swift back-hander, Wharton knocked Fisher T. Fish aside. Then he strode straight at Stacey; and as Stacey did not stir, he hit out. The next moment they were fighting. But it was only for a moment.

One more, and the Co. dragged Stacey away.

"That will do, you cheeky rotter!" said Bob Cherry curtly. "We're going out of this study, and you can eat your giddy orders. Bang their nappers together."

"Good egg!" "Let go!" yelled Stacey, struggling. "Say, you let up, you galoots!" yelled Fisher T. Fish.

Bang! In the grasp of the angry comrades, Stacey and Fisher T. Fish struggled frantically, but they struggled in vain. Their heads came together with a sounding crack.

"Give them another!" hooted Johnny Bull. Crack!

"Ow!" "Wow! Wake snakes!" Then Stacey and Fishy were hurled, sprawling, along the floor, and the Famous Five walked out of the study, leaving them there.

"Ow! My cabeza!" groaned Fisher

T. Fish. He sat up and rubbed his head. "Ow! I'll say this is fierce! Wow!"

Stacey staggered to his feet. He was pale with rage. Fisher T. Fish's bony "cabeza" had hurt. Fishy blinked up at him.

"Say, what about my banknote?" he gasped. "I'll tell a man, one of them guys has got it! What about it?"

"You fool!" snarled Stacey. He had a pain in his head, and a worse pain in his temper.

That one of the Famous Five had "pinched" the missing fiver, he did not believe for a moment, though he had been willing to make himself as unpleasant as possible to the Co. The net outcome of his visit to the study was an ache in his head.

"Look here!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "I'm telling you—"

"Look for your rotten banknote, you dummy!" snarled Stacey. "And take that, to help you along!"

He grabbed Fisher T. Fish by the collar, and banged his bony head against the table-leg. There was a fiendish howl from Fisher T. Fish.

Apparently Stacey found solace in that proceeding, for he banged the bony head again, and yet again. Then he stamped out of Study No. 14, leaving Fisher Tarleton Fish rubbing his cabeza and waking the echoes.

Fishy was rubbing that damaged cabeza for a good quarter of an hour before he re-started crawling over the study carpet, in the vain hope of finding his missing fiver in some corner!

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Condemned!

"WHARTON'S got the knock!" murmured Skinner.

It was the following morning. Some of the Remove fellows had gone for letters in break; and Harry Wharton had found one, addressed to him in his uncle's hand.

He stepped aside to the window, and opened it rather eagerly, and yet with some misgiving.

Colonel Wharton had taken his time to think over the communication he had received from the headmaster of Greyfriars. But here was a letter from him at last. Whether he was coming down to the school or not, Harry did not yet know—he regarded the interview rather with dread than hope.

But as he read the letter—unusually long for the old military gentleman, whose missives were generally very brief—his face changed.

He was so deep in the letter that he did not observe curious eyes turned on him. Skinner winked at Snoop.

"By gum, he looks floored!" murmured Snoop.

There was a letter for Stacey by the same post. He was standing near the rack, reading it, with a faint smile on his face. It seemed that the old colonel had more pleasant things to say to that distant relative than to his nephew.

Lord Mauleverer moved over to Wharton.

"Not bad news, old bean, I hope?" he murmured.

"Eh! No! Yes!" stammered Harry.

He looked up from the letter. Then he observed that a dozen fellows were looking at him curiously, and he coloured.

He thrust the letter into his pocket and went out into the sunny quad.

"What's up with your jolly old relation, Stacey?" asked Skinner, with a grin.

"Better ask him!" drawled Stacey. "Oh, you're the fellow to ask!" broke in Vernon-Smith. "If he's in a row at home you've worked it!"

Stacey raised his eyebrows. "Think so?" he said carelessly.

"I don't think so—I know!" answered the Bounder coolly. "You've landed Wharton into rows here all through the term, with your lying and trickery—"

"Vernon-Smith!" It was Mr. Quelch's voice behind the Bounder, with a knife-like edge on it. Smithy spun round in dismay. Quelch had come along from the Form-room in time to hear Vernon-Smith's words to his head boy.

"Oh!" gasped Smithy.

"Vernon-Smith, how dare you address such words to Stacey?" Mr. Quelch's voice trembled with anger. "You will take five hundred lines, Vernon-Smith!"

The Bounder set his lips hard. Stacey smiled and strolled out into the quadrangle.

He glanced after his double. Wharton, with his uncle's letter in his hand again, crumpled and clenched, was tramping away towards the elms—evidently wanting to be alone to read that letter.

Stacey would have given a good deal to read it, too. But he could guess its purport.

The Co. looked for their leader in break, but did not see him. Wharton remained alone under the elms, reading and re-reading that letter from his uncle, and thinking over it with a dark and gloomy brow.

He started as the bell for third school reached his ears.

His manner was quite composed when he joined the Remove, going back into the Form-room. He did not want all the fellows to observe that he had had a letter from home that had, as Skinner expressed it, given him the "knock."

But he was very glad when the hour of dismissal came. When the Remove came out, he went into the Rag.

The Co. followed him in, anxious to know what the trouble was. They knew there was some trouble.

"Look here, what's up?" asked Bob Cherry.

Wharton took the crumpled letter from his pocket, and handed it to him.

"You fellows read that!" he said. They read it together, with grave faces. It ran:

"Dear Harry,—Your headmaster has suggested that I should see you and Ralph at the school. Last week I came to see you, and you avoided me, and I see no purpose in coming again.

"I need not say that your conduct this term has caused me deep pain and distress. I fear that a foolish and unfounded jealousy of Ralph is partly the cause.

"In view of what has happened, one of you must go to another school next term. I am thankful that, at all events, you are able to leave without being expelled. At a new school I shall hope that you will make new resolves and do better.

"I understand that the farmer, whose property was damaged by your recklessness, claimed a certain sum in compensation, which is just and right.

"I shall leave this to you, as a warning of the natural result to be expected from lawless and reckless conduct.



Johnny Bull and Fisher T. Fish were punching one another frantically, and Wharton, Nugent, Cherry, and Hurree Singh were grabbing at both of them to drag them apart. Stepping up to the book-shelf, Bunter took down one of the volumes and slipped the fiver between the pages!

You must pay it from your own resources. I earnestly hope that this will be a serious lesson to you.

"Your uncle,
"J. WHARTON."

Bob passed the letter back, and Harry Wharton put it into his pocket. The Co. looked dismal enough.

"Well, that's pretty thick!" said Bob.

"The thickfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamse Ram Singh. "But the blamefulness of the esteemed old nunky is not great. The absurd Quelch has been taken in by the unspeakable Stacey, and has taken in the ridiculous colonel in his turn."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"I'm not feeling wild with him," he said quietly. "It's a bit of a knock, as you can guess; but my uncle can only believe what my Form-master tells him—and Quelch believes what he says. But—"

He choked for a moment.

"That cur has wangled this from the beginning! You fellows know what happened that day my uncle came down—I was fooled into going out by a spoof telegram. I believe Stacey wangled it; but, of course, there's no proof—there never is when he plays his rotten tricks!"

"He's too deep for me—and too deep for a simple and straightforward man like my uncle. He's too deep even for Quelch, who is twice as keen as either of us. He's done me—all along the line! This means—"

"It means that you won't be coming back next term?"

"I suppose so."

"And that cur will be here!" muttered Johnny Bull. He clenched his hands. "By gum, I've a good mind—"

"It's rotten!" muttered Nugent miserably. "The fellow seems as cun-

ning as a fox—there's no beating him. Colonel Wharton must be fearfully upset, of course—look here, how are you going to manage about Piker? He claims five pounds for the damage to his barn."

"Damage done by Stacey, by his filthy smoking!" said Wharton bitterly. "I suppose I can manage it somehow—I can sell some things, I suppose. I don't care much about that. But—to have my uncle thinking of me like this—" He broke off, a quiver in his voice. "To be condemned like this—even the Head thinks there's a doubt; but my uncle seems to think there's none. Of course, all the evidence is on the side of that rotter, and Quelch is convinced about it. I suppose I shouldn't wonder. But—"

He broke off again.

"Oh, it's too rotten to talk about! I had to tell you fellows, but let it drop! Let's get out!"

They went out into the quad. Stacey was sauntering there with Ogilvy and Russell. There was a smile on his face—that grew mocking as he glanced at his double.

A spasm of rage came over Wharton as he caught his enemy's look. With clenched hands he strode up to Stacey.

"Stacey! You cur! I've heard that Colonel Wharton is not going to pay Piker for the damage you did to his barn. The man's got to be paid. Are you going to pay him?"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Five Pounds to Pay!

RALPH STACEY faced him coolly. The smile was still on his face. Wharton was angry and excited; Stacey was cool as ice. If Wharton chose to let all Greyfriars know that his uncle condemned him,

Stacey certainly had no desire to stop him.

"I don't quite follow," he drawled. "I suppose Piker will have to be paid—most likely he would bring an action if he wasn't compensated. I've heard that he put the damage at five pounds. If you think he's asking too much—"

"I don't think anything of the sort. I think that the fellow who did the damage ought to pay him."

"That's right, of course!" assented Stacey, with a nod.

"Well, are you going to do it?"

Stacey raised his eyebrows.

"Didn't you say the fellow who did the damage?" he queried. "According to what you say, your uncle seems to have decided that you were the fellow."

"And everybody else, too!" exclaimed Ogilvy angrily. "You can't shove this on Stacey, Wharton."

"I should jolly well think not!" said Russell. "What the dickens are you getting at, Wharton? Every man in the Remove knows that you're lucky not to be sacked for what you did—"

"For what Stacey did!" said Harry, between his teeth.

"Oh, chuck it!" said Russell in disgust. "I don't blame the Head for going slow about sacking a man; but everybody knows—"

"The knowfulness is not terrific, my esteemed idiotic Russell," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Rats!" snapped Russell. "I wonder at you fellows for standing by a fellow like that! Hardly anybody else in the Form does."

"Look here!" bawled Johnny Bull.

"Rats!"

"Hold on!" said Harry quietly. "This is between Stacey and me. I want to know whether you're paying for the damage you did, Stacey."

Stacey laughed lightly.

(Continued on page 16.)

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(Continued from page 13.)

"If you mean that you want to raise the wind, I'll lend you anything I can, for the credit of the family," he answered. "The man's got to be paid, certainly. You can't diddle him."

"You cur!"

Wharton, quite losing control of his temper, sprang at him, his fist lashing out.

Stacey's hands came up like lightning. "Hold on!" gasped Bob Cherry. "There's Quelch staring from his window—"

Harry Wharton did not heed. He pressed Stacey, hitting out right and left. His face was flaming.

"Harry, old man—" exclaimed Nugent, in dismay.

Stacey was a good man with his hands, and he was by no means sorry to come to blows. Whatever his faults were, he had plenty of pluck.

But Wharton, in his anger and indignation, seemed to be twice a match for him, and the head boy of the Remove was driven back, step by step, till a fierce drive stretched him on the ground.

He was up in a second; but before the fight could be renewed, Mr. Quelch was on the spot.

"Stand back, Wharton! Stacey, stand back!"

"Very well, sir!" said Stacey quietly, and he dropped his hands and stood back, panting.

The Remove master fixed his eyes on Wharton's crimson face.

"I saw all this from my study window, Wharton! I saw you deliberately approach Stacey, and—"

"The rotten cur!" burst out Wharton.

"Silence!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "I warn you, Wharton, that if you do not behave yourself better, you will not be allowed to remain at this school even till the end of the term."

Evidently Mr. Quelch had been informed of the old colonel's decision.

Wharton panted.

"Go into the House!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Remain there till dinner, Wharton. Go this instant!"

Wharton did not stir. But Frank Nugent caught him by the arm, and almost dragged him away to the House.

Mr. Quelch followed, with a frowning brow.

Never had he been so deeply incensed against the hapless junior who had once been his trusted head boy.

Harry Wharton went to his study, where he remained till the dinner-bell rang.

When he came down all eyes at the Remove table were turned on him—as well as many others from other tables.

Stacey elaborately took no notice of him, and Wharton tried not to look at his enemy.

He realised that he had made a false move and played into his rival's hands. Most of the fellows were against him—his Form-master was against him—his headmaster, though still doubtful, had

to admit the weight of evidence. Now condemned at home also—that his uncle and guardian condemned him. The fact that he was left to pay for the damage done to Piker's barn was proof of that.

His own friends still backed him loyally. The Bounder stood by him—but the support of a black sheep like the Bounder was not worth much to a fellow's reputation. Hazeldene was rather inclined to take his side, but everybody knew that Hazel was jealous of Stacey's cricket. Of the rest of the Remove, hardly a fellow stood by him, except Lord Mauleverer—generally regarded in the Form as an ass.

Fellows he liked and respected, like Tom Brown and Squiff, and Peter Todd, gave him cold looks now. He could hardly blame them. If his Form-master believed that he ought to be expelled—if his own uncle turned him down—what were fellows to think?

When the Remove came out after dinner, Fisher T. Fish came up to the Co. He poked a bony forefinger into Wharton's ribs to draw his attention.

"Say—" began Fishy.

"Oh, leave me alone!" snapped Wharton. He was in no mood to be bothered by Fishy, and in the stress of his own troubles he had completely forgotten what had happened in Study No. 14 the previous day.

"I guess I want my banknote!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I've been all over my study with a small comb, and I ain't found it. You guys figure that I'm going to lose it?"

"Get out of the way!"

"I guess I want that fiver—Whoop!" yelled Fisher T. Fish, as the Famous Five grasped him, and upended him, and walked on, leaving him sprawling, in the quad.

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter.

"Aw, wake snakes!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. He scrambled up, red with rage. "I guess I'm going to Quelch—I guess—"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "I say, Fishy, Quelch will want to know where you got that fiver! He, he, he!"

"You fat clam!" hissed Fisher T. Fish. He stalked away—not in the direction of Mr. Quelch's study.

Fishy was in what he would have called a "quandary." The idea of losing that five-pound note made his transatlantic flesh creep. On the other hand, there were difficulties about going to Quelch about it. He did not want to draw his Form-master's attention to the fact that he had so much money in his possession.

Quelch might suspect that the money-lending business had been going on again.

Billy Bunter grinned, a fat grin, as Fisher T. Fish jerked away. The missing banknote was still safely tucked between the pages of the volume in Study No. 14—nobody was likely to be sufficiently interested in that volume to open it.

Bunter's bright idea was to leave it there till the end of the term.

On the last day of the term he would tell Fisher T. Fish where to find it.

Which seemed to the fat and fatuous Owl quite a screaming joke on Fishy.

Harry Wharton & Co., totally unaware of Bunter's screaming joke, and utterly regardless of Fishy's deep anguish, walked in the quad, discussing the coming holidays. But the discussion was not full of cheery anticipations, as usual.

Harry looked forward with anything but pleasure to going home to Wharton Lodge, in the present circumstances.

Stacey would be there!

And next term—

But he drove the thought of next term from his mind. It was too bitter to think of that.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

With the Gloves Off!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH sauntered in at the school gates with his hands in his pockets and a grin on his face. He glanced round and spotted Harry Wharton.

Wharton was leaning on one of the old elms, reading his uncle's letter over again with a clouded brow. His friends were at the nets, but Wharton was in a glum mood, no mood for cricket. But he put the letter in his pocket, and looked up as the Bounder approached him.

"Been out?" asked Smithy.

"Not since class."

"Stacey has," grinned the Bounder.

"I don't care what Stacey does."

"You would if any other jolly old eye but mine had spotted him while he was out of gates."

"I don't see—"

"I mean, if Quelch, instead of me, had been tottering down the lane beside the Cross Keys, you'd be hauled over the carpet!"

"And why?"

"For getting a packet of cigarettes at the back door of a pub," answered the Bounder coolly.

Wharton stared at him.

"I've been keeping an eye on the dear boy," said Smithy. "He never smokes where a fellow can see him; picks out nice lonely spots like old Piker's barn. But he has to get his smokes somewhere. I know now—where. See?"

Wharton made a gesture of distaste.

"Hoity-toity!" grinned the Bounder. "You're too high-and-mighty to keep an eye on a fellow—what?—even a fellow who's dished you all round and landed you with a bill to pay for his damage!"

"I certainly shouldn't watch the rotter!" said Harry.

"Well, I'm not so jolly particular! I've watched him, and spotted him. He got me five hundred lines to-day!" said the Bounder, between his teeth. "He will be back soon. He started back after getting his packet of cigarettes, and I cut across the meadows and got in ahead of him. See the point?"

"Not at all."

"Stacey will be coming in, in ten minutes or so, with a packet of cigarettes in his pocket."

"Nothing to do with me."

"Lots to do with you! You and I are going to bag him as soon as he comes in and shake the smokes out of his pocket under the eyes of everybody who happens to be around. Fancy his face!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You're on?" asked the Bounder eagerly.

"No, old bean! I'm not giving him away to the beaks, cur as he is." Wharton shook his head. "That's not the game."

"You silly fathead!" said the Bounder scoffingly. "Has he been so jolly particular with you? Hasn't he blackened your character and made you a dog with a bad name? Hasn't he—"

"I know all that, but I'm not coming down to his level. It's not good enough, Smithy. Wash it out!"

"It's good enough for me," said Herbert Vernon-Smith. "I've been watching for a chance to show that rotten hypocrite up, and I'm not losing this one. He can explain to Quelch

what he's doing with smokes in his pocket. He can't make out that they're in your pocket." The Bounder chuckled. "He can't work the double bizney with the goods found on him. Look here, Wharton, don't be a silly ass. If Quelch's eyes are opened it may mean a lot to you. I've heard that you're going to be taken away from Greyfriars, and I know who's worked it. If Quelch is made to see what a lying rotter the fellow is——"

Wharton shook his head again. "Are you on?" demanded the Bounder impatiently.

"No, it's not good enough, Smithy!" "Oh, rats! Does Stacey play fair? Does he keep the gloves on?"

"No; but——" "Well, if a fellow plays me fair I'll play him fair! If he plays me foul, I'll play him foul!" said the Bounder savagely. "That's good enough for me. If he takes the gloves off, I'll take them off, too."

"Look here, Smithy——" "Rats!" answered the Bounder, over his shoulder. He went back towards the gates, leaving Wharton looking after him.

It was close on lock-up, and a good many fellows were coming in. A few minutes later Stacey appeared from the direction of the village, and at the same time Wingate of the Sixth came in.

Since the occasion when Stacey had played for the First Eleven, and helped Greyfriars to a victory, he had been very high in favour with the captain of the school. Wingate joined him as he entered the gateway, and they came in together. Many admiring and envious eyes fell on Stacey as he received that mark of distinction from the greatest man at Greyfriars.

"I want you to give me some bowling at the nets to-morrow, kid!" Wingate was saying.

"Jolly glad to, Wingate!" answered Stacey.

The Bounder's eyes glittered. He stepped directly into Stacey's path.

"Hold on a minute, Stacey!" he said. Stacey glanced at him with cool disdain.

"Don't bother when Wingate's speaking to me!" he answered. And the Greyfriars captain, amazed at the Bounder's cheek, gave him a glare.

"I think Wingate will be interested!" grinned the Bounder. "As head prefect he has to see that juniors don't smuggle smokes into the school."

Stacey gave a violent start. Wingate stared.

"What do you mean, you young ass?" he demanded gruffly.

"I mean," answered Vernon-Smith, with icy coolness, "that Stacey's got a packet of cigarettes in his jacket pocket, and everybody's going to know that he's got them. I want fellows to know who was smoking in Piker's barn the other day."

Stacey's face paled. A dozen fellows had heard Vernon-Smith's words. There was a buzz of voices as they gathered round.

Wingate gave the Bounder a very grim look. Then he glanced at Stacey.

"I suppose there's nothing in that, Stacey?" he said.

"Nothing at all," answered Stacey lightly. "I certainly haven't any smokes about me, and I can't imagine why Vernon-Smith thinks so. Will you get out of my way, Smithy?"

"No," said the Bounder grimly, "I won't! Not till you've turned out the pocket in which I saw you put the packet of cigarettes."

Stacey clenched his hands. Wingate looked from one to the other.

As head prefect he was bound to take note of such a matter.

"Sneak!" came a voice from the gathering crowd of juniors.

The Bounder crimsoned. He gave a fierce look round.

"You can call it what you like," he said between his teeth. "You know jolly well I wouldn't give a man away; but that cur Stacey has landed it on Wharton, and I'm going to put it where it belongs."

"I think you'd better turn that pocket out, Stacey," said Wingate quietly. "Of course, I don't believe a word of this, but you'd better make it clear, and I warn you, Vernon-Smith, that you'll get six for this."

"Not if Stacey's got smokes in his pocket!" said the Bounder mockingly.

"No," said the Greyfriars captain, "not in that case; but if he hasn't—and I don't believe for a second that he has—I shall give you such a whopping that you won't make rotten accusations again in a hurry. Turn out that pocket, Stacey!"

Stacey breathed hard.

"I—I don't see why I should be made to turn out my pockets in public like this!" he answered.

Wingate stared at him.

"I've told you to," he said. "Can't you see it's better for you to knock this on the head at once?"

"I don't care what the fellow says." The crowd of Greyfriars fellows exchanged glances. Wingate's expression altered a little. The Bounder smiled a deadly smile. He had his enemy on the hip now.

"For goodness' sake, Stacey, don't be an ass!" exclaimed Ogilvy, who was in the gathering crowd. "What the dickens do you fancy fellows will think?"

"I don't care what they think!" snapped Stacey.

Wingate's face became very grim.

"Look here, Stacey, this won't do," he said. "You're making a fool of yourself. I order you, as a prefect, to turn that pocket out! Now then!"

Stacey set his lips hard.

He was fairly caught! Again and again he had risked it; but always his cunning had come to his aid and saved him. It could not save him now.

Any fellow caught with cigarettes on him was liable to punishment; the rule against smoking being very strict at Greyfriars. But it was much more serious in Stacey's case than in any other

(Continued on next page.)

GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

Here's another jolly poem by the Greyfriars Rhymester, and this time his subject is **WILLIAM WALTER DABNEY**, Temple's chum in the Upper Fourth.

(1)

He's Temple's thir'd henchman,
That's all you can say!
A modest back-benchman,
Who's not in the way.
He'll never go farther
Than Temple, but seeks
To murmur: "Oh, rather!"
Whenever he speaks.



(4)

I paid him a visit.
Before I could speak,
He murmured: "What is it?
It's rather a freak!"
I weighed up his muscle,
And thought, on the whole,
I wanted no tussle
With Dabney, good soul!



(7)

"It's not our providing,"
He said. "Sure enough!
We found Bunter hiding
In here with the stuff,
And twisted that joker's
Fat ear—by the way.
That stuff is all Coker's,
Or was, sad to say!"

(2)

No more his applause is,
No higher his praise,
Whatever the cause is,
It's "rather" always;
When Wingate is hitting
A hundred or more,
You'll hear him admitting
It's "rather" a score!



(5)

"At tea?" I asked gently
(He had quite a spread).
"What you accidentally
Have stated or said,
I'll quite overlook it——"
And seeing a seat,
I very soon took it
And started to eat.



(8)

And Coker came quickly,
The truth he soon spied.
I rose with a sickly
Sad feeling inside.
What happened thereafter
Is not very clear.
But Dab said (much laughter!):
'Twas "rather" severe!

(3)

If Capper went potty
And pulled out a gun,
And punctured old Scotty,
Or Temple, for fun!
Of this grim destruction
You'd hear him exclaim:
'Twas "rather" a ruction,
And "rather" a shame!

(6)

I gobbled down biscuit,
And pastries, and crust,
And ate till my weskit
Was ready to bust.
No word Dabney uttered,
Until I had done,
And then he just muttered:
"It's rather good fun!"

fellow's. Almost everyone believed that it was Wharton who had smoked in Piker's barn and caused it to catch fire by a spark in the dry straw. But if smokes were found on Stacey, it was likely that there would be a considerable change of opinion.

"Do you hear me, Stacey?" rapped Wingate.

He was beginning to have very strong doubts now.

"Stacey, old chap—" muttered Ogilvy. The Scottish junior had a startled look on his face.

"I appeal to my Form-master!" said Stacey. "If Mr. Quelch orders me to turn my pockets out, I will do so. Not otherwise!"

It was an almost transparent trick to gain time. Harry Wharton, looking on, could almost have pitied his enemy at that moment. Some of the fellows were grinning now—some shrugging their shoulders. Wingate of the Sixth drew a deep breath.

"Very well, Stacey!" he said quietly. "I will take you to your Form-master. Come with me to Mr. Quelch."

Stacey followed him across the quad. A buzzing crowd watched them enter the House. The Bouncer strolled over to Wharton.

"That cur's game is up now," he said. "I fancy even Quelch will begin to wonder who really smoked in Piker's barn—what?"

Wharton did not answer. Whether the Bouncer was justified or not in meeting foul play with foul play, it seemed that he "had" Stacey now. How was the scheming rascal of the Remove to wriggle out of this?

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Driven to the Wall!

"WHARTON, what—" Mr. Quelch broke off in confusion.

There was a tap at the door and Wingate opened it, and walked Stacey in. Generally, the Remove-master made no mistake between the doubles of his Form. But seeing Stacey walked in as a culprit, in charge of a prefect, he took him, for the moment, for his double.

He coloured with vexation as he realised his mistake.

"Stacey, sir!" said Wingate.

"Yes, yes, I see now that it is Stacey!" said Mr. Quelch hastily. "What does this mean, Wingate? Why have you brought my head boy to my study?"

Mr. Quelch emphasised the "head boy." His tone implied that he was not prepared to hear any report unfavourable to that head boy.

"Stacey preferred to come to you, sir, and I have brought him," said the Greyfriars captain. "He appealed to you from an order I gave him."

"I hardly understand, Wingate! Stacey has set an example in my Form of obedience to authority. If you gave him any reasonable order—"

Wingate breathed rather hard.

"I ordered him to turn out a certain pocket and let me see what it contained, sir! I was told it contained cigarettes."

Mr. Quelch started violently.

"Nonsense!" he said brusquely.

Wingate reddened.

Hitherto he had shared Mr. Quelch's high opinion of Stacey! He was rather changing it now.

He would not have been hard on some thoughtless young ass who fancied trying a cigarette. But if Stacey smoked, it gave away all the careful appearances he had kept up for a term; it revealed

him as a humbug—as quite probably the fellow who had smoked in Piker's barn. And Wingate was by no means pleased to hear his remarks described as "nonsense."

"The matter's for you to settle, sir, as Stacey chose to appeal to you," said the prefect, rather gruffly. "I had to act on what I was told—and the boy refused to empty his pocket. I see no reason for his refusal, unless he actually has cigarettes there."

"I am absolutely certain that he has nothing of the kind!" said Mr. Quelch. "Had it been Wharton—"

"Well, it is not Wharton, sir—it is Stacey," said Wingate dryly, "and his conduct seems to me suspicious." He set his lips a little. "I've believed, like you, so far, sir, that Wharton, and not Stacey, was the rascal of the two—it's certain that one of them is. But now—"

"I do not see that you have the slightest reason to change your opinion, Wingate!" said Mr. Quelch coldly. "I certainly see none to change mine."

He turned to Stacey.

"Why did you refuse to obey Wingate's very reasonable order, my boy? It is not like you, and I do not understand it."

Stacey was cool and calm. It required an effort; but he knew how much he required a cool head just then, and he kept himself well in hand.

No doubt he had hoped to find a chance, on the way to his Form-master's study, of getting rid of the packet in his pocket. But he had had no chance of that. Wingate, growing more and more dubious, had kept a keen eye on him.

Now he was standing in his Form-master's presence, the packet still on him. He needed all his wits.

"I was sorry to seem disrespectful to Wingate, sir!" he said. "But I thought it an insult to be ordered to turn out my pockets on information given by a fellow known to be on bad terms with me."

"Was it Wharton told you this absurd story, Wingate?" asked Mr. Quelch, with a curl of the lip. "If so, I am surprised at your heeding it."

"It was not Wharton—it was Vernon-Smith!" almost snapped Wingate.

He was in far from a good humour by this time.

"Vernon-Smith! A boy who has been caned on several occasions for smoking," said the Remove master. "I am bound to point out, Wingate, that, though you are, of course, expected to do your duty as a prefect, you are not bound to take note of information given by one boy against another—what the juniors term, I believe, sneaking."

Wingate flushed with annoyance.

"Neither should I do so, sir," he snapped; "but this case is a peculiar one. Vernon-Smith, right or wrong, accused Stacey, and, if he was right, it was as likely as not Stacey who was smoking in Mr. Piker's barn a few days ago, when the fire occurred. No prefect with a sense of duty would let slip an opportunity of ascertaining the truth in that serious matter."

"The truth in that matter is already ascertained," said Mr. Quelch coldly.

"At the same time, Stacey, I must say you have acted very thoughtlessly. I fully understand your resentment of such an accusation and such a suspicion, as your conduct ever since you have been here has been above reproach. But you should certainly have done as Wingate directed you."

Stacey felt his heart sink.

Mr. Quelch was standing by him all he could, but not to the extent of allowing him to get away with his refusal to turn out his pocket. It was clear that Quelch would not go so far as that.

Indeed, only Quelch's strong faith in him prevented the Remove master from seeing what Wingate could now see—his only possible real reason for not wanting to disclose what was in that pocket.

But he was cornered now.

"Come, come, my boy," said Mr. Quelch, very kindly. "Let the matter be settled beyond dispute on the spot. Turn out whatever you have in that pocket, on my table." He glanced at Wingate, as the prefect made a movement towards the door. "Remain here, please, until you have seen with your own eyes that Vernon-Smith's malicious statement was unfounded, Wingate."

"Very well, sir."

Stacey's hand went slowly to his breast pocket. His heart was like lead. He could see that Wingate saw through him now, and that meant a great deal to him. But if Quelch saw through him, too—

"There is nothing in my pocket, sir!" he said. "Nothing but a handkerchief! I will certainly turn it out if you order me to do so."

"Please lose no more time!" said Mr. Quelch, and even in Quelch's tone there was a touch of acerbity.

Stacey put his hand into the pocket. Then he uttered a sudden and, apparently, startled exclamation:

"There is something here, sir—"

"Wha-a-t!"

Stacey turned out a handkerchief—and a cardboard box of cigarettes. He laid the latter on Quelch's table.

Wingate's lips curled with contempt. Quelch stared at the box of smokes, as if it had been the ghost of a box of smokes.

"Stacey!" he gasped.

The wretched trickster pulled himself together. Hard lying was his only resource now that matters had reached this pass, and he was not sure that it would save him. But it was all that was left.

"I hope, sir, that you will believe me." His voice was calm, though his heart beat painfully. "I did not know that that box of cigarettes was in my pocket! Vernon-Smith must have known, as he told Wingate; but I did not know."

"You—you did not know, Stacey?"

Mr. Quelch seemed, at that moment, like a man catching at straws.

"Certainly I did not know." Stacey's voice grew firmer. "I am sorry to say it, sir, but I can only think that Vernon-Smith has deliberately played this trick on me. I left my jacket in my study when I went out to the nets, after class, and anyone could have got at it, if he wanted to. This packet was slipped into my pocket when the jacket was off. I never knew it was there."

Mr. Quelch looked at him.

The story was possible—even plausible. The Bouncer was his enemy—and was known to be not very scrupulous in his enmities. It was possible that he had played such a trick.

Wingate's face expressed only disgust.

Had Stacey, in the first place, turned out his pocket at the gate when told to do so, and tried his story then, probably Wingate would have been deceived. But he had not had time to think of it then—he had not told it then because it was not true, and he had had to have time to think something out. It was, in fact, a skilful falsehood, uttered by a culprit driven into his last corner—driven right to the wall.

That was clear to Wingate. It was not so clear to Mr. Quelch, for his self-esteem, his faith in his own judgment as a Form-master, were mingled with his trust in Stacey!



"Yarooop!" yelled Fisher T. Fish, as Bunter landed out with his foot. "Here, look out!" roared Bob Cherry, as the table heaved, and the crockery began to dance. The tea-party jumped up and grasped the edges of the table to save it, as Fisher T. Fish crawled out with a red and furious face.

If he had been deceived, if he had been deluded, if he had been made a fool of, what was he to think of himself? Yet, hard as he clung to his fixed opinion, Quelch was staggered. The silence was long.

"What do you think of this, Wingate?" he asked, at length.

It was almost an appeal.

"I think that the boy is lying, sir!" said Wingate, scornfully. "If this was true he would not have avoided turning out his pocket till the latest possible moment. I do not believe a word he says."

Mr. Quelch winced.

"Stacey, if—if this is true you have acted very injudiciously," said the Remove master haltingly. "You hear what Wingate says—"

"I do not care, sir, so long as you believe me."

Mr. Quelch coughed.

Did he believe Stacey? He was trying hard to do so, at all events.

Wingate left the study. He, at all events, had made up his mind. Mr. Quelch hardly saw him go. He was troubled and distressed.

Stacey stood waiting.

"Leave me, Stacey!" said the Remove master, at last. "I will question Vernon-Smith on the matter. I have little doubt that this will turn out, as you say, to be a piece of miserable trickery. But leave me now."

"Very well, sir."

Stacey left the study. His face was dark and bitter as he went down the passage. Whether Quelch continued to believe in him or not, his position was shaken—he knew that.

Mr. Quelch, left alone, sat gazing at the box of cigarettes on his table.

He did not send for the Bouncer. If this was, indeed, a trick played by Vernon-Smith it was useless to expect an admission from him. But was it? It was possible, but—but—The Remove master's mind swayed in doubt.

If Stacey had deceived him in this he had deceived him in other things. That went without saying. It was, in a word, Stacey who was the black sheep of the Form, and not his relative and double; and in that case, the Remove master had wronged Harry Wharton. That was too bitter a pill for Mr. Quelch to get it down.

But though he clung to his faith in the boy he had trusted, he knew, only too well, that he did not trust him as before. It was the beginning of the end!

It was said of old that great is truth, and it must prevail. Stacey, like many a rascal before him, was to learn that it was so.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Aunt Amy Weighs In!

"HARRY, old chap—"

Billy Bunter blinked into Study No. 1, in the Remove, the following afternoon. Harry Wharton, seated at the study table, was busy with lines—overdue—for Mr. Quelch.

"Hook it, fathead!" said Wharton impatiently. "I've got lines! Go and bother somebody else."

Billy Bunter, in the doorway of Study No. 1, blinked at him reproachfully through his big spectacles.

"If that's how you thank a fellow for bringing your letter up to you, Wharton, I can only say you're an ungrateful beast!"

"Oh! Is there a letter for me?"

"Yes, old chap; from Wharton Lodge," said Bunter. "I thought I'd bring it up to you, as you were sticking here doing lines, and didn't know it had been put out in the rack. If there's a tip in it—"

Harry Wharton laughed rather harshly.

"Not likely, fathead! My uncle doesn't send me tips these days."

"This isn't from the old fossil—"

"What?"

"It's from the old frump!" explained Bunter.

Harry Wharton stared at him as he disinterred a letter from his pocket. It came out with an ancient bullseye sticking to it.

From Bunter's remarks Wharton gathered that the letter was not from his uncle, but from his aunt. But the description of his uncle as a fossil, and his aunt as a frump, quite banished any gratitude he might have felt for Bunter having taken the trouble to bring up the letter.

He rose from the table, took the letter with one hand, and Bunter's fat neck with the other.

"Wow!" roared Bunter, as he was twirled out of the study. He sat down suddenly.

The door shut on him.

"Beast!" roared Bunter through the keyhole, and then hastily departed, lest the door should open.

Wharton sat down at the table again, and slit the envelope. His face was clouded. He was glad to get a letter from Aunt Amy, but he rather dreaded to read it. If it was anything like the one he had received from his uncle, Aunt Amy's brother, it would be a heavier blow to him than even the colonel's letter.

He drew it from the envelope at last. As he unfolded it, a crisp slip of paper rustled out.

It was a five-pound note.

"Oh my hat!" ejaculated Wharton.

His face cleared, and he smiled.

It was not the "tip" that relieved him, welcome as it was, considering that he had precisely that sum to pay Mr. Piker. But the fact that the letter contained so handsome a tip was a proof

that Aunt Amy, at all events, had not turned against him. His heart was light as he read the letter.

"Dearest Harry,—I am so sorry that you seem to be in trouble at school this term. I am sure that it is not your fault. I have told uncle so several times. I have asked him whether I had not better, perhaps, come to the school and explain to Mr. Quelch how foolish and mistaken he is, but your uncle thinks not."

Wharton, at this point, whistled! Grateful as he was to Aunt Amy, he was glad that she had yielded to her brother's opinion, and had not come to Greyfriars to talk to Mr. Quelch!

He read on:

"I understand that there has been damage of some kind, and that five pounds has to be paid. It is not quite clear to me why your uncle has not sent you the money, unless it is because he is very cross at the present time. So I am sending it, my dear boy, and I have, of course, told your uncle, and as he did not say anything I suppose he approves."

"I am sure, my dear Harry, that you will not allow this distressing misunderstanding to make any difference to your affection for your uncle. He would not be so angry if he was not so fond of you; and men are not very reasonable creatures at any time. It seems so odd to me that he should believe anything against you, but, of course, it will pass."

"I shall be very happy to see you when the holidays commence, and I am sure, dear Harry, that your uncle will be in quite a good temper again by that time."

"Your affectionate aunt,

"AMY WHARTON."

Wharton smiled over that letter, but he felt a lump in his throat as he smiled.

He wondered what Colonel Wharton had thought when his sister told him that she was sending the money he had refused to send. Perhaps, with all his sternness, he had been glad of that way

out of it. Anyhow, he seemed to have raised no objection.

Perhaps he had felt that it was futile to argue with a dear old lady, who regarded his stern anger simply as a spasm of bad temper—naturally to be expected, every now and then, from such unreasonable creatures as men-folk!

Harry Wharton put the letter in his pocket, and resumed writing his lines in much better spirits.

Having finished the imposition, he took it down to his Form-master's study. Mr. Quelch, busy as usual with papers, glanced up at him.

"My lines, sir!" said Harry.

"You may place them on the table, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch. His voice seemed to have lost the sharpness to which Wharton's ears had been accustomed all through that term. The junior could not help noticing the change.

He laid the imposition on the table, and turned to the door.

"One moment, Wharton."

"Yes, sir!" He turned back.

"I have received a telephone call from Mr. Piker! It appears that his claim for damages has not yet been met."

Wharton compressed his lips a little.

Now that he had received that kind remittance from Aunt Amy, the matter no longer presented difficulties. Before then it had bristled with difficulties, for five pounds was a large sum for a junior in the Lower Fourth to raise. Certainly, had Wharton been guilty of the damage to Piker's barn, this would have been a lesson to him to be more careful, as the old colonel intended.

"I am going to pay Mr. Piker to-day, sir!" said Harry. "I am going over to see him on my bike after tea, to settle with him. But I'm bound to repeat to you, sir, as you have mentioned the matter, that I do not admit that I am responsible for damage I never did."

"I understand that Colonel Wharton has so decided—"

"Yes, sir! I have no choice in the matter. I have never been anywhere near Piker's barn, all the same."

Wharton fully expected an outbreak of anger in reply to that; and he did not

care. But to his surprise, Mr. Quelch's face remained quiet and thoughtful, and a little troubled.

It came into Wharton's mind that a doubt was growing in Quelch's. The Bounder, little as he approved of his methods, seemed to have done him a good turn. There was a brief silence.

"We need not discuss that, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch at last. "You may go."

Wharton left the study.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" Bob Cherry met him at the end of the passage. "Coming up to tea, old bean?"

And the Famous Five went up to tea in Study No. 1. There, over a cheery tea-table, Wharton told them of the letter from Aunt Amy, and showed them the five-pound note. And the Co. agreed unanimously that Aunt Amy was a brick—indeed, Hurree Jamset Ram Singh declared that the brickfulness was terrific!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Fishy's Fiver?

"SAY, Stacey!" yapped Fisher T. Fish.

Ralph Stacey was standing in the doorway of Study No. 3. He was waiting for Ogilvy and Russell to come up to tea—and they seemed rather long in coming.

His brow was rather knitted.

He had got through with Quelch; but he knew only too clearly that a doubt, at least, had crept into the Remove master's mind. As for Wingate, his eyes had been quite opened; and Stacey had nothing but contempt and distrust to expect from the Greyfriars captain.

It was a hard blow for the schemer of the Remove; and his feelings towards the Bounder were bitter enough.

The affair was the talk of the whole Form; Smithy, as was natural, made the most of it. And it was plain that it had made a difference with a good many of the fellows. Stacey was wondering whether it had made any difference to his two best friends, Oggy and Russell. He was very well aware that if they learned the truth they would drop him like a hot potato.

He scowled at Fisher T. Fish. He was in no mood to be bothered by the business man of the Remove.

"Say, what about my five-pound note?" demanded Fishy. "You being head boy of the Remove—"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snapped Stacey. "Don't bother me!"

Fishy glared at him.

"One of them guys cinched my fiver!" he bawled. "You figure that I'm going to let him keep it!"

"Don't be a silly ass! Your banknote's lying about your study somewhere—go and hunt for it, and don't worry."

"I'm telling you I've combed that study, every doggoned inch of it!" hooted Fisher T. Fish. "One of them had it, I'm telling you!"

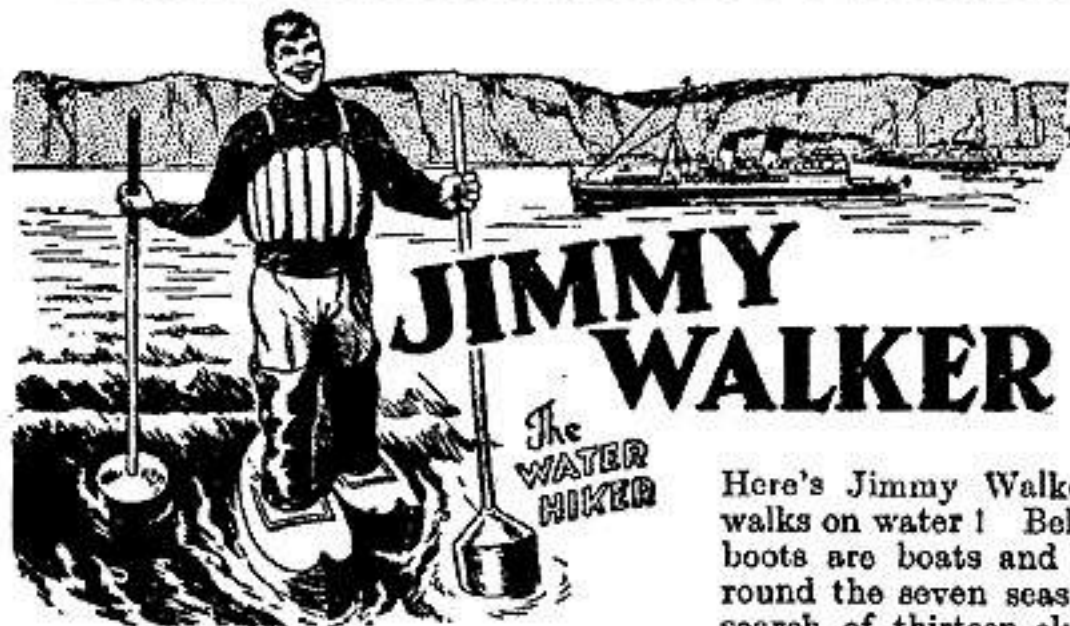
"Rubbish!"

"I figured that it might be that fat clam Bunter, but he ain't been spending any money! I guess you know where his money goes when he has any. I'll say Bunter ain't got it. One of them guys—"

"Fool!" snapped Stacey.

Fisher T. Fish gave an angry snort. The matter was important to him, if not to Stacey; and Fishy's idea was that the head boy of the Remove ought to have been deeply concerned about it. Instead of which, Stacey evidently did not care a straw about his missing fiver.

The American junior jerked along to Study No. 1 and hurled the door open. "Say, you guys," he hooted, as he



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tramped into Study No. 1. "I guess— Why, carry me home to die!"

Fisher T. Fish broke off in sheer amazement.

Not suspecting for a single moment the fatuous trick that had been played with his five-pound note, Fishy was convinced that one of the tea-party in Study No. 1 had snaffled it, or that they were all in the game together.

One of them, or all of them, had his missing fiver—he was absolutely certain of that.

Now, as he jerked into Study No. 1, his eyes nearly popped from his head at what seemed to him indubitable proof that his suspicion was well-founded.

There was a banknote in Harry Wharton's hand.

It was a five-pound note.

Fishy fairly goggled at it.

Five-pound notes were, of course, very uncommon in the Remove. Lord Mauleverer had such things, and the Bounder, and Monty Newland. Other fellows seldom or never did. Only on very rare occasions did such a handsome tip reach any lucky fellow in the Remove.

Wharton, certainly, had no large supply of cash, as Fishy knew. There had been talk in the Form of Wharton selling his bike to raise the necessary sum to settle with Mr. Piker. Every fellow knew that Wharton had been in a difficulty about that.

Now, Fisher T. Fish saw him with a five-pound note in his hand!

He gasped.

"Waal, I swow!" stuttered Fisher T. Fish, when he recovered his voice. "I'll tell a man this is the bee's knee! I'll say it's the elephant's side-whiskers, and then some! Fan me!"

The Famous Five stared round at him.

"Want anything?" asked Harry.

"Yep!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "I'll say so! I'll jest whisper it! I should smile! I'll mention that I want that fiver."

"This fiver!" said Harry blankly.

"Sure!" hooted Fisher T. Fish. "You figure that I'm letting you cinch my fiver now I've seen it in your paws! Not so's you'd notice it."

Wharton stared, not comprehending for a moment. Then as he understood he jumped to his feet, his face crimson.

"You—you—you—" he gasped.

"You rotten rascal, what do you mean? Do you dare to say—" Wrath choked him.

"Oh, come off!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "Don't you come the high horse with me, and you with my fiver in your paws! You hand over that fiver, you pesky piecan, or I'll go straight to Quelch and tell him you've pinched it! You hear me toot?"

Wharton thrust the five-pound note into his pocket.

Then he stepped towards Fisher T. Fish.

He did not speak again—he was too angry to speak. He let out right and left. The right caught Fishy on his bony chin—the left followed it up, on Fishy's bony nose! Fishy flew!

There was a crash in the Remove passage as the junior from New York landed there on his back.

Wharton's eyes blazed at him from the study doorway.

"Now get up and have some more!" he roared.

"Yow-ow-woooooh!" gurgled Fisher T. Fish.

He staggered to his feet.

"Give the worm a few more!" said Johnny Bull.

Wharton did not need telling. He followed Fisher T. Fish into the passage, punching.

"Yaw-aw-ooooh!" howled Fishy.

"Keep off, you galoot! Wake snakes! Oh, carry me home to die! Yow-ow!"

Thump, thump, thump!

Stacey stared on at the scene. He was not surprised to see Fisher T. Fish leave Study No. 1 like this if he had accused the fellows there of pinching his fiver.

Fisher T. Fish dodged round him, and scuttled into Study No. 3 for safety. For the moment he was thinking less of his lost fiver than of getting away from a pair of angry, lashing fists.

"Say, keep him off!" yelled Fishy.

Stacey blocked the doorway as Wharton seemed disposed to follow Fishy into Study No. 3.

"That's enough, Wharton!" he said sharply.

Wharton looked for a moment as if he would knock Stacey into the study after Fisher T. Fish. But he restrained himself, and turned away without answering. Perhaps it occurred to him that Fishy had had enough. Fishy was feeling as if he had had a great deal too much. Wharton turned on his heel and went back to his own study, and the Famous Five went downstairs together.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

At Last!

FISHER T. FISH rubbed his bony nose, his bony chin, and other bony spots.

He was feeling rather as if he had had a collision with a traction-engine. He gasped and panted as he rubbed the painful places.

"Say, is that piecan gone?" he asked at last, addressing the back of Stacey's head.

Stacey, in the doorway, was still waiting for his study-mates, who did not seem to be coming.

"Yes, they're gone!" snapped Stacey over his shoulder. "You can get out of my study!"

"What about my fiver?" gasped Fisher T. Fish, still rubbing his bony spots. "He's got it!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!"

"I tell you I saw it in his hand!" yelled Fisher T. Fish.

Stacey spun round in the doorway.

"What's that?" he exclaimed.

"I'm telling you I saw my banknote in his paw! He's got it!"

"Who?"

"That guy Wharton!"

"Wharton?"

"Yep!"

"You saw a five-pound note in Wharton's hand?" exclaimed Stacey, staring blankly at the American junior.

"You said it!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. Stacey's eyes glittered.

"You're sure?"

"Think I'm blind?" hooted Fisher T. Fish. "I'm telling you that galoot Wharton had a five-pound note in his hand when I looked into his study, and I'll say it was my fiver! Where'd he get one from, say?"

Stacey caught his breath.

Once before, the thought, or, rather, the hope, had entered his mind that Harry Wharton might have picked up the lost banknote in Study No. 14. He had dismissed the idea as absurd—as indeed it was.

But now it did not seem so absurd.

Everybody knew that Wharton was short of money. It was no secret that he had intended to sell things to raise five pounds for Mr. Piker; but he had sold nothing yet.

If he was suddenly in possession of such a sum as five pounds when exactly that sum was missing—a banknote, too,

when it was a banknote that had been lost!

Stacey hardly breathed.

He had only the remaining week or two of the term to work in if he was to succeed in his schemes against his rival. After that, they would be at different schools and he would be powerless. Was this the chance he had wanted? Was his rival, at the eleventh hour, playing right into his hands?

Most fellows would have thought it too bad to be true. To Stacey it seemed too good to be true.

If Wharton was a thief—

He remembered his own temptation when he owed money to Joe Banks, and how terribly nearly he had gone over the edge of dishonesty. Had Wharton, similarly tempted, gone over the verge?

Stacey's thoughts raced. Was it possible that, at long last, he had his enemy in the hollow of his hand?

Fisher T. Fish continued to rub bony spots and grunt and gasp. But he was thinking more of his lost fiver now than of his painful bones.

"Say, you come with me and talk to him, Stacey," said Fisher T. Fish. "Now a guy's seen a fiver in his paw, he can't figure that he can keep it, see? I sure don't want to make a row, s'long as I get the fiver!"

Stacey smiled—an evil smile.

If it was true that Wharton had pinched Fishy's fiver, he did not want to avoid a "row" on the subject; the more row there was, the better for his purpose.

"You've no doubt that it's your fiver?" he asked.

"Sure!"

"Then you'd better go to Quelch at once."

Fisher T. Fish gave him a sharp look. Fishy was not, perhaps, quite so spry and smart as he reckoned that he was. But he knew all about the bitter feud between the doubles of the Remove, and he was not a fellow to be made use of.

"I guess I ain't going to Quelch!" he answered. "I don't want him asking a lot of questions. And—"

"And what?" snapped Stacey savagely.

Fishy shook his bony head.

"It's sure my fiver," he said. "I guess that's a cinch! But accusing a guy of stealing is purty serious. S'pose it turned out that his uncle had sent it to him, and it was his?"

"Colonel Wharton's not likely to have sent him a tip! He's refused to let him have the money to pay Piker."

Fishy nodded.

"It's a cinch," he agreed. "But I guess he will hand over that fiver now I've seen it! I ain't going to Quelch!"

Stacey set his lips.

He was determined that the matter should come before Quelch; but he would have preferred the accusation to come from Fisher T. Fish. But that youth's habitual caution stood in the way.

To accuse a fellow of stealing was all very well, if it was proved. But if it was not proved, it might very easily mean a Head's flogging for the accuser.

Fishy firmly believed that it was his fiver he had seen in Wharton's hand. But there was at least a chance that it was not.

There was risk in making an accusation that might prove unfounded, and there was risk of Quelch inquiring into the source of that wealth and getting on the track of the moneylending business.

Greed was one of the strongest traits in Fishy's fascinating character. But caution was stronger.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Accused!

He was not in the least actuated by personal malice, like Stacey! All he wanted was his fiver.

"You come with me and talk to him!" he repeated. "I guess I want you to see that he don't go off the deep end again. You——"

"Better come with me to Quelch——"
"Nix on Quelch!" said Fisher T. Fish definitely, and he walked round Stacey and left the study.

Stacey gritted his teeth. There was no "use" to be made of the cautious Fishy. But, as head boy of the Remove, he could take the matter up; it was, in fact, his duty as head boy to look into it.

He remained thinking the matter over for a few minutes. If Fisher T. Fish had seen a five-pound note in Wharton's hand, it was the missing fiver. On that point he had absolutely no doubt.

He left the study at last, and went downstairs. He found the Co. in the quad. They had changed into flannels to go down to cricket, while Wharton was gone to Mr. Piker's. Stacey came up to them.

"Where's Wharton?" he asked.

"Find out!" grunted Johnny Bull. He had no politeness to waste on his chum's enemy.

"I have to see him, as head boy!" said Stacey.

"Then you'd better buck up," said Bob Cherry. "He's gone for his bike to go over to Piker's Farm."

And the Co. walked away. Stacey hurried down to the bike-shed. There was a glint of triumph in his eyes. Wharton was going to Piker's Farm—he could only be going to pay the five pounds. Was there a doubt now?

Harry Wharton was wheeling out his machine as the head boy of the Remove came up. He continued to wheel it out, disregarding a sign from Stacey to stop.

"Hold on, Wharton!" called out Stacey.

Without even turning his head, Harry wheeled the bicycle out at the gate.

Stacey overtook him.

"I've heard from Fishy——" he began.

Wharton's eyes gleamed at him.

"Don't tell me what you've heard from Fishy!" he said, between his teeth. "Not unless you want some of what I gave that rotter."

"He says he saw a fiver in your hand in your study."

"He can say what he likes."

"Where did you get it?"

"Find out!"

With that, Wharton put a leg over his machine and pedalled away. He rode in the direction of Piker's Farm at Friardale.

Stacey stood looking after him. He was breathing hard and deep. There was no doubt now—but he was in no hurry to act. Fisher T. Fish only wanted to get his fiver back—but that was not what Stacey wanted! In half an hour's time, Wharton would have parted with that banknote, and it would be gone beyond recovery! Then would be the time for Stacey to act!

He walked back to the House with a smile on his face! He caught a word from Temple of the Fourth speaking to Dabney as he passed them.

"I hear that Wharton's leaving at the end of the term!"

Stacey walked on, smiling! He fancied that Wharton would be leaving before the end of the term! He would be leaving that day! Once he had parted with the stolen fiver beyond recall—No wonder the schemer of the Remove smiled.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,432.

"COME in!" said Mr. Quelch.

Stacey entered his study.

The kind smile with which Mr. Quelch usually greeted his head boy did not come so spontaneously as of old. Still, he smiled genially.

Although he might be, and had been, led into injustice, Quelch was a just man. And it was not just to make any difference in his treatment of Stacey, unless he discarded him from his confidence altogether.

That he was far from prepared to do. He still believed in Stacey, and hoped that his belief was well-founded.

"What is it, Stacey?" His voice was quite kind, but he could not infuse into it the old cordiality.

Stacey did not fail to observe it. The shock to Quelch's faith had gone deeper than Quelch himself realised.

But it would be all serene again when Wharton was sacked for theft! If Quelch's thoughts were turning with compunction towards his former head boy, that would put paid to it.

And Stacey had no doubt about it. What he believed himself, he expected the others would believe. He did not wholly realise that in his own case the wish was father to the thought.

He closed the study door, came across to his Form-master's table, and stood there, leaning one hand on it. His face was so grave that the Remove master eyed him very curiously and a little doubtfully.

"What is it, Stacey?" he repeated.

"I have to speak of a very serious matter, sir!" said Stacey quietly. "I think it is my duty to report it to you, as head boy, but——" He paused.

"Does it concern Wharton?"

"Yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips a little.

"I am not sure whether I had better hear it, then," he answered. "If, however, it is a very serious matter——"

"It is a theft, sir."

Mr. Quelch started so violently that he dropped the pen in his hand and a shower of blots scattered over his papers.

"What!" he almost shouted.

But he calmed himself at once and made Stacey a gesture to be silent. His eyes were on the handsome face that was so like Wharton's, searchingly.

Did he trust this boy now?

He could hardly have said. He knew only one thing against him, and that had been explained away more or less plausibly. Was a single shock to shake the whole edifice of his faith in the boy? Whether or not, Mr. Quelch certainly felt, for the first time, a touch of repugnance for Stacey.

"Before you say more, Stacey, listen to me carefully," he said. "To all appearances, your relative Wharton has taken to bad courses this term, and has gone to the bad almost entirely. But that he is capable of so base a thing as theft is inconceivable to my mind. If you have reason to believe so, speak on, otherwise, say no more; but make sure that you have good and sufficient reason!"

Stacey drew a long breath.

Before yesterday, he knew Mr. Quelch would not have uttered those words to him. He would have taken it for granted that he had ample reason to speak. Obviously, the shock to Quelch's faith had gone deep.

All the more for that reason, however, Stacey was not to be deterred.

"A banknote is missing, sir!" he said.

"It has been missing for some days, and Fish—the fellow it belongs to—has suspected Wharton from the beginning. I took no notice of this, however, till this afternoon, when Fish informed me that he had seen Wharton with a similar banknote."

"Go on!"

"It was a five-pound note, sir! Wharton was in Fish's study when it was lost. He called me in at the time, and I suggested that the fellows there should turn out their pockets before leaving the study."

"Did they do so?"

"They refused to do so, sir."

"Did you not insist?"

"Wharton lost his temper at the suggestion, and attacked me. I was thrown over, and they left the study. The matter dropped."

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"And now——" he asked.

"There has been talk for some time, sir, in the Form, about Wharton having to sell some things to raise the money. I have inquired, and found that he has not done so. But he has now gone out to see Mr. Piker and pay him—his friends told me so. Fish says that he saw him with a five-pound note——"

"But surely you spoke to Wharton?"

"I did, sir, and he refused to answer."

Mr. Quelch leaned his chin on his hand, his brow dark with troubled thought. What did it look like?

What it looked like was only too clear. Yet, somehow, Mr. Quelch could not take the view he would have taken a day or two ago. Breaking bounds, pub-haunting, gambling—easy steps to theft—and yet——

Was a doubt creeping into Mr. Quelch's mind whether Harry Wharton really was guilty of all that had been laid to his charge that term?

It really seemed so.

It was only a few days since Mr. Piker's visit, when the Remove master had been prepared to condemn Wharton almost without a hearing. And now it——

It was a long silence.

Stacey waited.

He would have given a good deal to know what was passing in Mr. Quelch's mind. But, at any rate, he had to act on this.

"Why has not Fish come to me?" asked Mr. Quelch, at last. "As owner of the missing banknote, he should have done so. Such a matter should have been reported to me at once."

"I have advised Fish to place it before you, sir. Until he informed me that he had seen Wharton with the banknote, I merely thought that it was lost, and did not suppose for a moment that there had been a theft."

"Quite so—quite so! Fetch Fish here!" said Mr. Quelch.

Stacey left the study.

He smiled as he went down the passage. Fisher T. Fish, willy-nilly, had to "see Quelch about it" now.

While he was gone Mr. Quelch rose from his chair and moved about the study, troubled and restless. If this was true, and it looked like it, the "worst boy in his Form" would soon be off his hands—without waiting till the end of the term. Was it true?

He caught sight of a junior in the quad, and fancied for a moment that it was Stacey looking for Fisher T. Fish. The next moment he saw that it was Harry Wharton. The Co., in flannels, fresh and ruddy from the cricket, joined him, and they came towards the House.

Mr. Quelch watched them from his study window. Wharton had returned from Piker's Farm. He had paid Mr.



"Want anything?" asked Wharton. "Yep!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "I'll mention that I want that fiver. Do you figure that I'm letting you pinch my fiver now I've seen it in your paws!" "What do you mean?" gasped Wharton. "Oh, come off!" howled the American junior. "Hand over that fiver, or I'll go straight to Quelch and tell him you've pinched it!"

Piker—apparently with a five-pound note! Where had he obtained it?

Mr. Quelch's brow grew darker. If there was a thief in his Form, he would remain only so long as was required to establish his guilt, and then the gates of Greyfriars would close behind him for ever.

There was a tap at his door, and Stacey re-entered, accompanied by Fisher T. Fish. The latter was looking very worried and uneasy.

"Fish! I understand that you have lost a five-pound note?"

"Yep! I mean, yes, sir!" mumbled Fishy.

"You accuse Wharton—"

"Nope!" said Fisher T. Fish hastily. "I guess I ain't accusing anybody, sir! I'd sure like to know where Wharton got the fiver I saw in his paw, but I sure ain't accusing anybody, sir."

"Tell me how and when it was lost."

"It was in my study, sir!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I—I had it put by for the holidays, sir, and happened to have it on the table when them guys came in to tea, and they were larking and upset the table. I looked for it everywhere and couldn't find it."

"You believed that one of the boys had taken it?"

"I guess it didn't walk away, sir."

"Answer me directly, yes or no!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Yep!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. He hated making a straight answer, but there was no help for it.

"What boys were present? Give me all their names."

"Wharton, Cherry, Bull, Nugent, Hurree Singh, and Bunter, sir."

"Stacey, tell the boys named to come to my study."

"Yes, sir."

Stacey left the study a second time. Fisher T. Fish remained, wriggling uncomfortably. In a few minutes

Stacey returned, followed by the Famous Five, with Billy Bunter bringing up the rear—looking far from easy in his fat mind.

Bunter, certainly, was not thinking about Fishy's banknote; he had almost forgotten it. But he had too many sins on his fat conscience not to feel uneasy when he was summoned into his Form-master's majestic presence.

Harry Wharton & Co. were only looking mildly surprised. But on Wharton's face a dogged expression was dawning. What was it now?—he wondered bitterly. If he was going at the end of the term could not Quelch and even Stacey let him alone for the last week or two?

"Wharton!"

"Yes!" The junior apparently forgot the "sir."

Mr. Quelch did not fail to note the omission. His eyes glinted.

"Have you paid Mr. Piker's claim?"

"Yes."

"You have paid him five pounds?"

"Yes."

"Was it in the form of a banknote?"

"I don't see that that has anything to do with it."

"Whether you see or not, Wharton, you will answer my question instantly!" barked Mr. Quelch.

"It was!" said Harry, setting his lips.

"Where did you obtain the banknote?"

Harry Wharton looked at him. He looked at Stacey—and at Fisher T. Fish! Then he understood.

A blaze came into his eyes. A surge of passionate anger and indignation almost choked him, and he could not speak for a moment. When he did speak his voice was husky with rage.

"I will not tell you! I will say nothing! Take me to my headmaster, if you like—I will not answer you!"

Mr. Quelch's face set like iron.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Only Bunter!

THERE was a brief silence in the study.

Stacey lowered his eyes, afraid that the gleam of triumph in them would betray him. He could scarcely conceal his satisfaction.

The Co. stood dumb. Billy Bunter blinked from face to face through his big spectacles in wonder. Bunter had not the faintest idea, so far, what was up.

Mr. Quelch broke the silence.

"You refuse to answer, Wharton?"

"Yes!" said, or, rather, snarled the suspected junior. "If Stacey is making out that I am a thief, let him get on with it."

"Stacey has nothing to do with this matter except to report it to me, his duty as head boy!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "It is Fish who has lost the banknote, and he—"

"I ain't accused Wharton, sir!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I ain't accused anybody—"

"Silence!"

"Oh lor'!" murmured Billy Bunter. His fat brain began to grasp what was on.

"My boys," said Mr. Quelch, addressing the Co., "I have sent for you because you were present when the banknote was first missed. It is clear that, as Fish failed to find it in his study, it was picked up by someone."

Bob Cherry reddened.

"Not by one of us, sir!" he said. "And if Fish thinks that Wharton touched his fiver it only shows what a rotten worm he is."

"That will do, Cherry! Do you know what became of the banknote?"

"No, sir."

"Or you, Nugent!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,432.

"No, sir!"
 "Or you, Bull?"
 "No, sir!"
 "Or you, Hurrée Singh?"
 "The answer is in the esteemed negative."
 "Or you, Bunter?"
 "Oh crikey!"
 "Answer me, Bunter!"
 "Oh dear! I—I never touched it, sir! It was only a lark on Fishy, because he rapped my knuckles, sir—"
 "What?"
 "And—and he's so jolly stingy, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I thought it would be a lark to make him think the banknote was lost, sir."
 "Wha-a-t?"

Every eye turned on the fat Owl of the Remove.

Stacey changed colour.
 It was clear that Bunter knew something about it—though he could not guess what. It could not have been Bunter!

Mr. Quelch fixed his gimlet eyes on the fat Owl. Never had they seemed so like gimlets to the hapless Bunter.

"What do you know of this matter, Bunter?" he demanded sternly.

"Oh! Nothing, sir!" gasped Bunter. "N-n-nobody pinched that fiver, sir! It wasn't pinched! Oh lor'!"

"Did you pick it up, Bunter?"
 "I—I—I might have picked it up, sir!" stammered Bunter. "It—it was only a—a—a lark, sir! Oh dear!"

"A lark!" repeated Mr. Quelch in a terrifying voice. "You call it a lark, Bunter, to take possession of another boy's money?"

"Oh! No!" gasped Bunter. "I—I didn't, sir! Oh crikey! The banknote's still in Fishy's study, sir!"

Sensation!
 "The banknote is still in Fish's study?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh dear! Yes, sir!"
 "Aw, can it, you gink!" yapped Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I been over that study with a small comb, and there ain't nary banknote—"

"You silly ass!" gasped Bunter. "I hid it, just to pull your leg! It's there all right!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Where did you hide the banknote, Bunter?" hooted Mr. Quelch, looking at the fat Owl as if he could have bitten him.

"In—in—in a book, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Have you searched in the books, Fish?"

"Aw! Nope!" stuttered Fisher T. Fish. "Who'd have thought of looking in books for a banknote that was dropped on the floor?"

"It—it was one of Bull's books, sir—a prize book!" gasped Bunter.

"One of my books!" breathed Johnny Bull. "You fat villain!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"
 "Are you so incredibly stupid, Bunter, as to play practical jokes with money?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir—I mean, no, sir—I mean, I—"

"Go with Fish immediately, and point out the book in which you placed the banknote! Both of you return here!"

"Oh dear!"
 Bunter rolled out with Fisher T. Fish.

A dead silence reigned in the study while they were gone. A faint grin was dawning on Bob Cherry's face. Wharton's eyes were on Stacey, gleaming with scorn. Stacey was almost white.

He had believed, without the shadow of a doubt, that Wharton had taken Fisher T. Fish's banknote. He had wanted to believe it, and he had believed it. Even now it was unexplained how Wharton had happened to possess a five-pound note. But it was clear now that, wheresoever Wharton had obtained that banknote, it was not the one that belonged to Fisher T. Fish. Stacey was utterly taken aback and confounded.

In a few minutes Fisher T. Fish returned with Bunter. In his bony hand was a five-pound note, and on his bony face an expression of ecstatic satisfaction.

"You have found your banknote, Fish?"

"Yep, sir!"
 "It was hidden in a book, as Bunter stated?"

"Sure—I mean, yes, sir!"
 "Very good! I am very glad that it is now clear that the banknote was not purloined at all," said Mr. Quelch. "You may go, Fish!"

Fisher T. Fish went gladly. Quelch had not, after all, got on the track of the moneylending. He was too busily occupied with other matters—which was rather fortunate for the business man of the Remove.

"M-m-may I go, sir?" gasped Bunter. "It—it was only a—a—a lark, sir—just to make Fishy sit up, sir, for being such a stingy beast, sir!"

"You will take five hundred lines, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"
 "If you should ever be guilty of such crass folly again, I shall request the headmaster to administer a flogging!"

"Oh lor'!"
 Billy Bunter tottered from the study.

"Wharton!"
 Harry Wharton gave his Form-master a bitter look.

"Yes, sir! I hope you are satisfied, now that I have not stolen Fish's banknote, as it has not been stolen at all!" he said, with savage sarcasm.

Mr. Quelch breathed hard.
 "In view of the circumstances, Wharton, I shall overlook your insolence," he said. "You may go!"

He made a gesture to the Co. to leave the study, and to Stacey to remain. The Famous Five went to the door.

But at the door Harry turned back.

"I'm sorry, sir!" he said impulsively. "I—I—didn't mean to be cheeky! At—at least—" He stammered. "I mean, I'm sorry I was cheeky! It was my Aunt Amy who sent me the banknote, sir, to pay Mr. Piker!"

"That is immaterial now, Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch, not unkindly. "But you will realise that, if you had answered me frankly at once instead of giving way to an unruly temper—"

"I know, sir! I'm really sorry!"

"Very well, Wharton; we will say no more about it!" said Mr. Quelch, quite graciously.

And Harry Wharton left the study with his friends.

Stacey would have been glad to leave it, too.

But Mr. Quelch had not done with his head boy yet.

He fixed his eyes on him grimly. His voice was like ice as he addressed him.

"Stacey, you see now that there was nothing—absolutely nothing—in the charge—the very serious charge—you made against your relative?"

Stacey licked his dry lips.

"Yes, sir. I certainly thought—"

"I am afraid, Stacey, that you were only too willing to think harm of your relative Wharton! The moment I investigated this matter the facts came to light, and it transpired that there had been no theft at all. It should have been a simple matter for you to make the same discovery! You have not acted, Stacey, in the manner I have a right to expect from a head boy!"

Stacey said nothing.

Mr. Quelch opened his lips again, but closed them. It seemed as if he had more to say, but decided not to say it. There was a brief silence.

"You may go, Stacey!" said Mr. Quelch abruptly.

Stacey went, gritting his teeth as he walked down the passage. Mr. Quelch, left alone, shook his head very seriously. His faith in his head boy had been shaken, and somehow—he hardly knew how—his distrust of him was growing. He was sorely troubled in mind.

Stacey went up to the Remove. On the Remove landing he passed the Famous Five. He gave Harry Wharton a black look.

Wharton's lip curled.


"You'd better try again!" he said contemptuously.

Stacey went into his study and slammed the door.

THE END.

(A real good yarn, wasn't it, chums? But typical of what you always get in the MAGNET. Order next Saturday's issue and thus make sure of reading the final story in this series: "HARRY WHARTON WINS THROUGH!" It hits the bullseye!)

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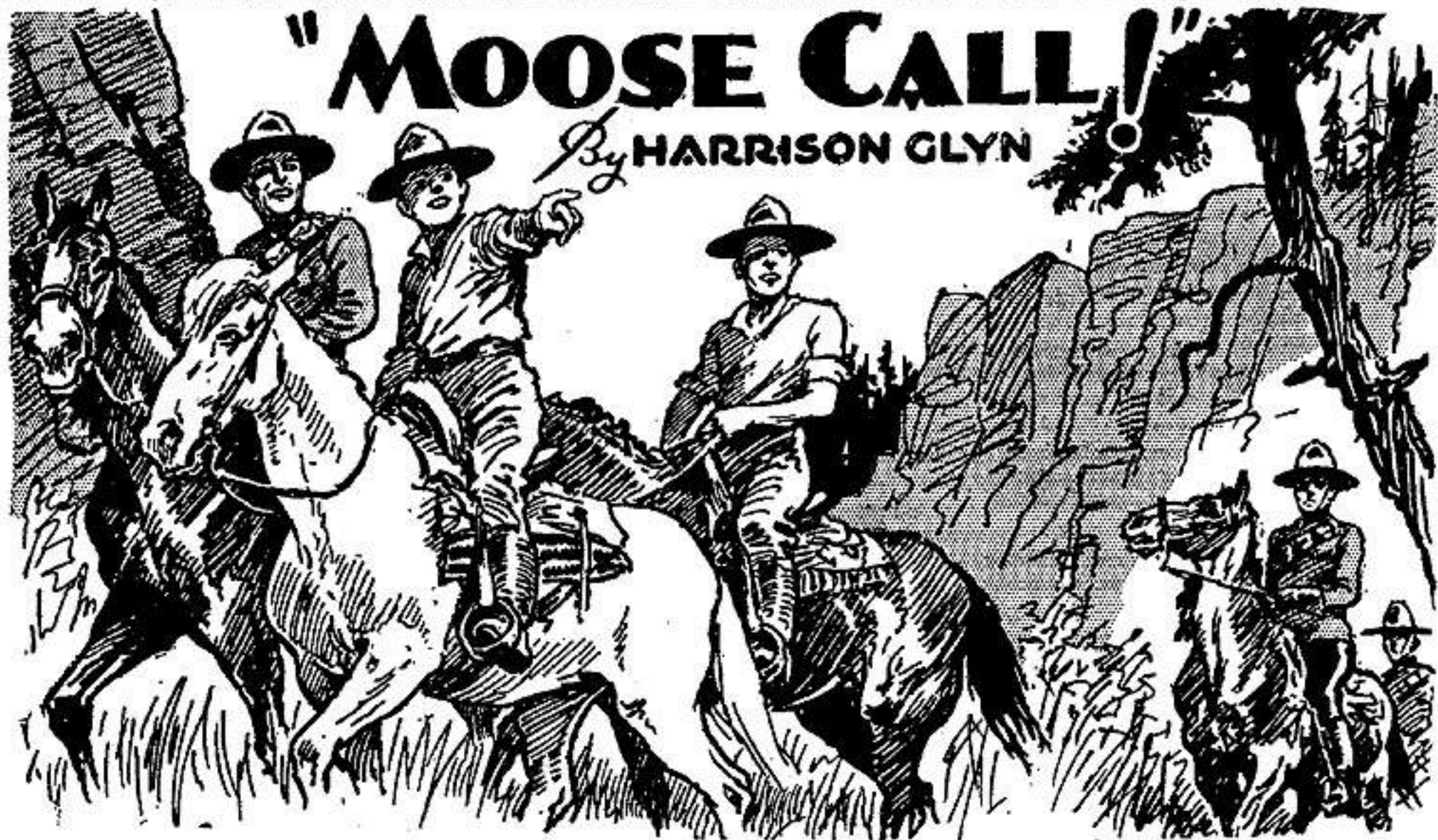
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"MOOSE CALL!"

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WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

Selwyn Gore and his brother, Colin, set out for Moose Call to avenge the murder of their Uncle Amyas, a gold prospector. En route, they meet Mountain Lion, a Sioux Indian and friend of Amyas Gore, who leads them to a great natural amphitheatre behind the Great Chief's Head in the Sunrise Mountains, where they discover the murdered man's claim. Leaving the Indian behind, Selwyn and Colin make for the homeward trail to register the claim. They are ambushed, however, by a gang of toughs led by Majoe and Musty, who have already registered the claim, but do not know its whereabouts. The two Brits succeed in trapping the gang in the amphitheatre, but find themselves on an unknown trail. Fortunately, Mountain Lion is near at hand and hauls Selwyn to safety.

(Now read on.)

Spilling for a Fight!

COLIN was not long in following his brother. Nor did it need the broad, encouraging grin of the Sioux to urge him on.

Mountain Lion reached down for his hands, and, gripping them firmly, dragged him up and swung him down beside Selwyn. Then he picked up his tomahawk and squatted cross-legged beside the two brothers, a grin stretching his smeared face from ear to ear.

"White English boy make plenty big climb," he said, with a friendly nod. "How come?"

"We got away from Majoe and his gang, Mountain Lion," answered Colin. "They're up in the claim behind the Great Chief's Head. We escaped by the waterfall, but took the wrong fork and came out at a water-hole far down the mountain. One of the brutes drowned himself while chasing us, but the other seven went down to Amyas Gore's claim through the slide hole."

Mountain Lion grunted.

"Then white English boys make big climb? Good! Mountain Lion heard them coming, heard them talking. He

didn't know. He came 'long meaning to use the sharp tomahawk if bad white men. But good, finding white boys!"

In his delight, he filled and lit an Indian pipe, which he smoked contentedly as he looked from one boy to the other, his face as grave as a carved image once more.

"Mountain Lion afraid bad white men kill English boys after they stam-pede the white men's ponies!" he grunted.

"And so they would have done," said Selwyn, "had they not wanted us to show them the way to Amyas Gore's claim." He laughed. "But we fooled them at the slide-hole, Mountain Lion."

"Lion, we're starving!" gasped Selwyn. "If we don't soon get food to eat we shall die."

The Sioux reached for a skin bag which he carried slung from his shoulders when climbing and, searching in it, found some hard, dried meat and some coarse wheaten bread, which he divided with his scalping-knife and shared between them. The boys' teeth cracked upon the coarse, dry wheat, and tore at the leathern meat; but the hard chewing necessary soon helped to ease their hunger, and like magic their spirits soared again.

"Mountain Lion left white boys and Isaac Snugger riding to Tomahawk," said the Sioux, after watching them awhile. "From the hills he saw bad white men bring English boys back. Where is Isaac Snugger?"

"Dead, Lion," said Selwyn, with a gulp. "Majoe and Musty shot him on the Tomahawk road, and threw his body out on the plain. They meant to kill us, too. The only thing that saved us was that Majoe did not know how to find Amyas Gore's claim."

The Sioux made no comment, but smoked on, eyeing them stolidly, his black eyes on fire. He squatted like a figure cast in bronze, his expression Sphinx-like.

It was not until the boys could eat no more, and told him so, that the Sioux moved, and then it was to hold out a water-bottle, with a grunt, from which they both drank greedily.

The bottle emptied, Selwyn stood erect, his feet spread, his arms thrown

upward to the sky. He had ate and drank, and felt as if he had been born again. The rare mountain air invigorated him, and his bright eyes danced with excitement.

"There's only one thing I want now, Mountain Lion," he said, "and that is to meet Majoe and Musty face to face with a gun in my hand, and shoot it out with them. I want to get even with them for killing Isaac Snugger."

The Sioux drew a Colt revolver from the holster attached to his belt and gave it to Selwyn. But Selwyn showed him the one he had found in the mountain cave, gripped in the dead man's hand. So the Sioux gave Colin the gun, and, ejecting the sodden cartridges from Selwyn's .45, he cleaned the cylinder and barrel and refilled the holes with new ones. That done, he shouldered his skin bag and a Winchester rifle, picked up his tomahawk and scalping-knife, and, pointing along the ledge, led the way upwards.

Mountain Lion, acting as guide, led them by unknown ways and through narrow gorges over the Sunrise Mountains, until, towards the wane of the afternoon, Selwyn gazed upon familiar ground.

The plumed head of the Sioux was bobbing far in front of them as he walked the dangerous ways with head thrown back and shoulders squared, as picturesque a figure as Selwyn and his brother had ever seen.

Suddenly, in a turn in the track, the brothers saw the Great Chief's Head sharply defined higher up the mountain in front of them. The Sioux had led them back to the old trail.

He began to climb upwards until they lost the Head and came within view of the narrow and treacherous ledge which led to the slide-hole. Then he waited for them.

"Why have you brought us back here, Lion?" asked Selwyn.

The Sioux pointed up to where the hidden hole lay and grunted.

"Bad white men behind there," he said. "Listen! Look!"

Selwyn stared about him, but could see nothing but bare, barren, frowning rock. There was something terrifying

about the desolate place. Selwyn would have hated being up there alone.

Suddenly Mountain Lion opened wide his mouth and let out a piercing and echoing war-whoop which thundered over the mountain.

"Ha-la-la-la la-ooooooh! Halloooo-oooo-oooo!"

The rocks hurled the echoes back. Selwyn saw eagles swoop in startled flight, and then, as the war-whoop died, the whole mountain seemed to ring out an answering challenge.

For a moment Selwyn really believed he was listening to the echoes, but some of the cries were shrill and others deep in tone, and soon he knew that he was listening to the answering war-whoops of Indian braves. The cries came from all along the mountain side, and as he scanned the frowning rocky places he saw heads capped with eagle's feathers rise into view; saw faces hideous with warpaint peering down at him from rocky holes saw the Red men brandishing their rifles.

He counted twenty, thirty, or more, and every man was painted and armed to the teeth.

"Are they friends, Mountain Lion?" asked Selwyn.

"Sioux!" informed the Redskin. "When Mountain Lion failed in his attempt to rescue the English white boys from the bad white men's camp, he stampeded their ponies down to the mesas and along them, over the mountains, to the camp of Red Bull. Red Bull make war on the bad white men."

With a grin of triumph he pointed to the slide hole.

"Majoe, Musty, Slick go in there," he said, "but they never come out. Sioux wait here. Sioux wait upon the way out by the waterfall. The bad white men can never escape. If they try, Sioux shoot; Sioux scalp. Red Bull's warriors have come to protect the claim of the great white chief, Amyas Gore."

Selwyn's eyes blazed, but he gasped when he thought of the doom of Majoe and his gang of crooks, who were digging gold greedily in the amphitheatre behind the shadow of the Great Chief's Head.

Majoe and Musty had killed Amyas Gore in order to steal the claim. They had shot poor Isaac Snugger because the big-hearted, quaint little Tomahawk solicitor had looked like spoiling their plans, and they had intended to murder Selwyn and Colin—would have done so, in fact, if the boys had not outwitted them. All the same, it came as something like a shock to know they were doomed.

"Mountain Lion," gasped Selwyn, "you must not murder them!"

The Sioux looked grimly at Selwyn.

"No need," he replied. "Majoe and the bad white men have with them only so much food. That eaten, they must starve. When they begin to starve they will either fight one another or try to escape, and the only safe way out is by the waterfall. If they come that way the Sioux will cut them down. Wagh! It is justice! Amyas Gore was Red Bull's white brother. Isaac Snugger was Mountain Lion's friend. Kill bad white man; save trail."

"But you might get yourselves into trouble," said Selwyn. "Wouldn't it be better to send for the Mounties and let them deal with the bad men?"

The Sioux made a face and shrugged his massive shoulders.

"The Sioux are spoiling for a fight," said he. "Rather would I send them

sliding through the hole to battle with the bad men beside Amyas Gore's claim and take their scalps there."

Selwyn could see that the primitive savage still loomed largely in the Sioux nature. But the debate was cut short by the arrival of a magnificently garbed Sioux chieftain, whose plumed head-dress trailed over his shoulders and half-way down his back. His skin clothes were heavily beaded and decorated with elaborate designs in bright blue and red and white. His face was wrinkled like elephant's hide, and his yellow face was lit up by two brilliant black eyes that seemed to bore right through you. He trod noiselessly in his moccasins, and raised his right hand in salutation as he came close to the brothers.

"This is our great chief, Red Bull," introduced Mountain Lion. "Red Bull, meet the brave white English boys of whom I have spoken."

Red Bull gave each his hand and smiled encouragingly.

"Red Bull and his Sioux have taken to the warpath against the bad white men because of the English boys, who are the friends of the Great White Chief and our brother, Amyas Gore," he said. "Now Mountain Lion has found the English boys alive and well, and the bad men are shut up in the secret place behind the Great Chief's Head, where they may stay till they rot. It is good!"

"Red Bull," said Mountain Lion, who, with arms folded, had been doing a bit of quick thinking. "Mountain Lion take English boys down mountain to where Indian ponies are camped. The boys ride into Tomahawk and tell the soldiers. The Mounties ride out to arrest the bad white men who killed Isaac Snugger. Meanwhile, the Sioux keep watch. Is that good?"

"It is good," answered Red Bull. "Wagh!"

A Fruitless Search!

WITHOUT further delay, Mountain Lion led Selwyn and Colin down the treacherous slopes of the Sunrise Mountains until they came again to the ledge from which Majoe had hurled Amyas Gore to his death, after robbing him of his gold and shooting him.

Here the trail turned away, and, still dropping down, led to the shady bush-clad mesas above the foothills. Here, in a pocket, they found a bunch of Indians camped out, and with them a score or more of grazing ponies.

The Sioux pointed out the ponies that belonged to Majoe and his gang of claim jumpers and killers, and grinned.

"Plenty good pony for Injun!" he grunted. "But English boys ride on fine Injun pony to-morrow."

The day was closing in, and so they ate and drank, and, rolling themselves up in blankets, slept the night through.

The party awoke to find the moon still up and the stars twinkling in a cloudless sky. They breakfasted on fish caught from a mountain stream, hard rye bread and spring water.

After the meal, Mountain Lion caught the ponies, saddled them, and gave the boys the reins.

"White boys ride into Tomahawk with news," the Sioux said, giving them each a parting handshake. "Mountain Lion go up to help keep watch upon Majoe and his bad men."

"Thanks, Lion!" said Selwyn, his eyes shining with gratitude. "We owe you a frightful lot. I hope some day to be

able to repay you a little for what you have done."

"Bring back the soldiers, the Mounties!" the Sioux shouted after them, as, waving their hands in farewell, they rode their horses along the trail.

"Sure we will!" Selwyn called back to him.

The two brothers dipped down from the plateau, threaded their way through a pine-wood, and then came out in the open at a place where they could see the distant road to Tomahawk lying like a white thread upon the plain.

Here they turned their heads and glanced back. Mountain Lion was still standing rigid, like a statue, at a look-out point, his arms folded, his crested head thrown back. It seemed natural for him to stand like that, for him to be there. He was part of the mountains.

The sun was hot when they turned on to the Tomahawk road and urged their hard-bitten ponies along it. The way stretched straight in front of them, and they could follow it for miles.

The plain swept far away on the left hand, and the foothills were away to the right, bending inwards in the direction of Beaver Creek. They could see no sign of man or beast, only birds in flight.

Selwyn glanced ruefully down at his clothes, which had looked smart enough in Tomahawk, but were now torn, dirty spoilt by immersion, and badly stained, at his weather-beaten boots.

His shirt had shrunk, was old and dirty, yet something to be thankful for in their present plight. Selwyn reckoned he looked like a scarecrow, and a glance at Colin showed that his brother was the same.

Happening to slip his hand into his pocket, Selwyn found the loose gold-dust and the nuggets. He let out a whoop of joy. This would buy each a new outfit in Tomahawk.

"That'll be something to show Threfall, Col," he said, revealing a handful of the dust. "But, mind, the tunnel claim is ours."

"If we can ever get back to it!" laughed Colin.

The luck had changed indeed. Only a little while ago it had seemed as if the boys must die at the hands of Majoe and his gang of killers. Now they were free, and it was Majoe and his gang who were shut in that death-trap behind the Great Chief's Head. Even so, Selwyn shivered as he thought of Red Bull and his braves squatting on the mountain trail, hemming the villains in, waiting to scalp them should they attempt a forlorn rush.

It was good of Mountain Lion to furnish them with ponies and send them along the home trail, but—

Selwyn reined his pony to a halt and called out to Colin.

"Col," he gasped, "what if Mountain Lion sent us riding to get rid of us so that he and the Sioux could go in at the slide-hole and cut Majoe, Musty, and the gang to pieces, and scalp them, with no white man to see them do it?"

"Hope he docs," growled Colin. "I've no feeling of pity for the villains!"

"Nor I, really," said Selwyn. "But it would be a dreadful end. I'd sooner Sergeant Threfall and his Mounties went up there and took

them and hanged them. It would seem more regular."

A mile or so ahead of the boys the road forked to Beaver Creek, and Selwyn and Colin rode their ponies out on to the plain, for it was here Majoe and the gang had held them up, and Musty had shot poor Isaac Snugger.

Every detail of the scene stood out vividly; they remembered all—the stones which peeped up out of the waving grass; the stalks of tall, growing weeds; the flat, high boulder over there, close to the spot where the villains had thrown Snugger's riddled body down.

They rode to the spot, drew rein, and dismounted. The grass reached their ponies' knees. The boys fully expected to find a heap of clothes lying in the grass, and in them the bleaching bones of a grizzly skeleton. But they found nothing.

Possibly the high grass hid the remains from view. With heads bent, they looked around, moving from place to place. But there were no clothes to be found.

"This was the spot, Sel," said Colin, the first to speak. "The marks still show on the road where the gang held us up."

Selwyn nodded his curly head.

"You stay here, Col," he said, "and I'll go back and make sure."

He went back to the road, studied the hoof-marks which were plainly imprinted in sand and dust, then looked at his brother.

Yes, Colin was right. That was the place. The ground dipped there, so that Colin was only half-visible from the road. The gang had thrown Isaac Snugger like a sack down there, and Majoe had given him a finishing bullet as he lay, leaving his body to rot.

"It's the right spot, Col," said Selwyn, when he returned. "Poor Isaac must be there!"

They remounted and went over the ground again, but failed to find the body. They were about to give up, when they found Isaac Snugger's hat, lying deep in the grass in the hollow. It had Snugger's name inked on the inside band, and it lay where Snugger's body ought to have been.

"What's it mean, Sel?" asked Colin, puzzled. "Can some wild beast have come this way and borne poor Isaac's body over the plain?"

"What beast?" questioned Selwyn. "A grizzly? A mountain lion? They haven't any tigers in these parts. Colin, supposing Isaac Snugger were still alive?"

But Colin shook his handsome head. "They shot him twice. He was all crumpled up. His pony bolted. The night was cold and heavy with dew. Sel, there isn't a chance."

Selwyn and Colin had lost their own hats long ago. Their hair was bleached a golden white by the sun, and their faces were tanned to copper hue. Colin found that Isaac's old hat fitted him, and he put it on.

They rode on till the day closed in, when they sought a sheltered place, ate and drank, hobbled their ponies, and left them to graze until the morning.

Rising again at dawn, they ate and then rode on.

The pine-grove in which their car had been burnt by Majoe and Musty was now a vivid, fresh green, with grass and bright flowers leaping from the rich soil. They found the charred ruins of the car and bits of the tent, weed-grown and almost hidden from view. There was nothing worth the taking, so they went their way.



"This is our great chief, Red Bull," said Mountain Lion. "Red Bull, meet the brave white English boys of whom I have spoken." The Sioux chieftain raised his right hand in salutation as he approached Selwyn and Colin.

Two days later they rode into Tomahawk, to find its streets thronged with people and the car-parks packed with cars. The shops were all doing a roaring trade, and the stores were packed. Gasoline stations were working overtime, and adventurers from all the nations of the world were to be seen talking at corners or loitering on the sidewalks.

Straight to Snugger's office the boys rode, to find the ancient clerk in charge, writing laboriously with a printing hard in a heavy leather-bound book.

He squinted over the rims of his glasses as the door bell rang, and his face lighted up as he recognized the two boys.

"Just one word!" said Selwyn, who was for wasting no time. "When did Isaac Snugger come back?"

"Mr. Snugger?" stammered the startled clerk. "Isaac Snugger ain't bin back. Why, he went away with you. He ain't writ, he ain't phoned, he ain't done nothing!"

"Thanks!" said Selwyn, as he grabbed Colin's arm and darted out of the open door.

From the office the two boys rode to the headquarters of the Mounties. The first person they saw was Sergeant Threfall. He was seated on the doorstep, paring an apple with a broad-bladed pocket-knife.

"Hallo, sergeant!" yelled Selwyn.

The sergeant of the Mounties looked up, recognized them, then rose and gaped.

"Why, boys," he greeted, "I never thought of seeing you. Where's Papa Snugger? Did you find that claim? Just say what you want and tell us the news."

"Snugger's dead, sergeant," said Selwyn. "We found Amyas Gore's claim. But two villains named Majoe

and Musty, and a gang of toughs are in possession. They killed Snugger, and now Red Bull and his Sioux are hemming in the rascals. Saddle up a troop of Mounties, and let's all go back and clean up the ground."

For a few seconds Sergeant Threfall stared wide-eyed at the boys, his lower jaw working up and down. Then he jerked out one word. The word was: "Sure!"

The Lone Rider!

SERGEANT PAUL THREFALL, of the Mounties, soon had a troop of men together. He asked a thousand questions, and listened to the story Selwyn and Colin had to tell, his bronzed and rugged face set and grim, his brown eyes on fire.

"So you found Amyas Gore's murderers, and they bumped poor Isaac Snugger off," he said. "Well, wait till we lay hands on the skunks. They'll soon dance to another tune. But Mountain Lion has got Red Bull and his warriors out, you say? H'm! I'd rather they didn't shoot up Majoe and his gang. Much better for the Mounties to handle 'em. John Majoe and Musty Wilnot, eh? It may interest you to know that both those skunks were in Tomahawk the night you were shot at, boys."

He went out into the yard and watched his men saddling up.

"Amyas Gore never registered his claim in Tomahawk," he said. "Majoe and Musty killed him before he'd time, I suppose. Now they've jumped the claim. You say they can't get out?"

"The Sioux will wipe them out if they do," answered Selwyn. "But I don't think they can find the way out by the waterfall."

"In a jam, eh? Fine! And there's heaps of gold up in the mountain?"

"Tons of it, dust and nuggets. And in the cave through which the fall water runs—well, you've seen what we picked up."

The sergeant had, indeed. His eyes had bulged when Colin and Selwyn poured it out on to the table.

"When Majoe and Musty met you on the road, riding back with the gang, and shot up Isaac Snugger," he said, "you say they came from Beaver Creek?"

"Yes."

"Well, wait while I phone up." Paul Threfall got busy with the telephone, and after putting through several calls he found out all he wanted to know. "Boys," he went on, "Majoe and Musty registered a joint claim up in the Sunrise Mountains by the Great Chief's Head up above Moose Call. Soon we're going to rub that claim clean off the register."

They ate and rested, and later in the day the sergeant and a troop of twenty men rode out of town with Selwyn and Colin, heading for Moose Call.

The Mounties were a fine body of men, big muscular fellows who did full justice to their uniforms. Sergeant Paul was particularly imposing with his punched-in brown felt hat, his red coat with dark blue shoulder straps, yellow chevrons, blue riding-breeches with broad yellow stripes down the seams, brown riding-boots with spurs, and brown leather gun belt and holster.

His keen eyes, set in a sun-browned face, missed nothing as they peered out from under the shade of his wide flat hat brim, and every one of the men behind him showed the same strength and confidence.

They talked as they rode, and, making fine progress, lit a fire and camped that night thirty miles along the road.

"You say you didn't find a trace of Snugger's body when you looked on the way to Tomahawk," said the sergeant, as he sat before the fire, drinking neat liquor from a flask. "But you ought to have found bones, even if the wolves had picked his body clean. You found only his hat. And you say Mountain Lion said the Injun pony Isaac was ridin' when they shot him didn't go back to Red Bull's camp. How do you figure that out?"

"The pony might have been chased and eaten by wolves," answered Selwyn.

"Might have. Same stands for Isaac. Of course, Snugger might have been still alive when you and your brother were led away by Majoe and his gang of bullies, and have crawled some distance before he cashed in. But if he did we ought to find his bones lying out on the prairie somewhere."

They moved on at daybreak, and, making fine riding, camped beside the road within striking distance of Moose Call.

Next day they examined the ground where Isaac's body had been thrown to die and rot.

They scouted on an ever widening circle, until at last it became evident that whatever had happened to Isaac Snugger, his body had not been left to bleach upon the plain.

"It's got me licked," said Sergeant Paul, rubbing his chin as the party crowded together for a conference. "Though Isaac was as hard as hickory, he was old. Got two full doses of lead. How could he have digested that?"

They turned their horses back towards the road to Moose Call, and were moving through the tall-growing grass, when Selwyn espied a solitary horseman riding across the plain towards them.

The lone rider was perhaps a mile away and galloping hard. Selwyn saw him sweep off his hat and wave it as a signal, and told Threfall.

"Some rancher anxious for a pow-wow," said the sergeant, as he watched the advancing horseman coming up. "There are one or two ranches over that way. Maybe it's Ben Freeland, who farms an' keeps the Lone Man Ranch, or p'r'aps it's Farmer Jake Magloon, of the Bull Elk. Our red coats must have showed up and given us away."

The horseman slowed a little when he saw the party was waiting for him. He came within hail at last, the swaying grass reaching almost to his horse's belly.

"That you, Sergeant Threfall?" he roared, as he came within earshot.

"It's Jake Magloon," stated the sergeant of the Mounties.

Jake Magloon proved himself to be a big, raw-boned hulk of a man, with hawk-like, piercing grey eyes shaded with long, stringy eyebrows. His clothes were soiled and heavy, his boots caked with mud, his hat weatherbeaten, with holes cut in it for ventilation. Lank,

grey hair fell almost to his shoulders, and a straggly moustache and pointed grey beard gave him a dignity and picturesqueness which might have vanished with the application of soap and razor. He carried a rifle on his back and two revolvers in his belt holsters.

"Buck huntin' or man huntin', Jake?" asked the sergeant, with a welcoming grin.

"I was ridin' in to find the nearest telephone, so's I could put through a message to the sheriff in Tomahawk, when I caught your red coats showing up over the plain," Jake Magloon explained. "I reckon you boys are going to save me a long, hard ride."

"And why?" asked the sergeant.

"I've got a sick man named Isaac Snugger berthed at the Bull Elk," the rancher informed. "He came to me all shot up, and but for careful night and day nursing by the missus and my daughters, and his being as tough as teak, he must have died. A gang of gunmen did it, and I wanted to spread the news."

The sergeant swept off his hat and waved it joyfully.

"Hurrah!" he cheered. "I might have known that Isaac Snugger could take all a gang of roughnecks could give him an' then sit up and smile. He's still alive!"

The two brothers joined in the general cheering. All the Mounties in Tomahawk loved old Isaac. It was great for them to know he was still alive.

When the cheers died down the sergeant turned wistful eyes upon the distant irregular line of the Sunrise Mountains.

"Reckon it's all fifteen miles to the Bull Elk?" he muttered.

"Sixteen and a half the near way," corrected the rancher.

The sergeant swung his horse about.

"You needn't phone in to Tomahawk, Jake," he said. "We'd already heard the news, and were riding out to get the gang who plugged Snugger. But, as things are, we'll go and have a look at Isaac first."

(It certainly is great news to Selwyn and Colin to learn that their old friend Snugger is alive. But they've got to "put paid" to Majoe and his rascally gang of toughs yet. Be sure you read the thrilling follow-up of this powerful adventure yarn which will appear in next week's MAGNET.)

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WARNING

Members of the audience attending the Remove Dormitory Breaking-up Concert are earnestly requested to throw nothing heavier than tomatoes at the performers. Brickbats are bound to bring up the beaks!

FINANCIAL REPORTS

We are not publishing reports about any of the Company Meetings held by Fisher T. Fish recently. The fact is that none of them provided the slightest bit of "interest"!

THE NEW Greyfriars Herald



No. 147 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

July 27th, 1935.

JEENIAL JUNIOR

Fod up with so-called pals, seeks a hollerday companion. Principal requirement: genuine, unselfish friendship. **MUST BE RICH.**—Rite, W. G. B., Box No. 1313, GREYFRIARS HERALD.

HOLIDAY REMINDER

Mind you fellows settle your accounts at the tuckshop before you leave for your holidays! If Mrs. Mimble doesn't get the cash in by the time we break up, she'll break down!

Bright minor, of the Second Form at St. Sam's, walked along the Fourth Form passage, wearing a very determined look on his yung fizz. Stopping at Study No. 7, which was tenanted by Snarler and Craven and Bounder minor, the cadds of the Fourth, he wrapped sharply on the door.

THE FAG WHO FAILED!

By **DICKY NUGENT**

From within the study came a noise that sounded very much like playing-cards being put away and cigarettes being thrown out of the window. Bright minor smiled slyly and opened the door—and there was a gasp of relief from Snarler & Co., who had imagined that some prowling prefect or meddling master was on their track.

"It's all right, you fellows," cried Snarler. "It's only yung Bright—come along for another game of nap, I eggspert! Shut the door and come in, yung Bright. Take a pew!" "No thanks," retorted Bright minor, in his piping trebble voice. "I've finished playing the giddy ox, now. What I've come to see you about is my major."

"Oh, you have, have you?" growled Snarler. "What about him?" "I want you to tell the Head the truth about why he turned into the worst fellow at St. Sam's," piped the yungster. "The reason is that he's so jolly bitter because Dr. Birchomall and everybody thinks he was leading you chaps into bad ways. Actually, as you know, he was trying to get me out of your klutchos."

H. VERNON-SMITH on— Humours of GREYFRIARS FLOWER SHOW

The school Flower Show, held at the end of the Summer Term, is one of the events I wouldn't miss for worlds. The spectacle of chaps like Skinner and Bunter trotting up to the exhibition tent carrying posies of pansies is one not easily forgotten!

Fellows who usually vie with each other at cricket, Soccer, rowing, and boxing are now seen vieing with each other over whose rose smells the sweetest. It's a sight for sore eyes, believe me, kids!

This year's show, being favoured with good weather, drew a particularly big crowd. As a show, I thought it rather so-so. The visitors, however, with the exception of a few ill-mannered youths who jeered and cat-called, were too polite to mention it, so the exhibitors finished the day quite happy.

Show news in brief: Visitors became quite emotional over the vegetables; in several cases I saw them actually weeping over the onions!

Bolsover, falling into a somewhat natural error, entered a burglar's black crepe mask in the competition for the best example of Deadly Nightshade!

Vegetables were thrown freely in the course of a fag riot during the afternoon. Aptly enough, Pluggs, the Courtfield plumber, who was looking round the show, stopped a "leak."

Trevor, who won First Prize in the Geranium Section, was disqualified when the judges found a price ticket on his exhibit!

youthful eagerness. "And if you'll only eggspain, the Head will realise he's done my major an unjustiss, and everything will be all right. I hoap you'll do the right thing about this!" "No harm in hoaping!" leered Snarler. "But if you think we're going to be birched black and blue just to put your major right with the Head, you've made a big mistake! What's more"—Snarler grabbed the fag's arm and gave it a savvidge, brootal twist—"if you breathe a word about it to the Head, we'll put you through it properly—like this."

"Yarooooo!" yelled Bright minor, as Snarler twisted his arm round with feendish force. "So just bear that in mind!" grinned the leader of the cadds, opening the door. "Now hop it!"

And Snarler gave the fag a kick that sent him flying out of Study No. 7 like a boolit from a gun. Forohunitly, Tubby Barrell happened to be passing, and broke his fall, or he mite have been severely injured. As it was, he escaped with a broken back and a fraktered collar-bone, and picked himself up little the worse for his eggporience.

Leaving Tubby wondering whether he had been hit by an earthquake or a hurricane, Bright minor scuttled out of the Fourth Form passage, and went downstairs towards the Head's study. His eggspression was more determined than ever now. Seeing that he would get no change out of Snarler & Co., he had made up his mind to go to the Head himself!

He trotted up to Dr. Birchomall's study and knocked timidly on the door. Crash! Bang! Wallop!

"Come in, fathead!" called out a quiet, skollarily voice from within.

Bright minor entered, and found himself in the distingwished prezzence of Dr. Alfred Birchomall, the headmaster of St. Sam's. As soon as the Head's peering, hipnottick eyes fixed on him, Bright minor felt his neeze nocking together with fear. It was easy

enuff planning what to say to the Head when he was on his way. Everything had seemed as clear as mud then. But now his curridge began to ooze away from him.

"I—I—" he stammered, in his piping, trebble voice.

Dr. Birchomall raised his eyebrows slyly. "I trust you haven't called meerly to repeat the first person singular to me, Bright minor!" he eggscclaimed. "I shall consider it very singular if you have!"

"I—I—"

The Head began to frown. "What on earth is this 'I, I' bizziness?" he demanded. "Sailors, I beleeve, are in the habit of shouting 'I, I!' to their superiors—but not St. Sam's juniors! What's the big idea, Bright minor, or, as the vulgar mite put it, what is the meaning of your mono-syllabic remark?"

"I—I—"

The Head's eyes gleamed. "Reelly, Bright, if you carry on much longer like this, I shall reluctantly come to the conclusion that you are being dis-pertinent!" he said sharply. "I suppose you are following the bad eggssample of your elder brother, who seems to be trying to aachieve the distinction of becoming Public Enemy Number One at St. Sam's!"

The mention of his major pulled Bright minor together. He found his tung at last.

"I—I—I—it's not his fault, sir!" his piping trebble voice orfde oballengingly.

Dr. Birchomall's brow became thunderous.

"Pardon me!" he said warmly. "But it is!"

"It isn't!"

"It jolly well is!"

"It jolly well isn't!"

The Head rose majestically, gripping his birchrod as he did so. "You're asking for it, Bright minor, and you'll get it jolly quickly at this rate!" he eride. "Was this your only reason for coming here to argew the toss with me over your brother?"

"Yes, sir!"

"WHAT?" hooted the Head.

Bright minor's sudden curridge oozed right out again.

"I—I mean, no, sir!" he piped.

"Then, in that case, Bright," said Dr.

Archomall in a deadly calm voice, "what eggssactly WAS your reason for coming here?"

Bright minor, in a regular pannick, farely raked his yung brane for a good eggssouse, all thought of eggspaining his real reason for calling was gone now. His only anxiety was to get out of the Head's study as quickly as possible!

"The—the fakt is, sir," he said, in his piping, trebble voice, "I came to ask you to help me with my prep. I got stuck over a problem in maths, and knowing what a grate name you have for mathymatticks, I thought you mite help me!"

Dr. Birchomall, who was not averse to a little flattery, thawed rapidly at that remark. "I'll put down his birchrod and grinned.

"Why didn't you say so at first?" he eride. "Of course, I will help you with your maths, my boy. You couldn't have come to a better man! What is the problem that is trubbling you?"

"It's a question of what twice six comes to," piped the fag, getting a sudden inspiration.

The Head larfed.

"Why, that's quite easily answered, Bright. You could have found it by turning up your multiplication tables, if you'd only known it. But I'm very happy to answer it for you all the same. Twice six, of course, is eleven."

"Th-thank you, sir!" gasped Bright minor, in his piping, trebble voice. "May I go now?"

"Certainly!" grinned the Head. "I'm glad to have been of help to you, Bright minor. Never hezitate to bring your problems to me at any time. After all, there's nothing like consulting an orthority."

And Dr. Birchomall, with a wave of his somewhat grimy hand, dismissed Bright minor and returned to the commie paper he had been reading.

Outside the study, Bright minor mopped his perspiring brow and farely gasped with relief. But when the thought occurred to him that he had failed to carry out his plan to help his brother to regain his good name, he felt fearfully remorseful.

"I didn't have the curridge to see it through!" he eride. "What is there left that I can do?"

But the only answer he got was the echo of his own piping, trebble voice.

(For the concluding yarn in this series—
"For the Sake of Their Pal!"—see next week's "Herald." It's a scream! Ed.)

"INKY" CAN BE PAINFULLY POLITE

Says **BOB CHERRY**

When someone remarked the other day that Inky's politeness was sometimes quite painful, I wondered what the dickens he meant. This week, when the public were admitted to Big Side for the Greyfriars v. Courtfield cricket match, I fancy I saw what he was getting at.



The chap who gave Inky a chance to exhibit his painful politeness was a young fellow wearing suede shoes and a loud check suit. He gave Inky a whack on the shoulder with his walking-stick and shouted:

"Hi, you! What's the score?"

Anyone but Inky would have resented that method of approach. Inky, however, removed his panama, bowed, and replied:

BOUND TO MAKE HIM "SOAR"!

Coker is anxious to know whether the second-hand glider he has bought is good enough for him.

We feel sure it will "shoot him down to the ground"!

were to ask you to walk with me gatefully!"

"You mean down to the gates? Well, I don't much like being seen with a blinking blackie like you, but I'll come if there's something to see!"

The stranger followed Inky down to the gates and across to a quiet spot just off Friar-dale Lane. There, Inky turned round and purred:

"May I have the esteemed and idiotic pleasure of helping you off with your jacket?"

"What for?" gasped the young man.

And Inky, polite to the last, replied:

"So that you can more easily punch me scrappfully in the fight we're going to have!"

About ten seconds later, having courteously helped the young man off with his jacket and given him a deep bow, Inky punched him once on the ear, once on the jaw, and once on the nose!

I think I can now see how painful Inky's politeness can sometimes be!

H. SKINNER says— WHY PUNISH NATURE LOVERS?

I'm booked for a swishing—a Head's swishing.

What sort of a crime do you think I've committed to deserve this? You'll hardly believe it when I tell you.

My crime is that I'm a nature lover!

Admittedly, it's looked on as a rather serious matter to break bounds after lights out. But I think they should look on it more leniently when it's done because a chap happens to be a nature lover.

It was the call of a beautiful summer night that took me out of the Remove dormitory on the night I was caught. The moon was shining, the air was soft and balmy. I felt an irresistible urge to hear the nightingale.

I knew I was doing wrong. But I just couldn't help it. I had to hear the nightingale, come what might—and I heard it!

But how, you may ask, if I went out to hear the nightingale did it happen that a prefect caught me coming out of the billiards-room of the Cross Keys at Friardale?

The explanation, my friends, is simple!

There didn't seem to be any nightingales about on this particular night. So, rather than put up with the bitter disappointment of returning without hearing one, I went to the Cross Keys and listened to one being broadcast. Admittedly, I played billiards at the same time; but my main reason for being there was to hear the nightingale.

And now I'm booked for a Head's swishing—simply and solely because I'm a nature lover!

It's a bit thick of the Beak, really—isn't it?

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



Wun Lung revels in jig-saw puzzles which apparently come easy to the Oriental mind. When he showed Harry Wharton and Co. a jig-saw with 5,000 pieces, each piece representing a letter of the 5,000-word Chinese alphabet, they could only gasp! Wun Lung grinned and said it was easy as A B C!



Rattling up 124 runs in just under an hour for the Remove against the Upper Fourth, Bob Cherry, Remove champion "slogger," put up a record. Bob took the bit between his teeth—though when he had finished there wasn't much "bite" left in the bowling! A "bold" innings, Bob!

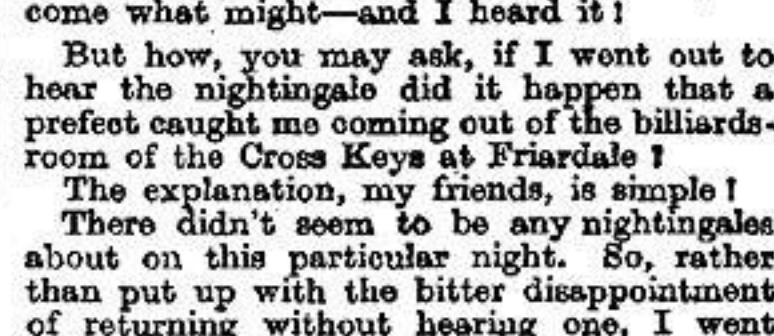


As a bowler, William George Bunter is even more hopeless than as a batsman. Bunter's deliveries are usually yards "wide." He hit something unexpectedly, however, the other afternoon, when Loder was walking nearby. The "something" was Loder's cranium! Bunter's "ball" made Loder "bellow"!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!



Skinner of the Remove says he would like to help draw animated screen cartoons, on the lines of Mickey Mouse. Skinner is a talented amateur artist already—his latest effort being a cartoon of Mr. Front, executed on the Fifth Form blackboard. Mr. Front still thinks that somebody in the Fifth did it!



Claude Hoskins, the musical genius of the Shell, was delighted when the manager of the new Courtfield Super Cinema permitted him to try his hand on the keyboard of the mammoth organ. Hoskins drew forth some rousing strains in very capable style—somewhat to the surprise of the cinema manager!

When the Famous Five ran into Coker, Potter, and Greene camping on the river, Coker accused the Removites of "prying"! Harry Wharton & Co. seized the egregious Coker and duded him, before Potter and Greene could come to his aid. Coker had an opportunity of "prying" among the fishes!