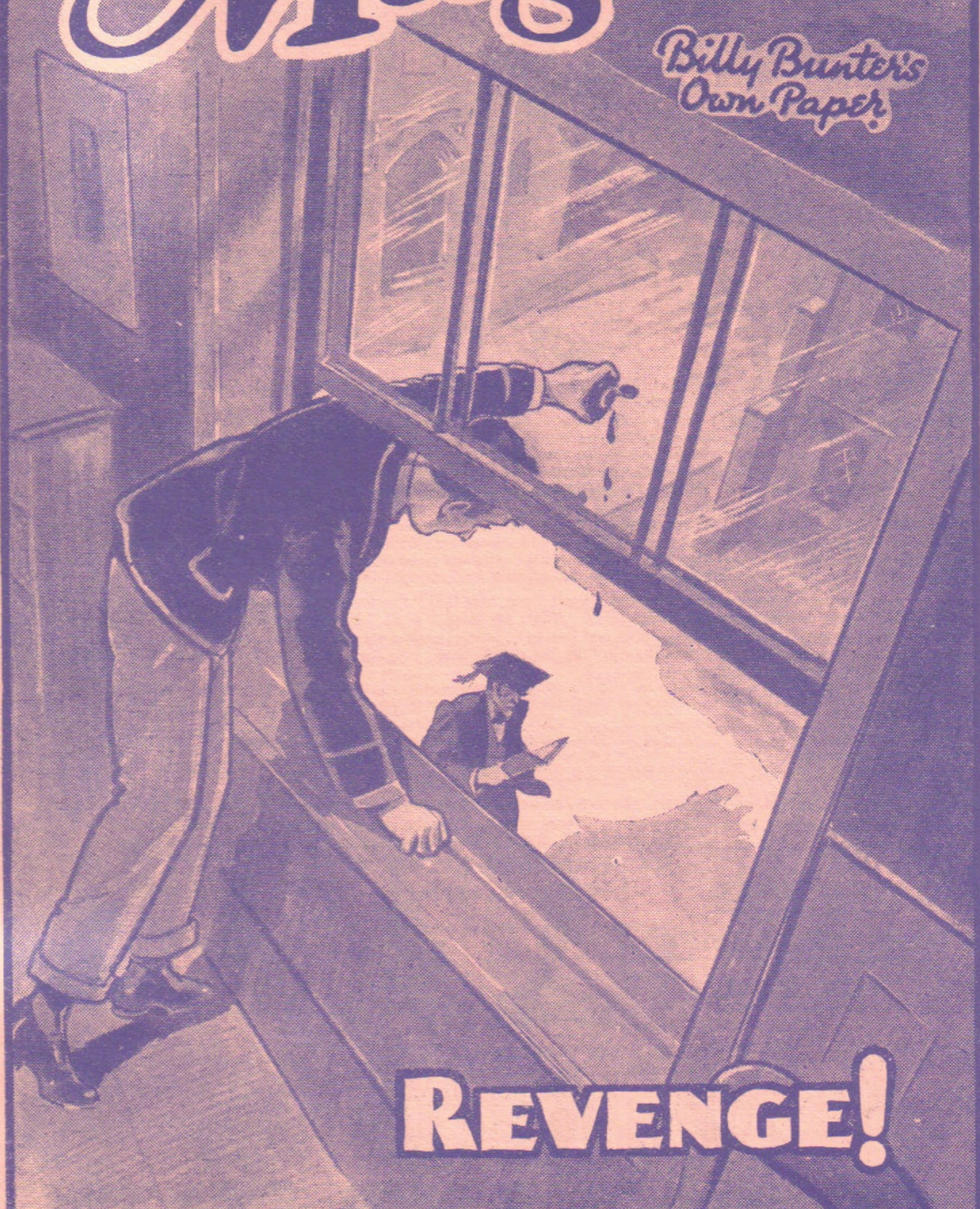


Frank Richards' Greatest Greyfriars Yarn: "THE RAT OF THE REMOVE!"

The Magnet ^{2^D}

*Billy Bunter's
Own Paper*



REVENGE!

Another Big Prize-Giving Coming Soon—Will YOU Be “Present”?

500 FREE FOOTBALLS



DO you want to win a New Football? Yes! Then this way, please! We've FIVE HUNDRED to be won in this month's grand "Footer-Stamps" Competition. So if you haven't already started after one, get busy!

This is the Idea! You simply collect the "Footer-Stamps" appearing every week—as you see below, they're snappy sporting pictures of six different actions on the football field—and the object of this great competition stamp-game is to score as many "goals" with them as possible by the end of the month.

TO SCORE A "GOAL," you collect a complete set of six stamps (they're numbered 1 to 6), made up of the following movements: **KICK-OFF—DRIBBLE—TACKLE—HEADER—SHOT—GOAL.** (Note! The "goal" stamp by itself does NOT count as a "goal"; you must get a set of the stamps 1 to 6 each time!)

The more stamps you collect, the more "goals" you can score. Below are another ten stamps. Cut them out at once—there is one complete "goal" amongst them, while the odd stamps may fit in with other stamps left over from previous weeks (or even previous contests) to make up still further "goals." Collect from your pals, too, or you can swap with them usefully, maybe. Remember, a little extra effort may well put a grand football right into your grasp.

★ If you want to score some other quick "goals," too, note that "Footer-Stamps" also appear in such other first-rate papers as **GEM** and **MODERN BOY**. There are more "goals" waiting in these papers this very week.

Keep all your stamps by you carefully. The 500 Footballs in the October competition are going to be awarded to the readers scoring the most "goals" with "Footer-Stamps" by the closing date. So don't send any stamps yet; wait until we tell you how and where at the end of the month.

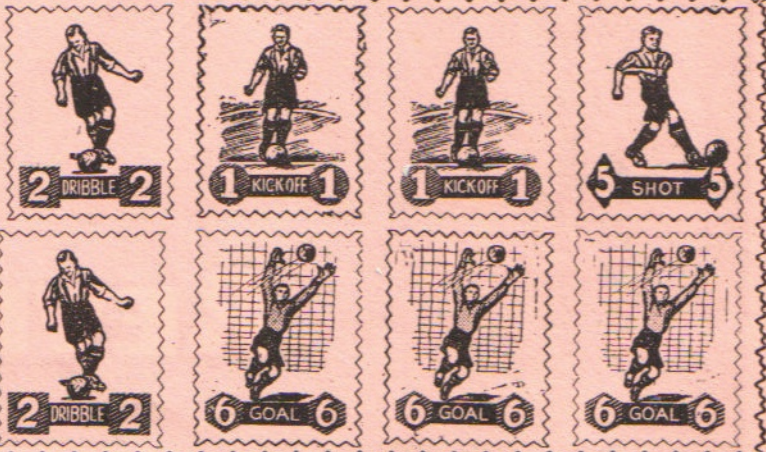
RULES: 500 Footballs will be awarded in the October contest to readers declaring and sending in the largest number of "goals" scored with "Footer-Stamps." The Editor may extend or amend the prize list in case of too many ties, and no reader may win more than one prize in "Footer-Stamps."

Each "goal" must consist of a set of "Footer-Stamps" Nos. 1 to 6, inclusive. All claims for prizes to be made on the proper coupon (to be given later). No allowance made for any coupon or stamps mutilated or lost or delayed in the post or otherwise. No correspondence! No one connected with this paper may enter, and the Editor's decision will be final and legally binding throughout.

(N.B.—"Footer-Stamps" may also be collected from the following papers: "Gem," "Modern Boy," "Boy's Cinema," "Detective Weekly," "Triumph," "Wild West Weekly," "Thriller," "Sports Budget," and "Champion.")

OVERSEAS READERS! You pals who are far away—you're in this great scheme also, and special awards will be given for the best scores from overseas readers. There will be a special closing date for you as well, of course!

TEN FREE
"FOOTER-STAMPS"
FOR YOU!



"I don't like Greyfriars, and I won't stay at Greyfriars!" says Gilbert Tracy. But Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, has undertaken to keep the new boy at Greyfriars. Who will come out on top in this peculiar contest—the schoolmaster or—

The RAT of the REMOVE!



By
FRANK RICHARDS

Tramp, tramp, tramp! Yelling and wriggling and howling, the Rat of the Remove was frog-marched along the passage!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

All Right for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER sat down—suddenly!

He yelped as he did so. The fat ornament of the Greyfriars Remove always preferred to sit, rather than stand. But he did not want to sit down in the middle of the Remove landing, especially with such a sudden bump!

Bunter was rolling across that landing, at his usual leisurely pace, when a Remove fellow came up the stairs at a run, and shot across the landing to the Remove passage. It was Gilbert Tracy, the new fellow, and he seemed to be in a hurry. Bunter had no time to get out of the way, and Tracy seemed to have no time to go round him, so there was a collision. Bunter sat down, and Tracy cut on into the passage. "Ooooh!" gasped Bunter. "Beast! Ooooh!"

He blinked after Tracy through his big spectacles. The new junior shot on, and disappeared into the first study in the passage—Study No. 1, which he shared with Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent.

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "Knocking a fellow over! Swab!"

The fat Owl of the Remove heaved himself to his feet, and rolled into the passage after Tracy, pink with wrath.

Tracy had darted into Study No. 1, and thrown the door shut after him. He was almost breathless with haste.

As the door slammed, he cut across the study to the mantelpiece where the clock stood. The clock indicated a quarter-past five. In a twinkling he opened the clock face, and pushed back

the minute hand. Then it indicated exactly five o'clock.

Tracy stood panting for a moment. Then he turned back to the study door and re-opened it.

A fat face and a large pair of spectacles dawned on him in the passage.

Billy Bunter gave him a glare that almost cracked the spectacles.

"Beast!" he hooted. "Barging a fellow over! Yah! Cad!"

"Sorry, old fat man!" said Tracy. "Yah!"

"Like some toffee?" asked Tracy. "Oh!"

Billy Bunter's wrathful glare faded

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Introducing **HARRY WHARTON & CO., of GREYFRIARS, and Bad Lad Gilbert Tracy.**

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away. He had rolled after Tracy to tell him what he thought of him for barging a fellow over. But if Tracy had toffee, and was prepared to whack out the same, it altered the case. Bunter liked toffee!

"I've got a packet here," said Tracy amicably. "Roll in, old bean, and have some!"

"Oh!" said Bunter. "All right!"

He rolled in. But he blinked rather suspiciously at Gilbert Tracy. He did not like the new man—few fellows in the Remove did. Tracy had never wasted a civil word on him before, during the week he had been at Grey-

friars. So this hospitable offer was rather surprising.

But it was evidently genuine, for Tracy produced a large packet of toffee, and held it out for Bunter to help himself!

Bunter helped himself liberally. Having done so, he turned to the door.

"Don't go, old chap!" said Tracy. "There's a cake in the cupboard—"

"Oh!" said Bunter.

This was more and more surprising. Billy Bunter began to revise his opinion of this new fellow! Hitherto he had regarded him wholly as a beast. But a fellow who whacked out toffee and a cake in this open-handed way could not be wholly beastly, Bunter considered.

"Squat down, old bean!" said Tracy. "I'll get the cake!"

Billy Bunter squatted down in the study armchair. He masticated toffee while Tracy opened the study cupboard.

"Know where Wharton and Nugent are?" asked Tracy.

"They're at footer," answered Bunter, through a large mouthful of toffee. "They went down after class."

"Oh! I had to go into detention with Mossco—only just out!" said Tracy. "I've had an hour of it with the little beast! Just got away!"

Bunter blinked at him. "The French class was let out at five," he said.

"Yes; it's five now."

"Is it? I thought it was later than that."

"Isn't that clock right?" asked Tracy casually.

"Yes, that's Nugent's clock; it always keeps good time," answered the fat

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Owl. He blinked at the clock. "Two minutes past five! I jolly well thought it was later than that."

"Here's the cake!"

Billy Bunter beamed.

It was quite a nice cake! It had marzipan on top, and Bunter loved marzipan. Tracy put it on the table and cut a huge slice! Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles! That was all right!

"I say, Tracy, you ain't such a bad chap!" he remarked. With a big chunk of toffee in one fat hand, and a huge slice of cake in the other, it was a happy Bunter. "I say, I don't believe you're such an absolute cad as most of the fellows think! I don't, really."

"Oh!" gasped Tracy. "Thanks!"

"I mean to say, if a fellow's a bit of a worm, he can't help it," said Bunter, evidently prepared to take favourable views under the influence of the toffee and the cake.

Tracy looked at him.

Billy Bunter did not realise, in the least, that he had a narrow escape at that moment of having the cake crammed down his fat neck and the toffee after it.

Neither did it dawn on his podgy brain that Gilbert Tracy had a special and personal reason for feeding him in Study No. 1.

It did not occur to him that Tracy might have some motive for wishing to be able to prove, with an eye-witness, that he had been in that study—and not elsewhere—at five o'clock!

Quite unaware that Tracy had altered the clock before he came in, Bunter was not likely to guess that! Neither was he likely to guess that Tracy had carefully drawn his attention to the time indicated by the study clock!

Bunter's fat thoughts were concentrated on toffee and cake.

"I say, this is a jolly good cake!" went on Bunter. "Not so good as the cakes I get from Bunter Court—but jolly good!"

"Have another slice?"

"What-ho!"

Bunter had another big slice.

With great presence of mind, he ceased to masticate toffee, and devoted himself wholly to cake. The toffee could be slipped into his pocket, to be dealt with later. He munched his second slice, with an eye on the cake, wondering if there was going to be a third!

There was! Tracy cut it in readiness, and Bunter fairly beamed on him. He wondered why he had disliked this fellow so much. At the present moment, he loved him like a brother!

"I say, aren't you having any?" he asked.

"Oh, no! I don't care much for cake!" answered Tracy.

"I jolly well do!" grinned Bunter. And he started happily on the third slice.

Whether Tracy cared for cake or not, he did not help himself. Bunter was not likely to remain after the cake was gone, so he had to make it last as long as possible.

It lasted ten minutes! By that time, Bunter had disposed of it to the last plum and the last crumb. Then he heaved himself out of the armchair. He was looking happy and shiny, and breathing rather hard.

"Thanks, old chap!" said Bunter affably. "I say, you must come to tea in my study some time—I'm expecting a postal order shortly, and I'm going to stand rather a spread. I've got to see some fellows now."

Bunter rolled out of Study No. 1.

The moment he disappeared, Tracy stepped to the clock and put it right. It had indicated ten minutes past five when Bunter went—now it indicated twenty-five minutes past, and was quite in order to meet the eyes of Wharton and Nugent when they came in.

Then Tracy cut after Bunter, and overtook him on the Remove landing.

"Going out?" he asked. "I'll come with you."

Bunter blinked at him.

"Oh, all right," he said. "I don't mind, after you've been so decent about the cake!"

That remark caused Bunter to have another narrow escape; this time of getting a boot on his trousers! Again he was happily unaware of it.

Tracy went down the stairs with him, and they went out together. That, however, seemed sufficient of the fat Owl's fascinating company to satisfy Tracy; for he left him at the door of the changing-room, and went in to change for football practice.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Good Shooting!

"GOOD old Squiff!"

"Well saved!"

"Good man!"

Sampson Quincy Ifley Field, of New South Wales, who was called Squiff in the Remove, stood between the posts, with a cheery grin on his face.

The Famous Five and three or four other Remove fellows were giving him some hard work, which Squiff seemed to be enjoying.

Squiff, who kept goal in Remove matches, was being put through it by way of practice, and never had the Remove custodian seemed in better form.

Harry Wharton was as good a forward as any junior at Greyfriars. Bob Cherry had a mighty kick. Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were all good men. But they plied Squiff with whizzing shots from every angle, in vain; Squiff put paid to all of them.

Which was very satisfactory, as Squiff was to keep goal in the St. Jim's match when it came along; in which circumstances, it would have been quite a disappointment to the captain of the Remove, had he succeeded in getting the leather past him.

"Good man!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, as the leather came out once more. "Here, Smithy, give him a good one!"

He kicked the ball across to Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder of Greyfriars put in a shot. He put it in with all the care and skill he could muster. As a Remove footballer, he was glad to see the Remove goalie in such form—but as Herbert Vernon-Smith, he wanted to beat him; just to show that he could. There was a spot of swank in the Bounder, and he liked very much to bring off things that other fellows couldn't do.

But it booted not! The shot went in, like a bullet, for the corner of the net; but Squiff was on the spot, and it came out again, like another bullet! And the Bounder grunted.

The ball dropped at Harry Wharton's feet; and the captain of the Remove sent it whizzing in again like lightning. But if Wharton was like lightning, Squiff was like greased lightning; he grinned, and sent the leather back.

"Rotten!" said a drawing voice.

How NOT to be a Big Noise!

Who wants, George Alfred Grundy, the St. Jim's champion chump? His claims to leadership ridiculed in the School House, George Alfred transfers to the New House—to find his talents—if any—equally unappreciated there. But Grundy is determined to take the lead among the juniors. Read how he fares and have a good laugh!



Grand Book Length
Yarn—for 4d.

GRUNDY TAKES THE LEAD!

No 350 of the Schoolboys' Own Library

Of all Newsagents and Bookstalls 4d.

All the juniors looked round, at that unpleasant remark!

In their keenness on testing the Remove goalkeeper, they had not noticed the arrival of another fellow on the scene. Gilbert Tracy, with his hands in the pockets of his football shorts, lounged over the touchline—greeted by rather inimical glances. His remark had pleased nobody.

"What was rotten about it, Tracy?" asked Harry Wharton very quietly. "It was well saved, at least!"

"Rotten shot, I mean!" drawled Tracy. "A kid in the Third could have saved it."

"That's rot!" growled Bob Cherry. "The rotfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Don't be a cheeky ass, Tracy!" suggested Johnny Bull.

Harry Wharton did not speak. He seldom saw the new man in the Remove without wanting to punch his head, and that desire was strong upon him now. Really, the fellow seemed to ask for it.

"Have you come to Greyfriars to teach us how to play Soccer, Tracy?" asked Vernon-Smith, with a sneer.

"I dare say I could," answered Tracy coolly. "Anyhow, if I couldn't put in a better shot than that, I'd give my football boots to the first tramp."

"Blessed is he that bloweth his own trumpet!" remarked Peter Todd.

"Let's see one of your wonderful shots, then!" said Frank Nugent. "Here's the ball, and there's the goal! Shove it in—if you can!"

"I'll try, if you like!" drawled Tracy. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look out in goal!" roared Bob Cherry. "Here's a jolly old International with his shooting-boots on!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Stand up to it, Squiff!"

"Mind your eye!"

Tracy shrugged his shoulders, as he lounged over to the ball.

Harry Wharton watched him in silence. Most of the other fellows were grinning derisively. But the captain of the Remove was aware that Tracy was a good man at Soccer—he had seen him before he came to Greyfriars, and what he had seen looked as if Tracy was something like a wizard with the Soccer ball. He thought it quite likely that the new man would beat Squiff, which all the other fellows had failed to do.

It was surprising enough, for Tracy was not a fellow whom one would have expected to be a good games-man. He smoked, he slacked, he was bitter-tempered, and malicious—there was little or nothing of the good temper and good fellowship of the open-air man about him. He seemed to like making himself obnoxious—especially to the captain of the Remove, who would gladly have extended a friendly hand to a good footballer.

Squiff, in goal, grinned. He had seen nothing of Tracy's style, so far; and he did not think much of him now, on his looks. Squiff was prepared to deal with him quite efficiently when the shot came.

But when it came, Squiff ceased to grin. Tracy ran with the ball from the half-way line, and sent in a sudden shot, which escaped Squiff's outstretched fingers by a foot or more.

The leather lodged.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Squiff.

The practice had been going on for some time; but this was the first shot that had beaten Sampson Quincy Ifley Field.

"Goal!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "By gum! That man can shoot!" said Johnny Bull, rather unwillingly. "Tain't all gas—he can shoot!"

"The shootfulness is terrific!"

"Try that again!" called out Squiff, as he tossed out the ball.

"Pleased!" drawled Tracy. "He can't do it a second time!" muttered the Bounder, with a rather grim look at Tracy.

Smithy did not like the new fellow's manner, or the new fellow himself.

"I think he can, Smithy!" answered Harry Wharton quietly. "I've seen him bring off three shots in succession, harder than that."

"Eh? Where?" asked Smithy, staring at him. "He's done nothing here, so far!"

"He was at Wharton Lodge, the last day of the hols," answered Harry.

"Oh, yes, I remember you brought him along first day of term, and had to lug him in by the ears!" said the Bounder. "Well, I'll believe that he can do it again when I see it—not before."

"Look!"

"Oh gad!"

Squiff missed the ball by a yard this time. It dropped behind him, and he blinked.

"Oh crumbs!" said Bob Cherry, rather blankly. "He can shoot! I say, Wharton, old bean, if that's not a pair of flukes, that man is a prize-packet."

"No fluke about it!" answered Harry. "The fellow's a rank outsider in everything else, but he can do anything he likes with a Soccer ball."

"Good man for the matches, then!" said Bob.

"Ye-es!"

"Try again!" called out Squiff.

"Any old thing!" said Tracy. Squiff threw the ball out. It seemed hardly to have left his hand when Tracy's left foot caught it, and it came back, whizzing under the goalie's arm.

"Goal!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Great pip!"

"The jolly old hat-trick!" exclaimed Peter Todd.

Peter looked at Tracy, with quite a new respect. Like other fellows in the Remove, he did not think much of the new man. But a fellow who could beat Squiff in goal, apparently without an effort, was worthy of respect.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, what does Wingate want?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, was coming down to Little Side, with long strides.

"Is that new kid, Tracy, here?" called out the Sixth-Former.

"Yes, here he is!"

"Oh, you're here, are you!"

exclaimed Wingate, staring at the new Removeite. "I've looked everywhere else for you!"

"Have you?" said Gilbert meekly. "Do you want me, Wingate?"

"No, I don't—but your Form-master does! Follow me at once!"

Gilbert Tracy followed the Greyfriars captain back to the House.

The other juniors glanced after him, and glanced at one another.

"Has that goat been ragging Quelch again?" said Bob Cherry. "By gum, some fellows do ask for it! Come on—let's see if anybody else can beat old Squiff, as well as that new tick!"

And the Remove footballers resumed shooting practice—and Squiff resumed putting paid to their efforts.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

HENRY SAMUEL QUELCH, master of the Remove, stood in his study, with an expression on his face that was positively terrifying.

The "frightful, fearful, frantic frown" of the Lord High Executioner was nothing to it.

The Gorgon, of ancient times, had nothing on Quelch at that moment.

His brows were knitted; his eyes glinted under those knitted brows; his right hand grasped a cane almost convulsively.

Anyone who had seen Quelch just then would not have needed telling that some member of his Form was booked for bad trouble.

A glance round the study would have told the reason.

That study was in a startling state.

Mr. Quelch had come in from a walk after class, to find his study looking rather as if a hurricane had struck it.

He had hardly been able to believe his eyes when he saw his writing-table upside down, books scattered right and left round the room, papers covering the floor like snowflakes, his fender on its end, his chairs on their backs, and his inkpot overturned in the leather seat of his armchair.

"Rags" had happened at Greyfriars before—but this was rather a record in the way of rags!

It was seldom that a master's study was ragged, unless in a very mild way. Billy Bunter had been known to introduce gum into his Form-master's inkpot. It was rumoured that Skinner had put drawing-pins in his armchair. The Bounder, who was a wild and reckless ragger, had once put up a booby-trap in that study. But even the Bounder, in his wildest moments of recklessness, would never have dreamed of dismantling Quelch's study like this!

It was not, indeed, what could properly be called a rag; it was an outbreak of hooliganism. It was almost unbelievable—unthinkable! But there it was. There was Quelch, in the midst of his wrecked study, like Marius in the ruins of Carthage.

No wonder his eyes glinted! No wonder he had a convulsive grip on the cane! Quelch was boiling!

He had no doubt who had done it. He never thought of doubting. It was Gilbert Tracy, the new boy in his Form!

Quelch knew that as accurately as if he had seen Tracy at work. And he had called Wingate of the Sixth and requested him to find Tracy and bring him there. He was ready for Tracy when he came. He was anxiously awaiting the arrival of that unusual youth.

He was not going to take him to the Head. Any other fellow who had committed such an outrage would have been taken to the headmaster, as a matter of course, and expelled on the spot.

But that, as Quelch was aware, would not have been a punishment to that peculiar new boy; it would have been exactly what he wanted.

Gilbert Tracy had come unwillingly to Greyfriars. A weak and indulgent uncle who could not manage him had handed him over to Quelch. Gilbert wanted to go back to Oakwood Place. He was determined to manage it somehow. He had started by ragging Quelch, expecting that the Remove master would get fed-up and send him home. Instead of which, Quelch had put in some efficient work with the cane, with a promise of more to come if Gilbert did not mend his ways.

For a few days Gilbert seemed to have mended them. He had had two tremendous whoppings—and few fellows would have wanted a third of the same. And now this had happened!

Obviously Tracy had done it. No other fellow would have risked the

"sack" by letting himself go to such an extent in his Form-master's study. Gilbert, so long as he got away from Greyfriars, did not care whether he was sacked or not. But he was the only fellow at Greyfriars who didn't.

This was Gilbert's work; Quelch knew that. But if Gilbert fancied that it was going to lead to the train home, Gilbert was mistaken. Quelch had undertaken to keep him at Greyfriars for a whole term. He was going to do so. He relied on the cane to keep Gilbert in order. He was not going to bother the Head with him; there was no flogging to come. But Quelch had a practised and scientific hand with a cane. Cane in hand, Quelch could make a fellow pine for a Head's flogging, instead.

Footsteps came up the passage. "Here is Tracy, sir!" said Wingate, at the door. "Go in, Tracy."

"Thank you, Wingate!" said Mr. Quelch.

Wingate glanced round the study as he drew the door shut, leaving Tracy inside. The fellow had asked for it—begged for it—but the captain of Greyfriars could not help feeling a little sorry for him, as he went. The look on Quelch's speaking countenance indicated too clearly what was in store for the hapless ragger.

Quelch fixed his gimlet-eyes on Gilbert. He was rather surprised by the new junior's calm assurance of manner. Surely the young rascal knew what to expect after what he had done.

As he had come straight from the football ground, Tracy was still in football outfit. He had been given no time to change. Wingate had been some little time finding him, and he had marched him in without a moment's delay.

He stood before his Form-master, cool and collected. He did not seem to know what the trouble was. The hawoked state of the study leaped to the eye; but Gilbert did not know, apparently, that was why he had been called in.

"Tracy!" said Mr. Quelch in a deep voice.

"Yes, sir?" said Gilbert. "Wingate said you wanted me."

"You have been at this school a very short time, Tracy, but in that brief period you have twice been severely punished for outrageous insubordination and disrespect. It appears that this has produced no effect."

"Oh, yes, sir!" answered Gilbert. "I don't want to stay at Greyfriars, sir, as you know; but my uncle has told me that it depends entirely on you, sir, and so I've made up my mind to it, unless you decide to send me away."

"No doubt you suppose that I shall send you away for what you have done now," said Mr. Quelch bitterly. "I shall do nothing of the sort, Tracy. I have given Sir Giles Oakwood my word to keep you here for a whole term. I shall do so."

"What have I done, sir?"

"What! Look at my study! Do you dare to deny that this is your work?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"You deny it?"

"I haven't been in your study at all, sir, to-day, until now," said Gilbert calmly. "I am quite surprised to see it in this state. It looks as if somebody has been ragging here."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips in a tight line.

"It was you, Tracy!"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"Any other boy in the Remove, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,600.

Tracy, would be expelled for such an outrage. No other boy would have ventured to do any such thing."

"Looks as if some fellow has, sir," said Tracy. "What makes you think that I did it, sir?"

"I have not the slightest doubt on the subject, Tracy. I am sorry to say that I cannot take your word on this subject, or any other, as you have already spoken falsely to me on several occasions. I shall now punish you—"

"Not for something I have not done, sir, surely?" said Tracy, with the same cheerful calmness. "I've been playing football, sir; you can see that I've just come from the football ground. The fellows there will tell you—"

"You have not been playing football since four o'clock, when the Remove was dismissed," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir! I had an hour's detention with Monsieur Charpentier. The French master will tell you that I was in his detention class till five o'clock."

"No doubt," said Mr. Quelch. "But it is now nearly six o'clock. Dare you tell me, Tracy, that you went direct to the football ground after leaving the French detention class?"

"I ran up to my study, sir, to take my books there, and then went down to the football."

Mr. Quelch uttered a sound resembling a snort.

Evidently it was between the time when the detention class had been dismissed and the time when Tracy had joined the footballers that this rag had taken place.

So much havoc could not have been wrought in two or three minutes. The ragger had been at least ten minutes in the study, probably longer. Quelch had been out at the time, and he had no spot of doubt that Tracy had come from the detention class to his study and wrecked it, and then gone down to the football.

But Quelch—angry as he was, and certain as he was in his mind—had to make sure that there was no error.

"You state that you ran up to your study to take your books, Tracy. If you left your study again immediately to go down to the football you can have had no time to perpetrate this outrage here. Did you do so? And will the other boys on the football ground bear out your statement?"

"I stayed a little while in my study, sir."

"How long?"

"About ten minutes or so, sir."

Mr. Quelch's jaw set grimly.

"That 'ten minutes or so' was precisely the time that had to be accounted for. And Tracy failed to account for it. His statement that he had stayed ten minutes in his own study was worth nothing."

"Was either of your studymates in the study at the time, Tracy?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"Neither Wharton nor Nugent?"

"No, sir, they were at the football."

"I thought not!" said Mr. Quelch, grimly. "And I desire to hear no further prevarication from you, Tracy! You will now bend over, and I shall administer a severe caning."

"For nothing, sir?" asked Tracy, calmly.

"I have told you to bend over, Tracy!" said Mr. Quelch, breathing hard.

"May I go before the headmaster, sir?"

"You may not, Tracy."

"I have a right to appeal to my head-

master, sir, when I am going to be punished unjustly."

Mr. Quelch fairly gasped.

"Tracy, be silent! Do you fancy for one moment, you unscrupulous young rascal, that I am blind to your motive? You would be very glad to cause Dr. Locke to send you away from the school. You will not be allowed to trouble your headmaster, Tracy. I shall deal with you in this matter and all other matters, personally. Now bend over!"

Gilbert Tracy made a quick backward step to the door.

Before Mr. Quelch could realise his intention, he had the door open. He made a quick jump into the passage.

"Tracy!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"I'm going to the Head, sir!"

"I forbid you—"

Mr. Quelch made a jump at the doorway.

Tracy bolted!

"Tracy!" roared Mr. Quelch.

The new junior vanished round the corner. And Mr. Quelch, with feelings that could never have been expressed in words, followed him—to the Head's study!

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Before the Beak!

DR. LOCKE gave a sudden start. A blot dropped from his pen—a thing that seldom, or never, happened!

The Head was startled. There was a sharp knock at his study door, and it opened instantly, and a breathless junior entered.

Dr. Locke stared at Tracy. Then he looked at the blot on the sheet of Greek that lay on his table before him, then he stared at Tracy again.

"What does this mean?" he almost thundered. "Boy! How dare you rush into my study in this manner?"

"If you please, sir, Mr. Quelch thinks that I ragged his study, and he will not listen to me!" said Tracy. "I can prove that I did not, sir, if Mr. Quelch will let me speak! I have come to you, sir."

"Bless my soul!" said the Head blankly.

There was a rustle of a gown in the passage. Mr. Quelch appeared in the doorway.

His face was flushed. In the presence of his venerable chief, the Remove master was trying hard to control his wrath. But it was not easy. However, he contrived to speak calmly.

"I regret, sir, that this boy should have troubled you! I forbade him to come here! I will take him away at once."

"I appeal to my headmaster, sir!" said Tracy. "I have a right to do so. Dr. Locke will not allow me to be punished for nothing."

"Silence!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"One moment, Mr. Quelch," said the Head, quietly. "This boy is here on your responsibility, and it is left entirely to you to deal with him. His statement that you were about to punish him unjustly is obviously sheer impertinence. Nevertheless, he has made the statement and must take the consequences. Either he will prove that statement, which, of course, is impossible, or I shall administer a flogging."

"I am very reluctant, sir, to allow this boy to give you trouble. His object in doing so is unmistakable."

"Perfectly so, Mr. Quelch! But I must deal with him, as his headmaster, and I have no doubt that he will be discouraged from any further insolence of this kind!" said the Head. "Tracy, you will be flogged."



"Any kid in the Third could have saved Wharton's shot!" drawled Tracy. "If I couldn't put in a better shot, I'd give my boots to the first tramp!" "Let's see one of your wonderful shots, then!" said Frank Nugent.

"I have done nothing, sir!" said Tracy, meekly. "I can prove—" "I cannot doubt, Tracy, that Mr. Quelch has already inquired into your offence, and satisfied himself on that point."

"But I can prove that I went nowhere near my Form-master's study this afternoon, sir, if you will let me speak."

Dr. Locke paused, giving that peculiar new boy a keen and searching look. Then he turned to Mr. Quelch.

"What is the boy's offence, Mr. Quelch?" he asked.

"My study, sir, has been wrecked—what the boys would call ragged—during my absence after class!"

"I can account for every minute of my time, sir, since I left the French master's detention class at five o'clock," said Tracy. "I can prove that I went nowhere near Mr. Quelch's study."

"The proof of which this boy speaks, sir," said Mr. Quelch, breathing hard, "is his unsupported statement that he stayed in his study in the Remove, for ten minutes, and his word is worth nothing."

"Quite so!" said the Head. "Tracy, I will hear you! You have stated that you can account for every minute of your time, during which this outrage in your Form-master's study occurred. I shall give you an opportunity of doing so! Is it a fact, Mr. Quelch, that Tracy was in a detention class after being in Form with you?"

"That is the case, sir! He was given detention for carelessness in Form and was with Monsieur Charpentier, in Class-room No. 10 till five o'clock."

"Where did you go after leaving the French master's detention class, Tracy?"

"I went to my study, sir. I had to take my French book there."

"And then?"

"Then I went down to the changing-

room, sir, and joined the fellows on the football ground."

"When did you reach your study, Tracy?"

"Just at five, sir! I ran straight there after Mossco—I mean Monsieur Charpentier—dismissed us."

"And when did you leave it?"

"About ten minutes past five, sir."

"That, sir, is the material time!" said Mr. Quelch. "I have, of course, questioned Tracy closely, and he has admitted that no one else was in the study with him, and his unsupported statement is valueless."

"Oh, no, sir!" exclaimed Tracy.

"Someone was with me, sir."

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"How dare you say so? Dr. Locke, this boy has already admitted to me that neither of the boys who share the study with him was there."

"It was another fellow, sir!" said Tracy meekly.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Wharton and Nugent were not there, sir," said Tracy with the same meekness. "You only asked me about them, sir. But Bunter came in."

"B-Bunter!" stuttered Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, and he stayed with me—I stood him a cake!" said Tracy calmly. "I had a cake in the study, and Bunter is fond of cake, and I shared it with him. Then I went down with Bunter—"

"With—with Bunter?"

"Yes, sir, and he walked with me to the changing-room," said Tracy. "A good many fellows were in the changing-room, and must have seen us. Then I went down to the football."

Mr. Quelch gazed at him.

Dr. Locke gazed at him.

If Tracy's statements were correct, every minute of his time since five o'clock was accounted for, and he cer-

tainly had been nowhere near the wrecked study.

But Mr. Quelch quickly saw light!

"If this is correct, Tracy, you did not reach your study immediately you left the detention-room. You reached it at least ten minutes later."

"Oh, no, sir! It was at five o'clock. Bunter may remember the time, if you ask him."

Dr. Locke's expression was growing a little doubtful.

He knew too much of Master Gilbert to trust him, but even a young rascal was entitled to justice. If he actually had reached his study immediately after five o'clock, and another fellow had been there, his case was proved! And he seemed willing, indeed eager, for Bunter to be questioned about the time!

"I think that Bunter had better be sent for, Mr. Quelch, in view of Tracy's statement," said Dr. Locke. "No doubt he will remember the time that he was in Tracy's study with this boy."

"If he does, sir, I have no doubt that he will remember that it was ten minutes or a quarter past five."

"Then that will settle the matter beyond all possible doubt!" said the Head. "At all events, Bunter had better be questioned, before we proceed any further in the matter."

He touched a bell for Trotter, and the House page was dispatched in search of William George Bunter.

The two masters and the delinquent waited for the arrival of the Owl of the Remove. Dr. Locke resumed Greek—Mr. Quelch stood with a grim, knitted brow.

There was a doubt now in the head-master's mind. There was none in Mr. Quelch's. Bunter, it was true, was just the fellow to enter into a scheme of a

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concocted story, to see a fellow through a row. But Mr. Quelch had no doubt about his ability to extract the truth from him, if that was the case. And he had no doubt that the truth was, that Bunter had seen Tracy in his study at ten minutes or a quarter past five, and certainly not at five o'clock!

At the same time, he was puzzled, and a little disturbed, by Tracy's assured and confident manner.

There was no mistake—there could be no mistake—he knew that the young rascal had ragged his study as surely as if he had seen him at work! But if there was a mistake, Quelch's position was a very unenviable one!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Eye-Witness!

BILLY BUNTER tapped at the Head's study door with an unwilling fat finger.

Why the Head had sent for him, Bunter did not know; but no fellow liked a summons to that dreaded apartment.

Dr. Locke was a kind and benevolent old scholastic gentleman; but few Greyfriars fellows liked personal interviews with him—least of all Billy Bunter.

Bunter could not possibly hope that his headmaster had sent for him to express approval of his progress in Form, or approval of anything else whatsoever.

Bunter would gladly have avoided that interview. There were many sins on Bunter's fat conscience. They were small sins, no doubt; but they were as numerous as the sands on the seashore. And he wondered dismally which of them had come to Dr. Locke's knowledge.

However, there was no help for it; and the fat Owl dragged unwilling feet up the corridor, tapped with a reluctant podgy paw, and rolled slowly and sorrowfully into the study.

He blinked at the headmaster through his big spectacles; he blinked at Mr. Quelch. He hardly noticed Tracy standing there—Tracy did not matter. But Quelch being there looked, to Bunter, as if his Form-master had specially reported him to the Head—

which was awful.

"Ah!" Dr. Locke laid down his pen.

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir!" mumbled Bunter. "It wasn't me, sir!"

"What?"

"I—I wasn't there, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"You were not where, Bunter?" asked Dr. Locke, in surprise.

"Oh! Anywhere! I—I mean, nowhere, sir!" said Bunter. "I mean to say, it wasn't me, sir! I never did it!"

"You never did what?" exclaimed the perplexed Head.

"Nothing, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"This boy is very stupid, sir!" said Mr. Quelch hastily. "He apparently fancies that he is sent for to be punished."

"Oh!" Dr. Locke smiled faintly. "Bunter, I have sent for you to ask you some questions."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Ain't it a whopping, sir?"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "There is no question of punishment, Bunter—I simply desire to ask you some questions."

"Yes, sir!" said Bunter cheerfully, recovering his spirits at once. If it was not a whopping, Bunter had nothing to worry about, and he was not going to worry.

Mr. Quelch regarded him very sharply. He had had a suspicion that Tracy had schemed a story in advance, in collusion with Bunter, to see him through. But he could see now that that was not the case.

Bunter, plainly, did not know why he was sent for, and did not even guess that it was in connection with Tracy at all. He was simply wondering what on earth the Head wanted to question him about; his fat thoughts were easily read in his fat face.

"Now, Bunter, think before you answer me, and answer me carefully and truthfully!" said Dr. Locke. "Tracy states that you were in his study with him at a certain time after class in the Remove Form-room to-day. Is that the case?"

"Yes, sir!" said Bunter blankly.

He blinked at Tracy, realising now that he was sent for on account of the new junior. But why was still a mystery to him. He could not begin to guess why the headmaster was interested in the matter.

"At what time did you first see Tracy in that study?"

"Five o'clock, sir."

"Are you sure that it was precisely five o'clock, Bunter?"

"It might have been a minute past, sir."

Mr. Quelch felt a sinking of the heart. Was there—could there be—a mistake, after all?

Bunter was the most untruthful fellow in the school, if not in the wide world; but it was plain that he was telling the truth now, at least, so far as he knew it. His fat face revealed his astonishment at being questioned about the matter at all.

"Are you sure that it was not later than one minute past five, Bunter?" asked the Head.

Mr. Quelch stood grim and silent.

"Well, it couldn't have been, sir!" said Bunter.

"Why not, Bunter?"

"I mean, when I noticed the time it was two minutes past, and that was after I'd gone into the study, sir."

"You noticed the time?"

"Yes, sir."

"Does your watch keep correct time, Bunter?"

"No, sir!"

"You foolish boy, if your watch does not keep correct time, how can you be sure of what you say?"

"I didn't look at my watch, sir!" answered the fat Owl cheerfully.

Mr. Quelch thought he saw light again! He cut in swiftly:

"Did Tracy tell you the time, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir! I looked at Nugent's clock."

"Clocks in junior studies are sometimes incorrect," said Mr. Quelch.

"Indeed, more often than not, I think."

"Quite so!" said the Head. "That is a matter easily ascertained."

"Nugent's clock keeps good time, sir!" said Bunter. "Fellows often come up the passage to see the time by it."

"Is there more than one clock in that study?" asked the Head.

"Only Nugent's, sir! Wharton's clock doesn't go, since Bob Cherry put it right for him last term."

"Oh!"

Dr. Locke touched a bell.

Trotter appeared at the doorway.

"Trotter, kindly go to Study No. 1 in the Remove, and bring the clock there to me!" said the Head.

(Continued on next page.)

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"Yessir!" said Trotter, departing. Billy Bunter blinked round.

Knowing nothing of what had happened in Mr. Quelch's study, the fat Owl was quite mystified. Something, he could see, depended on whether Tracy had been in Study No. 1 at five o'clock, or not; but Bunter could not imagine what it was.

Trotter returned in a couple of minutes, with a clock in his hand.

Dr. Locke took it from him and compared it with the clock in his study. It was exactly right.

Mr. Quelch, with a grimmer and grimmer brow, compared it with his own watch, which was always exact, like Quelch himself; It was right to a second!

That fact being established, Trotter was bidden take it back to the Remove, which the House page did, in a very wondering frame of mind.

Mr. Quelch was breathing hard as the door closed on Trotter and Nugent's clock!

Dr. Locke's face was very grave.

Even to Mr. Quelch, certain as he was of Tracy's guilt, there now seemed a doubt in the matter. To the headmaster there was more than a doubt. To him it seemed fairly clear that Quelch had made a mistake. However, he proceeded to elicit information from Bunter.

"You are sure that you noticed the time by that clock, Bunter?"

"Yes, sir."

"Tracy was in the study with you at the time?"

"Yes, he was getting the cake out of the cupboard."

"How long were you in the study with Tracy?"

"Until we finished the cake, sir."

"Answer my question, you stupid boy."

"I—I think about ten minutes, sir—it might have been a little more. I know we finished the cake. I had the toffee afterwards."

"Did Tracy leave you, then?"

"He came down with me, sir."

"Do you know where he went?"

"Yes, sir; into the changing-room."

"Was anyone else there at the time?"

"Yes, sir, about a dozen fellows, I think. I noticed Coker of the Fifth near the door; I didn't see who the other fellows were."

"What did you do then, Bunter?" asked the Head.

"I ate the toffee, sir."

"I mean, did you remain with Tracy?"

"Oh, no, sir! He passed me, going down to the footer, but I didn't speak to him; I was eating—"

"That will do, Bunter." Dr. Locke, with a very grave face, looked at Mr. Quelch. Quelch's face was extremely grim by this time. "Mr. Quelch, are you satisfied with this boy's statements?"

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

"But—" He paused. "I will put a question to Bunter, with your permission."

"Pray do so, sir!" said the Head, somewhat dryly. The matter was, to his mind, clear, and Mr. Quelch appeared rather like a man clutching at straws.

"Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, "you have stated that you noticed the time when you were in Tracy's study. Did you actually look at the clock yourself, or did you ask Tracy?"

"I looked at it, sir! You see, I was near the clock, being in the armchair, and Tracy was getting the cake out of the cupboard—"

"You are a very short-sighted boy, Bunter! Did you see the clock clearly?"

"I wasn't a yard away from it, sir." "Did you see it clearly?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir."

"You state as a positive fact that it indicated two minutes past five when you looked at it?"

"Yes, sir."

"You did not lose sight of Tracy afterwards, till he went down to the football?"

"No, sir."

"How long had you been in the study when you looked at the clock?"

"A minute or two, sir."

"Tracy was there all the time?"

"Yes, sir! He'd just come up from detention with Mossoo."

Mr. Quelch breathed very deep, and very hard.

There was a brief silence—broken by the headmaster.

"Have you anything else to ask this boy, Mr. Quelch?"

"No, sir!" said Mr. Quelch, with an effort.

"You may go, Bunter!"

"Yes, sir! But I—I say, sir—" Bunter blinked round uneasily. "Is—is anything the matter, sir?"

"Never mind that, Bunter—you may go."

"Yes, sir, but—but I—I mean, if Tracy's in a row, sir," stammered the fat Owl. "If—if he ought to have been somewhere else when he was in that study, sir, I—I—I never meant—I mean, if he ought to have been in detention, or something, I—I—"

"Nothing of the kind, Bunter! You have done Tracy no harm by what you have told me; you have saved him from a punishment."

"Oh!" The fat Owl looked relieved.

"Of course, a fellow doesn't want to sneak, sir, but you asked me—"

"You may leave my study, Bunter."

"Yes, sir."

The fat Owl rolled out—perplexed, but relieved in his fat mind. He left a dead silence behind him.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Not Nice for Quelch!

GILBERT TRACY stood silent and respectful, but with a peculiar glimmer in his eyes.

Billy Bunter's evidence had completely exonerated him, and he knew it. He had known that it would see him through, and it was for precisely that reason that he had not mentioned Bunter in Mr. Quelch's study, but had reserved that evidence for the Head to hear.

The young rascal had, in fact, his Form-master "on toast," which was his object.

He could not now be punished for the rag in Quelch's study. It was proved, so far as proof was possible, that he could not have been anywhere near Quelch's study that afternoon. Neither could he be punished for his act of defiance and disrespect in bolting from Quelch, and forcing the matter upon the headmaster—now that it appeared that he was not the culprit. If he was not the culprit, the caning Mr. Quelch had been about to administer was an unjust punishment—in which circumstances, it could hardly be denied that any fellow had a right of appeal to his headmaster!

Quelch's position now was really intolerable. He hardly dared to meet the eyes of his chief.

Dr. Locke broke the painful silence.

"I think, Mr. Quelch, that it is now

established that Tracy could not have been guilty of what has occurred in your study.

"It—it would appear so, sir!" stammered Mr. Quelch. He hardly knew what to say.

"In that case, the boy may be dismissed."

"Oh! Certainly, sir."

"You may leave my study, Tracy!"

"Thank you, sir!" said Gilbert demurely.

He left the study and closed the door. Outside he winked at that door and then sauntered away, grinning.

Mr. Quelch remained with the Head, a flush in his cheeks. Never had the master of the Remove felt so utterly disconcerted.

At the bottom of his heart, he still believed that Tracy was the guilty party. Yet it seemed to be proved that he was not. A schoolmaster had to act on evidence, and the evidence had exonerated Gilbert.

Mr. Quelch was placed in the position of having intended to administer an unjust punishment from which the boy had only been saved by appealing—against his order—to the headmaster!

"This is a very unfortunate occurrence, Mr. Quelch!" said the Head, at last.

"I acknowledge it, sir," said Mr. Quelch, "and yet—"

"The boy is cleared—"

"It—it would appear so—"

"In the circumstances, he cannot be punished, or even reprimanded, for having disregarded your authority and brought the matter before me!" said Dr. Locke. "Indeed, we must be thankful that he did so, as it has prevented an act of injustice."

"I had every reason to believe—"

"Oh, quite, quite! I quite understand that this boy is a trial to you in your Form. You cannot trust him, and you believe him capable of acts of the most outrageous insubordination and disrespect. It was, however, by your desire, indeed at your special request, that he was admitted to the school at all."

The Head paused.

"I understand, and whole-heartedly approve, your motives in taking responsibility for this boy," he went on. "But if your distrust of him is so deeply founded that it is liable to lead you into errors of judgment, my dear Quelch, it may be injudicious for him to remain here."

"That is for you to decide, sir, of course!" said Mr. Quelch, in almost a choking voice.

"Not at all, Mr. Quelch, in the circumstances—you have a free hand in the matter. I leave it to your judgment!" said Dr. Locke, in his most gracious manner. "You will act as you think fit; but obviously the boy, troublesome as he is, must have bare justice. I hardly care to think of what would have happened, but for the mere chance that another junior happened to be in his study with him, at the time of the outrage in your study. A more careful investigation of the facts, sir, on any subsequent occasion—"

"You may be sure, sir, that I shall be most meticulously careful on another occasion!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"I am sure of it, sir!" said the Head graciously.

Mr. Quelch was glad to escape from his chief's study.

He had not been exactly called over the coals, but really it amounted to that! He had made a mistake—a mistake that no schoolmaster ought to have made! Yet at the back of his mind

was a belief that he had made no mistake—but that, in some inexplicable way, an artful young rascal had defeated him, and defeated the ends of justice.

The affair had, at all events, turned out exactly as Gilbert might have desired it to turn out—his object being to get away from Greyfriars.

It seemed to the worried and harassed Remove master that he had a glimpse of the young rascal's scheme.

He had started by open disrespect and defiance, but condign punishment had put a stop to that. Now he was carrying on in exactly the same way, but keeping behind the scenes, so that punishment could not come his way. His intention, to make Quelch tired of keeping him at the school, was the same—only his method was different.

His new method was a good deal harder to counter, for Mr. Quelch certainly did not want to go through another such scene as that in the Head's study.

Mr. Quelch arrived in his own study—and glanced round it, with deep feelings. Who had done this—if not Gilbert? Who could have done it?

Deep in Mr. Quelch's heart was the conviction that Gilbert had done it—though he had proved, to the Head's satisfaction, that he had not!

Mr. Quelch proceeded to set the study to rights. He did not want the servants to see it in its present state. The rag itself was bad enough—without the matter becoming a topic below stairs.

But it was a disagreeable and weary task for the Remove master, and his face was pale with wrath as he set about it.

He was collecting scattered books, and wiping spilled ink with a duster, when a sound of laughter from the quad drew his attention, and he glanced from the window.

There was a group of juniors at a little distance: Gilbert Tracy, with several other Remove fellows standing round him—Skinner, Snoop, Stott, Bolsover major, Vernon-Smith, and two or three others. They were all laughing at something Tracy was telling them—in full view of Mr. Quelch's study window!

Mr. Quelch could guess the topic, though he could not hear!

He almost trembled with wrath.

That young rascal had scored over him. He was telling other fellows about it! And he wanted Mr. Quelch to know—that was why he was telling them in view of his Form-master's study window!

And Mr. Quelch could do nothing!

He turned away from the window, with deep feelings. In that peculiar contest between a schoolboy and a schoolmaster, the schoolboy had scored, and the schoolmaster had to accept defeat—and he found the taste of it most unpleasant.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Row in Study No. 1!

"TRACY?" asked Frank Nugent. "Yes!" answered Harry Wharton.

He chewed the end of his pencil thoughtfully. A paper lay on the table before him in Study No. 1, containing a list of names.

It was the list for the Remove team, in a match with the Shell, which was coming off on Wednesday afternoon. And Gilbert Tracy's name was going down.

Tracy had come to Greyfriars only that term. He had made no friends in THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,600.

the Remove, but had, rather, made himself disliked. Harry Wharton liked him no more than any other Remove man—perhaps rather less. But it was clear that a footballer of Tracy's quality could not be passed over, even if the captain of the Remove wished to pass him over—which he did not.

"I don't like the chap, Frank!" he said slowly. "I don't see how anybody could! He really is a worm, isn't he?"

"As Inky would say, the wormfulness is terrific!" said Nugent. "But he's no end of a footballer."

"Yes; that's jolly queer! I don't believe he's got a spot of sportsman in him; but he can play Soccer! I play the game well enough to know a better man when I see one—and he's better than I am," said Harry. "He's the best man in the Remove at the game—or in all the Lower School. How he keeps his wind, with all those filthy cigarettes, is a mystery to me. He looks rather pasty, but he seems fit enough. Of course, we haven't seen him in a game yet—and it's different from practice—he may conk out! But he's got to have his chance."

"He's keen on it," said Frank.

"Yes, that's one good thing about him—he's almost as keen on Soccer as on making Quelch tired of life!" agreed Wharton.

"He will be rather a surprise-packet for Hobby and his men on Wednesday," remarked Nugent. "And we want to beat the Shell."

"Yes, there's that, too! And if he cuts a figure in games, it may make the silly ass more satisfied to stay at Greyfriars, and he may have sense enough to leave Quelch alone!" said Harry. "Some of the fellows think it jolly clever of him to score over Quelch—I can't see it myself."

"You wouldn't!" said a voice at the door, as Gilbert Tracy came into the study. "Good little Georgie loves his kind teachers, what?"

Harry Wharton looked at him. He had promised his uncle to do what he could for this fellow at school, and it was up to him to keep his word. But he could hardly have disliked a fellow more.

Gilbert lounged into the study and sat on a corner of the table. He glanced at the paper on which Wharton had been pencilling names.

"That for the game on Wednesday?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Harry curtly.

"I came up to speak to you about it! I want to play."

Wharton made no answer to that. Every Remove man, with very few exceptions, wanted to play in the Form team. Gilbert made the statement as if he were claiming a right.

No doubt he had a right, on his form; but it was not the way to speak to his captain. But it was Gilbert's happy custom to make himself as offensive as he could.

"Footer's something, at least, in this hole," went on Gilbert. "I wouldn't be found dead here if I could help it; but so long as I've got to stick it, it's something to play Soccer. What place are you giving me?"

"How do you know I'm giving you a place at all?" asked the captain of the Remove dryly.

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"I don't see that you've got any choice in the matter. I can play your head off, and you know it! Every man in the Form knows it, too. You can hardly keep me out, to save your own nose" from being put out of joint."

Harry Wharton breathed hard.

He had already decided to put Tracy's name in the list. But he was strongly tempted to change his intention. He was feeling much more disposed to collar Gilbert and pitch him neck and crop out of the study, than to play him in the match with the Shell. "Anyhow, you can tell me!" said Gilbert. "If I'm not playing on Wednesday, I've got something on, out of gates, and a fellow wants to know."

"A fellow who wants to know can wait till the list is posted up!" said Harry. "Now shut up!"

"When does the list go up?"

"This evening in the Rag!"

"And you can't let out the awful secret earlier?" asked Gilbert sarcastically. "Keep it, then! But if you're putting me in, and I suppose you are, put me down centre-forward."

"I happen to have myself down as centre-forward!" said the captain of the Remove.

"Better wash that out, then! Why swank, when you know that you're not in the same street with me?"

Harry Wharton rose to his feet. His eyes were glinting.

"That's enough from you, Tracy!" he said. "You'd better pack up the rest! If I hadn't promised my uncle to keep my temper with you, I'd knock you spinning off that table for your cheek!"

"I never asked the old fool to barge in, did I?" said Gilbert coolly. "If you've made a fool promise like that, you've got yourself to thank. Like your cheek to meddle in my affairs, and your uncle's, too."

"Are you calling Colonel Wharton an old fool to me, his nephew?" asked Harry, very quietly.

"Exactly—dashed meddling old ass!" said the cheery Gilbert. "Like uncle, like nephew, I suppose—a pair of meddling asses. I had only one day with the old donkey at Wharton Lodge, but I got jolly well fed-up with him—though not so fed-up as I am with you."

"Well," said Harry, between his set lips, "you can say what you like to me, and I'll try to keep my temper; but you won't speak of my uncle like that without being sorry for it."

He stepped quickly round the table and grasped Gilbert by the collar.

Tracy came off the table with a bump and an angry yell.

Bang!

A louder yell rang through Study No. 1 as Gilbert's head banged on the table. There was another bang, and another yell. Then Gilbert was pitched sprawling on the study carpet.

Harry Wharton stood looking at him, with clenched fists and gleaming eyes.

"That's a tip," he said savagely. "And if you're not satisfied, put up your hands, you cheeky rat!"

Gilbert staggered to his feet, panting for breath.

For a moment he looked like taking the captain of the Remove at his word. But it was only for a moment.

"I'm not scrapping with you!" he said between his teeth. "I tried that on, first day of term, and found you over my weight. No good trying again. But I'll make you sorry for that, all the same."

"Look here, Tracy, why can't you keep a civil tongue in your head?" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "You know jolly well that Wharton has been trying his hardest not to quarrel with you."

"Who asked you to butt in?" retorted Gilbert. "Isn't there any fellow at this school who can mind his own business?"

With that, the new junior walked out of the study, leaving Frank Nugent breathing hard.

"By gum!" said Nugent. He half rose, and sat down again. "Bother the fellow—it's not worth a row! I wish Quelch, hadn't stuck him in this study!"

"Same here!"

Harry Wharton sat down again, and took up pencil and paper. Again he chewed the end of the pencil. Nugent watched him rather curiously. The captain of the Remove wrote in the eleventh name at last, and Nugent smiled as he saw that the name was "G. Tracy."

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Inky!

JAMES HOBSON, the captain of the Shell, stared. He stared quite blankly.

Hobby of the Shell had come up to his study; and as his study-mates, Hoskins and Stewart, were out of the House, he naturally expected to find that study empty.

Instead of which, there was a fellow in it, and as Hobby opened the door, that fellow was in the act of taking the inkpot from the table and stepping to the window with it.

The window was open, and the fellow in the study leaned out, with the inkpot in his hand.

His back had been to the door, and he had not seen Hobby open it. Hobby stared in blank astonishment at his back.

Who the fellow was, James Hobson did not know, only that he was not a Shell man. If Hobby had heard that there was a new man in the Remove that term, he had not noticed him, and knew nothing of Gilbert Tracy.

Hobson was not only surprised, he was intensely angry at what he saw. The fellow, whoever he was, was evidently going to pour Hobson's ink from Hobson's window on some fellow below—which was rather the limit in the way of practical jokes. And the fellow below who got the ink was fairly certain to come raging up to Hobby's study, thinking that Hobby or one of his friends had done it. He could hardly think anything else, if he spotted the window from which the ink descended.

Hobby stepped softly across the study, behind the fellow leaning at the window. He was going to surprise that fellow!

Tracy, leaning out, was so intent on watching below that he remained in happy ignorance that the captain of the Shell was just behind him. He was not throwing the ink yet; he was, apparently, waiting for someone to pass exactly under the window, to get it fair and square.

Hobby, about to apply a sudden boot, paused and glanced out over the fellow's shoulder, rather curious to see who it was that was booked for the ink.

His eyes bulged as he saw.

Only one person was passing near the study windows, and that was Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove!

It was a beak on whose devoted head this mad ass was planning to drop a sudden flood of ink!

Hobson stood transfixed for a moment in real horror.

Swamping a master with ink was an unheard-of performance. Obviously, the fellow who did it would never dare to let the fact become known. That, no doubt, was why he had selected another fellow's study for the performance. He was going to vanish after he had done it, leaving the fellows to whom the study belonged to face the inquiries of an exasperated beak!

Hobby's eyes gleamed.

Mr. Quelch was coming along the path at a leisurely pace. In about another minute he would be passing beneath that window, about twenty feet down.

Tracy waited and watched.

Nothing but Hobby's unlooked-for arrival in the study saved the Remove master from that sudden flood of ink from above, which certainly would have astonished and exasperated him. Fortunately, Hobby was there, and he was not likely to allow the fellow to carry on and leave him to pay the piper.

His first intention had been to surprise the ragger with a sudden and hefty kick on the trousers. Now he changed that intention. Instead of booting Tracy, he grasped him suddenly by the shoulders and jerked him back into the study—chiefly anxious to get that inkpot safe inside the window.

Tracy gave a startled yelp.

He whirled backwards, and sat down on the study floor with a heavy bump. The inkpot dropped from his hands and landed on his knees, flooding his trousers with ink.

Hobson glared down at him as he glared up.

"Now, what's this game?" demanded Hobby. "Who are you, I'd like to know?"

(Continued on next page.)

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DAD-**



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Flies your kite...
Erects your 'Meccano'...
Drills your soldiers...
Reads your Maags...*



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"Find out!" snarled Gilbert.
 "That's your beak; I suppose, that you were going to chuck the ink over?" demanded Hobson.

"Are you going to tell him?" sneered Gilbert.

James Hobson reddened.

"No," he answered; "I'm not going to tell him, you rat! But I'm going to give you a lesson about playing rotten tricks from my study window! Quelch would have come up here if he had got that ink. You wouldn't have been here waiting for him, I fancy. He would have fancied that a Shell man had done it. That was your game, you measly toad!"

Gilbert picked himself up and moved round the table, edging towards the door. James Hobson was rather a burly fellow, and Gilbert was not looking for a scrap. But the captain of the Shell stepped quickly between him and the door.

"You're not going just yet, my beauty!" he said.

"Let me pass, you fool!" snarled Gilbert. "I've got to get this ink off!"

"Jolly lucky for me that Quelch hasn't got to get it off!" retorted Hobby. "If he had, he would have gone raging to Hacker, and Hacker would have had this study on the carpet! Nice for me and old Hosky and Stewart if I hadn't happened to come up and catch you! I don't know who you are, and don't care; but I'm going to give you a tip not to barge into my study!"

"Will you let me pass?" hissed Gilbert.

"Not yet! As you have a fancy for inking nappers, I'll see how you like it yourself! I've got a pint bottle in the cupboard!"

Gilbert made a sudden rush. Ink on Quelch's napper was one thing; on his own quite another. Hobson staggered from the rush, and Gilbert whirled to the door. But Hobby had hold of him in a twinkling.

"No, you don't!" said Hobby.

Gilbert struggled desperately. For a couple of minutes the captain of the Shell had his hands full. Then he had Gilbert by the collar, and was dragging him bodily towards the study cupboard.

Tracy resisted fiercely, but he resisted in vain. Hobby held him with one hand in a grip of iron; with the other he opened the cupboard door and took out a large bottle of ink.

Gilbert fairly cringed with apprehension.

"Let me go!" he panted. "I won't come to this study again—"

"I'll see that you don't!" said Hobby.

"Keep that ink away, you mad idiot!" yelled Gilbert, struggling frantically.

"Don't you want it?" asked Hobby.

"No, you fool!"

"Then you shouldn't have asked for it! Here you are!"

Hobson of the Shell was a good-natured fellow. But he had no good nature at the moment to waste on Gilbert Tracy. Had Tracy got away with that performance at the study window, matters might have been very serious for the fellows in that study. Hobby's idea was to make him understand that that study was a distinctly unhealthy spot for him, and he certainly succeeded.

Tracy writhed with horror as the pint bottle of ink was upended over his head. It came swamping down. It soaked his hair; it flooded behind his ears; it ran in streams over his face and down his neck. He was drenched in ink almost from head to foot.

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"Like it?" grinned Hobby.

"Gurrgrgh!" gurgled Gilbert.

"Feel a bit damp?"

"Urrrrgh!"

"That's how Quelch would have felt if you'd got him from my window—"

"Yurrgh!"

"If you don't like it, it's open to you to complain to your Form-master!" grinned Hobby. "Quelch would like to know why I inked you, I'm sure!"

"Wurrrrrgh!"

"Now you can get out, and take the ink with you! You can have it for nothing!"

"Urrrrgh!"

Tracy went whirling to the door.

Hobson's foot rose, and was planted on him, as if Hobby fancied that he was kicking for goal.

"Thud! Bump!"

Tracy crashed in the passage.

"Now hook it!" said Hobby. "And if you want some more of the same, come to this study any time!"

And Hobby chuckled as the new fellow in the Remove tottered away, gasping and gurgling, and dripping ink.

THE NINTH CHAPTER Caught!

"YOU will go on, Tracy!"

Mr. Quelch spoke quietly in the Remove Form room on Wednesday morning. But, quietly as he spoke, there was significance in his tone.

It was "con," and the Remove were doing the second book of the *Æneid*. Several fellows had been put on before Gilbert's turn came. Harry Wharton had given out quite a good con; Mark Linley a very good one indeed; Lord Mauleverer a very bad one; and Billy Bunter a translation that would have made Virgil jump had P. Vergilius Maro been there to hear it.

Everyone was interested when Gilbert Tracy was called on to construe.

The "feud" between that unusual new boy and his Form-master was well known to all the Remove. All the fellows knew that Tracy had set out to make Quelch tired of having him in his Form. Most of them knew that Tracy had ragged the Form-master's study and got away with it with impunity. It was no secret that Quelch was "down" on him with a very heavy down.

Quelch was a just man. But in Tracy's case justice was not likely to be tempered with mercy. Quelch would never punish him but for a proved delinquency, but if he overstepped the line of caution he was "for it"—hard and heavy.

It is not unknown at school for some exuberant fellow to set up as a ragger, and a successful ragger can give a beak endless trouble—with caution. But it is a game that requires playing with care. A ragger cannot afford to be a slacker, too, for if he fails in class the beak has him on the hip, as it were.

But all the Remove knew that Tracy was a slacker—in work if not in games. He was, therefore, handicapped in his peculiar contest.

Quelch could not punish him for wrecking his study, though he had no doubt that he had done it. But he could punish him for slacking in prep and handing out a bad translation; and there was no doubt that he would, and that the punishment would not err on the side of leniency.

Tracy's studymates, Wharton and Nugent, knew that he had hardly glanced at prep the previous evening. They knew, and other fellows did not

doubt, that he was little better prepared to deal with the passage he had to translate than Mauleverer or Bunter.

Probably Mr. Quelch was also aware of it. There was a glint in his eye as it fixed on Tracy. All the Form expected Tracy to "skew," and skew badly, whereupon the vials of wrath would pour upon his devoted head!

Tracy appeared to hesitate for a moment or two, and Quelch's lips were seen to set in a tight line.

"Primus ibi ante omnis, magna comitante—" began Tracy.

"Construe!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

Then Tracy went on to translate, verse after verse, without a pause or mistake, to the general astonishment.

"Then, foremost of all, followed by a great throng, Laocoon speeds down from the height of the citadel—" and so on.

Gilbert carried on calmly and correctly, and the other fellows listened, unusually interested in a fellow's con.

Mr. Quelch's knitted brow cleared a little.

So far from failing in class, Gilbert was handing out a construe that was as good as Mark Linley's, usually the best in the Remove.

This looked as if he had worked hard in preparation, which Wharton and Nugent, at least, knew that he had not done.

To Quelch, this appeared like a sign of amendment in the worst boy in the Remove. If the fellow were trying to do better, Quelch was the man to forget past offences and help him on to do better still.

Gilbert's translation was good. It was, perhaps, just a little too good!

Quelch was not a suspicious man, but he had not taught schoolboys for so many years without learning all the tricks of the trade. It was well known in the Remove that Quelch was a downy bird!

Pleased at first, Quelch began to smell a rat! He stepped closer to the Form, his eyes on Gilbert, gimlet-like in their keenness.

"Stop!" said Quelch suddenly. "What is that in your left hand, Tracy?"

Tracy caught his breath.

"Nothing, sir!"

"Stand out before the Form!"

Tracy, with set lips, stood out before the Form. As he did so, he dropped a circular disc of cardboard, which rolled under the desks. It was neatly done, but it did not escape the gimlet eye.

"Wibley!"

"Oh! Yes, sir?"

"Hand me that card that Tracy has dropped. It has fallen near you."

"Oh!"

Wibley had not seen it. Quelch had! Wibley stooped and picked it up, and then a dozen fellows saw it.

On that disc of cardboard, which Tracy had held concealed in his left hand, was a written translation of the portion of the *Æneid* that the Remove were handling that morning. It was written in tiny letters, to go into the small space of a disc that could be concealed in the hand. But there it was—and it fully accounted for Tracy's excellent construe of a passage that he had never prepared!

The juniors fairly gasped as they saw it.

Fellows used "cribs," when they could get them, to help them through prep. A crib is, in fact, useful to an earnest worker, though to a lazy fellow it is a certain means of never learning anything. Cribbs may be good or bad, according to the use to which they are



“Tracy, you unscrupulous young rascal, bend over at once!” thundered Mr. Quelch, swishing his cane. “I’ve a right to appeal to my headmaster first!” said the new boy, opening the door and making a bolt for the passage.

put, but schoolmasters have no choice but to forbid their use altogether.

But though plenty of fellows used cribs in their studies, it was rather new for a fellow to try to use one in class, right under the eyes of his Form-master—and such keen eyes as Quelch’s.

In silence, Quelch took that disc of cardboard from Wibley. He looked at it with a thunderous brow. Then he looked at Tracy.

“You have not prepared this lesson, Tracy,” he said quietly.

No answer.

“You have ventured to bring a translation into class! You have been reading out a written translation, copied from some book you are not allowed to possess.”

There was nothing for Tracy to say. That was exactly what he had been doing, and he had been fairly caught in the act.

Mr. Quelch twisted the cardboard disc in his fingers and threw it into the wastepaper-basket. Then he fixed his eyes again on Tracy’s sullen face.

“You will now construe, Tracy—without the aid of a crib!” he said, in a grinding voice.

Tracy glanced at the Latin page. He had no chance whatever of dealing with it. Without his crib he was helpless.

“I am waiting!” said Mr. Quelch. “You will translate the whole passage, Tracy, or I shall punish you severely!”

So far from being able to translate the whole passage, Tracy could not translate a single verse.

He stood sullenly silent. He had relied on his crib to see him through and it had failed him—and now he was for it!

“Very well!” said Mr. Quelch. He took up his cane. “Bend over that desk, Tracy!”

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

“Go to your place, Tracy! You will be detained in the Form-room this afternoon, and will write out a translation of two hundred lines from this book of the *Æneid*.”

Tracy went wriggling to his place. Con continued in the Remove Form-room, while Gilbert sat and wriggled and scowled.

He had scored over Quelch in the matter of the study rag. But slacking was a chink in his armour, and he had, as it were, handed himself over to the enemy, bound hand and foot!

With the happy prospect before him of a half-holiday spent in the Form-room, working at Latin translation, Gilbert could not feel that he was getting on well with his feud!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Gilbert!

HARRY WHARTON had rather a worried look after dinner that day.

The name of “G. Tracy” was in the list posted up in the Rag. He was down as inside-left. But a fellow under detention could not play football, so the captain of the Remove had no choice but to fake that name out again.

Personally, he would have been glad enough to leave Tracy out of the team. But he was too good a skipper to allow personal feelings to influence him in games. If Tracy had one good quality, it was his keenness on Soccer, and in that line all the Remove knew that he was a bright, particular star. Fellows who disliked him were glad to see his name in the list, knowing what a rod in pickle he was for Hobson & Co. of the Shell.

The Shell were a rather older and heavier team than the Remove, and the

best men were needed for the game—and everyone knew that Tracy was one of the best.

So it was rather a worry to the captain of the Remove—all the more because he had his promise to his uncle to remember, to see Tracy through in every way that he could.

“Can’t be helped!” said Bob Cherry, when he consulted his chums. “The howling ass asked for it, and got it!”

“Silly ass to play that game on Quelch!” grunted Johnny Bull. “In the Fourth a chap can stick up a translation on his desk in front of him, and Capper wouldn’t notice—but it won’t do for Quelch!”

“You’ll have to put in Toddy!” said Nugent.

“Toddy’s got a crooked knee—besides, he’s nowhere near Tracy’s form,” said Harry. “We want Tracy.”

“We can beat the Shell without him,” said Bob. “Are you thinking of asking Quelch to let him off? Not much good, when he’s got the old scout’s rag out to such an extent.”

“I think I’ll try,” said Harry. “I’d like the game better, with Tracy in the Form-room, but there’s no getting out of it that he’s the best man we’ve got. Quelch may go easy, as he’s a new fellow here.”

And the captain of the Remove, though not in a very hopeful mood, repaired to his Form-master’s study. He was in the rather peculiar position of leaving no stone unturned to get a fellow into the team whom he would have preferred personally to leave out of it! But Soccer was Soccer!

Mr. Quelch greeted his head boy with a kindly smile, but the smile vanished at the mention of Tracy.

“Really, Wharton—” he said severely.

(Continued on page 16.)
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BURLEIGH'S TRUMP CARD!

Amusing School Story of Jack
Jolly & Co., of St. Sam's
By DICKY NUGENT

"I wonder if you would mind lending me sixpence, Burleigh?" asked Doctor Birchermall casually, as he ran into Burleigh in Big Hall.

The broad-shouldered kaptin of St. Sam's stopped with a grin. "I wouldn't mind a bit, sir!" he said cheerfully.

"Good!" grinned the Head of St. Sam's. "Fork out, then, my good fellow!"

But, much to the Head's surprize, Burleigh shook his head.

"Sorry, sir; but I'm afraid it can't be done! I'm broke to the wide!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Jack Jolly & Co., who happened to be standing near by.

The Head sniffed.

"Really, Burleigh, I wish you wouldn't try to be commical. It duzzent suit you!" he said testily.

"This is a serious matter. I had set my mind on seeing the grate footer match between Muggleton Manglers and Maimham United this afternoon. But now that the time has come, I haven't the tanner admission fee."

Burleigh larfed.

"If that's all you're after, sir, why not get somebody to bunk you up and let you stand on their shoulders outside the ground? There's a ripping fence down a little alley-way on one side of the Manglers' ground."

Doctor Birchermall's eyes gleamed.

"That's not a bad wheeze, Burleigh, by any means. Half a minnit, boys!" he added, as Jack Jolly & Co. made a hurried move for the front door. "I fancy I shall require you to help me this afternoon."

Jack Jolly & Co. grimaced.

"Er—can't you get somebody else, sir?" asked Jolly. "We're dew to play footer against the Fifth this afternoon."

"Ratts!" snapped the Head. "All four of you will accompany me to Muggleton and provide me with your shoulders as a footstool up against the fence outside the Manglers' ground."

Do you here?"

"We here, sir!"

"That's better!"

leered the Head. "Fall in and follow me, then. Good-bye, Burleigh—and thanks for the tip!"

Burleigh doffed his cap and strolled off. His brows were nitted thoughtfully as he did so.

Jack Jolly & Co. felt jolly wild as they tramped out of the School House behind Doctor Birchermall. It was a bit thick, they reflected, for fellows to have to spend their "halfers" bunking their headmaster up the fence outside a footer ground.

They reached the Muggleton Manglers' football ground at last and the Head soon discovered the little alley-way Burleigh had mentioned.

"Bless my sole!

It will be almost as good as a seat in the grand stand!"

he chortled. "Line up, boys, and give a man a shoulder!"

Jolly and Fearless nelt down so that Doctor Birchermall could get one foot on each shoulder. Merry and Bright stood one each side of them so that the Head could use them as balancing-posts. Then the grinning Head climbed up and Jolly and Fearless, wobbling slitley under the strain, gradually rose to their feet till the Head could see over the top of the fence.

It was no joak to Jolly and Fearless to have to put up with the larks the Head got up to when the match began.

I could just about stand all this, but this last business of my piano playing on its own is the last straw. It has happened every day this week. The notes start moving about before I sit on the stool; odd notes that I haven't touched play in the middle of my exercises, and the piano goes on playing after I've stopped!

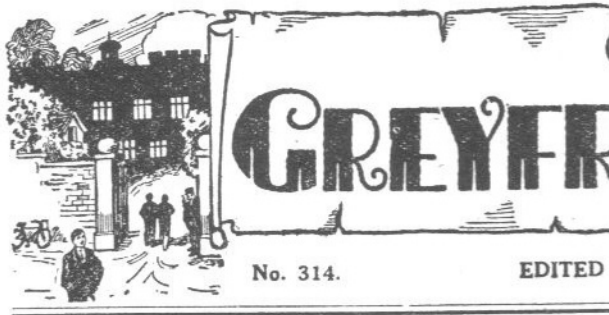
It must seem rummy to you to read this. But it's a lot more rummy when you actually see it like I've done. The only thing I can imagine is that the school is haunted by some disembodied spirits that have taken a fancy to playing the piano. Whatever it is, it's giving me the creeps, and I hope you'll take me away from Greyfriars at once.

Your loving son,

CLAUDE.

P.S.—Don't trouble to take me away, after all. I've just found out that that silly ass, Hobson, has been causing all the trouble. He has been putting his white mice into the works of my piano for their daily exercise!

P.P.S.—When I told him his fat-headed trick had nearly stopped me playing the piano, he had the cheek to say that was partly why he had done it. I shall play more than ever, now—just to show the idiot!



The old fogey seemed to forget where he was; he jumped and danced about and dug his heels into the Fourth Formers' shoulders till Jolly and Fearless fairly yelled with pain. But it was no good yelling against the Head, whose cheers for the Muggleton Manglers put all other sounds in the shade.

"Good old Manglers! You've got 'em groggy!" he roared. "Treat 'em rough, lads! Biff 'em and bash 'em! Yah! Boo! Hooray!"

"Ow!" gasped Jolly. "This is getting a bit thick. I shall be broosed all over if he keeps this up for long."



"Same here, old chap!" panted Fearless. "If only something would happen—"

"Nah, then! Wot's all this here, eh?"

Fearless broke off, as a stern official voice interrupted his remarks. Looking round, he saw a black-moustached policeman standing behind him.

Jolly saw the newcomer at the same instant and he and Fearless did the same thing instinctively. They moved aside—in opposite directions!

The result was a fourgone conclusion. The space between them became too wide for Doctor Birchermall and the Head lost his footing and fell.

Bang! Crash! Wallop!

"Yarooooo! Ow-ow-ow!"

Doctor Birchermall let out a deffening bellow of pain, as he hit the floor. But worse even than his fizzical pain was the mental pain he felt when he found a frowning perliceman advancing on him.

"You'll 'ave to come alonga me, old covey!" rasped the man in blue. "I arrest yer in the name of the lor for illegal watching of a football match an' I warn yer that—"

But the perliceman went no further. Before he could do so, Doctor Birchermall, with amazing agility, had jumped to his feet and fled.

Jack Jolly & Co. quite expected to see the stern-faced limb of the law follow him.

But a surprize was in store for the chums of the Fourth. Instead of racing after the Head, the perliceman stopped in front of the juniors and calmly removed his helmet—and also his false moustache.

MASTER MUSICIAN'S MISTAKE!

Amazing letter from
Claude Hoskins

Dear Mater and Pater,—Will you please take me away from this beastly school at once? I've always thought it was haunted, and now I know it for a fact that it is because my piano has started playing by itself. And my nerves won't stand it any longer!

It's no good your saying I'm imagining it. I've seen it plainly and heard it, too—and several times at that! I can tell you, it has given a very severe shock to my system.

The term hasn't been going at all well even apart from this. Several of the chaps have kicked up a fuss because they said I played the piano too much and they were fed up with it. I ticked them off, of course. I told them you can't have too much of a good thing, but the fatheads wouldn't see sense, and there has been quite a lot of unpleasantness.

The GREYFRIARS HERALD



"NO COURTESY" LEAGUE AT GREYFRIARS

"Scrap Formalities!" Says Leader

Bolsover major has started something fresh at Greyfriars—the "No Courtesy" League.

"Scrap useless formalities—that's the idea!" he told Tom Brown, when the latter called to inquire about it for the "Greyfriars Herald." "What's the use of saying 'How are you?' when you don't care a rap how a chap is? Why say 'You're welcome!' when you'd like to boot a chap out of your study? The 'No Courtesy' League will abolish all this and bring back refreshing candour and truthfulness into conversation. See the idea?"

Tom Brown said he thought he saw.

"In the ideal school of the future which we 'No Courtesy' chaps visualise," said Bolsover enthusiastically, "nothing will be said unless it's really meant."

On the following evening, the "No Courtesy" pioneers held their first public meeting. A lukewarm gathering of a score or so turned up in the Remove Form-room to listen to Bolsover major speak.

Bolsover took his stand by Mr. Quelch's desk and started the meeting without any polite trimmings such as a chairman to run the show.

"Gentlemen!" he cried.

It was a fatal opening for Bolsover. The crowd got one in right away over that.

"No courtesy!" they chortled, delightfully.

Bolsover frowned.

"H'm! I shouldn't have said that, of course! Forget it! Ahem! It gives me great pleasure to stand here this evening—"

"No courtesy!" insisted the crowd.

Bolsover glared.

"I mean, it doesn't give me any pleasure at all. What I should have said is—I stand here this evening for the purpose of introducing a brand new idea to all you good people—"

"NO COURTESY!" chanted the crowd.

"The idea," said Bolsover major, very red in the face, "is this: no superfluous remarks, made in the interests of courtesy! To introduce this great theme to you tonight is my privilege and—"

"NO COURTESY!" roared Bolsover's tormentors.

"Oh, rats!" snorted the founder of the "No Courtesy" League. "A chap can't be expected to get out of the way of politeness in a day. Shut up and give me a hearing and—yooocoooop!"

Bolsover major's speech ended in a wild yelp, as a very ripe tomato flattened itself against his features.

Somehow, this incident had a disturbing effect on the meeting, and it broke up a little later amid quite disorderly scenes.

That is all that has been heard of the "No Courtesy" League up to the time of going to press. But we have little doubt that more will be heard of it in the near future!

BY HARRY WHARTON.

October 15th, 1938.

H: Vernon-Smith's WEEKLY SPORTS SHORTS

Have we a super Soccer side in the Greyfriars Remove this year?

Now that our strongest team has been seen in action for the first time, I think most critics will feel that the answer to this question is Yes!

The most optimistic of the Greyfriars crowd hardly expected that we should beat Tom Merry's team by three clear goals when we visited St. Jim's last Saturday. Yet that was the margin, and it by no means flattered us, either!

Wharton and Bull and Cherry turned out for Greyfriars for the first time this season, and didn't St. Jim's know all about it, too? There was no stopping Wharton at centre-forward, there was no getting by Johnny Bull at right-back, and there was no stopping or getting by Cherry at centre-half! These three, still looking deeply bronzed from their South Seas journeyings, seemed to revel in the game. They were a real inspiration to the rest of us.

Now for that championship table

I promised you the other week! It looks a bit top-heavy at the moment, but it's early in the season yet, and you'll find a levelling-up process going on pretty soon, I fancy. I am not at present taking goal averages into consideration and I have given the two leading places to St. Jude's and Highcliffe respectively merely out of politeness. Greyfriars, with a goals record of 4-0, has the best average in actual fact, but we prefer to go to the top of the table on a clean-cut points lead.

If the team continues to shape as it has begun, we shall not have long to wait!

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE.

	P.	W.	D.	L.	Pts.
1. ST. JUDE'S ..	2	2	0	0	4
2. HIGHCLIFFE ..	2	2	0	0	4
3. GREYFRIARS ..	2	2	0	0	4
4. BAGSHOT ..	2	1	1	0	3
5. RYLCOMBE ..	2	1	1	0	3
G.S.	2	1	1	0	3
6. ST. JIM'S ..	2	1	0	1	2
7. ROKWOOD ..	2	0	0	2	0
8. CLAREMONT ..	1	0	0	1	0
9. REDDITSFORD ..	2	0	0	2	0
10. ABOTSLYFFE ..	3	0	0	3	0

THOUGHT HE'D REACHED HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS!

Sporting Form-Master's Mistake

Roaming in the gloaming on the banks of Little Side the other dewy eve, Mr. Paul Pontifex Prout, whose fame as master of the Greyfriars Fifth is exceeded only by his fame as a big game hunter, stopped and blinked.

He really found it difficult to believe his own eyes.

Stalking across the grass in the direction of the footer pavilion was a tiger!

Mr. Prout could have wept at the thought that he had not brought his rifle with him. But then nobody could possibly have anticipated meeting a tiger in the course of an evening stroll round the grounds at Greyfriars!

He decided to put matters right by obtaining his Winchester repeater at once. But before he rushed away to yank out that trusty old weapon of war, he saw another sight that made him sit up and take notice.

Padding out of the pavilion on their hind legs came two fierce-looking bears!

Then he spotted something else. A couple of kangaroos! Oh, yes, and two sea-lions

—and a crocodile—and a small-sized elephant!

With his scanty hairs standing up from his head like the quills of a porcupine, Prout tore back to the House. He raced up to his study, loaded the Winchester, and whizzed downstairs again, ready to indulge in an orgy of slaughter outside the School House.

But he didn't have to go outside the School House. When he got down into the Hall, it was to find the animals he had spotted on Little Side calmly walking in through the front door.

Fortunately, Wingate managed to disarm the Fifth Form-master before he could carry out a general massacre. We say fortunately, and we jolly well mean it, too!

You see, the wild animals Prout had spotted belonged to Wibley's circus, which had been rehearsing in the footer pavilion. And the "animals" in Wibley's circus, as you probably know already,



happen to be disguised Remove chaps!

Mr. Prout was quite annoyed when he learned the truth. He had imagined that the happy hunting grounds of Indian legend had by some strange means been transplanted to Greyfriars.

Blundell of the Fifth tells us that he's trying to get Mr. Quelch to put a stop to Wibley on the plea that Wib. has been guilty of false pretences.

But we have an idea it will take more than Mr. Prout to stop Wibley's entertaining show! It has already raised money for charity, and will do so again.

"That's got a lot of him, kids, I fancy!" he said.

"BURLEIGH!" yelled the Co. "They were right! The stern-looking policeman" was none other than Burleigh, of the Sixth, disguised in "props" belonging to the Senior Stage Society.

"Surprised to see me, what?" he chuckled. "I made up my mind to do it as soon as you left. Now hurry back to St. Sam's, kids, and change into your footer jogs. I've got the Fifth to postpone the kick-off for an hour and you'll just be in time to play in the match!"

"Oh, thank you, Burleigh!" chortled Jack Joll & Co.

And they returned to St. Sam's at the double and beat the Fifth 6-nil. And nothing was seen of the Head till after dark.

Burleigh's trump card had evidently given the old rascal quite a shock!

HARRY WHARTON IN THE CHAIR AGAIN!

Yes, I'm back again in the editorial chair and feeling fit as a fiddle and full of beans after my long absence in the South Seas. Glad to meet you all again, everybody!

As you may have gathered from last week's editorial, Fisher T. Fish, who has been running the "Herald" while I have been abroad, was reluctant at first to hand over the reins of office. In fact, when we actually got to the point, I discovered that he had shifted the entire editorial office, lock, stock, and barrel, to a "secret" headquarters from which it was his intention to continue to run the paper, whether I liked it or not!

It didn't take me long to discover that Fishy's "secret" headquarters were in a box-room at the top of the School House. I went up there to see him, quite expecting to have a lot of trouble.

To my utter amazement, I found that he had almost forgotten the existence of the "Greyfriars Herald."

It seemed that he had found amongst the junk in the box-room an old pamphlet entitled "How To Make A Fortune Buying Old Books."

When he spotted me, he gave a start, as though he had just come down to earth.

"Howya, Wharton! Listen!" he said eagerly. "I guess I wanna resign! It's tough on the readers, but I jest can't help it. So-long!"

"Where are you going, fathead?" I called out, as Fishy slipped past me.

"To Courtfield, I guess! I got a date, giving some bookshops the once over! Apologise to my fans, won't you?"

And Fishy went down the Otairs at top speed. And I became Editor again with unexpected ease!

HARRY WHARTON.

The RAT of the REMOVE!



By FRANK RICHARDS

(Continued from page 13.)

"I know it's a lot to ask, sir," said Harry, colouring, "but he's a new fellow here, and—"

"Tracy has been to other schools before he came to Greyfriars, as you know, Wharton," answered Mr. Quelch. "He is not in the position of an ordinary new boy."

"I know, sir, but—"
"But what?" rapped Mr. Quelch.
"Well, he's a good footballer, sir, and keen on the game. He's wanted in the team, and it will be rather a blow to us to lose him."

Mr. Quelch gave his head boy a very keen look.

"You are not friendly with this boy, I think, Wharton?"

"I don't like him, sir," confessed Harry.

Mr. Quelch smiled faintly.

"Yet you are asking me to pardon him for a very serious fault!" he said.

"Well, not exactly, sir," stammered Wharton, "but—"

"If the boy is really keen on games, it is a point in his favour," said Mr. Quelch, "but he is not exactly the type of boy I should have expected to prove very valuable in a football team."

"Well, it's rather a surprise to all of us," answered Harry, "but it's the truth, sir—he can play my head off, and I'm not bad at the game. If you'd seen him in practice—"

"I have not had that privilege," said Mr. Quelch, smiling. "But I will bow to your judgment in such matters, Wharton. Certainly I do not desire that the Form games should be interfered with in any way. You may tell Tracy, from me, that his detention is cancelled."

"Thank you, sir!"
Wharton left his Form-master's study, and looked for Tracy.

He found Gilbert slouching in the quad, with his hands in his pockets, and a scowl on his face.

Tracy greeted the captain of the Remove with a sneer.

"All right for you," he remarked.

"As it happens, yes," answered Harry. "But what do you mean?"

"You couldn't leave me out of the eleven, though you wanted to," sneered Gilbert. "All the fellows would have known that it was jealousy. You had to shove my name in. But you've got by all right, as I'm detained."

Harry Wharton looked at him. This was the fellow he had just begged off from Quelch.

"All right for you," jeered Gilbert. "But one swallow doesn't make a summer. I shan't be in detention next time, and you'll have to play me, whether you like it or not. And you'll have to have your nose put out of joint by a better man. See?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I wonder," he said, "whether there ever was such a worm as you before in the wide world, Tracy? You're playing this afternoon."

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"How can I play in detention?"

"You're let off."

"Rot!"

"Quelch has just told me to tell you so."

Tracy's face brightened, but he looked puzzled.

"Why?" he demanded. "The old goat is down on me. He knows jolly well that I wrecked his study the other day, and he's been watching for a chance at me ever since, and I was fool enough to give him one this morning. Why has he let me off, then?"

"Because I asked him."

"You did!"

"I did!"

"And why, you dummy?"

"So that you could play in the footer."

Tracy stared at him blankly. For a long moment he was silent, staring. Evidently he was taken very much by surprise.

"Is that straight?" he asked at last.

"Quite."

"You don't like me any more than I like you," said Tracy.

"Less, probably," answered Harry.

"I hope there's more to like in me than there is in you, Tracy."

"Well, then, why have you done this?" demanded Gilbert.

"Think it over," suggested Wharton. "In about a thousand years it may dawn on you that some fellows are decent, though you'll never be able to understand how or why."

With that he turned and walked away, leaving Gilbert staring after him.

But Tracy, whether he was able to understand or not why the captain of the Remove had begged him off, was glad enough to turn up in the changing-room, instead of the Form-room that afternoon. And his face was very bright when he went down to Little Side with the Remove footballers.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Ordered Off!

HOBSON of the Shell glanced over the Remove team, stared at Tracy, and grinned.

He recognised the fellow he had inked in his study the day before, and booted out, dripping with ink.

Hobby's grin was quite good-natured, but the glance that Gilbert gave the captain of the Shell was far from good-natured. Gilbert had not forgotten that happening in Hobby's study. He had a long memory for offences, great or small.

"Who's that kid?" Hobson asked Harry Wharton.

"Tracy," answered Harry.

"New kid."

"Yes."

"Hard up for men—playing a new kid that's just blown in?"

"Not quite," answered Harry, with a smile. "You'll find him a good man, Hobby. Born with his shooting-boots on."

"That's the rat I copped in my study yesterday, and jolly well inked!" said Hobby. "See him scowling? He doesn't like ink. Ha, ha, ha!"

With that, James Hobson dismissed the matter from his mind.

Gilbert did not dismiss it, as Hobby was to learn before that game was over.

Gilbert had been drenched in ink, and booted. And in a football match a fellow had a chance of getting even, if he were not bothered by anything in the way of scruples. And scruples of

any kind had never bothered Tracy much. If Gilbert had a chance in that game, which was very likely, Hobby was going to learn exactly how much damage a football boot could do.

Quite a crowd of fellows came down to see the match—even Billy Bunter exerting himself to roll down. Already the new man's prowess at the winter game was a topic in the Remove, though he had been seen only in practice, so far. Every fellow was keen to see how he shaped in a match, against tough opponents like the Shell.

Potter of the Fifth blew the whistle.

Every fellow who had come down to the ground was glad that he had come during the first half. Tracy proved worth watching.

He had a fault—rather a serious one in a footballer—that of being too greedy with the leather.

Smithy was rather given to fancying that the Soccer ball in a game was his sole possession; but the Bounder had nothing on Tracy in that line.

On the other hand, there was no doubt that when Tracy had the ball, he could do almost what he chose with it, and success to some extent condoned selfishness.

Twice in the first twenty minutes the leather went in, and each time it went in from the new fellow's foot.

"By gum, that chap can play!" remarked Peter Todd.

Peter was watching the game, and especially Tracy, who had the place Peter had rather expected. Peter was not so sure as his skipper that a bruise on his knee barred him from the game. But Toddy had to admit that the new man filled his place as he could never have filled it himself.

Fellows who knew that Tracy smoked in his study were astonished at his speed. He seemed like lightning. And if he kept the ball when he should have passed it, the results, at least, were good. Nothing succeeds like success—from the point of view of the onlooker, at least. But good as Tracy's game was, Harry Wharton was far from satisfied with his new recruit. Soccer was not a one-man game, even if that one man were a sort of genius.

It was close on half-time when, after a tussle in midfield, the Remove forwards got away with the ball. Stewart, in the Shell goal, stood ready for a rush of custom. Ogilvy, at outside-left, went over, but passed the ball to Tracy before he went, and Tracy ran it in. On the other wing two men were down; but Harry Wharton, at centre, was well placed to take a pass, with only Stewart to beat, if Tracy had let him have the ball on time.

"To me!" called out Harry.

Either not hearing, or not heeding, Tracy kicked for goal—a long shot from the wing which, according to all chances, ought not to have come off. But Tracy seemed a wizard with the ball, and it came off—barely grazing Stewart's finger-tips, and landing.

"Goal!"

It was a roar round the field.

"Goal! Goal! Good man, Tracy!"

It was Tracy's third goal, and so far the Shell had not broken their duck.

Remove fellows round the field roared.

Harry Wharton compressed his lips hard.

At half-time he spoke to Tracy very quietly.

"Did you hear me call to you, Tracy?"

Gilbert looked at him with a mocking glimmer in his eyes.

"I'm not deaf," he answered coolly. "You're a good enough footballer to know that you should not have taken that shot."

"Don't you want goals?" "We want Soccer, not flukes!" said Harry sharply. "And you may as well remember that you are not skipper of this team."

"If you've got any objection to goals, of course, I won't put in any more. I know my place."

Some of the footballers who heard that grinned.

Harry Wharton compressed his lips harder, but he said no more. He was beginning to doubt whether Tracy, wonderful footballer as he was, was a man who was wanted in the Remove team, after all. In the second half that doubt was changed into a certainty in a very unexpected way.

The Remove were falling back under a strenuous attack from Hobby & Co., when Hobby came in contact with Tracy.

It was Gilbert's chance at last, for which he had had a watchful eye open all through the game.

The crack of a football boot on a knee sounded almost like a pistol-shot, and Hobby rolled over with a howl he could not repress.

The whistle rang. Hobby did not get up again. He could not. When he was lifted his right leg sagged under him, and he had to be helped off.

Shell fellows round the field were howling "Foul!" at the top of their voices—even some Removites joining in the howl.

It was a foul if ever there were a foul, and Harry Wharton's face was pale with anger as he strode towards Tracy. The Greyfriars Remove prided themselves on clean play, and Smithy had been called to order a good many times for letting an excited temper get the better of him. But the Bounder in his most excited moments would never have fouled a man intentionally—and there were few who doubted that that was exactly what Tracy had done.

"You rotter!" breathed Harry, his eyes gleaming at Gilbert. "You worm!"

"It was an accident!" said Gilbert sullenly.

"It was nothing of the kind! I had my eyes on you—I never saw anything more deliberate!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove passionately.

"Draw it mild, old man," murmured Bob Cherry uneasily. "A fellow could hardly tell—"

"What do you say, Potter?" asked Harry.

The referee gave Tracy a glare.

"Foul!" he snapped.

"It was an accident," muttered Tracy. Probably by that time Gilbert rather regretted that he had seized upon that chance of "getting even" with the fellow who had inked him!

"You won't have any more accidents like that on this ground!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Get off the field!"

Tracy panted. "I won't! You rotter, you're glad to jump at a chance—"

"Get off the field!" roared Wharton. "I'll boot you off if you don't!"

Tracy looked at the referee. But there was no help for him in that quarter.

Potter of the Fifth gave him a glare of disgust.

"You little rat!" said Potter. "I saw you—and your own captain saw you! I never saw anything so rotten! Get out of it!"

Tracy glanced round, with a burning face and smouldering eyes. Some of the

men were dubious; but there was no help for him when neither the referee nor his own captain had any doubt on the subject.

Slowly, savagely, he tramped off the field, and the game went on a man short on either side.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

No Trade!

"SAY, BO!"

Fisher T. Fish's tone was genial; his smile effusively friendly. But if Fishy felt genial and friendly, Gilbert Tracy did not. He gave the American junior one of his blackest scowls.

Tracy had changed after being turned off the football field, and was lounging in the quad in a black and bitter mood. The game was going on; but Tracy cared nothing how it finished. He cared a great deal, however, for the position in which he now found himself.

As he had told the captain of the Remove, Soccer was his one consolation for having to stay at a school he loathed and from which he was anxious to get away. His own revengeful temper and utter unscrupulousness had put paid to that.

He had fully intended to foul Hobby, and cared nothing for how much damage he did; but he had hoped that it would pass as an accident in the excitement of a struggle in front of goal; or that, at all events, there would be a doubt in the matter of which he would have the benefit. But it had not worked out like that—and it looked as if he had "dished" himself in Remove football. Some of the fellows were doubtful; but Wharton was not doubtful, and it was in the hands of the captain of the Remove that the power lay.

Unscrupulous player as he was, Tracy was really keen on football, and the prospect of being barred from Remove games was dismaying to him. He had not the slightest remorse for the injury he had given Hobby; his thoughts were concentrated on himself, and the more he thought about it the less he liked the outlook.

In such a mood he did not want to be bothered by Fishy. He scowled at the American junior, and would have walked on; but Fisher T. Fish put out a bony hand to detain him.

Fishy, the business man of the Remove, liked meeting new fellows. They did not know Fishy so well as the other fellows! Fishy, as usual, had something to sell. And Tracy, being a new fellow, unused to Fishy's wily ways, Fishy hoped that he had found a victim.

Fisher T. Fish had been leaning on one of the old elms, debating in his keen transatlantic mind to whom next he should offer the pocket camera he had bought from Temple of the Fourth for half-a-crown. He was only asking ten shillings for it, which was moderate for Fishy, as he had given two-and-six! Already it had been hawked up and down the Remove and had found no takers. So Fishy was very glad to see Tracy, and did not heed his sulky scowl.

"Say, big boy, you got a camera?" he asked.

"No!" grunted Tracy. "Let go my sleeve, you ass!"

"I got one to sell cheap!" urged Fisher T. Fish. "First-class camera, cost a guinea—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"I'm letting it go under half-price, and—"

"Let go my sleeve, you bony freak!"

"I guess it will pay you to look at

that camera!" said Fisher T. Fish in his most persuasive tone. "You don't often see a camera like that going for ten bob. Jest give it the once-over, Tracy, old-timer!"

Fisher T. Fish jerked the camera from his pocket and held it up for admiration.

It was quite a nice little camera in its way, but if Temple of the Fourth had paid a guinea for it he had been "done." Probably he hadn't—but Fishy was not the guy to under-value his goods.

Tracy did not look at the camera. He was in an evil temper, and had Fishy not been so fearfully keen on business he would probably have noticed it and left him alone. Instead of looking at the article, Tracy knocked it out of Fishy's hand, and it bumped on the ground.

"Aw! Wake snakes!" gasped Fishy.

He let go Tracy's sleeve and pounced on the camera, in dread that the bump on the earth might have damaged it and deteriorated its selling value—which would have been heart-breaking to a fellow like Fisher Tarleton Fish.

Fortunately for Fishy's heart it had not been damaged!

He grabbed it up and glared at Tracy.

"Say, what sorta pie-faced geck do you call yourself?" hooted Fishy. He could see that there was no chance of a sale now, so he was going to take it out in slang. "You pesky mugwump, I've sure a hunch to make potato-scrappings of you! You figure you can knock my property about because you've been kicked off a field for foul play, you pie-faced clam?"

Tracy, who was moving on, turned back. His eyes gleamed at Fisher T. Fish.

Fishy, apparently, had seen what had happened on the football field. He found solace for his disappointment in "rubbing it in."

But Tracy, who had been about to plant his knuckles on a bony nose, checked himself.

The old elm under which Fishy was standing was in full view of Mr. Quelch's study window. For all Tracy knew, Quelch might be in his study—perhaps looking out! He did not want Quelch to witness him punching noses.

"Let's look at it!" he said.

"Eh?"

"Let's see that camera."

"Oh!"

Fishy's geniality returned at once. The chance of doing business at a profit banished all offence from Fishy's mind.

"I'll say you can't do better, big boy!" he said cordially. "I'm telling you that camera is going for ten bob, and I'm losing on it."

Gilbert took the camera to examine it. He stepped round the elm so that the tree screened him from Quelch's window if Quelch happened to be there.

Then, with a jerk of his arm, he pitched the camera up into the branches of the elm.

It lodged among the branches that jutted from the trunk, about fifteen feet up, and stayed there.

Fisher T. Fish fairly gasped.

"Why, you—you—you—" articulated Fishy. "You pie-faced, slabsided gink, what you reckon you're doing with my camera? You get up in that tree and get it back, you hear me yaup?"

"I don't think!" answered Tracy.

"You figure that I'm climbing after it?" howled Fishy. "We ain't allowed to climb them trees, you geck, and I guess I ain't chancing it! You chucked it up there, and you get it back—or I'll

make potato-scrappings of you, and then some!"

"Go ahead!" said Tracy.

Fisher T. Fish was not a fighting man as a rule. There was no profit in scrapping, so it was of no use to Fishy. But his dander, as he would have expressed it, was rized! He jumped at Tracy.

The next moment he was grabbed by the collar and his bony head was banging on the trunk of the elm—on the side farthest from the House! It was a thick and massive trunk, and if there were an eye at Quelch's window, even that gimlet eye could not see through a tree-trunk!

Bang, bang!

"Aw! Can it!" yelled Fisher T. Fish. "Forget it! Yarooop! You pesky gink, leggo my neck! Aw, carry me home to die! Wow!"

Bang, bang!

"Yarooop!" roared the hapless Fishy. He was left sitting at the foot of the elm, rubbing his head and gasping for breath as Gilbert walked away to the House.

It was some minutes before Fisher T. Fish tottered to his feet, still rubbing a painful napper.

He did not follow on Tracy's track; his fighting blood had been cooled by those bangs on his unfortunate "cabeza." Besides, he had that camera to think of. Fellows, as he had said, were not allowed to climb the trees in the old quad; but Fisher T. Fish had to recover his property! And Fishy, in almost a homicidal frame of mind, left off rubbing his head at last and proceeded to hook himself up the elm, in search of that camera.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Bright Idea!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Oh, don't bother!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Buzz!" said Frank Nugent.

"Beast!" retorted Billy Bunter.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent had just come up to their study when Billy Bunter rolled into the doorway with a rather eager expression on his fat face and blinked at them through his big spectacles.

The captain of the Remove was not in the best of tempers. The match with the Shell had ended in a victory—three goals to two, the Shell having taken two in the second half. All three of the Remove goals had been captured by the fellow who had been ordered off the field for foul play, which was an odd, and not pleasing, state of affairs.

Hobson was still in the changing-room, attending to a damaged knee, with a group of sympathetic friends round him.

Tracy was in his study when Wharton and Nugent arrived there. He was lounging in the armchair, with a black brow; and the chums of the Remove, finding him there, were about to get out again, not wanting his company. Then Billy Bunter filled the doorway with his ample person.

"I've been waiting for you fellows!" said the fat Owl reproachfully. "I say—"

"Nothing to wait for, old fat man!" said Nugent. "We're teasing in Hall!"

"If you think I was thinking about tea—"

"Oh, my hat! Weren't you?"

"No!" roared Bunter. "I've had tea with Mauly. I mean, I'm not always thinking about grub, like some fellows!"

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I say, do listen to a chap! Quelch hasn't come in yet."

"What does it matter whether he's come in or not, fathead?" asked Harry Wharton. "I never knew he'd gone out."

"Well, I did!" said Bunter. "You see, I had to take my lines in before tea. You know, he made out that I did a bad construe this morning. Like him, wasn't it? He made out I hadn't done any prep, you know, just because he guessed that I'd cut it. Suspicious beast, you know! He gave me fifty lines, so I had to go to his study to tell him I hadn't done the lines, because I'd hurt my thumb, you know—"

"Lucky he wasn't there, if you were going to try that on!" remarked Nugent. "Quelch has heard that one before."

"Well, he wasn't there," said Bunter. "But the paper was."

"What paper, ass? Quelch's evening paper, do you mean?"

"No, you fathead!" howled Bunter. "The paper he's been swotting over, to catch us out in history to-morrow. You know there's going to be a history paper to-morrow. Well, Quelch has been working at it. You know how he puts his beef into it, just to catch fellows out—"

"Fathead!"

"Well, he jolly well does!" said Bunter. "I know I've been caught out a lot of times, and I'm pretty good at history. But he always seems to put questions that I don't know the answers to. He's frightfully deep, you know! Well, look here, suppose that paper disappeared?"

"Wh-a-at?"

"Give him his work over again, see?" explained Bunter. "That would be fair play for making us work at his rotten history papers! What do you fellows think?"

Billy Bunter blinked inquiringly at Wharton and Nugent. He did not see Tracy, who was out of sight behind the high back of the armchair. His eyes, and his spectacles, fixed on the chums of the Remove.

They gazed at him.

"You frabjous ass!" said Harry Wharton.

"You blithering owl!" said Frank Nugent.

"I suppose that means that you funk it!" sneered Bunter. "I say, fancy old Quelch's face when he came in and found that the paper was gone."

"Fancy the face of the fathead who made it go when Quelch got on his track?" suggested Nugent.

"Well, he wouldn't know!" argued Bunter. "Might be anybody. Ten to one he would think it was Tracy—he's always after Tracy!"

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent glanced at Gilbert, sitting in the armchair, silent and scowling.

"That's all right!" went on Bunter. "He couldn't prove that it was Tracy if it wasn't, could he?"

"Hardly!" agreed Nugent.

"And the more he suspected Tracy the less he would suspect you, Wharton, old chap—see?" urged Bunter.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"He wouldn't be likely to suspect me, anyhow," he remarked, "as I'm going nowhere near his study, you fat chump!"

"I don't think you ought to funk it, Wharton, you being captain of the Form, and all that!" said Bunter. "Captain of the Form is expected to set an example—"

"Not an example of snooping history papers from a Form-master's study!" chuckled the captain of the Remove. "Come on, Frank, we shall be late for

the doorsteps and dishwater in Hall!"

"If you funk it, Wharton, Nugent doesn't. Do you, Franky, old chap? You ain't afraid to go to Quelch's study, are you?"

"Not at all!" answered Nugent.

"Good!" said Bunter. "I say, that paper is lying on his table, with a paper-weight on it; you'll see it at once when you go in—"

"Eh? I'm not going in!"

"If you're going to funk it, like Wharton—"

"Haven't you finished your funny turn yet, Bunter?" asked Harry. "Let's have the rest after tea. Come on, Frank!"

"But I say— Wow!"

Billy Bunter tottered back into the passage as Wharton and Nugent came out of the study.

Bunter, being in the way, had to be pushed. He tottered two or three paces and sat down, with a bump.

"Beasts!" roared Bunter, as the two juniors walked away to the stairs.

Gilbert, in the study, had a gleam in his eyes under his scowling brows.

He had learned, from Bunter's chin-wag, that Quelch was out, and that he had left a Form paper on his study table, into which he had put a good deal of work. Gilbert turned that over in his mind very thoughtfully.

He was thinking it over when the fat squeak of William George Bunter was heard again from the passage, through the open doorway.

"I say, Smithy, old chap—"

"Gerrouf of the way, fatty!"

"But, I say—listen, old fellow! I say, you've got tons of nerve, Smithy—you're the pluckiest chap in the Remove, bar none! You wouldn't funk going into Quelch's study and sneaking the history paper he's left on his table, would you? It's absolutely safe—"

"Sure it's safe?" asked the Bounder. "Safe as houses!" said Bunter eagerly.

"No danger of getting spotted?"

"None at all, old chap!"

"Well, go in and win, old fat man—I'm not stopping you! I'll lend you some exercise books to pack in your bags when Quelch inquires after his history paper."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

The Bounder, laughing, went on to his study. Catspaws seemed scarce in the Remove that afternoon.

There was no doubt that Quelch would be considerably exasperated if he missed that paper from his study when he came in. But it looked as if Billy Bunter would have to do the sneaking himself, if he wanted it done at all!

"I say, Skinner—" came the fat squeak, a minute later. "I say, old Quelch has left a history paper on his table, and—"

"I'm going to do the same!" chuckled Skinner.

"Eh? What are you going to do?"

"Leave it on Quelch's table."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a chortle from six or seven fellows.

"Blessed if I ever saw such a lot of funks!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, in disgust. "Bet you that chap Tracy would sneak it, if a fellow knew where to find him. Think what a lark it would be on Quelch! Make him fearfully wild."

"I prefer Quelch in a tame state, when I have to deal with him!" remarked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I jolly well don't funk it!" declared Bunter. "I'll jolly well go and sneak that paper, and chance it—see? I jolly nearly did when I saw it in the study, only—only—"



Fisher T. Fish pointed to the camera on the table. "Fifteen bob is my price, Tracy," he said. "Mind, I ain't bulldozing you into buying it. But I reckon it'd pay you, in one way or another, to buy it." "You rotter!" breathed Tracy.

"Only you funk'd it!" suggested Skinner.

"Well, you fellows wait here, and you'll see me bring up that paper, so there!" declared Billy Bunter.

And the fat Owl, making up his fat mind to it, rolled away down the stairs. He left Skinner & Co. chortling. They did not wait for Billy Bunter to return with the history paper, having no doubt that Billy Bunter would change his fat mind before he reached Quelch's study.

As a matter of fact, Billy Bunter got as far as the corner of Masters' Passage. There he paused.

Second thoughts, proverbially the best, supervened. Bunter was still convinced that it would be no end of a lark to abstract that history paper, and leave Quelch to do his work over again. Nevertheless, he decided, on the whole, to leave that history paper where it was.

The sight of Mr. Prout, rolling majestically into the passage, helped him to make up his mind.

Prout glanced at him. Juniors were not supposed to hang about that passage.

"What are you doing here, Bunter?" asked Prout.

"Oh, nothing, sir!" stammered Bunter.

"Then do not loiter about this passage!" said the Fifth Form master.

Bunter rolled away. The history paper, under the paper-weight on Quelch's study table, was quite safe, so far as William George Bunter was concerned.

It was not quite so safe, so far as another member of the Remove was concerned.

Ten minutes later, Gilbert Tracy stepped quietly into Mr. Quelch's study and stepped quietly out again. And a minute or two afterwards, a history

paper that had cost Mr. Quelch twenty minutes of his valuable time, was in Study No. 1 in the Remove, hidden under the study carpet there!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Six for Bunter!

MR. QUELCH breathed hard and deep.

He stood in his study looking at the vacant space on his table where he had left a Form paper.

That paper had not been quite completed, and the Remove-master had intended to give it the finishing touches when he came in from his walk. He missed it, therefore, as soon as he entered his study.

That it had been taken away by a surreptitious hand was clear, for he remembered having placed a paper-weight on it when he left it. True, he had left his study window open. But no draught could have shifted a paper from under a paper-weight.

However, Mr. Quelch was a very careful gentleman. He looked over the table, and he looked round the table, to make absolutely sure that the history paper really was missing. He was soon satisfied. It had been taken away.

One name leaped into his mind at once—that of Gilbert Tracy! This was another of the monkey-like tricks of the new fellow who wanted to make him tired of the responsibility he had undertaken.

But Mr. Quelch was a just man; moreover, he had not forgotten the painful scene in the Head's study a few days ago. He did not want to commit an act of injustice; and, perhaps still more, he did not want Tracy to be able to make out an appearance of injustice.

Not for worlds would he have gone through such a painful interview with Dr. Locke again. This time he was going to make sure—very sure!

A few minutes later, he was very glad indeed that he had decided to make quite, quite sure! For his first step was to inquire whether any of his colleagues had happened to see any Remove boy enter his study during his absence.

Nobody had seen a Remove boy enter his study; but Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, had seen a Remove boy loitering in the passage, and said so.

"Tracy?" asked Mr. Quelch, nothing doubting.

"No; Bunter!" answered Mr. Prout. "Oh!" said Mr. Quelch. "Thank you!"

Mr. Quelch was very glad indeed that he had made sure! He had suspected that Tracy had abstracted that history paper. But it was exactly one of Bunter's fatuous antics; and Bunter had been seen loitering in the passage during his absence! Mr. Quelch decided to question Bunter first of all.

Thoughtfully putting a cane under his arm, in case it should be wanted, the Remove master proceeded in quest of Bunter. It was past lock-up now, and all the fellows were in the House. Mr. Quelch looked into the Rag, where Remove fellows were generally to be found before prep.

"Is Bunter here?" he asked from the doorway.

"Oh crikey!" came a startled ejaculation. Evidently Bunter was there!

"Oh! You are here, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, stepping into the Junior Room.

"No, sir! I—I mean, yes, sir!" gasped Billy Bunter, in alarm.

The fat junior blinked in great uneasiness at his Form-master—glad at that moment that he had decided, after all, to leave that history paper alone.

There were a good many Remove fellows in the Rag, and some of them grinned. Most of them had heard of Bunter's bright idea; though nobody believed that he had had the nerve to carry it out himself. But Quelch's inquiry for the fat Owl looked as if he had, after all.

"Bunter! Have you been in my study during my absence from the House?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir!" answered Bunter promptly.

"You had lines to take in at tea-time, Bunter."

"I—I never did them, sir, owing to hurting my thumb!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I got it caught in a—door, sir."

"You did not go to my study?"

"Nowhere near it, sir!"

The Removites listened to this in silence, Skinner winking at the Bouncer. A dozen fellows, at least, knew that Bunter had gone to his Form-master's study, to "tell the tale" about that damaged thumb, and had then seen the history paper on the table. However, Mr. Quelch was not aware of that; and no fellow in the Rag was likely to tell him.

"Then why, Bunter, did you go to Masters' Passage at all?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I didn't, sir!"

"You did not?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"No, sir—nowhere near the place at—"

"How dare you say so, Bunter, when Mr. Prout has told me that he saw you loitering in the passage!" exclaimed the Remove master.

"Oh crickey! I—I mean, I—I wasn't there when Mr. Prout saw me, sir—"

stuttered Bunter.

"What?"

"I—I mean to say— Oh crickey!"

"A history paper, which I had prepared for my Form in class to-morrow, is missing from my study!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Did you abstract it, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped the unhappy Owl. "It—it ain't missing, sir! It—it's on the table where you left it, sir!"

"And how do you know, Bunter, that I left it on my table, if you did not visit my study during my absence?" asked Mr. Quelch, in a grinding voice.

"I—I didn't, sir! I—I never knew anything about it!" moaned Bunter.

"I—I never saw it there, sir!"

"The matter is clear now," said Mr. Quelch. "Bunter, you will be punished with the greatest severity—"

"It wasn't me, sir!" howled Bunter.

"I never did it, sir! If that putrid paper's gone, I never touched it! I—I wouldn't! Lots of fellows knew it was there, sir—"

"No one can have known without having entered my study, which you have admitted doing, Bunter! I shall now—"

"I say, you fellows, you tell him!" howled Bunter, blinking round in dismay at the Remove fellows. "Tain't fair to put it on me! If it was you, Wharton—"

"I!" ejaculated Harry.

"Or Nugent—"

"You fat chump!" gasped Frank.

"Well, I think you ought to own up, now Mr. Quelch thinks that it was me. You jolly well knew the paper was there, as I told you—"

"Bunter! Bend over that chair!"

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Mr. Quelch slipped the cane down from under his arm. "I shall cane you, and you will take a hundred lines."

"But I never did it, sir!" wailed Bunter. "I say, if it was you, Smithy, you own up! You ain't the chap to land it on another fellow!"

The Bouncer laughed.

"It wasn't me, you fat chump!" he answered.

"Well, if it was you, Skinner—"

"It appears, Bunter, that you saw the history paper in my study, and told a number of other boys about it," said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir! I never saw it! And I never thought of taking it, sir!" groaned Bunter. "It—it wasn't there when I went into your study, sir, and I—I left it there when I went away, quite safe, sir, under the paper-weight. Besides, I never went to your study at all! I hope you can take my word about it, sir."

Bunter's hope was unfounded; Quelch couldn't! There was no doubt in his mind now, and he swished the cane.

"Bunter! Bend over that chair!"

"But I never did it, sir! I—I wasn't there when Mr. Prout saw me, and— and I told him I was doing nothing, too! He asked me what I was doing, and I said, nothing! Mr. Prout will tell you, if you ask him, sir."

"Bend over that chair at once!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh crickey!"

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Swipe, swipe, swipe!

"Yaroooh-oooh—whooop!"

Billy Bunter's frantic yells woke all the echoes of the Rag, and far beyond, as his Form-master laid on the cane.

Mr. Quelch tucked the cane under his arm again, and walked out of the Rag. He left Bunter still roaring.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Business is Business!

FISHER T. FISH came along the Remove passage, with his jerky steps, stopped at Study No. 1, and looked in.

There was a smile on Fishy's bony face; but there was no smile on Gilbert Tracy's, as the new junior looked round at him.

Fisher T. Fish had a pocket-camera under his arm. He laid it on the study table, and Tracy stared at it.

"What have you brought your rubbish here for?" snapped Gilbert. "Do you want me to chuck it into the passage, and you after it?"

"Nope!" answered Fishy.

"Then get out, sharp!"

"I guessed you might like to buy that camera!" remarked Fisher T. Fish.

"The price has gone up a few—fifteen shillings now. Is it a trade?"

Gilbert stared at him blankly. This was surprising; and he was still more surprised by Fishy turning to the door, and closing it after him.

Then Fisher T. Fish eyed him, with a genial grin.

"Buying?" he asked.

"No, you American freak!"

"I reckoned you might, now Quelch has come in!" remarked Fisher T. Fish casually. "But please yourself, old-timer."

"Has Quelch come in?" said Gilbert.

"Yep! I spotted him from the winder, ten minutes ago! I guess he's getting his back up, around now," drawled Fisher T. Fish. "I ain't seed him, but I surely do opine that he will be getting mad."

Gilbert eyed him narrowly. He had his own reasons for expecting Quelch to "get mad" when he went to his study; but if Fisher T. Fish had not seen him yet, he did not see how Fishy knew anything about it.

"What do you mean, scarecrow?" he asked.

"You sure chucked that there camera up a tree!" drawled Fisher T. Fish.

"I'm telling you, I had a high old time rooting it out. You see, it slipped into a holler in the branches, and stuck there, and I'll say I was a long time getting tabs on it."

"What about it, ass?"

"We ain't allowed to climb the trees," explained Fisher T. Fish, "and at this time of the year there ain't a lot of leaves left to cover a guy in a tree. I sure did keep my eye on Quelch's winder while I was up that tree, in case he should look out."

Gilbert started.

"I never saw Quelch," went on Fisher T. Fish airily. "I reckon he was out, after all. I surely did reckon that he couldn't be in his quarters when I saw a galoot step into his study—"

"Oh!"

"And cinch a paper off'n his table, and vamoose with it!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I'm mentioning that I saw him plain, from that tree opposite the winder."

Gilbert Tracy stood looking at him, breathing hard.

He understood now.

After pitching Fishy's camera into the elm, and leaving Fishy to root after it there if he liked, he had not given that matter a single further thought. How long Fisher T. Fish might be rooting after that camera, whether he found it again or not, and whether he was caught up the tree and given lines, Tracy did not care a straw. He had forgotten all about the business man of the Remove.

He had been extremely careful not to be seen, in his visit to the Remove master's study. That was all right! Nobody in the House had seen him!

But from the branches of that old elm, at a distance, but opposite the window, there was a clear view into the study, especially as the window had been open.

"I ain't saying anything!" drawled Fisher T. Fish. "Tain't any funeral of mine, if you rag a beak! Nope! You can ask for all the trouble you want, big boy, and I sure wish you joy of it! But I guess Quelch will be hopping mad about this time! What do you think?"

Gilbert did not answer that question. He had no doubt of it!

"Tain't my business to put him wise!" said Fisher T. Fish, in the same airy way. "I guess he'll jump to it that you was the nigger in the woodpile; but he sure can't lambaste you without proving it up. Mebbe he'll be hunting for the guy that cinched that paper, whatever it was! Think so?"

Gilbert set his lips hard.

"Let's say no more about it!" said Fisher T. Fish affably. "I'm mum as a clam. I never was a guy to horn into another guy's funeral! I sure came here to see if you'd like to buy that camera."

Fisher T. Fish pointed a bony finger at the camera on the table.

Gilbert was no longer thinking of pitching it into the passage, and its owner after it! He dared not.

"Fifteen bob is the price, and cheap!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Mind, I ain't bulldozing you into buying that camera! But I reckon it'd pay you, in one way or another, to buy it. What's your idea? Business is business, what?"

"You rotter!" breathed Tracy.

"The price has gone up," remarked

Fisher T. Fish. "But I guess you can't expect to bang a guy's cabeza on a tree for nothing, and give him half an hour rooting around to find his own property! What? Everything on this here yairth has to be paid for, one way or another! But please yourself, of course—that camera's yourn for fifteen bob, if you want it. Buying?"

Fisher T. Fish rubbed his bony head, in which an ache still lingered. But Fishy did not really mind that ache very much, as it was going to be paid for!

For a long minute Tracy eyed him. Then he slipped his hand into his pocket.

Fisher T. Fish smiled. "I guess it's a good camera," he remarked. "You can chuck it up a tree, or any old thing you like, when it's yourn to play with. Thanks!"

The business man of the Remove strolled out of Study No. 1 richer by fifteen shillings. He strolled back to his own study, in a very cheery and satisfied mood.

A good stroke of business was enough to make Fishy happy—and this was an uncommonly good stroke! Some fellows, it was true, might have seen something unscrupulous in that stroke of business. But Fishy's conscience did not worry him. Fishy had a very accommodating conscience! Money was the beginning and end of all things to Fishy; and a profit covered a multitude of sins!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Poor Old Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
 "Poor old Bunter!"
 "I never did it!"
 "Fathead!"

"I've a jolly good mind to go to the Head about it!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, cackle!" howled Bunter. The Remove were coming up to prep. Gilbert Tracy stepped to the door of Study No. 1 and looked out into the passage, as he heard the dulcet tones of William George Bunter.

There was a subdued grin on his face. Billy Bunter was wriggling as he came up from the landing. His fat face was red with wrath and indignation.

Bunter had had "six." Bunter had often deserved six without getting the same; but this time he had had the six for nothing, and his indignation was immense and intense.

For, though he had certainly planned to sneak that history paper from Quelch's study, and had even gone as far as the corner of Masters' Passage with the fell intention of sneaking it, actually he hadn't sneaked it! Really and truly, he hadn't; and he had been caned, just as if he had! It seemed to the suffering fat Owl that this fearful miscarriage of justice was enough to make the skies fall!

He had forgotten all about the whoppings he ought to have had, and never had had! His fat mind concentrated on the one he had had, and oughtn't to have had!

The Removites were sympathetic. Naturally they sympathised with a fellow who had had "six." But as for believing that Bunter had not done it, that was another matter. They knew that he had—though, in point of actual fact, he hadn't.

"That's the sort of justice we get here!" said the wriggling Owl. "A fellow gets whopped for nothing! I never touched that putrid history paper in Quelch's study—never even thought of it—"

"Why, you fat villain!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You came to my study and put it up to me."

"Oh! I mean, if I may have thought of it, I never did it! There's a difference between thinking of a thing and doing it, ain't there?" demanded Bunter. "The worst of it is that Quelch refused to take my word! That's insulting!"

"Oh crumbs!"
 "I never did it, you know—"
 "Oh, chuck it, old fat man!" said Bob Cherry. "You've had your six, so what's the good of gammoning now?"

"I tell you I never—"
 "That's the chap who told us to wait while he went down and sneaked the paper!" grinned Skinner. "It was sneaked, and he says he never did it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I never!" roared Bunter. "I dare say it was you, Skinner! You're just the chap to play a rotten trick like that, and leave it on another fellow."

"Why, you fat frog—"
 "Anyhow, I never did it! I shouldn't wonder if it was Tracy—he's always going for old Quelch! Or was it you, Smithy?"

"Fathead!"
 "Well, it wasn't me! I say, it's pretty thick if you fellows can't take my word, just like old Quelch!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I mean to say, it isn't as if you'd ever known me to tell crammers, you know—"

"Oh, my hat!"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Well, I've a jolly good mind to go straight to the Head, and say—
 What are you cackling at, blow you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Yah! You can cackle!" roared Bunter. "I've had six—for nothing! I've a right to go to the Head about it! So I jolly well would, only he mightn't believe me any more than Quelch! He's doubted my word before, as you jolly well know."

"Don't we!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"The knowfulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!" chortled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Well, I think the fellow that did it ought to own up!" said Bunter. "Old Quelch thinks I've chucked his rotten history paper away—"

"Well, what have you done with it?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I haven't touched it!" yelled Bunter.

"You sneaked it out of Quelch's study without

touching it?" asked Skinner. "How the dickens did you manage that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I never sneaked it! Never thought of it—I mean, never did it! If you're making out that I'm telling whoppers, Skinner—"

"What is the fat ass gammoning now for?" asked Johnny Bull, in wonder. "He's had the whopping! You can tell the truth now, Bunter."

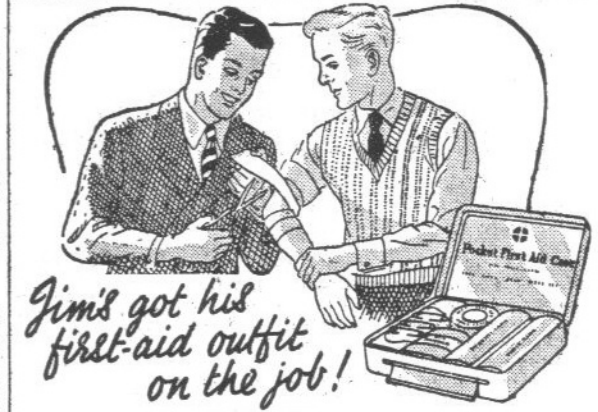
"Beast!"
 "He can't!" said Skinner, shaking his head. "He's too used to the other thing, ain't you, Bunter? Couldn't tell the truth if he tried!"

"And he's never tried!" remarked Peter Todd.

"I tell you, I never touched that putrid paper, and I don't know what's become of it!" roared Bunter. "It was one of you fellows—somebody I told about it! I was going to, but I never did. Old Prout spotted me, and I cleared! One of you fellows did it, and I think it's jolly mean to leave it on me and get me a whopping! I've got lines, too! The man who sneaked Quelch's history paper ought to do those lines!"

"He's going to!" grinned Peter Todd. "Eh? Who was it, then, Toddy? Do you know?"

"Yes, you!"
 (Continued on next page.)



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"Beast!" roared Bunter. "I keep on telling you it wasn't me, and I jolly well won't do the lines, either! 'Tain't fair! I've had a whopping for nothing, and I ain't going to do a hundred lines for nothing!"

"Chuck it, you fat ass!" said Harry Wharton. "What the dickens is the use of making out you never did what we all know you did?"

"Beast! I didn't!" wailed Bunter. "I shouldn't wonder if it was you——"

"You howling ass!"

"Well, you're trying to make out that it was me! If you did it——"

"You blithering bloater!"

"If you did it, you ought to do the lines, at least!" urged Bunter. "I've had the whopping! Are you going to do the lines?"

Herbert Vernon-Smith gave the fat distressed Owl a very curious look. It was true that no fellow ever could believe a word uttered by William George Bunter. It was said in the Remove that if Bunter remarked that it was raining, a fellow had to look out of the window to see whether it was or not!

But the fat Owl was in real earnest now; and it was singular, too, that he should persist in his denial of having sneaked that paper after the whopping was over and done with. There was no particular purpose to be served by deluding the Remove fellows—even if he had deluded them.

"Is it barely possible," said the Bounder slowly, "that Bunter never did it, after all?"

"If he didn't he took a lot of trouble to make Quelch believe that he did!" chuckled Skinner.

"What rot, Smithy!" said Harry Wharton. "Of course Bunter did it! He was gabbling it all over the Form, and——"

"Told us to wait while he fetched up the paper!" grinned Skinner. "I never believed he'd have the nerve—till Quelch came into the Rag and said that the paper was gone."

"I never!" wailed Bunter. "I was going to, but old Prout——"

"Well, if another fellow did it, it's pretty rotten of him to leave it on Bunter!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Rubbish!" said Harry. "No fellow would!"

"Well, rubbish or not, I'm beginning to think that Bunter never did it!" said the Bounder tartly.

"You hear that, you fellows?" said Bunter. "Smithy knows I never did it, don't you, Smithy? I say, was it you, Smithy?"

"Wha-at?"

"If it was, it was pretty mean of you to keep mum and let me take the whopping!" said Bunter.

"Why, you fat rotter——" gasped the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

"Well, I know it wasn't me, and it looks to me as if you did it, Smithy, from what you say!" said Bunter, blinking at him. "How do you know it wasn't me, if you come to that, unless it was you? If it was you——"

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

The expression on the Bounder's face was quite entertaining at the moment.

"If it was you, Smithy, you'll have to do the lines!" said Bunter. "I've had the whopping, anyhow! You do the lines——"

"You—you—you——" gasped Smithy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, it's only fair for Smithy to do the lines, ain't it?" exclaimed Bunter. "He ought to have

owned up when Quelch got after me, and it was beastly mean of him not to; but he jolly well ought to do the lines! I can jolly well say this, Smithy—— Yaroooooh! Yarooooop! Yoo-hoop! Leave off kicking me, you beast! Yaroooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Vernon-Smith did not leave off kicking Bunter till he landed him, in a yelling heap, in his study. Then he stalked away to his own study, leaving the juniors in the passage roaring with laughter, and Bunter, in Study No. 7, roaring, too, though not with laughter.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Startling

PLOP!

Harry Wharton jumped.

The Remove were going into Form in the morning.

Mr. Quelch, having let his Form into the Form-room, had gone to his desk, and was looking into the same, and his eyes were not on his class.

Quelch did not see, and no one else noticed, who suddenly whizzed an ink-ball as the juniors went to their places.

The ink-ball took the captain of the Remove quite by surprise as it plopped on his cheek, leaving a smudge of ink there.

The ink-ball—a tiny ball made of kneaded blotting-paper in ink—dropped on the floor.

"Oh!" ejaculated Harry, as his hand went to his cheek.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes gleamed round at once.

"What——" he ejaculated.

"He, he, he!"—from Billy Bunter.

Harry Wharton coloured with annoyance. Mr. Quelch frowned.

Buzzing an ink-ball was not an uncommon trick. Skinner was particularly skilful at that game, and he often took a fellow by surprise, suddenly projecting the tiny missile from forefinger and thumbnail. But, though considered a joke by the juniors, Quelch had a strong objection to any such pranks in the Form-room, and he stepped away from his desk, with a frowning brow.

"Who did that?" he snapped.

No reply.

"Skinner——"

"No, sir!" answered Skinner.

Some of the fellows grinned. That ink-ball had been landed with great accuracy in the face of the captain of the Remove, and nobody had seen whence it came, and a good many fellows took it for granted that Skinner was the marksman. His skill was well known. And his denial counted for nothing, Skinner not being the fellow to admit anything that would have earned him a swipe from his Form-master's cane.

"I will not allow these absurd pranks in the Form-room!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "If it was you, Skinner——"

"I've told you it was not, sir!" said Skinner sullenly.

For once, as it happened, Skinner was innocent, and he knew no more than the other fellows who had projected the ink-ball.

Mr. Quelch was about to speak again, but he did not. He stopped, with his mouth open. He stared.

Harry Wharton had taken his handkerchief from his pocket to rub the spot of ink from his cheek.

As he did so, a folded paper fluttered to the floor.

That paper, evidently, had been in the same pocket, and had been jerked out with the handkerchief.

It was a sheet of foolscap, folded in four—written on, with the writing outside.

Mr. Quelch and a dozen juniors saw it, and saw the handwriting on it. The handwriting was that of Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Quelch's face had an extraordinary expression as he stared at it, fairly dumbfounded.

He knew that paper!

It would have been unusual enough for a Remove boy to have a paper in his pocket, written in his Form-master's hand, even if such a paper had not been missing from the Form-master's study. This, as Quelch knew at a glance, was the missing paper.

He knew it—and the juniors who saw the paper knew it also. There was a gasp from some of the Removites.

Wharton, as it happened, did not notice the paper, being occupied in rubbing the ink-spot from his cheek with the handkerchief. The paper had fallen several feet away from him as it fluttered down.

Mr. Quelch found his voice. It came gasping:

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!" Harry, still rubbing his cheek with the handkerchief, looked inquiringly at his Form-master.

"Give me that paper!"

"What paper, sir?"

"The paper that has just fallen from your pocket."

Wharton stared.

"Has a paper fallen from my pocket, sir? I didn't notice it!" he glanced round the floor.

All eyes were on him now. The Co. were regarding him with utter wonder.

The Bounder had a sneer on his face. Smithy fancied now that he knew why the captain of the Remove had taken so positive a view that Bunter had sneaked that paper, and his lip curled.

Skinner suppressed a whistle.

Harry Wharton saw the paper and picked it up! As he did so, he detected, of course, the hand in which it was written, and he gave a jump. His face was blankly astonished as he handed the paper to Mr. Quelch.

In the midst of a dead silence the Remove master unfolded the paper and examined it. He knew what it was, but he made sure.

"Wharton! How did this paper come into your possession?" he asked, in a grim voice.

"It was not in my possession, sir!" answered Harry. "I'd never seen it till I picked it up."

"It fell from your pocket, Wharton, when you took out your handkerchief."

"It couldn't have, sir!"

"What?"

"It couldn't have!" repeated Harry. "I never keep papers in my handkerchief pocket; besides, that paper doesn't belong to me."

"This paper," said Quelch, tapping it with his forefinger, "is the history paper that was abstracted from my study yesterday, Wharton."

"I've never seen it before, sir."

The Bounder winked at Tom Redwing. Redwing frowned back at him. The Removites were all exchanging glances. Only Billy Bunter was unaware of what was happening, the short-sighted Owl not having seen the paper at all. But Bunter could see that something was on.

"I say, you fellows, what's up?" inquired the fat Owl, in a stage-whisper.

"Wharton's number!" grinned the Bounder.

"But I say——"

"Silence in the Form!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Wharton! This paper was in your pocket."

"It was not, sir," answered Harry, quietly. "It couldn't have been. How could it?"



A paper was passed along under the desks and eventually dropped on Wharton's desk. The head boy glanced at it and read the word, in big black letters: "Kad!"

"That is what I require to know," answered Mr. Quelch grimly. "You dropped it in taking out your handkerchief—"

"I couldn't have—"

"I saw it, Wharton, and most of the boys present saw it also."

Harry Wharton stared at Mr. Quelch, and then looked round at the crowd of tense faces.

Utterly ignorant of the fact that the missing paper had been in his pocket all at all, he could not believe that he had jerked it out with his handkerchief. He believed that Quelch was making a mistake—a very annoying and unjustifiable mistake.

But the looks on the faces of the Removites settled that point.

Wharton breathed hard, and called to Frank Nugent.

"Did you see it, Frank?"

"Yes, old chap!" answered Nugent.

"You saw that paper fall from my pocket?" gasped Harry.

"Ye-e-es."

"You will now explain, Wharton, how this paper, missing from my study, came to be in your possession!" said Mr. Quelch. "A boy in this Form has been severely punished for taking it. Yet it is in your possession. Explain this at once."

Harry Wharton looked bewildered, as well he might. He could not doubt now that the paper had been in his pocket. His face was growing crimson, under the stare of a sea of eyes.

"I don't know anything about it, sir!" he said. "I've never seen the paper before, that I know of."

"It was in your pocket."

"I suppose it was, if it fell out! I never saw it! Some silly ass put it there for a joke on me, I suppose."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured the Bouncer. "This beats Bunter at his own game!"

"Wharton all the time!" breathed Skinner. "Bunter told him about the paper, you know, and he went—"

"Dirty trick to leave it on Bunter!"

grunted Bolsover major.

"Silence!" rapped Mr. Quelch. There was silence in the Remove, and the gimlet-eyes fixed on Wharton's crimson face.

"Wharton! Are you telling me that you did not know that this paper was in your pocket?"

"Certainly I did not!" said Harry. "I've told you that I've never seen it before, and I never have."

There was a long minute of silence. The juniors hardly breathed. Quelch had canted Bunter, severely, for sneaking that paper. If it turned out that another fellow had been guilty, Quelch was placed in an extremely awkward and discomfiting position. And there were few in the Form who did not take it for granted, as a matter of course, that the fellow who had the missing paper in his pocket was the fellow who had sneaked it. The history paper could not have walked there!

The silence was growing painful, when Quelch spoke again.

"Bunter!"

"Oh, lor'! I—I mean yes, sir."

"Stand out before the Form, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Stand out at once, Bunter!"

And the fat Owl, still in the dark as to what was going on, rolled unwillingly and apprehensively out before the Form.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

By Whose Hand?

BILLY BUNTER blinked at his Form-master through his big spectacles.

He blinked at the paper in Quelch's hand, but as he could not see what it was, it told him nothing.

"Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice. "During my absence yesterday afternoon, you took this paper from my study—"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped the fat Owl. "Oh, no! I never took the other paper, either, sir."

"What other paper, Bunter?"

"The history paper, sir—the one you whopped me for—"

"This is the history paper, Bunter."

"Oh! Is it, sir? I couldn't see what it was! I'm so glad you've found it, sir."

"What?"

"Now you've found it, you know that I never took it from your study, sir," said Bunter, brightly. "I told you I hadn't, sir, you remember."

Mr. Quelch gazed at the fat Owl. The Remove fellows grinned at him.

Bunter, clearly, did not know how and where that paper had been found. As Quelch had it, he supposed that Quelch must have found it in his study after all.

"I suppose I needn't do the lines, sir?" went on Bunter.

"The—the lines?"

"You gave me a hundred lines, as well as whopping me, sir. Now you know I never took the paper—"

"I know nothing of the kind, Bunter!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"But you've got it in your hand now, sir!" ejaculated Bunter. "How could I have taken it if you've got it?"

"Did you not see this paper fall from Wharton's pocket, a few minutes ago, Bunter?"

Billy Bunter jumped.

"Oh, crikey! Did it? Is that what all the fellows were staring at? I'm rather short-sighted, sir—"

"Did you see it or not?"

"Oh, no, sir! I never knew it was Wharton who sneaked it, sir! I thought

it was Smithy—I—I—I mean, I never—"

"Silence, Bunter! This paper was in my head boy's pocket! He states that he knows nothing of it. Did you place it there?"

"Me, sir?" gurgled Bunter.

"Yes, you!"

"Oh, crikey! No, sir! As if I would!" gasped Bunter. "Besides, how could I, when I never had the paper at all? I told you I never had it, sir. I told all the fellows you whopped me for nothing, sir."

"How dare you make such a statement, Bunter?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Eh! But you did whop me, sir—don't you remember?—in the Rag yesterday evening!" stuttered Bunter. "A lot of fellows were there—"

"I caned you for taking this paper from my study, Bunter!"

"But I never took it, sir; and now you know it was Wharton—" stammered Bunter. "Now you know it was Wharton, you know it wasn't me, sir."

Mr. Quelch gave him a very penetrating look.

"Bunter! Wharton states that this paper was placed in his pocket, and it can only have been placed there by the boy who removed it from my study. It was you who removed it—"

"I didn't, sir!" wailed Bunter. "I wouldn't! I mean, I told the fellows I was going to, but I never did, because old Prout—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, Mr. Prout spotted me, and—"

"Answer me directly, Bunter! Did you, or did you not, place this paper in Wharton's jacket pocket?"

"Oh, no, sir! Never!"

"You must have, Bunter!" said Harry, very quietly. "Be decent for once and tell the truth!"

"Why, you beast!" gasped Bunter. "Trying to put it on me! If you'd had any sense, you'd have chucked it away, instead of leaving it in your pocket! Why didn't you chuck it away?"

"I never touched it."

"Well, you must have touched it when you picked it up in Quelch's study and

put it in your pocket! You know that! You had to keep it out of sight while you got it away, but you could have chucked it away afterwards! I should have done so."

"You must have put it where it was found," said Harry. "You had it—"

"I never had it! Why, you jolly well know I didn't, when you had it in your own pocket!" roared Bunter. "You had it there all the time while I was being whopped, and it was a dirty trick, and—"

"Silence, Bunter!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Well, Wharton ought to have owned up, sir, when you whopped me!" howled Bunter. "Any fellow would! I would! You ask any of the fellows, sir, and they'll say they'd have owned up when another fellow was getting tico for it!"

"Hear, hear!" murmured the Bounder.

"I've had six!" went on Bunter. "You gave me six on the bags, sir, and Wharton had it all the time—"

"I've never seen it before!" gasped Harry.

"Yah!"

"Silence!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Well, I jolly well think—"

"Be silent at once!"

Billy Bunter relaxed into indignant silence. But he gave the captain of the Remove expressive looks. His very spectacles gleamed with indignation and scorn.

Mr. Quelch stood utterly perplexed.

Utterly untruthful as Billy Bunter was, it was fairly easy for a keen man like Quelch to sift the wheat from the chaff in his statements. It was quite plain that the fat Owl was bursting with indignation, now; and that, in fact, he certainly had not slipped that missing paper into Harry Wharton's pocket.

To Harry, it seemed the only possible thing that could have happened; but Quelch could see, and all the Remove could see, that such was not the case. Bunter, whether he had sneaked the

paper or not, had not placed it where it was found.

Few fellows in the Remove, by this time, believed that Bunter had sneaked it at all. But Mr. Quelch, naturally, was extremely reluctant to come to that view. It was an awful reflection, for a schoolmaster, that he had administered an unjust punishment. And that was what Mr. Quelch had done, and all his Form knew that he had done, if it was not Bunter who had sneaked that history paper from his study.

"Wharton!" said Mr. Quelch, at last.

"Yes, sir!" said Harry quietly.

"I had no doubt that the paper taker from my study had been thrown away. It may have been seen and picked up. Any boy who picked it up, might naturally have placed it in his pocket, intending to return it to me. If that was how it came into your possession, and—"

Skinner gave the Bounder a sneering grin, and Smithy shrugged his shoulders. Quelch was catching at straws, trying to make a loophole for his precious head boy! That was Skinner's opinion.

"Nothing of the kind, sir!" said Harry Wharton steadily. "If I had seen that paper, after Bunter threw it away, I should certainly have picked it up, to return to you. But I never did."

"N.G.!" whispered the Bounder.

"He knows it won't do now!" murmured Skinner. "It would have done at the start, if he'd thought of it. It won't wash now!"

"Silence! Wharton, I shall accept your word—you are my head boy, and I trust you!" said Mr. Quelch. But he spoke very slowly. "I can only conclude that, after Bunter had thrown away this paper, it was found by some other boy, who placed it in your pocket, doubtless for a foolish and thoughtless jest."

"I never—" squeaked Bunter.

"Silence, Bunter!"

"Yes, sir! But I never—"

"Go back to your place, Bunter!"

"Yes, sir; but am I to do the lines, as I never—"

"If you speak another word, Bunter, I shall cane you!"

Billy Bunter rolled back to his place, without speaking another word! But he gurgled with indignation as he rolled.

"You may take your place, Wharton!" added Mr. Quelch, quite kindly.

"Very well, sir."

Wharton went to his place, with burning cheeks.

"Con" began in the Remove Form-room, and the matter was dismissed. But all the Remove could see that Mr. Quelch was in a troubled mood that morning. More than once his glance was seen to turn, not exactly doubtfully, but very searchingly, on his head boy! And one fellow, at least, noted it with satisfaction—Gilbert Tracy.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter is Wrathful!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Billy Bunter fairly yelled.

All through first and second school, the fat Owl had had to bottle up his indignation. But it burst out, in break, like a Highland spate. Bunter was boiling over.

"I say, you fellows, that beast!" yelled Bunter. "That worm, that sneak, that rotter—letting me in for a whopping when he had Quelch's putrid paper in his pocket all the time, and—"

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"It's the jolly old limit!" declared Skinner.

"Too jolly thick!" said Snop.

"I say, you fellows, I had six—six on the bags! And a hundred lines! I say, Quelch jolly well knows it wasn't me, now! He won't admit it, but he knows! He jolly well knows it was Wharton—"

"We all know that, old fat man!" said Vernon-Smith.

"That cad—that swab—that rat—letting me in for a whopping!" yelled Bunter. "Making out I did it, when he did it all the time! I'll jolly well punch him if he doesn't do the lines. I say, you fellows, ain't it up to Wharton to do the lines, when he did it all the time?"

"Yes, rather!"

"We'll make him!" said Bolsover major. "He ought to be jolly well scragged! Dirtiest trick I ever heard of!"

"Foul!" said Skinner.

"Blessed if I make it out!" said Squiff. "Wharton isn't the chap to play a dirty trick—"

"He did!" sneered Skinner.

"It does look like it," said Peter Todd, "but—"

"I say, you fellows, you jolly well know he did!" roared Bunter. "Wasn't the paper in his pocket? Making out that I put it there! How could I—"

"Well, you could have, old fat man!" said Peter. "Any fellow could have got at a fellow's pocket in the dorm, if you come to that."

"Why, you beast, Toddy, if you're making out that I did it—" yelled Bunter.

"Not at all, old porpoise—I know you didn't!" said Peter soothingly. "But some fellow did—unless Wharton sneaked that paper himself."

"He jolly well did sneak it!" howled Bunter. "Shoved it in his pocket, and left it there! And I got the whopping—he was looking on while I got it—and he never said a word—"

"Shame!"

"Rotten!"

"Dirty trick!"

Billy Bunter had the satisfaction, so far as it went, of being the object of general sympathy.

No doubt he had had hard measure; for nobody in the Form believed now that he had sneaked that wretched paper; and nobody supposed that Quelch quite believed it, either.

Bunter had been caned for nothing—for the first time Quelch had made the awfully serious mistake of punishing one fellow for the fault of another! Whether he admitted it or not, that was what he had done—and the Remove buzzed with it!

Hitherto, Tracy's foul play in the Form match with the Shell had been the chief topic in the Remove. But that topic was quite dismissed in the excitement of the affair of the history paper.

Tracy's name was hardly mentioned now, if it was mentioned at all. Harry Wharton had all the limelight, which, no doubt, was satisfactory to the fellow who had made so bad a break on the football field.

Harry Wharton was not enjoying this kind of limelight. He came out in break with his friends, as usual, but the Co. were looking worried and dismayed. They accepted the version Harry had given as a matter of course; but they knew that Bunter had not landed that wretched paper on him, so the matter was utterly puzzling and perplexing.

To the other fellows it seemed clear enough. A fellow who sneaked that

paper from Quelch's study would naturally thrust it into a pocket to keep it out of sight till he got clear. He had carelessly left it there—perhaps forgotten it. It had come to light by the sheerest accident. What could be clearer?

The only alternative theory was that the culprit had deliberately landed it on Wharton. And if Bunter was the culprit that was inadmissible, for everyone knew that he had not done so.

So it was rather a problem for the Co. They were not going to believe that their leader had stood by with that paper in his pocket, while Bunter was caned for his offence. They could hardly suppose, as Quelch seemed to do, that the culprit had thrown the paper away, and a third party, unknown, had found it and planted it on Wharton. So they hardly knew what to believe.

All through break Billy Bunter was eloquent on the subject. Bunter was the fellow to complain when there was nothing the matter, and now there was something the matter—awfully the matter!

For once he had the ear of the Form, and the fellows listened to his tale of woe with sympathy and indignation.

When the bell rang and the Remove went in for third school, Bunter was still in a boiling state. He gave the captain of the Form deadly glares through his big spectacles.

In third school there was whispering in the class, and Mr. Quelch rapped out sharply:

"Silence! Bunter, you are talking!"

"Oh, no, sir!" squeaked Bunter. "I was only telling Toddy what a rotten cad Wharton was to—"

"Silence!"

Harry Wharton's cheeks burned.

A little later a paper was passed along under the desks.

It arrived at the head boy, and stopped there. As it dropped on his desk, Wharton glanced at it, and read the word, in big letters:

"Kad!"

Evidently it was a message from Bunter.

The captain of the Remove crumpled it, and dropped it under his desk, with gleaming eyes.

Encouraged and emboldened by the general sympathy, Billy Bunter, a few minutes later, proceeded to dispatch another note.

This time, however, the gimlet eye of Quelch spotted what was going on, and his voice came with a snap.

"Wibley, what is that paper?"

"Oh, nothing, sir!" gasped Wibley. Bunter's missive had reached Wib, and he was about to pass it farther on, when he was spotted.

"Hand it to me at once!"

There was no help for it, and Wibley handed over the paper.

Mr. Quelch looked at it with a brow of thunder, and read:

"MEESLY SNEEK! YAH!"

If Mr. Quelch did not already know that that missive emanated from Billy Bunter, he would have guessed it from the spelling. The gimlet-eye gleamed at the fat Owl.

"Bunter, how dare you write this nonsense in class?"

"Oh, I—I didn't, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"What?" Mr. Quelch held up the paper, plainly in Bunter's scrawl, as well as his original spelling. "You did not write this, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir! Never seen it before."

"It is in your hand!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh crikey! It ain't, sir!" gasped the fat Owl. "It's in yours, sir!"

"What-a-t?"

"You've got it there, in your own hand, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I've got nothing in my hand, sir, except my pen."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence in the class! Bunter, you utterly obtuse boy—I mean that this paper is in your handwriting."

"Oh, you said it was in my hand, sir, and it ain't!"

"You wrote this, Bunter!"

"I—I—I didn't, sir! I—I don't know what's written on it! Besides, Wharton is a measly sneak to let me take that whopping, when he had the history paper all the time!"

"If there is any more of this, Bunter, I shall cane you!"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

Mr. Quelch threw that missive into his wastepaper-basket.

The juniors exchanged significant looks.

Bunter was warned off, as it were, but he was not punished. And all the fellows knew quite well what that meant. Bunter's antics were absurd enough; but they showed quite plainly that the fat Owl had not sneaked the paper, and that he believed that Wharton had sneaked it. And Mr. Quelch could not help seeing it. Whether he liked it or not, Quelch had to realise that he had punished the wrong fellow for that act. And that made it very difficult for him to deal with the fatuous fat Owl.

His face was very sombre when he dismissed the Remove after third school.

As the juniors went out a fat squeak floated back to his ears:

"Yah! Cad! Are you going to own up? Yah, you swab!"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips, hard. Bunter had not sneaked that history paper. He had caned Bunter for what he had not done. It was a mortifying and painful realisation; but he had to realise it. And it was the most discomfiting thing that had happened to him in his career as a schoolmaster.

And if Bunter had not done it, who had? Who, but his trusted head boy, in whose possession the missing paper had been found?

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

Gilbert Gets on With It!

"I'D go to the Head!"

"Would you?" asked Bunter doubtfully.

"I jolly well would!" said Tracy.

"Um!" said Bunter.

"Haven't you been caned for nothing?"

"Yes; but—"

"You've got lines for nothing?"

"Yes; but—"

"Well, the Head will see fair play. He saw fair play when Quelch had me up for nothing. And he will see fair play for you."

"Um!" said Bunter.

Dr. Locke, with a very curious expression on his face, glanced from his study window.

That window was open, and within the Head sat, glancing over some notes for Greek with the Sixth that afternoon.

Bunter did not see him. Bunter, in THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,600.

deed, had not noticed that Tracy had led him along by the Head's study window at all.

The headmaster, as he sat by the window, was out of sight from the quad, except for the top of his venerable head bent over the Greek paper.

Gilbert knew that he was there—that was why he was passing below the window with Bunter.

Every word floated in to the Head, and drew his attention away from his Greek paper.

"Everybody knows who sneaked that paper from Quelch's study yesterday," went on Tracy. "Everybody knows Quelch jumped on you and whopped you for nothing. We all think it a shame."

"So it is," said Bunter. "I had six—every one a swipe, too! I never touched that rotten history paper! I believe Quelch knows it now, too."

"Well, I'd go to the Head. You've got the lines—"

"I fancy Quelch won't ask me for those lines, now he knows," said Bunter. "He can't very well, can he?"

"The Head ought to know—"

"Um!"

The two juniors passed on.

Dr. Locke sat with a thoughtful shade on his brow. He was not thinking of Greek.

He touched the bell at last, and when Trotter appeared, sent him to request Mr. Quelch to step to the study.

There was no likelihood that Billy Bunter, bursting with grievance as he was, would go to the Head about it. Gilbert was aware of that. Nevertheless, he had contrived to bring to the Head's knowledge the fact that the Remove master had inflicted an undeserved punishment on a member of his Form.

Whether Dr. Locke chose to inquire into the matter, or not, he knew—which was another step in the peculiar campaign Gilbert was waging against his Form-master. But the Head, in truth, had hardly any choice but to take note of the matter.

Mr. Quelch entered the study. He was a little surprised at being called there just before class. And he noted at once the grave expression on the headmaster's face.

"You sent for me, sir," he said.

"Pray be seated, my dear Quelch!" said Dr. Locke.

Mr. Quelch sat down.

"There is something that I think I ought to bring to your notice," explained the Head. "Some talk from boys of your Form in the quadrangle reached me as I sat at the window. It is a matter I think you should inquire into."

"Indeed, sir! What—"

"I gather that you have recently had occasion to punish Bunter of your Form?"

Mr. Quelch started a little.

"Bunter? Yes!"

"Either the foolish boy fancies, or has been led to fancy, that he has been unjustly punished," said the Head. "Such a thing is, of course, impossible! But such talk among the juniors—"

The Head paused. Mr. Quelch's face was reddening under his surprised eyes.

There was a brief and rather awkward pause. The Head's grave face became graver. But when he

spoke again it was with his usual urbane courtesy.

"That is all, Mr. Quelch! I thought it better to bring the matter to your attention, as it had reached my ears."

Mr. Quelch sat very still.

It was painful enough to him to realise that he had for once, and quite inadvertently, been unjust. But it had not occurred to him that the matter would reach the ears of his chief!

"Please let me explain, sir," he said haltingly.

"There is nothing to explain, my dear Quelch," said the Head kindly. "I merely referred to the matter—"

He paused again. He knew that Quelch knew he had guessed how the matter stood.

"It was somewhat unfortunate, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "During my absence yesterday, a history paper was taken from my study, and I had every reason to believe that it was taken by Bunter, who has played such foolish tricks before. But—" Quelch seemed to choke a little. "But I have since had some reason to conclude that it was taken by another boy."

"After Bunter had been punished?"

"Yes, sir!" almost gasped Mr. Quelch.

There was another pause.

"It is, as you say, unfortunate," said the Head at last. "We all make mistakes at times—to err is human! In these circumstances, there is nothing for you to inquire into, as I supposed. Pray dismiss the matter from your mind, my dear Quelch."

Mr. Quelch hardly knew how he got out of his chief's study.

The Head had let him down as lightly as possible. That did not alter the fact that he had appeared before his chief as a master who had made a very serious mistake to the extent of punishing one boy for the fault of another.

His face was burning as he went down the passage.

It was scarcely possible that his chief's confidence in him should not be shaken. First the affair of Tracy and the rag in his study—now the affair of Bunter and the missing history paper! What was Dr. Locke to think of him?

A few days ago only Tracy's appeal to the Head had prevented an act of injustice, apparent at least. Now an actual and unmistakable act of injustice had been committed! This was not the kind of thing that a headmaster expected from his staff!

Mr. Quelch reached his study in a very disturbed and agitated state. But gradually anger supervened over other feelings.

He had made a mistake—that was undeniable. But whose fault was it—but that of the young rascal who had taken away that wretched paper and stood silent while Bunter was taking his "six"?

When the bell rang Mr. Quelch went to his Form-room with a set face. All the Remove could see, when he let them into the Form-room, that they needed to walk warily that afternoon.

"Bunter!" rapped Mr. Quelch, when the Remove had taken their places.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Have you done your lines?"

"Oh crikey! I—I mean, I—I was just going to do them, sir, only—"

Bunter stuttered.

Bunter had told all the Remove that he jolly well wasn't going to do those

lines! But he did not feel disposed to tell Mr. Quelch so!

"Very good! You need not do the lines, Bunter!"

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

"I have reason to believe, Bunter, that it was not you who abstracted the history paper from my study yesterday. Had you been less untruthful, I could have taken your word on the subject."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"What has occurred, Bunter, may be a warning to you not to prevaricate."

"Me, sir? I never—"

"Silence! I have now to speak to the whole Form," went on Mr. Quelch, his eyes glinting over a silent Remove. "Some boy here present abstracted that paper from my study. I shall make the most rigid inquiry into the matter, and the boy, when discovered, will be publicly flogged in Hall."

His eyes rested, for a long moment, on Harry Wharton. Many other eyes turned on the captain of the Remove.

Wharton set his lips hard.

"Until the discovery is made," went on Mr. Quelch, "the Remove will stay in extra school for two hours every half-holiday! That is all! We will now proceed!"

And the Remove—with deep feelings—proceeded!

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Hobson Takes a Hand!

JAMES HOBSON, of the Shell, grinned—and backed behind the elm on which he had been leaning.

It was the first time Hobby had grinned that day. Hitherto, his expression had been one of disgruntled discomfort.

Hobby was limping that day! He had not yet recovered from the hack Tracy had given him in the Form match. He had many painful twinges, and every twinge reminded him of Tracy, whom he had determined to kick all over the shop at the first chance he had.

Hobby was a good-tempered fellow and a sportsman, and not the fellow to make a fuss about an accidental hack. But a deliberate foul, which left him tottering on a game leg, was quite another matter. There was no room for a doubt in the matter, when the foul player had been ordered off the field by his own captain, with the full concurrence of the referee. Such a measly swab, in Hobby's opinion, wanted booting and booting hard.

But Hobby, with a game leg, was not in a state to go hunting him to give him what he wanted! He had to wait for a chance—and here was the chance!

After class, Hobby had been limping, and he had stopped to lean on a tree, to rest that game leg, which twinged painfully. He saw Tracy at a little distance—with morose eyes! There was no chance of getting after him, with a game leg! Then, to his surprise and satisfaction, Tracy suddenly changed his direction, and walked straight towards the elms.

The cause was Fisher T. Fish.

Fishy was looking for Tracy. Tracy did not want to see Fishy so much as Fishy wanted to see him! When he saw Fishy coming, he walked off in another direction—Hobby's direction, as it happened.

That was why James Hobson grinned—for the first time that day!

(Continued on page 28.)

FALL IN, YOU FELLOWS, AND FOLLOW—

The GREYFRIARS GUIDE



ALL ROUND GREYFRIARS. The Courtfield Cinema

(1)

When you're feeling kind of low,
When your heart is full of woe,
The Courtfield Cinema is sure
To make you bright and cheerful.
"Standing, ninence; seats a bob!"
If you want to laugh and sob,
Take your seat, and you'll endure
An eyeful and an earful!

(2)

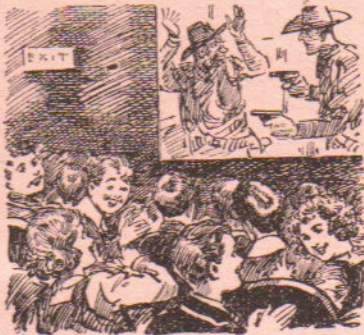
Watch the hero, name of Ed,
Filling gangsters full of lead,
When they try to pull a bluff
He knows it's kinda phoney!
But none the less, he takes a chance
(With twenty shot-guns in his pants!),
And when he does his lead-fill stuff
The gangsters shout: "Boloney!"

(3)

There is a comic man, of course,
Who hangs around and says: "Gee,
borss!"
And cracks a joke as gangsters fall
Like chaff before the reaper!
A heroine is there as well,
I'll tell the universe she's swell!
For ninence you can have it all,
And nothing could be cheaper.

A WEEKLY BUDGET OF FACT AND FUN

By
THE GREYFRIARS
RHYMESTER



THE FOOTBALL FAGS

Eleven little football fags faced the Sixth Form men,
One had burnt old Loder's toast, then there were ten!
Ten little football fags reckoned they were fine,
One kicked himself to death, then there were nine!
Nine little football fags were in war-like state,
One trod on Wingate's face, then there were eight!
Eight little football fags met the first eleven,
One tried to stop a shot, then there were seven!
Seven little football fags now were in a fix,
One thought it time for tea, then there were six!
Six little football fags kept the game alive,
One got in Blundell's way, then there were five!
Five little football fags vainly tried to score,
One skidded on the ball, then there were four!
Four little football fags floundered dizzily,
One argued with the ref, then there were three!
Three little football fags knew not what to do,
One sent himself straight off, then there were two!
Two little football fags wished they'd not begun,
One tried a shoulder charge, then there was one!
One little football fag left in great despair,
He gave up trying to pretend he wasn't there!
Eleven little football fags all had had enough,
Now they're playing marbles, for—
it isn't quite so rough!

THE GREYFRIARS ALPHABET

JAMES WALKER,

the slack and lazy prefect of the Sixth.

W is WALKER—a Sixth Form guy.
A prefect with a searching eye
Resembling (more or less) the lynx—
Well, that, at least, is what he thinks!
But other chaps behind his back
Assert that he is dull and slack.
They say he's always on the rocks
Because he plays the giddy ox.



They say he's known to smoke and bet,
A "prefect," but not "perfect"—yet!
With Carne and Loder he has crept
Out through the night while others slept!
But still, he's not as bad as they,
And may perhaps reform some day.
He's quite good-natured, as a rule,
And not disliked at Greyfriars School.

GREYFRIARS GRINS

Tom Brown's radio set was making a fearful ear-splitting scream until Quelch came on the scene with a cane. Then Tom Brown made a fearful ear-splitting scream!
Skinner has filled Mauly's inkwell with gum. That's one way of making our prize slacker stick to his work!
In a fight with Bolsover, Inky got a black eye. Lucky for him it wasn't a white eye!
A Second Form fag is rumoured to have discovered a hitherto unvisited part of the school. Probably a Second Form bath-room!

PUZZLE PAR

Put six coins on the table in a cross, like this:

```

O
OOO
O
O
    
```

There are now four coins downwards and three across. The puzzle is to rearrange them so that there are four coins in each direction.

Answer at foot of col. 2.

This week's recipe from BUNTER'S COOKERY BOOK.—"APPLE DUMPLINGS. Take two dozen apples and—Ow-wow-wow! Yaroooh!" (The last bit was due to Mimble, the Head's gardener, who saw Bunter take two dozen apples.)

They say it's lucky to turn your money over when there's a new moon. There was one last week, and I asked Fishy to turn my money over because he's got it all.

RANDOM RIDDLES.—Why is the letter W like a sneak?—It makes ill will.

What's the difference between a farmer and a dressmaker?—The farmer gathers what he sows, the dressmaker sews what she gathers.

Why is a painter handsomer than a carpenter?—Because the carpenter is a deal planer.

ANSWER to PUZZLE

Take the bottom coin and put it on top of the one in the middle.

He drew quickly behind the elm! Tracy had not seen him—and was not going to see him! But he was coming straight towards that elm; and when he passed it, Hobby was going to weigh in—with his sound leg!

Hobby grinned with cheery anticipation as he waited for Tracy to pass. He would be able to land at least one before Tracy dodged—and it was going to be a good one!

"Say, big boy!" Fisher T. Fish's nasal voice reached his ears. "Hold on! What's got you? I'm telling you I want to chew the rag with you a piece, you Tracy!"

"What do you want, you fool?" Tracy came to an unwilling halt—much to Hobby's disappointment. He had nearly reached that elm—but he had not passed it. Hobby had to wait for him to pass.

"I guess you know what I want!" snapped Fisher T. Fish. "What sorta game do you call this that you're playing? 'Putting it on Wharton—'"

"Don't yell, you fool!" "You pizen polecat!" said Fishy indignantly. "I never guessed what you was up to! Jest a rag on Quelch. I figured, when I saw you sneak that pesky history paper from his study."

Fisher T. Fish snorted. "You figure I'm going to stand for it, because you bought a camera from me for fifteen bob, and cheap at the price?" he demanded. "If you do, you got another guess coming!"

The astounded Hobson, on the other side of the elm, heard a sound of gritting teeth.

"Chew on it, you polecat!" said Fisher T. Fish. "You've been keeping out of my way, but I'm telling you, bo, jest chew on that! This guy ain't standing for no such shenanigan! Not this baby! Got me?"

"It's a bit too late to tell me that!" Tracy's voice came with a bitter sneer. "You've kept it dark so far, and you'd better go on keeping it dark, if you know what's good for you. Wharton's no friend of yours—"

"He sure ain't; but I'm telling you, there's a limit—"

"If you open your mouth now, you'll have to let out the whole story! Do you want the Remove, and Quelch, to know that you stook me for fifteen shillings to keep it dark?" sneered Tracy.

"You bought a camera—"

"Oh, chuck it! You know why, and everybody will know why. You can tell the fellows that, with the rest!" sneered Tracy.

Fisher T. Fish's nasal voice was silent. It dawned upon his sharp transatlantic mind, that he had placed himself in a difficult position by his keen attention to business!

"Forget all about it," said Tracy. "I'll say you sure are a pizen polecat!" said Fisher T. Fish. "If I'd been wise to your game—"

"You'd have charged me more for the camera, what?" asked Tracy contemptuously. "Got anything else to sell? If you have, you can trot it along to my study."

"Oh!" said Fishy. There was a pause. But the appeal to Fishy's business instincts was too powerful to be resisted. "I sure got a clock—I'm asking a pound for that clock—"

Tracy laughed. "I'll buy it!" he said. "But—but I—I guess—!" Fishy seemed in doubt.

There was an interruption at that point.

Hobby, tired of waiting, peered round the trunk of the elm. Tracy was standing only a few feet away, his back to him! This was as good a chance as Hobby wanted! He limped round the tree as rapidly as his game leg would allow.

Fisher T. Fish saw him, and jumped. But before Tracy could turn his head, Hobby reached him.

Standing as firmly as he could on his game leg, Hobby shot out the other.

Crash! There was a wild yell from Tracy as the boot landed. It landed fair and square, and it landed hard, with all Hobby's beef behind it.

Gilbert, taken quite by surprise, pitched forward, yelling. He grabbed at Fisher T. Fish to save himself, dragged him over, and they rolled on the ground together.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hobby. "Got you, you cad! Got you, you swab! Ha, ha, ha! Now get up and have another!"

Tracy bounded up! But he did not stop for another! He flew!

Fisher T. Fish sat up spluttering. Hobby grabbed him by the collar.

"Here, you leggo!" howled Fishy, as the Shell fellow jerked him up.

"What you got agin me, you gink? I never fouled you at football, did I?"

"You're coming in with me," said Hobson, grinning. "You've got something to tell Wharton, I think."

"I—I—I sure ain't!" gasped Fishy.

"I think you have!" said Hobby. "You can tell Wharton what you've just been telling that cad Tracy."

"Oh, wake snakes!" gasped Fishy. "Mean to say you yeared—"

"Come on!"

"I—I—I guess—"

"This isn't a guessing competition! This way!"

"I—I—I calculate—"

"Do you want one like I gave Tracy?" inquired Hobson.

"Aw! Nope! Sure not!"

"Then come on!"

And Fisher T. Fish reluctantly came on!

THE TWENTY-SECOND CHAPTER.

Brought to Book!

HARRY WHARTON hurred open the door of Study No. 1 in the Remove, with a crash.

There was a tramp of feet behind him, in the Remove passage, and a huzz of excited voices.

Tracy was in the study. He caught his breath, as the captain of the Remove tramped in, followed by the Co., and the doorway was crammed by a dozen other fellows.

"You rotter!" roared Wharton. "You worm!" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Have that cad out!" shouted Vernon-Smith.

Tracy panted for breath. He had been wondering whether Hobson of the Shell had heard that talk with Fisher

T. Fish; and whether if he had heard it, he would pass it on! He knew the answers to both questions now.

The Remove knew what he had done, and they had come up to the study for him. And Tracy's knees knocked together, as he eyed the angry and excited crowd.

"Are you going to own up now, you cur?" asked Harry Wharton. He waved the excited Removites back, and faced Tracy, with gleaming eyes. "You sneaked that paper, and Fishy saw you—you landed it on me—you—you reptile! I've had the whole Form girding at me, over that extra school, you worm! Are you going to own up?"

"No!" said Tracy, between his teeth.

"That does it! Collar him!" There was a rush at Tracy! Study No. 1 swarmed with excited Removites. Gilbert, yelling and struggling, was dragged headlong into the passage.

"Frog's-march!" shouted Smithy.

"Hear, hear!" "Give the rat jip!"

Tramp, tramp, tramp! The mob of juniors tramped up the passage with the rat of the Remove in their midst. Yelling and wriggling and howling, the hapless schemer was frog-marched up to the end of the passage.

By that time Gilbert was in a dusty, dishevelled, and breathless state.

"Hold on a minute!" said Harry. "Are you going to Quelch, Tracy?"

"Urrgh! Stoppit! Urrgh! I'll go!"

"We'll see you as far as Quelch's study," said the captain of the Remove. "And if you come away without telling him—you'll go through it again, and a little more!"

Gilbert was walked down the stairs between the two juniors. The crowd of Removites followed them to the foot of the staircase. Then Wharton and Bob walked him away to Masters' Studies.

At Mr. Quelch's door they stopped and released him.

It was up to Gilbert now, and he had his choice of going in and owning up, with a flogging to follow, or of facing what awaited him in the Remove if he did not.

Gilbert did not want to own up, and he did not want a flogging; but still less did he want what the Remove had in store for him. For a long moment he hesitated, glaring at the captain of the Remove; then slowly he raised his hand and tapped at Mr. Quelch's door.

"Come in!" came the Remove master's voice.

Gilbert went in. The door closed on him, and Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry walked away and left him to it.

After calling-over there was a flogging in Hall. Under the eyes of all Greyfriars the Head wielded the birch; and venerable gentleman as he was, Gilbert discovered that he packed quite a lot of muscle.

THE END.

(Will Tracy's licking teach him a lesson—or will the rascally newcomer to Greyfriars continue his contest of schoolboy against schoolmaster? For the answer, read: "THE RUNAWAY!" next week's great Greyfriars yarn.)

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