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Under Suspicion!

A Splendid New, Long, Complete
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By **FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER. The Victims.

BOB CHERRY groaned.
It was a rather unusual proceeding on the part of Bob Cherry. As a rule, he was more inclined to laugh than to grumble, and he generally took things as they came with great equanimity.

But just now his sunny face bore an expression of the most lugubrious kind. He rose from his seat on the table in Study No. 13, in the Remove passage at Greyfriars, and groaned.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, of the Remove, had just looked into the study, and their faces were as lugubrious as Bob Cherry's.

"It's time," said Wharton.

"Better go down," said Nugent.

Whereupon Bob Cherry groaned emphatically. Wharton and Nugent might have called for him to accompany him on his way to execution, to judge by his expression.

"Time, Marky!" said Bob Cherry, turning a

doleful look upon his study-mate, Mark Linley, the Lancashire lad.

Mark smiled, as he rose and closed his Xenophon.

"Buck up, Bob!" he said. "It will only last an hour, anyway."

Bob Cherry snorted.

"An hour—on a half-holiday—and the best of the whole summer! What price the cricket?"

"We can go to the nets afterwards."

"Oh, rats!"

"Yes, rats!" said Harry Wharton warmly. "An hour out of a half-holiday! It's rotten! If it was our own Form-master it wouldn't be so bad, but Capper—"

"Quelch ought to have stood up for us!" said Nugent.

"Yes, rather!"

"He's left us to go like giddy sheep to the slaughter!" growled Bob Cherry. "I'm surprised at Quelch! I'm disappointed in him! Yah!"

"Come on!" said Mark. "Better not be late!"

And the four juniors left the study.

They proceeded downstairs, falling in with several more Removites going the same way. All the Remove fellows were looking serious and solemn.

"Faith, and it's too bad intirely!" said Micky

For our
**GRAND
NEW FEATURE**
see Page 28 and
the last two
Cover Pages.

Desmond. "Sure, I've been thinking, couldn't we ask Capper to lave it till to-morrow, and give us the lecture instead of one of the lessons?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'm afraid that wouldn't work," he said. "We've got to stand it. Of course, it's really very kind of Capper, in a way."

Bob Cherry groaned deeply.

"People have been killed with kindness before now," he said. "Hallo, hallo, hallo! There goes three! Come on!"

And the juniors hurried down.

In the "Rag"—the big room on the ground floor that was used by the juniors for their meetings—quite a crowd was collecting. They all looked very solemn. Nearly all the Remove and the Upper Fourth were gathering there, but they did not seem to be preparing to enjoy themselves.

Temple, Dabney & Co., of the Fourth, looked as woebegone as the Removites. Generally Removites and Fourth-Formers met with mutual chipping, but on the present occasion there was a bond of sympathy between them, as if they had met on the sad occasion of a funeral. Temple nodded lugubriously to Wharton & Co.

"Bit rotten, ain't it?" he said feelingly.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Better try to look a little more cheerful when Capper comes in," said Newland. "He won't take it as a compliment if we look like a blessed set of mutes!"

Temple growled.

"All very well for you; you're a giddy philatelist, and interested in rotten stamps. But what price us? We want to play cricket!"

"And we've got to look as if we like it!" said Bob Cherry, with a snort. "I call that insult added to injury!"

And the juniors groaned in chorus.

It was a lovely summer's afternoon, and a half-holiday. The cricket-field was simply calling out to the juniors, and the thought of the river was especially attractive to the rowing fellows in the Lower Forms.

But that was not to be!

Mr. Capper, master of the Upper Fourth, was an enthusiastic philatelist. He collected stamps, and he talked stamps, and he was popularly supposed to live merely for the sake of stamps.

Perhaps it was his pleasant little chats with Newland and Banthorpe on the all-absorbing subject that had made Mr. Capper fancy that an hour's lecture on the subject of philately would be keenly interesting to the juniors.

At all events, Mr. Capper had announced that he would give the lecture, and, at the same time, show his album to the juniors, and he never dreamed of the spirit in which his kind offer was being received.

Of course, the fellows were not bound to attend the lecture. They had been asked. But the requests of Form-masters are very much like the invitations of Royalty—they are supposed to be complied with.

Probably only two fellows in all the Upper and Lower Fourth wanted to attend the lecture, but all of them felt that they must attend it.

It was timed for three o'clock in the Rag, and at that hour most of the victims had turned up.

But they were not joyful.

Even the news that Mr. Capper had a very rare stamp to show them—a stamp which was supposed to have only one fellow in the wide world—did not make them enthusiastic.

An 1856 One-Cent British Guiana was no more to the average junior than the common or garden stamp bearing the effigy of his Majesty King George the Fifth, and sold at all post-offices for one penny.

Mr. Capper's stamp might be—and doubtless was—worth a fabulous sum, and might be a most remarkable thing for a Form-master to possess; but the juniors would rather have played cricket.

Which would have been quite incomprehensible to Mr. Capper.

Mr. Capper had shown that wonderful One Cent to several fellows interested in philately. Newland and Banthorpe, of the Remove, had almost wept over it. Gadsby, of the Shell, was said to have offered Mr. Capper five pounds for it. This was taken by the fellows as a clear proof that Gadsby, of the Shell, was off his rocker. Newland, who knew as much about stamps as Bob Cherry knew about cricket, declared that the stamp was worth hundreds of pounds.

And still the juniors would rather have played cricket!

"Look here! Why doesn't he come?" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in exasperation, looking at his watch. "It's ten past three!"

"Lecture's from three to four," said Nugent. "It's all right, if we get off at four."

"Yes; but you know these giddy hobbying maniacs!" growled Bob. "He'll make it an hour, all the same, whatever time he starts. I know 'em!"

"I shall jolly well get out at four, anyway!" grumbled Bolsover major.

"Same here!"

"Faith, and me, too, intirely!"

"The getoutfulness will also be terrific for my honourable self!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Why doesn't he come?" growled a dozen voices. "It's not playing the game!"

The audience were very restive. Some of them began to stamp on the floor. There were footsteps in the passage at last.

"Here he comes!"

But it was not Mr. Capper; it was Gadsby, of the Shell, who looked in. Gadsby glanced at the juniors and grinned.

"You fellows waiting for Capper?" he asked.

"Yes!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Something's gone wrong—I heard him yelling in his study as I passed," said Gadsby. "Hope you'll have a good time!"

And the Shell fellow whistled, and went on his way.

"He may have lost his album," said Bob Cherry, with a gleam of hope, "or some good Samaritan may have bunged it in the fire!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hark!"

"Here he comes!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

The door opened again. Mr. Capper, the master of the Upper Fourth, rushed in. He had a stamp album in his hands, and a wild expression on his face. His eyes were simply glaring, and his hair was untidy. He gasped for breath, and tried to speak, but could only stutter.

"Great Scott!"

"What's the matter?"

"The matterfulness is terrific!"

The juniors gathered round Mr. Capper in great concern. Although he had "mucked up" their half-holiday, as they regarded it, they rather liked "old Capper." Apart from his hobby, he was a very kind Form-master, and popular.

"What's the matter, sir?" asked Harry Wharton. "Anything gone wrong?"

Mr. Capper stuttered spasmodically.

"My stamp!"

"We're waiting to see it, sir," said Newland.

"M-m-m-my s-s-stamp!"

"Yes, sir. I've been telling the fellows about it," said Newland, in wonder. "They're all—ahem!—very keen to see it, sir."

"Awfully keen!" groaned Bob Cherry.

"M-m-m-my s-s-stamp!" spluttered Mr. Capper, looking as if he were about to fall in a fit.

"Isn't it there, sir?"

"Gone!" shrieked Mr. Capper.

"What!"

"Gone! Stolen!"

"Great Scott!"

Mr. Capper waved his stamp album high in the air.

"Gone! My stamp! The British Guiana One Cent! Gone! The 1856 issue! Gone! Only two in existence, and this was one of them! Gone! Stolen!"

"Lost, stolen, or strayed!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"Gone!" roared Mr. Capper. "Gone! Some unknown villain has purloined my stamp! Boys, I am sorry I shall not be able to give you the lecture now—"

The juniors tried to look sorry, too. There are times, as Nugent remarked afterwards, when hypocrisy seems to be almost a virtue.

"Oh, sir!" exclaimed Temple, with a really artistic look of dismay.

"Yes, I am sorry, but I am too upset—and it will be necessary for me to look for my stamp!" said poor Mr. Capper. "Boys!" He tried to calm himself; he realised

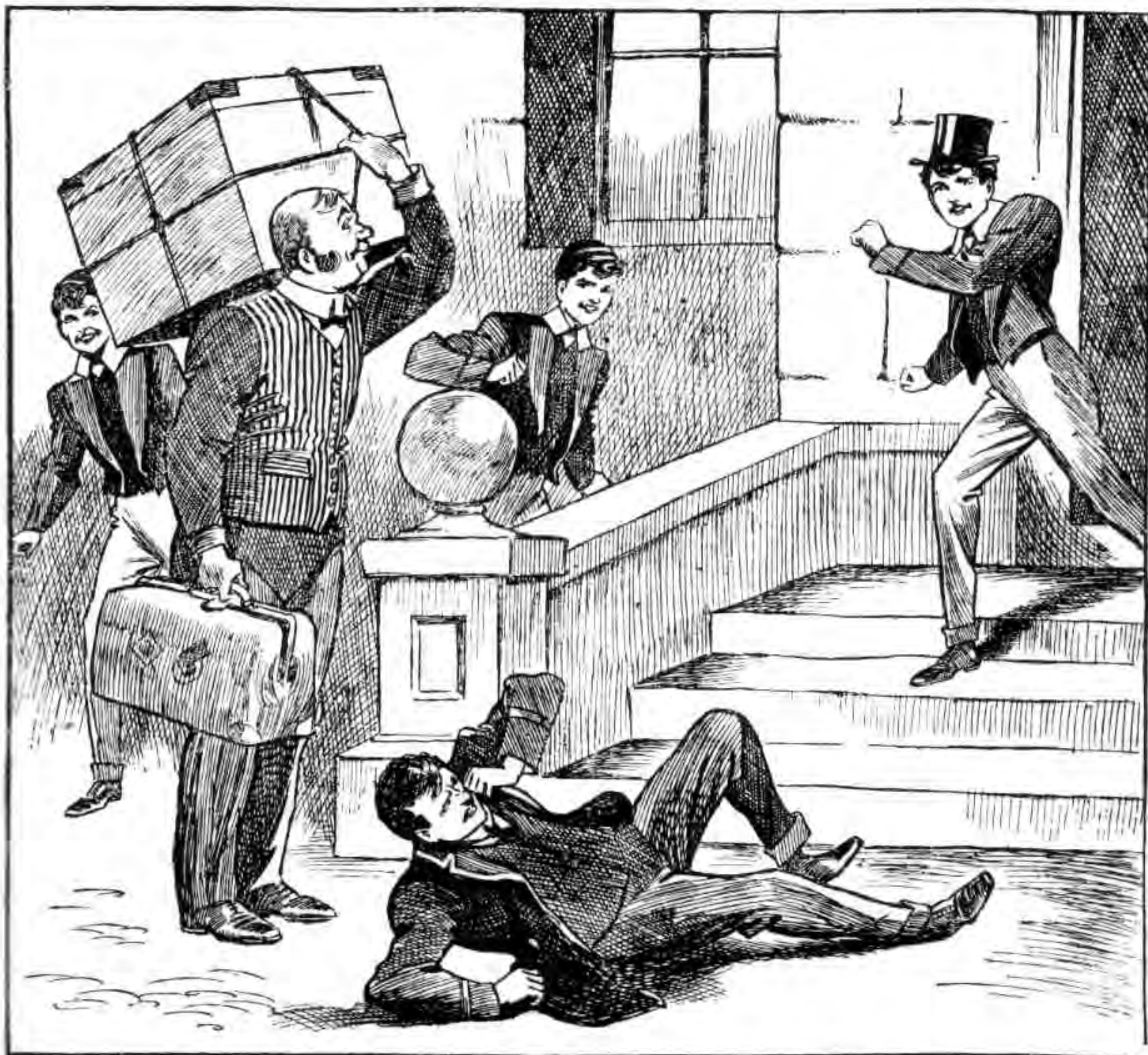
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See Page 27. "The Gem" Library, Number 233.



The new boy stepped up to Bolsover, and in a flash the bully's guard was knocked up, and the new-comer's fist caught him full upon the nose. Bolsover gave a roar like a bull, rolled down the steps, and bumped on the ground. (See Chapter 7.)

that at a moment like that calmness was necessary. "Boys, if any lad here has taken that stamp away for a—a joke, I will forgive him if he will return it at once!"

There was silence.

Much as the juniors had been exasperated by Mr. Capper's incursion into their half-holiday, nobody had thought of interfering with his stamp album. And it was well known that Mr. Capper would rather have lost a limb than his 1856 British Guiana One Cent.

"Boys," said Mr. Capper, hoping against hope, "I trust that this is only a joke—a foolish joke! I hope that my stamp will be restored. If any lad here has thoughtlessly removed it, let him give it back to me, and I will forgive him—I will thank him."

But there was no reply.

"Then," said Mr. Capper, with a haggard look, "I can only conclude that the stamp has been stolen—stolen for its value!"

"Was it worth anything, sir?" asked Billy Bunter.

"Worth anything!" shrieked Mr. Capper. "It was one of the only two in existence! It was worth a thousand pounds! Oh, my stamp—my stamp! My 1856 British Guiana One Cent!"

And with that wail Mr. Capper staggered out of the Rag.

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NEXT
TUESDAY:

"HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S BANK-HOLIDAY!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Under Suspicion.

SILENCE fell upon the crowd of juniors in the Rag. That they were glad to be let off the lecture could not be denied. But they were really sorry for Mr. Capper; and they were troubled, too, by his declaration that the stamp had been stolen.

It was not pleasant to think that there was a thief in the school.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry, breaking the silence at last. "This is pretty rotten. What can have become of his stamp?"

"Stolen!" said Ogilvy. "What should anybody steal a rotten stamp for?"

"It was worth hundreds of pounds," said Newland.

"Oh, rot!"

"But it was," said Newland. "Rare stamps fetch big sums. There was a Mauritius stamp once sold for fifteen hundred pounds."

"Phew!"

"The 1856 British Guiana One Cent is very rare," said Newland. "There is supposed to be only one in existence—and Capper had another; he told me he got it from a relation who died some time ago, and it was the apple of his eye."

eye. It would certainly have fetched three or four hundred pounds in the market."

"Worth a burglar's while, I should say," remarked Bob Cherry. "Blessed if I knew old Capper was such a giddy millionaire. All the same, I don't believe anybody's stolen it. It must be a lark."

"If anybody's stolen it, it's somebody who wants it for his collection, I should say," remarked Bolsover, the bully of the Remove.

Newland turned red.

"If you mean that for me—" he began.

"Well, I shouldn't wonder," drawled Bolsover. "This is what comes of letting blessed Sheenies into the school—" Bolsover did not get any farther.

Newland, the Sheeny, as Bolsover elegantly termed him, rushed right at the bully of the Remove, hitting out with his right.

Bolsover caught the blow on the point of his chin, and he went down on his back with a crash that shook the Rag from end to end.

Newland stood over him with blazing eyes.

"Good man!" chorled Cherry. "You asked for that, Bolsover. It was simply caddish to hint that Newland might have taken the stamp!"

"Yes, rather!"

Bolsover sat up dazedly.

"I—I'll smash him!" he gasped. "I'll squash the rotter! Let me get at him, that's all!"

And Bolsover major staggered to his feet.

"Hands off!" said Bob Cherry. "You'd no right to accuse Newland—"

"Get aside!"

"Rats!"

"Let him come on!" said Newland grimly. "He's bigger than I am, but I'll stand up to him till I drop. Nobody shall call me a thief so long as I can hit."

"Bravo!"

Bob Cherry shrugged his shoulders and stepped aside.

"You'll get hurt!" he said.

"I'm ready!"

Bolsover rushed at the Hebrew junior like a bull. Newland did not give way an inch. He met the attack with perfect coolness and perfect boxing. Bolsover staggered back as he caught the junior's right in his eye, and his left on the nose.

"Good old Newland!"

"Go it!"

"Hurrah!"

Bolsover breathed deeply. He was more than a match for the slim, handsome Hebrew lad, and he knew it, if he did not lose his head. He came on again more carefully, and his big fists began to hammer upon Newland.

Newland put up a good fight. But he was driven back before the bully's onslaught, and Bolsover's crashing blows fell heavily upon his face and chest. The bully of the Remove was grinning savagely now.

"I'll smash you, you cad!" he said, between his teeth.

The door of the Rag was thrown open.

Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, looked in with a frown upon his face.

"Stop that at once!" he exclaimed sharply.

The interruption came in good time for Newland. He was panting, and almost at the bully's mercy by this time. Bolsover dropped his hands unwillingly.

"What's this fighting about?" demanded Wingate angrily.

"I'm licking that Sheeny!" said Bolsover sullenly. "He started it!"

"Did you strike the first blow, Newland?"

"Yes," said Newland quietly.

"Then you—"

"Hold on," exclaimed Bob Cherry indignantly. "Bolsover accused him of stealing old Capper's stamp; that was what he hit out for."

"Oh, that alters the case!" said the Greyfriars captain.

"What reason had you to say anything of the kind, Bolsover?"

"Well, he collects stamps," said Bolsover, rather lamely.

"So do I," said Wingate—"or, rather, I used to; and so do several other fellows. Is that all?"

"Well, he's a Sheeny."

"Anything else?" said Wingate grimly.

"Well, I think very likely he took it!" growled Bolsover, feeling himself cornered.

Wingate's eyes gleamed.

"You think very likely he took it!" he exclaimed scornfully. "That's reason enough for you to call a decent fellow a thief, is it? You are a cad, Bolsover! You'll take five hundred lines for fighting in the House, and you'll stay in this afternoon and write them out."

Bolsover gritted his teeth. But he had nothing to say; at

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a word, the Greyfriars captain would have licked him there and then.

Wingate turned contemptuously away from the bully of the Remove.

"You fellows are all wanted," he said to the crowd of juniors.

"Going to have the lecture after all?" asked Bob Cherry in dismay.

Wingate grinned.

"No. The school's to be assembled in hall."

"Phew! What for?"

"The Head's going to inquire for the missing stamp."

"My hat!"

Wingate strode away. Remove and Upper Fourth crowded away towards the school hall. There was evidently to be no cricket for them that afternoon, after all.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

No Takers!

ALL Greyfriars had gathered in Big Hall.

Cricket and other occupations had been interrupted; fellows of all Forms had gathered from far and near.

All the fellows, from the head of the Sixth down to the youngest fag, looked very serious.

The whole school recognised that the matter was a serious one.

A stamp of great value, whether it was worth hundreds of pounds or not, had been taken from Mr. Capper's stamp-album, and it had to be found.

If it was not found, it meant only one possible conclusion—that there was a thief in Greyfriars school who had taken it.

Fellows in the school who were addicted to philately looked extremely uncomfortable. They felt that some degree of suspicion rested upon them. What Bolsover had said in the Rag was in a good many minds.

Only fellows who collected stamps were likely to understand the great value of Mr. Capper's wonderful specimen. The other fellows knew little, and cared little, about it—indeed, some of them even now did not believe its value to be so great.

Three fellows, at least, were stamp collectors, and known to be very keen on the subject. They were Gadsby, of the Shell, and Newland and Banthorpe, of the Remove. Bolsover had already done his best to fasten suspicion upon Newland, the "Sheeny." Banthorpe, the new boy, was a quiet, timid little fellow. The Removites took a good deal of interest in Banthorpe, owing to the peculiar circumstances under which he had come to Greyfriars.

A circus boy had come to the school under Banthorpe's name while the little fellow lay ill at the circus, and though the matter had lasted only a few days it had caused much excitement in the Remove. The real Banthorpe was a very quiet and timid lad, and most of the Removites regarded him with a kind of contemptuous liking. His one strong feeling of any kind seemed to be his keenness for stamps.

But that Banthorpe would have nerve enough to steal anything, even if he were dishonest enough, few were inclined to believe. But Banthorpe, owing doubtless to his natural timidity, was looking quite crimson as he took his place with the Remove in Big Hall. Newland was looking very self-conscious, too. The thought that Bolsover's reckless accusation might have taken root in the minds of his Form-fellows was enough to disturb the junior.

Gadsby, of the Shell, seemed cool enough. He had cheerfully asked Hobson and Hoskins of his Form to search his pockets, apparently considering it rather a joke that he might be suspected of having stolen the stamp.

Gadsby passed the Removites as he came into hall rather late, and nodded cheerfully to Newland and Banthorpe.

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"We'd better stand together," he said, with a grin. "We're under suspicion, you know. I say, Newland, I suppose you didn't bone that stamp?"

Newland flushed angrily.

"No, you ass!"

"All serene. I only want to know, you know. Did you, Banthorpe?"

Banthorpe coloured, too, and looked scared.

"Oh, no, Gadsby," he said, "I wouldn't do such a thing! I should have liked to have the stamp very much, but surely you don't think I would have taken it?"

Gadsby chuckled.

"Well, I didn't, either, as a matter of fact," he remarked; "but I bet you we shall all three be under suspicion until old Capper remembers what he did with that stamp."

Newland stared at him.

"Do you think he's lost it?" he asked.

"Of course he has," said Gadsby impatiently. "Do you think there's a thief in the school, then?"

"Well, I don't like to think so, certainly."

"Of course he's lost it," said Gadsby. "He's taken it out of the album for something—p'r'aps to show somebody—and forgotten to put it back. Might have got blown into the fire."

"Silence, there!" said Wingate.

"All serene," said Gadsby coolly.

He went to his place in the ranks of the Shell.

"Mind your pockets," he said cheerfully, as he joined the Shell fellows.

And the Shell grinned.

"Silence!" said Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, had entered by the upper door. Mr. Capper was with him, looking very white and worried. It was evident that the loss of his specimen weighed very much upon Mr. Capper's mind.

Dr. Locke looked very serious, too. It was an unpleasant matter to him, and in his heart he probably wished Mr. Capper's stamp album at the bottom of the sea, and perhaps Mr. Capper with it.

"Boys," said the Head, his deep voice sounding through the hall, "boys, you have been called together for a most unhappy and unwelcome cause. You have, doubtless, all heard by this time that Mr. Capper has lost a stamp from his collection."

There was a murmur of assent.

"This stamp is a very valuable one," said the Head. "Mr. Capper assures me that it cannot possibly have been lost by accident. It was fastened down in his album, and the album was secured by a catch, and was kept in his desk in his study. Someone must have gone to his study and opened the desk and the album, and taken the stamp out. Now, I am unwilling—very unwilling, indeed—to believe that any Greyfriars boy would have taken this valuable stamp with dishonest intent. I prefer to believe that it was taken as a joke—a foolish joke—to give Mr. Capper a fright. Such an absurd and unfeeling practical joke deserves the severest punishment. But in order to get the unpleasant matter cleared up, the boy who has done it will be forgiven, and nothing more will be said upon the matter, if he immediately restores the stamp to Mr. Capper."

The Head paused.

There was deep silence in the hall.

"I call upon the boy who removed Mr. Capper's stamp to stand forward and hand it back to Mr. Capper."

Silence!

There was a stir in the crowded ranks of boys; but it was only a stir of uneasiness and excitement. No one left his place.

"Not good enough," murmured Gadsby. "No takers!"

And his comrades chuckled softly.

"Are all the boys here, Mr. Prout?" asked Dr. Locke, turning to the Fifth Form-master.

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Prout.

"Very well, boys. I have made an appeal to you, for the sake of the good name of the school. Full forgiveness awaits the boy who has played this foolish joke on Mr. Capper. I appeal to him to come forward."

No reply.

"Otherwise," said the Head, his voice growing deeper, "as an article of very great value has been taken, it will be necessary to communicate with the police."

"The police!"

A shiver ran through the crowded hall.

"I see that you feel this as much as I do," said the Head.

"The good name of Greyfriars, I hope, is dear to every boy here. Again I appeal to the thoughtless boy who has done this to come forward and set the matter at rest."

There was a long pause.

But there was no answer to the Head's appeal, and a dark frown settled upon Dr. Locke's brow. His voice was sterner as he resumed.

"Very well. If my offer is not accepted, I can only conclude that the boy who has taken this stamp intends to keep it—in short, that he is a thief! That boy shall be sought."

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NEXT
TUESDAY:

"HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S BANK-HOLIDAY!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS

EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

out, and he will be expelled from Greyfriars immediately he is discovered. I shall send for a detective immediately!"

The Greyfriars fellows gasped a little.

Gadsby, of the Shell, came forward.

"May I speak, sir?" he asked.

The Head looked at him.

"Certainly, Gadsby. What have you to say?"

"Under the circumstances, sir, most of the fellows seem to think that suspicion falls upon fellows who are stamp-collectors."

"That is unfair," said the Head. "I hope no boy will suspect any other boy until proof of some kind is forthcoming."

"But they do," said Gadsby, "and it's rather rotten for us who happen to be philatelists. May I suggest, sir, that all the stamp-collectors in the school should be searched, and their studies and boxes should be searched, too, before any other step is taken. If the stamp should be found, that's all right; and if it isn't, it will set us right with the school."

Dr. Locke nodded.

"Quite so, Gadsby. It is a good suggestion. But the search must be carried out by an experienced and responsible person. I shall send for a police-inspector from Courtfield, and ask him to make the search."

"Thank you, sir."

The assembly broke up.

There was no more to be said. It was pretty clear, by this time, that the stamp had not been taken for a "jape on old Capper." Whoever had taken it intended to keep it, at the risk of being found out, expelled from the school, and perhaps arrested for theft. Whoever he was, he was, as Bob Cherry remarked, a cool beggar—a very cool beggar indeed.

The Greyfriars fellows streamed out of the hall, and the Remove were free at last to get down to the cricket-field. But keen cricketers as they were, they did not give much thought to the great summer game for the remainder of that afternoon. All Greyfriars, from fags to the Sixth, were thinking and talking of one thing only now—the mystery of the missing stamp.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Very Unsatisfactory.

INSPECTOR GRIMES arrived in due course from Courtfield.

The fellows saw him arrive, and quite a crowd gathered to see the search conducted. A great seriousness had fallen upon all the fellows. There was very little doubt in their minds that the stolen stamp would be found by the inspector, and they were anticipating a scene in the Big Hall—of the delinquent, discovered and exposed, being expelled from the school by the headmaster. The stolen stamp was certain to be still within the House, and it was only a few hours since it had been taken, and a thorough search could hardly fail to discover it. Indeed, it was quite on the cards that when the inspector left Greyfriars, he would take a prisoner with him on the charge of theft. The public disgrace that would follow was almost as annoying to the fellows as to the Head. There were very few at Greyfriars who did not think of the good name of the old school. If the thief were discovered and taken away, he would be followed by the scorn and contempt of every fellow in Greyfriars.

Inspector Grimes was shown first into Mr. Capper's study. The Fourth Form-master was there, with a most troubled expression upon his face. Mr. Capper, too, felt the unpleasantness of the coming disgrace, but he was determined at all costs to recover his stamp. He could hardly be blamed for that. It was almost a unique specimen, and its actual value was very large. Mr. Capper was not a rich man, and the rest of his collection was in proportion to his means; but that rare specimen had come to him by a stroke of good luck, and he had prized it very highly, and had refused many offers for it. Naturally, he was determined to move heaven and earth to restore it to its place in his collection.

The inspector looked very serious and knowing as he listened to the explanation of the Fourth Form-master. He shook his ponderous head solemnly, and produced a fat notebook, and moistened a stump of pencil. He was prepared to take copious notes, although whether that would lead to the recovery of the British Guiana One-Cent was another matter.

"You had better give me all the details you can, sir," said the inspector. "The stamp was in this album, I take it?"

"Yes," said Mr. Capper, opening the album. "This is its place. The stamp was mounted on this page along with the rest of my British Guiana. You see that the mount has been snipped through—not torn off. I suppose the boy who did it used a penknife?"

The inspector nodded.

"And when was the stamp taken?" he asked.

"Not more than a few hours ago. I was looking over my album just before dinner, as I had intended to give a lecture to the juniors on philately this afternoon, and I intended to show my album, and especially that rare specimen of the British Guiana One-Cent, 1856 issue." Mr. Capper lingered lovingly over these words, which indeed were enough to make a keen philatelist's mouth water. "After dinner I came up here to look up some notes of my lecture, and just before going down I glanced into the album as I took it out of my desk. Of course, I did not fancy that anything might have happened to my stamp, but I looked in to see it. Imagine my feelings when I saw that it was gone!"

Inspector Grimes could not, as a matter of fact, imagine Mr. Capper's feelings at that moment, but he nodded sympathetically.

"The album was in your desk?" he asked.

"Yes—this desk."

"Desk locked?"

"No. I never keep it locked."

"Was the stamp valuable, sir?"

Mr. Capper stared at him.

"Was a stamp of the 1856 issue. One-Cent British Guiana valuable?" he repeated. "My dear sir, the value was incalculable."

"To you, of course, sir; but to the thief. What would it fetch in the market?" asked the inspector. "A pound, perhaps?"

"A pound!" shrieked Mr. Capper. "I have been offered four hundred pounds for it, and have refused!"

The inspector jumped.

"Oh!" he said. "Four hundred quid! Great Scott!"

"There is only one other specimen in existence!" said Mr. Capper.

"This is a serious matter, then, sir," said the inspector. "If the stamp was worth four hundred pounds, that alters the case. How many people knew that it was here?"

"Everybody in the school, I suppose," said Mr. Capper. "I have made no secret of possessing a British Guiana One-Cent 1856 stamp. Naturally, I was proud of it. I have shown it already to several boys interested in stamp collecting."

"Did everyone know how valuable it was?"

"Well, no. But the stamp-collectors, of course, knew."

"Good!" said the inspector, moistening his pencil again. "Their names?"

Mr. Capper hesitated.

"It must be understood that I do not suspect them in the slightest degree," he said.

"Of course. But as they had seen the stamp, and knew how valuable it was, naturally they fall under suspicion first. Their names, please?"

"Newland and Banthorpe of the Remove, and Gadsby of the Shell."

The inspector made a note.

"Now, why do you suppose this stamp has been taken?" he asked.

"To add to a collection, of course."

"But then the collector would not dare to let it become known that he had such a stamp," the inspector remarked. "It would be known to be yours."

Mr. Capper shook his head.

"Not at all," he said. "There was an issue of the stamps, and others may survive in different parts of the world. A collector might come by one, as I did, for instance, in the collection of an aged relation who died and left his album to me. If such a stamp appeared in another collection, I might suspect that it was mine, but I could not prove it."

"But that would not apply to a Greyfriars boy?"

"No," said Mr. Capper, with a sad smile. "But you are evidently not a philatelist, inspector. A keen philatelist would be glad to have a unique specimen, even if he could not show it in public. It would be enough for him to possess it, and to gloat over it in private."

"Oh!" said the inspector, evidently under the impression that such conduct would be a plain proof of lunacy, but ready to take Mr. Capper's word for it. "I—I see. You do not, then, think that the stamp has been taken to be sold?"

"It is quite possible. There are dishonest stamp dealers, and they would give a great deal for such a wonderful specimen. If a dealer gave fifty or a hundred pounds for it, he could sell it again at an immense profit—perhaps in France or America."

"A chance for a keen young rascal to make a pot of money," the inspector remarked. "But it is not likely that a Greyfriars boy would be acquainted with a dishonest dealer, I suppose?"

"Well, no, it is extremely improbable."

"In that case, he would have taken the stamp for himself, to—to enjoy it in secrecy."

"I suppose so."

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A Story for ALL
"Magnet" Readers:

"TOM MERRY'S LEGION OF HONOUR."

"Which makes it clear that it must have been a stamp-collecting boy."

"H'm! Yes. I must admit it."

"And the stamp was taken——"

"Between one o'clock and half-past two," said Mr. Capper.

"Your room was empty all that time?"

"Quite."

"Where were the boys?"

"From one to half-past they were in the dining-hall. After that, it is hardly possible to tell where they were."

"Then if a boy has taken the stamp, it was taken between half-past one and half-past two?"

"Exactly."

"Good! Will you send for the three boys you have named? I will question them."

"Certainly."

Mr. Capper rang, and Trotter, the page, was sent for the three youthful philatelists of Greyfriars. They came in a few minutes; they had been expecting the summons.

They wore very different looks as they came in. Arthur Banthorpe was pale and frightened, and his colour came and went. The inspector's eye fastened upon him at once. If ever there were signs of guilt in a human face, they were in Arthur Banthorpe's. Montague Newland was calm and composed, but there was a frown on his brow. Only Cecil Gadsby was perfectly normal. He was very quiet, but very cool, and evidently not in the least put out.

Inspector Grimes singled out Banthorpe first with a stern eye.

"What is your name?" he asked.

Banthorpe turned crimson.

"B-a-a-Banthorpe, if you please," he stammered.

"Where were you between half-past one and half-past two this afternoon?"

Banthorpe tried to think.

"I—I don't remember," he muttered.

"You had better try to remember!" said the inspector sternly. "It may be a serious matter for you if you don't!"

"I—I was in the Close, sir, after dinner. After that I came into the Rag, to be ready for Mr. Capper's lecture in good time, sir."

"Anybody with you?"

"I talked to some of the fellows part of the time, sir."

"Were you in public view all the time?"

"No, no, no, sir!"

"Where were you, then?"

"Part of the time I—I was in the Head's garden, sir."

"In the Head's garden," exclaimed Mr. Capper! "What were you doing there? You know very well, although you are a new boy, that juniors are not allowed in the Head's garden."

"I—I—I——"

"What were you doing in the Head's garden?" asked the inspector grimly.

"I—I went there, sir," stammered Banthorpe.

"What did you go there for?"

"I—I just went there, sir."

"Were you alone?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"Did anybody see you go there?"

"I—I think not, sir."

"You went there secretly?"

"Yes, sir."

"Why did you go there secretly?"

"Because—I—I—I didn't take the stamp, sir!" exclaimed Banthorpe, turning a tearful face upon Mr. Capper. "I—I never thought of doing such a thing, sir, I assure you."

"I am sure of it," said Mr. Capper.

"How long were you in the Head's garden?" asked the inspector.

"About—about a quarter of an hour, sir."

"Until you came in to the lecture?"

"Yes, sir."

"Had you any special reason for spending that time in the Head's garden all by yourself?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"What was it?"

Banthorpe's lip trembled, but he did not reply.

"Answer the inspector, Banthorpe, my boy," said Mr. Capper kindly. "It is better to be quite frank. You will not be punished for trespassing in the Head's garden this time; I assure you on that point."

Banthorpe did not reply. He burst into tears instead.

Inspector Grimes turned a very significant look upon Mr. Capper.

"I don't think you will have to look much further for the thief, sir," he said in a low tone.

Mr. Capper looked very agitated.

"I cannot believe it," he said. "Banthorpe is a timid



As the junior set to work, his resemblance to Gadsby of the Shell faded away. His complexion departed under the touch of a sponge, his eyebrows altered their hue, and a flaxen wig was detached from his head; his very features seemed to change. (See Chapter II.)

led, and he is frightened. It is very curious that he cannot explain himself better, but—but—

Mr. Capper paused, discouraged very much by the inspector's grim expression, and, indeed, by wretched doubts that began to creep into his own mind. There was an uncomfortable silence in the study, broken only by little Banthorpe's sobs.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Banthorpe Cannot Explain.

GADSBY and Newland stood waiting. Inspector Grimes, with a last, expressive look at the sobbing fag, turned to the other two boys. He scanned the dark, handsome face of the Hebrew junior very closely.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Montague Newland, sir."

"Where were you between half-past one and half-past two to-day?"

"In my study, sir, looking over my stamp album."

"Anybody with you?"

"Yes, sir, Ogilvy shares my study, and he was there doing an imposition set him by Monsieur Charpentier, our French master."

"All the time?"

"He left the study to take in his impot. only a few minutes before half-past two, sir. I remember hearing the half-hour bell."

chime, and Ogilvy must have heard it, too. He was in the French master's room by that time, I suppose."

"How long were you left to yourself?"

"Not more than five minutes."

"During that time you were quite alone?"

"Yes, sir."

"It was time enough to slip down here and take the stamp from Mr. Capper's desk, and escape before he came in at half-past two?"

Newland flushed.

"I dare say there was time, but it would have been very close," he said.

"You must not mind these questions, Master Newland," said the inspector kindly. "I am not hinting that you did take the stamp, but I am trying to make it clear who had the opportunity to take it."

"I understand, sir."

The inspector turned to Gadsby.

"What is your name?"

"Cecil Gadsby, sir."

"Where were you between half-past one and half-past two?"

"I went down to the river, sir, with Hobson and Hoskins of my Form immediately after dinner," said Gadsby.

"When did you come back?"

"About three o'clock. I remember looking into the Rag about three, and seeing the fellows waiting there for Mr. Capper."

"Were your companions with you all the time?"

"Yes, sir."

"They will bear out your statement, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, I suppose so; they're in the house, if you care to ask them."

The inspector nodded.

Little Banthorpe's sobbing had died away. He was standing looking miserable and tearful, with wet glistening on his cheeks. Inspector Grimes turned to him again, with a glint in his eyes. There was no doubt that the inspector believed that he had already found the guilty person.

"Have you anything more to say, Master Banthorpe?" he asked significantly.

"N-no, sir," stammered Arthur.

"Did you take Mr. Capper's stamp?"

"No, no, sir!"

"Were you actually in the Head's garden at the time you have stated, or is that merely a flimsy excuse to account for your time, when you were really entering Mr. Capper's study?"

"I—I was really there, sir."

"Very well." Inspector Grimes turned to Mr. Capper. "I understand that I am desired to make a search, sir?"

"Yes; one of these boys himself suggested it."

"I did, sir," said Gadsby. "I think it would be more satisfactory for all parties."

"Quite so."

The inspector proceeded to search the boys. They submitted with great calmness to that proceeding. It was pretty clear that if the thief was there he was not carrying the stolen stamp on his person. The inspector could tell that easily from their manner; even little Banthorpe showed no signs of alarm.

"And now their belongings and their rooms, I suppose?" said the inspector.

"Yes, if you please."

Inspector Grimes and Mr. Capper left the study together. Quite a crowd followed them up to the Shell passage, where Gadsby's study was the first searched. Gadsby shared that study with Hobson of the Shell. Inspector Grimes, although his mind was already made up on the subject, searched the study very thoroughly. But no trace of the stolen stamp rewarded him.

They proceeded to Newland's study. Ogilvy of the Remove was there. He shared that room with the Hebrew junior.

He stepped out while the inspector searched the room.

The result was the same.

Then Banthorpe's study was searched. It was the room he shared with Billy Bunter, and the Removites who looked on from the passage grinned. It was not likely that anything could be kept in that study without Billy Bunter knowing it. Bunter generally knew everything that went on. And, indeed, the search was in vain. Nothing was found.

After that the boxes belonging to the three juniors were carefully examined in turn, still without result.

Inspector Grimes looked somewhat baffled as he finished. He had fully expected to find the stamp in Banthorpe's quarters or in his belongings, but he had not done so. When the search was over, he repaired to the Head's study with Mr. Capper. Dr. Locke was waiting in uneasiness to hear the result of the search.

"Have you been successful?" he asked, as the inspector entered.

Inspector Grimes shook his head.

"I am sorry to say not, sir," he said. "The young rascal has hidden the stamp well. But I have little doubt that he would produce it if proper pressure were brought to bear."

The Head started.

"You have fixed upon a person, then, in your mind?" he asked.

"Yes, sir; Master Banthorpe."

"Banthorpe! The new boy! You astonish me. He is a very timid little lad," said the Head. "I can hardly believe that it is possible."

The inspector drew himself up a little.

"Banthorpe showed every sign of guilty confusion, and burst into tears, while I was questioning him, sir," he said.

"He is, as I said, a very timid lad, Mr. Grimes. He has been brought up somewhat harshly, I understand, and frequently blushes when spoken to. I think perhaps his conduct was merely the effect of natural timidity."

"He has failed to account for how he spent the time during which the stamp must have been taken from Mr. Capper's desk."

"Ah, that is serious!"

"I regard it as conclusive, sir," said the inspector. "Under ordinary circumstances I should regard that as sufficient grounds for an arrest on suspicion."

"I wish to proceed very slowly and carefully in this matter, Mr. Grimes," said the Head. "I was in hopes that

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the stamp would be found, which would be conclusive proof. I will send for Banthorpe."

Arthur Banthorpe was sent for. He was pale and trembling as he came into the Head's study. Dr. Locke looked at him searchingly.

"Do not be uneasy, Banthorpe," he said. "It appears that you have failed to satisfy the inspector in your answers to his questions. Will you tell me where you were between half-past one and half-past two this afternoon? Have no fear. Whatever you may have done it will be forgiven if you can satisfy us that you did not go to Mr. Capper's study and take the missing stamp."

"I—I have told the inspector, sir," faltered Banthorpe, showing signs of tears again. "I went into your garden, sir, for a quarter of an hour, and remained there until I came into the house to be ready for the lecture."

"But Banthorpe fails to explain why he went into the garden and remained there for a quarter of an hour," said Mr. Capper.

"Why did you do so, Banthorpe?" asked the Head kindly.

Banthorpe burst into tears.

"Come, Banthorpe!" said the Head a little more sternly.

"You must see that your conduct now lays you open to very grave suspicion. Why did you go into the garden?"

"I—I thought I would, sir."

"Ah! You had no special reason for going?"

"He has stated that he had," said Mr. Capper.

"What was your reason, Banthorpe?"

Banthorpe sobbed.

Dr. Locke frowned darkly.

"This is very strange," he said. "You may go, Banthorpe. I shall have to consider about this. I have a few words to say to the inspector, Mr. Capper."

Mr. Capper followed Banthorpe out of the study. The few words Dr. Locke had to say to the inspector may have been accompanied by some reward for the trouble the inspector had taken, for Mr. Grimes looked quite cheerful and satisfied as he emerged.

Mr. Capper returned to the Head's study after the inspector had gone. Dr. Locke was looking very distressed and worried.

"This is a terrible occurrence, Mr. Capper," said the Head.

"I really wish you had taken more care of your valuable stamp, though I suppose it is useless to say that now. It looks decidedly black against Banthorpe."

"I have been questioning him," said Mr. Capper, with a troubled look. "He declares that he knows nothing of the stamp, but he still fails to state why he spent a quarter of an hour alone in your garden, sir. It is very suspicious indeed. But—but I cannot wish any drastic measures to be taken. A stamp is so easily destroyed. In case of any threat being used, I fear that the thief may burn the stamp to remove all proof against himself, and then it could never be discovered. I do not know what to do."

The Head frowned thoughtfully.

"I was thinking of a detective, sir," Mr. Capper remarked.

"You remember Dalton Hawke, the Schoolboy Detective, who cleared up the affair of the pickpocket who took Coker's pocket-book? He is exactly what is wanted now—a boy who could mingle with the other boys as one of themselves, and detect the thief. But, unfortunately, he is now known to the boys, and they would be as much on their guard against him as against a grown-up detective."

"I was thinking of Dalton Hawke myself, Mr. Capper," said the Head quietly. "His father, Inspector Hawke, of Scotland Yard, has told me that the lad is an adept at disguises, and it is possible that he might be able to come to Greyfriars under another name, and be unknown to the boys while he is making his investigations. I shall communicate with Inspector Hawke upon the subject."

Mr. Capper's face brightened up.

"That would be splendid, sir!" he exclaimed. "I have every faith in him—if he could come, and the other boys did not know that he was a detective. But—"

"We shall see," said the Head. "It appears to me to be the only chance of recovering the stolen stamp."

And they did see!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Wants Halves.

THE next day was not a happy one at Greyfriars.

Mr. Capper was going about, as Temple feelingly expressed it, like a bear with a sore head. He was worried about his stamp, and he appeared never to think of anything else. He hardly ate at mealtimes, and in the Form-room he was absent-minded and irritable. His temper was suffering under the stress of his anxiety, and the Fourth Form suffered under the stress of his temper. He talked of the missing stamp in season and out of season. He made the amazing statement in the Form-room that Marius, after his deeds at Rome, retired to British Guiana; and again he

asserted that the Greeks of Cyrus's army consisted of ten thousand postage-stamps—statements which were received with amazement in the Form, and which showed how the subject was running in the Form-master's mind.

In the masters' room Mr. Capper would always lead the conversation round to stamps, till the other masters were wearied to death of the subject. Mr. Capper had really unscrupulous ways of introducing his favourite topic. He would say, "Speaking of tariff reform, did I ever show you my Mauritius?" or "Talking of gymnastics, would you like to see my stamp album?" And now that the apple of his eye, the wonderful British Guiana 1856 One Cent was missing, Mr. Capper was more terrible than ever. The masters would go round corners hurriedly, when they saw him coming, to avoid the dreaded topic. Mr. Capper took to dropping into the prefects' room to tell Loder and Wingate and Valence and the other prefects about it, and on his third visit there he found the room deserted.

While Mr. Capper was so much exercised on the subject, matters were not pleasant in other quarters. Banthorpe's strange conduct had laid him open to suspicion, and many fellows looked upon him as the thief, much to his distress. Others persisted in taking Bolsover's view that Newland was the guilty party, a suspicion they based on no better grounds than a vague dislike of the Jewish race, which was not reasonable. Gadsby of the Shell took the whole matter apparently as a joke, and disarmed suspicion, if anybody had been inclined to suspect him. When Hobson lost his cricket-bat, Gadsby offered to turn out his pockets, which raised a laugh. And Gadsby announced that he had had enough of stamp-collecting in view of what had happened, and sold his stamp album that day to a dealer in Courtfield. That proceeding showed that he, at all events, was not the enthusiastic kind of philatelist who was liable to steal a stamp for the sake of gloating over it in private.

Under a vague cloud of suspicion, with Mr. Capper boring everybody to death about his stamp, and losing his temper with his boys, Banthorpe going about looking as if he were under sentence of execution, Newland keeping a dignified frown on his face, and occasionally fighting with somebody who asked him questions about stamps, everybody felt extremely uncomfortable, and wished Mr. Capper and his 1856 British Guiana One Cent at the North Pole.

It was quite a relief to have a fresh topic introduced in the shape of the announcement that a new boy was coming to Greyfriars.

Billy Bunter brought the news into the junior common-room just before bedtime. Bunter always had news before everybody else—perhaps owing to his gift for listening at keyholes. The fellows were looking gloomy enough, most of them expressing heated opinions on the subject of stolen stamps, when the fat junior rolled in.

"I say, you fellows!" said Bunter.

"Found the stamp?" asked Bolsover.

"Oh, no!"

"Then shut up!"

"But I say, you fellows, there's a new chap coming to Greyfriars," said Bunter. "I happened to hear Quelch say to Wingate——"

"You happened to have your ear to a keyhole, I suppose!" said Bob Cherry sarcastically.

"Oh, really, Cherry! The chap's name is Armitage——"

"Is he coming into the Remove?" asked Harry Wharton.

"I don't know. But he's a junior."

Some of the fellows talked about the coming junior for a change. It appeared that he was coming the next day, and would probably go into the Third or the Remove, according to how he shaped when he was examined by the Head. Billy Bunter blinked round the common-room, and found Gadsby. Gadsby was sitting in a corner reading a letter when Billy Bunter rolled up to him. Bunter lowered his voice.

"I say, Gadsby——"

Gadsby looked up.

"Hallo, Fatty! What do you want?"

"Hush!" said Bunter mysteriously.

Gadsby looked surprised.

"What on earth's the matter?" he asked.

"I want to speak to you in private," whispered Bunter.

Gadsby laughed.

"I've got no more to lend you," he said.

"I don't want you to lend me any money," said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Or give you," said Gadsby.

"Look here, Gadsby, I want to speak to you alone——"

"Oh, rats!"

"Would you rather I spoke here?"

"You'll have to speak here if you want to speak at all," said Gadsby, yawning.

Bunter sank his voice to a whisper.

"About that stamp!" he said.

"Well?"

"Halves, you know."

"What?"

"Have you sold it yet?"

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NEXT
TUESDAY:

"HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S BANK-HOLIDAY!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

EVERY
TUESDAY.

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ONE
PENNY.

Gadsby gave Bunter one look, and reached for the poker. Bunter sprinted out of the common-room as if he were running a wager on the cinder-path.

"Beast!" murmured Bunter, as soon as he was safe in the passage. "Beast! I suppose Gadsby didn't take it, after all. I'll try Newland."

Newland was rather difficult to find. Since the unpleasant suspicion had fallen upon him that he had taken Mr. Capper's stamp, the Hebrew junior had kept very much to himself. But the Owl of the Remove discovered him at last in the school library. He came up to the surprised Newland very mysteriously.

"I've been looking for a chance to speak to you, Newland," he said. "Mind, I'm coming to you as a friend. Halves, you know."

"What on earth are you talking about?" asked the astounded Newland.

"Halves!" repeated Bunter.

"Are you dotty?"

"Oh, really, Newland! If you haven't sold the stamp yet——"

Billy Bunter did not finish. Newland jumped up with an expression upon his face that made Bunter bolt for the door.

The fat junior was gasping for breath when he halted at last at a safe distance from the library.

"Beast!" he muttered. "I suppose it couldn't have been Newland, after all. The beastly Sheeny, to give me a start like that! It must have been that weepy little cad Banthorpe! Anyway, I'm bigger than he is!"

Comforted by that reflection, Billy Bunter rolled away in search of Banthorpe. Banthorpe was in his study, which happened to be Bunter's study, too. He looked up miserably as the Owl of the Remove came in.

Banthorpe was keeping in his study because he felt that he could not face the eyes and the talk in the common-room, but he was feeling very lonely, and he was glad to see Bunter come in. Billy Bunter was not exactly pleasant company, but he was better than solitude.

Bunter closed the door, and set his back against it in a dramatic attitude he had learned from pictures on the cinematograph in Courtfield.

"Now then, Banthorpe!" he said sternly.

Banthorpe started up in alarm. For a moment he fancied Bunter had gone mad. Bunter's manner certainly bore out that supposition. He raised his right arm, and pointed dramatically to the little Remove.

"W-w-what's the matter, Bunter?" stammered Banthorpe.

"Halves!"

"What!"

"Halves!"

"I—I—I don't understand you, please, Bunter!"

"None of your lies!" said Bunter loftily. "I know jolly well that you've sold old Capper's stamp, and I want halves!"

"What!"

"Hand it out at once, or I'll denounce you, you blessed young criminal!"

"You—you villain!" gasped Banthorpe.

Bunter gave a jump.

"What's that?" he roared.

"You villain!" said Banthorpe, showing spirit for once.

"Do you mean to say that if I had stolen the stamp you would take some of the money?"

Bunter coughed. As a matter of fact, he hadn't thought it out; he only knew that he wanted money. Bunter really had not brains enough to be a rascal; he had a very dim notion of the distinction between honesty and dishonesty.

"I—I'm going to be easy with you, for the sake of your—your people!" he said. "I don't want to disgrace your—your uncle. I'm going to let you off. Of course, I don't want the money myself. But I've been disappointed about a postal-order, and I'm temporarily—ahem!—embarrassed! If you don't want to be shown up, you'd better hand it out!"

"You cad!" said Banthorpe.

"Will you hand it out, or take a licking first?" demanded Bunter threateningly.

"I'll jolly well give you a licking for calling me a thief!" said Banthorpe.

And he rushed at Bunter and smote.

"Ow!" roared Bunter.

He sat down with a startling suddenness on the floor. He

ANSWERS

jumped up again, and rushed at Banthorpe, and Banthorpe hit out again and again. He was about half Bunter's weight, but he showed an unexpected pluck and activity. The study door was thrown open, and half a dozen Remove fellows looked in, attracted by the disturbance.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, in amazement. "Here's Bunter becoming a warrior bold! Go it, Banthorpe!"

Bunter sat down again with a bump.

"Oh!" he roared. "Keep him off! Oh!"

Banthorpe, wildly excited, danced round the Owl of the Remove, brandishing his diminutive fists.

"Get up!" he shrieked. "I'll teach you to call me a thief! Get up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The thrasher and the whale over again!" grinned Ogilvy.

"Get up, Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry. "Why don't you get up and take your medicine? You're twice as big as he is!"

"Ow! I—I don't want to hurt him!" gasped Bunter. "I was only reasoning with him, and begging him to reform and give Capper back his stamp—"

"He said I'd sold it, and asked for part of the money!" yelled Banthorpe.

"My hat! That's like Bunter!"

"I didn't!" roared Bunter. "I—I didn't mean that! What I meant to say, Banthorpe, old man, was—was that I firmly believed you were innocent, and I'd stick up for you against everybody!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, bump him!" said Bob Cherry, in disgust. "The way that fat bounder rolls out lies makes me feel ill! Bump him!"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

And when the Removites left Bunter, he had no breath left to ask anybody for "halves."

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Another of 'Em.

"FIRE!"

It was Ogilvy, of the Remove, who uttered that shout, as he looked out of the School House door the next morning after lessons.

There was a rush of the fellows at once.

"Where?"

"What—?"

"Why?"

Ogilvy chuckled.

"There!" he said.

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, following the direction of Ogilvy's finger with his eye. "It's a giddy blaze, and no mistake!"

It was!

A youth in Etons and a silk hat was coming across the Close, followed by Gosling, the porter, laden with a box. It was easy enough to guess that it was the new Lower School boy, of whom the juniors had heard the previous evening. The stranger had an extremely sandy-coloured face and hair of the brightest auburn, which showed red under the brim of his hat. There had been red-headed boys at Greyfriars before, but never one with so aggressive a red as that.

"Well, my word!" said Nugent. "So that's the new kid?"

"That's the giddy new bounder!" grinned Bolsover.

"My hat! I think we can have some fun with him!"

Harry Wharton frowned.

"Let his hair alone, for goodness' sake!" he said. "Some red-haired people are sensitive about it, though goodness knows why they should be—red's as good as any colour."

Bolsover put his hands to his mouth, and shouted:

"Hallo, Copper Top!"

The new boy came on calmly. He reached the school steps, and raised his silk hat to the juniors gathered there. He disclosed a really beautiful head of red hair in doing so, and Bolsover & Co. chuckled gleefully.

"Good old Copper Top!"

The auburn-haired youth looked coolly at Bolsover.

"Did you speak to me?" he asked.

"Yes, I did, Red Top!"

"Did you mean to be offensive?"

"Just as you choose to take it!" said Bolsover.

"Because, if you did, I am quite ready to knock some of the cheek out of you!" said the new boy quietly.

Bolsover grinned.

"Come on, and knock it out!" he said.

"Certainly!"

The new boy stepped up to Bolsover, and the bully of the Remove put up his big fists. In a flash—so quickly was it

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done that eyes could hardly follow it—his guard was knocked up, and the new boy's fist caught him full on the nose.

Bolsover gave a roar like a bull, and rolled over on the steps, and bumped down to the ground. He sat there gasping, and clasping his nose with both hands.

"Oh! Ow!" he bellowed.

"Take my box in, please, porter!" said the new boy.

"My heye," murmured Gosling—"my heye!"

And he carried the box in, and the new junior followed him into the House, and disappeared.

"Well, my only summer bonnet!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"Bolsover is in the wars now! He has been getting it in the neck lately! Are you hurt, Bolsover?"

"Ow!" groaned Bolsover. "Yow! That red-headed bounder is as strong as a horse! Oh!"

"Better give him a wide berth," grinned Bob Cherry, "and let his beautiful auburn tresses alone. He can look after them."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover made no reply, but walked away growling. He was generally expected to try conclusions again with the new boy, but he did not seek to do so. Bolsover major was not particularly gifted with brains, but perhaps he knew when he had had enough.

The knocking down of the Remove bully by the new junior interested the Removites in him. And his arrival was a welcome change of topic from the eternal subject of the stolen stamp.

"Master Armitage, sir!" said Gosling, as he showed the new boy into the Head's study.

And the Head rose to receive Master Armitage with a smile of welcome.

The new boy was a quarter of an hour in the Head's study.

When he emerged he inquired of a junior in the passage the way to Mr. Quelch's study. The junior happened to be Harry Wharton.

"This way," said Harry cheerily. "You want to see Quelch? Does that mean that you are coming into the Remove?"

"That's it!"

"Your name's Armitage, isn't it?"

The new boy nodded.

"What study are you going to have?"

"Mr. Quelch will tell me."

Wharton hesitated. He had some fear that the new boy might be put into No. 1, as there were only two fellows in it, and the chums of No. 1 did not want to be crowded in their quarters. But it would hardly have been courteous to a new fellow to ask him to ask for any number but No. 1, so Wharton did not speak.

He guided the new junior to Mr. Quelch's study.

"Here you are!" he said. "I'll wait for you and see what study you get, if you like, and take you there."

"Thanks! You're very good," said Armitage gratefully.

He knocked and entered. He was only a few minutes with Mr. Quelch. When he came out, he smiled a little as he met Wharton's anxious look.

"What number?" asked Harry.

"No. 7."

"No. 7! Good!"

"Is it your study?" asked the new boy innocently.

Wharton laughed.

"No; mine's No. 1. No. 7 is all right—there are two fellows in it—Banthorpe, a new chap, who came last week, and Billy Bunter. Don't lend Bunter any money, and don't advance him anything on any postal-orders, that's all!"

"Will you show me the way?" asked Armitage, smiling.

"With pleasure! Come on!"

Wharton led the way up to the Remove passage. A good many fellows looked at them as they went, but Armitage was not subjected to any more chipping on account of his auburn hair. His reply to Bolsover major had become generally known, and the juniors recognised that he was not a safe subject for chipping.

Banthorpe was in the study when they came in, and Billy Bunter was with him. Relations were rather strained between Bunter and Banthorpe. The unexpected fighting powers Banthorpe had shown the previous evening had left Bunter quite crestfallen, and he treated Arthur with very great civility. He blinked through his big spectacles at the new boy as he came in with Wharton.

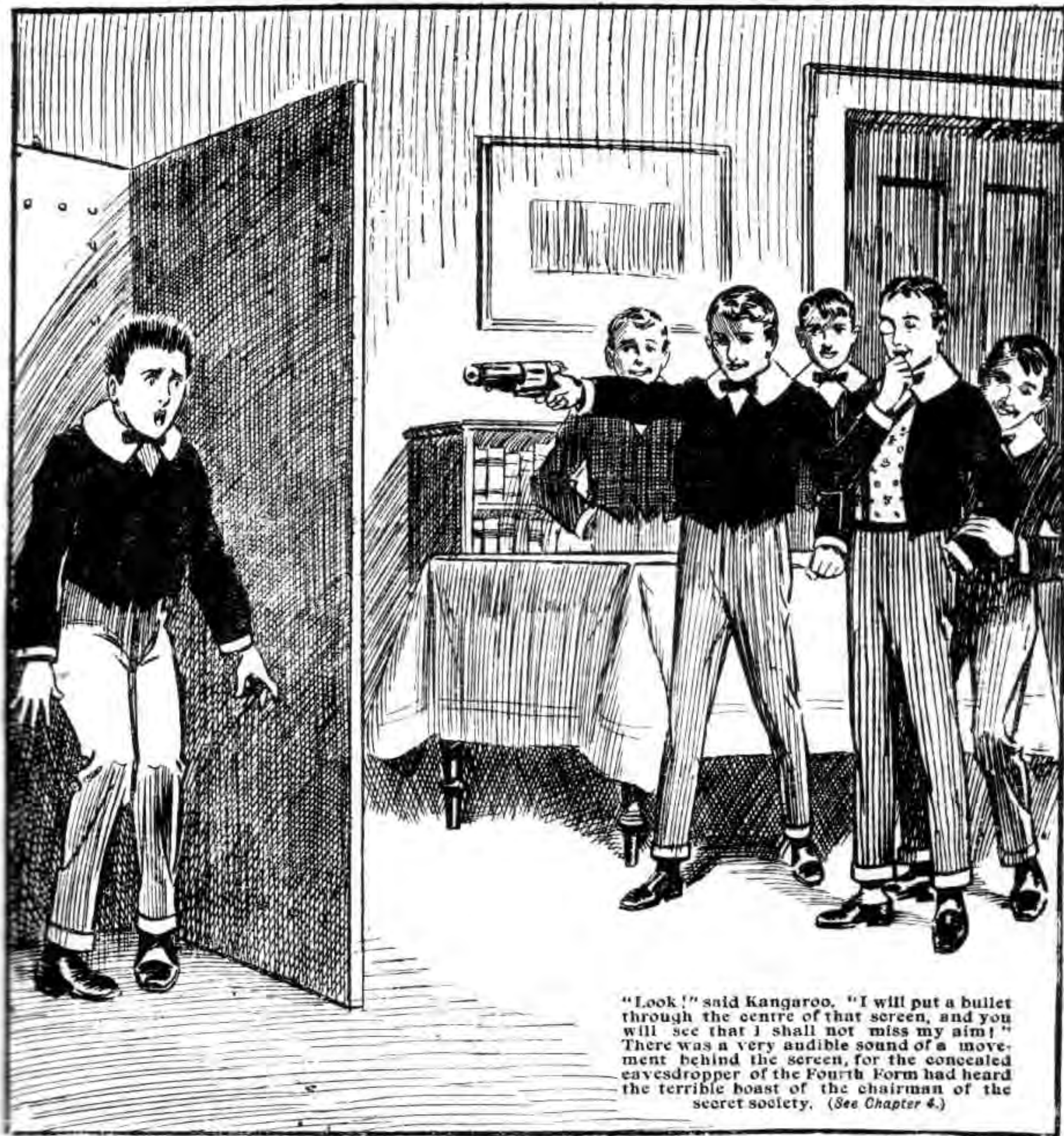
"This is Armitage," said Harry. "He's put into this study."

Bunter gave a growl.

"Well, that's nice," he exclaimed. "I used to have this study to myself; but they seem to think it's the proper place to dump new boys in. First Banthorpe, and now Armitage. Why can't you have him in your study, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You'd better ask Mr. Quelch," he said. "He put him here."



"Look!" said Kangaroo. "I will put a bullet through the centre of that screen, and you will see that I shall not miss my aim!" There was a very audible sound of a movement behind the screen, for the concealed eavesdropper of the Fourth Form had heard the terrible boast of the chairman of the secret society. (See Chapter 4.)

(For the above amusing incident see the grand, long, complete tale of Tom Merry & Co. at St. Jim's, entitled "TOM MERRY'S LEGION OF HONOUR!" by Martin Clifford, which is contained in "The Gem" Library. Out on Thursday. Price One Penny.)

"Well, I think it's rotten."

"Thank you!" said Armitage cheerfully.

"Oh, no offence!" said Bunter quickly, remembering Bols' major's recent experience at the red-haired junior's hands. "I don't want to row with you."

"You'd better not, I think," grinned Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"You'll find Bunter all right if you cuff him occasionally, Armitage," said the captain of the Remove. "Don't lend him any money, or you'll never see it again."

"Oh, really—"

"Come out, kid," said Wharton, tapping Banthorpe on the shoulder. "What are you moping indoors for on such a lovely afternoon? Come and have a run in the quad, before dinner."

Banthorpe shook his head.

"I'd rather stay here, thank you, Wharton!" he said.

"Why, you young ass?"

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"The fellows are all down on me," said Arthur, with a quivering lip. "They think that I took Mr. Capper's postage-stamp."

Armitage looked round curiously.

"What's that?" he said. "Somebody boned a postage-stamp? Not much of a thing to bone, surely?"

"Oh, it was a valuable stamp," explained Wharton. "A British Guiana Ten Cent something—"

"One Cent," said Banthorpe quickly. "1856."

Armitage looked interested at once.

"My hat, I'd like to see that!" he exclaimed. "Do you mean to say that anybody here has got an 1856 British Guiana One Cent?"

"Mr. Capper had," said Banthorpe, "but somebody's stolen it. Do you know anything about stamps?" he added shyly.

"I should say so. I collect them."

Harry Wharton gave a groan.

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S BANK-HOLIDAY!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

"Another giddy philatelist! I'm off!"

"And he ran out of the study. Armitage laughed.

"You're a philatelist!" said Banthorpe, interested in the new boy at once. "I'm so glad. I wish you could have seen Mr. Capper's stamp. Perhaps he will show it to you when it turns up. I think it must turn up some time, for I'm sure nobody at Greyfriars would steal it."

"Well, it would be a strong temptation, if it's really an 1856 British Guiana One Cent," said Armitage, laughing. "Are you sure it was genuine?"

"Oh, yes! Do you know them by sight?" asked Banthorpe.

"Yes, by description, of course. I've seen copies of them, but never the genuine stamp. I always understood there was only one in existence."

Banthorpe nodded.

"Yes, but Mr. Capper got one from a relation who died."

"Printed in black on red," said Armitage, "with a picture of a three-masted ship?"

"That's right."

"My hat, I'd like to see it!"

Billy Bunter gave a grunt.

"If you're going to talk rotten stamps, I'm going," he said.

"Shut the door after you!" said Armitage cheerfully.

Bunter went out and slammed the door.

"Would you like to see my album, Armitage?" asked Banthorpe shyly.

"Yes, rather! I'll show you mine when I unpack my box," said Armitage.

Banthorpe rose with a very cheerful expression upon his face. He was always willing to talk stamps. And until the bell rang for dinner the two new boys sat with their heads together over the stamp album, in a state of great enjoyment.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Caught in the Trap.

"WHAT'S the new kid like?" Bob Cherry asked, as he met Harry Wharton going in to dinner.

Wharton grunted.

"He's a stamp maniac."

"Oh, another of 'em!"

"Yes, another of 'em!"

"He'd better not talk stamps to me!" said Bob Cherry truculently. "I'm getting fed-up with stamps. Old Capper jawed me in the Close just now about stamps—fellows are beginning to run when they see him coming. It's awful!"

Armitage came in with Banthorpe. It was evident that the two new boys at Greyfriars had struck up a friendship, doubtless on account of their common interest in stamps. They looked an oddly-assorted pair—Armitage, sturdy and powerful, and little Banthorpe with his slim form and timid manner. But a good many fellows of Bolsover's kindred who had been in the habit of ragging the timid new boy decided that they had better let that pastime drop for the present, while he was under the protection of the fellow who had "whopped" Bolsover major. Armitage's friendship was likely to be a very good thing for Arthur Banthorpe.

Armitage sat beside Banthorpe at dinner, and they talked in low tones, and the fellows caught scraps of stamp talk—"Cape of Good Hope," "Ceylon," and the like.

Newland showed some signs of interest, and after dinner he joined the two boys as they left the dining-hall.

"You are interested in stamps?" he asked, speaking to Armitage.

Armitage nodded.

"I'm a collector," he said.

"So am I," said Newland. "I'll show you mine, if you like, if you care to come to my study."

"I'm on!" said Armitage emphatically.

And Banthorpe, Armitage, and Newland disappeared together into the Hebrew junior's study, and remained there till the bell rang for lessons.

Mr. Quelch bestowed a somewhat peculiar glance upon Armitage as he came into the Fourth-room with the rest of the Remove, but it was only for a moment, and beyond that he took no special notice of him.

Armitage's bright hair made him a conspicuous object in the Form-room, but otherwise he fell into his place very quietly. He did the Form work easily and well, and was given a good place in the class.

The three philatelists left the Form-room together after lessons.

"Any more chaps who collect stamps here?" Armitage asked.

"There's Gadsby, of the Shell," said Newland.

"Good. I'll look him out!" said Armitage. "I've got some stamps I want to swap."

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A Story for ALL
"Magnet" Readers:

"TOM MERRY'S LEGION OF HONOUR."

"Too late for swapping with Gadsby," said Newland, with a smile. "He's sold his collection. He sold it yesterday in Courtfield."

"Not much of a collector, if he parts with his collection," said Armitage.

"It's on account of that stamp of Capper's being missing. Gadsby says he's fed-up with stamps, and doesn't want to have any more to do with them."

"But he'd keep his rarest specimens, surely?"

"I don't know; you can ask him."

"I will!" said the new boy.

Gadsby, Hobson, and Hoskins, of the Shell, were in their study when the new Remove junior appeared there. They were having tea, and it was a lavish tea. From the marked deference Hobson and Hoskins showed to Gadsby, it was easy to guess that Gadsby was standing the tea.

"Hallo!" said Gadsby, looking inquiringly at Armitage as he came in after knocking. "Don't set the study on fire."

And Hobson and Hoskins laughed dutifully.

Armitage smiled good-naturedly.

"Oh, let my hair alone!" he said.

"Yes, rather! Don't want to burn my fingers," said Gadsby.

And Hobson and Hoskins laughed again.

"Cheese it," said Armitage, "for goodness' sake! I've heard enough about it since I came here. I say, I'm collecting stamps."

"Whose?" asked Gadsby.

"Ha, ha, ha!" chuckled Hobson and Hoskins.

"Somebody has been collecting old Capper's stamps, and there's been a row about it," said Gadsby, grinning.

"Lucky for you you've only just arrived at Greyfriars, or you'd be under suspicion, too. The fellows can't make up their minds whether Banthorpe or Newland or I boned old Capper's stamps."

Armitage laughed.

"I've got some stamps to swap," he said. "I've heard about your collection from young Banthorpe. You had a good Ceylon set."

"Yes, I had."

"I'm wanting some Ceylon to fill up my set, and I could let you have South American or East Indies."

"Too late, my son!" said Gadsby. "I've sold out."

"Sold the lot?"

"Every one, album and all."

"Oh, rotten!" said Armitage. "I say, where did you sell them?"

"In Courtfield."

"Oh, there's a stamp-dealer in Courtfield, is there?" said Armitage. "I might be able to get some Ceylon from him. Who is it?"

"Chap named Isaacs, in Church Street," said Gadsby.

"Is that where you sold your album?"

"Yes."

"Good! I'll run down and see if I can capture any of your Ceylon," said Armitage. "Is Isaacs a decent chap?"

"Oh, he's all right! You won't get any big bargains out of him, that's all," said Gadsby. "If you've got plenty of money to spend, you can get what you like from him. If you haven't, he'll fix you up with cheap stuff. He's got everything."

"Thanks!"

"If you buy any valuable specimens, you'd better keep an eye on Banthorpe and Newland and me," Gadsby called out, as Armitage turned to leave the study, and Hobson and Hoskins cackled again.

Armitage's face was very thoughtful as he went back to his own study. He entered the Remove passage, and caught sight of Bolsover and Snoop and Vernon-Smith there. They grinned at him, but he passed on without speaking, and entered his study.

As he pushed open the door and went in, there was a sudden swish of water.

"Oh!" gasped Armitage.

A large zinc bowl had been perched skilfully upon the top of the door, filled to the brim with water. He understood now the cause of Bolsover & Co.'s grins in the passage. The bowl had swooped down upon him as he opened the door, and fairly bonneted him, and the water ran down his clothes and his neck.

"Ow—ow! Gr-r-r-r!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a roar from the passage.

Bolsover & Co. expected Armitage to come rushing out in a fury. He had already shown that he was a fighting man, and they did not expect him to take the "booby" trap tamely. To their surprise, he slammed the study door and locked it.

"M-my hat!" ejaculated Snoop, in amazement. "He's taking that quietly."

Bolsover's eyes gleamed. He was quick to jump to the conclusion that Armitage was funk.

"The rotten funk!" he said. "Come on!"

He ran along the passage to the door of No. 7, and thumped upon it.

"Hallo, in there!" he shouted.

There was a sound of gasping within, but no other reply. Bolsover kicked on the door.

"Come out, you funk!" he roared.

No answer.

Bang—bang—bang!

"Funk! Coward! Yah!"

Still Armitage made no reply.

Harry Wharton & Co. came upstairs, Nugent carrying a bag in which were supplies for tea in No. 1 Study. They looked along the passage in surprise.

"What's the row there?" demanded Wharton.

"Armitage is funking," said Bolsover, kicking at the door.

"Oh, rats!"

"He didn't look much like funking when he biffed you this morning," grinned Johnny Bull. "I thought you were doing all the funking, Bolsover."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Remove bully scowled. He had felt his defeat at the new boy's hands very keenly, and he had turned over in his mind what chance he might have if he tried his fortune again. The apparent funking of the new boy encouraged him immensely. If Armitage was not funking, why did he not come out? He had been drenched with water, and must be soaked through now. And he could hardly be drying himself in the study; he had no towels there and no change of clothes. His locking himself in the study admitted of only one possible explanation, so far as Bolsover could see—he was in a blue funk.

"Well, he's funking now," said Bolsover savagely. "Why doesn't he come out? I'm willing to meet him, with or without gloves, and he's hiding in his study."

"Oh, rot!" said Wharton.

"Come and see for yourself."

"I jolly well will."

Harry Wharton tapped on the study door.

"Are you there, Armitage?" he called out.

"Yes."

"Bolsover's out here, hungry for a row. Are you going to give him a licking?"

"No."

"Eh?"

"I'll give Bolsover a licking presently."

Bolsover laughed.

"We rigged up a booby trap for him," he said. "He's soaked with water. He'll catch cold if he doesn't get himself dry. And he won't come out."

Wharton looked puzzled.

"Why don't you come out, Armitage?" he asked.

"Because I don't want to."

"Are you wet?"

"Yes."

"You'd better go up to the dorm, and dry yourself, then."

"That's all right."

"Dash it all, you don't want to catch cold!" said Frank Nugent. "What silly game are you playing, Armitage? You didn't look as if you were afraid of Bolsover this morning."

"I'm not afraid of him."

"Why don't you unlock the door, then?"

"All in good time."

Bolsover gave a taunting laugh.

"Yah!" he roared through the keyhole. "Coward! Funk! Yah!"

There was no reply from Armitage. Apparently the taunts of the Remove bully left him unmoved, or else he dared not venture out into the passage while Bolsover was there. The chums of the Remove looked at one another in wonder.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Funk!

A CROWD gathered in the Remove passage, outside the door of No. 7. Bolsover major was swaggering in a really remarkable way. He felt that all his old prestige was returning to him. He was willing to fight, and the boy who had knocked him down was not willing; so much was evident. And Bolsover major plumed himself very much upon it. He meant to give Armitage the licking of his life when once he could get at him. He banged on the door again, and yelled taunts through the keyhole.

"Yah! Funk! Yah! Come out!"

"I say, you fellows, that's my study," said Billy Bunter. "I want to go in. Who's been locking my door?"

"The new chap," grinned Ogilvy. "He's hiding from Bolsover."

Bunter knocked at the door.

"I say, Armitage, let me into my study."

"Go and eat coke!" came Armitage's reply from within.

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NEXT
TUESDAY:

"HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S BANK-HOLIDAY!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

EVERY
TUESDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Open the door!" shouted Russell. "What are you funk-ing for, Armitage? We all know you can lick Bolsover."

"Why doesn't he come out and do it, then?" demanded Bolsover. "He's a rotten coward, and he's hiding himself behind a locked door!"

"Faith, and ye're right!" said Micky Desmond. "If a fellow talked like that to me, I'd come out, if I had to squeeze through the keyhole."

"Armitage!"

"Come out!"

"Open the door!"

Armitage did not reply, and the door remained locked. Harry Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Looks as if he were a funk after all," he remarked.

"He didn't strike me in that light, though. Well, it's no business of ours."

And the Famous Four went along to Study No. 1 to tea.

"I'm jolly well going to have this door open!" said Bolsover, who was in great spirits now. "Bunter wants to go into his study—don't you, Bunter?"

"Well, not particularly," said Bunter. "I——"

Bolsover scowled at the fat junior.

"You don't want to go in?" he roared, threateningly.

Bunter jumped.

"Ye-es—I—I mean, yes, I do—I want to go in most particularly," he gasped. "That's what I really meant to say."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You specially want to go in at this moment?" said Bolsover, in a tone which showed very plainly what Bunter had to expect if he didn't assent. "You've got something to do—lines, or something?"

"Yes—yes," said Bunter. "I—I've got an impot. to do for old Charpentier, now I come to think of it. I want to go into my study at once."

"Good! Now, we're not going to see Bunter kept out of his study, are we, you chaps?" Bolsover asked, looking round at the crowd of Removes.

"Ha, ha, ha! No; certainly not!"

The juniors were all keenly excited by the scene, and as eager as Bolsover for the door to be opened, to see what would follow.

"Bunter's got a right to go into his study if he wants to," said Vernon-Smith. "It's up to us to see that he has his rights."

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows——"

Bang—bang—bang!

Thump—thump!

Crash!

Six or seven fellows were attacking the door now, and it groaned and creaked under their combined assault. A roar of voices filled the passage.

"Open the door, Armitage!"

"Funk!"

"Come out and show yourself, Copper Top!"

"Ginger for pluck, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come out, you blessed funk!"

Crash—crash!

But there was no sign from the junior within.

"I'm going to have the door open!" said Bolsover.

"Somebody get a hammer, and we'll smash the lock in!"

"Good egg!"

"I say, you fellows, you're not going to bust the lock on my door, you know!" said Billy Bunter, in alarm.

"I——"

"Shut up!" said Bolsover.

"But I say—— Ow!"

Bunter went whirling across the passage as the Remove bully gave him a violent shove.

Snoop had slipped away, and he returned in a few minutes with a heavy coke-hammer he had brought from the regions below. Bolsover grasped the hammer and swung it over his head.

"Stand clear!" he said.

The crowd backed away. Bolsover brought the hammer down upon the lock with a terrific crash.

"Phew!"

"That's done it!"

The lock was not built to stand an attack like that. The heavy swipe of the coke-hammer had smashed it to pieces. The door was loose enough, and Bolsover shoved it. But it did not open. It gave about half an inch, and then jammed again. Bolsover shoved at it in vain.

"He's barricaded it!" yelled Snoop. "I can see the corner of the table. He's got the study table under the handle!"

"My hat!"

"The awful funk!"

Three or four juniors united their strength against the door. But the study table was jammed under the handle, and it was pretty clear, although they could not see him, that Armitage was holding the table in place inside the study. The assailants reeled back, gasping, from the door.

"Well, at all the blessed funks!" said Vernon-Smith. "He must be scared out of his wits! Better leave him alone, Bolsover. You'll frighten him into a fit, or something."

"I'm going in!" said Bolsover. "He punched my nose this morning!"

"Yes, it looks as if he did," said Ogilvy.

Bolsover glared round in search of the speaker, and Ogilvy prudently retreated to the rear of the crowd. Bolsover's nose was very swollen and red, and he was very sensitive about it.

"Get the form from the end of the passage," said Vernon-Smith. "We can bust in the door with that. We'll make Armitage pay for the damage."

"Good wheeze!"

There was a rush of juniors to get the form. But at the same moment a junior near the head of the stairs called out:

"Care!"

There was a rush of the fellows to escape, but before Bolsover & Co. could retreat, Mr. Quelch came striding along the passage. He was frowning angrily.

"What does this riot mean?" he exclaimed. "Who has broken the lock of that door?"

"If you please, sir," said Bolsover, with wonderful meekness, "Hunter wants to go into his study to do an imposition, sir, and Armitage won't let him in."

"He's got the door barricaded, sir," said Snoop.

Mr. Quelch fixed a frowning glance upon Bolsover.

"Have you been bullying him, Bolsover?"

"I, sir!" exclaimed Bolsover, with well-done astonishment. "Not I, sir! He struck me this morning, sir, and I did not return his blow, because—because fighting is against the rules, sir. These fellows can tell you so."

"Quite true, sir," said Ogilvy. "Everybody thought that Bolsover was finking it, sir, and that he was afraid of the new chap."

Bolsover ground his teeth. Ogilvy's evidence was not given in a way that was exactly flattering to him.

Mr. Quelch looked puzzled for a moment.

"You had no right to break in the lock, Bolsover," he said. "If Hunter could not get into his study, he should have reported the matter to me. You had no right to take the law into your own hands. You will take a thousand lines for this behaviour, Bolsover. Disperse at once, you others. If there is any further disturbance here I shall cane every boy who takes part in it."

And Mr. Quelch strode away.

"My hat!" said Bolsover.

And in one minute there was not a single Removite left near Study No. 7.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Very Queer.

BOLSOVER MAJOR sat in his study writing lines. He had a good many to do. A thousand lines take a considerable time, and Bolsover was not a rapid writer. But only half Bolsover's attention was given to his imposition. He had one eye almost incessantly on the door of his study, which was open. The bully was waiting for Armitage.

The only explanation of Armitage's extraordinary conduct was that he was finking a meeting with Bolsover, and for that precise reason Bolsover meant the meeting to come about. He had his thousand lines, as well as his swollen nose, to avenge now, and he meant to make Armitage pay for both.

But Armitage did not come.

Bolsover had had his tea, and written several hundred lines, and yet Armitage had not passed along the passage.

It was uncertain whether he had come out of his study or not. Bolsover did not venture to linger there after the Form-master's warning. Armitage had doubtless taken advantage of the raising of the siege to go up to the dormitory to dry himself. But, even so, why did he not come? Did he mean to stay in the dormitory all the evening, to avoid Bolsover?

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The summer evening was yet light in the Close, and most of the fellows were out of doors after tea. Bolsover remained alone, grinding out Latin lines and watching for his victim, somewhat like a spider in a web. When Armitage did appear at last he would have him all to himself, and he promised himself the treat of giving the new Removite the biggest kicking he had ever given anybody.

There was a footstep up the passage at last. Bolsover laid down his pen, and made a step towards the door. Surely it was Armitage coming at last!

But it was a figure in a grey lounge-suit, with flaxen hair and a pink necktie, that came along the passage. Bolsover growled.

"Gadshy, you ass! Have you seen Armitage?"

The junior shook his head, without replying, and passed on.

"Shell rotter!" growled Bolsover, and he returned to his table and sat down, and resumed the weary drive of the pen.

But he watched and waited in vain for Armitage. Five hundred of his lines had been completed, when Bolsover, losing all patience, rose and threw his pen down, and in spite of Mr. Quelch's stern warning, went along the passage to Study No. 7.

The door with its broken lock was half open, and Banthorpe was sitting at the table doing his preparation.

He looked up timidly at the scowling face of Bolsover.

"Where's Armitage?" asked Bolsover savagely.

"I don't know, Bolsover. He was gone before I came in."

"Is he in the dorm?"

"I don't know."

Bolsover, with a growl, turned and made his way upstairs to the Removite dormitory. At that hour it was naturally deserted. Bolsover looked in. Armitage was not there.

"The rotten funk!" muttered Bolsover, greatly incensed.

"He must have sneaked down the back stairs while I was waiting for him in the passage. Never mind, I'll find him."

And, leaving his imposition unfinished for the present, Bolsover went out into the Close. Harry Wharton & Co. were on the cricket-field, making the best of what light remained, and the Close was full of fellows enjoying the fine weather. But among them it was impossible to find Armitage.

"Looking for somebody?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Yes," growled Bolsover. "Have you seen Armitage?"

"No; isn't he in his study?"

"He's not in the House at all," said Bolsover savagely.

"He must be hiding away somewhere. But I'll see him at calling-over, I suppose."

"Perhaps he's gone out," said the Bounder of Greyfriars.

"Ask those Shell chaps."

Hobson and Hoskins, of the Shell, were adorning the gate with their persons, and looking out into the road. Bolsover bore down on them.

"Have you seen Armitage go out?" he asked.

"No," yawned Hobson.

"Confound him!"

And Bolsover tramped away to resume his unprofitable search. The earth seemed to have opened to swallow up Armitage. If he had not gone out, it was very curious what had become of him.

A figure came down to the gates a few minutes after Bolsover was gone, and Hobson and Hoskins exclaimed together:

"Hallo, Gaddy!"

"Hallo!"

"Going out?"

"Yes."

"Like us to come?"

The junior shook his head.

"Not this time, I'm in a hurry. So long!"

And he walked quickly down the road towards Friardale. He passed out of sight of Hobson and Hoskins, and then, curiously enough, he leaped over a fence, crossed a field, and took a new direction, which, in a few minutes, brought him into the Courtfield road. Then he walked on quickly towards Courtfield.

Hobson and Hoskins strolled into the Close, rather wondering at the unusual abruptness of their study-mate's manner.

"Time we did our rotten prep," said Hobson.

"Yes, or I sha'n't have any time for my piano practice," Hoskins remarked. "Would you care to hear me play the march from Tannhauser, Hobby?"

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Bolsover brought the hammer down upon the lock with a terrific crash. The lock was not built to stand such an attack. The door gave half an inch and then jammed again. Bolsover shoved at it in vain. "He's barricaded it," yelled Snoop. "He's got the study table under the handle!" And meanwhile the mysterious new boy was working desperately at his fresh make-up. (See Chapter 9)

Hobby granted.

"No fear!"

And the misunderstood musical genius of Greyfriars accompanied Hobson to the study in the Shell passage. There was a light under the door, and Hobson frowned as he saw it.

"Somebody's in our study!" he exclaimed. "It can't be Gaddy—he's gone out."

"Some kid looking for the missing stamp, perhaps," grinned Hoskins. "Bunter was found searching in Newland's study this morning, and Newland kicked him out."

"If he's in our study, we'll make an example of him," said Hobson angrily. "Step quietly, and let's catch him, whoever it is."

The two Shell fellows trod on tiptoe towards their study door.

Hobson turned the handle silently, and flung the door open with great suddenness, and they rushed in.

"Now, then!" shouted Hobson. "What—why—how—my hat!"

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A junior seated at the table jumped up, startled by their sudden entrance, and scattering blots from his pen over the sheet before him.

"You fathead!" he roared. "What do you mean? What are you playing rotten tricks like that for?"

Hobson and Hoskins looked at him blankly.

It was Gadsby, of the Shell.

"You fool-idiot!" snarled Gadsby. "You've made me spoil this now! What on earth do you play those kids' tricks for?"

"We—we thought it might be some outsider in the study," gasped Hobson. "How on earth did you get here?"

Gadsby stared.

"How did I get here?" he repeated. "What are you talking about, you ass? Why shouldn't I be here, in my own study?"

"But—but you're gone out!" stammered Hoskins.

"Do I look as if I were gone out?" said Gadsby sarcastically.

"But we saw you go out!" shouted Hobson. "We were at the gates. We saw you go out ten minutes ago. You went down towards Friardale."

"Oh, you're off your rocker!" said Gadsby.

"You must have dodged round and got in again over the wall," said Hoskins. "What did you do it for?"

Gadsby snorted.

"I tell you I haven't been out!"

Hobson and Hoskins stared at him dumbfounded.

"You haven't been out?" gasped Hobson.

"No, ass!"

"But—but we saw you!"

"Oh, you were dreaming!" snapped Gadsby. "I've been in here for the last half-hour, doing my prep. And if you'll shut up talking rot, I'll go on doing it."

Hoskins and Hobson did shut up. They were too amazed to say anything further. But they looked at Gadsby with very deep suspicion and uneasiness in their glances. They felt that he was deceiving them, though why he should do so was a mystery they could not fathom.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Visitor for Mr. Isaacs.

MR. ISAACS looked up, in his dark, dusty little shop in the Church Street at Courtfield, as a junior in elegant grey clothes and a pink necktie came in. Mr. Isaacs rubbed his fat little stubby hands together, and bowed to the new-comer across the counter.

"Ah, Mishter Gadsby!" he said. "It is kind of you to look in and seee your old friend Sammy—Sammy Isaacs."

Gadsby nodded coolly.

"Same oily old bounder," he remarked, looking curiously at the dealer.

Mr. Isaacs wriggled deprecatingly.

"But I am ferry glad to seee you, Mishter Gadsby," he said. "If you have come to talk pizness, we goes into der little parlour. Perhaps some customer come in here, and den perhaps they hear. Ha, ha, ha!"

Gadsby grinned.

"And that wouldn't do," he remarked.

"No, no, no! He, he!"

"Well, I've come to talk business," said Gadsby abruptly.

"Goot! Goot!"

"So let's get in."

The dealer opened a flap in the counter and signed to Gadsby to pass through, and then the Greyfriars fellow followed him through a creaking door into a dusky little parlour behind the shop, thick with dust, and half full of cases of furniture. Mr. Isaacs closed the door leading into the shop, and signed to Gadsby to sit down.

"Take dat seat, my tear Mishter Gadsby!" he exclaimed. "Now, vat can I do for you? You have not altered your mind and vish to buy stamps again?"

"Oh, blow the stamps!"

"I still have dat album, if you vish to buy him back."

"I don't want to."

"I give you good price for him, and if you want him back, I let you have him same price, with a little per cent. for mein brofit—a very leetle."

"Rats!"

"You tink tat te less you have to do vith stamps the petter now," grinned the old Jew dealer, chuckling.

Gadsby nodded. There was a strange gleam in his eyes now, but he was sitting with his back to the shadowy window, and his face was in gloom, and the old Jew did not notice it.

"Vell, vell, behaps tat is right," said Mr. Isaacs, nodding too. "And I give you good price, is it not?"

"I'm not grumbling."

The stamp dealer chuckled.

"You grumble te other day," he remarked.

"Oh, never mind!"

"Tat is all right. But now to pizness."

Gadsby sat silent, as if in thought. The old Jew dealer watched him cunningly from beneath his heavy lids. He looked strangely like an old spider with a fresh young fly in the web.

Mr. Isaacs was a rather peculiar character. He was a dealer in curiosities of all sorts, and especially stamps—and many rare stamps could have been obtained in Mr. Isaacs' little shop—for a good price. But Mr. Isaacs did not bear the most savoury reputation. He was the deadly rival in trade of Mr. Solomons in the High Street. Mr. Isaacs was very sharp in business, and some Courtfield people considered that he was not above turning a dishonest penny if he had a very safe opportunity. But if that was the case, it had never been proved against Mr. Isaacs—he was too careful for that. His dealings in rare stamps were extensive. He sold six-penny and shilling albums for youthful beginners, and he sold rare specimens that ran into scores of pounds each. If a

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stamp was wanted, and it was obtainable anywhere, Mr. Isaacs was the man to get it if his price were paid—and his price was generally high. Mr. Isaacs wanted his little profit—generally about cent. per cent.

"Vat you tink?" Mr. Isaacs asked, after a pause. "You talk peeze?"

"Oh, go ahead," said Gadsby.

"But it is for you to go ahead," said Mr. Isaacs, in some surprise. "All I vant to know iz vezzer you have come to accept mein offer. You promise me tat you let me know by Saturday, and to-day is der Friday."

"I've been thinking it over."

"You tink dat I offer not enough?"

Gadsby nodded.

"But twenty pound!" exclaimed the old dealer, raising his hands. "Twenty pound for a poy at school! It is a fortune."

"Twenty pounds! Pah!"

"Have you ever had so much money before?" the old Jew exclaimed sharply. "I know tat you are in debi, Mishter Gadsby."

"How do you know that?"

The old man chuckled.

"Because you haf pawn der vatch mit David Jacobs in der High Street."

Gadsby started, and the Jew chuckled again.

"Ah! You not tink tat I know tet. Mr. Jacobs is my ferry goot friend."

"Hang him."

"You sell him also der scarfpin," said Mr. Isaacs, "so I know tat you vant money. I tink I know where you owe der monish, too."

"Where?" snapped Gadsby.

"At Highcliffe School," said Mr. Isaacs, watching him. "You have a cousin dere, named Gadsby also, and you mix much with Ponsonby and Monson, and der rest. Dey are ferry expensive young shentlemen. Dey run you into expense, and dey play cards for monish, I tink."

"What on earth do you know about the Highcliffe set?" demanded Gadsby angrily.

Mr. Isaacs chuckled his fat chuckle.

"I know all about dem," he said. "Tat is all right Mishter Ponsonby he come to me to sell someting some times, and he raise money mit Mishter Jacobs, too."

"Oh!"

"You owe der money at Highcliffe, I tink," said Mr. Isaacs coolly. "You play der part of der high roller, and you have not der money to pay up. So you get in debt—you pawn your vatch mit Mr. Jacobs, and you sell your stamp album to me. And because I like you I offer you twenty pound for vat you have to sell."

Gadsby paused.

"It's a low figure," he said at last.

"It is mooch—mooch," said Mr. Isaacs, with a shake of the head. "I make a very small brofit; I make small brofit indeed."

"Oh, rats."

Mr. Isaacs only grinned. He took Gadsby's growing annoyance as a sign that he meant to yield.

"Der truth," he said, "only der truth. I get dat ting for a shentleman who vanta him, in France, but he very close man—he pay little. I do it for friendship."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Isaacs laughed, too.

"Berhaps der is a leetle brofit," he said—"a leetle! But a man must live."

"Look here, what's the highest figure?" said Gadsby.

"Twenty pounds."

"Make it twenty-five?"

The dealer shook his oily head.

"Impossible, my young friend. Impossible. You vill ruin me."

"Twenty-five," repeated Gadsby, and money down!"

"If I say twenty-five," said Mr. Isaacs, hesitatingly, "tet is te top figure. You make me starve in my peeze. Master Gadsby. But berhaps I pay twenty-five, if you bring te article here and lay him down in my bresence first."

"The article?" said Gadsby.

Mr. Isaacs grinned cunningly.

"Te article dat you have to sell," he said.

"Very good. When shall I come?"

"To-morrow," said Mr. Isaacs, "if tat is possible. But—" he paused. "You have him?"

"Yes, I've got it all ready."

"Has dere been drouble about it?"

"Oh, that's all right."

"You must be ferry gareful," said Mr. Isaacs anxiously—"ferry gareful indeed! I do not want der bolice in mein shop."

Gadsby laughed.

"TOM MERRY'S LEGION OF HONOUR."

By MARTIN CLIFFORD, in this Thursday's number of "THE OEM" LIBRARY, One Penny.

"That's all right, Mr. Isaacs. Twenty-five pounds, then, when you see me to-morrow."

"Yeth; if you pring der article mit you."

"Good."

And Gadsby rose to his feet. Mr. Isaacs showed him out of his little shop into the street, with many bows. Then he returned to his murky little parlour, chuckling.

"Goot! Goot!" he murmured. "Twenty-five pounds is a large sum—a ferry large sum—but dere vill be mooch left out of four hundred and seefty. Ha, ha, ha!"

And Mr. Isaacs congratulated himself very much upon a handsome stroke of business. If he could have followed his visitor after the latter left the shop, he would not have congratulated himself so much, and the satisfaction in his breast would have turned into the keenest alarm.

For Master Gadsby, after strolling carelessly along the High Street of Courtfield, turned into the lane that led towards Greyfriars, and entered a footpath in the wood. It was dark now; but he seemed to know the way perfectly well. He paused at last at an old hut, half-hidden in tangled thickets that had grown over the ruin, and turned on the light of a pocket electric torch. The light gleamed upon thick and silent woods. The junior pushed aside a tangled mass of creepers, and entered the ruined hut. There he set the electric lamp upon the ground, and the interior of the place was brightly lighted. He dragged a bag from under the creepers where it had been hidden, and opened it. He took clothes and a good-sized mirror from the bag, and a case of making-up paints. Any fellow at Greyfriars, as well as Mr. Isaacs of Courtfield, would have been astonished to see the junior now.

Gadsby, of the Shell, had never been known to enter into private theatricals as an amusement, and even so, his proceeding in such an extremely secret way would have amazed his friends.

But as the junior set to work, his resemblance to Gadsby of the Shell faded away. His complexion departed under the touch of a sponge, his eyebrows altered their hue, and a flaxen wig was detached from his head; his very features seemed to change.

And then, as he stood clear in the light, the fellows who had seen him on a previous visit to Greyfriars would have recognised Dalton Hawke, the schoolboy detective!

But he was not finished yet.

He changed his clothes, and packed away the grey suit in the bag, and dressed himself in Etons. Then he resumed making-up—but in a very different character this time. His hair grew a bright auburn under his deft touch, and when he had, at last, finished, it was the face of Armitage, the new boy at Greyfriars, that looked back at him from the mirror.

Ten minutes later the hut was deserted and in darkness. Armitage, the new boy in the Remove, whom Bolsover had sought in vain for so long, was on his way back to the school.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Armitage Turns Up!

BOLSOVER MAJOR swaggered into the junior common-room with his nose very high in the air. Bolsover major was never very modest in his demeanour. He never allowed it to be supposed for a moment that he didn't an excellent opinion of himself. But just now his "awank" had risen to a pitch that made half the Remove sworn to shake him.

The fact that the new boy had disappeared for hours, and had evidently stolen out of the house secretly, impressed Bolsover with a sense of his terrible prowess which certainly got into his head and excited him.

Somewhere or other Armitage was hiding away, and the terrible Bolsover paraded the passages and the common-room with the air of a conqueror.

Bob Cherry uttered an exclamation of disgust as the bully of the Remove swaggered in.

"Somebody will have to punch that silly ass," he growled, "he's getting altogether too big for his boots."

"The bigfulness of Bolsover for his honourable boots is terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But where can the esteemed funky Armitage be?"

"That's a giddy mystery."

"Anybody seen Armitage?" asked Bolsover, looking lazily round.

There was a laugh from the juniors.

"No, Bolsover."

"He's not on view."

"Where on earth can he be skulking?" said Bolsover. "I've looked all over the place for him. Did anybody ever hear of such an awful funk?"

"Perhaps he's gone out," said Vernon-Smith.

"If he has, he's late for locking-up," said Bolsover. "He missed calling-over. Though I suppose that won't hurt him, as Quelchy seems to be favouring him."

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NEXT

TUESDAY:

"HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S BANK-HOLIDAY!"

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ONE
PENNY.

"Faith, and he's bound to turn up be bedtime, I suppose," said Micky Desmond.

"I'll wallop him in the dorm.," said Bolsover.

"Or he'll wallop you," snorted Bob Cherry.

Bolsover laughed sneeringly.

"It doesn't look like it," he said. "Hallo, Gaddy!" he added, as the Shell fellow came in with Hobson and Hoskins. "Have you seen Armitage?"

"Not since this afternoon," yawned Gadsby. "Are you still hunting for his scalp, you dreadful fellow? Aren't you afraid of terrifying the whole school into fits if you carry on in this way? I tremble whenever I come near you."

There was a cackle, and Bolsover turned red.

"Look here, if I have any of your cheek, I'll lick you instead of waiting for Armitage," he said threateningly.

"Not at all," said Gadsby politely. "I'm not looking for trouble, Bolsover, dear boy. I was only remarking what a terrible fellow you were. You are, you know?"

And Gadsby strolled carelessly away.

It was getting very late in the evening, and bedtime was at hand. It was puzzling a good many fellows what had become of the new junior.

The only explanation of his absence was that he was hiding away from the bully of the Remove, and that explanation could only cause general contempt.

Yet it was strange, after the cool way in which Armitage had disposed of the Remove bully, when trouble had first arisen between them.

"He's a rotten coward, Bolsover," said Snoop. "I could lick him myself, as far as that goes. When I see Armitage—"

"Are you inquiring after me?"

It was a cool voice at the door.

The Removites stared round in surprise.

The red-headed junior stood in the doorway, with a placid smile upon his face, and certainly with no symptoms of terror in his looks.

"You want me, Snoop?" he asked.

Snoop backed away behind Bolsover. He did not quite like the looks of the new boy.

"Bolsover wants you!" he stammered.

"Well, I'm here."

Bolsover stared at Armitage in amazement. The cool manner of the new boy was not at all in keeping with the theory that he had been hiding away in fear. But if he had not been hiding away, why had he locked himself in his study, and where had he been ever since?

The Remove bully swaggered towards the new junior.

"I've been looking for you, Copper Top," he said.

"Thank you!"

"You've been hiding away."

Armitage shook his head.

"Not at all."

"Where have you been, then?"

"Out for a walk."

Bolsover laughed mockingly.

"And you locked yourself in your study because you wanted a little rest, I suppose," he said, with heavy sarcasm.

"Never mind why I locked myself in my study," said Armitage, cheerfully, "and never mind where I've been. I don't see that it's any business of yours."

"Funk!" hooted Snoop.

"Yah! Funk!"

"Wallop him, Bolsover."

"That's just what I'm going to do," declared Bolsover.

"Are you ready, you funk?"

Armitage hesitated.

"I haven't got much time now," he said. "I was late in, and I haven't done my preparation yet, you know."

There was a yell of derisive laughter from the juniors.

"I guess that's too thin," said Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "I reckon that cock won't fight, sonny."

"No fear."

"Take your licking, you funk."

Bolsover stepped between Armitage and the door.

"You're not going out of this room until you've taken a licking," he remarked.

Harry Wharton jumped up.

"Hold on, Bolsover. If the new kid doesn't want to fight you, he's not going to be made to. You're a head taller than he is, and you can let him alone. I don't care whether he's a funk or not. You're not going to bully him."

Bolsover glared savagely at the captain of the Remove for a moment, and then he burst into an angry and scornful laugh.

"All right. If the rotten coward wants to skulk behind somebody else, let him! He's not much worth licking."

"But I don't want to," said Armitage, smiling. "I'm very much obliged to you, Wharton. It's your duty as Form-

captain to protect smaller boys against that big brute. But as it happens I can take care of myself."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, if that's how you look at it, pile in," he said. "But if you don't want to fight Bolsover, he sha'n't touch you."

"I'm quite ready to fight him if he wants me to, and I'll let the prep. stand over."

The Removites stared at Armitage in amazement. They were utterly perplexed, but Armitage evidently meant what he said. He had taken his jacket off as he spoke, and now he rolled up his sleeves.

"Now I'm ready," he remarked. "Come on, Bolsover. I will make your ears match your nose, if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, and it's a broth of a bboy he is after all!" exclaimed Micky Desmond, enthusiastically. "Pile in, Armitage darling, and wallop him."

"Go it, Red Top!"

"Ginger for pluck!"

"Pile in!"

Bolsover stared blankly in amazement at the new junior for some moments. Then, with a scowl of rage, he doubled his big fists, and rushed to the attack.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bolsover Takes His Medicine.

ARMITAGE met the rush of the Remove bully with perfect coolness.

His hands were up, and his cool and steady eyes fixed upon Bolsover's face. As the big fists of the Remove bully lashed at him, Armitage swept up his left, and Bolsover's hands were knocked into the air with perfect ease. Then Armitage's right came with a crash on Bolsover's nose, and the burly Removite reeled back.

Bump!

Bolsover fell with a crash that shook the room.

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Groo!"

There was a buzz of amazement in the common-room. Why a fellow who could fight like this should have hidden himself away all the evening was a mystery. It was pretty clear that he had nothing to fear from Percy Bolsover in a stand-up fight.

"My hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "That was a beauty! Bolsover will have a proboscis as big as an elephant's to-morrow."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Faith, and ye're right."

"Get up, Bolsover!"

"Pick your man up, Snoopy."

"Put him on his feet."

"Bravo, Ginger!"

But Snoop did not pick his man up. He had no desire to make himself conspicuous just then, in case he should take the next turn after Armitage had finished with Bolsover. Snoop was making himself as small as possible. It was Monty Newland who went forward and helped the fallen bully to his feet, returning good for evil in the moment when his enemy was down.

Bolsover staggered up with Newland's assistance, and stood unsteadily upon his feet. There was a crimson stream flowing from his nose, and he dabbed at it savagely with his handkerchief. His eyes had filled with water from the force of that doughty blow, and his head was swimming a little. Gladly enough would the Remove bully have relinquished the combat then, as he realised with painful clearness that he had tackled more than his match. But after "swanking" about for hours, looking for his enemy, he could not abandon the combat in the first round.

"Go it, Bolsover!"

"Pile in, Ginger."

"Ginger for pluck! Hurray!"

Bolsover cast a look of helpless rage at the crowd. His bullying ways had not made him liked, and there was hardly a fellow in the room who was not glad to see him getting the worst of the combat.

He gritted his teeth, and rushed at the new boy again. He hoped to clinch with him, when his great strength would give him an advantage.

To his surprise and satisfaction, the new boy did not seek to avoid the close encounter. Bolsover grasped him.

"Now, then, you hound!" the bully muttered, between his teeth.

Armitage grinned.

"Yarrah!" roared Bolsover.

He felt his feet suddenly swept from under him, and he was bumping on the floor before he knew what was happening. The new junior had tossed him there like a bundle of rags.

"Bravo, Copper Top!"

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"Hurray!"

Newland helped Bolsover up again. The Remove bully looked dazed. But he came on again, not seeking to get to too close quarters this time.

But even his length of reach failed to give him an advantage. Armitage forced the fighting, and the Remove bully was driven fairly round the common-room. The juniors, laughing and cheering, made room for him to pass, and he was driven back step by step, resisting fiercely all the way, and taking a heavy punishment.

The new junior's face had hardly been touched. He was cool and calm as ever, and smiling cheerfully.

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "He is a cough-drop, and no mistake! Why, Bolsover hasn't had a look-in from the beginning."

"What on earth was he dodging Bolsover so long for, then?" said Harry Wharton, in great perplexity, "and why did he lock himself in his study this afternoon?"

"It's a giddy mystery, but he ain't a funk."

"Perhaps he was leading Bolsover on to play the giddy ox," grinned Frank Nugent. "If it was that, he's succeeded."

"The giddy oxfulness of the honourable Bolsover is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamaet Ram Singh. "He is down again!"

Bump!

Bolsover reclined on his back on the floor.

He did not rise very soon this time. He was knocked out, and he had no fight left in him, and he realised it himself now.

Newland helped him up, and guided him to a chair, where Bolsover sank down gasping. His nose was terribly swollen, and one of his eyes was closed.

"Done?" asked Ogilvy, with a grin.

Bolsover panted.

"Yes, hang you!"

"Well, he looks done—done brown," remarked Morgan.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can cackle, you rotters!" groaned Bolsover. "There isn't another fellow here who could have done it."

"Swank is cheap to-day!" remarked Elliott, with a grin.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, shut up, you chaps!" said Bob Cherry. "Let him alone. Don't chip a fellow when he's down. Bolsover's put up a good fight, and he never had a chance from the start. Copper Top is a giddy prizefighter."

"Bravo, Ginger!"

Armitage smiled.

"I'm sorry I had to hammer you, Bolsover," he said. "You wouldn't let me get out of it, would you? You can't blame me."

"Oh, hang you!" growled Bolsover.

"Give us your fist, and let's say no more about it," said Armitage, holding out his hand frankly enough.

Bolsover put his hands in his pockets.

"I'll lick you some day!" he gasped.

"Just as you like," said Armitage. He looked round.

"There was another chap here who was calling me a funk as I came in. Will he kindly step forward and repeat the remark."

Snoop turned quite pale, and tried to get out of sight. But there were plenty of fellows eager to see the sneak of the Remove made to look diminutive in public. There was a yell for Snoop to show himself.

"Snoop! Snoop!"

"Walk up!"

"Stand up, Snoop!"

Ogilvy and Trevor and Russell and a good many more Removites pounced upon the unhappy Snoop, and he was dragged forward. Snoop's knees knocked together. Armitage regarded him with a scornful smile.

"I think you called me a funk," he remarked.

"No, I—I didn't," gasped Snoop—"that is, I didn't mean it. I—I—it was just a little joke, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Snoop looks like a big joker, doesn't he?"

Armitage grinned.

"That's all right," he said. "I think you fellows have seen that I wasn't a funk, and that's enough for me. You can buzz off, Snoopy."

And Snoop "buzzed" off with great alacrity.

Bolsover followed him from the common-room. Bolsover went alone. The bully's friends had fallen away from him in the hour of his humiliation.

"But what on earth did you lock yourself in your study for this afternoon, Armitage?" demanded Bob Cherry. "You made the whole Form think you were funkling."

"Why didn't you come out and wallop Bolsover, if you could do it so easily?" asked Bulstrode.

"My dear chaps, what a lot of questions you ask," said

Armitage. "I didn't care to. That's enough, isn't it? I'm going to do my prep. now."

And Armitage left the common-room and went up to his study. Little Banthorpe followed him quietly. He left the room in a buzz behind him.

"Blessed if I ever saw a giddy champion like that before," said Bob Cherry. "He's got a ripping upper-cut with his left. Did you notice it?"

"Bolsover did!" grinned Hazeldene.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It reminded me of that chap who was here a few weeks ago," said Bob Cherry. "You remember that chap, Dalton Hawke. He had an upper-cut with the left like that."

Gadsby came quickly towards Bob Cherry, with a startled look on his face.

"What's that?" he exclaimed sharply.

Bob looked at the Shell fellow in surprise.

"You remember?" he asked. "I had the gloves on with him in the gym. once, and he downed me in the same way. Lucky we had the gloves on. Never seen any other chap with that same upper-cut with the left."

Gadsby nodded, and with a queer expression on his face, quitted the common-room. He went up to the Remove passage and looked in at No. 7.

Armitage and Banthorpe were seated at the table, cheerfully enough, Armitage working away at his preparation, and Banthorpe with his stamp album before him. They looked round as the Shell fellow glanced in. Gadsby surveyed Armitage with a piercing glance.

"Hallo!" said Armitage cheerily.

"Did you manage to get your Ceylon stamps?" asked Gadsby.

"I haven't seen about it, yet," said Armitage. "I'm thinking of going down to Courtfield to-morrow. Did you say Church Street?"

"Yes. Isaacs, in Church Street," said Gadsby.

"Thanks."

"Good-night."

Gadsby closed the study door and walked away. There was a strange paleness in the Shell fellow's face.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

In the Dead of Night!

"BANTHORPE, old man!"

Banthorpe looked up from his Mauritius page with a smile. He had grown to like the new fellow very much in the short time he had known him. Philately had been the first thing to draw them together, but Armitage's kindness had won very much upon the timid little fellow, and Banthorpe regarded his fighting powers, too, with awed admiration.

"Yes, Armitage," he said.

"Will you tell me something?"

"Yes, anything you like. About stamps?" asked Arthur.

Armitage smiled.

"No. About yourself."

"About myself!" said Banthorpe, in astonishment. "Yes, if you like."

"I've heard the whole story of Mr. Capper's stamp, since I've been here, of course," said Armitage. "The fellows seem to have made up their minds that it was taken by one of the three chaps who collect stamps here. But Newland and Gadsby seem to have proved an alibi. Newland had Ogilvy in his study with him at the time that the stamp was taken, excepting for a few minutes."

"I'm sure Newland didn't take it," said Arthur. "He's not that kind of fellow."

Armitage nodded.

"He struck me in the same light, too," he said. "I should certainly want a lot of proof before I thought that he was a thief. Gadsby, too, had Hobson and Hoskins with him down by the river. Of course, he might have slipped away from them, but—"

"I can't think that Gadsby took it," said Arthur hesitatingly. "Of course, I don't know Gadsby. He's in a different form; and I'm new here, too."

"Then there's yourself," said Armitage. "I know you didn't take it, kid. But why couldn't you account for the time when it was taken? You said that you went into the Head's garden, a place where juniors are not allowed to go, and you wouldn't say why. You're not the kind of chap to play a jape on the Head."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed Banthorpe, startled at the idea.

Armitage smiled.

"And you're not the kind of chap to trespass in the garden without permission, either. The fellows all know that; and you can hardly blame them if they think that it was a yarn to account for your time."

"I suppose so," said Arthur, with a very troubled look. "Don't you believe me, Armitage?"

"Yes, as a matter of fact, I do," said Armitage. "But I want you to explain, all the same. Why didn't you tell the Head why you went into his garden?"

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The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

Banthorpe was silent for a moment.

"I didn't want to get Bolsover into a row," he said at last. Armitage started.

"Bolsover!" he exclaimed.

"Yes. The fellow you fought with, you know."

"What on earth had Bolsover to do with it?"

"He'd been ragging me," said Arthur falteringly. "He's a bully, you know, and he's always ragging me when Harry Wharton and the others are not about. I can't be always going to Wharton or Bob Cherry and complaining. I—I went into the Head's garden to keep out of Bolsover's way. He was going to duck me in the fountain, and I kept away from him till the time for the lecture. I knew that he couldn't do anything then, you know, because Bob Cherry would have stopped him."

Armitage whistled softly.

"And why didn't you tell the Head?"

"I couldn't," said Banthorpe, flushing. "It would have been sneaking, and it would have got Bolsover into a row. And—and he would have licked me afterwards, too."

"I see. But you might have explained to the other fellows—"

"They wouldn't have believed me," said Arthur, with a quivering lip. "It was too late then. It—it looked as if I'd made it up afterwards, you know. I don't know whether even you believe me now."

"I believe you," said Armitage quietly. "But it was very unfortunate for you. Inspector Grimes went away quite convinced that you were the thief, because you couldn't prove an alibi to account for your time when the stamp was taken."

"I know. I couldn't help that."

"I'm glad you've explained," said Armitage, after a pause, "and I'm glad I gave that bullying brute a licking, too. And you needn't worry about the matter. I fancy the thief will be discovered before very long."

Arthur Banthorpe brightened up very much.

"I hope so," he said. "You—you think the stamp was really stolen, then—not that Mr. Capper lost it somehow?"

"I'm sure of it."

"Then I hope the thief will be found. It's rotten to have the fellows looking at me as if I were a thief, and not speaking to me."

"That will be all over soon, kid."

Bob Cherry thumped on the door of the study a few minutes later, and it flew open.

"Bedtime, you new fellows," said Bob Cherry. "My hat! Stamps again!" he exclaimed, as he caught sight of the open album on the table. "Br-r-r-r!" And he fled.

Armitage laughed, and rose to follow him.

Bolsover elaborately took no notice of the new boy when he came into the dormitory.

And Armitage took no notice of him. There was no suspicion of swank about him, although he had laid low the great fighting-man of the Remove. He went to bed quietly. And no one in the Remove suggested ragging the fellow after lights-out. It had been made very clear that Armitage was not a fellow to be ragged with impunity.

Wingate saw lights out for the Remove, and left them all very quiet and orderly. Armitage was soon breathing steadily, and one by one the juniors, after the usual chatting, dropped off to sleep.

But if anyone had been able to see Armitage in the darkness of the dormitory, he would have discovered that the new boy's eyes were wide open.

Armitage was breathing the regular breathing of a sleeper, but he was not asleep.

Eleven o'clock tolled out from the old tower of Greyfriars, and there was no sound in the Remove dormitory save the breathing of the juniors and the deep, unmusical snore of Billy Bunter.

Another hour glided away.

Twelve strokes rang faintly through the night.

Midnight!

Armitage sat up in bed. By that time all Greyfriars was sleeping. The new boy slipped quietly out of bed, and without a sound drew on his clothes and a pair of rubber shoes. Noiselessly he crossed the dormitory to the door, and let himself out into the passage.

It was quite dark outside; all the lights were turned out in the house. For a new fellow, Armitage certainly knew his way very well about the School House. He moved on, silently and without a pause, to the Shell passage, and opened the door of Gadsby's study. The study was dark and silent.

Armitage closed the door when he had entered, and laid a rug along it to prevent a beam of light from escaping into the passage, and hung his handkerchief over the keyhole. Then he drew down the blind. The interior of the study was now as dark as the tomb.

The new boy turned on the light of his electric lamp, and the study was lighted up.

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S BANK-HOLIDAY!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

In the clear light of the electric lamp, Armitage set to work.

He was searching the study.

Not as Inspector Grimes had searched it, but minutely; not leaving a single inch of walls, floor and furniture unsearched. One boomed from the clock-tower!

Two!

Three!

With untiring patience the searcher went on, while the hours glided away, and it was not till three had struck that the light went out in Gadsby's study.

In the Remove dormitory the juniors were sleeping soundly, and no one heard the faint creak of the door as it opened again.

Armitage undressed in the dark, and slipped into bed. In two minutes more he was asleep.

He was still fast asleep when the rising-bell rang out on the clear morning air of July, and Bob Cherry sat up in bed and yawned.

The new boy was awakened by a hearty shake, and he opened his eyes and found Bob Cherry looking down upon him.

"Hullo!" said Armitage sleepily.

"Time to get up, lazybones!" said Bob Cherry. "Didn't you hear the rising-bell?"

"No," yawned Armitage. "I suppose I was fast asleep."

"I suppose you were!" grinned Bob. "You can't let Gosling expend his energy on the rope for nothing. Get up, you slacker!"

And Armitage laughed, and turned out.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Gadsby Gets a Shock.

GADSBY of the Shell was down early that morning.

Before the rest of the Shell were down Gadsby was wheeling out his bicycle across the Close, and he mounted it at the gates, and pedalled away towards Courtfield. He had gone into his study for a few minutes, and came out with his jacket buttoned up over something he had placed in his inside pocket. If anyone had observed Gadsby's movements, he would have fancied that Gadsby had something very valuable there. Perhaps he had. Perhaps there was a reason for the peculiar smile with which Armitage of the Remove watched Gadsby wheel his bicycle out.

Gadsby put on good speed as he dashed away towards Courtfield. His face was looking unusually serious, and his brows were knitted. He rode into Courtfield, and jumped off his machine before the little shop of Mr. Isaacs in Church Street. The shop was not yet opened; Mr. Isaacs did not begin the day's business at such an extremely early hour. But Gadsby rang loudly at the bell at the side door.

After about five minutes' delay, Mr. Isaacs' head, adorned with a night-cap, looked out of a window above.

"Vat is dot?" demanded Mr. Isaacs. "Mein cootness! It is Mishter Gadsby!"

"I want to speak to you—it's important!" said Gadsby.

"My cootness! Is anything wrong?"

"No, no; it's all right. But buck up—I've got to get back to brekker."

Mr. Isaacs grumbled, and withdrew his head. He was not an early riser, and he did not like being disturbed. But he came down presently, in a musty old dressing-gown and loose slippers, and opened the side door. Gadsby had leaned his bicycle up against the shop-front, and he was waiting impatiently. He came in immediately the door was opened.

"Come into der parlour," said Mr. Isaacs. "Haf you brought it?"

"Yes."

"Goot! But vy so early?" asked Mr. Isaacs, as he ushered the Shell fellow of Greyfriars into the murky little parlour behind the shop. "Der afternoon—dot would be all right."

"I wanted to get rid of it—never mind why. I'd feel safer with it gone," said Gadsby uneasily. "I had a queer suspicion in my mind last night. I suppose there was nothing in it, but—but there it was. I feel safer without that rotten thing hanging about. If you like to come to decent terms, it's yours."

Mr. Isaacs closed the door carefully.

"I haf gome to derms," he said. "I offer you twenty-five quids."

"What? You offered me twenty?" said Gadsby. "But twenty or twenty-five, it's all the same; I sha'n't take it. You know perfectly well that it's worth four hundred to you. Mr. Capper was offered four hundred."

The old Jew's eyes glistened.

"Dot is all right," he said. "But dere is der risk, and I have to find der gustomer."

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A Story for ALL
"Magnet" Readers:

"TOM MERRY'S LEGION OF HONOUR."

"Don't tell lies!" said Gadsby savagely. "You've got the customer. It was because you had a good customer inquiring for the specimen, and offered any price for it, that you put me up to this."

Mr. Isaacs raised his hands in protest.

"I put you up to it!" he exclaimed. "Now, dot is not true. You come to me and say dot you have dot stamp to sell, and I say I buy him."

"I told you that Capper had one in his collection," said Gadsby, "and you went specially to Greyfriars to ask Capper to let you see it, to make sure that it was genuine. What you did that, I knew you had an eye on it."

"My dear Mishter Gadsby—"

"And for weeks after that you were hammering away at me on the subject whenever I saw you," snarled Gadsby.

"You put this idea into my head, and now I've got the stamp you want to screw me down to twenty quid, and sell it for four hundred yourself."

"I give you twenty-five."

"You'll give me fifty, or I'll throw the rotten thing into the river, and have done with it!" said Gadsby savagely. "I don't dare to take it back to the school."

Again Mr. Isaacs' dirty hands came into eloquent action.

"Mein dear Mishter Gadsby! Mein dear young shentleman—"

"Will you give fifty? You'll make a whacking profit then—about seventy-five per cent."

"Yesterday you say you take twenty-five—"

Gadsby stared.

"Yesterday? What are you talking about? I didn't see you yesterday."

Then Mr. Isaacs stared.

"Ah, you are dreaming, my dear Mishter Gadsby," he said. "In dis parlour here you offer me to bring dot stamp for twenty-five."

"You're mad, or else I am!" said Gadsby hoarsely. "I tell you I never came into Courtfield at all yesterday!"

"My cootness!"

"Are you lying to me, or did somebody come here calling himself by my name?" demanded Gadsby, in anxiety and alarm.

"Somevun certainly came, and it vas you—unless you have a twin brotzer who is as like you as two peas, Mishter Gadsby."

"My hat!" said Gadsby in a deep breath. "That accounts! Hoskins and Hobson both swore yesterday that they saw me go out of the school, when I was in my study doing my prep. all the time! Somebody made himself up as me!"

"My cootness!"

"That proves it! That red-headed villain—that upper-cut with the left! My Heaven, then he knows—he knows! Good heavens!"

The Jew gazed at him in alarm.

"My dear Mishter Gadsby—"

"Look here, will you have the stamp or not?" shrieked Gadsby, his face pale as ashes. "I tell you there is a detective in the school watching me!"

"Vat!" gasped Mr. Isaacs, turning pale.

"I thought the matter was ended when that old fool Grimes went away. He was convinced that young Banthorpe had taken the stamp. I thought it was all serene. Then that red-headed villain came! Don't you understand?"

"No; I don't!" growled Mr. Isaacs.

"Listen to me, then! Coker lost his pocket-book some weeks ago, and a young detective chap named Dalton Hawke came to the school to look into the matter. After it was settled, we found that he was a detective. I was thinking he might be sent for again over old Capper's stamp, and I was on the watch—but I never suspected that red-headed kid until Bob Cherry mentioned last night about his upper-cut with the left. Then I thought of it for a minute, but it seemed impossible. Only, if you say a chap came here yesterday disguised as me—"

"My cootness!"

"Did you say anything to give me away?" asked Gadsby anxiously.

The Jew wrung his hands.

"Dot awful rascal!" he gasped. "I dink it vas you, Mishter Gadsby! I speak not of der stamp—I speak of 'dot article you have to sell.' But—but I speak about you—about your being in debt, and—and pawning your watch—"

Gadsby clenched his hands.

"Oh, you ass! You fathead! You've given me away! That was the information he was after, of course! Hang him!"

"Be calm, my dear Mishter Gadsby! If you have dot stamp, it is all right! You give him to me for twenty-five pounds, and I get rid of him. Then dere is no proof against you—dere cannot be proof if dot stamp is not found."

"True!" Gadsby calmed down a little. "When I've got

rid of the rotten thing, it will be impossible for Dalton Hawke to prove anything, even if he suspects. But, I tell you, you sha'n't have it for twenty-five! I'd rather throw it into the river!"

"Dot would be a sinful waste, Mishter Gadsby! But it is all right. I give you dirty."

"No—a thousand times no!"

Mr. Isaacs sighed.

"You ruin me!" he said. "You ruin your poor old frent Isaacs! But you are so greedy, and you are my nice young friend! I give you forty-five!"

"Fifty, or it goes into the Sark!"

"Oh, my dear Mishter Gadsby—"

Gadsby, with a furious gesture, turned towards the door. The old Jew shrieked after him:

"It is all right! I giff you feefty, but you ruin me!"

"Buck up, then!" said Gadsby.

"Show me dot stamp first!" said Mr. Isaacs, locking the door. "You lay dot stamp on der table, and I lay der monish beside it!"

"All right!"

Gadsby took a pocket-book from his inner pocket, and opened it. He jerked out a stamp that was fastened to one of the leaves by a gummed mount. The stamp was printed in black on red, with a little design of a three-masted ship in the centre. Along the top and bottom were the lines: "British—Guiana," and along the sides, "Postage—One Cent."

"There you are!" said Gadsby.

Mr. Isaacs looked at the stamp. Then an exceedingly disagreeable look came over his wizened old face. He regarded Gadsby with a bitter sneer, and made a gesture of contempt towards the stamp.

"You are in a hurry?" he asked.

"Yes, yes; I want to get back!"

"Go pack, den!"

"Give me the money for the stamp, confound you!"

"You can take back dot stamp, instead!" said Mr. Isaacs contemptuously. "I giff you one haltpenny for him! Dot is der value! Mein cootness! You dink dot you take in der old Jew mit dot imitation? My cootness! I sold stamps and bought dem before you was born, you dishonest young rascal!"

Gadsby seemed transfixed for a moment.

"Imitation!" he breathed.

"Yeth, you young villain! You dink to take in der old Jew! He, he, he!"

And Mr. Isaacs cackled unpleasantly.

"That's the stamp that came out of Mr. Capper's album!" panted Gadsby. "You saw it there yourself—you saw it was genuine! You told me so!"

The Jew nodded.

"Mishter Capper's stamp was genuine," he said. "But dot is not Mishter Capper's stamp! Dot is a sheap imitation, printed!"

Gadsby caught up the stamp and examined it. A terrible pallor came over his face.

"Vell?" said Mr. Isaacs sarcastically.

"You're right!" said Gadsby hoarsely. "It's an imitation!"

"He, he, he!"

"Don't cackle at me, you old fool!" hissed Gadsby. "I didn't know it was an imitation! I hid the stamp in my study, and I took this from the same place this morning! Somebody must have found it and changed them!"

"You hid it ferry carefully, hein?"

"Yes, yes! I raised the wallpaper in one corner, very carefully, and put the stamp on the wall, and gummed the paper down again over it!" said Gadsby dazedly. "No one could have thought of such a dodge—Inspector Grimes didn't! But—but somebody must have searched my study last night, and—and found it, and—and taken the real stamp away, and put this in its place for a trick!"

The old Jew's face expressed the greatest incredulity.

"Dot is fery fine!" he said. "I do not pelieve vun word of it! You are a dishonest young rascal! I have noddings to do with you! Take away dot cheating imitation, and leave my house! I have noddings more to do vith you at all!"

Gadsby staggered, rather than walked, from the house.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Capper Is Made Happy.

"COME in!" said Dr. Locke.

His study door opened, and Armitage entered, with a very quiet and grave expression on his face.

"Good-morning, Armitage!" said Dr. Locke.

"You wish to see me?"

"Yes, sir, and Mr. Capper!"

"I will send for him."

Dr. Locke rang, and Trotter was sent to summons the Fourth Form-master to the study. Mr. Capper came very quickly, and there was an eager expression upon his face. He did not place the greatest faith in the schoolboy detective, but he was eager to avail himself of the slightest chance of

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NEXT
TUESDAY:

"HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S BANK-HOLIDAY!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

EVERY
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The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

getting back the 1856 British Guiana One Cent, like a drowning man clutching at a straw.

"You have something to tell me?" he exclaimed eagerly.

Armitage closed the door.

"Yes, sir."

"You have looked for my stamp, Hawke—I mean, Armitage?"

Dalton Hawke smiled.

"You may call me by my right name now, sir," he said.

"My work here is finished."

The Head drew a deep breath.

"You mean to say, Hawke—"

"You have found my stamp," shrieked Mr. Capper—"you have discovered my 1856 British Guiana One Cent?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good heavens!"

"Is it possible?" exclaimed the Head.

Dalton Hawke laid the stamp on the Head's desk. Mr. Capper pounced upon it with an almost inarticulate cry.

"Is that it, sir?" asked the schoolboy detective, with a smile.

"Yes! My goodness! My British Guiana One Cent—my 1856 issue! My dear, dear boy, you have saved my stamp! How can I thank you?"

"I am amazed!" said the Head. "I am only too thankful that I sent for you, Master Hawke! But how did you find the stamp, and where?"

"In Gadsby's study, sir."

"Gadsby, of the Shell?"

"Yes, sir. I searched the study last night; it occupied me nearly three hours."

"Bless my soul!"

"I should not have searched it so thoroughly, but that I had suspicions to go upon. I knew that Gadsby had taken the stamp, and so it was only a question of searching until I found it," said Dalton Hawke quietly.

"But how did you know it? Three boys have been somewhat under suspicion, but of the three, Gadsby was the least suspected," said the Head.

Dalton Hawke smiled.

"I made it a point to observe the three of them when I came here," he said. "I was put into Banthorpe's study, and so had every opportunity of observing him. It did not take me long to decide that whoever had taken the stamp, it was not he. Newland impressed me in the same manner, and, besides, his alibi was almost perfect. But with Gadsby—he declared he had been with Hobson and Hoskins by the river at the time; but I was sure that he could easily have slipped away from them, as undoubtedly he did. I learned, too, that Gadsby was in the habit of spending money freely—standing feeds, and so on, in his Form, and yet his people were not supposed to be rich; also, that he was on chummy terms with a set of Highcliffe fellows, about whom, and whose little ways, I had learned something when I was here before. Upon the whole, Gadsby seemed to me to be the fellow to watch, and I watched him!"

"But—but then—"

"My methods were a little original," said Hawke, with a smile. "I doffed my present disguise, and adopted another—that of Gadsby himself. He is rather a striking-looking fellow, and dressed in a somewhat striking way, and it was not difficult. I visited Mr. Isaacs, the stamp-dealer, in Courtfield, under Gadsby's name and appearance, and Mr. Isaacs, without a single suspicion, was good enough to give the whole game away!"

"Bless my soul!"

"I learned—quite unintentionally on his part, of course—from Mr. Isaacs, that Gadsby was in debt; that he had pawned his watch and sold a scarf-pin in Courtfield; and that he had been led into extravagance by the Highcliffe set. He was badly in need of money, and it was pretty clear to me that Mr. Isaacs had played upon that, to induce him to purloin Mr. Capper's stamp. Doubtless he had had a big offer for such a specimen from some keen philatelist. There are collectors who would give a thousand pounds for that stamp to complete their set."

"True, very true!" said Mr. Capper. "I have been offered four hundred, and have refused. Mr. Isaacs, himself, I remember, offered me two hundred when he saw it."

"The villain!" said Dr. Locke. "The wretch, to tempt a foolish boy to his ruin! The law shall deal with him for that!"

"I came away knowing that Gadsby was the thief, sir. It was only a question then of finding the stamp. I searched his study, and found it at last. It was hidden under the wall-paper, which had been raised in part and stuck down again over it; and certainly I should never have succeeded if I had not known something of the dodges of criminals in concealing stolen banknotes."

"Does Gadsby know?" asked the Head slowly.

The schoolboy detective smiled.

"He must by this time, I came here with a printed facsimile of the stamp in my possession—in order to impress it upon my mind, so that I should easily recognise the original when I found it. The idea occurred to me of placing the imitation in the place of the stolen stamp, and I did so. Gadsby's feelings when he finds it out will not be pleasant; but he deserves that punishment."

"He has not found it out yet, then? I must send for him at once."

"He has probably discovered it by now," said Dalton Hawke. "He went out this morning on his bicycle, and did not come in to breakfast. I looked into his study, and found that the wall paper in that particular place had been disturbed again. He has taken the imitation stamp away—to take it to Mr. Isaacs, I presume."

"The dreadful young rascal!" said Mr. Capper. "I have treated him with every confidence. He deserves to go to prison."

Dr. Locke frowned.

"I am afraid, Mr. Capper, that by leaving so valuable an article (unlocked, you, to some extent, placed temptation in the wretched boy's way," he said. "And the influence of that—cousin, Isaacs, did the rest. Gadsby will be expelled from Greyfriars, but there I think his punishment may stop."

Dalton Hawke nodded.

"I think so, too, sir. But if he is not punished, Mr. Isaacs must escape, too! But the police will watch him very closely after this, and it will not be long before he is caught napping; for a man who deals in this kind of thing once will do so again, and he will be laid by the heels before long."

"I agree with you," said the Head. "You have done wonderfully well, Hawke, and I am very grateful. I suppose you will be leaving us to-day?"

"Yes, sir," said the schoolboy detective, with a smile. "I should like to say good-bye to the fellows before morning lessons, and catch the early train. I have other work waiting for me in London."

Dr. Locke shook hands warmly with the schoolboy detective, and Dalton Hawke left the study.

Harry Wharton & Co. met him in the passage.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here you are!" said Bob Cherry. "Head warm?"

The schoolboy detective grinned.

"Thanks, no," he said.

"Bell's gone," said Harry Wharton. "Aren't you coming into the Form-room?"

Armitage shook his head.

"No; I'm leaving."

"Leaving!" exclaimed the Famous Four together. "What on earth for?"

"Going home," Armitage explained. "Good-bye!"

"Well, my hat!"

The chums of the Remove shook hands in amazement with the schoolboy detective. They had to hurry into the Form-room, and had no more time to ask questions. Dalton Hawke bade farewell to Banthorpe in the passage, and Arthur, as amazed as the Famous Four, said good-bye sadly enough to his new friend. By the time the Remove had settled down for morning lessons, Dalton Hawke was on his way to the station. His work at Greyfriars was done, and much as his sudden departure surprised the Remove, few, if any of them, guessed that the new boy in the Remove had been no other than Dalton Hawke, the famous Schoolboy Detective.

There was another fellow missing from his place that morning at Greyfriars. It was Gadsby, of the Shell.

Dr. Locke waited for his return, ready to deliver sentence upon the wretched junior; but Gadsby did not come.

He knew that the game was up, that the stolen stamp had been found in his study, and that he was known to be the thief. What fate awaited him at Greyfriars he did not know. Expulsion at least, and perhaps arrest as well. The wretched boy, overcome with fear and remorse, did not return to the school. In Courtfield he wrote and despatched a miserable letter to the Head, begging for forgiveness and confessing his misdeed, and then he fled to his home.

And after morning lessons, when the Head had received Gadsby's letter, and read it sadly enough, the school was assembled once more in Hall, to hear a brief announcement by the Head. It was then that Greyfriars learned that the thief had been discovered, that Mr. Capper had his stamp again, and that Gadsby had confessed and left Greyfriars for ever.

"Gadsby!" said Bob Cherry, as the school streamed out of the hall, amazed. "My hat! I hope you'll have the decency to tell Newland you're sorry now, Bolsover!"

Bolsover granted.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 233.

A Story for ALL
"Magnet" Readers:

"TOM MERRY'S LEGION OF HONOUR."

"And young Banthorpe, too!" said Harry Wharton. "Some of the silly asses said it was young Banthorpe!"

"Oh, I don't mind now," said Arthur. "I'm sorry for Gadsby. The poor fellow must have been very much tempted. Poor Gadsby!"

"Poor rats!" said Bob Cherry, with a snort. "A thief's a thief! Jolly good thing he's gone! But I wonder why young Armitage went so suddenly? That's a giddy mystery!"

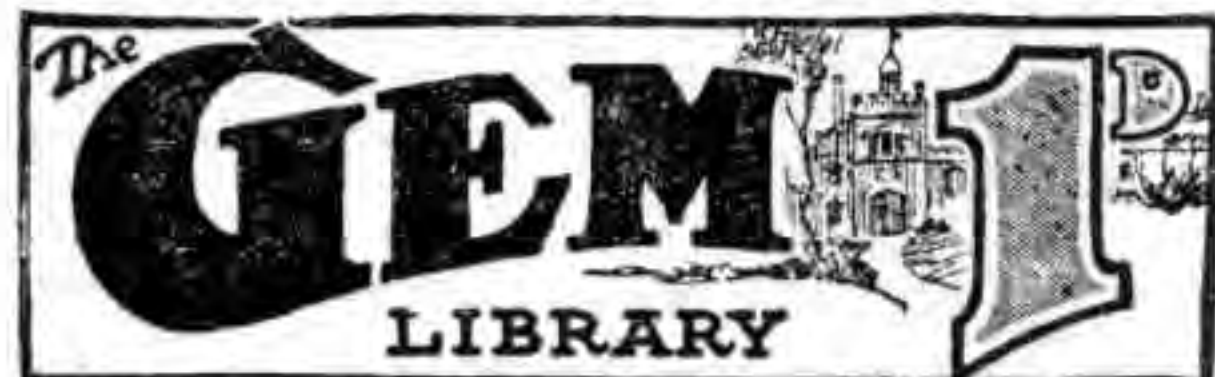
"Mysterious young beggar altogether," said Harry Wharton. "I suppose we shall never know now why he locked himself in his study yesterday against Bolsover."

It was, indeed, mysterious. But if the Greyfriars juniors had seen Armitage washing the dye from his hair and his face, and transforming himself into Dalton Hawke again, they would not have been so surprised at the fact that he had locked himself in his study after the booby-trap had drenched him with water. It was only the locked door that had saved Dalton Hawke, in that emergency, from being discovered to be in disguise. But the Head had not seen fit to take the school into his confidence on the subject of the real identity of the red-headed junior. He wisely considered that the less said the sooner mended, and it remained a secret that Dalton Hawke, the Schoolboy Detective, had visited the school in disguise to track out the stolen stamp.

THE END.

(Next week's splendid, long, complete tale dealing with the adventures of Harry Wharton & Co., at Greyfriars, by Frank Richards, is entitled "HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S BANK HOLIDAY!" Also next week there will be a grand long instalment of Sidney Drew's wonderful serial story, "Twice Round the Globe!" and another three-page comic supplement! Make sure of obtaining a copy of "The Magnet" Library, by ordering well in advance, Price 1d.)

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TWICE ROUND THE GLOBE!

THE STORY OF THE
GREAT MAN-HUNT
BY SIDNEY DREWFerrers Lord, millionaire, and owner
of the Lord of the Deep.Prince Ching-Lung, Adventurer, Conjuror and
Ventriloquist.Nathan Gore, Jewel collector,
and multi-millionaire,
Ferrers Lord's terrible rival.

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

"BY FOUL MEANS OR FAIR, I'LL WIN."

Nathan Gore, millionaire and jewel-collector, clenched his hands furiously and raved like a madman on the deck of the liner Coronation. He had started specially from America in order to be present at the sale-room in London where the costly diamond, "The World's Wonder," was to be put up for auction, and now it seemed that this thick fog which had suddenly fallen over the Channel was to spoil everything. For the great sale was to take place at midday, and already the captain had told Nathan Gore that it would be impossible to reach Southampton before that time. "A telegram for Mr. Gore," a voice rang out through the darkness. The American was told the message, and, as he listened, his face came over deathly pale, and he gave vent to a terrible oath. The message was: "Ferrers Lord purchased 'The World's Wonder' privately. No bidders. Price unknown." "I'll win yet," shrieked the man. "By foul means or fair, I'll win!"

"THE WORLD'S WONDER."

In the magnificent drawing-room of Ferrers Lord's house in Park Lane was assembled a varied collection of individuals. First of all there was the celebrated millionaire himself, and close to him sat Ching-Lung, a Chinaman, busily engaged in making paper butterflies. Hal Honour, the great engineer, was sipping tea, and Rupert Thurston yawned in a chair. "How much did you pay for that great diamond?" presently asked the latter. The millionaire smiled. "Money and far words, Rupert," he replied. "By the way, you have not seen it yet?" The priceless gem passed from hand to hand. A thousand fires burned in its crystal heart; a thousand colours, ever changing, leaped from every facet. "I guess it would have been more money and less fair words if old Gore had turned up," remarked Ching-Lung sagely.

"I'LL TAKE THE CHALLENGE!"

The millionaire's house was wrapped in silence. A faint light shone from the drawing-room. Ching-Lung pushed open the door, then a cry broke from him. A man lay face downwards on the floor. There was a ghastly crimson stain on his collar. The man was Ferrers Lord. "Ching—the diamond!" came in a hoarse voice. Ching opened the drawer which Lord indicated, but there was no diamond there. But a message had been left behind: "To Ferrers Lord,—Knowing that you would not sell 'The World's Wonder,' I have taken it. Do your worst. I defy you. The stone is mine.—Nathan Gore." The millionaire rose to his feet. "I take the challenge, Ching," he said. "I'll hum him down and win back my diamond." He travels down to the cave where the Lord of the Deep is hidden, only to find that this wonderful submarine vessel has been destroyed by Nathan Gore. He begins the chase after the diamond thief, and rushes across Germany in a special train, taking with him a number of the crew of the Lord of the Deep. After many delays they cross the Russian frontier. Again they are delayed owing to the flooding of the marshes, but when they reach the other side they discover an old mill, in which Ferrers Lord thinks Nathan Gore is hiding. They burst open the door, their hearts beating with excitement. Was Nathan Gore there in the blackness, his finger on the trigger of a weapon?

(Now go on with the story.)

The Bird Escapes!

"Nathan Gore!" rang the millionaire's voice.

There was no reply. Ferrers Lord struck a match, and lighted the candle. He walked on boldly, holding the light above his head. Sacks of flour were piled up round the walls. A rickety ladder led up to a room above.

"Stay where you are," said the millionaire.

He began to mount the ladder. At the top was an open trap-door. He vanished, and the light threw strange shadows.

"Ching!"

Ching-Lung ran up. A man bound hand and foot was lying on the floor, a rifle close beside him. His dress proclaimed him a peasant. He looked up at them in doubt and terror.

"What has happened here?" said Ching-Lung.

"We shall soon know."

Ferrers Lord took the gag from the man's mouth. The expression in his eyes grew hard and stern as he began to untie the cords.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 233.

NEXT
TUESDAY:

"HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S BANK-HOLIDAY!"

By
FRANK RICHARDS.

"You had better bring in the wounded man," he said. "The night air won't do him much good. Be quick, Ching, and send for the horses."

He spoke so sharply that Ching-Lung whistled as he turned away. When his pigtail had vanished, Ferrers Lord sat down on the only stool the room contained, and laid his revolver across his knee.

"Well, rogue," he said harshly, "where are the men who came here from the train?"

"I know not, Excellency, by Saint Nicolas of Moscow, I know not! May the fiend fly off with them! They took my bread and my boat. They bound me as you saw."

"And they fired at us?"

"Yes, Excellency, the murderers—yes."

"Oh," said Ferrers Lord, "in that case they have not been long gone. How quickly the marks of muddy boots dry on your boards, little Ivan the miller, little Ivan the dog, the pig, the liar. Out with the truth, little Ivan, or my biggest man shall knock you at your own door."

"By the Saint——"

"The truth, little Ivan," said the millionaire, with a smile that made the peasant shudder. "Must I cut your back with the knout, and take away the gold the Englishman gave you, too? Do I not know when a man is bound, and when he pretends to be bound and gagged. Do I not know a mudstain hours old from one minutes old? Do I not know the mark of an English boot from that of a Russian clog? Must you have the knout? Speak, little Ivan the miller. I have learned many a trick for getting at the truth. Must I call the man with the strongest arm?"

The peasant fell upon his knees.

"Excellency," he whined, "I am a poor man. All is here. You can read into my heart. I took his gold, indeed, for the season is bad and bread is dear. Be merciful, Excellency. I will tell you all. The men from the train have gone in my boat. The Englishman has taken my horse. He bribed me to do this."

"Thank you. And when did he leave, little Ivan?"

"Long ere sunset. He said that you would come, and bade me fire on you to keep you back, Excellency, if only for a little. But the cartridge was blank, Excellency."

Ferrers Lord laughed.

"I guessed that the moment I touched those cords," answered Ferrers Lord. "And I suppose our horses are blank also."

A glimmer of a smile wrinkled the miller's dirty face.

"I think so, Excellency. My brother Michael was paid to drive them away."

A heavy footstep set the ladder creaking, and Barry's head and shoulders appeared.

"Plaze, sor," said the Irishman, "the gintleman wid the bullet in him has imigrated. We can't foind him at all, at all. Oi belave Ould Nick has come along and invoited him out to supper. Be all the powers, he's vamoosed, bad scran to him for puttin' us to the throuble av lukin' for him."

"Have they gone for the horses?"

"Misther Ching and Prout, sor, is afther thim."

"Very good."

The millionaire took out a cigar. He was neither angry nor downcast. He could admire cleverness in foe as well as in friend.

Lost Horseflesh and a Lost Breakfast.

The simplicity of Nathan Gore's scheme doubled its brilliancy. He had made good his escape, he had kept his pursuers in check, and, what was more, he had robbed them of their horses. Ferrers Lord felt sure that the crafty moujik had ridden off with their mounts. All doubt was ended when Ching-Lung bounded up the ladder.

"Here's a game!" he said. "The horses have broken loose, and hooked it!"

"A pity!" said Ferrers Lord.

"I'll massacre that villain Joe," said Ching-Lung. "He must have tied them up as if he'd been tying up a brown-paper parcel. Where's Nathan sloped to? Are we on a false scent?"

The millionaire shrugged his shoulders.

"It does not matter," he answered. "A stern chase is a long chase. Little Ivan here took us for burglars, and fired at us with a blank. That is all."

Ching-Lung rubbed his shaven crown for a second, and then began to giggle wildly as he grasped the whole plot.

"Oh, pip," he chuckled; "what a giddy bilking! I say, Lord, that will take some capping. And how sweetly we swallowed it all. Now we've lost our horses, and—ha, ha, ha, ha! Oh, what green things we were!"

"Fairly," said Ferrers Lord. "I fear we are stranded for the night. Little Ivan," he added, in Russian, "I could send you and your brother to the mines for stealing my horses, if I wished it. You may sell the horses, but the money is mine, and I shall send for it."

"It will be waiting for you, Excellency."

"If it is not, you will regret it! To-night we are your guests. Find my men food and drink."

"Yes, Excellency."

The miller was glad to get off so cheaply. He made a fire, and lighted a dozen rushlights. Then he brought out heaps of sacks for seats, a stone jar containing vodka, black bread, and a fitch of bacon.

Barry tried the vile, fiery vodka first, and howled that he had swallowed prussic-acid. Tears poured from his eyes. It was like drinking molten lead.

"Get some tea!" said Ferrers Lord.

They made a good supper. Ferrers Lord questioned the Russian. The man did not think that they could obtain horses. If the flood went down, a return to the town would be impossible until the ground dried.

"We'll sleep, then," said the millionaire philosophically, "and let to-morrow take care of itself."

It seemed probable that, for the second time, they had lost

every scrap of baggage. The owner of the boat would hardly run the risk of remaining to be stranded. He would steam back and hand the property over to the police, or else keep it for himself.

According to the miller, Nathan Gore was almost in the same plight. At any rate, they were crossing a civilised country, and they could do something towards refitting at the next town.

Barry and Gan snored in chorus, and the rest lay with their feet pointing at the stove. Except for numerous hungry fleas, who were most attentive, the night would have passed pleasantly. However, they were all tired, and even the fleas could make little impression on the leathery hides of Barry, Gan, Maddock, Prout, and Joe.

The sun was bright when Ching-Lung kicked them into wakefulness.

Barry groaned as he sat up.

"Murther!" he said. "Oi'm as stiff as the proices at a London hotel!"

"So's me!" growled Gan.

"That's with getting wet," said Ching-Lung, "and toddling about in damp duds. Get up!"

"Oi can't; Oi'm too weary! Oh, lit me slape agen! Swate slumber, lit me woo thee!"

"Lazy pig!" said Prout. "Get up, Gan!"

"Too stiff—too—too—stiff! I—"

Gan was asleep again, and Barry followed his example. They had one of their lazy fits. When they were roused, the two hypocrites began to whine and groan about their aching limbs.

"Av yez are a Christian, Joe," sighed Barry, as he drew the sacks over his legs, "bring me a cup of tay in bed! Bedad, av Oi troied to sthind Oi shud dhrop down in a faint, so I shud!"

"Me goin' die!" moaned Gan. "Gotted pneumatic fevers bad 'nough all ober. Me want tea, Joe—just some nice butterful tea! Lub yo' awful, Joe."

"Blitherin' frauds," said Joe sympathetically; "blessed skulkers!"

"Hark at that, and us at the dure o' dith!" sobbed Barry. "Oi thought he'd a tindher hearrrt, Gan."

"Old beast!" said Gan. "No good only to saw firewood! Dirty old chip-cutter! Want him ugly face planed off!"

"And us doiein'!"

Barry hid his face in the sack and wept, while the disgusted Joe went to cook breakfast. Ill as they pretended to be, Gan and Barry could not resist the seductive smell of bacon. They turned a couple of poles into crutches, and hobbled down below, for Joe was doing his cooking in the open air. A roar of laughter greeted them.

"Buck up, you cripples!" said Prout.

"Pass the Elliman's, Rue," said Ching-Lung.

"Two invalid-chairs, some cushions, and the smellin'-salts for two toffs, waiter!" chirped Maddock.

"Send for a doctor, quick!" put in Joe.

Barry and Gan limped painfully towards the fire.

"Have yer laugh and yer chaff," said Barry dardle. "Yez'll regrit ut whin we loie could and stiff in our coffin! Oi forgives—we both forgives yez. Racked wid pain and agony as we are, twisted wid rheumatism, iv'ry bone achin', iv'ry nerve red-hot, iv'ry movement a torture and torment, we are still min enough to bear yer insults, and proudly say to all of yez—"

"Rats!" cried Ching-Lung.

The men screamed.

"Are you ill, O'Rooney?" asked Hal Honour.

"Sir," answered Barry, "Oi am sthindin' on the threshold of dith!"

"Push him inside, Joe," said Prout rudely; "you're nearest!"

"I scorn yez!" cried Barry. "Gan, we scorn that mia!"

"Silly ole bald head!" said Gan, with deep disgust.

"Barrin' Misther Honour, who is a thrue and noble gentleman, and Misther Rupert," said Barry, "consider yez are scorned! Bein' at dith's dure, Oi have composed the followin' swate little verse to carrie on our tomb. Oi feel sure that Misther Honour will see ut done. The verse is this:

"From the Green Oisle and from the Lind of Ice,

An Oirishman and an Eskimo have come to doie, oh, masha!

Wan aich of thim, which just makes twice,

Have come to doie in Russia,

To lave their bones on a foreign shure——"

Joe picked up the frying-pan containing the bacon. Prout lifted the steaming kettle, Ching-Lung clutched the plates. Maddock seized the bread and cups, and, without a word, they entered the mill, leaving Rupert and Honour to hear the rest of the "poem" alone. They bolted the door behind them.

Barry's jaw fell when he saw the breakfast take its departure, and Gan was on the verge of tears.

"Oi—Oi think," stammered the Irishman. "Oi—Oi—Oi'm sure Oi've forgotten the rist! When ut comes back to me Oi'll tell yez. Thank yez kindly! We must be goin'. Rheumatics is terrible—terrible!"

They did not limp so much as they made for the door.

"Ghost of a gudgeon!" panted Barry. "Ut's fast!"

"Kicks at him!" said Gan. "I wants bacon!"

"Lit us in, plaze!" said Barry, knocking gently. "Be so kind as to open the dure, gintlemen!"

"Impossible," answered Ching-Lung's voice. "It wouldn't be proper. I'm having a bath. Come back in an hour!"

"Beautiful bacon, isn't it?" said Prout loudly.

"Wonderful," said Joe, in the same tone. "Delicious, splendid! I never tasted better! Have another slice?"

"With pleasure! Joe, you're a king of cooks! Just look at those pink streaks and toothsome fat. It's great, grand, sweet!"

"This tea is fine," remarked Ching-Lung, "and the bread is a treat! Really, I never enjoyed anything more in my life!"

"Melts in your mouth," said Prout. "Such bacon, such bread! By hokey, it's scrumptious!"

Barry and Gan were starving.

"Let us in, for the sake of marcy!" whined Barry.

"We're ravenous!"

"Go away!" yelled Joe. "You're dyin'! Dyin' men don't want grub! Go and die!"

"Dey eats him all!" moaned Gan. "Oh, de piggses, de piggses!"

"Another cup of that splendid tea!" said Ching-Lung.

"Yes; I will have another rasher. Treat isn't the word for it! I'm making an awful hog of myself!"

"Do lit us in!" wailed Barry. "We're dhroppin' wid hunger, faintin' for food! Wid bitther thirst our blistered lips is parrehed! Ow! Lit us in!"

"Ow, ow, ow! Dey leave us nones!" sobbed Gan.

"You're dyin'!" roared Ching, Prout, Maddock, and Joe together. "Go and die!"

"Haythins, brutes, hogs!" said Barry.

"Go and die!"

"Rogues, vagabonds, thaves, villains, cads, curs, monkeys, apes, sneaks, bounders, brutes, bastes, animals, snakes, reptiles, insicks, voipers, gorillers!" howled Barry madly.

"Rillers, 'rillers, 'rillers!" bellowed Gan. "Dirty, means, nasty 'rillers!"

"As you're so pressing, I'll have just half a cup of tea," said the unseen Ching politely.

"And the last rasher, sir?" said Joe. "Allow me to have the supreme agony to press you, sir."

"As you press me, I'll take it," answered Ching-Lung.

"Is there any more tea after this?"

"Not a drop, sir. We've cleared up every drop and every crumb."

"It was the most delicious breakfast that ever passed my lips," said Ching-Lung. "It was really superb!"

Barry and Gan forgot their rheumatics, and tore their locks and danced. Suddenly something touched Gan on the head. It was a black loaf tied to a string that dangled from the little window above. Gan clutched it.

"Halves!" said Barry.

"Nebber!" said Gan.

"Thafe!" said Barry.

Gan dug his teeth into the loaf and fled. He knew it came from Ching-Lung. The interior was stuffed with bacon. Barry started a chase; but Gan-Waga swallowed down the loaf as he ran, and as Barry saw the food dwindling he gave it up. Thurston took pity on him, and gave him some bread and a couple of eggs.

"Oi'll kill that Ching-Lung yit!" growled Barry, and not for the first time. "Oi know Oi shall!"

Ferrers Lord had decided to push on on foot until they could find some conveyance. Ivan's stock of cattle consisted of an old plough-ox, with a sad-looking face and a gentle eye. Ching-Lung had an interview with the miller about that ox. Two pieces of gold went from Ching's pocket to the pocket of the miller, and the ox was the property of the Chinese prince. A surcingle was obtained, sacks tied over it, and when the order was given to start, Ching-Lung rode out in triumph, mounted on his sorry piece of tough beef.

"Great Scotland Backyard!" said Rupert. "What are you going to do with that?"

"Well," said Ching-Lung, "as I've bought it, I think I'll buy a field to put it in!"

"Bought that! Never!"

"Don't you insult my cattle!" said Ching-Lung.

"Bedad," said Barry, "what an extraordinary craytur!"

"What a cowardly thing to say," added Joe gravely, "about his Highness's lively capture!"

"That's just where you reveal yer ignorance!" murmured Prout dreamily. "I was thinkin'—"

"Order, order!" said Thurston. "I don't want a headache. Are you really going to ride that, Ching?"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 233.

EVERY
TUESDAY.

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ONE
PENNY.

"I am, sonny."

"Then our friendship is severed!" said Rupert. "Farewell!"

He hurried after Ferrers Lord and Honour. From his mysterious pocket Ching-Lung took out a huge whip.

"I am going to meet the Sniffsnaffscotchi Foxhounds," he grinned. "Forward, Sceptre, my Derby-winner."

"Goin' to the meet, did he say?" said Barry. "Bedad, he may be goin' to ut, but ut's little meat he's goin' on."

The old ox loped away, and they tramped in its wake. The road was wet and heavy. Scathing remarks were hurled at the prince and his mount. Ching-Lung grinned, smoked cigarettes, and fanned himself. After a mile or two of boggy walking, the chaff gave out. The old ox had a good more in him than they fancied. He kept up a swinging pace. Very soon they were envying his owner.

"Oi begs yer pardon, sor," said Barry, "but is ut comfortable?"

"Just like sitting in an easy-chair," said Ching-Lung.

"Ah!" sighed Barry wistfully.

A little later on Gan lost a boot in the mud. The sole had been almost torn off.

"Get up behind me, Ganus, my blubber-biter," said Ching-Lung. "You'll have to ride now. Give me your fisticus."

"Ah!" sighed Barry again. "And Oi must walk on ould Shanks's mare. Ah, me!"

Soon after that Barry lost a boot. It may have been an accident, or he may have unfastened the laces. Anyhow, he dug in the mud for it in vain. Perhaps Barry wanted to ride.

"Go on and lave me to doie," he said. "Oi can't walk widout boots. Oi wudn't kape yez. Go on, and Oi'll rist here and lit the woid wolves of the desert gnaw me bones!"

"What's up?" asked Ching, reining in his fiery mount.

"Barry's bootless, sir," said the steersman.

"Careless chump!" said Ching-Lung. "That's just like Barry—always making a mess of things."

"Make butterful messes of him feet!" warbled Gan-Waga.

"Well," growled the prince, "he can't walk, so I expect he'll have to ride my Arab steed. Come down, Gan."

Barry winked and grinned, for he had obtained his desire. Ching-Lung was very busy with the sacks and ropes.

"You can ride properly now," he said.

Gan and Barry sat back to back, with a rope to cling to, and a couple of sacks rolled up and fastened to the animal's flanks for footrests. Barry thanked his Highness a dozen times. As the old trek-ox could not carry three, Ching led it along.

All went well for an hour. The character of the country had totally changed. Instead of the flats and swamps, they began a steady ascent towards a range of blue hills. They followed the banks of a winding stream, swelled and yellowed by the rain.

"I reckon the beef is going to come to a full stop yonder, sir," said Prout, "unless he can do circus tricks."

Ching-Lung grinned. The stream crossed the road, spanned only by a plank.

"Bosh!" said his Highness. "My old bovril is a tight-rope-walker."

They reached the edge of the water. Gan and Barry prepared to spring down. Then Ching-Lung gave the end of a dangling rope a pull, the sacks which formed the footrests swiftly unrolled, their mouths opened, and Gan and Barry, yelling with astonishment, slid into them.

The sacks tightened, and while Joe, Maddock, and Prout screamed with laughter, Barry and Gan dangled on either side of the ox, only their red and angry faces visible, utterly helpless to free themselves.

"Onward, Flying Fox!" laughed Ching-Lung. "Gentlemen, I will now tame this ferocious creature, and teach it how to walk a plank above a wet and dizzy abyss. I can't promise to succeed the first time, and I make no charge to view the thrilling and unparalysed sight. Allez! Hoop-la!"

He cracked the whip like a pistol-shot, and the ox bellowed.

"Murder!" howled Barry, staring at the foaming water below. "Help! Oi can't swim! Oh, spare me, Oi entreat, Oi beg, Oi pray! Help! Foire! Don't sor—don't!"

Crack, crack! rang the whip.

"Oh, Chingy, Chingy!" wailed Gan. "Him fall in! Ow, ow, ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!" roared Joe, Maddock and Prout.

"Allez! Allez!" shouted Ching-Lung.

The ox had his forefeet on the greasy plank, and the two passengers were struggling frantically to liberate themselves. Prout and Maddock danced with fiendish joy.

"Whoa, yez baste—whoa!" roared Barry.

"Moo-oo-oo!" said the ox.

And then he got angry, spun round like a top, and put his head into the small of Joe's back with such violence that he lifted the carpenter a few yards into the air. Joe dropped into a muddy puddle, and Prout and Maddock got out of the way. At a swinging trot, that shook Gan and Barry almost to jelly, the animal took the road to the mill.

Ching Lung went in chase. Suddenly the rope broke, and Gan and the Irishman lay in the road. With a last "Moo-oo-oo!" of delight and defiance, the ox whisked his tail, gambolled like a calf, and took his departure.

There was a great deal of laughter. Ching-Lung soon made some foot-covering out of the sacks. Rupert, Hal, and Ferrers Lord were awaiting them at a solitary farmhouse. From the farmer they purchased some huge thigh-boots, which the farmer and his son used when duck-shooting in the swamps.

"I have more news," said Ferrers Lord. "Gore passed on horseback last night, and the horse seemed very lame."

"Good biz!"

After a cup of tea, a slice of black bread, and some strong-smelling cheese, they went on again. The day grew hotter and hotter. They met a few peasants, who looked at them wonderingly, and a few children, who promptly took to their heels. It was heavy walking, for they were still ascending.

"Gore evidently intends to strike the railway again," said the millionaire. "Nearly thirty miles of the line are flooded. There has never been such a deluge before. If he loses his horse we ought to gain on him. He is an old man."

"Is this the only way he can take?" asked Rupert.

"The only way until he is beyond the hills, Rupert. The lower pass is choked with water, and he must cross by what is known as Satan's Swing. Keep O'Rourke from lagging."

"Hurry up, Barry!" cried Ching Lung.

"Bedad!" muttered Barry sulkily, "yez wudn't be so sprog yerself av yez was wearin' boots heavy enough to drive in rivets wid!"

The ascent became more difficult. It was only a winding sheep-track, and water trickled down it. Here and there the millionaire noticed the half-effaced spoor of a horse.

"Limping badly on the near front leg," he thought, "and getting worse."

He set a quicker pace—a pace that made Barry groan, for the boots were not comfortable.

Prout began to mop his bald head.

"A horse!" cried Ching-Lung, pointing to the left.

It was lying down, still saddled.

"He has had to abandon it!" said the millionaire. "Faster, faster!"

Barry groaned again. A hard climb brought them to the brink of a deep, narrow ravine. Ferrers Lord turned sharply to the right, and they came in view of Satan's Swing—a bridge swung on wire ropes from cliff to cliff. It looked flimsy and weak, but the millionaire did not hesitate. They were half-way over, when a shrill cry of terror burst from Gan-Waga's lips.

They stopped dead—petrified, aghast. Even Ferrers Lord, the man of iron, was incapable of thought or action for a moment.

A gaunt, wild-eyed figure stood above them at the end of the bridge—the figure of the pursued—the figure of Nathan Gore!

With a scream of murderous triumph, and a wolfish laugh, he looked down at them. His white locks tossed in the breeze, his face was distorted with fiendish joy. And then he hurled himself at a massive boulder poised above the supports of the bridge, and the great stone swayed and rocked.

"Back—back for your lives—for your lives!"

Ferrers Lord's shout brought them to their senses. They turned and ran. The millionaire fired. He missed; but a splinter of stone cut the madman's face and covered it with blood. He uttered a cry of pain and rage. The boulder fell over the brink and tore away the supports.

Just in time, the millionaire sprang clear, and two bullets from Ching-Lung's weapon whistled across the chasm.

But Nathan Gore was gone.

"Beaten again," said the millionaire calmly.

None of the others spoke. They stood panting, pale and breathless.

"Oi'm goin' home," said Barry, blowing his nose. "I loike a bridge that is a bridge. London Bridge is about good enough for yours thruly. Gentlemen, will wan of yez till me where Oi can foind a 'bus?'"

He roused a laugh, but rather a weak one.

"By hookey!" muttered Prout, "that was a close thing!"

"Oi hate a man who throws stones," said Barry. "Ut's a rude thing to do. Fancy h'm sp'ilin' this lovely bridge! Ut's mane—that's what Oi call ut. Bedad! Oi wish Oi had the rogue in Tibet. Oi'd tacho the ould wretch to go round the counthry smashin' up bridges and chuckin' bowlders about. Arrah, Tom darlint, av there's avin a smell in yer

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A Story for ALL
"Magnet" Readers:

"TOM MERRY'S LEGION OF HONOUR."

pocket-pistol, ut's meself that wud loike to sniff, and av the smell's gone, Oi'd luv to suck the cork!"

Prout produced his flask and passed it round. Ching Lung rolled a cigarette.

"Programme, please, Lord?" he said.

"I was just considering. We cannot cross the ravine, and the pass is flooded below. Perhaps we can find a boat, or build a raft."

"How far is it?" asked the engineer.

"I should say six or seven miles."

"We'll think how to cross when we get there," said Hal Honour.

The millionaire's knowledge of the ground astonished them. He never faltered, even where several paths met. They rounded a low spur, and saw the yellow flood-water stretching out before them in the sunlight.

"I think that will even puzzle you, Hal," said Ferrers Lord, smiling.

There was a house in the valley, and Honour pointed to it. "Let us go and see," he said laconically.

A repulsive-looking Russian, and a whole pack of lean, starving dogs, met them. Ferrers Lord asked for a boat. There was no boat.

"Now, what will you do, Hal?"

"Build one."

"What with?"

"With his shed," answered the unbeaten engineer.

The shed was built of wood, and wonderful gold purchased it. Their only tools were an axe and a hammer. In half an hour the roof was off, and they were busily at work building a raft. All their nails were the old ones, carefully taken from the planks. Everyone lent a hand.

"She'll be a bit heavy to go into the water, sir, won't she?" said Prout.

"I think not, Tom. Look at that stick."

The water was rising swiftly. Honour had placed a stick to mark the rise. Long before they had finished the little raft, yellow waves were lapping the timbers. Honour mounted a tough larch pole for a mast, and hacked blades on two others for sweeps. The only sail they could find was a worn tarpaulin sack-sheet.

"What wind there is is right for us," said Ching-Lung. "But I can't call her a 'Shamrock,' or a 'Defender.' I suppose she'll travel a mile a year."

"If she travels at all, we shall get ahead of Gore," said Ferrers Lord. "He has a long round to make. He must go on, unless he wishes to starve."

The work made the men hungry. They were lucky enough to obtain some fresh eggs, and some bacon that was practically all fat. Joe baked barley-cakes over a smoky fire.

The last nail was driven in, and they watched the stick.

"She'll be afloat in twenty minutes," said Hal Honour.

The millionaire paced up and down, his hands clasped behind him. The chase seemed almost at an end. Gore could not skulk among the hills; he could not retreat to Prinsk, for he had cut off retreat by destroying the bridge. He would starve unless he reached Reffay. It was a long round, and a difficult one, for the road would be submerged in several places.

Who would reach Reffay and the railway first? All depended on that. From Reffay the line would be clear to Moscow, and there was a train in the evening.

"She floats!" said Hal Honour.

The raft rose clear of the grass. But their weight brought her down again.

"We must wait a little longer," said Ferrers Lord.

Ching-Lung bent over, and cut a notch in the stick.

"It seems to me," he said, after a pause, "the beastly water doesn't mean to get any higher."

"By hokey!" growled the steersman. "It seems to me it's going back!"

"Try and push her off!"

The water was certainly not advancing. They seized the sweeps and pushed. The raft would not budge.

"Man got ole hoss up dere," said Gan-Waga. "Seed him, Chingy?"

"You miserable scatterbrains!" said Ching-Lung. "Why didn't you say so before? I'm on it like a ton of bricks!"

He managed to find some tackle, and came galloping back on an old screw of a horse.

Ching-Lung rode it into the water.

"Make fast," he said, "and pull and push together. Yo-heave-ho! Gee-up, my boy! Gee-whizz!"

"Hurroo, we're moving!" yelled Barry. "Bedad, the anchor's weighed, and a mighty good weight ut is! We are out on the ocean sailin'—sailin' across the say! We are bold and bonny—"

There was a clatter of hoofs. A troop of Russian soldiers galloped down the hill. The raft was surrounded.

(To be continued next week.)

By MARTIN CLIFFORD, in this Thursday's number of "THE GEM" LIBRARY. One Penny.

My Readers' Page.



**OUR GRAND
NEW
WEEKLY
FEATURE
ON
NEXT PAGE.**

"HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S BANK HOLIDAY."

My readers will know what to expect next Tuesday, for the title alone of Frank Richards' latest story conveys promise enough, to be sure. It is a tale of the popular chums of Greyfriars School while on pleasure bent, and is full of fun and spicy adventure. The sport these merry juniors have helps to make up quite the best yarn it has ever been my good fortune to read.

You can join in

"HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S BANK HOLIDAY"

by buying next Tuesday's issue of "The Magnet" Library, and it will be a holiday you will more than enjoy. At holiday time, by the way, it's advisable to order your copy in advance.

OUR 3-PAGE COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

I have been anxiously waiting to place this surprise number of "The Magnet" Library before you, and now that it is actually in your hands I sincerely trust that every one of my readers will thoroughly appreciate this new and costly feature which I have introduced into the pages of the ever-popular "Magnet" Library.

The comic supplement will brighten up our little journal more than ever, and when my loyal friends have shown this special number round amongst their friends, who are non-readers, I can, I know, look forward to seeing in the near future an astounding increase in the circulation of this paper.

Write and let me know what you think of it. A postcard will do.

"LEAGUE OF GIRL-MAGNETITES."

This is the latest suggestion for the advancement of the cause of clean and wholesome popular literature for boys and girls—and grown-ups—as represented by "The Magnet" Library and its companion paper, "The Gem," against the blood and thunder type of penny dreadful which has lately been making strenuous efforts to establish itself in the popular favour. "Molly Malone," a staunch girl reader, hailing from Cork, in dear old Ireland, writes as follows:

"Dear Editor,—Why cannot we girls have a 'Magnet League' all to ourselves? I am sure we form a considerable proportion of the thousands of readers of the dear old 'Magnet' and its equally popular companion 'The Gem' (and it is a Gem, too!) Nearly all girls, although they don't always own it, prefer a rattling good boys' school story to the stuff they get in so-called girls' papers, and you will find your girl-readers everywhere are at least as enthusiastic as your boy-readers over the splendid Harry Wharton and Tom Merry stories which I, for one, would not miss for worlds! You would find girls can get you quite as many new readers as boys, and I should like to ask girl Magnetites to form special girls' leagues in every district for this purpose."

Well, Miss "Molly Malone," you have had your say, and the next thing is for me to await my numerous girl-readers' comments thereon. Until I have heard these, I shall be unable to tell you whether your suggestion will be acted upon or not. I am inclined to think, however, that readers will be content with one Magnet League in each district, to which readers of both sexes can belong. All readers are Magnetites, whether boys or girls, you know. I quite agree with what you say about the enthusiasm of girl readers, and I rely on them to help me all they can—and not in vain, either! In conclusion, I must thank you for a very interesting and clearly put letter.

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**NEXT
TUESDAY:**

"HARRY WHARTON & CO.'S BANK-HOLIDAY!"

**By
FRANK RICHARDS.**

£1,000 FOR YOUR HOLIDAY.

I would like to draw my readers' attention to the magnificent prize of £1,000 which the "Daily Mail" is offering this year for the best holiday. To quote the words of the paper itself:

"The prize of £1,000 is for the twelve photographs which show most strikingly that the competitor has had a splendid holiday and has thoroughly enjoyed himself. It is for the set of photographs which will make a friend who looks at them, perhaps some years later, say, 'What a lovely time you had! I wish I had been with you there!'"

One might think at first sight that one would have to be an expert photographer to stand any chance of gaining the prize, but this is not the case. A series of photographs taken by a beginner with a cheap camera has as good a chance as the work of the expert. It is not the quality of the photographs that matters, but the scenes they depict.

Those who are already photographers should make a point of entering the competition. As for those who are not photographers, it is very easy to become so, for a serviceable camera can now be secured for a very reasonable price.

A FEW HINTS TO AMATEUR GARDENERS.

The month of August is the time when the kitchen garden should be cleared out and re-dug ready to receive the seeds of vegetables for the following winter and spring months. The best seed to sow in the winter garden is that of the cabbage.

First of all, dig the soil deeply, and turn it over thoroughly. Then sow the seeds thinly, afterwards covering them with about a quarter of an inch of mould. Cabbage-seeds have to be watered occasionally, and the plants should be watered directly they make their appearance. Guard the seeds well from the birds. Later on, thin out the seedlings, and when the young plants have grown four or five leaves they must be transplanted in well-manured ground.

Transplanting

is really a very delicate operation, and should be conducted with the greatest care, making sure to inflict no harm upon the plants. Remove them with a fork, doing it gently because of the roots. It is not necessary to remove the earth which clings to them—in fact, in this case it is better to leave it on. Before transplanting them, make holes in the ground with the dibble, and should the weather be dry, fill them with water. Insert the plants, and press the earth well down, not merely against the stem, but well round the roots. Water the plants at intervals and earth up the roots as soon as the cabbages begin to get of any size.

Cabbages that are to be used in the winter should be sown in July and early August.

Another plant which requires very little attention, and which will grow all the year round, is

Spinach.

It also requires very little space. Spinach is of extra value in the winter, and if it is sown at intervals during August and September, it will give off a good crop during the winter months.

Sow the seed thinly, at the depth of half an inch, and with a space of about a foot between each set. It is best sown in showery weather, as otherwise it requires constant watering.

As birds, especially sparrows, are very fond of spinach seed and young plants, the kitchen garden should be well protected from these raiders.

When the plants have grown a little, they should be thinned out to about six inches apart. The bed must be kept in good condition, well hoed, and free from weeds of all descriptions. Spinach must be gathered, and not cut.

THE EDITOR.

OUR SPLENDID NEW 3-PAGE FEATURE!

SPECIAL COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

THE BUNSEY BOYS HAVE BAD LUCK TO START WITH!



1. Dear Mister Edditer,—When your little friends Georgie and Ferdy tripped over a parrot, you can bet they weren't looking much longer for a chance to laff. First, Georgie sneaked Ike's togs, while me, Ferdy, hauled up an old bench. No, we didn't say anything to ma just yet.



2. Not till we had got it all faked up. Then Georgie ran off and told ma to come and make Ike jump. Ma is always ready for a lark—she takes after her little sons. So up she waddled, while I was talking French with the parrot and making believe I was talking to Ike.



3. It was a nice old beano, and ma thought, safe as nuts, it was Ike sitting on the form trying to cod her he was a parrot! "I'll make him jump such a one!" she said, while her little sons laffed their buttons off.



4. "Now, ma," said Georgie, "just do this like I do to Ferdy." And ma did it, and said: "Now, Ike, guess who it is in twice, and you shall have a nice home-made cake, with THE MAGNET in sugar on the top."



5. P'r'aps the parrot thought she was offering him a cake there and then, for he caught hold of ma tight, and she couldn't shake him off nohow. And then, just as we was starting to laff, up comes Ike in an old barrel, which we ought not to have left near him.



6. And then, oh, dear! oh, dear! another fine joke ruined! We have done our best, Mister Edditer, to make your readers laff, but our jokes never seem to end as they should. We don't seem to have no luck at all. Good-bye till next week.

FERDY, the Bunsey Boy.

PEPPER TEARS.



1. "Phoo! This is about the limit!" gasped Tommy Atkins. "Thirsty! My word! I should think I was! Even the camel's got the hump over it. But I think I know what to do!"



2. "With the help of this pepper and my merry Mauser, I think I can obtain some moisture!" And he took a shot at the moon.



3. Which caused it to turn the tear-tap on full, and Tommy Atkins and his camel, catching the precious liquid, slaked their thirst beautifully.



First Nursemaid: "Is your baby strong?"
Second Nursemaid: "Rather! He raises the whole family out of bed every night."



THAT MADE HIM HUFFY.

Spectator (to policeman who is obstructing his view): "Hi, Mr. Policeman, can you play draughts?"

Policeman: "A bit. Why?"

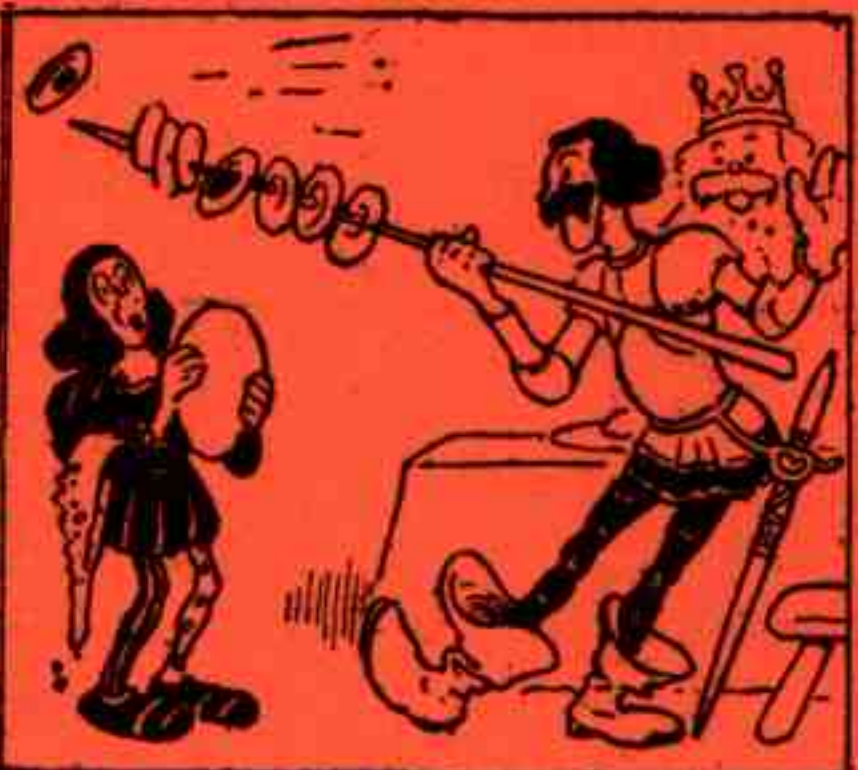
Spec.: "I'm just thinking it's about time you made a move."

Policeman: "Is that so? Well, when I make a move, I always take a man."

SAVED BY A SPEAR'S POINT.



1. "Alack!" cried the page, as he side-slipped, and dropped the tarts. "My luck's out! I'll get the sack for this. Oh, gadzooks! that's done it!"



2. But good Sir Rupert quickly brought his pike around, and spiked the toothsome tarts. And the king was so diverted, egad, that he pardoned the naughty page.

STILL ALIVE.



Visitor: "Have you lived here all your life?"

Fisherman: "Not yet."

A STAGGERING STORY.



1. "Just my luck!" yelled Smith, the gunmaker. "I only put that sign up this morning, and now that stag comes along and knocks it down. Oh!" But the stag was well away with the sign.



2. And when the noble sportsmen spotted the sign, they were vastly delighted. "Bai Jove!" said they, "What a rippin' idea! What a smart fellah this Smith must be!"



3. And they made a bee line to Smith's Emporium when they wanted new guns, much to old Smith's surprise and pleasure.



1. Now, it seems that the Hon. Lady Ermytrude was giving some of her friends a cup of souchong, and James brought it up on a silver salver in his best manner. And the Hon. Lady Whatshername's two little brothers, who were home for the holidays—

DAMPED THEIR ARDOUR.



1. Little Dickie Doenut and Charlie Chumpeigh were enjoying a quiet cigarette in the hollow of the old tree, when the dear old doctor strolled by.



2. "What!" said the D.O.D., "the ancient willow alight. Dear me! I will at once obtain some spring water, and extinguish the conflagration."



3. No explanation is needed here, gentle reader. Our two little friends soon popped out, and the doctor attended to them later in his study. Yes!



2. Tried a merry jest on James by sticking a needle into his calves. And, believe us, the explosion blew them downstairs, where their papa, the duke, promptly attended to them with a malacca cane!