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FAGS!"**

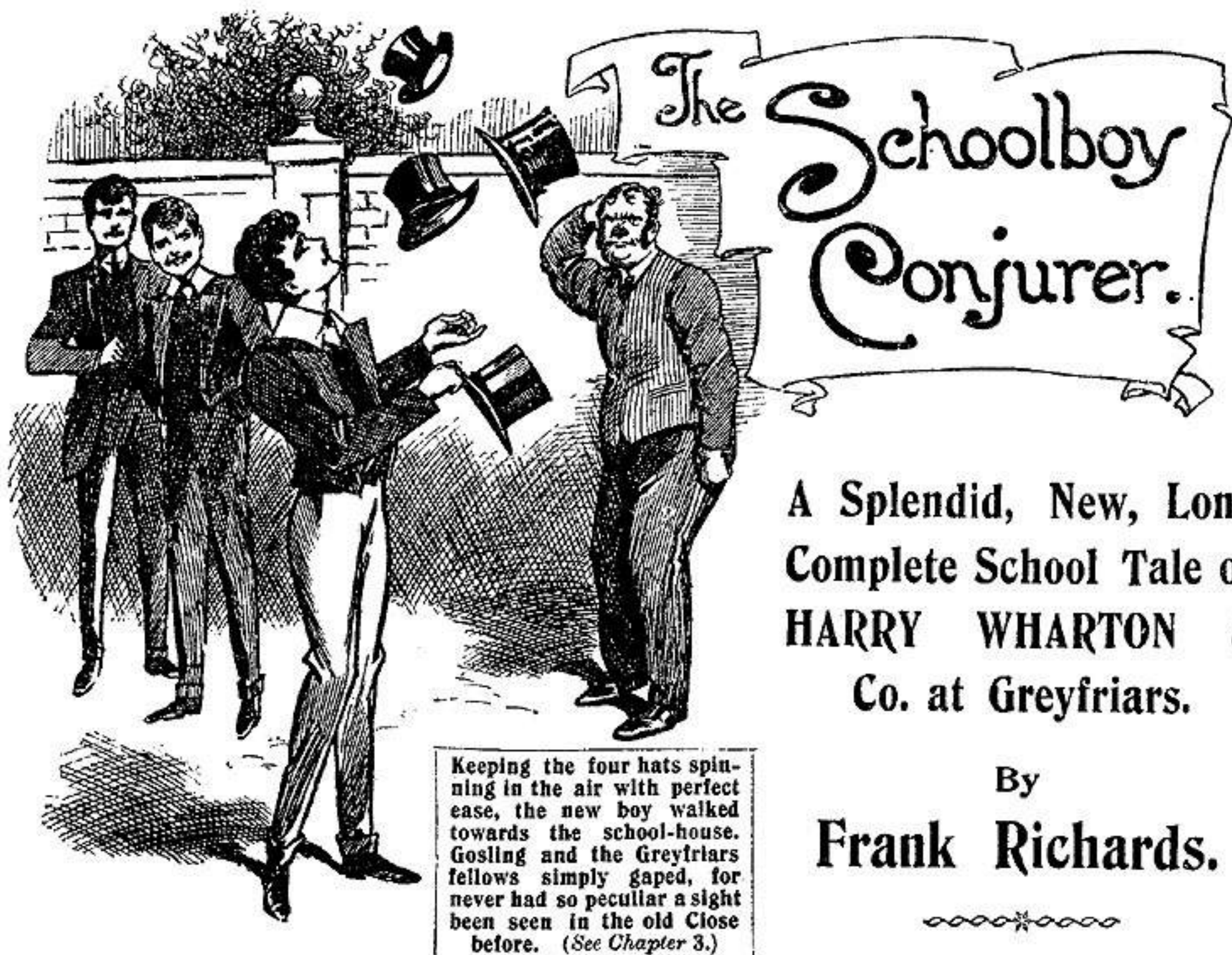
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plete School Tale.

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Keeping the four hats spin-
ning in the air with perfect
ease, the new boy walked
towards the school-house.
Gosling and the Greyfriars
fellows simply gaped, for
never had so peculiar a sight
been seen in the old Close
before. (See Chapter 3.)

A Splendid, New, Long
Complete School Tale of
**HARRY WHARTON &
Co. at Greyfriars.**

By
Frank Richards.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Quite Convinced!

"NOT a word!" said Bolsover major.
"Not a syllable!" said Vernon-Smith, the Bounder
of Greyfriars.

"Not a giddy whisper!" chuckled Snoop. "If
Wharton or Bob Cherry heard of it, the whole game would be
spoiled."

Bob Cherry, of the Remove Form at Greyfriars School,
paused in the passage.

He was passing the open door of Vernon-Smith's study as
the words were uttered, and he simply could not help hearing
them.

Bob Cherry was not the kind of fellow to play the eaves-
dropper. He swung into the doorway of Vernon-Smith's
study at once, and looked in at the three juniors. And there
were three startled exclamations all at once:

"Hallo!"

"Bob Cherry!"

"Bother you!"

Bob Cherry grinned.

"What is it that Wharton or Cherry mustn't hear?" he de-
manded. "As I happen to be Bob Cherry, I'm rather inter-
ested."

Vernon-Smith's lip curled.

"So you've been listening!" he said.

Bob flushed hotly.

"You know I haven't," he replied. "If fellows jaw in a
study with the door open, a chap can't help hearing if he's
going down the passage."

"Oh, rats!"

Bob Cherry pushed back his cuffs.

"So you say I've been listening," he said.

"Yes, I do."

"Very well. Where will you have it?"

Vernon-Smith retreated round the table as Bob advanced
upon him in an extremely warlike way.

"Oh, get out!" he growled. "We were talking about something that doesn't concern you."

"Not in the least," said Snoop.

"You mentioned my name."

"Yes, because you and Wharton and Nugent are given to meddling in what isn't your business," said Bolsover major.

"That's all. It's a joke, if you want to know, and we're not going to tell you a word about it. So you can buzz off!"

"No hurry," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Smithy offered the opinion that I was listening. I'm going to convince him that I wasn't."

"How are you going to do that?" asked the Bounder, with a sneer.

"By hammering you till you admit that you were in the wrong."

"Look here—"

Bob Cherry made a rush round the table. Vernon-Smith dodged round that article of furniture, still keeping it between him and Bob Cherry.

"Look here, Cherry," said Bolsover major, the bully of the Remove, in his most bullying tone. "You can get out of this study."

"I can," assented Bob. "But I'm not going to."

"Then you'll be put out."

"Rats!"

And Bob Cherry pursued the elusive Bounder round the table.

"Collar him!" exclaimed Snoop. "He's shoved himself in here, and now's the chance to give him a bumping. He's been asking for it for a long time."

"Good egg!" exclaimed Bolsover major. "All hands."

"Pile on him!" said the Bounder, between his teeth.

And the three cads of the Remove piled on Bob Cherry at once. Bob put up his hands, and backed away from the combined attack.

"Here, hold on!" he exclaimed. "Fair play's a jewel, you know. One at a time! Ow! Yow! Yoop!"

He was struggling with the three of them now, and he came down upon the floor with a mighty bump. Snoop yelled as Bob's heavy fist crashed upon his nose, and Vernon-Smith roared as a right-hander sent him rolling on the carpet. But then Bob Cherry was on his back, with Bolsover major sitting on his chest, Vernon-Smith jumped up and grasped his wrists, and Snoop stood upon his legs. Bob Cherry was helpless now.

"Now we've got him," said the Bounder, with a disagreeable grin, "we'll give him something for shoving himself in here."

"Rescue!" roared Bob Cherry.

A junior who was coming down the Remove passage paused to look in. It was Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. He stared at the sight.

"Gee-whiz!" he exclaimed.

"Help us, Fishy!" shouted Bob Cherry. "The cads are going for me three to one. Rescue!"

"Get out, you Yankee boulder!" shouted Bolsover major.

Fisher T. Fish hesitated.

"I guess I'd wipe up the floor with the whole crowd, Cherry!" he said. "But—"

"Well, wade in, then."

"I guess—"

"Never mind guessing. Drag these rotters off!" roared Bob.

"I guess I'd do it like a shot, and wipe up the floor with them, but I'm in a hurry," said Fisher T. Fish. "So-long!"

"Fishy—"

But Fisher T. Fish was gone. Fisher T. Fish was a great fighting-man, if his accounts of his exploits were to be believed. But it would have needed a very strong inducement to make him face the heavy fists of Bolsover major.

"You blessed funk!" roared Bob Cherry.

Bolsover major chuckled.

"You won't get Fishy to help you," he grinned; "and most of the other fellows are out. You've dropped in here at a bad time—for yourself, my son."

"Leggo!"

"Not just yet! Bump him!"

Bob Cherry, grasped by three pairs of hands, struggled desperately, but he struggled in vain. He was raised from the carpet and brought down upon it again with a sounding concussion.

Bump!

Ow!

Bump!

Yow!

Ha, ha, ha!

"Ow!" roared Bob Cherry. "Leggo, you beasts! Rescue! Rescue!"

There was a rush of feet in the passage, and Harry Wharton, Johnny Bull, and Frank Nugent of the Remove dashed into the study.

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"Fishy says—" began Wharton.

But he did not finish; he saw what was happening. He rushed to the attack, and in a moment the tables were turned. Snoop dodged round the table and bolted into the passage, but he was not stopped. He was not worthy of the steel of the chums of the Remove. Bolsover major and Vernon-Smith were collared and rolled on the floor, and Bob Cherry staggered to his feet.

"Ow!" gasped Bob. "Yow! Oh!"

"Lemme go!" roared Bolsover.

"Not just yet!" grinned Bob Cherry. "It's our turn now."

"What's the row about?" asked Nugent, taking a firmer grip upon the back of Vernon-Smith's collar, and grinding his nose a little harder into the hearthrug, while the Bounder gasped and struggled madly.

"The rotters were plotting something or other, and Smithy said I was listening. I was going to convince him that I wasn't, and they piled on me," said Bob Cherry indignantly. "One good turn deserves another! Bump them!"

"Hear, hear!"

Bump! Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Yaro-o-oh!" roared Bolsover. "Leggo! Lemme go! Yoo-o-op!"

"You beasts!" gurgled Vernon-Smith. "Ow! Oh! Leggo!"

Bump! Bump!

"Now, Smithy," said Bob Cherry cheerfully, "you're going to take back your remark after all. Was I listening?"

"Yes, you were!" yelled the infuriated Bounder.

"Good! I'll convince you that I wasn't. Hold him!"

"We've got him!" grinned Johnny Bull.

The Bounder was whirled over on his back and held in a grip of iron. Bob Cherry took the inkpot from the table and tilted it over the Bounder's face so that a thin stream of ink poured upon his nose.

"Groo-o-oh!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Better keep your mouth shut," suggested Wharton. "You may get some ink into it—there, I told you so!"

"Groo-o-o-o-c-c-h-h-h!"

"Now was I listening, Smithy?"

"Gron-ogh!"

"That isn't an answer."

"Yow-owo-gr-r-r-r-r!"

"That isn't, either. Yes or no?"

"No!" gasped the unhappy Bounder. "Oh! No! Ow!"

"There," said Bob Cherry triumphantly, as he replaced the nearly empty inkpot on the table, "I told you I'd convince you, Smithy."

"Groo-oh!"

"I'm an awfully convincing chap when I start," said Bob sweetly. "Are you sure you haven't any doubts left? There's some more ink."

"Ow! Yes! Ow!"

"Good! If any doubts should recur to your mind at any time, you've only to mention it, and I will come along and remove them."

"Groo-oh!"

And the chums of the Remove retired grinning from the study. Vernon-Smith and Bolsover major sat up and blinked at one another. Bolsover major was feeling very dusty and dishevelled, but he grinned at the sight of Vernon-Smith's inky face.

"Well, you do look a picture!" he said.

The Bounder scowled savagely.

"The rotters!" he muttered, dabbing his face with his pocket-handkerchief, and speedily reducing it to a limp and inky rag.

"Never mind, they haven't got on to the joke, anyway," said Bolsover major. "They don't know about the joke on the new kid; and we'll take it out of him!"

Then Vernon-Smith grinned, too. The cads of the Remove had been very roughly handled by the famous Co.; but there seemed to be some consolation in the idea of "taking it out" of the new boy.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not According to Programme!

"COURTFIELD!"

The train was slowing down in the junction, and Oliver Kipps, the new boy bound for Greyfriars School, looked lazily out of the window. Oliver Kipps senior laid down his newspaper, and yawned, and glanced at his son.

"This is where you change for Greyfriars, Oliver," he said.

"Yes, dad."

"I wish I could come all the way with you," said Mr. Kipps, eyeing his son very dubiously. "But—"

"I shall be all right, dad."



Vernon-Smith & Co, dragged at the door, but Kipps held it fast. "No, you don't!" he said cheerfully. "You told me that it's the right train so you're all right. If it isn't, you're all wrong; but that's your look-out." The three japed japers turned quite pale as the train gathered speed. (See Chapter 2.)

"Yes, I know you will be all right, you young rascal!" replied his father. "But—"

Kipps smiled.

"No larks, dad!" he said. "I'll go straight to Greyfriars! Honour bright!"

"And no tricks on the way, Oliver!"

"Dad!"

Mr. Kipps shook his head. Although his fame had not reached Greyfriars, where only some of the fellows happened to know that a new boy named Kipps was coming into the Remove, Mr. Kipps was celebrated in his own peculiar way.

Mr. Kipps was a famous conjurer, and he had been so successful in his profession, that the days when he had hung round agents' offices, and pushed for introductions to managers, seemed very far off indeed. Mr. Kipps had made money, and if he continued to follow his profession, it was rather from choice than necessity. But Mr. Kipps had determined that all the advantages he had lacked in his younger days should not be wanting to his son.

Kipps junior was to have the best of educations, the best of starts in life, and to turn out something better than a conjurer. That was the scheme of Mr. Kipps, and for that reason Oliver was going to Greyfriars. The only drawback to the scheme was that Oliver didn't like the idea. He had spent most of his younger years in helping his father in entertainments, and sometimes the fond parent had fancied that Oliver would excel him in his own business in the long run.

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

But the prosperous state of the Kipps' banking account put an end to that ambition for Kipps junior. Like Othello bidding farewell to the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war, Oliver Kipps junior bade farewell to the halls, to the stage, to the mysterious chest, and the mysterious screen, and the other appurtenances of conjuring life. It was a great wrench for Kipps junior; but he did not want to disappoint his father, and he made the change with as good as grace as he could muster.

But Kipps was, as he had often told his father, a born conjurer, and he would count the days till he was back at his old profession.

"You'll do your best at Greyfriars, Oliver?"

"Yes, dad."

"And don't perform the disappearing trick with the Headmaster's gown or your Form-master's books, or produce rabbits and ribbons from the porter's neck."

Kipps junior laughed.

"I'll be jolly careful, dad," he said. "But, you know, what's bred in the bone—"

"You're going to be something better than a conjurer, my son."

"There isn't anything jollier, anyway," said his son, with conviction. "I say, dad, I sometimes wish you hadn't made so much tin at the business. I'd rather be knocking around with you as we used to, than going to a public school."

Mr. Kipps patted his hopeful son affectionately.

"BARRED BY THE FACTS!"

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"I know you would, Oliver," he said softly. "But it's better for you. I've your future to think of, my boy. I've done the hard work, and now you're going to have the benefit of it."

"I'd rather stick to the old firm," said Oliver wistfully. "I'm afraid things will be frightfully slow at school, dad, after what I've been used to."

"I dare say you'll find some fun there, Oliver. You generally make things lively wherever you are, you young rascal!"

"Well, I'll do my best, dad."

"Do so, Oliver. I rely on you. Now jump out, or you'll be carried on with me in the train."

The train had stopped.

Oliver Kipps descended upon the platform, and shook hands with his father for the last time through the window of the carriage.

"Remember, Oliver," said Mr. Kipps, still apparently a little doubtful, "no larks! You're going to live in a different atmosphere altogether now, and you'll have to mind your P's and Q's."

"I'll mind 'em, dad. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, my dear boy!"

The train went on.

Oliver Kipps waved his cap after the train, and his father waved his hand from the window, and the train rolled on out of sight.

Then Kipps junior looked about him.

He was alone on the platform, with a bag in his hand, and his trunk near him, where the guard had put it down.

There was a shade upon the boy's face. He felt very much the parting with his father. They had not been separated for more than a day or two at a time as long as he could remember. Now he was to live his life alone, amid new, and strange surroundings. He had no misgivings about being able to look after himself at Greyfriars. No doubt upon that score troubled him in the least. He had been brought up to be self-reliant, and to take care of himself, and he had generally succeeded in doing so.

The lad was a picture of physical fitness. Slim, but well-developed, with liveness in all his limbs; keen, intelligent eyes; a ready brain and a ready tongue, and more experience of the world than generally falls to a dozen lads of his age. Kipps was certainly well calculated to be able to look after himself. His father had been, as he often said, his best pal, and he felt the parting keenly; but he was not accustomed to moping over what could not be helped, and he pulled himself together at once.

"Put my box in the train for Friardale, please," he said to the porter. "When does the local train go?"

"Ten minutes, sir. No. 3 platform."

"Thank you!"

And Kipps strolled away with his bag in his hand.

He resisted, with some difficulty, the desire to carry the bag with his feet, and walk down the platform on his hands. Such a mode of progression, though highly popular in the circuses where Kipps had performed many a turn as a boy acrobat, would have been quite out of keeping with Eton clothes and a silk hat, and the dignity of a Greyfriars fellow. And Kipps was glad that he had not yielded to the temptation when he saw three youths, also in Etons and silk hats, waiting in the passage which led to No. 3 platform. He guessed that they belonged to Greyfriars.

He was sure of it the next minute. The three juniors came towards him, and raised their hats very politely.

"Kipps?" asked one of them.

"That's my name," he said.

"Good! You're the new kid for Greyfriars?"

"Yes."

"Good again! I'm Vernon-Smith of the Remove. This chap is Bolsover major, and the other chap is Snoop. We're all in the Remove. It's a half-holiday at Greyfriars to-day, and we thought we'd come and meet you."

"Jolly good of you!" said Kipps.

He was a little surprised. He did not know much about public schools; but he had certainly not expected the fellows to carry politeness to the extent of coming to meet a new fellow at the station, simply because they had heard he was coming to the school.

And they did not look like specially good-natured and generous fellows either. Kipps was not suspicious; but he could not help thinking that the trio were perhaps actuated more by a desire to jape the stranger than by excessive politeness.

But he smiled an innocent smile that put the three intended japers quite off their guard. If japes were the order of the day, it was probable that Oliver Kipps would be able to keep his end up without the slightest difficulty.

"The fact is, we mean to be good to you," said Bolsover major solemnly. "There are some fellows at our school who jape new-comers, and we're down on that sort of thing."

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"That's just it," said Snoop.

"That's why we've come to meet you," Vernon-Smith explained. "We want to see you safe into Greyfriars, before any rotters like Wharton or Nugent or Cherry can have a chance to take a rise out of you."

"Thank you very much!" said Kipps simply.

"Not at all," said the Bounder airily. "We regard it as our duty, as leading members of the Form."

"Quite so," said Snoop.

"I suppose you know you change trains here for Greyfriars?" said the Bounder. "Our station is Friardale."

"Yes. No. 3 platform the porter said."

"That's his little mistake," said Vernon-Smith calmly. "There's been an alteration in—the arrangements. There's a new train been put on, and it starts from No. 6. It goes in a couple of minutes, too, so there's no time to waste."

Kipps hesitated.

"Are you going in the train?" he asked.

"Certainly; if you'd like our company to the school!"

"Thanks; I should!"

"Come along, then!"

Vernon-Smith took Kipps' arm in a very friendly manner, and led him to No. 6 platform, which was considerably crowded. A train was waiting there, and it needed only a glance to tell Kipps that it could not possibly be the local train for Friardale. He knew at a glance that it was the London express.

"First-class behind," said Vernon-Smith. "Hurry up!"

They rushed Kipps down the platform, and Bolsover major pulled a door open. The carriage was empty.

Kipps gasped.

He had suspected that the trio intended to jape him; but he had hardly imagined that they would jape him to the extent of putting him in the London express, instead of the local train for Greyfriars.

"Sure this is the right train?" he asked.

"Quite sure."

"Oh, quite!"

"Jump in!"

Kipps drew back politely.

"After you," he said, with great courtesy.

"No, no; jump in!"

"After you."

"My dear chap—"

"Stand back there!" shouted the porter.

"Buck up!" exclaimed Bolsover major. "You've no time to lose!"

"Jump in, Kipps!"

"After you," said Kipps firmly.

The three conspirators exchanged a hasty glance. After all, there was time to get in, and get out again at the last moment.

"Right-ho!" said Vernon-Smith. "Come on, you fellows!"

Vernon-Smith & Co. bundled into the carriage.

"Now, come on, Kipps!" said Vernon-Smith. "Hand me your bag!"

But Kipps did not hand in the bag.

He closed the door of the carriage, and kept his hand upon the handle outside, and smiled in through the window at the three startled juniors.

"Quite sure this is the train?" he asked affably.

"Yes, yes!"

"No mistake about it?"

"No, no!"

"Good-bye, then! I think I'll take my chance on No. 3 platform," said Kipps.

"Stand back there!" yelled a porter.

The train began to move.

Vernon-Smith turned quite pale.

He dragged at the door; but Kipps, walking along beside the train, held it fast on the outside.

"No, you don't!" said Kipps cheerfully. "If that's the right train, you're all right. If it isn't, you're all wrong, but that's your look-out."

"You—you young villain!"

"Open that door!"

"It's too late!" gasped Snoop. "I—I shouldn't dare to jump out now!"

Kipps had to run to keep beside the train now. A porter caught him by the shoulder, and jerked him away. The train rushed on. Vernon-Smith glared furiously from the window. The train was going too fast now for him to think of jumping out, and in a few seconds it was far outside the station, and speeding away between green banks on its long journey.

The three japed japers stared at one another blankly as the express tore on.

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Bolsover major. "We—we're off!"

"Oh, dear!" groaned Snoop. "The train doesn't stop for thirty miles. We shan't be back till late tonight! Oh!"

"There'll be a row!"

The Bouncer gritted his teeth.
"The young villain!" he exclaimed. "He—he knew all the time that we were japing him. He's stuck us in this train on purpose!"

"You fathead!" roared Bol-sover major. "It was all your fault. You ought not to have got into the train."

"Well, you oughtn't, for that matter."

"You told me to."

"Oh, rats!"

"Look here——"

"Rot!"

The next moment Bolsover major and Vernon-Smith were rolling about the carriage, pommelling one another. They were furious at the result of their jape, and the new boy was not at hand, so they had to wreak their rage upon one another. They were shut up in the London express, without tickets, and without a stop for thirty miles. Meanwhile, Oliver Kipps, with a gentle smile upon his face, strolled away to No. 3 platform, and caught the local train for Greyfriars.

THE THIRD CHAPTER, Kipps Forgets Himself.

THIS Greyfriars? Gosling, the school porter, was sunning himself outside his lodge when Oliver Kipps walked in at the gates and addressed that question to him.

"Yea, sir," said Gosling, eyeing the new boy. "Are you Master Kipps?"

"I have that honour," said Kipps cheerfully. "You are the headmaster, I suppose?"

Gosling looked at the questioner very suspiciously. But Kipps' face was bland and innocent, and Gosling grunted. He decided that the new boy was as big a fool as he looked, and looked as big a fool as he was.

"No, I ain't," he said gruffly.

"One of the governors, perhaps?" ventured Kipps.

"I'm the porter," growled Gosling.

"Oh! If you're the porter, then perhaps you'll take my box in," said Kipps, as the cabman from the station trundled it down.

"Looks 'eavy, Master Kipps," said Gosling, inwardly debating how extensive a tip he might expect from the new junior for taking his box in.

"Yes, that's because it is heavy," explained Kipps. "But you show great perspicacity in observing that at a glance. It shows what education will do for a man."

Gosling stared at him. He had never heard a junior talk quite like that before, and he did not know what to make of it.

He was still more surprised the next moment. Kipps extended his hand, and took hold of the rim of Gosling's ancient high hat, and gently removed it from his head. He balanced it on the tip of his finger before the eyes of the astounded porter. Gosling did not know that he had had to deal with the hopeful son of Oliver Kipps, the famous conjurer and acrobat, and he began to suspect that the new boy was mad.

"Gimme my 'at!" he exclaimed.

Instead of doing so, Kipps took off his own topper with his left hand, and balanced that on the tip of a finger. Then he made both hats fly into the air, and kept them bobbing up and down one after the other, backing away from Gosling as he did so, but not allowing either hat to fall to the ground.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Coker of the Fifth, coming up to see the strange sight. "Here's a blessed conjurer! Oh!"

As he was speaking his own hat was jerked off, and Kipps added it to those he was keeping spinning in the air.

He kept the three hats going as easily as the two.

"Well, I'm blessed!" exclaimed Potter, Coker's chum. "If he handled my hat like that I'd— Hallo! Oh! Let my hat alone!"

A deft jerk, and Potter's hat joined the other three.

Keeping the four hats spinning in the air with perfect ease, the new boy walked away towards the School House.

The school porter and the Greyfriars fellows simply gaped. Never had so peculiar a sight been seen in the old Close before.

"Well, my hat!" gasped Coker of the Fifth faintly.

"And my hat, too!" howled Potter.

"And my 'at!" roared Gosling. "Wot I says is this 'ere—that kid's mad!"

A group of Removers were adorning the School House steps, and they stared at the new-comer and roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Is this a free entertainment, or what?"

"Mind your hat!" yelled Wharton.

But it was too late!

Bob Cherry's hat had been jerked off, and was added to the rest. Five toppers were now spinning in the air, kept going with perfect ease by the youthful conjurer.

Kipps' face was set and serious. He had quite forgotten

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where he was now; he was only thinking of keeping the hats spinning in the air.

There was a rush of fellows from all sides to see the extraordinary sight.

The five toppers spun with wonderful accuracy, as fast as they came down the ready hand of the conjurer sending them spinning up again.

"Great Scott!"

"A giddy conjurer!"

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, came out of the School House. He had heard the noise, and wondered what it meant. He came out quickly, and then stopped all of a sudden as he caught sight of the spinning hats and the serious, earnest face of the conjurer.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is—is extraordinary!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Boy! I suppose you are Kipps——"

Kipps made no reply. He did not even see the Form-master. He spun the hats unceasingly, till they moved so fast that the juniors could scarcely follow their movements with the eye.

"Kipps!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Dear me! The boy appears to be deaf! Kipps!"

Mr. Quelch advanced hastily towards the new boy. Then he uttered an exclamation of amazement. Kipps had snatched the mortar-board from his head, and added it to the spinning hats, keeping the six going with perfect ease. There was a yell from the crowd of Greyfriars fellows.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch stood dumbfounded for a moment.

That any junior, new boy or old boy, would dare to lay sacrilegious hands upon his mortar-board had never entered his wildest imaginings.

"Boy!" he thundered, when he recovered his voice.

Kipps did not speak.

The five hats and the mortar-board spun and spun with rapid movements.

"Boy! Kipps!"

No answer!

Mr. Quelch strode at the new boy and grasped him by the shoulder.

"Look out!" roared Kipps. "You'll spoil the trick!"

"Goodness gracious! Boy!"

"There—you've done it now!"

Kipps could not keep the hats afloat with the Form-master grasping him by the shoulder and shaking him violently.

The hats and the mortar-board crashed upon the ground.

"You've done it now!" said Kipps.

"Well, I never did!" gasped Gosling, who had pursued Kipps and his captured hat as far as the School House.

"Wot I says is this 'ere——"

"The cheeky young rascal!" exclaimed Coker of the Fifth.

Mr. Quelch shook Kipps vigorously.

"Boy! What do you mean? Are you mad?"

Kipps blinked at him. He realised what he had been doing, now that the spell was broken, and he turned red.

"Oh!" he gasped. "I—I forgot! I hope the hats aren't damaged. I'm sorry!"

"You—you took my cap from my head, boy!"

"Yes, sir."

"What is the matter with you? How dare you?"

"I—I—I——"

"Follow me to my study, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, majestically replacing the mortar-board. "Follow me at once!"

"Yes, sir," gasped the dismayed Kipps.

And he followed the offended great man into the house, leaving the Greyfriars fellows exclaiming and chuckling.

"Well, that new merchant is a queer customer, and no mistake!" said Bob Cherry, as he dusted his hat with his sleeve. "Never saw anything quite like that before."

"Wot I says is this 'ere," granted Gosling, as he recovered his hat: "he wants shetting up in a strait-weskit, that's wot I says!"

And Gosling retired growling.

"Well, he hasn't hurt my hat," said Coker, looking at it. "Must be a giddy conjurer, or something. Jolly clever, anyway."

The new boy had created quite a sensation at Greyfriars. Quite a crowd of fellows waited for him to come out of Mr. Quelch's study, curious to see something more of him. Kipps had followed the Remove master into his study in some dismay. He realised that Mr. Quelch was a master in the school, and that the matter might be serious.

Mr. Quelch regarded him with a stern frown.

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"Now, perhaps you have some explanation to offer for your extraordinary conduct?" he rapped out tartly.

Kipps hung his head.

"I'm sorry, sir. I forgot."

"Forgot what?"

"Where I was, sir," said Kipps, regaining confidence a little. "You see, sir, I'm a conjurer, and—and I haven't got out of the habit of it yet, sir."

Mr. Quelch regarded him curiously.

"I have been told something of you, Kipps," he said. "I understand that you are the son of a well-known performer?"

"Yes, sir," said Kipps promptly. "Performed before all the crowned heads of Europe, sir."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"You must not play that kind of trick here, Kipps," he said.

"No, sir."

"Above all, you must learn that respect is due to a Form-master. I am the master of the Remove, the Form you are entering."

"Yes, sir. I didn't mean to be disrespectful, sir. I just forgot where I was for the moment. Force of habit, sir."

"Very well. I shall excuse you this time, but you must be more careful."

"Thank you, sir; I will."

"You may go."

And Kipps went, glad to escape so cheaply. When he had left the study, and the door was closed, Mr. Quelch laughed.

"What an extraordinary boy!" he murmured.

He was quite right in that. Oliver Kipps was an extraordinary boy, as Greyfriars was destined to discover.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Hat Trick.

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

"Here's Kipps!"

"Here's the giddy conjurer!"

Kipps glanced round in surprise. A crowd of juniors surrounded him as he reached the end of the passage. Remembering his adventure at Courtfield Junction, Kipps was uneasy for a moment, but he saw at once that it was not a ragging. The fellows were curious about him, that was all.

"You're Kipps?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Yes."

"Coming into the Remove?"

"The Lower Fourth," said Kipps.

"That's right, that's the Remove—our Form!" said Nugent.

"Where did you learn to spin six hats at a time?"

Kipps laughed.

"I've been able to do that since I was nine," he replied.

"Great Scott!"

"But where did you learn?" asked Harry Wharton.

"My father's a conjurer," Kipps explained. "I used to help him in the shows—conjuring and acrobat, you know. It's born in me, and I can't help it."

"You'd better let the Form-master's headgear alone, though," said Bulstrode, with a chuckle. "Were you licked?"

"No. The Form-master's a brick!"

"Yes, he's all right; but I wouldn't try him a second time," grinned Bob Cherry. "Can you do all the conjuring tricks—make fire come out of your mouth, and pink ribbon out of your ears, and white rabbits out of your collar?"

"That's all baby work for me."

"Well, you shall give us a show, then," said Wharton. "We used to have a chap here once, named Levison, who could do conjuring; but he wasn't up to your mark."

"No fear!" said Bob Cherry.

"I guess I could do that hat trick," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "It wasn't bad exactly; but you should see our conjurers over there."

"Over where?" asked Kipps.

"In the Yu-nited States, of course," said Fish, with condescension. "I guess we can knock spots off what you can do in the Old Country. You fellows, lend me some hats, and I'll show you how it's done!"

"Not my hat!" said Bob Cherry promptly.

"Nor mine!"

"Nor mine!"

"I guess I could beat that trick hollow!" said Fisher T. Fish confidently. "There's really nothing at all in it, you know! It only requires knack!"

"Have you got the knack?" grinned Nugent.

"I guess so. You lend me a couple of silk toppers, and I'll show you something in spinning hats," said Fisher T. Fish.

Bob Cherry winked at his chums.

"Right ho!" he said. "I'll fetch a couple! Wait here!"

Bob Cherry rushed away. The juniors waited, grinning. They did not expect to see Fisher T. Fish perform a conjuring trick successfully. The American junior was given to fancy.

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ing that he could do anything that anybody else could do, and do it a little better. And though he generally, if not always, failed to bring it off, his self-confidence never underwent any diminution. After every failure he came up smiling, so to speak, with an undiminished reliance upon his powers to beat anything that could be done in the Old Country.

Bob Cherry returned with a topper in each hand.

"Here you are, Fishy!" he said.

Fisher T. Fish took the two toppers.

"Now, you watch me!" he said.

"Go it; we're watching!"

Fisher T. Fish spun one hat in the air, and then the other. He grabbed at them wildly as they came down, and missed both of them, and they rolled on the floor. There was a shout of laughter.

Fisher T. Fish picked up the hats, looking rather red.

"That's only a beginning!" he exclaimed. "I've not got my hand in yet. Just you watch me when I get going."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fish spun the hats up again. Kipps reached out and caught them as Fisher T. Fish missed them, and kept them spinning.

"Here, you let 'em alone!" exclaimed Fish indignantly.

"Who's doing this trick?"

"Looks to me as if Kipps is!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess—Oh!"

One of the hats settled upon Fisher T. Fish's head, and stayed there. He grabbed it off, and then the other settled in its place. It was a difficult trick, but Kipps performed it evidently without an effort. Fisher T. Fish took off the second hat.

"I guess I can do that, too," he said. "You watch me."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fish spun the hats into the air again. He made a jump to catch them as they came down, and again missed them. He missed his footing, too, in grabbing at them and stumbled over, and there was a loud squeal as one of the toppers was crushed under his weight.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher rolled off hurriedly, and rolled on the other topper, which had fallen beside him.

Crunch!

The juniors shrieked.

The two toppers were reduced into faulty imitations of concertinas now, and evidently would never be of any further use as toppers. Fisher T. Fish picked himself up, and picked up the toppers, and blinked at them.

"Gee-whiz," he exclaimed, "I can't perform tricks with these old hats, Bob Cherry! I couldn't keep 'em up in that state!"

"Nor in any other state, I fancy! Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess if you like to fetch me some more——"

"No fear; the supply's run out!"

"Then it's off," said Fish. "I guess I'm sorry your toppers are ruined, but I must say you're taking it very well." Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Doesn't worry me at all," he said.

"I guess they must have cost ten-and-six each," said Fisher T. Fish, who was very careful with his own money.

"How much do you pay for your toppers?"

"Fifteen-and-six!"

"Gee-whiz! Well, you must be rolling in money if you don't mind seeing toppers smashed that you gave fifteen-and-six each for."

"I didn't give anything for those toppers."

"Gee-whiz! Did you get them for nothing?"

"No."

"Then how?"

"You see, they're not mine," explained Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha! You've brought somebody else's toppers for me to play with it—is that it?" shouted Fish.

"That's it!"

"I guess the chap will be riled," said Fisher T. Fish. "But I reckon it was sensible of you, too. Whose are they?"

"Yours!"

"Wha-a-a-a!"

"Yours!" said Bob Cherry calmly.

The expression of Fisher T. Fish's face was extraordinary. The juniors shrieked with laughter as they looked at him.

"M-m-mine!" gasped Fish.

"Yes."

"You—you brought my toppers here to play tricks with?" yelled Fish.

"Certainly! You told me to fetch a couple of toppers," said Bob Cherry innocently, "so I went to your study and fetched yours—your Sunday topper, and your week-day topper. I thought it was best for you to perform tricks with your own hats, you know."



"Look out in goal!" roared the defenders. But Kipps was looking out. Harry Wharton sent the ball in with a quick drive—but Kipps was there. Still keeping the spinning balls in the air, he caught the footer, and added it to the rest, and spun it in the air with the other balls. (See Chapter 10.)

"You—you—you——"
The juniors yelled.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Look here," roared Fisher T. Fish furiously, "somebody will have to pay for those hats!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
"I guess it will be you then!" chuckled Bob Cherry.
"Ha, ha, ha!"
And the juniors streamed away, leaving Fisher T. Fish regarding his two ruined toppers with feelings too deep for words.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER. The Return of the Japers.

KIPPS had made friends at once. His peculiar mode of announcing his arrival had taken the fancy of the juniors: and most of the fellows, too, admired a chap who could "do things." Kipps could certainly "do things," though they were somewhat peculiar things. A fellow greatly gifted as a conjurer, and

not always able to resist the temptation to conjure, and, moreover, gifted with a peculiar sense of humour, was likely to find some trouble on his way; but, so far, he had not found any.

He had tea with the Famous Five in Study No. 1, and after tea he came down into the common-room with Harry Wharton & Co. The juniors gathered round him in the common-room, and somebody brought him a supply of cricket-balls to give an exhibition of his spinning powers, and Kipps good-naturedly gave it. He kept nine or ten cricket-balls spinning in the air at the same time, amid exclamations of admiration from the Remove fellows. His skill was, as Hurree Jamset Ram Singh of the Remove remarked, terrific. And when Kipps walked round the room with a chair balanced on his chin, and another on each hand, at the same time keeping a poker upright on his nose, the applause was loud and long.

In the interest of Kipps' performance, no one noticed for a long time that Vernon-Smith and Bolsover major and Snoop were absent. They had missed calling-over, and they had not come in since. They had not come in when Harry

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Wharton & Co. went to their studies to do their preparation, taking Kipps with them. A little later, Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, looked into the junior common-room.

"Has Vernon-Smith come in yet?" he asked.

"Haven't seen him, Wingate," said Bulstrode.

"Or the other two?"

"They're not here."

Wingate frowned.

"Tell them to come to my study when they do come in," he said.

"Right-ho!"

And Wingate went away with knitted brows. It was getting towards bed-time for the juniors, and the Bounder & Co. were still absent.

"I wonder what's become of Smithy?" said Micky Desmond. "Sure, I thought they went to Courtfield. But what's kapin' them?"

"Something fishy!" growled Johnny Bull. "There'll be a row when they do come in, anyway!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hallo, Bunter! Do you know where they are?" asked Bulstrode. "You generally know everything that doesn't matter to you."

"Oh, really, Bulstrode! I happened to be——"

"Listening at a keyhole?" asked Ogilvy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I happened to be near them when they were talking," said Bunter, with dignity.

"And you happened to hear what they said?" grinned Bulstrode.

"Yes, as it happened——"

"Generally happens like that," said Trevor. "What did you happen to hear them say, Bunter?"

"They were going to Courtfield to meet the new chap and jape him," said Bunter. "They were going to put him in the London express, and pretend that it was the train for Friardale. He, he, he!"

"I don't see anything to cackle at in that," said Bulstrode. "Rotten trick, I call it! The kid would have got landed thirty miles from Greyfriars late in the evening, and without a ticket, too."

"Let's ask Kipps if he's seen them!"

"My hat," said Bulstrode, "I wonder—— Ha, ha, ha! They may have got into the train themselves! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, here they are!"

Three tired, and dusty, and ill-tempered juniors came into the room. They were Vernon-Smith, Snoop, and Bolsover major. They glared round the common-room as if in search of somebody.

"Has that new kid got here?" demanded Bolsover major.

"Kipps?"

"Yes, Kipps! That's his rotten name, the rotter!"

"You're to go to Wingate's study," grinned Bulstrode.

"Wingate wants to see you very specially."

"Blow Wingate!" growled Bolsover major. "I'm not going!"

"What did you say, Bolsover?"

It was George Wingate's quiet voice at the door. Bolsover swung round, turning very red.

"Oh!" he stammered. "I—I said——"

"Yes?"

"I—I said——ahem!——"

"Did you?" said Wingate drily. "I thought you said something quite different."

"I—I——"

"As I overheard you, I will not say anything more about that," added Wingate, much to Bolsover major's relief.

"Have you juniors just come in?"

"Yes," growled Vernon-Smith.

"Where have you been?"

"We got into a train at Courtfield by—by mistake," said the Bounder. "We—we intended to take the train to Friardale, and it turned out to be the London express."

Wingate looked at him sharply. There was a chuckle from some of the juniors who had heard Billy Bunter's revelation.

"That was a very peculiar mistake to make, Vernon-Smith," said the prefect sharply.

Vernon-Smith nodded coolly.

"Yes, wasn't it?" he said.

"Are you telling the truth?"

"These fellows will tell you the same," said the Bounder sullenly. "We've had to pay; or, rather, Bolsover and I had to pay, as Snoop hadn't any money. The railway people wouldn't take any notice of its being a mistake, and they were going to detain us."

"It was a very extraordinary mistake to make," said Wingate. "I cannot understand it. The local train starts from quite a different platform. Is it true, Bolsover?"

"We went in the London train," said Bolsover major, "and we certainly didn't mean to. There wasn't any fun in

being carried thirty miles away, and having to wait for trains to come home by."

"None at all," said Snoop; "and I paid three shillings towards it."

"Well, it serves you right for being so stupid," said Wingate. "A fag in the Second Form ought not to have made a mistake like that. Still, if you've had to pay your fares to the first stop of the express, and the fares back, you've been hit pretty hard, I think."

"It came to nearly a quid altogether," said Vernon-Smith.

"Well, it was your own fault. As you've got a good reason to give for missing call-over, I'll speak to Mr. Quelch about it. You can get off to bed."

"All right."

Wingate turned away, and the Remove went up to bed, the three returned japers with them. Harry Wharton & Co. were already in the dormitory, with Oliver Kipps; they had come up from the study. Vernon-Smith gritted his teeth as he saw the new junior, and he strode towards him, with Bolsover and Snoop at his heels. Kipps was seated on the edge of his bed, taking his boots off, and he glanced up as the Bounder came bearing down upon him.

"Hallo, you've got in?" he asked affably.

"Yes, you cad!" said Vernon-Smith.

"And now we're going to make you smart for the trick you played us," exclaimed Bolsover major.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "What's that? I didn't know that you fellows knew Kipps?"

"We met him at Courtfield," growled Bolsover major.

"They tried to get me into the London express, instead of the local train," Kipps explained, with a grin. "It was a little joke, but it worked out the wrong way for them. I got them into the train instead."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So that's where you've been, Smithy," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Yes," snarled Vernon-Smith.

"And I suppose that's the jape you were planning to-day when I convinced you that I wasn't listening," said Bob Cherry.

"We're going to make this cad sit up for it," said Bolsover major savagely. "It's cost us a quid, and he's going to pay it."

"You've only got yourselves to blame," said Wharton. "It was a rotten caddish joke to play on a new boy, and it serves you right. If it had been some kid like Banthorpe, he might have been scared out of his wits at finding himself in the express for London. The new kid gave you just what you deserved."

"Hear, hear!" said Bob Cherry.

"You can mind your own business. We're going to bump that cad for fooling us!"

"You're not!"

"Who says we're not?" roared Bolsover major belligerently.

"I do," said Harry Wharton calmly. "I'm captain of the Remove, and I'm not going to see the new kid bullied. Shut up!"

"Them's my sentiments, too," grinned Bob Cherry. "If you're looking for a specially big thick ear, Bolsover, you've only got to keep on."

"The thickfulness of the honourable ear will be terrific," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, the dusky nabob of Bhanipur.

Wingate came into the Remove dormitory.

"Not in bed yet, you kids!" he said.

And the would-be ragers gave it up. The Remove went to bed, and Wingate turned the light out and retired. But Vernon-Smith & Co. had not given up their idea. There was a good deal of whispering from the direction of the Bounder's and Bolsover major's beds, and it continued after the other fellows had gone to sleep.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Disappearance.

"Y OW! Ow! Yoo-o-op!"

Oliver Kipps started suddenly out of sleep. For a moment he imagined that an earthquake and a flood had smitten Greyfriars simultaneously.

Then he realised that he was being bumped out of bed by two pairs of strong hands, and that he was crashing on a hard floor, and that at the same moment a third person was swamping cold water over him.

Swosh! Swish! Bump!

"Yaroo-oh! Oh!"

"Now, you cad, I think we're about even!" chuckled Bolsover major, in the darkness.

"Give him some more!" muttered Snoop.

"Goo-oo!"

"Bump the cad!"

"Ow! Ow! Oh!"
Kipps wrenched himself fiercely away from his assailants. He was aching severely from the heavy bumping on the floor, and he was drenched with cold water. He jerked himself away, and stumbled against a bed in the darkness, and fell again. The three raggies piled on him at once, but Kipps struck out, and there was a howl from Snoop.

"Ow! Ow! Hold the beast! Ow! He's smashed my—ow!—nose! Yow!"

Kipps jumped clear again.
"Collar him!" howled Snoop.
"There he is!" said Bolsover major, making a rush.
Kipps dodged him again.
"Wait a minute. I'll get a light," exclaimed the Bounder.
"I've got a candle here somewhere."
"Good!"

Voices were heard in the dormitory now; the other fellows had awakened.

"What's the row about?" called out Bob Cherry drowsily.
"Oh, go to sleep!" said Bolsover.
"Are you ragging the new kid?"
"Mind your own business!"

There was a sound of the window opening at the end of the dormitory. Then there came a sound that froze the blood of the juniors. It was a shriek, followed by a crashing sound outside the window, as something heavy tore down through the thick ivy.

"Good heavens!" shouted Harry Wharton. "He's fallen out of window!"

"He's jumped out!"
"Great Scott!"

Wharton leaped out of bed. Even Billy Bunter was awake now. Matches were struck on all sides, and three or four candle-ends were lighted. The dormitory was dimly illuminated from end to end.

The window was open.
The cold night wind from the sea blew into the dormitory, and made the juniors shiver.

But of the new boy there was nothing to be seen.
Vernon-Smith and Bolsover major and Snoop gazed at the open window with eyes wide and jaws agape.

"You rotters!" howled Bob Cherry. "You've done this!"
"We—we didn't!" gasped Vernon-Smith. "He wasn't near the window when we touched him. How could we guess the idiot would try to get out of window?"

"What did he want to do it for, anyway?" said Bolsover major, white as chalk. "We weren't going to hurt him."

"Only j-j-just bumped him out of bed," stammered Snoop.

"You've frightened him, and he thought it was burglars or something," said Tom Brown. "He's gone out of the window, anyway. I distinctly heard something falling through the ivy outside. And I heard him yell."

"So did I!"
"And I!"

"He must be—be—be——" Wharton paused. He could not speak the word. The juniors looked at one another with scared faces. Well they knew that anyone who had fallen from that window must have been smashed upon the hard ground far below.

"Dead!" muttered Russell.

"Good heavens!"

"He—he may have climbed down the ivy," muttered Snoop, with chattering teeth. "It was all Smithy's fault. I didn't want to touch the poor fellow. It was Smithy's idea from the beginning."

"Was it, you cad?" said Vernon-Smith, with a bitter sneer.

"Yes, it was, and you know it was; and I shall tell the Head so."

"Hold your tongue, you cur!" growled Bolsover major.

"We were all three in it, and we're all up against it now. We couldn't possibly tell that the mad young idiot would fall out of window."

"Begad, you ought to be ashamed of yourselves, you know!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Why couldn't you let the poor chap alone?"

"Wish to goodness we had," muttered Bolsover. "But who'd have thought of this?"

"He may have climbed down the ivy," suggested Russell hopefully. "He must be a good climber, if he's been an acrobat."

"Yes; it may be one of his giddy professional tricks," said Hazeldene.

"I heard something fall," said Tom Brown.

Wharton ran to the window, and mounted to the sill, and looked out. But the darkness was too thick for him to see the ground.

He descended within again.

"Did you see him?"

"No. But the ivy's broken away just under the window."

"That settles it," said Newland.

"I'm afraid so."

"He must have been mad," said Vernon-Smith hoarsely.

"He couldn't have fancied we were really going to hurt him—not bad enough to make him climb out of the window."

"He did, though, or he wouldn't have done it."
"He must be potty."

"Faith, and it looks loike it!" said Micky Desmond. "But potty or not, the poor gossoon is kilt intirely now."

"You'd better go and tell Mr. Quelch at once, Smithy," said Nugent.

The Bounder shivered.

"I'm not going to tell him."

"Well, somebody must."

The Bounder was livid. His reputation at Greyfriars was not good; and he could imagine what he would have to face when it was known that a new boy had jumped out of the dormitory window, because he was startled at being ragged in the middle of the night by the Bounder and his associates. Instant expulsion from the school was the lightest penalty the Bounder had to expect; and in his concern for himself Vernon-Smith quite forgot to think of the victim's fate.

"Look here, you chaps," said the Bounder, all his insolence gone, and his tone low and pleading, "let's keep this dark."

"What!"

"No need to say anything about it. Don't sneak! It—it will be supposed that he walked in his sleep, and fell out——"

"You rotter!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "If you don't go and tell Quelch at once, I'll go!"

"Look here——"

"Oh, shut up!"

Bob Cherry turned and strode towards the door. As he did so, his glance fell upon the new boy's bed, and he gave a yell.

All the juniors had been staring towards the fatal window, and they had their backs to the beds. Bob Cherry could scarcely believe his eyes. For there, in the new boy's bed, smiling sweetly, was Kipps!

"Kipps!" roared Bob Cherry.

"What!"

"Look!"

"Great Scott!"

"The—the rotten spoofer!"

The terror of Vernon-Smith & Co. turned to fury at once as they realised that they had been japed. They glared at the new junior as if they could eat him.

"How on earth did you get in?" demanded Wharton, in amazement.

"Into bed, do you mean? Stepped in."

"No, fathead—into the dormitory."

"I haven't been out of it."

"What! You got out of window——"

"No, I didn't," said Kipps cheerfully. "I opened the window and gave a yawn; but that was only my little joke. Then I slipped under this bed, before you got the lights going. I wanted to see how Smithy would take it."

"You—you awful spoofer!"

"But I heard you fall!" roared Tom Brown.

Kipps shook his head.

"I don't see how you could have," he said.

"I heard something fall, anyway," said the New Zealander junior. "And Wharton says the ivy's broken away under the window."

"Perhaps you heard what I heaved out into the ivy," said Kipps, with a grin. "I wanted to make it realistic, you know. I heaved out a bundle of clothes."

"Great Scott! Whose clothes?"

"I don't know, but I think they must have been Smithy's clothes. I grabbed them off the chair next to his bed."

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Smithy glanced at the chair where his attire had reposed. The chair was empty now. It was evidently the Bounder's clothes that Kipps had hurled out of the window, to lend reality to the little game he had played. The expression on the Bounder's face was indescribable. The juniors yelled as they looked at him.

"You—you've chucked my clothes out of the window?" gasped Vernon-Smith, at last.

Kipps nodded coolly.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" he remarked.

"I'll smash you!" roared the Bounder.

He rushed furiously at the grinning Kipps.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER. Loder is Surprised.

BOB CHERRY gave a shout.

"Look out, Kippy!"

But Kipps was looking out.

He rolled off the bed on the farther side as Vernon-Smith rushed at him, and the Bounder halted at the bed, breathing fury.

"Let me get at you, you cad!" he shouted.

"Come on!" said Kipps politely.

"I'll collar him soon enough," exclaimed Bolsover major. "No you won't," said Bob Cherry. "Fair play's a jewel; and one to one is enough. You're not going to pile on him!" "I can manage the cad!" panted the Bounder. "I'll give him the licking of his life!"

He scrambled over the bed at the new junior.

Kipps backed away, and the Bounder followed him, brandishing his fists. Vernon-Smith was a good boxer, though he was not much given to fistieuffs. But he was bigger than the new boy, and he did not think that the slim and agile Kipps would be able to stand against him for long. And he meant to give Kipps a hammering that he would remember for many a long day.

He made a sudden spring at Kipps, and grasped him.

"Got you now, you funk!" he exclaimed.

Kipps grinned.

"Yes, you've got me now," he agreed.

"Now I'm going to—oh!"

The Bounder gasped with amazement.

Kipps had closed with him, and it seemed to the Bounder as if he were enclosed in a steel vice. There was unsuspected strength in the sinuous arms of the boy acrobat. The Bounder's own grasped relaxed suddenly, and he wriggled desperately to get loose. All of a sudden his feet left the floor, and he whirled in the air. He had a momentary impression that he was sailing through boundless space. Then—

Bump!

The Bounder found himself sitting on his bed, hardly knowing how he had got there. The Removites stared. Vernon-Smith was a good weight for a junior, and they were amazed to see him tossed through the air as easily as if he had been a pillow or a bolster.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "This chap is a second Sandow!"

"How do you do it?" gasped Bob Cherry.

Kipps chuckled.

"It's knack more than strength," he said. "Now, if that big chap—Bolsover, I think, you call him—is spoiling for trouble, I'll serve him the same."

Bolsover snorted contemptuously.

"You jolly well couldn't!" he exclaimed.

"Come and see!"

"I jolly well will!" growled Bolsover. "I'll wipe up the floor with you!"

He rushed at Kipps. They closed and clinched, and the next moment Bolsover's feet swept up in the air, and his head tapped gently on the floor. Kipps had turned him upside-down with perfect ease.

The juniors roared at the strange spectacle.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gerrooh!" gasped Bolsover. "Yowp!"

Kipps gave him another turn, and tossed him upon the bed beside Vernon-Smith. Bolsover's arms flew out wildly, and one of them caught the Bounder across the face, and Vernon-Smith gave a yell.

"Look out, you clumsy ass!"

"Gerrout of the way, then!" grunted Bolsover.

"You chump!"

"Serve you right."

"Now, then, Snoop, it's your turn," said Kipps cheerfully.

But Snoop did not want to take his turn. He made a dive for his bed.

"It—it's all right," stuttered Snoop. "I give you best, you know. I don't want to be chucked about. I'm sorry we woke you up; it was all Smithy's doing. You can chuck Smithy about, if you like. You let me alone."

Kipps laughed.

"My hat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What a surprise packet to spring on Coker of the Fifth one of these times. Kippy, my son, you're worth your weight in gold. I say, Fishy, could you chuck chaps about like that?"

Fisher T. Fish nodded.

"I guess so," he said. "I'll try with you, if you like."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Bounder and Bolsover were looking very sheepish. Even Bolsover, the bully of the Remove, big fellow as he was, was not anxious to tackle the peculiar new junior again. In size and strength he had undoubtedly the advantage; but Oliver Kipps' peculiar gifts made him too dangerous an adversary.

"Cave!" called out Morgan suddenly. There was a sound of footsteps in the passage.

The juniors made a rush for their beds.

But it was too late.

The dormitory door opened, and Loder, the prefect, looked in. It was not Loder's turn of duty in looking after the Remove; for the current week that doubtful pleasure appertained to Wingate, the captain of the school. But Loder was always looking out for an opportunity of scoring off his old enemies in the Remove.

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"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
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Loder of the Sixth frowned majestically as he saw the candles alight, and nearly all the Remove out of bed in night-shirts and pyjamas.

"Oh, a pretty state of affairs!" said Loder. "I shall report you all in the morning. What have you young scoundrels been up to?"

There was no reply. Nobody felt inclined to tell Loder that the disturbance had been caused by Vernon-Smith and Bolsover's ragging the new junior in the middle of the night. The blame belonged to the Bounder & Co.; but the Removites did not care to sneak.

"What are you up to, I say?" roared Loder.

"Snuff!" said Bob Cherry softly.

"What!"

"Snuff!"

"What do you mean by snuff, you young ass?"

"You asked what we were up to," said Bob Cherry, in the most docile tone, "I said we were up to snuff. So we are."

There was a chuckle.

Loder of the Sixth turned red.

"You will take a hundred lines, Cherry," he said. "Get into bed. You're making a good beginning, you new kid," added Loder, scowling at Kipps. "Don't you know that you're not allowed to join in rags in the middle of the night?"

"Well, I didn't want to," said Kipps.

"Oh! I think I see—this is a ragging of a new boy," said Loder. "Tell me who did it, Kipps. Was it Wharton?"

"No."

"Cherry or Nugent?"

"No."

"Then who was it?" demanded the prefect.

All the Removites had their eyes upon Kipps now. As a new fellow, he might not know the ropes sufficiently well to know that it was not in the Greyfriars code to give the names of the offenders. Loder had hoped to get the names of some of his pet abominations in the Remove—Harry Wharton & Co.—but he was disappointed. But now that he had begun to inquire, he felt bound to go on.

"I'd rather not say, thank you," said Kipps. "I don't mind. It's all in the day's work, you know."

Loder scowled.

"It's not a question of what you'd rather," he said. "Do you know that I'm a prefect?"

"I didn't know," said Kipps.

"Well, you know it now. Answer me."

"Just a minute," said Kipps, who had been folding up his clothes, which had been knocked off the chair by the raggers in their attack upon him. "Excuse me—"

He advanced towards the prefect with a look of concern on his face. Loder stared at him.

"What the—"

"I suppose you don't know that you've got a beetle on your neck?" said Kipps.

"A beetle?"

"Look!"

Kipps stretched out his hand and touched Loder's neck. Then he showed in his palm a wriggling, struggling beetle. Loder shuddered, and his hand went up to his neck.

"G-g-g-good heavens! Where did the horrible thing come from?" he gasped. "Why, I—"

"Hallo, here's another!"

Kipps showed a beetle in his other palm, after touching Loder's neck. He did not seem to mind the contact of the wriggling horrors. Loder turned quite pale. To have a beetle on his neck under his collar was a far from pleasant experience.

"You seem to be swarming with them," said Kipps, taking another beetle from Loder's collar. "You'd better get those clothes off, I should think."

Loder wriggled spasmodically. He felt an itching in the small of his back, and he was convinced that it was another beetle. The thought of having a beetle inside his clothes next to his skin made him feel sick.

"Ow! There's one down my back!" he stuttered. "Where did the horrible things come from? Ow! Groooh!"

Loder did not waste a moment. He dashed out of the dormitory, without stopping to close the door after him. He ran straight to his own room, and began tearing off his clothes in terrific haste, to shake out the insect he felt on his back. Kipps closed the door of the dormitory, and smiled.

"Well, that was jolly lucky!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "What a jolly queer thing that Loder should have beetles on him!"

"Jolly queer!" said Wharton, with a suspicious look at Kipps. "Is it some more of your blessed conjuring, Kipps?"

Kipps chuckled.

He laid the beetles on the coverlet of his bed, and the juniors looked at them. They were wriggling, and seemed nearly all legs.



The door of the study was flung violently open, and Manners dashed in. "I've got it!" he yelled, waving a piece of parchment excitedly. "I've got it, you chaps!" (An incident from "Hidden Treasure at St. Jim's," the grand long complete school tale of Tom Merry & Co., by Martin Cliford, contained in this week's issue of "The Gem" Library. Out on Wednesday. Price One Penny.)

"They're real enough!" said Rake, with a shudder. "I shouldn't care to touch them!"

"Yes, they're real enough," said Kipps cheerfully. "Real wire and gauze—not real beetles. They're mechanical, and you wind 'em up. But I thought that the prefect wouldn't know the difference, and he didn't."

"My hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kipps returned the beetles to his pocket, and got into bed, smiling.

"But Loder said there was one down his back," said Rake. Kipps grinned.

"That wasn't a beetle," he said. "I dropped a match-stick inside his collar, when I took the beetle off, or pretended to, rather. I dare say it felt like a beetle to Loder when he got it down his back."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you're a giddy coughdrop," said Bob Cherry. "Better blow out those candles, you fellows. We shall have to be asleep when Loder comes back."

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Gerald Loder did not come back. He was quite a long time searching his clothes for beetles, though he did not find any.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Windfall for Bunter.

KIPPS took his place in the Remove Form the next morning.

Kipps had been prepared for the Lower Fourth, and he did not find the Form work difficult; indeed, it was child's play to most of the things that Kipps could do. But long before morning lessons were over Kipps was yawning behind his hand. He was accustomed to a far livelier life than that of a schoolboy. The Greyfriars juniors often made things lively in their own way, but their way was not Kipps' way.

Most of the juniors had taken to Kipps very much. He

"BARRED BY THE FAGS!"

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had made one bitter enemy in the Remove, and that was Vernon-Smith, the Bouncer of Greyfriars. Bolsover major did not like him either; but Bolsover was not rancorous like Vernon-Smith. Bolsover was a bully; but he was not without his good points, and, having found that Kipps was not a safe subject for bullying, he was disposed to let him alone. As for Snoop, nothing would have induced him to interfere with the new boy again. But with Vernon-Smith it was different. Vernon-Smith could not forgive a defeat, and if he could not avenge himself by open methods, he was wont to resort to "ways that are dark, and tricks that are vain," as the American poet hath it. And Vernon-Smith was revolving in his mind all kinds of schemes for scoring off the new junior.

Kipps did not take any notice of him—indeed, he seemed to have forgotten the Bouncer's existence. Kipps was wondering how he was going to stand life at Greyfriars, instead of the busy, and bustling life of circus and "hall." The spirit of the born acrobat was strong in him, and he had to struggle with his desire to relieve the monotony of class work with a few hand-springs across the Form-room. The desire to "break out" was almost irresistible, and before the class was dismissed Kipps could resist it no longer. Mr. Quelch, turning round from the blackboard, discovered the new junior in the act of balancing an inkpot upon his chin, and he simply jumped.

Kipps turned very red as he caught the Form-master's eye, and placed the inkpot in the receptacle in his desk again. Mr. Quelch looked at him very severely.

"You must not play those tricks here, Kipps!" he said sternly.

"No, sir," said Kipps meekly.

"You must be careful. I shall punish you next time."

"Yes, sir."

And Kipps, with great efforts, restrained himself till morning lessons were over. He was looking very thoughtful as he strolled out into the Close after third lesson. It was a keen, bright, spring morning, and the old elms were showing their early green, and a fresh breeze came from the sea. Kipps stood upon the School House steps, looking out into the Close, when Billy Bunter joined him. Billy Bunter had a most agreeable grin upon his fat face. Bunter never neglected new boys. Billy Bunter was a borrower of deadly skill and persistence; but the Greyfriars fellows knew him so well that he found of late very great difficulty in extracting loans from any of his old acquaintances. The story of the postal-order he was expecting was too well known in the Remove to be worked with much success. But new boys were Bunter's game: all his little wiles were new to them, and they generally fell easy victims to the cadger of the Remove.

"Nice morning, Kippy!" said Bunter, in the friendliest tone possible.

Kipps nodded.

"Ripping!" he said.

"Rather a change for you, this school," said Bunter.

Kipps sighed.

"Yes; a big change."

"Not used to it yet?"

"No."

"You'll get used to it," said Bunter encouragingly. "Of course, it's a bit thick having a conjurer chap sent here. But, bless you, there's nothing snobbish about me, at least! I'm going to be friends with you!"

Kipps gave him a very peculiar look.

"That's very kind of you," he remarked.

"I mean to be kind," explained Bunter. "I always stand by new boys, and 'elp 'em. I'm Bunter, you know—William George Bunter."

"Oh, you're William George Bunter, are you?"

"Yes. I'm going to take you up," said Bunter. "Some of the fellows look down on a circus chap; but, bless you, I'm not that sort! I don't see any reason why I shouldn't associate with you. Of course, you won't forget the difference between us?"

"No. I'm not likely to forget that," agreed Kipps, with a disparaging glance at the fat face and unwieldy, overfed form of William George Bunter.

"That's right!" said Bunter. "A fellow ought to know his place. I'm going to be friends with you, and I don't care what anybody says! I'm going to be your pal!"

"Really?"

"Yes; I mean it," said Bunter generously.

"I dare say you do. But it takes two to make a bargain, you know," Kipps suggested sweetly.

Bunter coughed.

"I suppose you haven't seen the postman?" he asked.

"No."

"Rotten postal arrangements here!" said Bunter, with a shake of the head. "He's always late. It's awkward, too, because I'm expecting a postal-order—a remittance from a

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titled friend of mine. I wanted to get a snack at the tuck-shop before dinner. Would you mind cashing the postal-order for me? It will save me going to the post-office."

"Yes, if you like."

"It's for ten bob," said Bunter.

"All right."

Bunter coughed again.

"I suppose it's all the same to you if you cash it now?" he suggested. "I'll hand the postal-order to you directly it comes."

"And then I'll hand you the ten bob," said Kipps.

"Ahem! I'd rather have it now, if you don't mind."

"But I do mind," said Kipps.

"Now look here, Kipps, I'd rather have the money now," said Bunter. "I particularly want to get a snack before dinner to—give me an appetite. I'll take five bob, if you like, and you can let me have the rest when my postal-order comes. I'm generally rolling in money, but just now happen to be hard up. It's a most unusual thing for me; but I've been lending Bob Cherry a lot of money lately, and he's a bad payer—"

"What's that?" roared Bob Cherry, coming out of the House.

Billy Bunter jumped. He blinked at Bob Cherry's wrathful face through his big spectacles in dismay.

"I—I— Is that you, Cherry? I—I made a slip! I meant to say Wharton—"

"Did you?" asked Harry Wharton, who had followed Bob Cherry out.

Bunter gasped.

"That is to say—er—Nugent—"

"Nugent," called out Wharton, "Bunter wants you to settle up!"

Frank Nugent came out.

"What's that?" he asked.

Billy Bunter wriggled.

"It—it's a mistake, Nugent!" he stuttered. "I meant to say—to say— Ahem—"

"You blessed young Ananias!" said Bob Cherry, "you owe money to every fellow in the Remove, I believe! Is he trying to stick you for a loan, Kipps?"

Kipps laughed.

"Story about a postal-order he's expecting, I suppose?" said Bob.

"Yes."

"He's been expecting that postal-order ever since he came to Greyfriars," said Nugent. "I remember hearing about it when he was a fag in the Second Form. If you lend him any money, you'll never see it again."

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

"What do you want to borrow money for, Bunter, when you've got banknotes about you?" Kipps demanded.

Billy Bunter stared.

"Banknotes!" he repeated. "I haven't got any banknotes."

"Look here, then!"

Kipps inserted his hand into the inside pocket of Bunter's jacket, and drew out a crisp and rustling slip of paper. Bunter stared at it open-eyed.

"M-m-my hat!" he gasped.

"Isn't it yours?" asked Kipps.

"Yes," said Bunter promptly. "I—I'd forgotten it. How could it possibly be in my pocket, if it wasn't mine? Give it to me!"

"You didn't know you had it?" said Kipps.

"I'd forgotten," explained Bunter, watching the banknote with hungry eyes, and preparing to snatch it. "I had a remittance from a titled relation, and—and I put that fiver in my pocket, and forgot all about it. That's how it was, you see."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "You'd be likely to do that—I don't think!"

"You shut up, Cherry! That banknote's mine, and I'm going to have it!"

Billy Bunter made a sudden snatch, and captured the rustling slip of paper. He crammed it into his pocket with the same movement, and blinked defiance at the juniors.

The Co. roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You fat duffer!" said Nugent. "It's a conjuring trick! Kipps didn't find the note in your pocket at all!"

"That's all very well," said Bunter obstinately. "I don't believe in conjuring tricks. This is my banknote, and I'm jolly well going to keep it! Kipps can go and eat coke!"

ANSWERS

And Bunter rolled away as fast as he could in the direction of the tuck-shop. Kipps laughed, and made no effort to detain him. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at him curiously.

"Are you going to let him keep it?" asked Wharton.

"Why not?"

"A fiver!" said Bob Cherry, in amazement.

"I've got plenty more."

"Well, my hat, you must be a giddy millionaire, if you can afford to give five-pound notes away!" exclaimed Nugent. Kipps grinned.

"That kind of fiver doesn't cost much," he said. "I can get 'em for three shillings a dozen in my line of business."

The juniors yelled.

"Ha, ha, ha! It's a conjurer's banknote, is it?"

"Yes, Bank of Elegance," grinned Kipps. "I don't think Bunter will get much of a feed for that fiver."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the juniors strolled over to the school shop, anxious to see Billy Bunter's face when he discovered what kind of a fiver he had obtained possession of.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. The Five-pound Note.

BILLY BUNTER rolled into the little tuck-shop in the corner of the Close behind the elms. There were several fellows there, and Mrs. Mimble was serving them. She did not take any notice of Bunter. Bunter was a good customer in one sense, and a bad customer in another. He was willing to purchase any amount of eatables and drinkables; indeed, he would have cleared off the whole of Mrs. Mimble's stock with perfect readiness. But as he would not have paid for anything, his wholesale orders were not welcomed by Mrs. Mimble. Bunter often tried to impress upon Mrs. Mimble the fact that great businesses were generally built up on an extensive system of credit. But Mrs. Mimble, in spite of Bunter's elaborate logic on the subject, persisted in turning a deaf ear, and declined the opportunity of building up a gigantic business on those lines. And so, when Billy Bunter rapped importantly on the counter, Mrs. Mimble did not even look at him.

"I'm waiting, Mrs. Mimble," said Billy Bunter, with great dignity.

"I'm attending to Master Linlow," said Mrs. Mimble tartly. "And I cannot let you have anything on credit, Master Bunter. You owe me nine shillings now from last term."

"I'm going to settle that," said Bunter.

"You must settle it before I let you have anything more," said Mrs. Mimble.

"I've come to settle it."

"Hallo, Bunter's being funny!" said Bulstrode.

"Oh, really, Bulstrode—"

"What have you got there?" asked Micky Desmond, catching sight of the rustling slip of paper in Billy Bunter's fat hand.

"Fiver," said Bunter nonchalantly.

"Five pounds?"

"Yes."

"Five rats!" said Bulstrode incredulously.

"I've had a remittance from a titled relation," Bunter explained. "You fellows have doubted my word when I said I was expecting a remittance. Well, it's come, that's all. Under the circumstances, I shall not stand you a feed, which I should have done if you'd been decent, and lent me a few bob when I wanted them. It's no good asking me, because I'm not going to do it. Mrs. Mimble, I'll trouble you to change this fiver. You can keep the nine bob out of it."

"My goodness!" said the astonished dame. "A five-pound note!"

"Yes, Mrs. Mimble," said Bunter loftily. "Hand me over some tarts to go on with while you are getting the change. I've a jolly good mind to leave this place alone, and get my things at Uncle Clegg's, in the village."

"I will change the note with pleasure, Master Bunter," said Mrs. Mimble, with an entirely new and surprising politeness.

"Well, here it is. Give me the tarts."

Bunter let the banknote flutter down on the counter, and commenced operations on the tarts. The juniors in the tuck-shop stared at him in amazement. They simply could not understand it. Bunter's expected postal-order, and his titled relations, and his rich people, had always been looked upon as figments of a lively imagination by the other fellows. But certainly there seemed to be something in it now. Five-pound notes were not common in the Remove Form at Greyfriars.

"Well, this takes the cake," said Bulstrode. "You'd better look at that fiver, Mrs. Mimble. Bunter may have made it himself."

The warning was unnecessary. Mrs. Mimble had taken out her glasses to examine the fiver. A fiver in Bunter's

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possession was too surprising to be taken without examination. And as Mrs. Mimble read the wording upon the note, her face grew quite crimson with indignation.

"Bank of Elegance! Dear me! Master Bunter, you are a wicked, wicked boy to try to pass a bad note upon a poor widow. Leave those tarts alone at once."

The tarts were disappearing at record speed.

"Bad note!" said Bunter, with his mouth full. "What rot! I tell you I had it only this morning from a titled relation."

"It is not a banknote at all!" shrieked Mrs. Mimble. "It is Bank of Elegance—the kind of note that swindlers use. You are a swindler, Master Bunter!"

"Bank of Elegance!" roared Bulstrode. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sure, I thought it was fishy," said Micky Desmond.

"Bunter's titled relations have a bank all to themselves—the Bank of Elegance," said Mark Linley, laughing.

Mrs. Mimble grabbed the plate of tarts, and jerked it away from Bunter. Then she slammed the conjurer's fiver down on the counter before him.

"Take your note, Master Bunter—take it away at once. I've a good mind to tell the Head that you have tried to pass bad money on me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry, looking into the tuck-shop. "Have you found it out, Bunter?"

Bunter spluttered with fury.

"It's a good note," he roared. "I tell you I had it from a titled relation—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look at it!" grinned Nugent.

Billy Bunter picked up the note, and blinked at it through his big spectacles. Billy Bunter was very short-sighted, but he could read the note; and after he had read it he could not deny that the words "Bank of Elegance" appeared where the words "Bank of England" should have been. His jaw dropped.

The juniors were shrieking with merriment. But Mrs. Mimble was not laughing. Six of her tarts—twopenny ones, too—had been consumed, before she made the discovery that the banknote was not a good one.

Billy Bunter glared at Kipps, who had come in with Co.

"You—you swindler!" he exclaimed.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's Kipps got to do with it?" asked Mark Linley.

"I got the note from him—"

"You said it was from a titled relation!" yelled Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ahem! You—you see—"

"It's a conjurer's note," explained Kipps. "After I found it in Bunter's pocket, he persisted that it was his. So I let him keep it. It's not worth much."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter's face was a study. His expected feed was gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream. He glared ferociously at Kipps.

"You—you—you beast!" he stuttered.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Kipps took the note, and returned it to his pocket.

"Has Bunter had anything on the strength of the note, ma'am?" he asked.

"Yes—six twopenny tarts," said Mrs. Mimble, with great asperity.

"All right. I'll pay for them, as it was my little joke," said Kipps.

Mrs. Mimble's face cleared.

"It's my treat," said Kipps, laying a sovereign on the counter. "Walk up, girls, chaps, and fellows."

The invitation was accepted at once. The new boy was evidently in funds—not consisting wholly of notes upon the Bank of Elegance. Mrs. Mimble cast a somewhat suspicious glance at the sovereign, and rang it carefully—with a pardonable doubt about it. But the sovereign was a good one, and Mrs. Mimble served her crowd of customers with a beaming smile. Billy Bunter had rolled away to the door, but now he rolled back again. The frown disappeared from his fat face.

"Well, I don't mind having a feed with you, Kipps," he said cordially. "I can take a joke, I hope."

"You can take anything that's going, can't you?" grinned Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

Kipps laughed.

"All welcome," he said. "Roll up, Bunter!"

And Bunter rolled up, and quite distinguished himself, to such an extent that Kipps had to lay down a second sovereign after the first. When Kipps left the tuck-shop, after that little feed, Billy Bunter rolled after him, and slipped an arm affectionately through the new boy's. Kipps stared at him.

"It's all right," said Bunter.

"Is it?" said Kipps, disengaging himself from the affectionate Bunter. "Leave my arm alone."

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"It's all serene," assured Bunter. "I don't mind being seen walking arm in arm with you. I'm not a snob. I'm going to be your friend, I tell you."

"You're jolly well not," said Kipps.

And Kipps jerked himself away from Bunter's detaining grasp, and walked off, leaving the fat junior blinking after him in astonishment and indignation.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Kipps Plays Footer.

THE Remove fellows became more used to Kipps during the next few days.

Kipps had been put into Study No. 14 with Johnny Bull, Fisher T. Fish, and Rake. And the occupants of Study No. 14 grew accustomed to seeing him balancing chairs on his nose and pokers on his chin when they came in. Fisher T. Fish, indeed, caused some trouble in the study by the persistence of his belief that he could do anything that Kipps could do. His belief on the subject did not matter, but he tried to put it into practice, and his chairs always fell off his chin and his pokers off his nose—sometimes with painful results to fellows who were standing near him, and with very destructive effect upon the property in the study. Till at length Johnny Bull seized his American study mate one evening and bumped him on the floor, and lathered him with a cricket-stump, and made him swear to give up conjuring on pain of instant slaughter. After that there was a little more peace in No. 14 Study in the Remove.

Kipps seemed to have made friends with everybody excepting Vernon-Smith. The Bounder of Greyfriars had little to say to the new boy, but he was watching for an opportunity. The Bounder never forgave.

Kipps did not care for his enmity. If the Bounder looked blackly at him, Kipps only smiled or shrugged his shoulders. He did not look on the Bounder as a dangerous enemy; though he did not quite know Vernon-Smith yet.

When the Remove came out after last lesson on Saturday—a half-holiday at Greyfriars—Bob Cherry linked arms with the new junior.

"Decent weather this afternoon," he remarked. "We've not got a match on, but we're going to have some solid practice. You play footer?"

Kipps nodded.

"Good! We're getting up a scratch team to play the Form Eleven," Bob explained. "I'm captaining the scratchers, and if you're any good you can play on my side."

"I'll be glad," said Kipps. "I've played footer."

"Where have you played?" asked Bolsover major, who was also in the scratch eleven for the afternoon.

"In a circus."

"A circus!"

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry. "Haven't you played on a footer ground?"

"Not very much. I haven't had the opportunity, you see. But I think I can handle a ball all right."

"Handling barred in soccer, you ass!" said Bolsover.

"I was speaking figuratively," said Kipps, laughing. "Anyway, I'll promise not to let your side down if you play me, Cherry."

"Well, I'll play you," said Bob. "You see, it's not easy to knock up two elevens in one Form, and we're letting some of the fags into the scratch team—Bolsover minor, and Paget of the Third, and Nugent minor of the Second. I should have liked to play young Wingate—he's our captain's minor—but he's on fighting terms with the rest of the Third, and they wouldn't play if he did, and I wanted you and young Bolsover specially."

"My minor is all right," said Bolsover.

"Yes—quite so," said Bob Cherry. "It runs in the Bolsover family, I suppose. And he doesn't grab the ball and keep it to himself all the time, as you do, either."

"Look here—"

"Shan't, unless you shove a mask on," said Bob Cherry humorously. "I'll put you in, young Kipper, and we'll see what you can do. Don't let us down."

"I won't," said Kipps.

And Kipps came down to the football field with the players later in the afternoon. It was a keen, bright spring afternoon, just the weather for footer. The ground was not in the best condition; but it was, as Bob Cherry said, good enough for practice, and anything was better than loafing around with one's hands in one's pockets.

"So you're playing Kipps?" said Harry Wharton, as he tossed for choice of ends with Bob Cherry.

"Yes; must fill up the places somehow."

"Thanks!" said Kipps.

Bob laughed.

"Well, if you shape all right, you'll have a chance of getting into the Form eleven," he said. "Play up for all you're worth."

"All serene!" said Kipps.

And Harry Wharton kicked off.

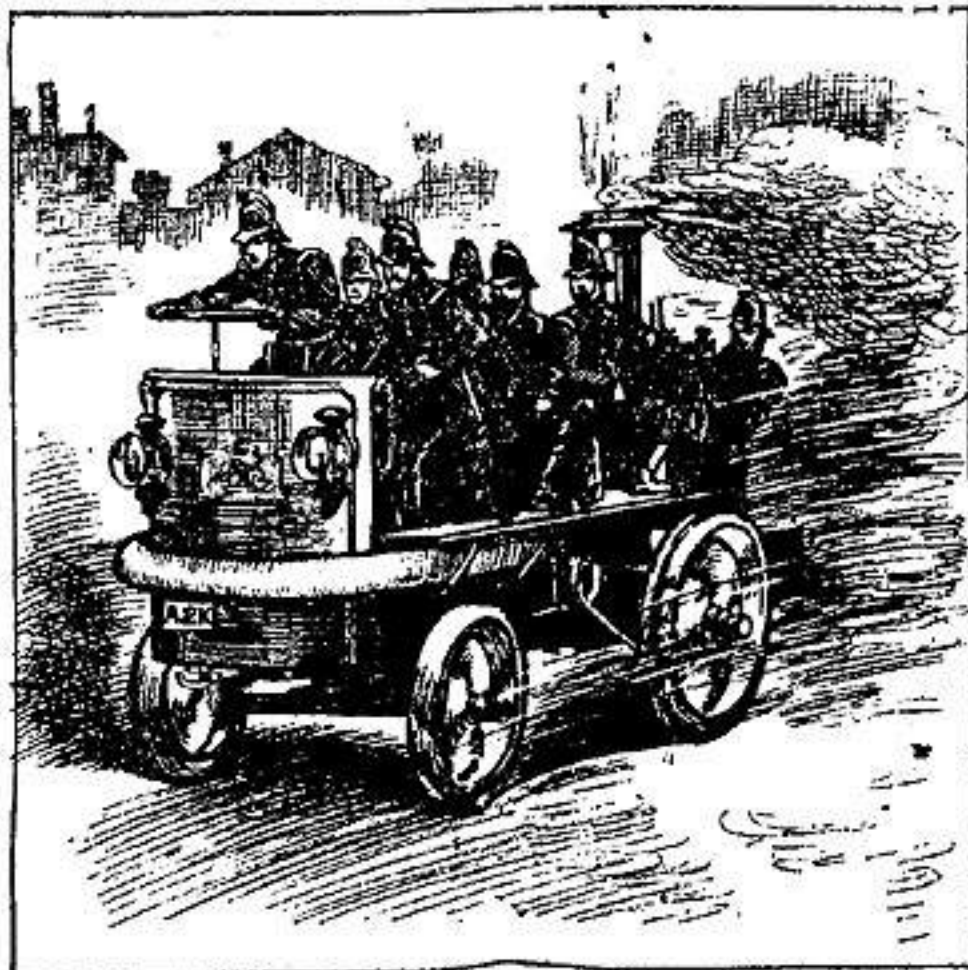
Bob Cherry had put Kipps in as outside-right. Kipps looked very fit in his football garb. He was in splendid condition, and there was no doubt that he had the makings

CONTRASTS.—No. 2.

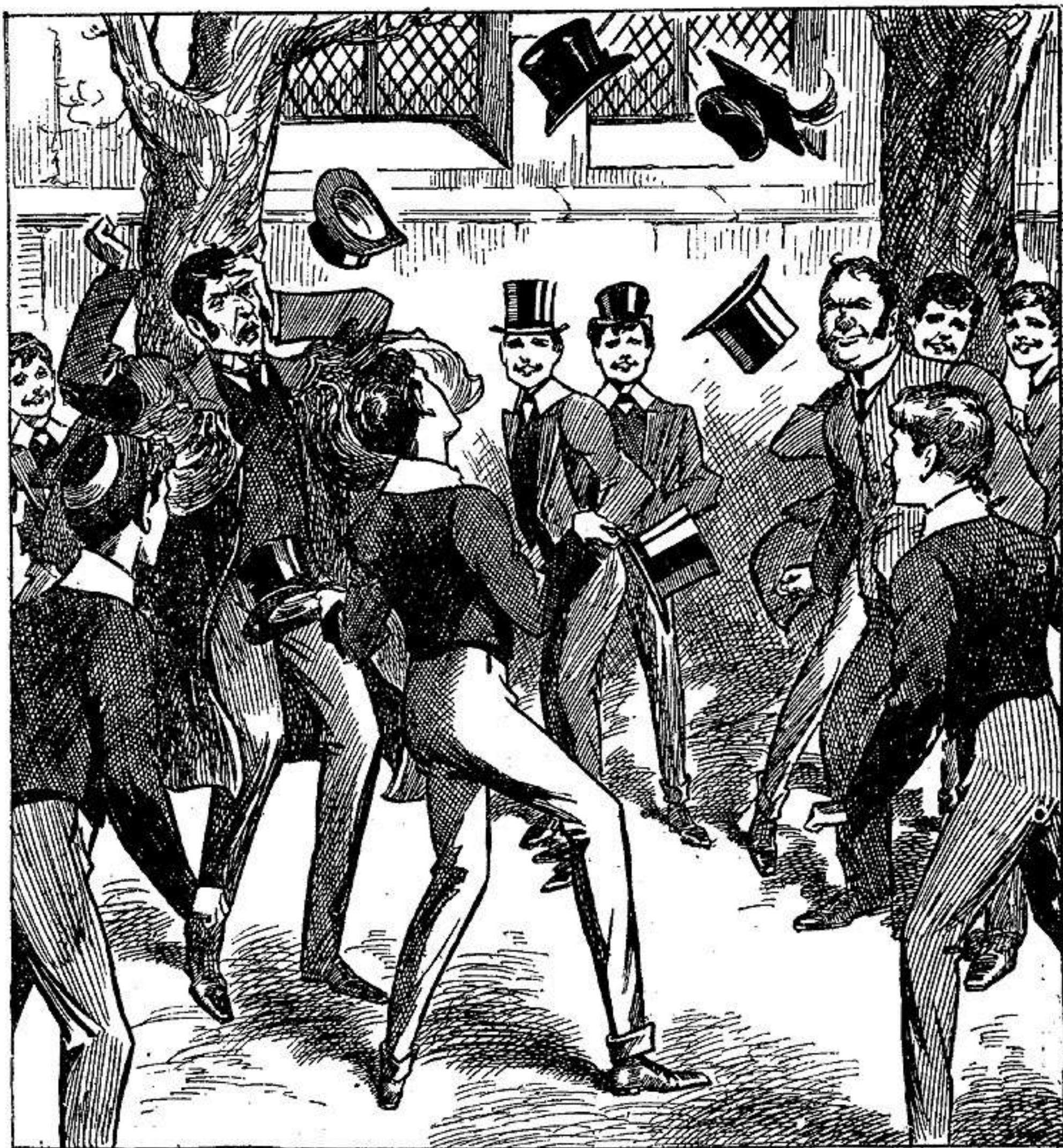
In the good old days boys were easily able to follow the engine proceeding to a fire; but—



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"Dear me! The boy appears to be deaf! Kipps!" cried Mr. Quelch, as he advanced hastily towards the new boy. Then he uttered an exclamation of amazement. Kipps had snatched the mortar-board from his head and added it to the spinning hats, keeping the six going with perfect ease. There was a yell from the Greyfriars fellows.
(See Chapter 3.)

of a good footballer in him, if he knew anything about the game.

Kipps was certainly very fast and very active and very watchful. But he played footer in a way that caused surprise.

The "scratches" were bringing the ball down the field when Morgan, who was left-half in the Form team, rushed to stop Kipps.

Morgan was a heavy fellow, and he intended to charge Kipps off the ball; but a surprise was waiting for the half.

He rushed right at Kipps, and the new junior kicked the ball clean over his head, and then, with a marvellous spring, followed it.

There was a yell from the juniors as the lithe runner rose
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in the air, and cleared Morgan's head at a bound. Morgan halted, transfixed.

Kipps came lightly down behind him, and ran on with the ball. Hazeldene, in goal, was staring open-mouthed, and, as he stared, the leather whizzed in over his shoulder. Kipps had scored the first goal.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mark Linley. "Goal!"

"My hat!"

"Oh, crumbs!" gasped Hazeldene.

"Where is he?" ejaculated Morgan. "Look you, what's become of him?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here I am," said Kipps cheerfully, "and there's the ball. It's my goal, I think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "I—I say, that isn't football!" gasped Wharton; "that's a giddy acrobat's trick! We don't jump over one another's heads, you ass!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "It isn't against the rules," said Kipps.
 "Well, no, it's not against the rules," said Wharton, rubbing his chin doubtfully; "but—but it looks queer. This isn't a circus performance. You'd better keep on the ground, I think."

"The queerfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Blessed if I've ever seen a chap who could do that!" said Bob Cherry. "Anyway, that goal counts, and it's one up to us."

The play recommenced, and Kipps held himself in for a time. But the spirit of mischief was strong upon him. A sudden roar from the fellows who had gathered to see the play turned all eyes upon Kipps suddenly. Wharton gasped.

Kipps had turned a somersault in pursuit of the ball, and now he was walking on his hands, and keeping the ball in the air with his feet. Two or three fellows rushed to take it from him, but Kipps kept it spinning in the air. The footballers gasped:

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Charge him over!" yelled Wharton.

Morgan rushed down heavily upon the reversed footballer. Kipps did not appear to be observing him; but just as Morgan reached him, he dropped his legs round Morgan's neck, and curled up as if made of elastic, and sat upon the half's shoulders.

Bob Cherry yelled with laughter.

"Oh, my hat, that isn't allowed in footer! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Wha-a-a-at is it?" gasped Morgan. "What—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry dragged the youthful acrobat off the half.

"You go into goal," he said. "You're not safe in the field. This isn't a circus, you ass! Penfold, you come out, and play on the wing!"

"Oh, I say—" said Kipps.

"Get into goal, you ass!"

And Kipps went into goal.

Bob Cherry's team kept the ball well up the field, and for some time Kipps had nothing to do in goal. He yawned portentously, and, producing several coloured balls from the pockets of his footer shorts, he began to spin them in the air. There was a shout as the opposing forwards came sweeping down with the ball.

"Look out in goal!"

But Kipps was looking out.

Harry Wharton sent the ball in with a quick drive; but Kipps was there. Still keeping the spinning balls in the air, he caught the footer, and added it to the rest, and spun it in the air with the other balls.

The sight of a goalkeeper performing the ball-spinning trick in goal made the onlookers yell.

"Stop it!" roared Bob Cherry, panting and laughing. "Chuck that ball out!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Chuck it, you ass!"

Bolover major rushed in, and grasped the conjurer. The footer rolled on the ground as Kipps missed it, and there was a yell:

"Goal!"

"Oh, crumbs!" said Kipps.

"Yes, it's a goal, you frabjous ass!" said Bob Cherry. "You've let us down, after all! You're not going to play any more conjuring tricks here! Buzz off!"

"I'm keeping goal—"

"No, you're not: you're travelling," said Bob Cherry.

And three or four laughing fellows rushed Kipps to the edge of the ground, and deposited him in a heap outside the ropes. The scratch match went on, but Kipps did not take any further part in it. His peculiar gifts were too strong for him; and, much as the juniors liked him, they did not want any conjuring on the footer field. Kipps wandered away disconsolately.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Lesson for Loder.

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"
 Kipps paused.

The yell of anguish proceeded from Loder's study. Kipps really had no business in the Sixth Form

quarters; but he was "mooching" about the House waiting for his friends to finish the footer game, and chance had led him there. Kipps frowned as he heard the yell. He had learned something of Loder, and he knew that the unpopular prefect was a bully, and that his fags had a very unhappy time of it, as a rule. Kipps hesitated, and looked at the

closed door of Loder's study. As he hesitated, there came another yell, in the unmistakable tones of Tubb of the Third.

"Ow! You beast, Loder! Leggo! Oh!"

Kipps hesitated no longer. He walked up to the door and opened it. True, it was not exactly the usual thing for a junior in the Lower Fourth to interfere with the proceedings of a prefect; but Kipps was a peculiar junior in many ways. His unusual experiences at an early age made him feel very much older than the other fellows in the Remora; and the great men of the Sixth Form did not impress him as they impressed other juniors.

He looked into the study. Tubb of the Third was wriggling in the grasp of Gerald Loder, who was giving him the benefit of a heavy belt—a benefit that the fag did not seem to appreciate in the least.

"Hallo, what's the trouble about?" said Kipps.

Loder paused for a moment in the application of the belt, and glared round at the new-comer.

"Get out of my study!" he snapped.

"What are you licking that kid for?"

"You—you come here and ask me questions, you cheeky cub!" exclaimed Loder, scarcely able to believe his ears.

Kipps nodded coolly.

"Sounds like it, doesn't it?" he said.

Loder stared at him, almost dumbfounded. He had been accustomed to much want of respect from many members of the Lower Fourth Form. But it really seemed that this new boy "took the biscuit."

In his astonishment he released Tubb of the Third, who promptly jerked himself away, and placed the table between himself and the enraged prefect.

"You—you—cub!" said Loder, finding his voice at last. "Do you know that I am a prefect—a prefect of the Sixth?"

"Yes; you told me so."

"And you come to my study, and— My hat!" Loder did not say any more; words failed him. He grasped the belt a little tighter, and ran at Kipps.

Kipps could have dodged away easily enough and escaped; but he knew that that would only make it worse for the fag. He had come there to help Tubb, not to leave him with a bully more enraged than ever to lick him.

He stepped quickly into the study and closed the door behind him, keeping a wary eye upon Loder.

"Hands off!" he said.

Loder did not heed. He grasped the new boy with his left hand, and swung up the belt in his right.

"I'll give you a lesson, you cub!" he said.

Swish!

Kipps roared.

"Ow! Yow! Leave off! Yow!"

Swish! Slash! Swish!

Loder showed no sign of leaving off. Indeed, he seemed to be only just beginning. All his wrath was transferred from Tubb to Oliver Kipps.

But Oliver Kipps was a more troublesome victim than Tubb.

The lithe boy-acrobat curled round Loder like an eel, and the prefect, much to his amazement, found himself bumping on the floor, his legs being swept away from underneath him in some remarkable manner.

Bump!

"Oh!" roared Loder.

Kipps dodged round the table.

"Out!" he said to Tubb.

Tubb hesitated.

"What price you?" he asked.

"I'll see you clear!"

"But he'll simply smash you!" said Tubb, looking with awed eyes at the prefect, who was sitting on the floor gasping for breath.

Kipps grinned.

"I'm not easy to smash!" he said. "You cut! I shall be all right!"

Loder staggered up.

"I'll skin you for that!" he gasped.

He dashed round the table at Kipps. Tubb promptly darted out of the study. Loder ran to the door, slammed it after the fag, and turned the key in the lock. Kipps watched him with undiminished coolness.

"Now I'll settle with you!" said Loder savagely.

"Go ahead!" said Kipps.

"I'll—I'll smash you!"

"Pile in!"

Loder came round the table with a deadly look in his eyes. His face was pale with rage. If he had had his way, certainly matters would have gone very badly for Kipps. But Kipps was quite sure of his powers of looking after himself.

"Now then," said Loder, reaching out at him.

Kipps dodged round the table again. The prefect, breathing fury, pursued him; but at this game the boy-acrobat was easily first. Loder had to pause at last, panting for breath, and Kipps was still regarding him cheerfully from the other side of the table.

"Nice little game, ain't it?" said Kipps. "Tell me when you're tired, and we can play at something else."

"I'll break every bone in your body!" roared Loder.

"Go ahead, then! Sure you wouldn't rather play at dominoes?" suggested Kipps.

Loder made another rush, and Kipps eluded him with perfect ease. Then the prefect grasped the table and swung it to the side of the room. Books and papers and an inkpot slid off it as he did so, but Loder was too furious to care for the damage to his property. The table out of the way, he rushed at Kipps, and seized him again.

"Now, then—oh!"

Kipps' face smiled into his.

Loder gasped.

He was quite twice as large as Kipps, and naturally very much stronger. He had not expected to have any trouble when once he got a good grip upon the elusive junior. But his troubles were only beginning!

Somehow or other—he never knew how—his hands were pulled over one shoulder, and Kipps held them in one, and he was bent over at an uncomfortable angle, with a feeling in him that if he struggled he would break his spine somewhere.

He wriggled.

"Let me go!"

Kipps grinned.

"Woke up the wrong passenger, Loder, old man," he remarked. "You didn't know that I was a jiu-jitsu merchant, did you? Bless your innocent little heart, I've twisted up fellows twice as big as you! Don't move, or you will have your backbone in two pieces, and you'd find it awfully uncomfortable."

"Ow! Let me go!"

"The question is, are you going to be good?" said Kipps calmly.

"Let me go!"

"Are you going to be a good boy?" asked Kipps.

It was miles beneath the dignity of a Sixth-Former and a prefect to reply to such a question, put by a Lower Fourth lad. Loder did not reply. He began to struggle. Kipps' grip toughened like a vice, and a spasm of pain went right through Loder, and he ceased to struggle instantly. The extraordinary junior had not boasted. The burly prefect was utterly at his mercy, and Kipps could have snapped a bone with perfect ease if he had chosen. Loder's face blanched. There was something very like terror in his face as he glared at the junior.

"Will you make it pax?"

Loder gritted his teeth with helpless rage. To "make it pax" with a junior was too humiliating. But to remain in his present uncomfortable position was worse. Kipps did not seem to be exerting himself in the least. He was as cool as the famous cucumber, and smiling gently at his powerless adversary.

"Will you let me go?" panted Loder.

"Will you make it pax?"

Loder glared at him with almost murderous fury in his face. Then he gasped weakly:

"Yes."

There was a knock at the door, and the handle was turned.

"Hallo!" called out the voice of Walker of the Sixth.

"Are you at home, Loder?"

"Yes!" gasped the prefect.

"What have you got the door locked for?"

"Let me go!" muttered Loder thickly. "I—I'll let you off, you young scoundrel. Let me go at once, do you hear?"

Kipps nodded.

"It's pax?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Honour bright?"

"Yes, hang you!"

Kipps released the prefect. Loder gasped for breath, and crossed to the door and unlocked it. Walker came into the study. He glanced curiously at Oliver Kipps' inscrutable face, and stared in amazement at the red and flustered prefect.

"What's the little game?" he demanded.

Loder panted.

"I've been showing Loder some tricks in jiu-jitsu," said Kipps serenely. "Haven't I, Loder?"

"Yes," gasped the prefect. Not for a very great deal would he have allowed Walker of the Sixth to learn how he had been handled by a junior.

"Like some more?" asked Kipps sweetly.

"No," grunted the prefect.

"You've only got to say, any time you'd like some more," said Kipps. "Or you've only got to let me know through Tubb. Savvy?"

And Kipps left the study, feeling that he had not wasted his

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afternoon. He had made one more enemy, a more bitter enemy than the Bounder, but that did not trouble him in the least.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Bolsover Draws the Line.

"LICKED?"

Harry Wharton asked the question sympathetically as Kipps came out of Mr. Quelch's study one afternoon in the following week.

Kipps was rubbing his hands, and making wry faces.

"Yes," he grunted.

"What was the trouble? What had you been doing?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Nothing much," groaned Kipps. "I had to take some lines to Mr. Quelch, and as he wasn't in the study I—I just did a trick with the inkpot and the ruler—just a simple balancing trick."

"No harm in that."

"No, but he came in suddenly, and made me jump, and the inkpot fell on his table, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It messed up some typewritten manuscript," said Kipps. "I didn't think it was very valuable, but Quelch seemed to look at it differently."

"My hat! That's Quelch's 'History of Greyfriars'!" said Bob Cherry. "He's been working on that for dog's ages, and if you messed that up the wonder is that he didn't scalp you!"

"Well, it only spoiled the top page," said Kipps. "I'd have typed it out again for him if he'd asked me. But he didn't—he licked me."

And Kipps rubbed his hands and drifted away. The chums of the Remove chuckled.

"He'll never be cured of his giddy conjuring," grinned Bob Cherry. "Fancy old Quelch having a page of his giddy history mucked up! It's the apple of his eye—far above rubies, that history. I wonder he didn't snatch Kipps bald-headed."

The Bounder of Greyfriars was coming along the passage to Mr. Quelch's study, and he had paused to hear what the juniors were saying. There was a somewhat peculiar look upon Vernon-Smith's face as he went on his way.

He had lines to take in to Mr. Quelch, and he knocked at the Form-master's door and entered. Mr. Quelch was looking extremely annoyed. He was trying to clean the top page of the precious manuscript, without much success. There was quite a pile of typed manuscript on the table; Mr. Quelch's literary work was progressing.

"My lines, sir," said Vernon-Smith.

"Put them on the table," snapped Mr. Quelch.

"Won't you look at them, sir?"

"I am too busy now."

"I hope nothing's happened to the manuscript, sir?" said Vernon-Smith, with a look of great concern.

"Yes," said the Form-master; "a clumsy, foolish boy has spilled ink on it. You may go, Smith."

"Yes, sir."

The Bounder of Greyfriars quitted the study. His eyes were gleaming in a way that showed that some idea was working in his mind, and when the Bounder was revolving some scheme in his active brain, it generally boded harm to somebody. Vernon-Smith hesitated a few minutes at the end of the passage, and then made his way to Bolsover's study.

There was a sound of voices in the study. Vernon-Smith heard Bolsover's voice, and a younger and shriller one—Bolsover minor's. He frowned as he heard it. Vernon-Smith did not like Bolsover minor. Young Bolsover's influence over his elder brother was all for good, and he had a very badly concealed dislike for Vernon-Smith, who encouraged the bully of the Remove in all his worst propensities.

The Bounder entered the study. The two juniors had their heads very close together over the table, and Bolsover major was explaining some difficult point in Latin syntax to his minor. It was an agreeable picture, though not to the Bounder's eyes. Most of the Removites would have been surprised to see it. They knew Bolsover chiefly as an overbearing fellow and a bully, and when his minor had first come to Greyfriars Percy Bolsover had been very much down on him. But that was changed of late, and, with all the Remove bully's faults, he was kindness itself to his minor now. And on many occasions Bolsover minor took his work to his brother's study for help, and Bolsover had been known to pass over all sorts of engagements to help him.

Vernon-Smith surveyed them with a sarcastic smile. Bolsover major looked up, and coloured uncomfortably. Under

the Bounder's mocking gaze he felt ashamed of appearing to be playing the part of the good brother.

"Want anything?" he asked.

"Yes, if you're not too busy coaching," said the Bounder, with a sneer.

"Nearly finished," said Bolsover.

The fog got up.

"I'll clear out if you like, Percy," he said. "I can finish this all right by myself, I think."

"All right, Hubert."

And the fog, without speaking to Vernon-Smith or looking at him, quitted the study with his books in his hand.

Vernon-Smith kicked the door shut after him.

"Your minor doesn't approve of me," he sneered.

"Oh, rot!" said Bolsover. "Do leave off ragging at my minor. You never seem to get off that subject."

"Well, I don't like to see a pal of mine playing the spooney."

"If it's spooney to help my young brother, I'm going to be a spooney," said Percy Bolsover angrily, "and you can shut your head about it."

"It's a new development, isn't it—this good-little-Georgie bisney?" said the Bounder. "I don't remember your receiving the kid with open arms when he first came here."

Bolsover flushed.

"Can't you let that drop?" he exclaimed. "I'm not going back on Hubert, if that's what you want. We've jawed over that enough already."

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, that isn't what I came here to speak about," he remarked.

"I'm glad of that, anyway."

"I've got a good chance of scoring off that new cad," said Vernon-Smith, sinking his voice. "I suppose you haven't taken him under your wing, too, after the way he showed you up and made you look an idiot in the dorm?"

"I don't know that I want to score off him," said Bolsover surlily.

"Good little Eric!" jeered the Bounder.

"Oh, shut up! What's the wheeze, anyway?"

"I'm going to get him into Quelch's black books," said the Bounder eagerly. "I've got the chance, and it's as easy as winking. He won't know where the blow comes from, either, so it will be quite safe."

Bolsover hesitated.

"It's not a ragging?" he asked.

"Nothing so clumsy as that. Besides, he's not safe to rag. Might turn out worse for us than for him."

"I shouldn't wonder. What's the scheme?"

"You'll help me?"

Bolsover major shifted uneasily.

"I don't know," he replied. "I'm blessed if I want to be mixed up in your schemes, Smirby. I suppose it's something rotten underhand."

The Bounder sneered.

"You're getting very particular," he remarked. "I tell you we can get him a flogging from the Head. How does that strike you?"

"By fixing something on him, you mean?"

"Yes."

"Making out that he's done something he hasn't, I suppose?"

"Exactly."

Bolsover major made a very decided gesture.

"Then I'm jolly well not going to have anything to do with it," he said. "Ragging a chap is one thing, but that's quite another."

"Look here, Bolsover—"

"I mean it," said Bolsover. "I dare say I've got my faults, but I draw a line somewhere, if you don't. And I draw it at that kind of thing."

The Bounder bit his thin lips with anger.

"So you won't back me up?"

"Not in that."

"Why not?"

"I've told you the reason. I draw a line somewhere."

"I suppose your minor would be cross with you, and perhaps box your ears?" suggested Vernon-Smith. "If you're going to allow that whelp to lead you by the nose—"

"You can leave my minor out of it," said Bolsover gruffly.

"You allow that young cad to twist you round his fingers lately—"

"If you call my minor names again, Vernon-Smith, you'll go out of this study on your neck!" said Bolsover savagely.

"I'll call him what I like, the goody-goody young rotter— Oh, hands off, you fool! I— Oh! Yah!"

Bump!

Vernon-Smith landed in the passage, and Bolsover major slammed the door. The Bounder picked himself up, his face convulsed with fury. For a moment the Bounder looked like

a demon; and he made a step towards Bolsover's door. But he thought better of it, and paused. He went slowly down the passage, biting his lips. It was evident that in his scheme against the schoolboy conjurer, whatever it was, Vernon-Smith would have to depend only on himself.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Mystery of the Night.

"HALLO! Hallo! Hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry sleepily. "Who's that?"

It was very dark in the Remove dormitory. Bob Cherry had awakened, as there was a sound—what sound he could not be sure, but he had an impression that somebody was moving about in the dormitory, and had knocked against his bed.

Bob blinked round drowsily into the darkness. But the sound was not repeated; the silence was unbroken save for the steady breathing of the sleeping juniors, and the deep, unmusical snore of William George Bunter. And Bob closed his eyes again and went off to sleep.

But there was another fellow who had awakened, and who did not close his eyes again. It was Kipps. Since the incidents of the first night he had passed at Greyfriars, Kipps had not been subjected to any ragging. But Kipps was sure now that he had heard someone move in the darkness of the dormitory, and he kept his eyes open to make sure. He did not intend to be taken off his guard, if the raggers had planned to recommence operations that night.

And Kipps grinned softly to himself as he saw a moving shadow in the darkness. Some member of the Remove was evidently out of bed. The fellow, whoever he was, had remained quite still for five minutes or more, till Bob Cherry's deep breathing told that he was once more in the land of dreams.

Kipps made out the figure of a junior in pyjamas, but he could not see more than that. And the figure came from the direction of Vernon-Smith's bed. That, of course, did not prove that it was Vernon-Smith; it might have been any one of a dozen juniors. But the figure was approaching Kipps' bed, and the new boy was very much upon his guard now. But he did not make a sound. If the shadowy form was that of a ragger, he was going to be surprised himself, instead of surprising Kipps.

The dim form of the unknown junior came nearer and nearer.

Kipps' heart began to beat a little faster.

The figure stopped at the foot of his bed, where Kipps' clothes were neatly folded up on a chair.

Kipps wondered.

It was evidently not a ragging. There was only one fellow out of bed, and he did not seem to be concerned with Kipps, but with Kipps' clothes.

Was it a thief?

The suspicion was natural, yet Kipps did not think so. For one thing, he had left nothing of any great value in his pockets, and if the shadowy figure was that of the Bounder, it was extremely unlikely that he was on a predatory excursion. The Bounder had three or four times as much money as Kipps, and certainly he was under no necessity of stealing a few shillings from a Form-fellow's pocket. If Vernon-Smith had wanted money, he had only to drop a line to Mr. Samuel Vernon-Smith, his millionaire father, and he could have had as much as he wanted. And Kipps was certain now that the midnight prowler was the Bounder. He could not see his face, but there was familiarity in the outlines of the form.

Whoever it was, he was fingering over Kipps' clothes, as the new boy could see from under the edge of the coverlet. The form straightened up, but the head was bent, as if to listen. Kipps breathed regularly, and closed his eyes. He was conscious that someone bent over him for a moment, and then was gone.

He opened his eyes again.

He lay with puzzled brain, wondering what it all meant. The Bounder—if it was the Bounder—had some purpose in what he had done. He was not likely to go through such peculiar actions without a purpose. But what purpose? Evidently it was something "up against" Kipps; and the new junior, still affecting to be asleep, waited and watched to discover what it was.

What had Vernon-Smith wanted with his clothes? What was the Bounder doing now? In the silence of the dormitory, faint and indefinable sounds came to the straining ears of the schoolboy conjurer. Vernon-Smith had not gone back to bed. Kipps' impression was that the Bounder was dressing himself, but he could not be sure. But he was sure soon, for to his keen ears came a sound of the dormitory door being cautiously opened, and then closed again. Vernon-Smith had gone out of the Remove dormitory.

Kipps sat up in bed, lost in wonder.

What did it all mean? What had the Bouncer done with his clothes? Kipps believed that he had taken something from a pocket; but what could he have taken that would have been of any use or value to him? Why had he left the dormitory? It was so strange, and so amazing, that Kipps wondered if he had not dreamed it.

He intended to discover what it meant, at all events. He waited a couple of minutes, in case the Bouncer should come back, and then stepped softly from his bed.

He groped his way cautiously to the Bouncer's bed, and felt over it with his hands in the darkness.

The bed was empty!

That was evidence enough, if he had not known it already, that it was Vernon-Smith whom he had seen moving about in the dormitory in the dark.

Kipps did not strike a light. He did not want to awaken the other fellows. He intended to solve the baffling mystery, but he could do that by himself.

He returned to his own bed and felt over his clothes. That Vernon-Smith had taken something from his pockets he felt sure—but what? As he knew what was in the pockets, it was easy to discover, by feeling in them; he did not need a light.

"My handkerchief!"

Kipps was lost in wonder.

His handkerchief was gone!

Kipps remembered perfectly well that he had a handkerchief in the pocket of his jacket. It was gone now.

It was his handkerchief that the Bouncer had wanted.

Why?

Kipps wondered.

The Bouncer had left his bed in the middle of the night, abstracted Kipps' handkerchief from his pocket, and then dressed himself and left the dormitory.

What could it mean?

Kipps debated in his mind whether he should follow Vernon-Smith. But he did not know what direction the Bouncer had taken. He replaced the jacket on the chair, and returned to his bed and waited.

Vernon-Smith had some purpose to serve in what he had done, that was certain. And Kipps realised that he would be more likely to discover what it was if he did not allow the Bouncer to know that he had seen him.

He waited.

The minutes passed slowly, and the Bouncer did not return. Kipps nearly nodded off several times, but he kept himself awake with an effort.

There was a faint sound at last in the silence.

The door of the dormitory reopened softly, and closed again. The Bouncer had returned. Kipps lay still and listened.

The dim figure came cautiously towards his bed again, and stopped at the chair. It bent over the clothes folded there.

Kipps wondered if he were dreaming. Vernon-Smith was replacing the handkerchief in the pocket he had taken it from, he knew that.

What did it mean?

The Bouncer listened by the bed for a moment; and then, reassured by Kipps' regular breathing, he glided away to his own bed.

Kipps heard him get into bed and settle down.

"My only hat!" murmured Kipps. "What on earth does it mean? What has he been doing with my giddy hanky?"

It was impossible to guess.

But the morning would show; and Kipps still cautiously intended not to let the Bouncer know that he had seen him until he had succeeded in solving the riddle. He could not look at the handkerchief now without betraying himself to the Bouncer, and he determined to let it wait till morning.

He closed his eyes, and was asleep in a few minutes.

He did not wake again till the rising-bell was clanging out in the keen, fresh air of the spring morning.

Kipps sat up in bed, and involuntarily glanced towards the Bouncer. Vernon-Smith did not look at him as he got up. He maintained his usual attitude of indifference towards the new boy. Kipps had half inclined to believe that he had dreamed the whole occurrence. He was very curious to see his handkerchief, to ascertain whether it bore any traces of what the Bouncer had done with it in the night. But he did not look at it till he was outside the dormitory.

Kipps was the first out of the Remove dormitory that morning. He paused in the recess by the window in the passage, and took the handkerchief out of his pocket.

Then he uttered an exclamation of amazement. The handkerchief was thickly stained with red—red ink!

"Great Christopher Columbus!" ejaculated Kipps.

He stared at the handkerchief blankly.

Vernon-Smith had taken that handkerchief from his pocket in the night, had taken it downstairs, and had stained it with red ink, and then returned it to his pocket.

What did it mean?

Kipps thought over it, and wondered, but he could not even guess at a solution of the mystery. But he felt certain of one thing—that Vernon-Smith had done something down-

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stairs during the night to which the stained handkerchief would be a clue; that it was some deep-laid scheme of the Bouncer's to get him into trouble. It was impossible to suppose anything else—Vernon-Smith had not acted as he had done for nothing. What the scheme might be, Kipps had no idea—whether it was some prank on a prefect, such as filling his boots with red ink, or something of that sort. Kipps stared at the handkerchief as he thought the matter out.

Then suddenly a grin came over his face. Kipps was not fastidious with his handkerchiefs—the article was a common one, without any mark on it to show the owner. It might have belonged to anybody. It could only be identified by the pocket it was found in. And Kipps chuckled at the new idea that came into his mind. Vernon-Smith had stained that handkerchief with red ink in order to incriminate him in some way, in some matter he did not as yet know anything of. But with his skill in conjuring and sleight-of-hand, it occurred to Kipps that he would be one too many for the Bouncer. Still chuckling, Kipps put the handkerchief a little up his sleeve, just out of sight, and ready for use. He loitered about the passage till the juniors came out of the dormitory; and when Vernon-Smith appeared, Kipps dashed along the passage and ran right into the Bouncer, apparently by accident.

"Look where you're going, you fool!" yelled the Bouncer. Kipps clutched at him to save himself from falling, but he fell all the same, dragging the Bouncer down with him.

"Sorry!" gasped Kipps.

"You fool!"

The Bouncer struggled to his feet. He gave Kipps a savage look, and strode away. Kipps picked himself up and walked away in the opposite direction.

He stopped in a box-room, and tossed a handkerchief behind an empty trunk. It was Vernon-Smith's handkerchief, which the schoolboy conjurer had deftly abstracted from the Bouncer's pocket in the carefully-planned tumble in the passage. In Vernon-Smith's pocket, in the place of his own property, there now reposed the red-stained handkerchief he had put into Kipps' pocket in the night.

Kipps strolled down to breakfast with a cheerful smile on his face. He was ready for developments now. And the developments were not long in coming.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

What Happened in the Night.

THE Lower Hall was full of fellows when Kipps came down, and they were nearly all talking at once. Something unusual was evidently on the "carpet."

Billy Bunter was in a state of simmering indignation, and his voice could be heard in exasperated tones.

"Not go in to breakfast! My word! I'm hungry! Not go in to breakfast! What rot! I'm not going to wait for my breakfast! I'm hungry!"

"That's nothing new," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"But what's the row?" said Bolsover major.

"Blessed if I know!" said Bob Cherry. "Wingate's just said that something's happened, and we're not to go in to brekker till we get the word."

"Must be off his rocker!"

"Anything wrong?" asked Kipps, coming downstairs.

"Looks like it," said Harry Wharton. "But nobody seems to know what it is."

"Something's happened," said Mark Linley. "Wingate says so. But what it is, is a giddy mystery, so far."

"The mysteryfulness is terrific!"

"Some more of your conjuring tricks, perhaps, Kipps," said the Bouncer of Greyfriars, with an unpleasant look. Kipps shook his head.

"I don't think so," he said. "It isn't me this time."

"I don't know. You looked very rusty when Quelchly licked you yesterday for messing up his manuscript," said Vernon-Smith. "Have you been playing any tricks on Quelchly?"

"No."

"It's something to do with Quelchly, I guess," said Fisher T. Fish sagely. "I saw him just now going to the Head's House, and he looked as if he'd seen a ghost."

"Some silly ass has been japing Quelch, I suppose," said Nugent.

"Very likely. But who?—that's the question."

"The questionfulness is—"

"Terrific," grinned Bob Cherry, interrupting his ducky chum. "Hallo, hallo, hallo, here's Loder! Perhaps he can tell us! What's happened, Loder?"

"Something that somebody is going to be flogged for," said the prefect.

"My hat!"

"What's it?"
 "Can't we go in to breakfast?" demanded Billy Bunter, in injured tones.
 "No, you can't!" snapped Loder. "The whole school's to assemble in Hall before breakfast, and at once!"
 "I say, I'm hungry, you know!" expostulated Bunter. "You're a prefect, Loder. Couldn't you give the Head a hint that it would be better to leave it till after breakfast?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" growled Billy Bunter. "I know I'm jolly hungry! And, whatever's happened, it can't be so important as getting your breakfast when you come down hungry in the morning. I jolly well know—"
 But nobody was listening to the woes of William George Bunter.
 The juniors were streaming off in the direction of Hall, and, Bunter, growling and grunting, was constrained to follow them.
 It was evident that something very unusual had happened. Kipps and his conjuring tricks had been so much in evidence of late that a good many of the Removites suspected him of being the cause of the unusual disturbance—especially as he had been caned by Mr. Quelch the previous evening for a balancing feat in the Form-master's study which had ended in disaster.
 But to all questions on the subject, Kipps returned the same answer—he hadn't the faintest idea what the row was about, and, so far as he knew, it had nothing to do with him.
 "Well, we shall know soon whether you're telling the truth or not!" sneered Vernon-Smith, as they took their places in Hall.
 Kipps gave him a deep glance.
 "If you doubt my word, Smithy—"
 "I do!" said the Bounder coolly.
 Kipps clenched his hands.
 "Hold on!" said Bob Cherry, catching the schoolboy conjurer by the sleeve. "You can't punch Smithy's nose in here, Kipper, under the eyes of the prefects."
 "Let him keep his mouth shut, then!" growled Kipps.
 "Yes, shut up, Smithy, there's a good chap!"

"I'm entitled to my opinion, I suppose?" he said. "I believe this row has got something to do with Kipps' rotten tricks—especially as Quelch is mixed up in it, and we know that Kipps had his knife into Quelch over his licking yesterday."
 "You know nothing of the sort!" said Kipps angrily. "I don't bear Quelch a grudge for licking me. It would have been a wonder if he hadn't."
 "The wonderfulness would have been terrific!" said Hurrea Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Kipps spoiled the valuable manuscript of our esteemed and revered Form-master, which was the honourable apple of his august eye."
 "I deserved it, for that matter, though I never meant any harm when I juggled with his blessed inkpot!" said Kipps. "And I certainly didn't bear malice for it! And you're a rotten cad to say I did, Smithy!"
 "We all know Smithy," said Bob Cherry. "He has these lovely feelings himself, and he can't imagine that any other chap hasn't them."
 "Just so," said Nugent. "Seems to me that you're trying to turn suspicion on Kipps, Smithy, before we even know what's happened."
 "Yes, rather!"
 "The ratherfulness is terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous Smithy!"
 "Well, we shall see," said the Bounder.
 Wingate called out sharply:
 "Silence there, you juniors!"
 "All right, cocky!" said Bob Cherry, under his breath.
 Wingate frowned as he heard a chuckle following Bob Cherry's reply.
 "What did you say, Cherry?"
 "Nice morning, ain't it?"
 "Is that what you said?"
 "Well, no, it isn't exactly what I said," admitted Bob Cherry cautiously. "But it is a fine morning, isn't it—especially for the time of year?"
 Wingate smiled, and turned away.
 Nearly all Greyfriars had gathered in Hall now, and the masters had come in, and the Head was expected every moment. Mr. Quelch was the object of many curious glances from his Form. The Remove master's face was quite pale.

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and there were deep lines of worry and anger upon his brow. It was quite clear that the mysterious occurrence, whatever it was, affected the Remove master, and affected him deeply. Mr. Quelch had a package in his hand, and the fellows wondered what it contained.

There was a buzz, and a hush.

"Here comes the Head!"

Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, entered the Hall by the upper end. The doctor's face was very stern, and much troubled in expression.

"My only Aunt Matilda," murmured Bob Cherry, "I shall burst a boiler soon, if they don't let us know what has happened!"

"We shall get it soon," said Nugent.

"The soonfulness will be terrific, my worthy chum!"

"Silence!"

The buzz died away.

Dr. Locke regarded the crowded Hall in silence for a moment, and the Greyfriars fellows waited breathlessly for him to speak. As Bob Cherry remarked in a whisper to his chums, the Head had his flogging look on, and somebody was booked for trouble.

"Boys"—the Head's deep voice broke an almost dead silence—"boys, I am sorry to say that an outrage has occurred during the night—an almost incredible act of vandalism, which disgraces its perpetrator, and renders him liable to the severest punishment."

The Greyfriars fellows gazed at the Head and at one another in wonder. What was coming?

"Cut the cackle, and get to the horses, old chap!" murmured Bob Cherry. But, needless to say, Bob did not make that remark loudly enough to be overheard.

"During the night," resumed the Head, "somebody—some Greyfriars boy, undoubtedly—entered Mr. Quelch's study."

Kipps started.

He remembered the Bounder's mysterious departure from the Remove dormitory in the middle of the night. He understood that he was about to hear the explanation of the mystery now. He glanced at Vernon-Smith. The Bounder was quite cool and collected. If he was the author of the act of vandalism, whatever it was, it was certain that he had an iron nerve.

"Some of you are aware," the Head went on, "that Mr. Quelch is engaged upon a literary work—a history of our school."

Some of the Removites smiled. They were quite aware of that. Indeed, on half-holidays they had often heard Mr. Quelch's typewriter clicking away in the library, and had remarked to one another that old Quelch was going it again.

"This manuscript," said the Head severely, "was kept in a drawer of Mr. Quelch's table. The drawer was kept locked for safety, as the manuscript was once before damaged. But during the night someone forced the lock of the drawer, and took out the manuscript, and wantonly and wickedly disfigured it by drenching it in quantities of red ink. A large bottle of red ink was used for the purpose, for the manuscript was soaked through, and rendered almost wholly illegible. You may see it, and I hope that the perpetrator of this wicked outrage will feel properly ashamed of himself when he sees the harm that he has done."

Mr. Quelch laid his package on the table. There was a general craning forward of necks to see the manuscript as the Form-master uncovered it.

The fellows who were near enough to see it could see that the Head had not overstated the case. The neatly-typed sheets were one mass of red ink. Most of the pages had been stuck together by the ink in drying; but the ink had been swamped on so thickly that it was still wet in places. Most of that valuable pile of manuscript was utterly illegible, and it was evident that the learned author would have his work to do over again, at least, to the extent of copying it out, and filling in obliterated blanks.

"Poor old Quelch!" muttered Bob Cherry. "What a disgusting trick!"

"Rotten!" said Harry Wharton.

"The rottenfulness is terrific!"

"It's simply caddish!" said Mark Linley indignantly. "The fellow who did that ought to be kicked out of the school. It's a rotten shame!"

"A dirty trick!" said Kipps.

"I hope it wasn't anybody in the Remove," said Wharton, with a troubled look. "We couldn't have anybody in our Form. I should think, who'd do a rotten mean thing like that!"

"I hope not."

"Somebody did it," said the Bounder, with a sneering smile.

"Do you think it was a Remove chap?" demanded Bob Cherry hotly.

"Well, I dare say the rotter will be found out, and then we shall see," said the Bounder. "I hope he will be found out, for one."

"Yes, rather?"

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The packed Hall was in a buzz. The Head made a sign for silence, and the buzzing voices died away.

"I need not say," said Dr. Locke, "that the perpetrator of this heartless outrage will be severely punished. Indeed, I should expel him from the school if Mr. Quelch demanded it. Mr. Quelch has, however, asked that he may be flogged, and flogged he shall be, most severely. It only remains to discover who it is."

"First catch your hare!" murmured Coker of the Fifth inaudibly.

"The culprit is here, undoubtedly," said the Head. "I call upon him to step forward, and have the manliness to own up to his dastardly act, in order that suspicion may not possibly fall upon an innocent person. The only reparation he can make now is a frank confession. I call upon him to step forward!"

Silence!

A pin might have been heard to drop in the crowded Hall.

Dr. Locke waited.

A full minute passed.

But there was no movement on the part of any fellow in the big crowd to come forward.

"No takers!" murmured Fisher T. Fish. "I guess the offer isn't good enough."

But no one laughed.

The matter was too serious for that. No one expected the culprit to own up, and if he persisted in keeping silence the fellows did not see how he was to be discovered. And there was the possibility, at least, that suspicion would fall upon some fellow who was perfectly innocent. A good many of the Remove fellows were looking at Kipps. The same thought was in all their minds—had the new boy done this, in revenge for the severe caning Mr. Quelch had given him the evening before?

Kipps understood their looks, and he flushed angrily.

"I know what you're thinking," he blurted out. "I don't know anything about it. I never knew the manuscript had been touched till I came here. Don't you believe me?"

"I believe you, for one," said Harry Wharton.

"And I for another," said Bob Cherry.

"Begad, yaas," remarked Lord Mauleverer. "We know you wouldn't be awful cad enough to do such a thing, my dear fellow." And the dandy of the Remove gave Kipps an encouraging pat upon the shoulder.

"I am waiting for the culprit to speak," said Dr. Locke, in his deep voice that was heard in every corner of the great Hall.

Silence!

"Very well," said the Head; "as the perpetrator of this outrage refuses to admit his guilt, we shall now proceed to investigate the matter."

And there was an uneasy movement among the fellows, especially the Removites. Suspicion was all ready to fall upon someone, and no one could tell upon whom it might or might not fall.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Proof of Guilt.

THERE was an uneasy silence in the crowded Hall.

Mr. Quelch was conferring in low tones with the Head, but what he said could not be heard by the Greyfriars fellows.

Dr. Locke nodded, and turned to the assembly again.

The fellows hung upon his words as he spoke.

"Mr. Quelch has made a suggestion with regard to fixing the guilt upon the right person," said Dr. Locke. "A large quantity of red ink was scattered over the manuscript, and over Mr. Quelch's table, in the most profuse way. It is probable—more than probable—that the perpetrator stained himself or his clothing with the fluid, and such stains would not be easy to get rid of. A search will be made, and any boy bearing stains of red ink will be called upon to give an explanation of them. I shall not be hasty in adjudging the matter, but I am determined that the wicked perpetrator of this outrage shall not escape punishment."

Kipps turned giddy for a moment.

He understood it all now.

The staining of his handkerchief with red ink, and its return in that state to his pocket—he knew now the Bounder's scheme.

If he had not seen the Bounder at work, and guessed that he meant mischief, and taken steps to thwart him, he realised what his position would be like now.

He would be standing there with the ink-stained handkerchief in his pocket, looking as if he had wiped his hands on it after disfiguring the manuscript. He would not know it was there till he was searched, and it was found on him, and then what would he have been able to say?

That he did not know anything about it—that he could not even guess how this handkerchief had come to bear those tell-tale stains?

On the face of it such a statement would have been absurd. But his brain cleared in a moment. He had not foreseen this, but he had foreseen a trick of some kind—some treachery from the Bounder—and he had taken steps to save himself, unknown to Vernon-Smith. It was not Kipps whom the stained handkerchief would condemn!

The junior smiled grimly at the thought.

Unknown to himself, Vernon-Smith, the guilty party, had the proofs of his own guilt in his pocket, waiting for discovery! It was retribution with a vengeance.

Dr. Locke was speaking again, and Kipps listened to hear all that he said.

"The Remove will be searched first," he said, "as they are Mr. Quelch's own Form. My boys must not take this search as implying any distrust of them. I am convinced that they regard this outrage with as much scorn and contempt as I feel myself. But the guilty party is certainly here, in this gathering, and it is only by such means that he can be discovered and suspicion removed from all others."

"Quite right," said Bob Cherry, sotto voce. "Blessed if I like being searched, all the same, like a giddy criminal."

"Shouldn't like the job of searcher, either, begad," remarked Lord Mauleverer. "I suppose that's a prefect's bisney."

"No; here comes Gosling."

The school porter had been sent for, and he now entered the hall. The Head gave him instructions as to what was to be done, and Gosling lost no time. Gosling did not seem to see anything repugnant in the task. The Removites stood up manfully to the test; no one in the Form was afraid of it—though one had reason to be.

All eyes were upon the Remove as they were searched.

Masters and boys had little doubt that the culprit, if he were discovered at all, would be discovered in the ranks of the Remove.

Fellows in other Forms would not have been likely to meddle with the Remove-master's papers. The natural assumption was that it had been done in revenge for some correction administered by the Form-master, and Mr. Quelch, of course, had nothing to do in that way with any other Form but his own.

One of the Removites looked very uneasy—it was Bolsover major. Bolsover remembered the Bounder's proposal of the previous evening, and he wondered if this was the scheme Vernon-Smith had hinted at. He looked at Vernon-Smith, but did not succeed in catching his eyes. Bolsover waited uneasily for some sign of guilt to be found upon Kipps, which would confirm his suspicion. But even if it proved to be so, Bolsover intended to keep silent. He did not feel that he was called upon to give away the plotter, who, after all, was his pal, for the sake of a boy he disliked. Bolsover would not have had any hand in such a trick himself, but he had no intention of intervening to save Kipps, at the risk of being denounced as a sneak.

But he waited anxiously.

Kipps was near the end of the row, with Harry Wharton & Co., and he was searched fifth of the waiting boys. Gosling went through his pockets quickly, turning out the contents and examining the clothes for traces of ink. If anything on the boy, clothing or articles in the pockets, had been stained with red ink, it would have been ground for suspicion. But nothing incriminating appeared upon Oliver Kipps. His handkerchief came into view, and it was white and clean.

Vernon-Smith was watching him like a fox, and he started violently at the sight of Kipps's handkerchief.

There was not the slightest trace of a stain on it.

The Bounder ground his teeth.

Had Kipps discovered the stain on his handkerchief, and changed it for a new one? It must be so—and yet he had had little time. The outrage had been discovered, as the Bounder intended, before the Remove had come down, and immediately they were downstairs they had been ordered to assemble in Hall. There was little time for Kipps to have found his stained handkerchief and to have changed it for another, but he had evidently done so. The Bounder saw all his carefully-laid scheme tumbling to pieces, and his face went quite pale with rage.

Kipps's face expressed nothing but indifference as Gosling searched him for the tell-tale stains and failed to find them.

The school porter passed on, and several boys came under his hands without result, and then he came to Vernon-Smith.

The Bounder was scowling angrily. After the failure to find the incriminating handkerchief upon Kipps, the whole thing seemed like a farce to the Bounder, and he could scarcely muster patience to go through with it. But he had no choice about the matter now; the search had to go on.

Gosling blinked at Vernon-Smith, and turned out his pockets

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Every Wednesday.

for evidence. Almost the first thing that came to light was a handkerchief—drenched with red ink!

"My heye!" said Gosling.

There was a general exclamation from the Remove.

"Red ink!"

"Smithy!"

"So it was the Bounder!"

"You rotter, Smithy!"

"You outsider!"

Vernon-Smith almost fell down as he looked at the handkerchief.

It was thickly stained with red ink; it had been drenched with it, though it was now quite dry. The red caught the glimmer of the sun in the windows, and was conspicuous throughout the hall.

Gosling held it up for the Head to see.

"'Ere it is, sir," said Gosling. "'Ere's the proof, sir. Wot I says is this 'ere—there ain't much doubt about this."

Vernon-Smith doubted his eyes.

It seemed to the wretched Bounder that he was dreaming, or that he had taken leave of his senses. He had stained that handkerchief, and placed it in the pocket of Kipps's jacket, and here it was, discovered in his own!

He was guilty, and the proof provided by himself proved his guilt!

The Bounder was speechless.

For once even his iron nerve was shaken, and his ready wit deserted him. Had he made some frightful mistake the previous night, and put the handkerchief in his own pocket instead of in Kipps's? Had he been too sleepy to know what he was doing? Or had he suffered from some temporary aberration? He did not know what to think, and his brain was reeling under the shock. The boys, the old Hall, the Head's stern face, seemed to swim round him.

Dr. Locke's deep voice rang out:

"Come here, Vernon-Smith!"

The Bounder did not move. He seemed stunned.

"Bring the boy here, Gosling!"

"Yes, sir."

Gosling's heavy hand fell upon Vernon-Smith's shoulder, and the dumbfounded boy was marched up the crowded Hall, between ranks of staring juniors.

There were murmurs from the fellows as he passed—murmurs of scorn and contempt. No one had forgotten that the Bounder had attempted to throw suspicion upon Oliver Kipps. And now it was proved that he was the guilty party—proved by incontestable evidence.

Vernon-Smith halted before the Head, still with Gosling's hand upon his shoulder. But for the porter's grasp, he would have fallen upon the floor. His face was deadly pale, and his eyes seemed starting from his head.

Dr. Locke fixed a withering gaze upon him.

"So it was you, Vernon-Smith?"

The Bounder tried to speak, but his tongue clove to his mouth. He would have denied it. But what was the use, when the proof of guilt had been found upon him? If he had been innocent, and the handkerchief had been put in his pocket, he would have denied it easily enough. But he was guilty, and the sense of guilt and of being found out weighed him down, and checked the usually ready tongue.

"Why did you do this, Vernon-Smith?" asked Mr. Quelch, very quietly.

The Bounder gazed at him hopelessly, dumbly.

"What have I done to you that you should do me this injury?" said the Remove-master, in the same quiet tone.

Vernon-Smith did not speak.

"Have you nothing to say, Smith?"

"I—I—I—"

"Well?"

"I—I'm sorry, sir. I—I—I—"

"I quite believe you are sorry now," said the Form-master grimly; "but you have not explained why you did this, Smith."

Vernon-Smith groaned. He was not likely to explain why he had done it—that would have made matters worse for him. What he had done was bad enough; but if he had confessed that he had done it with the deliberate intention of getting a Form-fellow into trouble, he would certainly have been asking for severer punishment.

"I—I—I'm sorry, sir. It—it was only a lark."

"Indeed! I hardly think such an outrage can be called a lark, Vernon-Smith. You have been guilty of a cruel and cowardly action."

"I—I'm sorry, sir."

"Remove your jacket, Vernon-Smith," said the Head. "I shall flog you, and the punishment will be administered immediately. Take him up, Gosling!"

And, with the whole school looking on, the Bounder of Greyfriars was flogged there and then—a flogging he remembered for a very long time.

(Continued on page 26.)

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

AN INTERESTING COMPETITION—FOR ONE WEEK ONLY.

A page I want ALL my readers to fill up!—Editor.

⁶ Birmingham.

"Dear Editor,—You are always asking us readers to let you have our ideas as to what sort of stories and other features we should like to see in our favourite papers, and in connection with this an idea has struck me, which I venture to bring to your notice. Surely it must be most confusing to you to have a lot of letters in from readers all asking for different features in the paper. Besides, how can you tell by such casual letters what the real opinion of the MAJORITY of your readers is? You know, I expect, how much different people's ideas vary as to how a paper should be edited. Well, my idea is this. Why not get out a sort of form, in which a number of questions are tabulated, such as: What sort of story do you like best? What kind of a cover would you have? etc., etc. You could put this form in 'The Gem' or THE MAGNET LIBRARY, or both, and ask ALL your readers to fill it up. In this way you should get an impression of your readers' ideas. What do you think of my plan, Mr. Editor?"

"A Loyal Reader (J. K.)."

The above is a copy of a reader's letter recently received, and the idea suggested in it seemed to me so good that I have decided to adopt it. I have therefore arranged it in the form of a competition, open to readers of THE MAGNET. As you see, I have printed a form below, just as my cute Birmingham friend suggests, and all you have to do is to fill it up and send it to "The Competition Editor," THE MAGNET LIBRARY, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C., on or before Saturday, April 5th, 1913.

The reader who sends in the form containing the best and most *Practical* ideas will receive a POSTAL ORDER FOR TWENTY SHILLINGS, and to the senders of the next eight most practical forms I will award half-a-crown each. Just take two or three days thinking out your ideas, and then fill up the form and send it to

YOUR EDITOR.

What would you call the paper?			
What price would you make it?			
What day would you publish it on?			
What size would you make it?			
How many pages would it consist of?			
How many complete stories?			
How many serial stories?			
What kind of cover (coloured or not)?			
With what subjects would the stories deal?	1.	2.	3.
	4.	5.	6.
Would you have a competition?			
If so, what kind of competition?			
Would you have any articles?			
If so, on what subjects?			
Would you have any comic pictures?			
What NEW feature would you introduce?			
Name.....			
Address.....			
In entering this Competition I agree to accept the published decision as final and legally binding.			

WRITE CLEARLY
IN INK OR PENCIL.

TEAR OUT THIS PAGE AND POST IT TO THE EDITOR OF THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY.
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 268.

OUR THRILLING ADVENTURE SERIAL. START THIS WEEK!

TWICE ROUND THE GLOBE!

THE STORY OF THE
GREAT MAN-HUNT
BY SIDNEY DREW



Ferrers Lord, millionaire, and owner of the Lord of the Deep.



Prince Ching-Lung, adventurer, conjurer, 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!"

Whilst crossing the Atlantic on his way to England—where the costly diamond, "The World's Wonder," is to be put up for auction—Nathan Gore, the American millionaire and jewel-collector, receives a message from his agent in London to say that the diamond has been bought by his hated rival, Ferrers Lord, who is the owner and inventor of the wonderful submarine, the Lord of the Deep.

Nathan Gore swears he will obtain possession of the diamond, and on the night of his arrival in London he goes to his rival's house, and taking the stone, leaves in its place the message: "To Ferrers Lord,—Knowing 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 accepts the challenge, and a few hours after the robbery the chase is started. For five months, accompanied by his two friends, Ching-Lung, a Chinese prince, and Rupert Thurston, he pursues Nathan Gore, travelling once round the world, but never being able to overtake him. At last Ferrers Lord wearies of the game, and the Lord of the Deep's bows are turned to England once more. Rupert Thurston is arrested at Calais for piracy, and Ferrers Lord and his crew on board the Lord of the Deep are on their way to rescue him. In the meantime, Ching-Lung is going to get a new electric lamp for the corridor, and with the old one in his hand he slips down the ladder, and the lamp explodes. Prout and Barry go to his help.

(Now go on with the story.)

Ching-Lung Scores!

"Axin' yer honour's pardon, sor," murmured Barry, "but did yer honour spake, or only cough?"

There was no reply. Ching-Lung rolled over, and rubbed hard at the spot where the pigtail was attached to his scalp. Joe struck a second vesta.

"Would you like a chair, sir?" he asked.

"Don't sit too long on thim cowl'd, cowl'd plates, sor, or yez moight catch the collyfoozlums in your neck!" said Barry. "It's a firrrible complaint. Shall Oi get yez a cushion, sor? What about a noice soft pincushion?"

"By hokey!" growled Prout. "Did he fall, or was he pushed?"

"He must have fell loightly," said Barry, "for Oi twig he's got some candles, and candles is intinded for loight purposes!"

Prout and Joe sniggered. Ching-Lung rubbed himself, but said nothing. He saw the steaming bucket, the shapeless mass of tallow, and the grinning faces shown up by the spluttering match. He also saw a few stars, and felt a peculiar and unpleasant sensation in the locality of his pigtail. The match went out, and Ching-Lung dropped the candles into the hot water.

"Funny he should stop down there wi'out answering us," said the carpenter.

"Whisht, whisht!" said Barry. "He's a janius, and januses ain't loike ordinary folk. Oi wudn't disthurb him for the wilth of the Bank of Oireland. He's invinting something—a mangle, an egg-boiler, a toothpeck, or, maybe, a floying-machine that will lay eggs as well as floy. Oi cud see the foire of janius in both his peepers. Lit him be quiet; lit him invint; don't worry him."

"By hokey, I'd like to see the fire of genius!" put in Prout. "Is it hot enough to cook a kipper?"

"Show it him, Joseph," said Barry.

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Every Wednesday.

Again Joe struck a match, and, clenching the wheel, Prout went down on his knees. The three heads almost touched. Ching-Lung gazed up at them stonily.

"Dyer see the foire of janius?"

"By hokey, yes!" said Prout. "And ain't it 'ot?"

"I 'ope he's invinting hisself a new face," said Joe.

"If he is, I'll ax him to give us the old 'un to sharpen our razors on!" added Prout.

"It'd make a lovely Aunt Sally for the fo'e's'le," said the carpenter. "Ow, bother it!"

He dropped the match, which was scorching his fingers, and fumbled for another. Ching-Lung's hand shot towards the bucket. The heat of the water had melted the tallow into a green and sticky mass. Ching-Lung hurled it upwards at the three dark, circular objects that impeded the light. There was a curious, squelching sound as the tallow spread itself over the features of Prout, Joe, and Barry, and then a succession of muffled yells, coughs, and splutters.

"I hope you rascals like my invention!" shouted the prince. "It's green grease for coppery complexions and wiry whiskers. Tooralooral! Ta, ta!"

"Ow! Oi'm pizened! Oi'm pizened to diih!" wailed Barry. "Hilp!"

"Ugh, ugh, ugh!" coughed Joe.

"B-b-by hokey, I'm—I'm phew! I'm blinded and ch-choked!"

When they got their eyes clear, they looked at each other. The tallow hung from Prout's beard like greenish icicles, for Gan had a few green candles among the others. He did not eat the green ones, though he had tried one or two, and had been violently sick in consequence.

One of the wicks had attached itself to Barry's nose, and several hung to Prout's bald head. Joe's ear was glued up, and his sleeve was choked with tallow.

"Bedad," said Barry savagely, "Oi'll start invintin'!"

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

meself! Oun invint something to wipe that Choinee off the face of the globe."

Joe and Prout groaned deeply in their woe. Something rose from the depths and darkness. It was a square board attached to a stick, and on the board was written—or, rather, burned in with a red-hot poker:

"GREEN GREASE FOR GRUMPY GROWLERS.

Try it on your whiskers,
Try it on your mugs;
We give it away in chunks."

Barry made a grab at the insulting board. It swung out of his reach, and gave Prout a blow on the head. Then it vanished.

"Ouch!" howled Prout.

"Dems no!" lisped Ching-Lung, imitating Gan-Waga. "I believe I have tickles here."

Rupert Thurston Greets His Old Friends Again.

It was bright moonlight. In every direction Ching-Lung could see the twinkling lights of vessels. Ferrers Lord stood beside the wheelhouse in his evening dress-suit. Beeswax held a silver tray on which were cigarettes, a spirit-lamp, and two glasses of liqueur. The millionaire took up one of the tiny glasses, and lighted a cigarette.

"This part of the Channel reminds me of the Strand, Ching," he said. "It is always filled with traffic. There's a P. & O. boat, and there's a real tramp steamer. Now look between them. That's a policeman."

"You mean that British battleship, old chap?"

"I do. The P. & O. is a kind of omnibus, the tramp steamer is a dray, and the battleship is a policeman. This is a busy place. Here's good luck to us, Ching!"

He drained his glass. The sea was amazingly calm, for the Channel is a restless and treacherous strip of water. Ferrers Lord walked forward and raised his night-glasses. The Lord of the Deep was motionless, and hardly a ripple licked her bow-deck. Ching-Lung was a little uneasy, for he did not know the millionaire's plans. He knew that Thurston would leave Calais aboard the Channel Queen that evening in charge of two London detectives. The French authorities had granted the extradition warrant. Ching-Lung edged a little, and then joined Ferrers Lord.

"You're getting worse, old chap!"

"In what way, Ching?"

"In what way? Look here, old chap," said Ching-Lung, "you've changed altogether since this wretched affair about that beastly diamond. It's all mystery and secrecy. You don't seem to trust me a bit. I might be a kid!"

"My dear Ching," laughed Ferrers Lord, "perhaps that is your own fault."

"How the deuce my fault?"

"Because, my best of lads, you object to the whole thing. I know it bores you. I know you cannot understand why I, with my immense riches, should chase a paltry diamond and a maniac. I have tried to explain. We see things so differently. I have been efficient, certainly; but that was because you and Rupert did not agree with me on the subject. You are only here because of my great friendship. If you see heron, Ching, I'll land you at Calais."

"Don't talk rot!" said the prince sharply. "You know jolly well we can't part."

"Then you are fond of me?"

"Fond of you be hanged!" said Ching-Lung, chuckling. "I love, loathe, and detest you! I only stick to this rickety old ship for the sake of Gan, Prout, Joe, and O'Rourke. I am fond of those rascals. As for you, old fellow, you want a padded room. You are only a common pirate. I can prove it. Here's the boy I love, the meeky old rallow-eater!"

Gan-Waga had wedged up to them. He pointed.

"But you must not make, Ching," he said, as the prince gave him a dig in the ribs. "Oh, no! must not tickle here!"

The millionaire looked at his bloodhounds again and looked ahead.

"Are you going to leave me in darkness altogether?" asked Ching-Lung.

"My dear lad, I am not going to develop a bad temper!"

"Had I ever one?"

"Oh, where my blood take!" chuckled Gan-Waga.

Ferrers Lord laid his hand on the prince's shoulder. His eyes were twinkling.

The millionaire, laughing, relieved Ching-Lung.

"Well?" he asked.

"Oh, wait and see, Ching! I keep up my reputation and be secret a little longer. Here she comes!"

A small steamer ploughed rapidly through the silvery water. She crossed the bows of the Lord of the Deep. A yellow light flashed several times, and then vanished. The steamer headed for the English coast.

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
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ONE
PENNY.

"Good!" said Ferrers Lord.

Strains of music swept across the water. They were singing on the big P. & O. liner—singing "Home, Sweet Home."

"I'll wager most of them are jolly glad to be near 'Home, Sweet Home,' too," said Ching-Lung. "I expect they've been sweltering in India for years. That place wouldn't suit you, Gauss. It's warm in parts—hotter than cayenne pepper!"

"Ain't dere no icebergs dere, Chingy?"

"Icebergs? Why, the sun makes 'em red-hot in India! I tell you, chappie, that a red-hot iceberg is a sight for blind men! If you catch a seal on one he's ready cooked!"

"Dat funnys," said Gan, his eyes big with wonder. "Yo' nots chaffin', Chingy?"

"Fact!" said Ching-Lung. "That's India where the indiarubber comes from. Why, even the fowls lay hard-boiled eggs!"

Gan-Waga winked at the moon.

"Yo' wases a bigs eater, Chingy," he murmured, "and a bigs fi— Ha, ha, hoo! Yo' go and gets yo' faces fried, and den de dogges nots—ha, ha, ha!—barks at him!"

Gan shuffled away, chuckling deeply. With a solemn face he confronted Prout.

"Tom," he said, "do yo' knows Injy?"

"By hokey, yes!" said Prout.

"Where de injyrubbers comes from?"

"In coorse I does!" said the steersman.

"Den I specks," said Gan sweetly and gently, "dats yo' gotses dat injyrubbers face from Injy, where de injyrubbers comes from. Ha, ha, hoo! I gotted yo' dat times! Ha, ha, ha, ho!"

Before Prout could find anything to hit him with the Eskimo was missing.

"By hokey," growled Prout, "he's getting wasser and wasser! I'll bile him down for engine-grease afore I've done. Got my indiarubber face from India, where the rubber comes from! 'Ere, you fat villain of a Heskimo!"

"Oh, yeses, deares Tommy loves!" said the gentle Gan from below.

"By hokey," said Prout fiercely, "you come from Greenland, where the greenhorns come from! Ha, ha, ha!"

"No, I don't; I comes from Alaska. Ho, hoo! My mothers lives dere; and ifs yo' not believeses, I'll aska, and shows yo'. Ha, ho, ho, ho-o-o-o!"

The awful pun was almost fatal. Prout staggered, clutched his forehead, and moaned for brandy, doctors, and hospitals. But he stood stiff and alert as he saw the millionaire's upraised hand, his own great fist on the lever, and his keen, watchful eyes gazing at Ferrers Lord. The millionaire raised his arm. The vessel thudded and moved.

"The packet," said Ferrers Lord. "You see her, Ching?"

"My vision is still pretty good," said Ching-Lung. "She's a bit big for a packet. I should call her a bundle. What's the name of the line?"

"It's the French line—the Tarco-man. It only started last year, and, somehow, it has failed to pay. There are too many lines running between England and France. I am afraid I shall find this shipping enterprise a bad bargain."

"A bad bargain? Have you shares in it, then, Lord?"

"No," answered the millionaire. "I have purchased the whole concern—dock, stock, and cargo. They were glad enough to sell it."

Ching-Lung was beginning to see.

"You're a wonder," he said, "though I've told you so before. So Rupert is on that boat?"

"He is."

"But how does that help us? Yet, dare not—"

"My dear Ching, of course I dare not. If I sold a ticket to a passenger I must take him, and am compelled to take him to his destination by law. As it happens, and as I carefully worked the plan, that vessel completed its passenger list on Thursday. It also happens that unless Rupert is extradited in London to-morrow, and handed over to the United States police, he must be kept in charge until the courts open again after the holidays. He must not get there in time. If he does not, he will be formally brought before an ordinary magistrate and remanded on bail. Perhaps the sum will be a couple of thousand pounds."

"Well?" said Ching-Lung, grinning.

"We can afford that, Ching," laughed Ferrers Lord. "That is a most unlucky vessel. She blew out two steam-gauges, and in consequence she started two hours late. And now she is going to break something else!"

Ching-Lung chuckled softly.

"You terror!" he said. "Let me have a squint!"

The millionaire handed him the binoculars. Faint shouts reached them. The shouts came from the packet.

"I believe," said Ferrers-Lord, "she has broken a propeller."

"Still, the passengers have only to signal and be taken off. Of course—"

Ferrers Lord shook his head.

"Of course," he laughed. "I will finish what you were going to say—the captain is czar, emperor, despot, and tyrant on the ship he commands. That is the law. All must obey him, from cook to saloon passenger. If he declares there is no danger, he may decline aid, and forbid anyone to leave the ship. My captain will do that. He can repair the damage, and the water is clear. Captains dare not run their employers into heavy salvage claims. Rupert will not reach London before the morning. Yes, Prout?"

"Instrument going, sir," said Thomas Prout. "Marconi instrument, sir."

"What about?"

"Slight breakdown, sir," said Prout; "but no danger, and they don't want no 'elp. Short delay, and will be overdone. 'Turcoman,' Offices, Dover."

"Hold it out, old chap!" said Ching-Lung.

He shook hands with Ferrers Lord. They entered the wheelhouse, and the vessel sank.

Two nights later a Grimsby fishing-smack lagged heavily behind the rest of the fleet. When their lights were hulled down, she pulled in her canvas and lowered her only boat.

"Good-night, and good luck, sir!" said the gruff-voiced skipper.

Something twinkled like a star as the boat pulled away into the darkness. The oars rose and fell.

"Lord of the Deep, ahoy!"

"Ahoy!" came back the answer.

There were shouts of laughter.

"Oh, you bad, bad, naughty, wicked, nasty pirate!" said the voice of Ching-Lung.

"Never minds," chuckled Gan-Waga. "If she is a pirate, we shall tickle haire, Chingy."

And then Rupert Thurston was aboard the submarine, shaking hands with them all.

"There'll be a warrant out, and you'll get forty million years' hard!" grinned Ching-Lung.

"Oh, how can you be a nasty pirate, Ru? Oh, how could you bunk, and leave us to pay our bail?"

Gan-waga added:

"Oh, naughtys man! I shall tickles haire mosts norfully! Ho, ho, ho, hoo-o-oo!"

"Ow!"

There was a yell in the dark corridor, and then a thud. As Prout lay on his back, something whizzed over his features, and a loud "Pip-pip!" almost deafened him.

"By hokey!" roared Prout, sitting up. "I'll—Ouch!"

Prout sat down again. He could not help it, for he was hammered down. Something pounded over him, and again there was a "Pip-pip!" Prout got angry. He was going to supper, after a long spell at the wheel. He rose upon his hands and knees, thirsting for human blood.

"It's that Ching," he gasped, "on a dirty bicycle. By hokey, I'll have his life this voyage! I'll find him and eat him! I'll break him into sawdust!"

The Lord of the Deep was nine days out, and her astonishing speed had brought her close to Cape Town. Prout was rather tired—as tired as such a tough and muscular seadog could ever get. He knew that there were several bicycles aboard, and he knew that a bicycle had hit him, if not two of them. He sprang up in his wrath, and bolted through the gloom in pursuit.

All at once he found himself hung up by the neck. He had been hurrying. He waltzed about in the air for a fraction of time, and then descended on his shoulders into something warm. A great splash followed. Prout had come down on his shoulders, and his legs were in the air. He had found something wet, and something he did not like at all. He bloated, spluttered, coughed, choked, and got his head above water.

"Pip-pip!"

He was moving forward swiftly. He clutched at the sides of his unknown and wet carriage, and fell backwards again. Then he rolled out, and lay gazing at nothing and trying to think.

(Another instalment of this amusing and exciting serial story next Monday.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 263.

"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

"The Schoolboy Conjurer!"

(Continued from page 22.)

The fellows looked on grimly. No one felt sorry for the Bounder. He deserved all he received; and, indeed, deserved more, if the fellows had known all the facts.

When the punishment was over, Vernon-Smith staggered away, his face chalky white, and his eyes burning.

"Smithy, after all," said Bob Cherry, in a puzzled way, as he went out into the Close with his comrades. "Well, he's got what he's asked for, and got it bad. I don't like to see any fellow flogged; but I can't say I'm sorry for Smithy."

"What I can't understand," said Nugent, "is his keeping a stained handkerchief like that in his pocket, to be found if there was a search. He must have known there would be a fearful row over Quelchy's precious manuscript being messed up with ink. I suppose he wiped his hands on his handkerchief when he had finished. But why didn't he have sense enough to hide it somewhere? It isn't like Smithy. He's usually so deep, and this time he has simply given himself away."

"He didn't mean to," said Kipps quietly.

"What do you know about it?" asked Johnny Bull.

Kipps hesitated for a moment.

"No need to tell all the fellows," he said; "Smithy has had his medicine, and I don't want to rub it in. But I'll tell you fellows—that was my handkerchief."

"Yes. I woke up last night, and found Smithy taking it from my pocket, and he took it out of the dormitory. He came back, and put it back in my pocket. I looked at it this morning, and found it stained like that."

"Great Scott! He meant to fix it on you, then?"

"But—but the hanky was found in Smithy's pocket," said Frank Nugent, in amazement. "If he put it back into your pocket, Kipper, how was it found in his?"

"That's where the conjuring comes in," he replied. "You remember I biffed into Smithy in the dormitory passage?"

"Yes."

"I changed the handkerchief for his own then."

"And he didn't see—"

"No fear; or he wouldn't have turned up in Hall with that hanky in his pocket," said Kipps. "He meant to get me flogged—it's a case of the biter bit."

"Well, I always knew Smithy was a cad," said Wharton at last. "But this is rather thick, even for Smithy. But he's got it in the neck this time, and serve him right!"

Bob Cherry burst into a chuckle.

"It's the biter bit, with a giddy vengeance," he said. "I fancy after this, Kippy, the Bounder will leave you alone."

And Bob Cherry was right. It was some time before the Bounder realised what must have happened, and by that time he had come to the conclusion that it would be his wisest plan to give a wide berth to the schoolboy conjurer.

THE END.

(Next Monday's long complete tale of Harry Wharton & Co. is entitled "BARRED BY THE FAGS," by Frank Richards. Order a copy of "The Magnet" Library in advance. Price One Penny.)



































































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"THE PENNY POPULAR"
EVERY FRIDAY.

The Editor
is always
pleased to
hear from
his Chums,
at home or
abroad.

FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"BARRED BY THE FAGS!"

By Frank Richards.

Next week's grand, complete school tale deals largely with the further adventures of Jack Wingate—the younger brother of the popular captain of Greyfriars—amongst the fags of the Second Form.

Young Jack has long since seen the error of the ways he first brought with him to Greyfriars, but the heroes of the Fags' Form are none too ready to believe in the rather sudden reformation of the erstwhile sneak of the Lower School.

Consequently, Wingate minor still has a rough time to go through, and largely owing to the little attentions of Loder of the Sixth, he is

"BARRED BY THE FAGS!"

In the end, however, Jack Wingate proves to the satisfaction of all—even Loder—that he has quite given up his former sneaking ways. None of my chums should miss this splendid story of school life, which will prove to be of particular interest to all.

JUST BETWEEN OURSELVES.

A frank letter from a reader on the subject of any of my papers is always welcome to me, even when the letter contains adverse criticism. I am only too pleased to hear from my readers direct, just what they like, and also what they don't like. From my voluminous postbag I have selected for publication this week a letter from a chum in Wellingborough, who gives his opinion of our latest companion paper "The Penny Popular," with perfect freedom and candour. Here is his letter:

"Wellingborough.

"Dear Editor.—Just lately you have been asking us for our opinion of 'The Penny Pop.' Considering that I read the 'Gem' and the 'Magnet' as well, perhaps it lies in my power to give an opinion, up to a certain point. In my opinion there are only two better books on the market than 'The Penny Pop.', and those are the 'Gem' and the 'Magnet.' I have taken it in ever since it came out; it is a clean and healthy little book, and only one thing lacks, and that is an 'Editor's Chat' page; and I don't think I am the only one to miss this page. I am recommending it to all my friends by giving them a copy to read, and they nearly all express the same thing, namely, 'It is a jolly decent little book,' and I join in with them. But, dear Editor, as I said before, it does not come up to the standard of my two favourites, the 'Gem' and the 'Magnet.' No matter what future books you may issue, you will never beat these two, and I shall always remain a staunch reader of them; of course, I shall never drop the 'Pop.', but say 'All hail to the Popular Three.' If ever I find any silly ass starting an 'Anti-Magnet League,' he will suffer great pain in consequence, and I shall do my level best to enlarge the circulation of our famous three papers in Wellingborough. Tom Merry and Bob Cherry are for ever in my thoughts, and I could not drop reading about them, even if I wished to. Bringing the 'Pop.' out on Friday has filled the week-end gap wonderfully. Please think it over about the 'Chat'

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A Grand, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars next Monday, entitled:

"BARRED BY THE FAGS!"

page, and let me know the result on our 'Chat' page very soon. Wishing you and your three papers every success,

"I remain, a Loyal Reader,

"FRANK B."

Well, Master Frank B., I am much obliged for your letter; as for your request for a chat page, I am afraid I have no room for such a feature in the crowded pages of "The Penny Popular," for the present at any rate.

With regard to the opinion you express, though, I should just like to put to you, and to all those of my readers who think as you do, what is known as a "leading question." It is this: What alterations do you suggest should be made in order to bring "The Penny Popular" right up to the standard of the "Gem" and the "Magnet" Libraries? "The Penny Popular" was first brought out to satisfy the urgent demands of my "Gem" and "Magnet" readers, and I have all along attempted to give my chums just what they want, as far as it is possible to do so within the limits of a penny weekly journal. The trouble is that it is an extremely difficult matter to gauge the exact feeling of the great mass of my readers on this subject. If they don't write and tell me just what they like best in the way of complete stories, articles, serials, etc., it is evident that my task of judging just what kind of fare will be the most acceptable to my friends is rendered much more difficult.

Therefore, I should like to impress once again upon all my loyal chums that the best way they can do their poor, worried old Editor a good turn is to write and tell him just what they and their friends would like best in "The Penny Popular." I am ready and willing to put in anything in the way of stories, pictures, and articles I am asked to, once I am assured that it is certain to be popular with the majority of my readers; so that it is up to my chums to see that I have a plain expression of opinion from the great body of "Gem" and "Magnet" readers all over the world.

SIGHTS TO SEE IN LONDON—THE ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS.

The Zoological Gardens, better known as "The Zoo," are situated to the north of Regent's Park, London, N.W. They were built in 1826, chiefly by Sir Humphry Davy (the inventor of the Davy safety-lamp, as now used in our coal mines). Years before this, there was a small menagerie at Windsor, which, on the opening of the new Zoological Gardens in London, was transferred here, and some five years later was further increased by the menagerie of the Tower of London, of which I spoke last week. Many animals have been which, on the opening of the new Zoological Gardens in Society by well-known big game hunters, and many, too, have been sent as presents to our kings and queens from foreign royalties. Dotted about the gardens are little shops, somewhat like sentry-boxes, from which may be bought such articles as monkey-nuts, biscuits, and buns, etc., to feed the animals. The official feeding time for the lions, seals, etc., is not definitely fixed, but an inquiry from one of the many attendants will secure you the information. One of the boa-constrictors in the reptile house is known as the "cannibal-boas." It got its name like this. One night the attendant had fed the two boas with a pigeon apiece, their usual meal, but next morning only one boa was there. Judging by the fatness of the other, it was quite evident that he had eaten his brother!

Large reptiles of this class eat by suction, and once they start eating, they cannot stop themselves until their prey has vanished inside; so it was concluded that the boa, having finished his pigeon, made a grab at his brother's, and caught not only the pigeon, but his brother's head! It took over a month for him to get over his meal.

A visit to the monkey-house will cause great amusement, especially to my younger readers, while the antics of the bears will amuse all. Unfortunately space will not allow me to describe any more of this wonderful garden. Admission is sixpence on Mondays, and one shilling on any other day. The Zoological Gardens open at 9 a.m., and are shut to the general public on Sundays.

THE EDITOR.

Please order your copy of "THE MAGNET" Library in advance.

THE "MAGNET" LIBRARY SPECIAL COMIC SUPPLEMENT.

NOT SUCH A DUSTY IDEA!



1. "How in the world can I get my fruit to grow properly with all these motors kicking up this dust?" growled old Stubbins. "I'll put a stop to them somehow or other, so I will!"



2. So that same evening he put on his considering-cap, and a brilliant idea came to him. Yes, he rigged up a dummy policeman, with notebook and all complete, and the motorists were so scared that they went past at a snail's gallop.



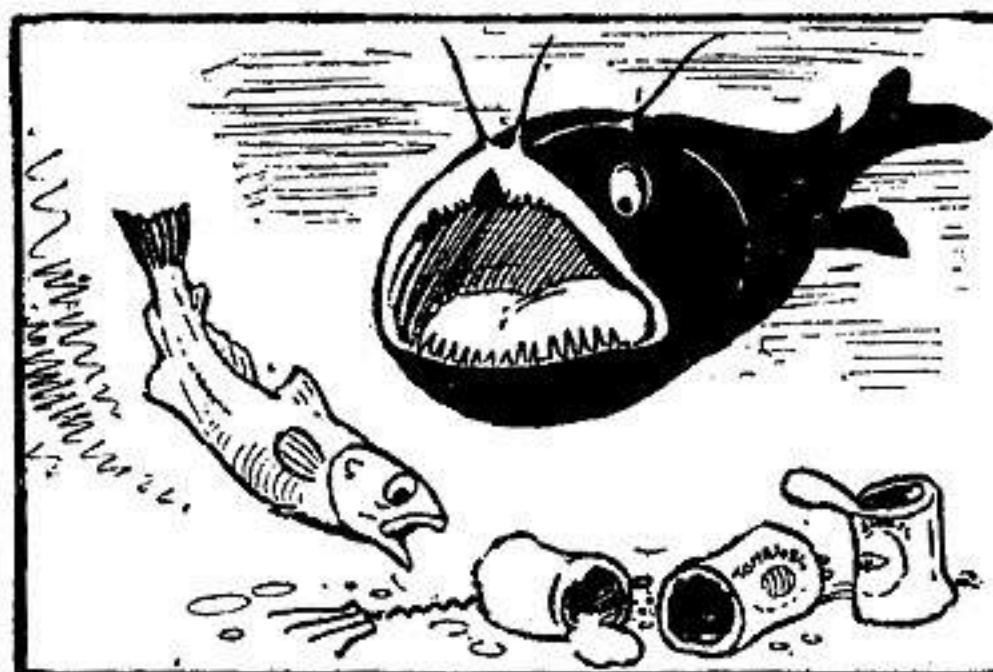
PUT THE MUZZLE ON HIM!

1. "If you buy this, sir, you'll find it quite simple. You just slip the cartridge in here, so. There you are, sir."

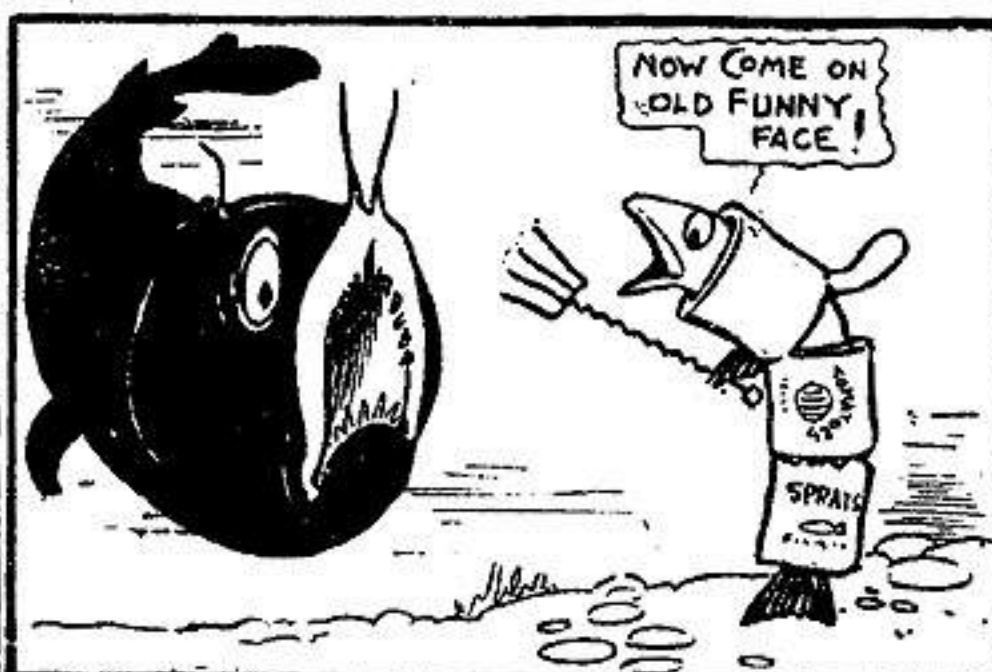
2. "I see," said the customer. "Now just hand over the till, will you, as quickly as you can. Thanks!"



THEN THE WHALE WAILED!

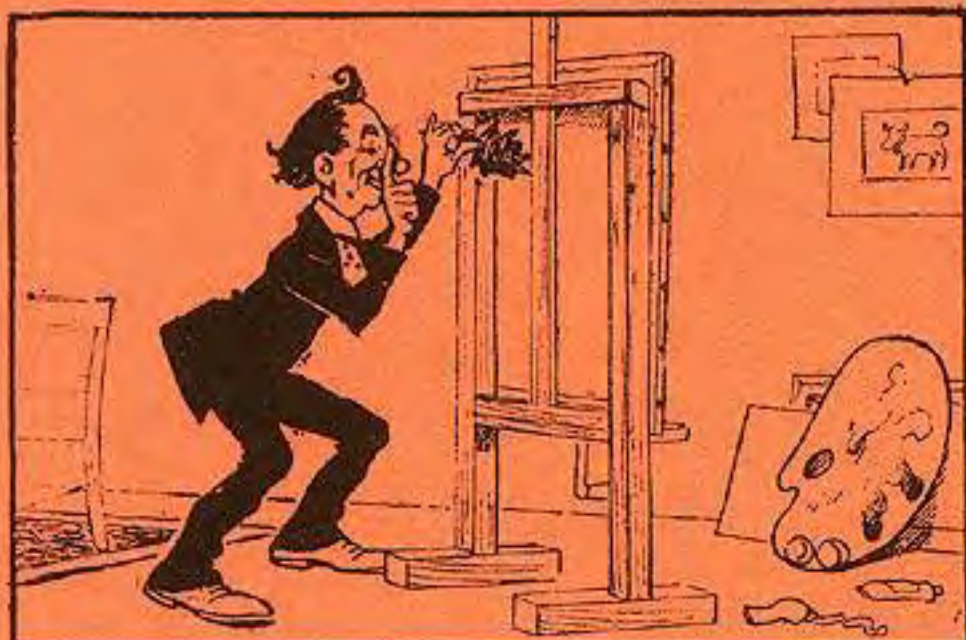


1. The Lophius Piscatorius was after the codfish. "Dear, dear!" gasped the cod. "My number's up if summat desprit don't happen! Ah! What's this? Tin cans with the tops and bottoms out? Righto!"

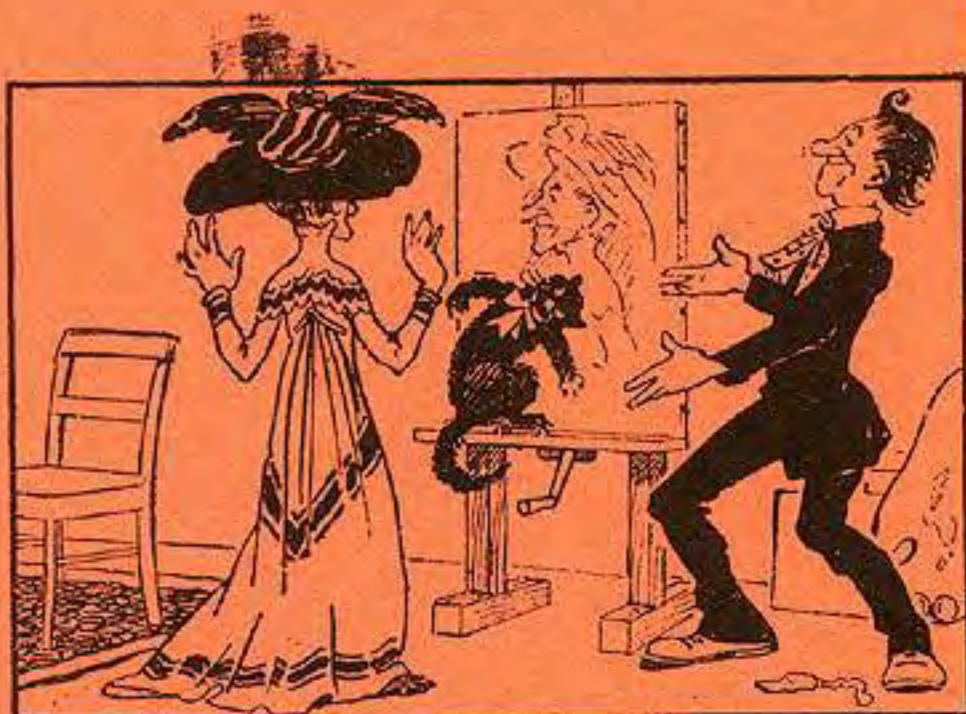


2. "All's well! Cased in armour I fear no foe. Come on, pretty dear. Have at thee!" "Oo-er!" gasped Lophius Piscatorius. "Faints! I've made a mistake! Good-afternoon!"

Behind the Scenes!



1. D'Aub, the artist, had a commission to paint a lady nursing her favourite cat, and the happy idea occurred to him of fixing a double portion of cat's-meat on the back of the canvas.

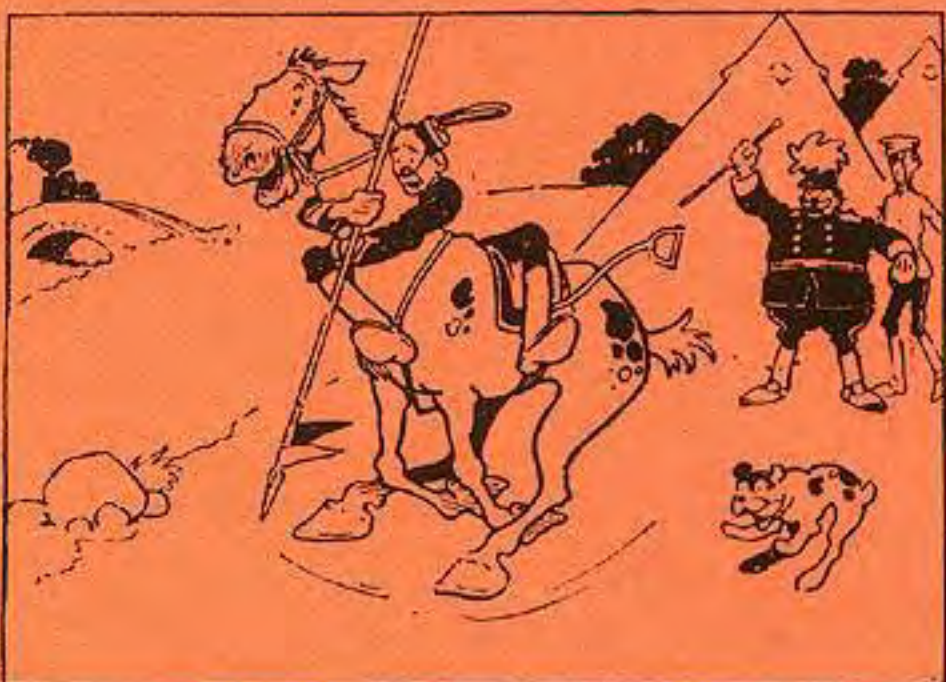


2. And the way the puss went for that picture when it smelt the meat! "There!" said the artist. "What better proof of the likeness when pussy thinks it is really you?"

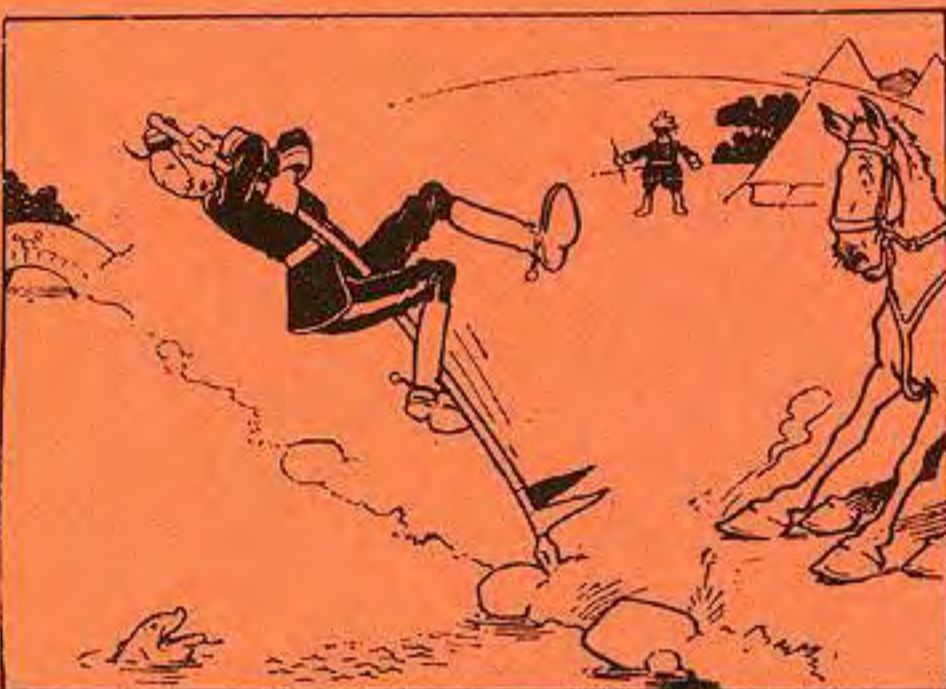


3. That did it, and out trotted the cheque. Isn't it marvellous what a little artfulness will do?

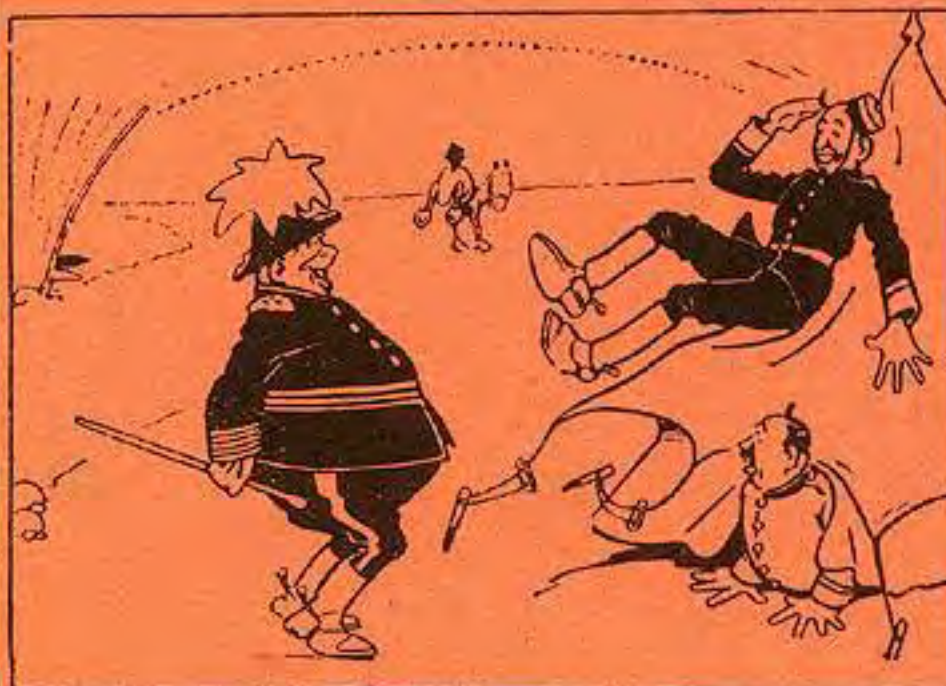
Many Happy Returns.



1. "Whoa! Back pedal!" cried Private Nibs, as his horse started dancing a giddy cake-walk towards the river. Just as the general was passing, too.



2. But, not liking cold water, it stopped suddenly on the bank. "O-er!" yelled Nibs, as he shot over its head. But his lance stuck its business end into the ground, and he started doing a graceful backbend towards the water.



3. Did he get wet? No! When that lance rebounded he came into camp with a rush, as per above. "Here we are again, me lad!" said the general. "Yes, just like a bad ha'penny!" said Nibs. But what d d those in the tent say? Ah!

A LITTLE ENTANGLED!



He: "But I thought you'd forgiven me for that and promised to forget it?"

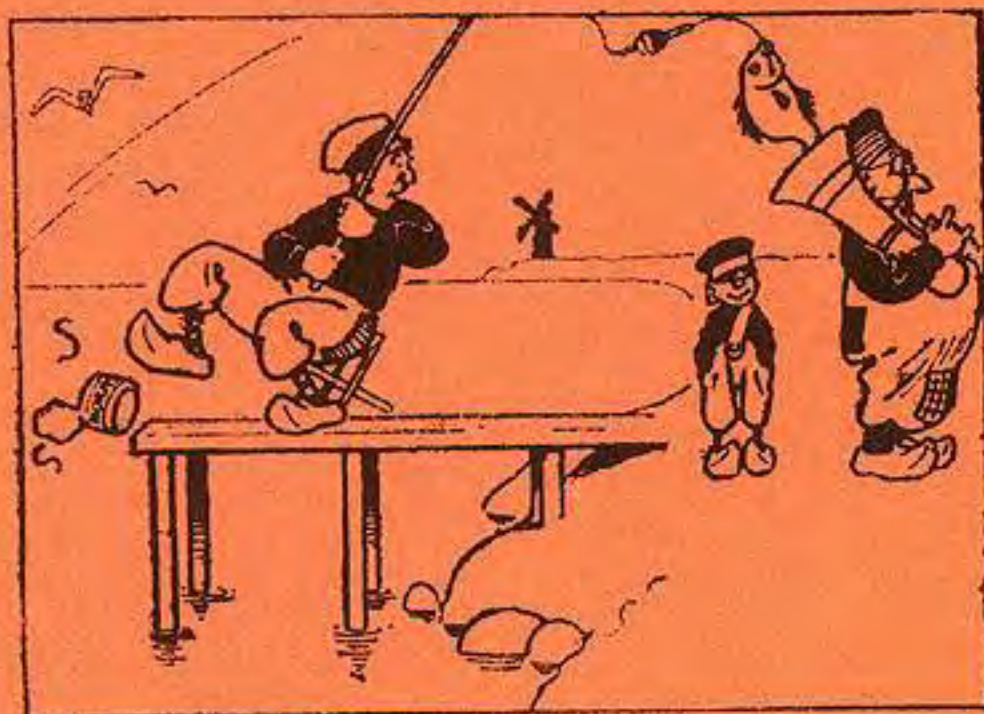
She: "Yes; but I didn't promise to let you forget I'd forgiven it!"

COMPENSATION!



Buttons: "Yes, I gets three bob a week and no clothes. I said to the guy'nor when I took it on, 'The wages is rather small.' 'Well,' he sez, 'but the clothes is rather large, so that makes up for it.'"

HE DIDN'T CATCH IT, AFTER ALL!

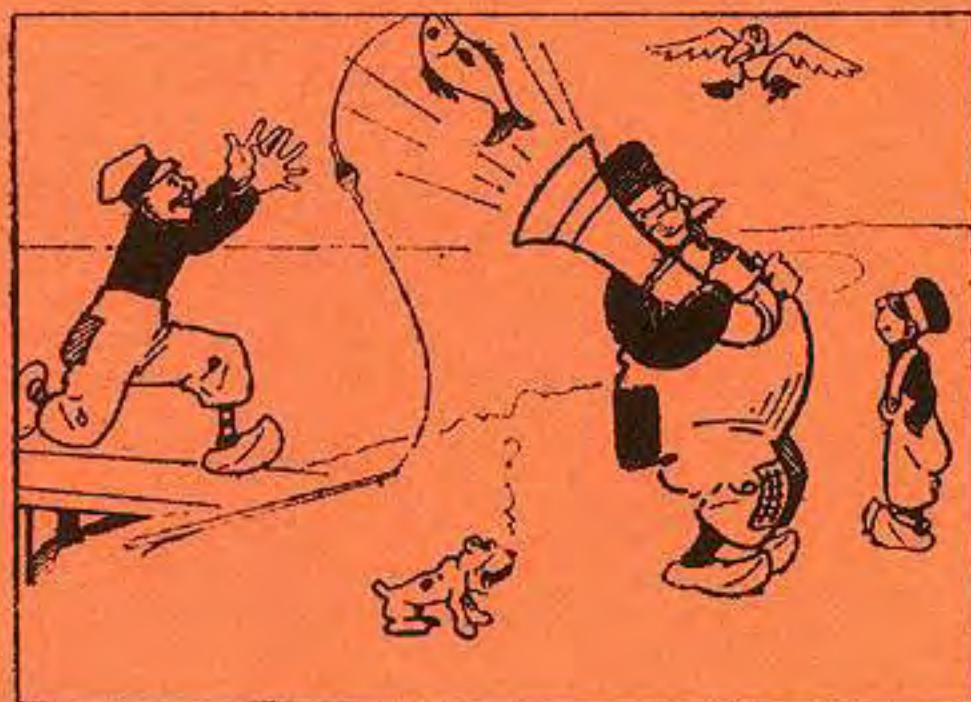


1. "Dat vos goot!" said the Dutch yoblet, as he pulled up a fine fat finny fish; and, to his glee, it dropped right into the musician's ear-splitter.

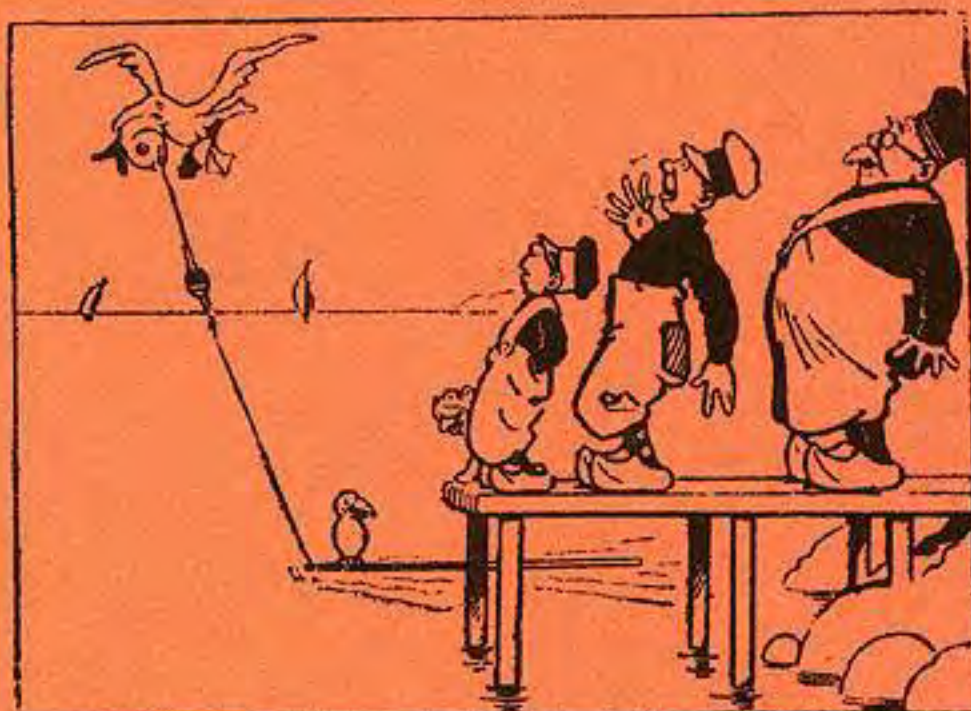
NOT WHAT SHE MEANT!



Nell: "Mr. Smytho called last night, and told me of his love."
Gwen: "Which one?"



2. "Vot sport we vas having, don't it?" said the yoblet, when the music-monger blew the fish out again, and he rushed forward to catch it.



3. But did he catch it? Most dissentingly not. "By-bye!" said the seagull, as he flew off with it. Were the Dutchies surprised? Well, do they look it?