

IN THIS
ISSUE:

THE FALSE FORM-MASTER.

BY
FRANK RICHARDS

A SPLENDID LONG, COMPLETE SCHOOL TALE OF HARRY WHARTON & CO. AT GREYFRIARS.



At Mr. Quelch's window the false Form-master stood transfixed. A smart jerk of Peter Todd's fishing-rod had lifted the wig fairly from his head—and his own hair was revealed! There was a yell of amazement from the crowd of juniors in the Close. "Great Scott!" roared Vernon-Smith. "It's not Mr. Quelch at all; it's Ullick Ferrers!" (An amazing incident in the long, complete School Story contained in this issue.)

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at Greyfriars.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

After Lights Out.

"CAVE!"

Harry Wharton whispered the word, and as he whispered he drew his two companions into the dark shadow of the clump of trees at the cross-roads.

"What the—!" began Bob Cherry and Frank Nugent together.

"Hush! It's Quelch!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob.

"Shush!"

The three juniors of Greyfriars drew back closer into the dark shadow of the trees. Round that clump in the middle of the cross-roads fell the light of the road-lamp, and in the radius of light, a figure had loomed up, approaching from the direction of the village.

The Greyfriars juniors had good reason to keep out of sight.

At that hour of the evening they were supposed to be in their dormitory and sound asleep; and certainly were not supposed to be on their way to the tuckshop in Friardale village for a supply of "tuck."

And although their reason for being out of bounds after "lights out" was not a very harmful one, they knew what to expect in case of discovery.

Their palms already tingled in anticipation.

"What rotten, rotten luck!" murmured Bob Cherry in-

audibly. "I'd have sworn old Quelch was in his study when we came out. The light was burning."

"That's Quelch!"

"No doubt about that—and he's stopping."

The juniors kept their eyes fixed upon the man in the road with almost painful intensity. If he had seen them it was all, as Bob Cherry would have said, "U P."

He had stopped, and was glancing towards the clump of trees.

The light of the road-lamp, dim as it was, fell full upon his face—the somewhat severe and hard face they knew so well. The keen, sharp features were shown up in the light—though the juniors noted, with surprise, that the man was wearing a cap pulled down low over his forehead. An overcoat covered his person, buttoned up to the chin, though the evening was decidedly warm. They did not remember to have seen their Form-master in that long, dark coat before, and they had never seen Mr. Quelch wearing a cap. But there was no mistaking the clear-cut features.

"He's seen us, I believe!" Frank Nugent breathed.

The juniors watched the man with intent eyes, their curiosity growing.

What was Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove at Greyfriars, doing out there at nearly ten o'clock? When they left the School House they had looked at his study window, and had seen the light burning there, and had nothing doubted

that Mr. Quelch was in his study. It was very unlike the orderly and methodical Form-master to go out and leave the light burning in his study. And what did his peculiar manner mean?

He stared towards the dark clump of trees, with a keen stare that made the juniors fancy he had discovered them—and then he looked back furtively along the road, as if to see whether anyone was following him.

The juniors waited, in momentary anticipation that he would stride towards the clump of trees that concealed them, and order them to step out into the light.

But he did not.

"Quiet!" whispered Harry Wharton, as a low branch crackled and rustled, one of the juniors having pushed hard against it.

The sound, slight as it was, seemed loud in the dead silence of the lonely lane, and it evidently reached the overcoated man at a little distance.

He started.

"Now we're done!" groaned Nugent. "Game's up!"

"M-m-my hat!" gasped Bob. "Look at him!"

The juniors stared blankly.

Instead of striding towards them at the sound, the man had made a sudden spring through a gap in the hedge that bordered the road.

For a moment or two they heard his footsteps pounding in the field.

Then silence!

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at one another blankly.

For the moment it seemed to them that they must be dreaming. Bob Cherry was the first to find his voice:

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated. "What on earth——"

"He's bolted!" said Nugent.

"Clean gone, by Jove!"

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Well, of all the unexpected things, I think that takes the cake!" he said. "He didn't see us—he heard us, and he scooted. Quelch scooted! What on earth did he scoot for?"

Bob Cherry rubbed his eyes, as if in doubt as to whether they had deceived him.

"I suppose it wasn't a giddy dream!" he murmured.

"It was real enough. It was Quelch—and he didn't want to be seen for some reason—though I'm blessed if I can see the reason!" said Harry.

"Wonder what the old bird has been up to out here?" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Some giddy mystery!"

"Jolly lucky for us, anyway!" said Nugent. "Let's get on before he changes his mind and comes back again!"

The juniors left their cover, and hurried on their way.

The inexplicable conduct of their Form-master troubled their minds as they went, and they could not help thinking about it.

What had caused Mr. Quelch—usually so grave and composed and dignified—to act in that extraordinary manner.

It was inexplicable.

"Better buck up!" said Bob Cherry, in a low voice, as they came into the old High Street of Friarsdale. "The old boy may be hanging round to catch us."

The juniors lost no time.

A considerable number of Removites were awake in the dormitory at Greyfriars, awaiting their return, or they would have abandoned the expedition. But they could not go back without the tuck under the circumstances. The disappointment of the intended feasters, and the sneers of Vernon-Smith and Skinner and Snoop, would have been too hard to bear.

They hurried to Uncle Clegg's little shop, and found the old gentleman about to close. But Uncle Clegg was quite willing to serve the Greyfriars juniors; and in a few minutes a sovereign had changed hands, and the three Removites had their pockets bulging with purchases.

Then they hurried away from the tuckshop and took the road home to Greyfriars.

In case Mr. Quelch should still be about the lane—though

what he could be doing there they could not imagine—the juniors took the short cut back across the fields.

They ran most of the way, and reached the school gates, and passed them, going along the wall towards the spot where they had climbed out, and where they intended to climb in again.

"Hold on!" whispered Wharton suddenly.

The juniors halted, crouching close against the shadowy wall.

Ahead of them was an overcoated figure in a cap, and although there was no light here to show the face, they knew it at once.

"Quelch!" murmured Nugent.

"And waiting for us!" growled Bob Cherry.

The man in the overcoat had stopped by the wall, and was scanning it with his eyes, as if he intended to climb it.

The juniors backed away.

"We'll get in over the wall of the Head's garden, and cut across the Close," Wharton whispered. "Jolly close shave that!"

They lost no time.

The wall of the Head's garden was easily scaled, and the juniors dropped into the garden and ran down the path, and clambered over the gate into the Close.

"Safe enough now!" breathed Wharton. "Quelch is still outside the walls. If he's waiting for us——"

"He'll have a long wait!" chuckled Bob.

"The light's still burning in his study," said Nugent, pointing to the study window, on the ground floor of the old grey building. "Careless boulder to go out and leave his light burning. Ought to be reported!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come on!" murmured Wharton. "Why, what—what—who—My hat!"

A form loomed up before the juniors in the shadowy Close. The light from the study window fell upon the face.

"Mr. Quelch!"

The juniors gasped out the name together, in dumb-founded amazement.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Caught Out!

"MR. QUELCH!"

"M-m-my hat!"

"Oh!"

It was not a wonder that the juniors were astonished. They had left their Form-master—as they believed, at all events—outside the school walls.

And here he was standing before them, in the Close of Greyfriars.

And the man they had left standing outside the school wall was dressed in cap and overcoat.

Mr. Quelch was in his usual gown and mortar board that they knew so well.

The juniors could only stare at him, dumbfounded.

A dark frown came over the Form-master's face.

"Wharton! Nugent! Cherry!" he rapped out. "What are you doing out of your dormitory at this hour?"

The chums of the Remove did not reply. They could not. They could only stare blankly at the Remove-master, and wonder if they were dreaming.

"What is the matter with you?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch irritably. "I suppose you are surprised at being caught? But why do you stare at me as if I were a ghost?"

"Mr.—Mr. Quelch!" gasped Wharton. "It—it is you, sir?"

"Certainly it is I! What do you mean?"

"I—I—I don't understand it, sir!"

"Indeed! Will you kindly explain yourself, Wharton?"

"Wasn't it you—outside—in the lane?" stammered Wharton blankly.

"I—outside!" said the Remove-master. "Don't be absurd, Wharton! I have just come out of my study!"

"Y-y-your study, sir!"

"But—but we saw you!" stuttered Bob Cherry.

"What?"

"We saw you in the lane, sir."

"Nonsense!"

"You were wearing a cap and an overcoat, sir," said Nugent dazedly; "and—and we thought you were still out there, sir!"

"Are you wandering in your mind, Nugent?" said Mr. Quelch, scanning the junior's face in angry surprise. "I have just come out of my study to take a turn in the Close before going to bed. What do you mean by saying that you saw me outside the walls?"

"But we—we did, sir. I—I mean, if you say we didn't, of course we didn't; but it was somebody exactly like you, sir."

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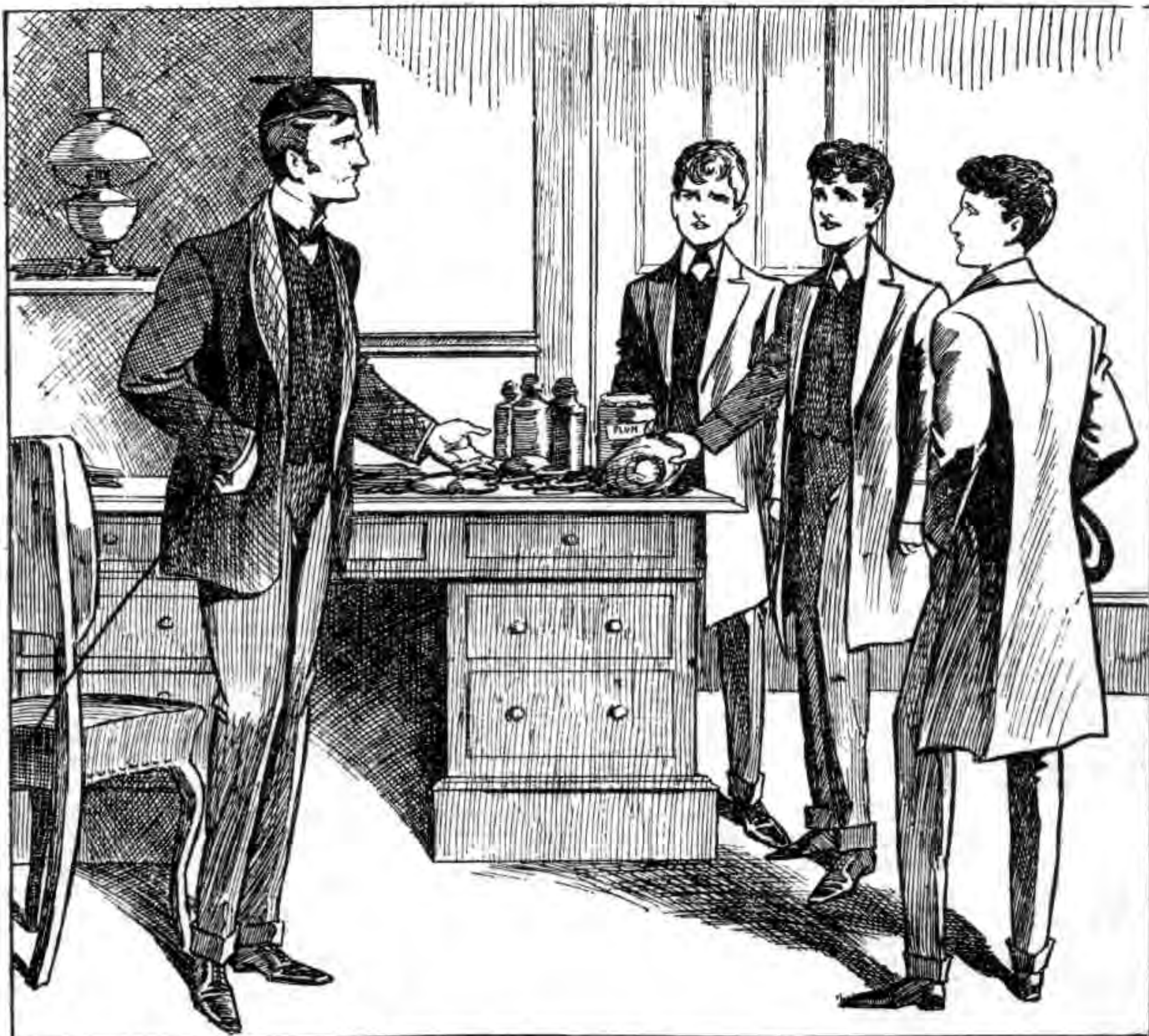
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"Where have you been?" asked Mr. Quelch, as he picked up a cane. "Friardale, sir." "Turn out your pockets!" The unfortunate juniors turned out their purchases upon the table. "So that is what you broke bounds for!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. (See Chapter 2.)

The Form-master started.

"Somebody exactly like me, Nugent?" he repeated.

"Yes, sir; only he was dressed differently."

"I do not quite understand this," said the Form-master coldly. "There is certainly a man in existence who resembles me very much, but he is nowhere near Greyfriars—he is not in this county at all. You have been misled by some fancy. Follow me into my study!"

"Ye-e-es, sir!"

The juniors followed the Form-master with grim faces.

It was pretty clear now that they had been deceived by someone who bore a resemblance to their Form-master in features, though the resemblance was certainly very striking. It had been an unlucky deception for them. In the belief that they had left their Form-master outside the school wall, they had shown less caution in returning across the Close, and had run fairly upon Mr. Quelch there.

They felt very much inclined to kick themselves as they followed the Form-master into the house and into his study.

Mr. Quelch picked up a cane.

"Where have you been?" he asked sharply.

"Friardale, sir."

"Turn out your pockets."

The unfortunate juniors turned out their recent purchases upon the table. Mr. Quelch eyed them grimly. Bags of tarts, and a pot of jam, and a cake, and two or three bottles

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of ginger-beer, and dough-nuts and cream puffs. There was a sufficient supply of tuck there to make half the Remove ill with indigestion.

"So that is what you broke bounds for?" said Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir."

"I am glad that your object was no worse, and this was only a foolish prank!" said Mr. Quelch, a little more mildly. "These things will, however, be confiscated, and I shall cane you. Hold out your hands!"

Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"You may return to your dormitory," said the Remove-master. "If you stir out of it again, your punishment will be severe!"

"Good-night, sir!" said Nugent meekly.

"Good-night; and remember what I have told you!"

The juniors left the study, and with doleful faces ascended to the Remove dormitory. As soon as they had entered, and the door was shut, there was a chorus of inquiry.

"Got the grub?" asked Johnny Bull.

"All serene?"

"Faith, and weren't ye spotted intirely?"

"Where's the grub?"

Wharton laughed ruefully, as he rubbed his tingling palm. Mr. Quelch had not laid the strokes on lightly.

"The grub's in Quelch's study," said Harry. "We were spotted!"

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"Oh, tare and oons!" groaned Micky Deamond.

"Rotten!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"The rottenness is terrific, my worthy chums," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Indian junior, in his weird and wonderful English.

Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, burst into a scoffing laugh.

"There goes a quid!" he said.

"Oh, blow the quid!" said Bob Cherry. "I'll give you back your little bit of it if you're so mighty particular about that!"

"Oh, I don't mind my bob!" said the Bounder. "But I knew you fellows would make a muck of it! I could have pulled it off all right!"

"Rats!"

"Rats to you, and many of them!" said the Bounder coolly. "I could have pulled it off, and I'll prove it if you like by going now!"

"I say, you fellows, that's a jolly good idea!" said Billy Bunter. "Let Smithy go. I'll stand my whack out of another quid for the tommy—I mean, I'll owe it to you!"

"Smithy can go if he likes!" growled Bob Cherry. "It's jolly risky, though, now that Quelch is on the watch. He'll be keeping his eyes and ears open now!"

"He won't catch me!" said the Bounder arrogantly.

"Oh, rats!"

Vernon-Smith evidently meant to be as good as his word. He slipped out of bed, and began to dress himself. Harry Wharton and Nugent and Bob Cherry turned in. They were disappointed about the feed, but they had had enough adventures for one night.

"Look out for Quelch downstairs, that's all," said Bob Cherry.

"I'm going by the window!" said the Bounder.

"You'll break your silly neck!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, it's my neck!" said Vernon-Smith, with imperturbable coolness.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

And the Bounder, with a low chuckle, went to the window, and opened it cautiously, and swung himself out in the thick ivy. Thick and strong as the ivy was, it required a nerve of iron to make a descent that way, especially at night-time. But the Bounder of Greyfriars had never wanted for nerve, either for good or for evil.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Strange Visitor.

"My hat!"

The Bounder murmured the words softly to himself.

He had scuttled across the shadowy Close, and reached the school wall, unseen and unheard. He stopped at the wall, and was about to climb, when a peculiar sound on the other side of the wall caught his ears.

It was a rubbing, scraping sound on the rough old stones, and the Bounder of Greyfriars knew very well what it meant.

Someone was climbing the wall from the road.

The Bounder grinned in the darkness, and crouched back in the deep shadow of the nearest tree to watch. He had no doubt that it was some fellow who had been out of bounds—perhaps Loder or Carne of the Sixth, who, as the Bounder had good reasons to know, sometimes paid little nocturnal visits to a certain public-house in Friardale.

A head appeared over the top of the school wall, and the Bounder dimly made out a cap pulled down over a face. In the darkness he could not make out the features. The rest of the climber followed, and the Bounder whistled inaudibly to himself. It was not a boy at all—it was a man who was climbing the wall of Greyfriars!

A natural suspicion flashed into the Bounder's mind.

It must be a burglar who was making this surreptitious entrance into the school grounds. It was curious that a midnight thief should come at so early an hour for his work, before the lights were out in Greyfriars. But whom else could it be?

The Bounder set his teeth hard.

The man dropped on the inner side of the wall, and Vernon-Smith heard him give a grunt. He remained for a few moments breathing hard close to the wall, the hidden junior within six feet of him.

Vernon-Smith did not make a sound.

If it was a burglar, he did not want to risk getting a jemmy or a life-preserver crashing upon his head. He would wait till a safer moment before he thought of giving the alarm.

The man moved through the shadows of the trees, and stopped away towards the School House.

Vernon-Smith watched him go, and saw the dark figure

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loom up in the light that shone from Mr. Quelch's study window.

Outside that window the figure halted.

Vernon-Smith's heart was beating hard. He followed the stranger cautiously, but he no longer thought that it was a burglar. The intruder was evidently a man who knew his way about in the Close of Greyfriars.

Tap!

Vernon-Smith started, and drew a deep breath.

The dark figure outside Mr. Quelch's window was tapping at the pane.

Vernon-Smith's eyes blazed with excitement. His heart was beating hard.

"My only hat!" he muttered. "It's somebody to see Quelch—a visitor for our giddy respected Form-master sneaking in at night like a thief over the wall! What does it all mean? I know one thing—I'm jolly well going to find out."

Tap!

Vernon-Smith kept back in the shadow of the elms, watching the Form-master's window.

There was a moving shadow on the blind within.

Tap!

The blind was drawn aside, and Vernon-Smith saw Mr. Quelch within the study, in full view in the electric-light.

The man within, and the man without, stood staring at one another through the glass, for a second or two.

Within the study, the Form-master seemed petrified.

Vernon-Smith watched eagerly, tensely.

It was clear to him, as he looked, that the meeting was a surprise to Mr. Quelch—that he had not been expecting a visitor.

The cad of the Remove felt that he was upon the brink of a discovery—that some hidden secret of the Form-master was at his mercy.

Not for an instant did a scruple enter his mind about penetrating a secret that was no concern of his. The Bounder of Greyfriars was not troubled by scruples of that kind. That there was something shady in the matter was evidenced by the secrecy with which this strange visit was paid. And a vision floated in the Bounder's mind of surprising a secret that would give him a hold over his Form-master—and thereby make it much easier for him to indulge in some of his peculiar little relaxations.

He watched breathlessly.

There was a slight sound as the window opened. The Form-master leaned out a little, and gazed more closely at the face of the intruder. As the man's back was turned to Vernon-Smith, he could not see the face. In the stillness of the Close, the voice of Mr. Quelch came clearly to the Bounder's ears.

"Good heavens, Ferrers! It is you!"

"Yes!"

"What are you doing here?"

"Let me in!"

"Let you in! I cannot—you know I cannot! You should not have come here! Are you mad? You may be looked for here first of all!"

"I must come in!"

"I refuse!"

"For a few words, Quelch—then I will go; but I must speak to you!"

The man had his hands upon the window-frame as he spoke, and he put his knee upon the sill.

The Remove-master seemed to hesitate, and then he drew back, and the man leaped lightly into the room.

He half-turned then, and the light was on his face.

The Bounder could scarcely repress a cry of astonishment. For, allowing for the difference the low cap over the forehead made, the man's face was startlingly like that of the Remove-master. It was quite evident that they must be relations; they might have been twins.

The man tossed off the cap, and then the likeness was less apparent.

For, instead of the Form-master's dark hair, slightly fringed with grey, the new-comer's hair was of a sandy hue, inclining to light brown.

The difference in the colour of the hair was so striking, that it subtracted a great deal from the resemblance of the features, though the resemblance was still apparent.

"Ferrers," began the Remove-master, whose face showed signs of strong agitation.

"Close the window!"

"But—"

"And pull the blind. Who knows who may be watching?"

"The boys are all in bed." Then Mr. Quelch started. "Good heavens! A short time ago I found some of the Remove boys in the Close—there might be more—"

"Close the window; you can look into their dormitory and see."

"True!"

Mr. Quelch closed the window and drew the blind again, and the interior of the study was shut off from view.

But Vernon-Smith did not wait for that. In a few minutes Mr. Quelch would be in the dormitory to see whether any of the Remove were absent. Vernon-Smith ran for the wall under the dormitory window, and clambered desperately up the ivy. He reached the window, which he had left open, and clambered in, closed the window quickly, and ran for his bed. There was no sound as yet of the approach of the Form-master. The Bouncer stripped off his clothes almost in a twinkling.

"Back again!" growled Billy Bunter. "You haven't been to Friardale—"

"Shut up!"

"Spotted?" asked Peter Todd.

"No; but Quelch's coming here!"

The Bouncer turned in.

"Oh, I say, you know—" began Billy Bunter.

"Shut up, you idiot!"

"But, really—"

"Cave!" whispered Harry Wharton.

There was a footstep outside, and even Billy Bunter had wisdom enough to cease speaking, and to begin to snore. The door opened, and a light glimmered in. Mr. Quelch entered the dormitory, and glanced at every bed there.

Every bed had its occupant, and the Remove-master was satisfied.

He withdrew quietly from the dormitory, and closed the door, and his footsteps died away down the passage.

Not till the last sound had died away was there a voice audible in the dormitory. Then the juniors sat up in bed and showered questions on the Bouncer.

"How did you know he was coming, Smithy?"

"Weren't you spotted?"

"How did you—"

"I wasn't spotted; I've been spotting!" grinned the Bouncer. "Quelch has got a visitor—a chap who sneaked in over the wall, and tapped at his window, and got in that way into his study."

"Great Scott!"

"A chap so like Quelch that he might be his brother, only he's got sandy hair," said the Bouncer. "until he took his cap off you'd have sworn it was Quelch, if you'd seen him alone."

Harry Wharton uttered an exclamation.

"My hat! The chap we saw!"

"No doubt about that!" said Bob Cherry. "So he's visiting Quelch?"

"You saw him?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith. "When and where?"

Wharton explained.

"It's jolly queer," said the Bouncer slowly. "The man must be a relation—he's so like Quelch, if it wasn't for the colour of his hair. Something jolly fishy in his visiting Quelch in this way, don't you think so?"

"Jolly fishy!" said Bolsover major.

"No business of ours!" yawned Bob Cherry. "I'm going to sleep."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, go to sleep, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I say, what about that feed? Isn't anybody going down to Uncle Clegg's to get the tummy?"

"Feeds are off!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really; you're not faking it, are you, Smithy?"

"I'll come and hammer you if you hint that I'm faking it," said the Bouncer. "But it's not good enough. Quelch may be showing his visitor out any minute, and I don't want to be spotted out of the dorm."

"Oh, really, you know—"

"You can go if you like, Bunter!"

"Ahem!"

"Good! I guess it's up to Bunter," said Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "I guess I'll put another dollar to the feed if Bunter will go and get the grub."

Snore!

"Going, Bunter?" demanded several voices.

Snore!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Snore!

Billy Bunter considered it judicious to be asleep; and the other Removes followed his example. Slumber descended on the Remove dormitory—the juniors little dreaming of what was passing, in those very minutes, below in their Form-master's study.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Fugitive From Justice.

FERRERS!"

Mr. Quelch spoke the name quietly, coldly. The man with the sandy hair, but otherwise so like the Form-master, had thrown himself into the comfortable armchair, and stretched out his feet to the fender.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 285.

EVERY
MONDAY,

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ONE
PENNY.

The Remove-master remained standing, his hand resting on the table, his eyes fixed upon his visitor.

The manner of the man whom Mr. Quelch addressed as "Ferrers" was quite cool and calm, but there was a glitter in his eyes that betrayed the feelings within. The man was keeping a strong hand upon himself, that was all.

"Can't you give me something to drink?" he asked.

"Water!" said Mr. Quelch.

Ferrers shrugged his shoulders.

"To eat, then? I have eaten nothing for twelve hours!"

Mr. Quelch hesitated.

"I am famished!" said Ferrers.

"Wait, then," said Mr. Quelch, ungraciously enough. "I will return in a few minutes."

He left the study, closing the door after him.

Ferrers waited a few moments, and then rose to his feet. The mask of coolness had dropped from his face. He looked like what he was—a desperate and hunted man. His quick, roving glance scanned the study, taking in every detail of his surroundings. He groped in his pocket with his right hand, and his hand came out with a short, thick oudgel in it. He slipped it back into his pocket, leaving it so that he could readily reach it.

But he was sitting in the armchair, apparently just as Mr. Quelch had left him, when the Remove-master re-entered the study.

Mr. Quelch bore a plate upon which were bread and ham. At that hour it was not unknown for feeds to be held surreptitiously in dormitories, but it was very difficult for a master to get anything to eat. The Form-master set the plate on the table before his visitor, and closed the door again.

"Better turn the key," said Ferrers.

Again the Form-master hesitated. It would have surprised the Removes if they could have seen him. They knew him cold, severe, unhesitating. But Mr. Quelch was not at all his usual self now. The visit of the man who resembled him so much seemed to have thrown him quite off his balance.

"Someone might come along," Ferrers suggested, easily, as he began to devour the bread and ham with a keenness that showed that he was, as he had said, famished.

"Very well."

Mr. Quelch turned the key in the lock.

Neither spoke again while Ferrers was eating. He finished, and the Form-master opened his lips to speak, and closed them again.

"You can give me a cigar?" asked Ferrers.

"I do not smoke."

"Wise man!" said his visitor, with a curious inflexion of sarcasm in his voice. "You neither drink nor smoke?"

"Neither."

"It is a pity I did not share your wisdom. I might now be safe at Upshott instead of a wanderer on the face of the earth," said Ferrers.

"You did not want for warnings."

"Quite so; you gave me enough," said Ferrers. "But the spirit is willing and the flesh is weak, you know, and Ulick Ferrers was not born to pass all his days in a country house, hammering instruction into the dull brain of a pupil."

"You seem to have come to worse," said Mr. Quelch drily.

"I had not the wisdom of my worthy Cousin Quelch," said Ulick Ferrers. "I suppose you have heard about what has happened?"

"It is in the papers."

"I suppose so. I have not seen the papers. Gad! I wish you could give me something to smoke!"

"I cannot."

"Well, well, let it pass. What have you seen in the papers?"

"That Lord Upshott's name was forged upon a cheque by his son's tutor, and that the tutor has fled, and the police are looking for him," said Mr. Quelch.

"Exactly. Any more?"

"That he obtained the money—a thousand pounds—and is supposed to have taken it with him," said the Remove-master sternly.

"He would not be likely to leave it behind," said Ferrers coolly. "There is no mention of the fact that that unfortunate Ulick Ferrers had a cousin—"

"A second cousin," said the Remove-master coldly.

"Second cousin, if you choose, a Form-master at a famous public school on the coast, called Greyfriars?"

"I have not seen it referred to," said Mr. Quelch. "I am glad of it. I have no wish to be mixed up in your disgrace. We have never been friends, and I have no desire whatever to shield you from the just punishment of your

NEXT
MONDAY;

"THE SPORTS OF THE SCHOOL!"

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crime. Moreover, although it is not referred to in the papers, there is little doubt that the police will look out all your connections, and discover that you have a relation here. I fully anticipate hearing from them, if not receiving a visit, to learn whether I know anything of your movements. An hour ago I could have said that I knew nothing. Now——"

"Now——" said Ulick Ferrers, as the Form-master paused. "Now I shall be compelled to state that you have been here," said Mr. Quelch coldly. "For that reason, I advise you to go as quickly as possible."

"Why not ring up the police-station on the telephone, and tell them that I am here now?" Ferrers said, with a sardonic smile.

"I do not wish to have the disgrace of an arrest at this school."

"No other reason?"

"I do not wish to cause you any harm," said Mr. Quelch, after a pause. "I must mention that you have been here if I am questioned. Until then I will say nothing—if you go at once."

"And that is all you are prepared to do for me?"

"All, certainly!"

"It is not enough," said Ulick Ferrers quietly. "Listen to me! The police will be here to look for me to-morrow. I was seen only twenty miles from this place, and had a narrow escape."

"All the more reason why you should go at once," said the Form-master.

"I cannot go! I should be laid by the heels before I was ten miles away! I have come here for a hiding-place."

"What!"

"Do I not speak plainly?" said Ferrers. "You know that I was a Greyfriars boy—once. Twenty years ago I knew every nook and cranny of this old place. There are recesses in the ruined chapel, and in the crypt under it, where a man could lie hidden for weeks, or years, if—if he had a friend at hand to bring him food and drink."

"Are you mad?" said the Form-master, his voice rising with anger. "Do you ask me—a Form-master at a public school, enjoying the confidence of the headmaster and the governors—to make this school a shelter for a runaway criminal, and to hide him and tend him while escaping from the police! You must be insane! Even at this moment you have about you the money you have robbed your employer of!"

"That is neither here nor there——"

"Listen to me!" said Mr. Quelch. "Lay that money here, upon the table, for me to return to its owner with an explanation, and I will give you ten pounds towards your expenses, and allow you to depart."

Ferrers laughed.

"Thank you for nothing! I need the money to make a fresh start in America when I get safely out of England."

"You are asking me to become a party to a theft."

"I am asking you to save me."

"Well, I refuse! More," exclaimed Mr. Quelch, his eyes flashing, "unless you hand over the stolen money, to be returned to Lord Upshott, I will take your suggestion and ring up the police on the telephone."

Ferrers' eyes burned for a moment.

"You mean that?"

"I mean it every word. If I allow you to go with that money in your possession I shall be the accomplice of a thief."

"It seems that I have put my head in the lions' den by coming here, then!" said Ulick Ferrers, with a mocking smile on his lips, but deadly rage and hatred in his eyes.

"You have yourself to thank for that. You should not have come here. You know me well enough to know that I should not help you to escape justice and to carry off the money you have stolen from your employer. It is my duty to hand you over to justice at once. I will stretch a point. Give up what you have stolen, and you shall have till the morning to get clear if you can."

"That is all you can offer me?"

"Most decidedly! You were mad to come here!"

"Perhaps not, if you knew all," said Ferrers calmly. "I have made my preparations long in advance of this day. I always had it in my mind that this should be my refuge if I were hard pressed. I did not think that I should be so closely pressed as I am now. But so it has turned out; but I am prepared. I have come here, and I have come to stay until the hue-and-cry is over."

"Then there is nothing more to be said. You will do as I have told you within five minutes, or I shall ring up Court-field Police-station."

"Be it so."

There was a grim silence in the study. Mr. Quelch, agitated but determined, paced to and fro, glancing every few seconds

at the clock on the mantelpiece. Ulick Ferrers kept his eyes upon the Form-master.

"It is time!" said Mr. Quelch at last. "Have you decided?"

"I have told you so."

"Very well. I go to the telephone now."

Mr. Quelch turned towards the door. His hand was on the key to turn it, his back to the other, when Ulick Ferrers made a sudden spring. The Remove-master did not see him; but he heard him, and he swung round quickly. Ulick Ferrers' hand was raised, and the cudgel was in 't, and even as the Form-master turned the blow descended.

Crash!

One deep groan escaped the master of the Remove, and he fell insensible to the floor.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Change of Identity.

THERE was no sound in the dead silence of the study, save the ticking of the clock, which seemed strangely loud in the deathly silence of the room.

Ferrers did not give a second glance at his victim. He knew that he was stunned.

He stood close to the door, his head bent to listen.

From the house came no sound.

The fall of the Form-master had not been heard. Almost all Greyfriars was in bed and sleeping, and the sound had not been loud.

For a full minute the scoundrel stood there, silent, motionless, with beating, throbbing heart.

Then, with a deep breath, he turned from the door.

"So far, success!" he muttered aloud.

He stooped over the insensible Form-master. Mr. Quelch's eyes were closed, and his face was chalky white. Under the iron-grey hair was a large bruise, where the weapon of the assailant had struck him. Ferrers removed the gown that was tangled round the still form.

"Good for an hour at least!"

For some moments the ruffian stood in thought.

Then he turned out the light, and the study was plunged into darkness. He waited a few moments for his eyes to become accustomed to the gloom, and then moved cautiously across the room to the window, raised the blind, and opened it.

The Close without was dark and silent.

One window gleamed. It was the window of the Head's study. But the blind was closely drawn, and no one within that room could have seen into the Close.

The coast was clear.

Ferrers stepped back to where the Form-master lay, and lifted the insensible man. He carried him to the window, and set him on the sill, and jumped lightly out. Then he lifted the unconscious man from the window-sill to his shoulder. With the Form-master thrown across his shoulder, he moved away into the darkness.

No sound, no movement came from Mr. Quelch. He was stunned, and, as the ruffian had said, he could not recover his senses for an hour at least. The blow had been a terrible one.

With the swiftness and certainty of one who knew the way well, Ulick Ferrers strode across the dark Close in the direction of the ruined chapel.

He had, as he had said, been a Greyfriars boy twenty years before; and in twenty years the old school had not changed. In the darkness the old mossy masses of masonry loomed up.

With unfaltering steps, Ferrers entered the ruins, and paused at the shaky old stone stair that led down to the crypt.

There he laid down his burden.

He groped in his coat, and drew out a dark-lantern, and lighted it, keeping carefully in cover of the old masonry as he did so.

The light gleamed on the stone steps leading downward.

At the bottom was the door of the crypt. It was a stout oaken door, and it was locked. The ancient door had long rotted away, but the new door had been placed there, and was kept locked, to keep out adventurous juniors who desired to explore the crypt. Those dark recesses were full of pitfalls for the unwary, and had been placed out of bounds. But "bounds" did not always restrain fellows who had a turn for risky exploration. Since the door had been there, however, the crypt had not been entered.

Ferrers muttered below his breath as he saw the locked door. That was a new thing since his time at Greyfriars. It was locked, and there was, of course, no key in the lock. It was in charge of Gosling, the porter. The rascal laid his



"Now we're done!" groaned Nugent. "Game's up!" "M—m—my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Look at him!" The juniors stared blankly, for the man whom they recognised as Mr. Quelch, instead of striding towards them, made a sudden spring into the hedge and disappeared! (See Chapter I.)

burden down again, at the foot of the door, and placed the lantern on the steps, where its rays fell upon the lock. Then he groped in his pocket again.

He had told Mr. Quelch that he had come prepared for all emergencies, and he had told the truth. He drew a curious-looking key from his pocket, inserted it in the lock, and the door swung open.

Dark and gloomy looked the old crypt as the door opened, and a noisome odour came from its sunless depths.

Ferrers, strong as his nerve was, shivered for a moment.

But he did not waste time. He lifted the insensible Form-master again, and carried him into the stone-walled vault.

He laid him down upon the cold flags, and then stood breathing heavily.

From a pocket, after a pause, he drew a cord, and shackled the wrists of the insensible man behind him, so that when he recovered his senses he would not be able to use his hands, or move them more than a few inches. Then, passing a cord round Mr. Quelch's body, he knotted it, and fastened the end to a rusty iron bolt in the wall.

The Form-master was now a helpless prisoner when he should recover his senses.

Perhaps moved by some glimmering of humanity, the rascal took off his coat, and placed it under the insensible man, to keep off the chill of the cold stone.

He left the lantern burning upon the floor, at a little distance from the prisoner, where he would not be able to reach it, and after a last glance round him left the vault.

He closed the door, and locked it again on the outside with the skeleton key.

Never was a prison more secure. The thick stone walls and massive door would stifle any cry from within, and help and escape were equally impossible for the unfortunate man.

"I must get the key to-morrow!" Ferrers muttered. "For to-night all is safe!"

He returned the way he had come, and entered the Form-master's study by the window.

He closed the window, drew the blind, and turned on the light again.

The study was as he had left it.

He looked into the glass, and started a little. The reflection showed a face deadly pale, lined, and drawn. Even his iron nerves had not stood that trial without flinching.

He fumbled in an inner pocket, and took out a flask, and swallowed a deep draught of the liquor it contained. Then the colour flushed into his cheeks again.

From under his vest he drew out a bag, and laid it on the study table. He opened it, and drew from it a wig of an iron-grey colour, and some grease-paints and pencils.

Standing before the glass, he adjusted the wig to his head, and the change it made in his appearance was startling.

It was the sandy colour of his hair which had distinguished him in appearance from the master of the Remove.

Now he was the Remove master's living image.

He grinned at the reflection, evidently satisfied, and gave a few touches to his eyebrows to make them darker.

He was not occupied five minutes. But when he had finished it would have puzzled any fellow in the Remove to tell that it was not Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

who was standing there. It was only too clear that the scoundrel had come to Greyfriars with this scheme in his mind, and prepared in every way for carrying it out. It was a desperate expedient for the fugitive from justice, and yet, from its very daring, likely to be successful.

He donned the scholastic gown he had taken from the insensible man, and then the resemblance was complete and impenetrable.

Then he unlocked the door.

In case of the bare possibility that anyone might come to the study, the locked door might excite suspicion, and Ulick Ferrers was now prepared to face all Greyfriars.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Like a Thief in the Night!

ULICK FERRERS sat down in the armchair, his brows wrinkled in thought.

The most dangerous part of his scheme had been carried out, and carried out with perfect success.

But there was more to come.

He had adopted his cousin's appearance. He had donned his gown; and he intended to take his name and his place in the school until it was safe for him to fly.

But he had much to learn. Somewhere upstairs was the Remove-master's bed-room, where he must spend the night, and he did not know which room it was. He had taken a bunch of keys from the insensible man, but none of them evidently was a bed-room key. How was he to find the bed-room?

He stepped to the door at last, and opened it.

The light was burning in the passage. He gave a last glance behind him, to assure himself that he had left nothing of a suspicious character about the study. Then he turned out the light in the room, and closed the door behind him, and moved along the passage.

He ascended the stairs with perfect outward calmness, but with his heart beating hard within.

The Remove-master's bed-room was, as a matter of fact, near the end of the Remove dormitory passage. But Ulick Ferrers had no means of discovering that circumstance.

But it had to be done somehow, and he was not a man to hesitate and waste time. He listened at the door of each bed-room, as he crept along in the gloom, and whenever he heard breathing within he was satisfied, of course, that it was not the room he sought.

He stopped, at last, at a bed-room door where he heard no sound.

After listening for a couple of minutes he turned the handle gently, and opened the door. Once in the right room he would soon know for certain, for, of course, Mr. Quelch's name or initials would be upon some of his property.

The disguised rascal stepped into the room, and listened again. In spite of his caution, his foot knocked against a chair, and there was a thud. Then there came a sudden exclamation in the darkness. The room was occupied, after all!

"Mon Dieu! Vat is zat?"

The French accent was enough to tell the intruder that he was in the room of the French master of Greyfriars. He did not retreat. In the faint glimmer of light from the window he made out the outlines of a bed, and a man sitting up in it in surprise and alarm. Before he could act, there was a sudden flood of light in the room. Monsieur Charpentier had turned on the electric switch beside his bed.

"Monsieur Quelch!" exclaimed Monsieur Charpentier, in amazement as his eyes fell upon Ulick Ferrers.

"Excuse me, monsieur!" said Ferrers, and no one could have told that the clear, metallic voice was not that of the master of the Remove. "I am sorry to disturb you."

"Ciel! Vat is it zat 'ave happen?" exclaimed Monsieur Charpentier. "Is it zat zere shall be burglars?"

"No, no; there is no cause for alarm."

"Zen vat is ze mattair?"

"I have sprained my foot," said Ulick Ferrers calmly. "I was foolishly coming up to bed in the dark, and I stumbled and sprained my foot. It hurts me very much. Would you have the great kindness to assist me to my room, monsieur?"

"Helas! I am sorry zat you hurt ze pauvre foot," said the French master, jumping out of bed. "It is wiz great plaisir zat I assist you, Monsieur Quelch."

"Thank you very much!"

"Du tout! Vait vun moment while zat I put on ze gown of ze dress."

And Monsieur Charpentier hurriedly donned his dressing-gown and slippers. The false Form-master's features wore an expression of pain that quite touched the heart of the kindly little Frenchman.

"Zat you lean on me—so," said Monsieur Charpentier.

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
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"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
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And Ulick Ferrers leaned heavily upon the little Frenchman as they left the room.

As the supposed Form-master was leaning upon him, it was necessary for Monsieur Charpentier to lead the way, which he did. He proceeded to the second stairs, and led the limping man up to the next floor, and to the door of Mr. Quelch's room.

Monsieur Charpentier opened the bed-room door, and switched on the light within.

"Zere ve are, mon ami," said Mosseo kindly.

"Thank you very much, monsieur!"

"Pas du tout," said Monsieur Charpentier politely. "You zink zat you can manage viz yourself now, mon pauvre ami."

"Yes, yes; thank you, and good-night!" said Ulick Ferrers, who, now that the French master had served his turn, was only anxious to be rid of him.

"Good-night, zen!" said Monsieur Charpentier.

And he retired, closing the door after him.

Ulick Ferrers softly turned the key in the lock.

Then he stood in the middle of the room, looking round with a keen glance at Mr. Quelch's very roomy and comfortable quarters.

"My kind cousin does himself very well here," murmured Ferrers, with a grin. "I think I shall be comfortable—for a few days, at least. My kind cousin will have colder quarters, I am afraid—that cannot be helped."

Perhaps some feeling of remorse penetrated his breast for a moment, but he shrugged his shoulders impatiently.

"He should have helped me; we must take care of ourselves in this world. It is only for a few days, at all events."

The fire was laid in the bed-room, in the wide, old-fashioned grate. The night was warm enough, but Ferrers, after carefully drawing the blind, lighted the fire. Then he undressed, and one at a time placed the articles he removed into the fire. They burned up one by one in the old grate. Only the boots and trousers and jacket, as too bulky to be burned without leaving suspicious traces, he wrapped up in a bundle as small as possible, concealing them in the drawer of the big wardrobe, of which he had the key on the bunch he had taken from Mr. Quelch.

Then he calmly sorted out the clothes he would require on the following day from the belongings of Mr. Quelch—the underclothing and linen, of course, being marked with the Form-master's initials or name.

Boom!

The heavy stroke of one sounded through the night.

Ulick Ferrers started a little.

"One o'clock! Time I was in bed—and a good evening's work!"

And the rascal, after a final glance about him, turned in, in Mr. Quelch's comfortable bed.

It was long before he slept.

He was playing a desperate game, and he realised it. It was the safest hiding-place he could have found, and yet there was an incessant risk. On the morrow, he knew, there would be a visit from the police to inquire if Ulick Ferrers had been there.

In his character as Mr. Quelch he would have to see the detectives, and satisfy them. It would be a terrible trial, even for the iron nerve of the ruthless adventurer.

But it had to be gone through. Unless he lost his nerve, there was no reason why he should not be successful.

He slept at last.

He had stolen into the school, he had stolen his cousin's place and his cousin's name, like a thief in the night.

But the thought of it did not disturb his slumbers.

It was a desperate game he was playing, but Ulick Ferrers was the man to play it out with success.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Skinner Makes a Discovery!

CLANG, clang, clang!

The Greyfriars rising-bell rang out through the summer morning air.

Bob Cherry sat up in bed in the Remove dormitory and yawned. He was feeling the effects of the night out, and he would gladly have had another hour in bed. But Bob was no slacker, and he turned out cheerfully enough. With equal cheerfulness he dragged the bedclothes off Billy Bunter—a little favour he frequently did the fat junior. Bunter never turned out till the last possible moment.

"Ow! Beast!" said Bunter, sitting up and groping for his spectacles. "I say, you fellows, would you mind telling Quelch I'm ill? I didn't get enough sleep last night, and I want another two or three hours."

"Oh, I'll give you something to stop that!" said Bob

Cherry genially. And he squeezed a wet sponge over the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter roared and rolled out of bed.

"I wonder if Quelch's visitor has gone?" Vernon-Smith remarked, as he was dressing. "He came late enough—he may have stayed all night."

"If he hasn't, you'd better not let on that you know anything about him," grinned Bolsover major. "You wouldn't have known if you hadn't been out of bounds, you know."

"Something jolly queer in the bizney," said the Bounder. "I feel rather interested in that chap with the sandy hair. Except for his hair, he's like enough to Quelch to be his brother, but I never heard of Quelch having a brother, that I remember."

"Jolly fishy his sneaking in, in the middle of the night like that," agreed Skinner. "We may be able to spot something, and give old Quelch a twist, you know."

"Better mind your own business," said Harry Wharton bluntly. "I suppose it's Mr. Quelch's business, isn't it—not ours."

"Oh, rats!" retorted the Bounder. "I don't see why we shouldn't get to the bottom of it. It looks awfully fishy to me."

"That's what I think," said Snoop, "especially if the man hasn't stayed here. Did you catch his name, Smithy?"

"Quelch spoke to him as Ferrers."

"Ferrers!" said Skinner thoughtfully. "I've heard that name somewhere lately—seen it in the paper, I think; I can't remember where."

"In the paper!" said Vernon-Smith thoughtfully. "I shouldn't wonder. If Ferrers has been in the paper, we can easily see, I'll get hold of the Head's 'Times' this morning, and look."

"Begad, my dear fellow, better leave it alone!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Quelch mightn't like you poking into his affairs, you know."

"I don't expect him to like it," said the Bounder coolly. "That won't make any difference to me."

A good many fellows in the Remove, as well as the Bounder & Co., were interested in that very strange visit Mr. Quelch had received the previous night. Even fellows who were willing to mind their own business remarked that it was very queer. Harry Wharton & Co. could not help thinking so, too, though they did not join in the discussion on the subject.

The Famous Five, indeed, were more interested in the question of the comestibles that had been confiscated by the Remove master. As Bob Cherry observed, Mr. Quelch was not likely to eat jam-tarts and cream-puffs and dough-nuts himself, and there might be a chance of recovering the confiscated goods.

Mr. Quelch was not down when the Remove descended, but the Form-master came in to take his place at the Remove table for breakfast.

The Removites, or most of them, gave him curious glances. To all outward appearance, the man who appeared before their eyes was the Mr. Quelch they had always known.

If there was any difference, it was so slight that it was not noticeable—at least, by fellows who never dreamed for an instant, of course, that there was a change, and that it was a stranger who was acting the part of the Remove master.

And yet Ulick Ferrers had a difficult part to play. He did not know a single member of the Lower Fourth by sight; neither did he know which was the Remove table in the dining-room.

But here the good-natured and unsuspicious Monsieur Charpentier was of assistance again.

He met the Remove-master in the hall, and said good-morning to him in his usual polite way, and inquired after the injury to his foot.

"I 'ope zat it is bettair viz itself zis morning, n'est-ce-pas?" said the little Frenchman, with much solicitude.

"Thank you very much—yes," said the Remove-master. "There is still some pain; perhaps I might trouble you for your arm to my table?"

"Oui, oui; most certainly!" said Monsieur Charpentier at once.

And he guided the Form-master to Mr. Quelch's place at the head of the Remove table.

Some of the boys greeted the French master by name, and so Ulick Ferrers was placed in possession of a little more much-needed information.

"Thank you very much, Monsieur Charpentier!" he said.

"It is nozzing—du tout," said the French master gracefully.

The false Form-master sat down.

"Good-morning, sir!" said the Bounder, with his eyes fixed very curiously upon the supposed Mr. Quelch.

"Good-morning!" said Mr. Quelch the second calmly.

"Not quite so much talking at the table, please."

That was quite in Mr. Quelch's manner.

After breakfast, the Bounder made it a point to ascertain

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whether Mr. Quelch's friend of the previous night had stayed at Greyfriars. He soon learned that there was no guest in the house, and that no one outside the Remove knew that Mr. Quelch had had a visitor that night at all.

Apparently the man had come and gone in the middle of the night, and the Bounder could hardly think that it was anything but very curious indeed.

Shortly before the chapel bell rang, Skinner came up to Vernon-Smith in the Close, with a newspaper in his hand, and a flush of excitement in his face.

"Look at this, Smithy!" he exclaimed.

"What is it?"

"I've got Gosling's paper," said Skinner. "I knew I'd seen the name of Ferrers in the paper lately, and I've looked through this morning's paper for it. Look at this! If this doesn't beat cock-fighting, I'm a giddy Dutchman!"

The Bounder took the paper eagerly, and scanned the paragraph Skinner pointed out to him. He gave a low whistle of amazement as he read it. For this is what the paragraph contained:

"Ulick Ferrers, who absconded from Lord Upshott's house on Monday, with a thousand pounds which he had obtained by means of forging his lordship's name to a cheque, is still at large. The police have a clue to his whereabouts, however, and his arrest is momentarily expected at Scotland Yard. It is believed that Ferrers still has the money in his possession, and that he is making for the coast, doubtless with the intention of escaping abroad."

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Visit from the Police!

VERNON-SMITH stared blankly at Skinner.

Although the Bounder had quite decided in his mind that there was something "fishy" about that mysterious midnight visit to Mr. Quelch's study, he had hardly figured in his mind anything like this.

"Ulick Ferrers!" he said, with a deep breath. "I don't know about the Christian name, but the man who came here last night was named Ferrers, right enough."

"Quite sure of that?" asked Skinner.

"Quite!"

"Do you think it's the same?"

"Well, we can't be sure," said the Bounder slowly. "But—but it looks jolly like it, to me. Don't you think so?"

"It sounds rather thick," said Skinner. "How could a respectable old bird like Quelch be connected with a forger?"

"Well, I suppose this man Ferrers must have been respectable before he became a forger. He was living in Lord Upshott's house."

"Yes, that's so."

"And he may be a relation of Quelch's—perhaps he was a tutor or something. Something in the schoolmaster line," said the Bounder. "I wish they'd given a description of him. My hat, fancy old Quelch having a friend a fugitive from justice! If we could make sure—"

"Well?" said Skinner.

"I fancy we could keep old Quelch in order," said the Bounder coolly. "If he's helped a man who's running away from the police, we should have him under our thumb."

Skinner whistled.

The chapel bell rang, and the subject was dropped.

The Remove-master was a little late in the Form-room that morning. The juniors did not guess that he waited for them to go into their Form-room so that he should know which room belonged to him.

He came in a few minutes after the last of the Remove.

The part he had to play in the Form-room was not specially difficult to the impostor. He had been a tutor, and at one time had had a post as master in a school, and so the Form work of the Lower Fourth was not new to him. It was only a question of mastering details of Mr. Quelch's personal ways and habits.

Did the rascal think, then, of the man who was shut up in the darkness of the vault under the old chapel—a prisoner in cold and gloom?

If he did, there was no indication of it in his manner. Probably he was too concerned about his own difficulties and dangers to have much thought to waste upon the man whose name and place he had stolen.

For that morning, as he was assured, there would be a visit from the police, and he would have to see them.

While he was going through the ordeal of first lesson he

ANSWERS

was thinking of that, and listening for the summons that he knew must come.

The Remove were in second lesson when there was a tap at the door of the Form-room.

"Come in!" rapped out the master.

Trotter, the page, put his hand into the Form-room.

"If you please, sir, a gentleman to see you."

"I can see no one in the class hours," said the Remove-master tersely. "Request him to call again."

But his manner changed as he glanced at the card Trotter presented.

"Ahem! Show Mr. Spott to my study," he said.

"Yes, sir."

And Trotter retired.

The Remove-master turned to his Form.

"I am compelled to leave you for a few minutes," he said.

"You will kindly continue your work, and if there is any disturbance during my absence, it will be punished."

And he left the Form-room.

There was a slight buzz among the juniors. Vernon-Smith rose from his place, and went to the door, and glanced into the passage. His eyes gleamed as he saw a constable standing at the end of the passage.

"My hat," muttered the Bounder, "a peeler?"

There was no sign of Mr. Quelch. The Remove-master had evidently gone to his study to see his visitor.

Vernon-Smith stepped coolly out of the Form-room, and looked round for Trotter. He soon found the page.

"Who was it called to see Quelch, Trotter?" he asked, showing a shilling between his finger and thumb.

Trotter's eyes were on the shilling at once.

"Mr. Spott, sir," he said.

"What kind of a man—bobby?"

Trotter grinned.

"The name on his card was Inspector Spott, Master Smith," he said.

"Inspector—eh?" Vernon-Smith tossed the shilling to the page, and returned to the Form-room.

He had discovered what he wanted to know. Inspector Spott and a policeman had come to the school together to see Mr. Quelch. That circumstance did not leave much doubt whether the "Ferrers" who had visited Greyfriars the previous night was the Ulick Ferrers who was being searched for by the police.

The Bounder's eyes were gleaming as he whispered with Skinner in the Form-room. He did not take anyone else into his confidence. Skinner was a fellow after his own heart, and quite ready to make profit of the Form-master's secret, if he had one.

"The rotter came here to see Quelch," Vernon-Smith muttered cautiously. "What did he want? Not money, as he had a thousand quid on him? He came here to hide."

"Hide!" repeated Skinner, starting.

The Bounder nodded.

"That's it. Quelch is in the game. Perhaps he's going to have some of the thousand quid, if Ferrers gets clear."

"Oh, draw it mild, Smithy!"

"Anyway, he's helping the man, that's certain. My belief is that he's hiding him somewhere about the school."

"My hat!"

"That means imprisonment," said the Bounder coolly.

"I say, if he's doing a thing like that he ought to be shown up!" said Skinner, with virtuous indignation.

"Perhaps he ought!" said the Bounder, with a chuckle.

"But I know a trick worth two of that. Quelch has been down on me hard enough and often enough, and this is where I get a little bit of my own back. See?"

"I don't see how—"

"After school I'm going to scout round, and see whether the man is hidden anywhere here. If he is, we've got Quelch under our thumb."

Skinner shifted uneasily.

"I—I say, that's a jolly risky business, Smithy. Quelch is an awfully tough customer, you know."

"Rats! I'll take the toughness out of him, if what I think is true," said Vernon-Smith. "We needn't lose any time. We're free for a quarter of an hour at eleven o'clock, and then we'll see. If the man's hidden about Greyfriars, there's only one place that would be safe—the vaults under the old chapel."

"But they're locked up."

"Gosling has the key, and we can get it away from him."

"But if Quelch has put anybody there to hide, he will be taking jolly good care of the key," said Skinner.

"Yes, and if we find that he's taken the key from Gosling, that will be proof, won't it?"

"I suppose so."

"What are you rotters whispering about?" demanded Bob Cherry in disgust. "Jawing over poor old Quelch, I suppose?"

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"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
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"Find out!" said the Bounder.

Eleven sounded from the clock-tower, and as their Form-master was not present to dismiss them for the recess, the Remove dismissed themselves. As the juniors swarmed out of the Form-room, Vernon-Smith and Skinner lost no time in making their way to the porter's lodge.

Gosling, the schoolporter, was there, and Vernon-Smith tackled him at once.

"Warm weather, Gossy!" he said genially.

"Yes, and thirsty weather, Master Smith," said Gosling.

"Just what I was thinking," agreed the Bounder; "and I've got a half-crown here that I don't know what to do with."

Gosling grinned.

"Wot is it you want me to do, Master Smith?" he asked.

"I want you to lend me the key of the vault under the old chapel, Gossy. Want to have a look round there."

Gosling shook his head.

"It's agin horders for you young gents to go there," he said.

"Only for ten minutes," urged the Bounder, taking the half-crown from his pocket.

Gosling's eyes lingered lovingly on the coin, but he shook his head.

"Can't be done, Master Smith," he said regretfully. "I'd like to oblige a young gentleman like you, but it can't be done."

"But you've got the key, Gossy," said the Bounder.

"I 'ad it," said Gosling.

"Haven't you got it now?"

"No. Mr. Quelch asked me for it this morning," said Gosling. "I 'anded it to 'im."

The Bounder gave his companion a glance of triumph. Skinner gasped. This proof of the Bounder's suspicions took him by surprise.

"Mr. Quelch has it?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Yes," grunted Gosling. "And wot I says is this 'ere: The 'Ead told me to mind that key, and now Mr. Quelch 'as took it. I s'pose he thinks it ain't safe with me. Huh!"

"Isn't there another key?" asked the junior.

Gosling shook his head.

"There ain't but one."

"But I suppose he's going to give it back to you?"

"Which he didn't say so."

"Oh, rotten!" said the Bounder; and he walked away with Skinner.

"Well, what do you think now?" he demanded.

"Looks queer," said Skinner. "Only if Quelch didn't get the key till this morning, as Gosling says, how could he have hidden the man in the vault last night?"

The Bounder started a little. In his eagerness he had overlooked that objection to his theory.

"Anyway, he's got the key," he said, after a pause.

"Perhaps he had another key to the vault, and wanted to make sure of this one as well, so that nobody else could get in. What did he want the key all of a sudden for, unless he's got a secret locked up there—eh?"

And Skinner had to admit that it looked very probable.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Ordeal!

"INSPECTOR SPOTT?"

"Yes, sir!"

The inspector, a stout, red-faced gentleman, had seated himself in Mr. Quelch's study, and he rose as the master came in.

He started as his eyes fell upon the Form-master's face.

"By gum!" he murmured.

The resemblance of the man before him, in feature, to the missing forger had struck him at once.

"What can I do for you?" asked the Remove-master.

"You are aware of the object of my visit, sir, I presume?" said Inspector Spott, still with his eyes curiously upon the Remove-master's face.

"Pray sit down. Yes, I think I can guess. I have seen in the papers the disgrace that has fallen upon my cousin," said the master. "You are doubtless aware that Ulick Ferrers is my cousin."

"Exactly, sir, if you are Mr. Henry Quelch."

"That is my name."

"I should have known you as a relation of the missing man, sir, at once," said the inspector. "The resemblance is striking."

The Form-master nodded.

"It has often been remarked upon," he said. "In earlier days I knew Ferrers very well, and our resemblance was much remarked upon at that time. Of late years I have seen little of him; our way of life was very dissimilar."

And the Form-master drew himself up a little.



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"Then you have not seen him lately, Mr. Quelch?" the inspector asked, looking disappointed.

"Lately! How do you mean?"

"I surmised that he might have applied to you for help to escape, sir."

"Absurd!"

"Ahem!" said the inspector, a little nettled.

"Excuse me, Inspector Spott, but you evidently are not

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aware of the terms I was on with Ferrers. I have said that our ways of life were very dissimilar. If you know anything of his private life, you will know that there could be nothing in common between him and a man in my position, with a reputation to take care of," said the Remove-master acidly. "He deceived Lord Upshott as to his character, I should suppose, or he would never have obtained his position as tutor to his lordship's son."

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"So it proves, sir. Our investigations have shown that Lord Upshott was very much deceived in him. He seems to have led a wild life in secret—betting, gaming, drinking, and other things—and in debt in a dozen different places," said the inspector. "I suppose he knew that the crash was coming, as the state of his affairs could not have been concealed much longer, and he made this last haul before he bolted."

"So I should suppose. But I am the last man in the world to whom he would come for help. He knows me well enough to be perfectly aware that if he came here I should hand him over at once to the police."

"It would be your duty to do so, sir, I know. But the claims of relationship—"

The Remove-master interrupted him.

"The claims of relationship have nothing to do with it. If I shielded a criminal from justice, I should be no better than a criminal myself. I have decidedly strict ideas upon such subjects. Moreover, the terms I was upon with my cousin have not been such that he had, or could have, any hope of assistance from me. In fact, I was sufficiently aware of his wretched conduct to remonstrate with him, and to tell him very plainly that I considered our acquaintanceship at an end. Not more than a month ago I wrote him a letter to that effect."

"That letter has been found among his papers at Upshott House, sir."

"You have seen it, then?"

"Yes."

"Then you should know how little likelihood there is of my rendering assistance to the man."

"Quite so. But in a search of this kind it is our custom to leave no stone unturned," said the inspector.

"I am sorry I can give you no information, Mr. Spott."

"You have not heard from your cousin since his flight?"

"No."

"Nor seen him?"

"Certainly not."

"Yet it appears to have been his intention to visit you, sir."

"Indeed! What causes you to think so, if I may ask?"

"His flight was in this direction. On Monday he was traced to a town only ten miles from here, and yesterday he was seen—we have some very good evidence to that effect—in a village near this school—Friardale."

"That is extraordinary!" said the Remove-master. "Are you sure that this information is correct?"

"I am pretty certain of it. And if he came as far in this direction as Friardale, he can only have intended to come here, I should imagine."

The Remove-master shook his head.

"I cannot think that that was his intention," he replied. "He knows very well that he has nothing to expect from me. It is more probable that he was making for the coast. There is a fishing village about a mile from here, where vessels sometimes cross to Dutch and German ports."

The inspector smiled.

"Every vessel at Pegg is under observation," he said, "and searching inquiries have been made as to whether strangers have been seen there."

"And you have learned nothing to that effect?"

"Nothing."

The Remove-master pursed his lips.

"It transpires, too, that he was educated at this school, as a boy," said the inspector. "That might be an additional reason for his coming here. There might be some nook or cranny in an old place like this where he might hope to lie concealed."

"It is possible," said the Remove-master thoughtfully. "The Black Pike, for instance—the hill you must have noticed coming here. There are caves there in the rocks, well known to most of the boys. Yet I do not see how he could lie concealed for long without food and drink; and he would scarcely venture to show himself to procure them."

The inspector looked at him keenly.

"Unless he has a friend who would supply him," he said. "You surely do not suspect that a man in my position would undertake such a service for a criminal fleeing from justice?"

"I did not say so."

"That is what your words implied," said the master, frowning.

The inspector coughed.

"If you assure me that you know nothing of the man's whereabouts, Mr. Quelch, I accept your assurance, of course," he said.

"I do assure you, most certainly."

"Then I have nothing more to do here," said the inspector, rising.

"Stay! If you would care to see the headmaster here, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 285.

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Dr. Locke will tell you whether I am likely to have acted in the way you have surmised," said the Remove-master.

"It is not necessary," said the inspector courteously. "You must excuse me, sir, but men of my profession are sometimes compelled to ask questions not wholly pleasant. We cannot afford to lose a chance in searching for a criminal."

"I understand that, of course."

"I am afraid I have taken you away from your occupation."

"I was called from the Form-room here, certainly," said the Remove-master, with a smile. "But I am entirely at your service. I am only sorry that I cannot help you."

"If you should by any chance hear from Ferrers—"

"If I should receive a letter from him I shall place it immediately in the hands of the police. If he should have the astounding impudence to come here himself, I shall telephone to Courtfield Police-station immediately."

"I can ask no more than that, sir," said the inspector. "Thank you, and good-morning!"

And the inspector took his leave.

The Remove-master closed the door, and then crossed to the window. He stood behind the curtains, and watched the inspector and the constable cross to the gates, and disappear.

Then he drew a deep, almost sobbing breath.

"That is over!" he muttered thickly.

He opened the locked drawer of the table, and took out a flask, and drank a deep draught from it before he quitted the study.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Has Bad Luck!

"I SAY, you fellows, it's rotten!"

Billy Bunter made that remark dolefully.

Lessons were over at Greyfriars, and the chums of No. 7 Study—Peter and Alonzo Todd, Billy Bunter, and Tom Dutton, were in the Close. There was a shade of thoughtfulness upon the brow of Peter Todd. Bunter was evidently downhearted.

"Hallo! What's the matter with you, porpoise?" asked Peter Todd.

"What are we going to have for tea?" grunted Bunter.

"Now the tuckshop's closed, what are we going to do?"

It was indeed a knotty problem.

Mrs. Mimble, who kept the little tuckshop in the corner of the Close, was the victim of an attack of influenza, and, during her absence on the sick list, the school shop was closed. Fellows who wished to indulge in the delights of tuck had to fetch their supplies from Uncle Clegg's in the village while Mrs. Mimble was on the sick list.

Not that that made much difference to Bunter, who was in his usual state of impecuniosity, and who had already reached the limit of credit with Mrs. Mimble.

"Had a postal-order, Bunt?" asked Peter Todd, rather sarcastically.

Billy Bunter sniffed.

"Well, I'm expecting one," he said.

"I dare say the school shop will be opened again by the time it comes," Peter Todd suggested kindly.

Bunter sniffed again.

"Well, I might have got something on tick from Mrs. Mimble," he said. "But old Clegg is a suspicious old beast. No good asking old Clegg to trust a chap till Saturday. He wouldn't trust his own grandfather."

"Well, we must have tea," said Peter Todd. "Unfortunately, I'm stony. Have you got any money, Alonzo?"

Alonzo shook his head sadly.

"I'm sorry to state that my finances are reduced to a very low ebb, my dear Peter," he replied, with a fine flow of language that was peculiar to the excellent Alonzo. "Otherwise I should have been very pleased to place my resources at the disposal of the study."

"Go hon! Haven't you any tin, Bunter?"

"No!" growled Bunter. "Lent it all to Bob Cherry."

"Liar!" said Peter calmly. "Have you got any money, Dutton?"

"Eh?" said Dutton, who had the misfortune of being deaf—or, rather, as Peter Todd put it, No. 7 Study had the misfortune of Dutton being deaf.

"Got any money?"

"Funny! Who? Do you mean Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Dutton—"

"Have you got any cash?" roared Peter.

"I don't see what my being rash has to do with Bunter being funny," said Tom Dutton, in surprise. "What are you talking about?"

"Oh, crumbs! Got any tin?" yelled Peter, putting his head close to Dutton's ear, and exerting the full force of his lungs.

"Oh, no! And you needn't shout—I'm not deaf!"
 "Never saw a doorpost that was, then!" growled Peter.
 "Well, it wouldn't make much difference if the tuckshop was open, as we're all stony. I wonder what Quelch has done with those things he bagged last night? He can't have eaten them."

"They're generally sent down into the kitchen," said Bunter. "That kind of thing has happened before lots of times."

"They haven't been sent down into the kitchen this time; I've asked Trotter," said Peter Todd. "They must be still in Quelch's study."

Bunter's eyes glistened.

"Might be a chance——" he began.

"My belief is that he's eaten them, when I come to think of it," said Peter, after a pause. "Quelch has developed an abnormal appetite, according to Trotter. When I asked him about those things, he said Quelch was taking to feeding in his study; he's had sandwiches sent in twice, between meals, and Trotter says the plate comes away quite clean—not a crumb left."

"But he wouldn't eat jam-tarts," said Bunter. "They'd give the old bird indigestion, you know. I suppose he shoved them into his cupboard and forgot all about them. I think it's up to you to look, Peter."

"Yes, I can see myself being caught by old Quelch exploring his study!" growled Peter.

"What are you going to do for tea, then?"

"Ask me another. I'm going down to the cricket," said Peter. "Better go and collect the money you've lent Bob Cherry." And Peter Todd chuckled as he departed.

Billy Bunter snorted.

The Owl of the Remove had a strong objection to taking risks; but if there was anything that could induce him to take risks, it was the prospect of a feed. And so long as their confiscated eatables were supposed to be in Mr. Quelch's room, that room had an irresistible attraction for William George Bunter.

After thinking the matter over, and learning that Mr. Quelch was not in his study, Billy Bunter presented himself there, with Virgil under his arm. If by any chance the Form-master had returned, Billy Bunter was ready with a question about Virgil—having developed a sudden appreciation for the famous shipwreck passage in that great poem.

If Mr. Quelch wasn't there, a very short search would reveal the hidden treasure—in the shape of tarts and doughnuts and cream-puffs and ginger-beer.

Bunter tapped at the study door and opened it.

The room was empty.

The Owl of the Remove hesitated a moment or two in the doorway. If Mr. Quelch returned and found him there, it would mean trouble.

But the tempting prospect of the whole feed to himself gave him courage. He stepped into the study and closed the door behind him.

He glanced into the study cupboard, but found only books and papers there, and a pile of manuscript which contained the greater part of that famous "History of Greyfriars," upon which Mr. Quelch had been engaged almost ever since he was a master at the school.

There was no sign of the feed.

Bunter hunted round the study, almost forgetting the danger of discovery by Mr. Quelch in his keenness to discover the jam-tarts.

"The beast!" murmured Bunter, at last. "Where has he put them? He hasn't scoffed them himself. They must be here somewhere."

There was a travelling-bag on the floor, under the table, and Billy Bunter looked into it, as a last chance, without much hope of discovering the missing eatables there.

"My hat!"

There they were!

Cakes and tarts and doughnuts and other pastries, neatly packed in their paper bags, and several bottles of ginger-beer. And with them were wedges of sandwiches, wrapped in impot paper, packed into the bag.

Bunter blinked at the interior of the bag though his big spectacles in utter amazement, hardly believing his eyes or his glasses.

What in the name of wonder had Mr. Quelch packed these articles into a bag for?

They had not been thrown in carelessly, out of the way; they were packed, and the sandwiches were packed with them. Bunter remembered Trotter's story of the sandwiches that had been sent into the study for the unusually hungry Form-master. Mr. Quelch had not eaten them, then—here they were!

"He can't be going on a picnic!" murmured Bunter. "What on earth does it mean? Anyway, I'm jolly well not going to leave them here. They're ours!"

And Bunter clutched up a bag of tarts to begin with, and jammed one into his mouth by way of a start.

The next moment he swung round with a gasp of alarm.

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The study door had opened, and an awe-inspiring figure in cap and gown had come in, and stood staring fixedly at Bunter.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say, Mr. Quelch—I say, sir! I—I—I just came here to ask you a question about—about talia jactanti stridens—— Ow!"

The Remove-master's grip fastened on his shoulder with a vicelike intensity that made Bunter yell with pain.

Bunter had seen Mr. Quelch look angry before. But he had never seen such an expression of fury as that which now convulsed the face of the master.

"You young scoundrel! You are spying!"

"Ow! Leggo! I didn't—I wasn't! I didn't know the grub was there!" wailed Bunter. "And it's ours, too—yow—I didn't—yah—I—oh!"

The master did not speak again. He shifted his grasp to the back of Bunter's collar, and caught up a cane with the other hand.

Swish, slash—swish!—slash, slash!

The cane descended upon Bunter's fat person in a rain of blows.

Billy Bunter had been licked before—but that licking was a record. The Form-master did not seem to care how hard he struck. The cane crashed and rang upon Billy Bunter, till the fat junior roared with anguish.

"Ow, ow! Leave off! Help! Fire! Murder! Oh!"

Slash, slash, slash!

The cane broke with the force of the final blow.

Bunter yelled frantically. The angry Form-master whirled him to the door, and with a swing of his arm, hurled him into the passage and slammed the door after him. Bunter went staggering along the passage, shrieking, and fell in a heap.

"Great Scott! What's the matter with you?" exclaimed Wingate of the Sixth, coming quickly out of his study.

"Ow, ow, ow, ow!" bellowed Bunter.

"What's happened to you?"

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"Shut up that fearful row!" exclaimed Wingate. "Have you been licked?"

"Ow, ow! Yes. It's old Quelch! The beast! Ow! He's broken a cane on me!" howled Bunter.

The Greyfriars captain whistled.

"Draw it mild!" he said.

"I tell you he has!" yelled Bunter. "Ow! I'm aching all over! Yow! And they're our tarts, too! Ow! Yow! I'm going to complain to the Head! Yah!"

And Bunter picked himself up and staggered away, panting with rage and pain.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Vernon-Smith Knows!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Wherefore this thushness?"

Bob Cherry stared blankly at Bunter as he asked the question. Bunter had rolled out into the Close, sobbing with pain. The tears were running down his fat cheeks.

"What's the matter with you, Bunter?" exclaimed Peter Todd, running up. "My hat! It's not gammon this time! He is hurt!"

"Looks like it," said Harry Wharton. "Is it Loder, Bunt?"

"Ow! No," groaned Billy Bunter.

"Nor Smithy?" asked Peter Todd.

"No," broke in the voice of the Bounder; "it wasn't Smithy. It was Quelch; I saw him through his study window. He ought to be put in prison for the way he licked Bunter! If the Head knew there would be a row!"

"Oh, rot!" said Harry Wharton at once. "Quelch isn't a brute. If Bunter got a whaling, I dare say he was asking for it."

"Ow, ow! I'm marked all over—I know I am!" wailed Bunter.

"Rats!" said Peter Todd. "Quelch wouldn't lay it on so hard as that!"

"You didn't see it," said Vernon-Smith. "I did—so did Skinner. We were outside the study window."

"It was awful!" said Skinner. "I've never seen Quelch in such a wax! I suppose Bunter was asking for it, as he was looking for the grub in Quelch's study. I suppose that was it, wasn't it, Bunt?"

"Ow! Yes," groaned Bunter.

"You didn't expect to find it in a travelling-bag, did you?" chuckled Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, that's it?" said Bob Cherry, in disgust. "You were spying into Quelch's things?"

"The grub was in the bag!" howled Bunter. "All our grub was there, packed up, and the sandwiches, too, that!"

Trotter had taken in for Quelch. He's keeping our grub to go on a picnic or something. Ow!"

"What rot!"

"Well, it was there!" said Bunter. "And then Quelch came in and caught me, and he broke a cane on my back!"

"Phew!"

"You're such a blessed Ananias!" said Bob Cherry dubiously. "If he did that, you'd have marks to show for it."

"So I have—I know I have!" groaned Bunter. "I'll show you!"

He tore off his jacket and waistcoat.

"Here, draw a line!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "You're not in the dorm. now, and there may be ladies round about."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Come round the corner, Bunt, and show us the dreadful wounds!" said Peter Todd, grinning.

Bunter rolled round the corner of the School House, and unfastened his collar and pulled his shirt down to show his shoulders. There was a general exclamation of horror and surprise from the juniors.

Bunter's statements for once were quite correct. The skin of his back was scored and marked in great weals where the savage blows had fallen.

"What do you think of that?" howled Bunter.

"My hat!"

"Phew! That takes the cake!"

"Go and show it to the Head, Bunter!" advised Skinner. "If Dr. Locke knew that a master hit a kid like that he'd boot him out of the school!"

"I jolly well will, too!" said Bunter.

"Better not sneak," said Harry Wharton. "You'll never get any good out of sneaking. Quelch must have been awfully out of temper. It's not like him at all."

"I can't understand it," said Bob Cherry, in perplexity. "If anybody had told me that Mr. Quelch would hit a chap like that I'd have called him a liar at once!"

"Seeing is believing, I suppose?" grunted Bunter.

"Well, yes; but I can't understand it."

"I'm aching all over!" groaned the Owl of the Remove.

"I've a jolly good mind to go to the Head about it!"

"Come down to Uncle Clegg's instead, and have a feed!" said Harry Wharton.

Bunter's expression changed at once.

"Well, that's a good idea," he said. "I'll come with you with pleasure, Wharton!"

And Billy Bunter replaced his shirt and waistcoat and jacket with great alacrity.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Nothing like jam as a balm for wounds, and ginger-beer to wash the pain away!" he remarked. "I'll come with you, and we'll feed poor old Bunter up to the chin!"

"I say, you fellows, that's jolly decent of you!" said Billy Bunter. "Of course, I'm not going to sneak, even about old Quelch!"

GOOD TURNS!—No. 2.



The world would be a better and brighter place if everyone would adopt the excellent rule of the B.P. Scouts, to do at least one good turn to someone every day. Many "Magnet" chums already follow this noble rule, and this picture shows one of the many little acts of kindness and courtesy that readers may have the chance of performing in the course of everyday life.

A "Magnetite" cyclist, with true chivalry, is relieving a young lady rider of the unpleasant task of mending a punctured tyre by the roadside.



The Bounder's eyes gleamed in the darkness as a dark form loomed up—dimly he made out the figure of the form-master, with a bag in his hand. With thumping heart he watched the dim figure descend the steps; there was the sound of a key grating in the lock, the door opened, then silence! (See Chapter 11.)

"That's right!" said Wharton encouragingly. "Grin and bear it! Quelch is a good sort, as a rule, though I must say he has laid it on rather thick this time."

"Yaas, begad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "I shouldn't have believed it of him."

And Billy Bunter, drying his tears, was led away to feed—the greatest comfort and consolation the juniors could possibly administer.

Quite a crowd had gathered round to see Bunter's injuries, and the juniors discussed it with much excitement.

Mr. Quelch was a severe master, but he had never been known to be brutal before, and the occurrence amazed the Removites.

Vernon-Smith and Skinner drew apart to discuss the matter. Vernon-Smith had his own opinion about the incident.

"I suppose you know what that means, Skinny?" he remarked.

"Quelch was awfully ratty, finding Bunter spying into his bag," said Skinner.

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"No reason why he should thrash him like that, though—like a drunken hooligan."

"Well, no; it was thick, and no mistake!"

"You heard what Bunter said—the grub was packed in the bag, and sandwiches with it. What do you think it was for? You don't fancy Quelch is going out on a picnic on his lonesome?"

"No; rather not!" grinned Skinner.

"I know what the grub was in the bag for. He's got somebody to feed."

"My hat!"

"He's keeping his cousin in the vault, to hide him," said the Bounder coolly. "That's what he had the key from Gosling for, to take care that nobody was able to enter the vault. And he's going to take him grub after dark."

Skinner whistled.

"He's had the sandwiches sent to his study, pretending he wanted them himself, and he's stuck to the grub he collared from Wharton last night," said the Bounder. "I don't think it could be much clearer."

"Hardly," agreed Skinner. "Only—only old Quelch isn't the kind of man to help a fellow get away from the police. More likely to give him up to them."

"The police don't think so, or they wouldn't have come here looking for the man," said the Bounder shrewdly. "He's a relation of Quelch's—the likeness shows that—and the inspector who came here this morning must have suspected that Quelch knew something about him, or he wouldn't have come."

"That's so."

"You mark my words—Ulick Ferrers is in the old vault hiding, and Quelch is going to take him grub to-night, after lights out," said the Bounder. "He's standing by him—blood is thicker than water, you know—and he may be having a whack out of the thousand quid!"

"I don't believe that!"

"Well, anyway, the man's there, right enough! And I'm going to make jolly certain of it to-night," said Vernon-Smith.

"How will you do that?"

"By keeping an eye on Quelch," said the Bounder. "I'm going to get out of the dorm. after lights out, and keep watch on the old chapel."

"That ought to settle it, but—"

"But what?"

"I shouldn't care to be in your shoes if Quelch spots you!" grinned Skinner. "You saw how he handled Bunter."

"He wouldn't handle me like that!" said the Bounder, grimly. "I've only got to give him a hint of what I know to bring him to his knees. He must have denied knowing anything about Ferrers when Inspector Spott was here asking him questions, so if the man's found here it will be a clear case against him. It means arrest, my boy. He can't face that. I'll bring him to his senses with two words if he cuts up rusty with me."

"I wish you luck," said Skinner. "I'd rather not tackle old Quelch myself, especially now he's so hefty with the cane. I don't want a cane broken on my back."

"Then you won't come with me to-night?"

"No, thanks!" said Skinner promptly.

"Pooh! I'll go alone, then—I'm not a funk!" said the Bounder scornfully.

And when the Remove went to bed that night Vernon-Smith only partially undressed before getting into bed.

When ten o'clock sounded from the clock-tower he got up; and, without answering any of the questions of the juniors who were awake, quitted the dormitory.

A quarter of an hour later he was in the ruins of the old chapel, crouching there in the darkness, under cover of the old masses of masonry—waiting and watching.

He had a long time to wait.

Eleven o'clock sounded from the clock-tower, and no sound of a footstep had disturbed the silence of the gloomy ruins.

Another long, weary hour!

Midnight!

The last light was out now in the windows of the school, and the Bounder was growing cramped and cold and uncomfortable.

But he was patient.

He was certain that he was upon the right track, and he did not intend to let a little personal discomfiture stand in the way of accomplishing his worthy object—that of getting his Form-master under his thumb, as he elegantly expressed it.

His patience was rewarded at last.

A quarter of an hour after midnight the silence of the old ruin was broken by the sound of a cautious footfall.

The Bounder's eyes gleamed like a cat's in the darkness, and he crouched still deeper into the black shadows of the masonry.

A dark form loomed up in the gloom. Dimly he made out the figure of the Form-master with a bag in his hand.

Vernon-Smith's teeth came hard together. There was no doubt now. With thumping heart he watched the dim figure descend the steps to the entrance of the vault. There was a sound of a key grating in the lock, the door opened, and shut again!

Vernon-Smith rose to his feet.

"That settles it!" he muttered.

Dearly the spy would have liked to see and hear what passed in the old vault, but he could not open the door without instant discovery. But he was satisfied; and he chuckled to himself several times as he made his way back to the Remove dormitory.

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THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Prisoner!

A LIGHT gleamed in the darkness of the old crypt. The door had been closed, and the false Form-master had locked it on the inside as an additional security.

Twenty-four hours had passed since the master of the Remove had been conveyed, insensible, to the vault under the ruined chapel.

How long he had lain insensible Mr. Quelch did not know. The lamp had burned out before he recovered consciousness. He had lain there in the darkness, or paced the vault as far as the rope would allow him, during the long and weary hours of the day.

The cord shackling his feet allowed him to move with short, halting steps, but he could not free himself.

His hands were shackled behind him, and the strong rope fastened him to the wall, the end secured above his head.

The prisoner was conscious enough now, and awake. He lay upon the coat, weary, with aching limbs and aching head, his face very pale. His eyes seemed to burn from the pallor of his face as he turned them upon the man with the lamp.

Ulick Ferrers looked down upon him.

Mr. Quelch had probably been at a loss to know the reason of his terrible imprisonment, until his eyes fell, now, upon the false Form-master.

Now he understood.

The sight of Ulick Ferrers, in the skilfully-adjusted wig that made the resemblance of the cousins complete, and wearing Mr. Quelch's own clothes and gown, showed him plainly enough the device of the fugitive from justice.

Confinement in the noisome vault and hunger had weakened the master of the Remove, but he rose to his feet as Ferrers stood before him.

"You scoundrel!" he said, in a low, tense voice.

Ferrers shrugged his shoulders.

"Hard words break no bones," he said lightly. "Self-preservation is the first law of nature. I have brought you food, and a light. You should be grateful."

"You scoundrel!" repeated the Remove-master, as if he could find no other words.

"I am sorry your quarters are not so comfortable as mine," said Ferrers coolly. "But you can rest here without anxiety. I have worries that you do not share, you know. I have had a visit from the police this morning. Fortunately I was able to satisfy the worthy Inspector Spott that I have had no hand in concealing my wicked cousin, Ulick Ferrers, from his pursuers."

"What does this masquerade mean?" said Mr. Quelch abruptly.

"Cannot you guess?"

"You have had the impudence to assume my name, and take my place here?"

"Exactly."

"You have passed yourself off on Greyfriars as me—as me?" said the master of the Remove, as if unable to believe it.

"Yes; with success, too."

"You villain! Then you came here with the intention of doing so; you have that disguise already prepared?"

"I had it planned in my mind a month ago, as a last resource in case of extremity, and I made all preparations," said Ferrers calmly. "It was a bold stroke—you will admit that. The inspector this morning was struck by my resemblance to myself," he laughed.

"You cannot keep up this deception long," said Mr. Quelch.

"Why not? I have taken over your class—I can do your work as well as you can do it yourself. I am learning the names of my boys—and quite getting into the way of being a Form-master here."

"You will be discovered."

"I hope not. At all events, I have passed through the most trying time. I am better able to play the part now than at first."

"And no one suspects you?"

"No one."

Mr. Quelch was silent.

"I do not want you to starve," said Ferrers, opening the bag. "I have brought you all the food I could get without exciting suspicion. I found in your study cupboard a collection of rather juvenile good things. I did not know that you had a taste for jam-tarts and dough-nuts."

"Those things were confiscated last night. A boy had

broken bounds to fetch them from the village. I shall be glad of them now, if there is nothing better."

Ferrers started a little.

"A boy in your Form?" he asked.

"Yes! or, rather, three boys," said Mr. Quelch. He was already eating the sandwiches.

"At what hour?" asked Ferrers uneasily.

"A short time before you came."

"The devil! Is it possible?" Ferrers broke off.

Mr. Quelch gave him a grim look.

"Yes," he said. "Now that I come to think of it, it is quite possible they may have seen you lurking about the place, if you hung about for any length of time before entering."

Ferrers gritted his teeth.

"I spent some time looking round, to make sure that the coast was clear," he said. "I saw nothing of them."

"They would naturally keep out of sight. Indeed, when you had your head covered they would take you for me if they saw you—good gracious!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, breaking off suddenly. "They did see you—I remember now."

"They saw me?" said Ferrers, between his teeth.

Mr. Quelch nodded, with a satisfaction he did not trouble to conceal.

"Yes, undoubtedly. When I caught them in the Close. I remember, they were in a state of great astonishment, and stated that they had seen me outside the walls only a few minutes before. I was puzzled then. I understand now. It was you they had seen. Your position here is not so secure as you have supposed, my fine fellow. Three boys at least know that a man closely resembling me was hanging about the school at that time, and they have probably told others the story. A word from them to the police, and you are lost!"

"A thousand curses! I did not foresee this! Yet they cannot possibly come into contact with the police. The inspector left here quite satisfied, and in any case he would not be likely to question the boys; he could not guess that they would be out of bounds at night!" muttered Ferrers.

But the twitching of the adventurer's features told of his inward uneasiness, in spite of his words.

"Which boys were they?" he asked. "Give me their names?"

"I shall do nothing of the kind."

"You had better not trifle with me," said Ulick Ferrers menacingly. "It rests with me whether you are left to perish of hunger in this vault."

Mr. Quelch was not at all discomposed by the threat. His glance met calmly the threatening look of the adventurer.

"You dare not go so far," he said. "I believe you are willing enough for that, or any other wickedness; but you dare not. You are risking penal servitude now, but you dare not risk the punishment for murder. But for that, I verily believe you would have made your cowardly work complete last night, to make you the more secure in your imposture."

"Will you give me their names?"

"I will not."

Ferrers burst into a savage laugh.

"Well, it makes no difference. If I should find any of them spying, I shall know how to deal with them."

He paced the vault with irregular steps, biting his lips.

What the master of the Remove had told him had shown

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him an element of danger in his cunning imposture that he had not been aware of before. The path of the false Form-master was beset with thorns.

"After all, it will not be long," he muttered. "A couple of days more, and then I can go. As soon as the coast is clear—"

"You will not escape," said Mr. Quelch. "Your description will be in every port; they must know that you will attempt to leave the country. It is a satisfaction to me to know that your punishment is certain."

"Not so certain as you suppose," sneered Ferrers. "When I leave here, it will not be as Ulick Ferrers, but as Henry Quelch. I shall receive a telegram informing me of the illness of a relation. I shall request the headmaster's permission to visit that relation, and I shall go in your name, in your clothes, with your trunks—openly, in the light of day. No one will stop or question Henry Quelch, Form-master at Greyfriars School."

"You will not escape," said Mr. Quelch. "Of that I feel assured."

"The wish is father to the thought!" sneered Ferrers. "And you had better hope that I escape, for not until I am in a place of safety shall I send word where you are to be found. Unless you wish to perish of hunger, you had better hope for my escape!"

Mr. Quelch was silent.

"If you had agreed to help me, this need not have happened," said Ferrers. "You have only yourself to thank for your imprisonment here!"

"I am not sorry that I refused to aid an unscrupulous scoundrel!"

"Bah! I did not come here to bandy words with you!" snarled Ferrers. "I have brought you all the food I could. I will do the same to-morrow night, if it is safe to come. Otherwise, you must take your chance!"

He picked up the lamp, and left the vault.

The imprisoned Form-master heard the key turn in the lock, and he was left alone—in silence, in darkness—almost in despair!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Information Wanted!

"HALLO—hallo—hallo!"

"My hat! It's Spott again, the giddy inspector!"

"Inspector Spott!" said Harry Wharton.

"Yes," said Vernon-Smith, his sharp eyes upon the stout gentleman who had entered the school gates in the early-morning sunshine. "Didn't you spot him yesterday when he left after calling on Quelch?"

"Can't say I did," said Harry carelessly.

"Well, I did," said the Bounder.

"Blessed if I see what a giddy inspector of police wants with old Quelch," said Bob Cherry, with a puzzled look.

"Might be looking for a chap resembling Quelch—chap with sandy hair, who pays mysterious visits at midnight!" grinned Skinner.

"Oh, rats!" said Wharton.

"The ratfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Skinner is off his ludicrous rocker!"

Vernon-Smith gave Skinner a warning look. He did not want his suspicions to be confided to all the Remove. The well-assorted comrades moved away, conversing in whispers. Inspector Spott entered the School House, but he did not ask to see Mr. Quelch. He sent his card in to the Head.

He was shown into the Head's study a few minutes later. Dr. Locke was looking very much surprised. It was early morning, and nearly time for chapel, and Dr. Locke always conducted morning prayers himself. It was not a propitious moment for a caller.

"I must ask you to excuse me for calling at such a time, Dr. Locke," said the inspector. "My card will have told you that I am here representing Scotland Yard, Criminal Investigation Department."

"Quite so," said the Head. "I suppose you have some good reason for calling now?"

"A very good reason, sir. You have doubtless heard the name of Ulick Ferrers?"

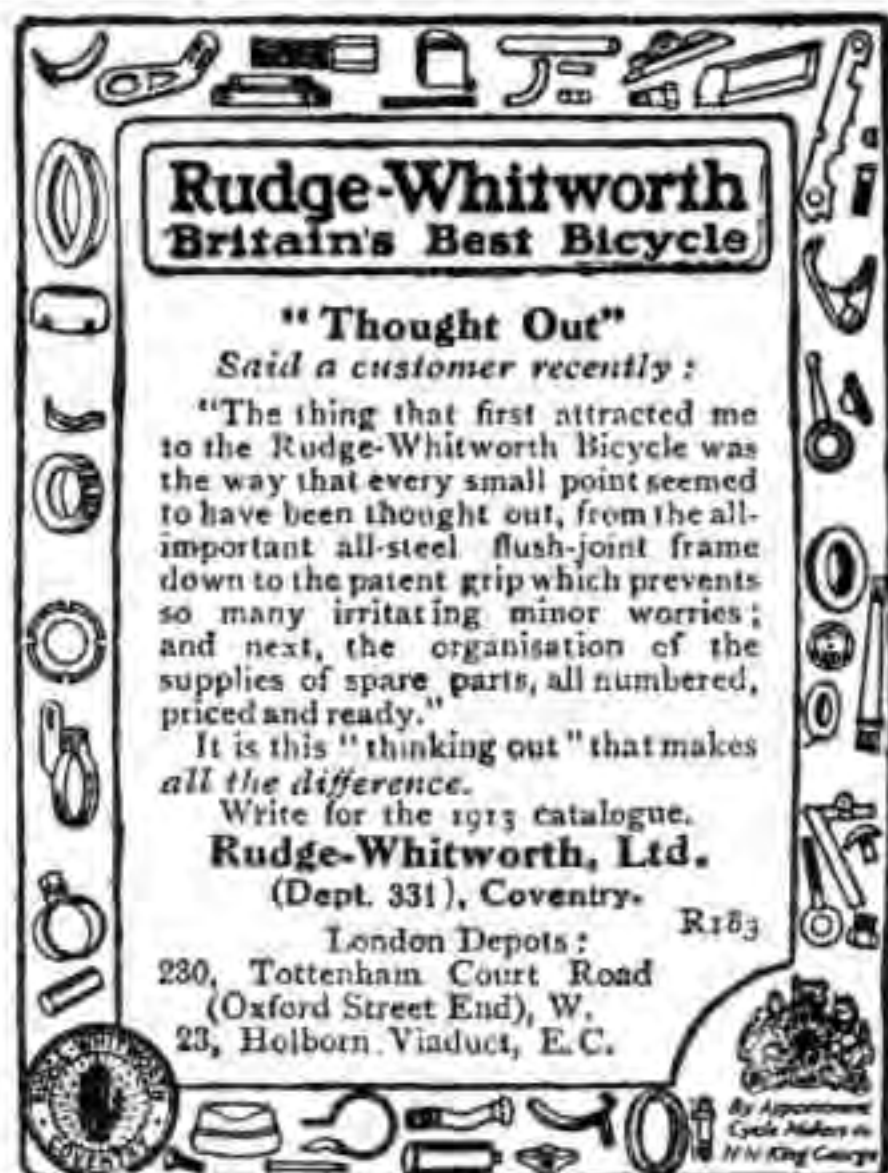
Dr. Locke looked surprised.

"No, sir; the name is quite strange to me."

"Mr. Quelch has not mentioned the matter to you, then?"

"Mr. Quelch—the master of the Lower Fourth Form here? Certainly not! I do not quite understand you, Inspector Spott!"

"I will explain, sir. Probably you do not read news of that kind in the papers, otherwise you might have seen that Ulick Ferrers, tutor to Lord Upshott's son, had fled, after



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forging his lordship's name to a cheque for a thousand pounds, taking the money with him!"

"You are quite right, Mr. Spott—I do not read that kind of news," said the Head drily. "May I inquire how the matter concerns me?"

"Ulick Ferrers is Mr. Quelch's cousin."

"Indeed! That is very unfortunate for Mr. Quelch, and I am sincerely sorry. Surely, Mr. Spott," added the Head, frowning—"surely you do not tell me this in order to create distrust in my mind of my Form-master—one of the most upright gentlemen I am acquainted with?"

"No, sir. Yet I am surprised that Mr. Quelch has not mentioned the matter to you, as I called upon him yesterday in connection with it."

"Probably he does not wish to talk on such a matter, sir. It is not a connection he should be proud of."

"Quite so," agreed the inspector; but he was evidently not quite satisfied.

"But you have not called merely to acquaint me with this unfortunate circumstance in connection with Mr. Quelch?" asked the Head.

"No, Ulick Ferrers has fled in this direction, and has not been captured. He has disappeared without leaving a trace behind, sir. I have made the strictest investigation, and there is no longer any doubt that he was seen in Friardale the day before yesterday. That he is still hiding in the neighbourhood seems to me certain. The whole vicinity has been searched, and searched again, without result. Now, sir, you will not need telling what must have been his motive in coming so close to this school?"

Dr. Locke looked startled.

"Do you mean that you suspect that he has tried to obtain assistance in his flight from Mr. Quelch?" he exclaimed.

"I do not say so, but appearances are to that effect," said the inspector. "I asked Mr. Quelch about it yesterday, and he assured me that he had seen nothing of his cousin, and heard nothing from him."

"You may rely upon Mr. Quelch's word without the slightest hesitation," said Dr. Locke. "He is incapable of deception!"

"I accept his assurance—and yours, sir. But there is no doubt in my mind that Ulick Ferrers has been in the neighbourhood of the school—probably to make some appeal to his cousin, whether he has carried out his intention or not. I cannot conceive any other reason why he should come here; but that he has come here is beyond question. My wish, therefore, is to question all who are in this school—masters and boys—as to whether they have seen anything of him. Of course, this cannot be done without your permission; but it may greatly help the course of justice."

Dr. Locke pursed his lips.

"Such a step would have the unfortunate effect of acquainting the whole school with Mr. Quelch's disgraceful connection," he said.

"That cannot be concealed in any case, sir; for the arrest, when it takes place, will most certainly take place near here, and it will be in the papers."

"If you really think that this will help you, Mr. Spott—"

"I certainly do think so, sir—and it may also save you from unpleasantness, and Mr. Quelch as well; for as the man is known to be in this vicinity, the police are now keeping this school under observation. The sooner that is ended, the better it will be, from your point of view, I presume?"

"Most certainly," said the Head. "I had no idea of this."

The inspector smiled.

"My men are doing their work well," he said. "But no one comes into this place, or leaves it, without my knowledge."

"It is very unpleasant; but I suppose you have your duty to do," said the Head. "I must do all I can to help you. You have an exact description of the man, doubtless?"

"His description is that, exactly, of your Form-master, Mr. Quelch, with the exception that he has sandy hair," said the inspector. "If he were wearing some headgear that completely concealed his hair, he would be taken for Mr. Quelch anywhere!"

"How do you wish to proceed?" asked the Head courteously, but evidently very much disturbed and troubled by the matter.

"I should like everyone in this school to be asked whether he has seen a person resembling Mr. Quelch, but with sandy hair, in the neighbourhood of the school since Monday."

"Very well," said Dr. Locke, with a sigh. "I will order the school to be assembled, and you shall put the question."

"Thank you!" said the inspector. "That will be excellent!"

And a few minutes later the prefects of Greyfriars were shepherding the school into Big Hall.

All the Forms were gathered there, with their masters, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 285.

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when the Head made his appearance by the upper door with the inspector.

There was a buzz of voices in the hall, the fellows wondering very much what was in the wind.

Upon the brow of the Remove-master was a shade of anxious thought; and when his eyes fell upon the stout form of the inspector he gave a violent start.

For a moment the heart of Ulick Ferrers almost ceased to beat.

It was a new move against him—he knew that; but exactly what was intended he did not know, and for a moment he had an almost irresistible inclination to bolt for the door.

But he held himself in hand.

The fact that the inspector's glance passed him carelessly showed that his identity was not suspected, so far, at all events. To Inspector Spott, as well as to all Greyfriars, he was still Henry Quelch, the master of the Remove.

The Bounder's eyes turned upon his Form-master's face, and he read the emotion there, though he gave a wrong meaning to it. For the Bounder, much as he knew and suspected, was far from dreaming that the man in Mr. Quelch's cap and gown was not in truth Mr. Quelch.

Dr. Locke, in a few short words, and with a dryness of manner which told how the whole affair disturbed him, explained to the assembled school what was wanted.

Every eye turned upon the Remove-master.

He stood with his eyes fixed upon the floor, as if in shame at having his disgraceful connection with a criminal thus abruptly revealed, and there were few who did not feel sorry for him.

"This man," resumed the Head, "who is unfortunately a distant relation of a gentleman whom I respect and honour highly—Mr. Quelch, the master of the Lower Fourth—this man bears a personal resemblance to my friend and colleague, Mr. Quelch. Inspector Spott supposes that he has come into this vicinity, perhaps with some intention of attempting to obtain assistance from Mr. Quelch—a very absurd proceeding, if it is the case. If any boy in this school has seen such a man during the past two days, he is requested to come forward and tell the inspector so."

There was a long silence. The fellows understood why the Head had "piled it on" about his respect and honour for Mr. Quelch. He wished it to be fully understood that this unfortunate revelation did not diminish his esteem for the Remove-master in any way. It was very like the Head, who was always kind and considerate, and beloved by the masters as well as the boys of Greyfriars.

There was a rapid exchange of glances among the three chums of the Remove who had made that unlucky expedition to Uncle Clegg's—Wharton, and Nugent, and Bob Cherry. The Head's announcement had taken them by surprise.

"I—I suppose we'd better speak up," said Bob, in a whisper.

"We shall have to let out that we were out of bounds," murmured Nugent.

"That's all right. Quelch has licked us for that once, and we can't be punished twice for the same bizney, you know."

"I wonder Quelch hasn't told us to come forward," muttered Wharton. "But I suppose we had better do it."

The Head was speaking again.

"If any boy here can give any information to Inspector Spott, I command him to do so, in the fullest possible manner. He will be doing a service to the law, and to the school, and to Mr. Quelch, in helping to get this wretched fugitive from justice removed from our neighbourhood."

"That settles it!" said Wharton. "Quelch isn't looking at us, even. He doesn't seem to care one way or the other."

"Come on!" said Bob.

"What about you, Smithy?"

The Bounder shrugged his shoulders.

"Least said, soonest mended," he said.

"But the Head's orders—"

"Oh, piffle!"

Harry Wharton did not reply to that. The three juniors left the ranks of the Remove and advanced towards the Head and the inspector.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Shadowed!

DR. LOCKE fixed his eyes upon the three juniors at once. The inspector started a little and craned his head forward.

"You have something to tell the inspector?" asked Dr. Locke.

"Yes, sir," said Wharton. "We have seen the man."

There was a buzz in the hall. Dr. Locke made a gesture to the inspector, intimating that he was to question the juniors himself. That the gentleman from Scotland Yard was only too eager to do.

"You saw the man, you say?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said the three juniors together.

"A man resembling your Form-master?"

"We took him for Mr. Quelch, sir," said Harry.

"You observed the colour of his hair?"

"No, sir. He was wearing a cap pulled down over his ears and his forehead," replied Wharton. "We couldn't see that, you see."

"When did you see him?"

"The night before last, sir."

"At what time?"

"Something before eleven."

"And where?"

"In Friardale Lane, and afterwards close to the school wall."

Dr. Locke fixed a frowning glance upon the juniors, and interposed.

"Wharton! What is this? What were you doing out of bounds at such an hour, when you should have been asleep in your dormitory?"

Wharton coloured.

"We got out to get some tuck from Uncle Clegg's in the village, sir. I—I know we oughtn't to have done it, sir, but—but Mr. Quelch caught us as we came in, sir, and took the stuff away from us, and caned us."

"Oh! In that case I shall say nothing further about it, as you have been punished. Tell Inspector Spott everything."

"You saw this man twice, then?" the inspector asked.

"Yes, sir. When we saw him in the lane first, we thought it was Mr. Quelch, though we wondered at seeing him there. We were dodging him, when he suddenly bolted across the fields. Then, when we came back to Greyfriars, he was outside the school wall. We thought it was Mr. Quelch waiting to catch us as we came back. We got in a different way, and ran into Mr. Quelch in the Close, sir. And then we knew we had been mistaken."

"Did you mention to Mr. Quelch having seen a man resembling him so closely?"

"Yes, sir. He thought it was simply a fancy of ours."

The inspector shot a quick, sharp glance of suspicion in the direction of the Remove-master. His instant thought was, why had not the Form-master mentioned this to him at their interview the previous day?

"You are quite sure that this person you saw was not, indeed, your Form-master, Mr. Quelch?" the inspector inquired. "You have made no mistake about that?"

"Oh, no, sir. Mr. Quelch told us, when he caught us, that he had not been outside the school walls."

"Since then have you seen the man?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know whether he entered the walls of Greyfriars?"

The juniors hesitated.

They did know it, of course, from what the Bounder had seen the same night, and had described on his return to the dormitory. But the Bounder had evidently determined not to come forward to give evidence, for what reason they could not guess. And it dawned upon them, too, that Mr. Quelch could have given information if he had chosen, since he had received the man into his study—according to the Bounder's story. Had Vernon-Smith been romancing?

"Come—come! Answer me!" said the inspector quickly. "Do you know whether this man entered the grounds or not?"

"We did not see anything further, sir," said Nugent. "We went back to our dormitory, and did not leave it again. Mr. Quelch caned us for being out of bounds."

"You returned to your dormitory at once?"

"Yes; at once, sir."

"Did you go to bed?"

"Yes."

"And did not even look from the window after that?" suggested the inspector.

"No, sir. We stayed in bed."

The juniors were on tenterhooks now.

The inspector's questioning had revealed what had not occurred to them at first—that Mr. Quelch was keeping secret that midnight visit to his study. They did not want, of course, to betray their Form-master if he chose to conceal that mysterious visit. And there was the possibility, too, that the Bounder had romanced, for some reason best known to himself. At all events, they could not render themselves responsible for what Vernon-Smith had declared he had seen, since Smith himself refused to come forward and give his evidence.

Fortunately, the inspector was satisfied.

As no one else came forward to give information, the matter was at an end, and the school was dismissed.

The inspector tapped the Remove-master on the arm as the boys were filing out.

"One word with you, please, Mr. Quelch!" he said.

"Certainly!"

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NEXT
MONDAY:

"THE SPORTS OF THE SCHOOL!"

"You did not mention what these boys had told you about the man they had seen, when I was with you yesterday," said the inspector, his eyes keenly on the Form-master's face.

"I had forgotten the occurrence, Mr. Spott," said the Form-master calmly. "I did not attach any importance at the time to what the juniors said, and it completely slipped my memory. Even now I think it was simply a fancy on their part. This questioning has put the idea into their heads, and they wish to make themselves of consequence."

The inspector looked dubious.

"It would have been more judicious to mention it, however," he said.

"I repeat that the matter had slipped my memory, as matters of no consequence are likely to do at any time."

"Very well, sir," said the inspector.

"You suspect, now, that the rascal has actually been here, Mr. Spott?" the Remove-master asked, as the inspector was turning away.

"I am quite assured of it," said Mr. Spott curtly. "I had little doubt before, and now I am certain. He is concealed in this vicinity, and someone is supplying him with necessities. That is all I have to say."

The inspector said no more, but more was easily to be read in his looks. He suspected Mr. Quelch of helping to conceal his missing cousin, and of supplying his wants while he remained in concealment. And there was no doubt at all that from that moment the Remove-master's movements would be closely watched, and that he would be shadowed whenever he quitted the school.

Inspector Spott took his leave, and the Form-master went into his study. As soon as the door was closed the calmness dropped from his face like a mask that is thrown aside. His features seemed convulsed with rage and terror.

"What infernal luck!" he ground out between his teeth.

"That those boys should be out of bounds then—then—of all times! Ah! There is always a weak place in the armour—some accidental circumstance to ruin the most carefully-laid scheme. Now I shall be watched. That fat fool thinks I have hidden myself—ha, ha!—somewhere in this neighbourhood, and am taking myself food and drink! The fool! But I shall be shadowed, spied upon—watched without ceasing! Yet—in the long run it must cease—at all events, they cannot watch me within the walls of Greyfriars, and so I am safe."

And after morning lessons the false Form-master donned hat and coat and walked out of the gates.

As he sauntered down to the village of Friardale a man in the dress of a country labourer lounged after him, never losing sight of him.

In the village the shadowing was taken up by a man in the garb of a mechanic.

The shadowers did their work well enough; but the Form-master did not lose a single detail of their movements, although from his manner no one could have guessed that he suspected that he was shadowed.

Certainly his visit to Friardale was harmless enough. He called into a bookseller's and purchased a book, and gave an order for some scholastic volumes to be procured from London—and then walked sedately back to the school.

He had not excited further suspicion; but he had satisfied himself that he was closely watched—that he could never quit the precincts of Greyfriars without being followed and noted. And the scheme of a flight in the name and under the guise of Mr. Quelch faded from his thoughts now. It was impracticable so long as he was kept under such close observation.

There was but one course open before him—to play out the game to the end—to keep up the part he had assumed, and take his chance, and that was what the false Form-master resolved to do.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Bounder's Defiance!

THE Remove did not have a pleasant afternoon in the Form-room that day.

Never had they known their master to be so harsh.

That Mr. Quelch's temper was suffering in some inexplicable way—perhaps on account of the trouble caused by his rascally cousin—the juniors knew from his treatment of Billy Bunter the previous day.

But this afternoon matters were worse than ever.

And curiously enough, Harry Wharton & Co. found themselves the chief objects of their Form-master's harshness.

Wharton and Nugent and Bob Cherry were called out in turn for the most trifling faults, and caned with a severity that sent them to their seats again with quivering nerves, and hearts burning with anger and indignation.

What was the matter with Quelch?

That was the question all the Lower Fourth asked themselves in great dismay. They were accustomed to severity from Mr. Quelch. But cruelty and brutality had always been foreign to his nature.

He was a severe master, but he could be very kind, and upon the whole he was popular with his Form. But there was no trace of kindness about him now.

The Removites guessed that he was troubled in his mind about the visit of the police, and the disgrace of Ulick Ferrers' connection with him. They fancied that perhaps he imagined they rejoiced over his misfortune—that he suspected them of triumphing over him. Some of them, indeed, like Skinner and Snoop, would have done so if they had dared. But most of the juniors had felt sympathetic, and Harry Wharton had suggested—and most of the fellows agreed heartily—that they should be on their very best behaviour for a day or two, so as to assure Mr. Quelch that they respected him as highly as ever.

As Bob Cherry said, it wasn't his fault if he had a cousin who was a wrong 'un. Bob had a cousin who was a "wrong 'un" himself, for that matter. And the Famous Five agreed that it was "up" to the Remove to be very respectful and attentive indeed, to show Mr. Quelch that their respect was undiminished.

But these good resolutions faded away when the Form-master showed his savage temper that afternoon.

For a whispered word in class Harry Wharton had received six cuts, so hard and stinging that his hands ached from them all the afternoon. Bob Cherry was caned with equal severity for shuffling his feet. Frank Nugent, for nothing at all, on a suspicion of having talked.

The chums knew very well what it meant. Their Form-master was angry with them for the information they had given the inspector. And as he could not punish them openly for obeying the Head's direct commands, he was "taking it out" of them in this underhand manner.

They were amazed, for they would never have dreamed of suspecting Mr. Quelch of such meanness. And they were very angry.

"If he didn't want us to say anything, why couldn't he give us a hint?" Bob Cherry muttered bitterly, as he squeezed his hands. "How were we to know that he was keeping it a secret about that chap coming here?"

"One word would have been enough, or a look," said Harry. "I'd have bitten out my tongue rather than have given him away, if I'd known. But—but he must have lied to the inspector, Bob—he must have said he hadn't seen the man, or else Mr. Spott wouldn't have needed to ask us questions at all. We told him less than Quelch could have told him. He has lied, and I suppose we gave him away without knowing it."

"And now he's going to make us suffer for it," said Nugent, with a grimace.

"I told you, least said soonest mended," said the Bounder, with a grin.

The Form-master turned round sharply from the blackboard. The words had been spoken in low whispers, but he had evidently heard a sound. His eyes fixed angrily upon Vernon-Smith.

"You were talking!" he rapped out.

"I, sir!" said Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, you! Stand out before the class!"

Vernon-Smith drew a deep breath.

The Form-master had taken up his cane, and the Bounder knew what that meant. He did not intend to go through the same savage punishment as Wharton and Nugent and Bob Cherry, if he could help it.

Now, if ever, was the time to try whether his knowledge of the Form-master's secret was of any value. Skinner knew as much as he did, but the look on the Form-master's face would have sent Skinner hurrying out at his command without a thought of defiance. But the Bounder was made of sterner stuff.

He set his teeth, and remained where he was.

"Do you hear me, Smith?" rapped out the Form-master. In the course of a couple of days he had acquainted himself with the names of most of his pupils.

"I hear you, sir!" said the Bounder, with grim calmness.

"Stand out here!"

"What for, sir?"

"I am going to cane you for talking," said the Form-master savagely. "I will keep order in the class."

"Excuse me, sir," said the Bounder in a tone of deliberate insolence, "but is it quite fair to punish us because you are worried by family troubles?"

The Remove simply gasped.



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The Form-master stood as if transfixed, glaring at the junior. Vernon-Smith's heart was beating harder than usual, but he was quite cool. This was the kind of situation the Bouncer enjoyed—amazing and startling his Form-fellows with an exhibition of courage and cool "cheek" upon which no other member of the Form would have ventured.

"You ass!" murmured Bulstrode. "He'll skin you!"

"He won't skin me!" said the Bouncer.

"Vernon-Smith," thundered the master, "stand out here immediately! Do you want me to fetch you, sir?"

"I'll come out there, certainly, sir, but I am not going to be caned," said the Bouncer.

"Are you dotty, Smithy?" muttered Wharton.

The Bouncer smiled coolly, and walked out before the class. He had his hands in his pockets, and his look was cool and impertinent. All eyes in the Remove were upon him. At that moment the Bouncer had a full share of the limelight he loved.

"Hold out your hand, Smith!" said the Form-master in a voice of concentrated rage.

The Bouncer's hands remained in his pockets.

"He must be mad!" muttered Linley. "Quelchy will scalp him!"

"I guess he's going through it!" murmured Fisher T. Fish.

"The ass!"

"He will get it in the neck!"

The Removites had only one opinion about what would happen to Vernon-Smith for his defiance of the angry Form-master. But the Bouncer was not dismayed.

"Will you hold out your hand, Smith?"

"No, sir," said the Bouncer, very quietly and distinctly.

And the Removites gasped again.

"What—what—what do you mean, boy?"

"It's not my fault your cousin is a forger and a thief, sir!" said the Bouncer, with a grim coolness. "I've no doubt it worries you, but I decline to have it vented on me!"

It seemed to the Removites that an earthquake must happen after that. Even the Bouncer was a little pale now, in spite of his iron nerve.

The Form-master did not speak again. He made a spring at the junior, and caught him by the collar with his left hand, and raised the cane with his right. The almost ferocious expression of his face showed with what savage force the blow was to fall, if it fell at all. Some of the juniors shivered.

But the Bouncer, turning his head so that his eyes met the angry glare of the master, spoke in a low voice, audible only to the man who was grasping him:

"Don't strike me, sir! You'd better not, unless you want me to tell Inspector Spott whom you're keeping hidden in the vault under the old chapel!"

The Form-master staggered back as if he had been struck.

He released his grasp upon the Bouncer's collar, and the blow did not fall. The cane slipped from his nerveless hand, and clattered on the floor.

His face had gone deathly white, and his eyes were starting with terror.

The Bouncer smoothed out his collar calmly and smiled, with a full enjoyment of his victory. It was evident that he would not be caned now.

The Removites looked on breathlessly.

The Form-master found his voice at last; but when he spoke his tones were husky, low, and uncertain.

"Vernon-Smith, follow me to my study!"

"Certainly, sir," said the Bouncer cheerfully.

The Form-master strode from the room with rustling gown, and the Bouncer followed him. There was a buzz of amazement in the Form-room.

In Mr. Quelch's study, the Form-master stopped and fixed his eyes upon Vernon-Smith. The Bouncer met his gaze calmly.

"You said," muttered the wretched man—"you said——"

Vernon-Smith nodded.

"I know that you are keeping Ulick Ferrers hidden in the vault, sir," he said.

To the Bouncer's surprise, a look of relief flashed over the haggard face before him. The Form-master drew a deep, almost sobbing breath. His relief was too great to be concealed, and the Bouncer saw it—and it astounded him! It was evident that the man had expected to hear something worse than that—though what, Vernon-Smith could not imagine.

"You—you—you know that, do you?" stammered the master at last.

"Yes, sir."

"And how do you know?"

"I saw you go there last night, sir."

"You spied on me?"

"You may call it that if you like, sir. Spying isn't any worse than hiding a criminal from the police, that I know of!"

A strange smile came over the pallid face for a moment—a smile that puzzled the Bouncer; but it was gone in an instant.

"Very well," said the Form-master, after a pause. "It

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ONE
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is true that I have hidden my—my cousin, Ulick Ferrers—I do not deny it. I—I believe that he is innocent, you understand, and so I am helping him to escape. Vernon-Smith, you must keep this secret for me?"

"I am quite willing to do that, sir."

"Have you told anyone?"

"Only my pal Skinner, sir, and he will be mum about it. You need not be afraid that I shall talk—I know what the secret is worth," said the Bouncer calmly.

"I understand. You think you have a hold over me now?" said the Form-master, his gaze searching the Bouncer's face.

"I suppose it amounts to that, sir."

"Very well. You and Skinner will keep this secret, and I will make it worth your while," said the Form-master.

"You can ask me any favours you choose—anything that a Form-master can grant. If you want money——"

The Bouncer shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't want money; I'm not a blackmailer. I want to have no lickings, and free passes out of gates whenever I ask for them."

"You shall have what you wish."

"Thank you, sir!"

"And I can rely on you?"

"On my word, sir!"

"Very well; you may go."

Vernon-Smith returned to the class-room. It was some minutes later that the Form-master returned. He found the room in a buzz, but it died away as he entered. The Bouncer's successful defiance of the master had caused great excitement in the Remove; and Billy Bunter, with his usual cheerful obtuseness, ventured to follow his example. But a single impertinent reply from Billy Bunter brought down a cataract of wrath upon his head. He was yanked out of his place, and caned till his yells rang through the Form-room, and he sat gasping during the rest of the afternoon lessons.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Peter Todd Goes Fishing!

"I SAY, you fellows, I've got a jolly good idea!"

The "Funny Four," as the denizens of No. 7 Study were sometimes called, were in their study, growling!

Even the gentle Alonzo was not looking as sweet and amiable as usual.

The unaccustomed harshness of the Remove-master had fallen heavily upon all four that afternoon. The Form-master had been brought to terms by the Bouncer, and he had indemnified himself by additional harshness to the others. Peter Todd had been caned for talking, Bunter for impertinence, and Tom Dutton because his deafness had irritated the master. Even the gentle Alonzo had not escaped. He had ventured to put in a word for poor Dutton, and had been caned for his pains.

Hence the glum looks of the quartette.

Peter Todd had announced that it was too thick, and that if Quelchy did not "chuck" it, Quelchy would feel the weight of No. 7 Study's wrath. It was then that the Owl of the Remove announced that he had an idea. His announcement was not received with enthusiasm.

Dutton did not hear him, Alonzo was fully occupied in rubbing his aching hands, and Peter Todd only gave a scornful snort.

"It's a jolly good wheeze!" said Bunter. "I say, it's time old Quelchy was made to sit up, isn't it? We're not going to take all this lying down. I've made a discovery about the beast!"

"Rats!" said Peter.

"He wears a wig!"

"What!"

"He wears a wig!" said Bunter triumphantly. "Nobody's ever suspected it before; but I've found it out. I suppose he's really bald, you know, and he's kept it dark for a jolly long time. But I've bowled it out!"

"Rot!" said Peter Todd. "I don't believe he wears a wig! Dash it all, he's been a Form-master at this blessed school for years on end, and do you think he could wear a wig all this time without being found out?"

"He's kept it awfully dark!" said Bunter. "But I know it. I spotted it to-day, when he was licking me. I tell you it's a fact. I was wriggling, you know——"

"Struggling like a bull, and yelling like a Red Indian!" sniffed Peter.

"Well, he had to exert himself to hold me," said Bunter; "and, I tell you, his hair quite came awry. My arm knocked against his mortar-board, and that caused it. Then I found out that old Quelch wears a wig!"

"Well, suppose he does?" said Peter.

"Don't you see?" demanded Bunter eagerly. "When a middle-aged man wears a wig, what is it for?"

"To cover up baldness, I suppose."

"Just that! And you couldn't give him a worse dig than by yanking his wig off, and showing him up in public!" chuckled Bunter.

Peter grinned, in spite of himself.

"It would be a lark—if you're right about the wig!" he agreed. "But if it's true, I don't see how it hasn't come out before."

"Well, it hasn't come out before; but it's true."

"And who's going to grab his hair, and yank it off?" asked Peter. "I'm not exactly a funk, but I don't think I should care to walk up to a Form-master and pull his hair. No, thanks!"

"It would be highly disrespectful," said Alonzo Todd solemnly. "My Uncle Benjamin wears a wig, and I am sure he would be extremely incensed if anyone should treat him in that manner."

"Go hon!" said Bunter sarcastically. "I'm not thinking of walking up to Quelch and asking for a licking. Haven't you heard of a fishing rod and line?"

Peter's eyes gleamed.

"My hat! Fancy going fishing for old Quelch—and catching his wig, if he's got one! We could do it from a window without being spotted! Bunter, my fat tulip, you're not half such a silly ass as you look!"

"Oh, really, Todd—"

"My dear Peter, I am afraid our Uncle Benjamin would not approve of such a proceeding!"

"Well, we're not going to ask Uncle Ben to do it," said Peter. "I'm going to do it, to make up for the licking he gave me this afternoon. And if it turns out that he doesn't wear a wig, it will only be a fish-hook wasted!"

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bunter. "It's all right; I know he wears a wig. Fancy his face, if he's shown up before all the fellows as bald as a billiard-ball!"

Peter roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You can do it, Peter," said Bunter generously. "I was only suggesting the scheme, you know; you could carry it out better than I could. Ahem!"

"And take the licking, if there's one going!" sniffed Peter. "I know! But I'm on, all the same. It would be worth a flogging to get a bite like that!"

Peter Todd reflected, grinning over the idea. The more he thought of it, the better he liked it. It was a "lark" after Peter's own heart, and the young rascal had nerve enough for anything.

"There's the passage window just over Quelch's study window," said Bunter. "If you were there, and somebody made Quelch look out, you could fish it off—"

"Good egg! You can throw stones at his window, and make him look out!" said Peter at once.

"I—I didn't mean that," said Bunter, in alarm. "I—"

"I know you didn't," chuckled Peter. "But that's what you're going to do. Or, better still, you can get into a fight with Dutton outside his window. I say, Dutton!"

"Eh?" said the deaf junior.

"I want you to fight Bunter outside Quelch's window. It's a wheeze!"

"Sorry," said Dutton. "I haven't any!"

"Eh? You haven't any what?"

"Any cheese."

"Wheeze, you fathead! Not cheese—wheeze!" shrieked Peter. "You're to get up a fight with Bunter—see?"

"What on earth does Bunter want a light in the daytime for?" demanded Dutton. "And why can't he get a light himself, if he wants one?"

Peter Todd groaned.

"It's a lark!" he roared.

"Where?" asked Dutton, looking round the study. "I don't see any sparks. Did you say sparks or sharks?"

Peter Todd put his mouth to Dutton's ear, and shrieked out an explanation. The deaf junior nodded.

"All right!" he said. "Don't shout! Anybody would think I was deaf, to hear you!"

"Come on, Bunter!"

"I—I say, can't Dutton fight Alonzo instead? It would be—ahem—better!"

"Come on!" roared Peter.

And Bunter unwillingly came on. Bunter had originated the scheme, but he would gladly have left its execution to his study-mates. Bunter was very modest in putting himself forward—where there were possibilities of a licking in store.

But Peter Todd's word was law, and he would take no denial. Ten minutes later Tom Dutton and Bunter were under the Form-master's window, ready to begin at a signal from their study-leader.

At the same time Peter Todd posted himself in the upper passage with a rod and line. One of the passage windows,

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with thick ivy clustering outside, overlooked the window of Mr. Quelch's study. The window was open, on account of the warmth of the summer's afternoon.

Two or three juniors immediately spotted Peter Todd with the fishing-rod, and inquired what the dickens he was up to.

"Going fishing," explained Peter airily.

"Going fishing indoors?" demanded Harry Wharton.

"No; in the Close!"

"Oh, he's dotty!" said Bob Cherry. "What are you going to catch in the Close, fathead?"

"Hair!"

"You're going to catch a hare?" demanded the juniors.

"I didn't say a hare—I said hair! H-A-I-R—hair!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bob. "What's the little game? Explain before we bump you!"

Bunter discovered that Quelch wears a wig," Peter explained. "I'm going fishing for it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fellows gathered from all sides to watch Peter Todd as he adjusted the rod and line. As a rule, japes on a master were barred; but, after the late experiences in the Form-room, the Removites were only too glad to see Peter on the warpath.

"I don't believe he wears a wig, though," said Hazeldene. "Somebody would have spotted it before this."

"It's all rot!" said Johnny Bull. "Bunter's discovered a mare's-nest again!"

"Well, it will be funny to catch his mortar-board," said Peter. "But I think Bunter is right myself. Anyway, we shall soon see."

"You'll get an awful licking," said Bulstrode.

"Can't get it much worse than we're getting it lately," said Peter.

"Begad, yaas; that's so!" remarked Lord Mauleverer.

Even the easy-going Mauleverer had had painful experiences in the Form-room that afternoon.

"Pass the word round to the fellows, so that there can be a good crowd to see him scalped," said Peter. "I'm just going to begin."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It did not take long for the word to pass round. Fellows posted themselves in the Close with gleeful anticipation, to watch events. Peter Todd leaned out of the window, and made several casts with his line to assure himself that it was in working order. He grinned as he saw the gathering crowd in the Close.

Tom Dutton was looking up for the signal. Peter Todd waved his hand to him as a sign to start, and Dutton promptly pinched Bunter's nose.

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Not so hard, you silly ass!"

"Certainly!" said Dutton, misunderstanding, as usual.

"Better hit hard; it looks more like the real thing!"

"Ow! I— Oh! Yah! Oh! Yaro-o-o-oh!" roared Bunter, as Tom Dutton began hammering him right and left.

The terrific din Bunter made would have exasperated the most patient of masters. In about half a minute the study window was thrown up, and the Remove-master looked out with a furious face.

"Stop that noise!" he shouted.

The struggling juniors did not seem to hear. Dutton was hammering industriously at Billy Bunter's fat person, and Bunter was struggling and roaring like a bull. The master leaned from the window and shouted to them.

"Bunter! Dutton! Come into my study instantly! I— Oh!"

Peter Todd had made his cast.

The hook fasted upon the Form-master's hair, and a smart jerk of the rod lifted the wig fairly from the Form-master's head.

In an instant Peter Todd had landed his "bite," jammed down the window above, and fled.

At Mr. Quelch's window, the Form-master stood transfixed. His hands went up to his head wildly—his mortar-board and his wig were gone, and his own hair was revealed—sandy in colour!

There was a yell of amazement from the crowd of juniors in the Close.

They had expected a bald head to be revealed, if, indeed, it proved that the Form-master did really wear a wig.

The sandy hair struck them with astonishment, and some of them understood. There was a yell from the Bouncer, as the truth flashed upon his mind.

"Great Scott!" roared Vernon-Smith. "It's not Mr. Quelch at all; it's Ulick Ferrers!"

And the name was repeated far and wide by the amazed juniors:

"Ulick Ferrers!"

ULICK FERRERS seemed stunned for the moment. Tom Dutton and Bunter had ceased their struggling, and were staring in blank amazement at the false Form-master.

The description Inspector Spott had given of the man was fresh in all minds. Exactly like Mr. Quelch in feature, but with sandy hair! And the Bounder, who had seen Ferrers enter the Form-master's study that eventful night, knew him again at once.

"It's Ulick Ferrers!" he shouted. "Don't you understand? It's the man the police are looking for!"

"Great Scott!"

Even yet the fellows could hardly grasp it.

But the next action of the exposed impostor left no doubt upon the subject.

Ferrers realised that all was up.

His cunning imposture, his deeply-schemed device, carried out with ruthless determination and unfailing resource, had been exposed—by the jape of a junior whom he had unjustly punished—his own harshness had brought it upon him.

He was recognised!

For a few minutes, while the consternation lasted, he was free to act; but in a few minutes word would reach the detectives who, at that very moment, were watching the school for him.

He had not an instant to lose.

He sprang back into the study, caught up coat and cap and donned them, and leaped from the open window.

Some of the fellows gathered up, as if to bar his passage; but the ferocity of his face deterred them, and they fell aside.

The rascal darted towards the school gates.

But it only needed the sight of the man running to determine the juniors. Until that moment they had hardly been able to credit the evidence of their own senses. But when he sprang from the window and fled, all doubt was at an end.

"After him!" roared Bolsover major.

"After him!" yelled the Bounder.

And the whole crowd broke into whooping pursuit.

But terror lent the fugitive wings, and he reached the school gates far in advance of his pursuers. The gates stood wide open, but Gosling was standing there, and the juniors yelled to him to stop the runner.

"Stop him, Gosling!"

"Stop, thief!"

"Trip him up!"

"Collar him!"

But to Gosling's astounded eyes it was Mr. Quelch who was running, and he stood aside to let him pass. Ulick Ferrers bounded out into the road.

There for an instant he paused, panting.

Whither to fly? In Friardale were the police, searching for him; the other way lay Courtfield, equally dangerous. And even as he stood, trying to think, a man in a labourer's dress detached himself from the tree he was leaning against, and came towards him—it was the shadower he had noted before.

The detective was staring at him, and as he stared came the wild whoop of the excited juniors behind.

"Stop him!"

"It's Ulick Ferrers!"

The detective sprang towards the false Form-master. Ferrers could not pass him; he dashed down the road away from him, leaped a hedge, and fled across the fields. The detective paused a single moment to blow a shrill blast upon a whistle, and then plunged through the hedge in hot pursuit.

From three or four different directions hidden men started up as if by magic, and dashed after the flying man.

The Greyfriars juniors stopped in the gateway, looking after the chase, in a state of the wildest excitement.

"They'll have him!" exclaimed Wharton. "He can't get clear! Look! He's thrown away his coat! There he goes along the towing-path!"

Pursuers and pursued vanished from sight along the towing-path. But there was little chance for the hunted man.

"Well, my only sainted uncle!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "If this doesn't take the whole giddy cake factory!"

"But where is Mr. Quelch?" exclaimed Wharton. "If that villain has been passing himself off on us as Quelch, where is Quelch?"

"I'll show you where he is!" chuckled the Bounder.

"You! How on earth do you know?"

"Because I've kept my eyes open," said Vernon-Smith coolly. "Not that I suspected anything of this sort. I don't see how anybody could. I thought that Quelch was hiding Ferrers from the police, but, instead of that, it was Ferrers who was hiding Quelch! My hat! He deserves to get away, for his cool check."

"Do you know what has become of Quelch?" demanded Harry.

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"Yes; I'm going to get him out. Come and help!" The Bounder dashed into the tool-shed, but it was only to get a crowbar.

"Follow me!" he said.

And he led the way to the old chapel. The juniors, amazed, but seeing that the Bounder knew what he was about, followed him.

They rushed into the ruins with a whoop, and Vernon-Smith led the way down to the crypt. He crashed the crowbar upon the lock of the door.

"Get a light—a bike lantern—somebody!" he called out.

Bob Cherry rushed away for his bicycle lamp. He was back by the time the lock had yielded. Vernon-Smith dropped the crowbar and lighted the lamp, and led the way down into the gloomy vault.

"Mr. Quelch! Mr. Quelch! Are you here?"

There was a voice from the darkness.

"I am here! Thank Heaven you have come!"

"Great Scott!"

"Mr. Quelch!"

The light flashed upon the prisoner of the vault.

There was Mr. Quelch, shackled, fastened to the wall, pale as death, but with new life flushing into his pallid face at the sight of his rescuers.

"My boys—my boys!" he exclaimed.

"We'll have you loose in a jiffy, sir!" exclaimed Wharton.

He opened his pocket-knife in a twinkling, and began sawing away at the ropes. Two or three other fellows followed his example, and the Form-master's bonds dropped in pieces round him.

Mr. Quelch staggered from weakness, and leaned heavily upon Harry Wharton's shoulder.

"Ferrers has been discovered, then?" he said faintly.

"Yes, sir. Peter Todd bowled him out."

"I say, you fellows, I bowled him out, you know——"

"Where is he?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"He's bolted, sir. But the police are after him. I expect they've got him by this time," said Wharton.

"And he told you I was here?"

"No fear! He didn't stop to speak. He cleared out when his wig came off," said Wharton. "Smithy knew you were here. I don't know how he knew."

"I was suspicious of the man," said the Bounder calmly. "I'd been keeping an eye on him, sir, and I saw him come here last night. So when he was shown up to-day, of course I knew he had done something with you, so I guessed you were here."

"Thank you, Vernon-Smith! Thank you all, my dear boys!" said Mr. Quelch, his voice shaken by emotion. "But for you I might have remained here—Heaven knows how long! Help me out of the vault. I can scarcely walk."

And the juniors aided the exhausted Form-master from the crypt. When they emerged into the Close, there was a roar. All Greyfriars knew what had happened now, and the whole school gathered round Mr. Quelch as the juniors assisted him back to the School House. In the doorway the Head met him, in a state of flurry and excitement the fellows had never seen their reverend headmaster in before. Someone had explained matters already to the Head, and he understood what had happened. He grasped the hand of the rescued Form-master warmly.

"Mr. Quelch! Thank Heaven you are safe!" he exclaimed. "This is a most—most extraordinary occurrence! I am amazed—astounded! Pray accept my arm to your room."

And Mr. Quelch disappeared with the Head, leaving all Greyfriars in such a state of excitement as the old school had never experienced before.

Two hours later Inspector Spott called upon the Head, in a state of the great satisfaction, to report the arrest of the fugitive. After a hard chase and a desperate struggle Ulick Ferrers had been captured and taken to the police-station. The stolen thousand pounds had been found upon him, sewn up in his clothes.

It was a nine days' wonder at Greyfriars. Mr. Quelch, who had been very much shaken by his terrible experience, was not able to resume his duties immediately, and he left the school for some time for his health. The Greyfriars fellows eagerly read the reports of Ferrers' trial, and no one was sorry to learn that he had been sentenced to a long term of imprisonment. It was likely to be a long time before the Removites forgot their exciting experiences with the False Form-master.

THE END.

Another splendid long, complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co. next Monday, entitled "The Sports of the School," by Frank Richards. Don't forget to order your "Magnet" Library in advance. Price One Penny.

YOU CAN START TO-DAY!



— By **SIDNEY DREW.** —

READ THIS FIRST.

Ferrers Lord, the famous multi-millionaire, is surrounded in his magnificent London residence by his friends Ching-Lung, Barry O'Rooney, Gan-Waga the Eskimo, and Prout & Co.—the stalwarts of the millionaire's famous submarine, the Lord of the Deep. After a period of inaction, there is a rumour afloat that Ferrers Lord is about to start upon one of his great expeditions again. Meantime, the millionaire himself is devoting all his attention to a curiously carved narwhal's tusk which he has picked up in an East-End curio-dealer's shop. The tusk proved to be hollow, and to contain some gold coins and a small wad of parchment, which bears a strange message from the sea. This tells of a mysterious floating island inhabited by strange monsters, which Ferrers Lord determines to go in search of. Thurston immediately christens the phantom island "Mysteria" in advance. All hands board the Lord of the Deep, which slips out of its secret cave on its mysterious new quest. Lord draws up a chart, and, telling Honour, the engineer, to steer to a certain islet which he intends to make his headquarters, he retires below. The Lord of the Deep arrives near the chosen spot, and to enable the vessel to rise Honour lets out the water from the tanks, thereby disturbing Gan-Waga in his sleep. The latter finds Honour on the bridge, and the engineer turns and points to the deck "Look out!" he ejaculates. (Now go on with the story.)

Boarders!

"What look fo', hunk?" grunted Gan.

"Rocks! Swing the lead?" said Hal Honour.

A round moon shone brightly over a quiet sea as Gan-Waga made his way across the wet deck. He splashed the lead over and let it run.

"No bottoms!" he called.

"Keep going steadily, please!"

"No bottoms yetses," said Gan-Waga.

The island came nearer. It was certainly not an atoll, one of those horseshoe islets built by the coral insects, but of volcanic origin.

The Lord of the Deep crept on. Using his night-glass, the engineer saw that the coral insects had also lent their aid and built two horns of rock into the sea, forming a natural breakwater.

"Sound again!" he cried.

"No bottoms nowhereses."

Answering her helm, the submarine sailed gently between the points of the horns.

"Now we gotted de butterful bump," said the Eskimo; "but dere's lotses and lotses of wetness. Ho, ho, ho! Yo' easily drowns a cat in them!"

The bay was fairly wide, but it narrowed between the two cones of rock, and widened again beyond them. The anchor went down with a musical rattle. Gan-Waga helped himself to one of Honour's cigars, and borrowed a match. The engineer was up to time, but he did not go below at once. The splendour and beauty of the night were too tempting. Leaning over the rail, he looked towards the shore.

"Perfect!" he said. "Lovely!"

"Butterful 'nough for fishes!" said Gan-Waga. "I'm afters dem. What-ho! Want somes fo' ole Roonatics, de dog-fishes."

No thought of danger crossed the engineer's mind. The island was almost too small to be inhabited, and in any case the inhabitants could only be friendly. He tossed the end of his cigar into the sea, and went back to the conning-tower.

Gan-Waga had not a great deal of bait handy, but the first fish he caught would provide more. He dropped his weighted line overboard and waited for a pull as he softly crooned an Eskimo song concerning blubber and walrus-oil and other dainty things.

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"THE GEM" LIBRARY,
Every Wednesday.

"Gotted yo'!" he said, as there came a tug at the line. "Yo' comes up and let's see ifs yo' good-looking!"

It was a big fish, a stranger to the angler, and it had swallowed both the hooks.

"Well, of alls de greedinesses!" said Gan-Waga ruefully.

"Oh, yo' ugly greediness fatheads! Ain't yo' snatisfies wid one, hunk? Now it take me ten million billion hourses to gets dose hooks out of yo'! I good minds to smacks yo' silly faces! Oh, bad 'nough! Come here, ole pip!"

He had to kneel to use his knife. The water, dark near the shore, but shining like silver in the centre, was as quiet as a millpond on a calm, hot day. Suddenly a ripple danced outwards, and a round, black object appeared, only to sink beneath the surface and vanish. Then came another and another.

"Tink I gets yo' now, Mr. Greedinesses!" muttered Gan. "Dat once, anyhow! Yo' gotted indigestchums bad 'nough, hunk! Yo' nevers, nevers smile agains no morer, hunk! Hope I nots tickles yo', did I? I begs yo' puddens norfully!"

Hal Honour's watch had stopped, for some reason. The engineer was still in the conning-tower, examining the works of the watch. Some instinct made him glance up.

Something flashed above the deck under the rail for a brief instant, but it was enough to attract Honour's attention.

"What was that?" he thought.

"Yo' nots pinch my hooks no morer, hunk?" he heard Gan-Waga say distinctly. "Yo' be goods 'nough after dat doses, hunk?"

Hal Honour took a few paces forward. A cloud drifted slowly across the disc of the moon. He looked up involuntarily, for the sky had been perfectly cloudless. The next moment his eyes encountered the naked figure of a man crouching on the bows. His hand leapt to his hip-pocket; but there was no revolver there, only a steel wrench that he had placed there to take below.

"Gan," he shouted, "come here at once!"

To hear the engineer speak at all was unusual; to hear him shout was electrifying. Gan-Waga was electrified. He leapt up, got entangled in the line, the end of which was tied to the rail, and sprawled down on his face.

The stumble probably saved his life, for a broad-bladed spear whizzed over him, and crashed against the unbreakable panes of the wheelhouse. With a yell, a herculean figure

Our Companion Papers.

"THE PENNY POPULAR,"
Every Friday.

bounded forward. He was armed with a club. Yelling to the Eskimo to run, Honour dashed to meet the foe. The steel wrench shot from his hand. The heavy tool struck the man over the heart with a heavy thud, and he dropped and slid a yard along the smooth deck. Other savages—ten or a dozen of them—poured over the side. Gan-Waga, shaken, but not otherwise hurt, ran into the conning-tower, with Honour close at his heels. They shut the door, and then the notes of the alarm-bell went echoing through the ship.

"Hallo! You have company, then?" said Ferrers Lord coolly.

He was the first on deck. He laughed as an ugly savage, with rings in his nose and ears, made a fruitless onslaught on the glass with a wooden club. He might as well have tried to break ten tons of granite in half with a tack-hammer. Glass that would withstand the tremendous pressure of water at a great depth could more than defy a paltry native club or spear.

"Why did you waken us, Honour, when you could have washed them away?"

The engineer pointed to the man who lay senseless in the scuppers.

"None can give back life," he answered.

Prout, Barry, and Ching-Lung arrived in their pyjamas. Word was passed that all was well, and, much to their disgust—for they had expected some fun—the rest of the crew retired mournfully to their hammocks.

"It's no good knocking, my black darlings," said Ching-Lung, as they watched the frantic efforts the islanders made to break into the crystal fortress. "You aren't allowed in without a ticket. And don't breathe on our nice clean windows; it's rude. Go away, all of you!"

"Oh, murder! Luk at the wan-oi'd wan wid the forty-fat smile!" chuckled Barry. "That's the king of the cannibal islands. D'yer know how he lost that swate blue, pink, green, yellow orb? His woife knocked ut out wid the poker. She got mad wid him, bless her! He towld her she'd put too much pepper in the missionary soup. He, he, he!"

"Ho, ho, ho, hoo! Dat's not bad jokes for roonatics!" grinned Gan-Waga. "Oh, dis tickles butterfals! Ho, ho, hoo!"

The mortification of the savages was too ludicrous. Even Ferrers Lord laughed heartily.

"By hokey," roared Prout, holding his sides, "was there ever a better nigger-minstrel show? I'd give summat to bang a few of their heads together!"

Then the baffled and wondering attackers drew back, either to hold a council of war or to get breath for another assault.

"Come, that fellow can swim, now!" said Ferrers Lord.

"Oh, don't spoil the fun yet, old man!" began Ching-Lung.

But the millionaire's hand was on the lever. They screamed with mirth as the vessel began to sink, and they saw the terror-stricken natives rush splashing to the side, and leap overboard.

"One more lingering look, old chap," pleaded the prince. "I want to take One-eye's photograph to wear next my heart!"

The pumps expelled the water, and the conning-tower rose clear. Not a native was visible, and Ching-Lung uttered a deep sob.

"What you cries fo', Chingy?" asked Gan-Waga.

"Be-be-be-be—"

"Bumble-bees, by hokey! A whole hive on 'em," said Prout.

"You—you sh-shut up!" sobbed his Highness bitterly. "Oh, Gan, I'm—I'm cry-crying be-be-because old One-eye w-w-went off without kis-kis-kissing m-me gug-gug-good-night!"

"Is he balmy, by hokey?" asked Prout. "Is he?"

"Hall hover, souse me," replied the bo-sun. "And that balminess is ten foot thick!"

A Disputed Landing—Thomas Prout Wins a Wager, and Chin Lung gets a Duckling—A Snake that wasn't a Snake—On the Way to the Native Village.

The southern sun fell warm and bright over sea and land. Ching-Lung followed the millionaire to the conning-tower. Gan-Waga, owing to having been frequently disturbed during the night, had overslept himself.

Although he was late for breakfast, he had no intention of missing any of the fun.

So, with a couple of mutton-chops in one hand and the best part of a thickly-buttered loaf in the other, the stout Greenlander sailed in the wake of the millionaire and the prince.

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NEXT
MONDAY;

"THE SPORTS OF THE SCHOOL!"

A Splendid Complete Tale of Harry
Wharton & Co. Order Early.

"What's the programme, old boy?"

"I have not arranged one," said Ferrers Lord. "All I wish to do is to talk to the natives."

"Then you can speak their lingo?"

"I speak most languages," answered the millionaire, smiling, "for I am a citizen of the world. After the fright we gave those fellows last night, I fear they will be a trifle shy. This is a pretty little corner of the earth, Ching. When I am tired I shall come here and rest."

"That will be when little pigs start to fly. You tired! Why, you're a human motor-car. But you're right about the place. It's as pretty as paint, and it smells like scent." He took a deep breath of the perfumed air. "I wonder if the beggars will try and dig holes in us with those ugly spears of theirs? I shall be most awfully rude if they do!"

Ferrers Lord buttoned a pair of leggings over his flannel trousers.

"The launch, Prout!"

The deck opened, and the launch rose up. A dozen men sprang forward to steady her into the blue water. Ferrers Lord scanned the shore through his field-glasses.

"I don't like it," said Ching-Lung. "If we're going between those two pillars, old boy, I'm taking an umbrella."

"What fo' takes 'brellers, Chingy?" gurgled the Eskimo.

"It not rainings, hunk."

"Who said it was? It might rain, blubberbiter. You get funny weather in these parts, my fat pet. It might rain spears, and if you're silly enough to be caught in a spear-shower, you catch a cold. No-oo, I don't like it. I think I'll stay at home, and play noughts-and-crosses!"

If the natives intended to be hostile, and to dispute a landing, they could choose no better spot than the narrow neck of water under the pillars. Perhaps they were already lurking there, ready to launch their spears.

"Me take a bumbreller, three, Chingy," said Gan.

"An umbrella, too, not three, you duffer!" said Ching-Lung. "You speak English like a Dutch parrot with a bad moult. Besides, you wouldn't get hurt. They'd only chip a few splinters out of your wooden head. You're eating with your mouth full again, are you? What horrid manners!"

The millionaire could see no sign of any human being. As he wished to be friendly with the savages, it was wise to take no chances. Blood spilled on either side would make a reconciliation trebly difficult.

"We'll run round the island, and find another landing, Ching," he said. "Prout and O'Rooney will go with us."

"Rupert is shaving, curling his moustache and his golden hair!" grinned the prince. "He might be going to a ball every morning, by the trouble he takes to make himself look pretty. Shall we wait for him? He's pencilling his eyebrows about now."

"Foul caitiff, thou liest in thy currish throat!" said Thurston's merry voice. "I was writing up the log!"

"All right, sonny, I beg your pudden. You've just arrived in time. Arrah! Barry, me broth of a bhoy, sure ut's meself that's proud to see yez this swate, sunny mornin'. Oi'd loike yez betther av yez had lift yer face at home. Will, will! Phwat a smoilin, happy face ut is, all over lumps, and dirrt, and whiskers! Luk at ut, Gan! Phwat does ut make yez faal yez want to do?"

"Jumps on its, Chingy!" said Gan-Waga gently.

"And Oi'd loike to break coals wid your'n!" said O'Rooney, filling his pipe. "By natur' Oi'm a peaceful man, a quiet, gentle gossoon; but whin that horrid face Oi see, a dreadful longin' creeps o'er me to grab a hatchet-handle and chop ut into chips."

After this beautiful specimen of poetic genius, Barry O'Rooney slung a rifle across his back and entered the launch.

Prout sent the little vessel dancing out of the bay. Rows of palms lined the shore, their feathery tops shaking in the fresh breeze.

A heavy surf broke white against the rocks with a hissing roar. Rather a heavy sea was running, but the buoyant launch breasted the waves gallantly.

"I see no chance of landing on this side," said Thurston. "We shall have to get under her lee to do it."

"Unless we find an inlet. Isn't that a break in the surf, Prout?"

The steersman shaded his eyes with a big, bony hand.

"So it is, sir," he answered; "but, by hokey, it's boilin' like a pot on a fire, and mighty narrow. Tain't worth riskin' her ribs, sir."

As they came close they saw that the landing was too perilous. Clusters of jutting rocks guarded the shore like iron spikes.

The island was well wooded, and myriads of wildfowl swept along under the cliffs or wheeled above them.

"A jolly nice crib for a little shooting. Ru!" said Ching-Lung. "I wish I had brought my little bow-and-arrow. Keep her out, Tommy, or you'll knock a dent in her. This

is rather a sweet spot to navigate in a fog, I guess. It wouldn't take long to navigate to the bottom. Mind your eye!"

A wave broke over the bows, giving Barry a tremendous drenching. He caught every drop of it, and for his act of kindness Ching-Lung, who sat behind him, thanked him gratefully.

"Nots want umbrellers—hunk?" chuckled Gan-Waga. "Barry Roonatickies butterful ones—hunk, Chingy?"

"As good as one with an eighteen-carat gold knob and pearl ribs!" laughed the prince. "And he did it all for me. How can I thank you, Barry, for this token of affection? Shall I buy you a row of houses? You can have anything you like to name—if you'll pay for it. Why this sadness on your brow?"

"It is not a sadnesses, Chingy; it water on de brain! Ho, ho, hoo! Water on de brainses, Chingy!" giggled Gan-Waga. "Gotted him again, Ho, ho, hoo!"

Barry O'Rooney fixed a wrathful and damp eye upon the tittering Eskimo.

"O'll tell yez phwat," he growled, "a dog as ain't got a licence took out for ut oughtn't to bark. Silence, Pongo! Loie down!"

The launch was battling with a powerful southerly current. She ran clear of it, and rounded a point of rock. Once under the lee of the island they noticed little surf, but it was half an hour before they sighted an opening.

"By hokey, it's nearly as hard as looking for work," remarked Prout, "and that's a fact."

"Did yez ever look for wurrk widout havin' both oies shut, Tommy?" inquired Barry. "Spake the truth, bedad! Did yez now, honestly?"

"And when he found it the sight struck him stone-blind!" said Ching-Lung. "My word, this is nearly as pretty as your garden under the sea, Lord! There may be a dragon in it, all the same," he added, drawing his revolver. "I'll look after the dragon!"

They crept in cautiously. The water was deep, but wonderfully clear. Flowering plants and ferns grew to the very edge of the little, sunlit bay, and the silvery music of a hidden cascade was heard. A few basking seals, startled out of their slumbers by the thrash of the screw, hurled themselves down, sending up the jewelled spray.

"Easy, Prout!"

Peaceful as it seemed, foes might be hiding there in ambush.

"Safe enough, I think," said Ferrers Lord. "Now, my boy!"

Seizing a line, Ching-Lung bounded ashore, and stooped down to make it fast to a convenient branch. At that instant the horned and bearded head of an enormous goat rose above a natural hedge of wildflowers.

"Bedad, there's your papa, blubberbiter—" began Barry O'Rooney.

Thurston shouted a warning, but it did not come quite in time. With a fierce, resentful bleat, the goat hurled itself across the narrow strip of sand. It struck his Highness with the force of a battering-ram. The chilly salt water drowned Ching-Lung's yell as he took an involuntary dive.

Fortunately, Ching-Lung had put up his revolver, or he would have lost it.

Barry O'Rooney, Prout, Gan-Waga, and Thurston shrieked with mirth. The hoary old goat stood his ground and bleated defiance.

When Ching-Lung rose and saw his assailant, he joined in the merriment.

"Let me see that soight again, and O'll die widout a kick!" grinned Barry. "Pwhat a goat for a poor ould Oirish tinant to own whin the landlord calls for the rint! Arrah! Phwat a purty pet! Did yez see ut, Tommy?"

"Ho, ho, ho, ho, ho-o-o!" roared Gan.

"By hokey, don't speak to me while I'm smilin'!" said Prout, wiping the tears from his eyes. "He, he, he, he! Ha, ha, ha, ha! Are you hurt, sir?"

Ching-Lung hung on to the rope and chuckled.

"I thought a stray earthquake had hit me," he said. "That's the way—keep on laughing. I'll bet you a box of cigars, Tommy, you daren't go ashore and ask him what time it is—without a gun, I mean. I wouldn't have the plucky brute shot for money!"

The fearless goat, shaking its beard and tossing its horns, challenged them to battle. Prout looked at it, but did not fall in love with it.

"You're afraid of me, you silly weevil!" howled the goat. "Come and let me knock the stuffing out of you! Come and win those cigars, if you can! Ba-a-a! Chuck it overboard! I've eaten better men than that before breakfast! Ba-a-a! What-ho! What made you turn so pale, Shiny-top? Ba-a-a-a! Don't be tremble!"

Ching-Lung's clever ventriloquism caused howls of laughter.

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Every Wednesday.

"By hokey!" said the steersman, spitting on his hands. "I never was scared of a miserable billy-goat! I can fancy myself smokin' them cigars!"

"Be quick about it, then," said Ferrers Lord, highly amused.

"Minds he don't tickler yo', Tommy," tittered Gan.

"Troth, that goat'll niver as much as bark at him," said Barry. "When ut sees his face ut'll put ut's arms round Tom's neck and croy wid joy. Luk at the loikeness between their faces. Oi tell yez they're brothers at laste. Hark! He's callin' Tommy, as plain as plain can be."

"Ba-a-a-ah! Come and kiss your pretty uncle, Tommy!" cried the goat.

Prout pulled the launch closer, and jumped. The goat spun round and eyed him wrathfully as he backed away. Prout bent, and braced himself to meet the charge.

"Plaze may Oi have your diamond toothbrush av he kills yez, Tommy?" called the Irishman.

Then the goat sprang forward like a hairy whirlwind, and the brawny steersman reeled. One huge hand caught the creature by the beard, and the other grasped a horn.

Prout had a giant's strength, and he needed it. Man and beast writhed and swayed. It was no ordinary goat, but a king of its race, and the season of the year had rendered it savage.

For a couple of minutes neither gained an inch or yielded. Suddenly Prout sank lower, until one knee touched the ground.

"That's one to me, by hokey!" he panted.

The goat rose into the air, spun over, and thudded down on its side. Both the steersman's knees sank into its ribs. Prout leapt up, and the goat struggled to its feet. Prout gave it a kick, and, with a doleful bleat, the sickest and most astounded animal that ever wore horns on its head and a beard under its chin limped mournfully away, and vanished, still bleating.

"Bravo, Tommy!" shrieked Thurston. "Well played, sir!"

"It's not the first time he's played the goat," said Ching-Lung. "Was that the Græco-Roman style, Prouty, or the Roman candle-greece style? What about my cigars? Did he win, or was it a draw?"

"Oi reckon he'll draw the cigars," said Barry. "Dear, dear, dear! Oi niver thought Tom was so harrd-hearted. Fancy him knockin' his poor old Uncle Billy about loike that! Faith, Thomas, yez'll come to a bad and bitter end—a rope's end, Oi sadly fear. Come ashore."

Prout, deeply to his regret, was left to take care of the launch. The others loaded their rifles, and Tom remained to smoke and grumble over his bad luck.

A winding path, trodden bare by the hoofs of goats, led upwards. The ground above was covered thinly with heather and moss.

"What about questioning the natives, Lord?" said Ching-Lung. "It strikes me forcibly that we'll have to catch one first."

"That ought not to be difficult. They must have a village somewhere. Trust to luck."

"And lose every time. No, thanks. I've tried that before. Trusting to luck has cost me a box of cigars already. Mark over! Twig that hare?"

Pussy escaped, for nobody carried a shot-gun. Then Gan-Waga almost fell over a fat sow that was snoozing in a hollow. Gan started in chase of the pig, but was quickly left in the rear. The sow, though fat, was very nimble.

"A man who chases his old grandmother is no gentleman!" said Barry. "Shame on yez, Gan-Waga, for a soulless haythin to do ut! Whoy cudn't yez let the poor lady slape in pace? Ut was unkind and unfilial."

"What unfilial? Not know him," said Gan. "Is it good to eat?"

"Unfilial," said Barry, scratching his head, "manes—manes— Whoy, any born idiot knows that!"

"Mo don'ts—yo' do," said Gan. "Ho, ho, hoo! Did I gotted him agains, Chingy? Him know unfilial—me nots. Ole Roonalies born nidgets—me nots. Oh, butterfuls good 'nough. I eats some cangle after dats. Oh, ho, ho, ho! Oh, lovelyful! Oh, butterfulness! I gotted de silly-silly! What unfiliale, Chingy?"

"At the risk of being called a born idiot, I will explain, my oily sweetheart. If you don't treat you pa and ma and grandpa, and such, properly, you are an unfilial person. There it is in a nutshell. I dare say it's even in Barry's nut now."

"Goods mind to crack his nut and see!" murmured Gan-Waga. "Whoo! Dere a niggers! Wow-ow-ow-ow! Stop de trams! Hoo-oo-oo!"

The man had emerged from a little coppice of stunted trees. Gan's musical voice did not soothe the terrors of his savage breast at all. He bolted into the trees again, like a rabbit.

"Spread out and get round him," said the millionaire. "And kindly be quiet, Gan-Waga!"

"Open that cavern mouth wance more the width of a knife-blade and O'll brain yez wid me rifle!" said Barry O'Rooney. "Sure, your howlin' has burst both me eardrums to smithereens! Soillence, oiciele—soillence!"

The coppice was scarcely thirty feet in diameter, and, therefore, the native could not possibly have escaped from it, for the ground about it was perfectly bare for a considerable distance.

Ferrers Lord called out something in a tongue unfamiliar to the others. There was no reply.

"He most rudes man," said Gan-Waga. "Why not spokes when him speaken to, Chingy?"

"Oh, silly little Eskimo," answered the prince, "there's a lot of stuff you'll never know! That rhymes, but it was accidental. He's not rude; he's most polite. It's rude to speak without being introduced. Twiggy-vous? That's why he won't spoke when he's speaken to, as you put it."

"Perhaps he doesn't understand you, Lord," ventured Thurston.

"Perhaps he's deaf," answered Ferrers Lord, with an impatient shrug of his shoulders. "Perhaps he's dead. Well, if the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain. Watch that he does not bolt!"

"You're not going in there, old man?" Rupert said anxiously. "There may be more of them than one."

"All the better. Lie out a little further, there, but don't shoot!"

Revolver in hand, he parted the bushes. The leaves and branches were not nearly as thick as he expected to find them. His eyes roved up and down through the gnarled and twisted stems, but vainly. Then a hand grasped his coat.

"You needn't go in there," whispered Ching-Lung. "I'll fetch him out, if he's not as deaf as a codfish. S'sh! See that tree with the creeper round it?"

Ferrers Lord glanced up into the branches of one of the tallest trees. The leaves were quivering suspiciously. A second glance revealed a naked foot. The native had taken refuge there.

"S-s-s-s-s!"

Ching-Lung imitated the hissing of an angry snake, throwing the sound—the most bloodcurdling sound of all to man and beast—into the very heart of the branches. A human body fell in a ball to the ground, and rolled clear of the tree, as if to avoid the snake's deadly spring. Then a tall, well-built savage pulled himself on hands and knees and gazed upwards with rolling eyeballs.

"S-s-s-s-s-s-s-s!" came the sibilant hiss close behind him.

The man could not have left the wood much more quickly had he been fired out of a catapult. He stopped, with a loud yell, and flung up his naked arms, as he saw two rifles levelled at his head. A moment later Ferrers Lord and the prince stepped out behind him.

"Yez bolted him foine, sorr," said Barry, saluting.

"Oh, no, we didn't!" laughed Ching-Lung. "A little snake wagged its tail at him, and he remembered he'd forgotten to pay his tailor's bill, so he was running home to do it. It was a lovely snake, too—just like me."

"Bedad, thin Oi hope yez killed ut!" said Barry wildly. "Tell me yez killed ut, and O'll luv yez for iver! Oi couldn't bear to think there were two loike yez in the world! The joy wud break my poor, tender heart!"

"Oi'll break your poor, tender neck if I have any more of your sauce!" remarked his Highness. "Put down that gun, Baritone, for he doesn't shape much like bolting!"

"How eud he, av he's seen two loike that, Gan?" murmured the irrepressible Irishman. "The wondher is he ain't a stiff, cowl'd, blackleaded corpse!"

"Me tinks sameses for onces Roonatics!" chuckled Gan-Waga. "Bad 'nough shock to kill him twice, hunk!"

The savage remained motionless, with hanging head. The millionaire spoke in a gentle tone. This time he received a short reply. Then the man seemed to recover from his fright. He spoke more freely, and gesticulated with his hands.

"They're going along like a little motor-car!" said Ching-Lung. "Isn't it a tuneful language, Ru? What does it remind you of?"

"Throwing slates off a roof into a greenhouse."

"M'yes! It is a little like that, only more so!" remarked his Highness, mysteriously producing a lighted cigar from Gan-Waga's right ear. "You could strike matches on it, couldn't you? It's enough to make you run away and be a soldier!"

"Come, lads!" said Ferrers Lord.

"Whither away, fair sir?"

"To the village."

Ching-Lung ran his hands down the legs of his trousers to squeeze out the water, and winked sily at O'Rooney.

"Ask him one question before we start," he said. "It's most important to me. Ask him—oh, ask him nicely—if they've got a mangle at home!"

Left Alone—The Phantom Island.

The one, only, and original Thomas Prout, steersman of the submarine vessel *Lord of the Deep*, had plenty of muscle, **THE MAGNET LIBRARY—No. 285.**

NEXT MONDAY,

"THE SPORTS OF THE SCHOOL!"

EVERY MONDAY,

The "Magnet" LIBRARY.

ONE PENNY.

and also a good deal of brains. The easiest way to kill time until the return of his companions, and the pleasantest way, was to go to sleep. To go to sleep there, Prout thought, might have meant a rude awakening, with a few inches of spear-head in his ribs—or no awakening at all.

Prout backed the launch out, but still he grumbled as fathom after fathom of cable ran out over the bow.

"By hokey, is there any bottom at all?" he growled, watching the flight of the rope. "It'll take me a month to haul this mud-hook up. Hallo! She bumps at last, wi' enough line on her to reach to the North Pole!"

The launch settled to her cable, and, like a good seaman, Prout tested the grip of the anchor with a pull. Then he lay down and blinked at the wreaths of smoke that rose from his pipe.

"This is comfortable, anyhow, by hokey," he mused, "if it ain't excitin'! There's no bed so easy as a boat, to my mind. It rocks you like a cradle, by hokey, and it's as safe as a bank. Nothin' ever comes to disturb—Ow! What the—By ho—Wha—Ouch!"

Something loathsomely wet struck the steersman violently on the face, knocking the pipe from his mouth and bringing his head in violent contact with the hard edge of a thwart. It was only a hard-pressed flying-fish, that had come aboard to escape some voracious pursuer.

"Phew!" whistled the steersman, rubbing his head. "I thought you was Davy Jones making call. Get out, and when you want to come aboard this ere craft another time, give a hail first, d'ye see? You'll get hurt one day for shovin' your nose into other folk's business. Take this as a last warning, by hokey, and don't do it!"

This little incident seemed to shake off Prout's fit of drowsiness. He refilled his pipe, and gazed aimlessly around him. He lay about a furlong outside the bay; the air was soft and warm, and the vivid light showed up every fissure of the cliffs in bold relief.

He was staring aimlessly to the north-west, when a sudden change of weather caught his trained eye.

The horizon, clearly marked a few minutes before, was now blotted out.

"Mist comin' down," thought the steersman. "By hokey that's funny. Who ever seed a mist running along in the wind's-eye? 'Tain't the smoke of a steamer, or I'd see the vessel. What a rummy sort of sky!"

Then Prout sprang erect, as if galvanised. His mouth opened wide in mute amazement. The dull grey mass that had so suddenly and mysteriously shut out the horizon split asunder and rolled aside.

"By hokey!" panted the steersman. "What's that, in the name of thunder?"

Prout had nerves of iron, and nothing that he understood could frighten him. What he saw now he could not understand, and a quick chill ran through him. He caught his breath sharply.

Within a league of him he saw an island, bright sunshine pouring down upon its hills and cliffs. It was of a pallid, ghastly grey, ghostly and terrible, and blotched with ugly yellow and faded blue. There were trees upon it—skeleton, leafless trees—but no green verdure or rich browns. It was a spectral land—a land that might well be peopled by lost souls and demons. A sensation of repulsion and horror crept over the sturdy sailor, but a power that he could not master fastened his eyes upon the nightmare vision. He could not look away.

Like a curtain the mist fell, and the hideous thing was gone!

(A Splendid, Long Instalment of this Grand Serial Story again in next Monday's "Magnet" Library. Order in advance. Price One Penny.)

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My Readers' Page

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FOR NEXT MONDAY:

"THE SPORTS OF THE SCHOOL!"

By Frank Richards.

In our next splendid, long, complete tale of the chums of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, Peter Todd & Co. come out very strong. The announcement of some pony races, to be held in connection with a local bazaar, arouses the keenest interest, and the Greyfriars juniors determine to put up a good team against Ponsonby, Vavasour & Co., of Highcliffe, who are also entering a team. Coker, of the Fifth, also enters, having a great idea of his own powers of horsemanship; but, as usual, Coker does not distinguish himself. Peter Todd & Co. make a good show, the premier honours being carried off by Tom Dutton, the deaf junior. Altogether

"THE SPORTS OF THE SCHOOL!"

is a rattling good school yarn, and one that I recommend every Magnetite to pass on, when finished with, to his—or her—chum.

BY REQUEST!

Every reader of the invincible trio of companion papers, "The Magnet" and "Gem" Libraries and "The Penny Popular," should make a point of going in for the great

"Poplets" Competition

now running in the last-mentioned paper. This latest new competition is both easy and interesting, while the most scrupulous care is used in selecting the winners. Everyone has an equal chance, and there is no entrance fee whatever.

A number of splendid

CASH PRIZES

are being won every week by readers of "The Penny Popular." The latest list of prize-winners will be found on page 2 of the cover of this issue of "The Magnet" Library. "Poplets" is becoming quite a craze now with "Penny Pop." readers. You have only to try your hand at this grand competition to discover how intensely fascinating it is. Now, I am going to make a personal appeal to all my readers who have not, so far, tried this wonderful competition, to get a copy of "The Penny Popular" to-day, and have a go at "Poplets!"

Will you all do this, as a special favour to your Editor?

THE ART OF SWIMMING.

By a Sergeant-Instructor.

Every boy and girl, no matter what position they occupy in life, should learn to swim. So necessary, indeed, is this useful accomplishment that for the past twenty years the military and naval authorities of practically every country in the world have insisted on the soldiers and sailors becoming proficient in this art.

The lives of thousands of people have been saved by the fact of their being able to swim; and we all know that thousands of lives have been lost because people did not go to the trouble of learning to conquer the waves—for the swimmer is master of the waves on which he keeps afloat.

To learn to swim is the easiest thing in the world—provided one goes about it in the proper way. Many people actually end their own lives by their useless, frantic struggles in the water; for swimming is a gentle art, the least move of a hand or foot being enough to keep one afloat.

First Exercise.—The "breast stroke" is the most natural, and therefore the easiest to learn. It consists of an effort to keep afloat by bringing both hands to the breast, and then throwing them out in a circular fashion, until the hands are fully extended on each side of the body. In forcing the hands through the water, the thumbs should be downwards—that is, towards the bottom of the swimming-bath. This has the effect of propelling the body forward; the resistance of the water to the backward stroke sends the body forward. Keep the fingers close together. You will thus give greater force to the stroke, as the water cannot pass through.

At the same time that you throw the arms apart in the above stroke, draw up the legs towards the body. Then both arms and legs must be extended at the same moment. You will find that you are inclined to go very fast. This is a mistake. Slow and even strokes will keep you afloat. Hurried and frantic efforts will swamp your head, and send you to the bottom.

You will go under a few times before you learn to swim. Do not allow this to frighten you. It will only accustom you to hold your breath when you come to learn the art of diving.

Have confidence in yourself. If you fear the water, you will never learn to conquer it.

Do not venture into deep water before you are a good and confident swimmer. The best and safest place in which to learn to swim is one of the many public swimming-baths now found in every town or city. The depth of the water is shown upon the scale fixed in a prominent place. You can learn to swim in three feet of water as well as you could in thirty.

A safe way in which to venture into the water is: Get a pair of "water wings"—you all have seen them—and fix them so that they hold your body up at the shoulders. Then you will find that you can practise the breast stroke without the least danger of sinking, or even ducking your head.

Once you have a knowledge of the breast stroke, all other kinds of strokes come by practice. You can float very easily if you simply hold your arms by your side, and use the hands with the palms down to paddle you on.

Diving.—This is a dangerous practice in the learning. Never venture a long dive until you are perfectly able to master a short one. Very high diving should be avoided; it tends to no good end, and may very easily lead to a bad end; for if the body strikes the water flatly, the result is often serious.

Stand at the deep end of the swimming-bath, and with your eye mark the spot you intend to dive at. This spot should be only a few feet from the brink. If you attempt to go out further than your own height, the result will be a flat fall upon the surface of the water, and great pain and injury to yourself. Make your hands pierce the water by holding them, fingers together, above your head. Then make a curved dive. Keep your mouth shut when under water, and come up at once when you find that you are feeling the strain.

Do not dive against time. Let the other fellow do all the swank diving. Indeed, diving, except for the purpose of training one to search under water, is of very little use as an art. Keep above the water. If you can do that, then you will have a lot more fun than the fellow who half drowns himself for mere show.

When you have once learned to take a simple dive, and do your hundred yards without feeling any fatigue, you may attempt greater feats; but I warn you not to go beyond your depth until you are perfectly confident of your powers as a swimmer.

The Editor

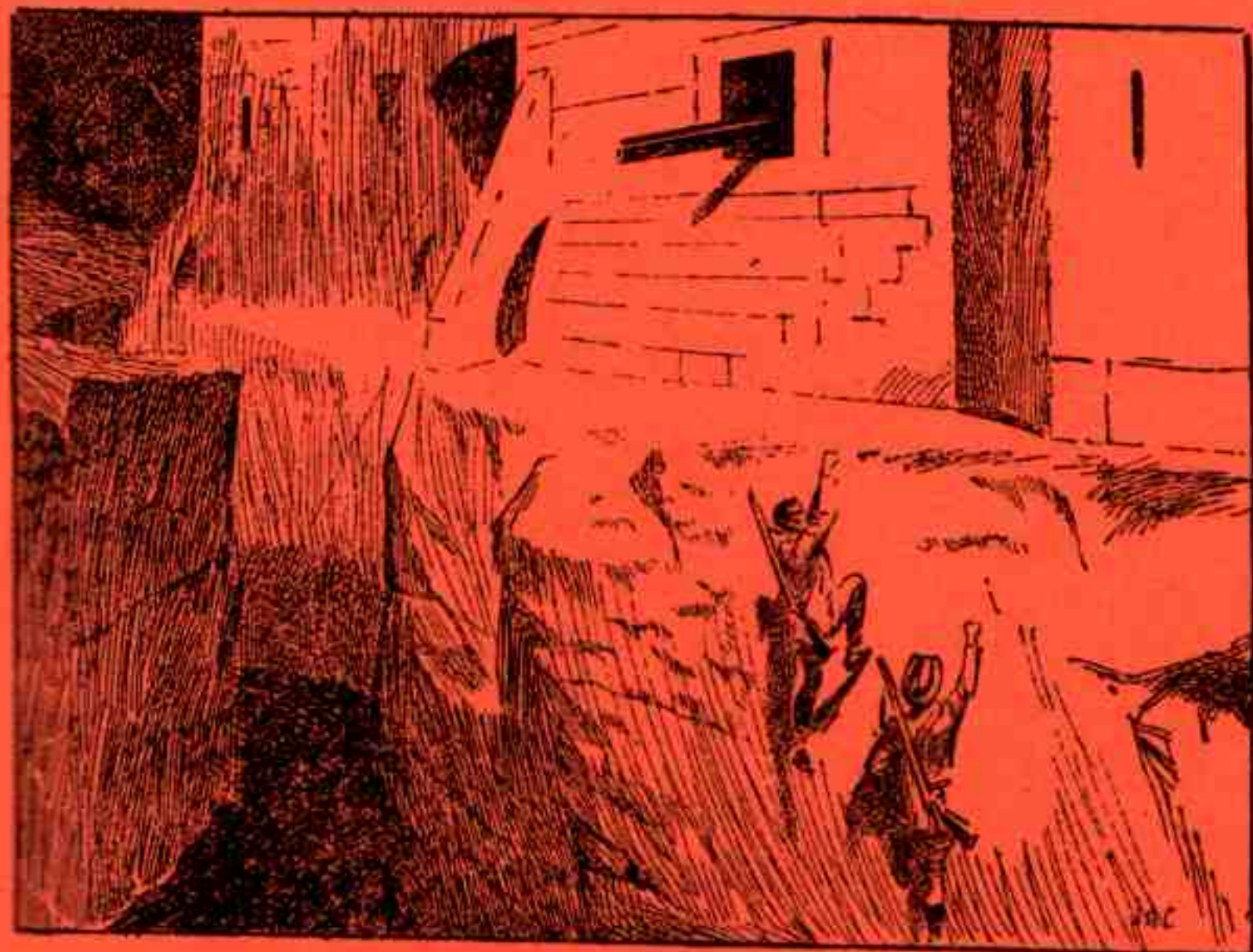
READ THIS STORY IN "THE PENNY POPULAR."

It is one of the three grand long, complete stories which every issue of our splendid companion paper contains. Ask your newsagent for THE PENNY POPULAR to-day. Now on sale everywhere.

BAJA THE SPY!

A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale Dealing with the
Wonderful Adventures of Jack, Sam, and Pete.

By S. CLARKE HOOK.



Careless of their peril, the two daring men climbed up the face of the rock and gained the fortress.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Mysterious Ring—Drugged!—Baja the Spy.

WELL, Pete," exclaimed Sam Grant, as he stretched his tired limbs amongst the giant ferns in the heart of the Venezuelan forest, "what do you think of this country?"

"Golly!" cried the negro. "It don't bear tinkering ob, Sammy. It 'ud need all Jack Owen's eloquence to condemn him sufficiently."

"Look here, Pete," laughed Jack, lighting his pipe, "that is libellous. It gives a wrong impression. Besides, what could be more beautiful than this?"

"Duck and green peas."

"Could anything be grander than those mighty trees, and—"

"Rump-steak wid new potatoes."

"You are evidently not poetical."

"Dat's so. But dis child am mighty hungry."

"Look at that gigantic creeper. It's at least a hundred feet."

"What, dat one creeping up Sammy's back? 'Spect he's got a hundred feet, 'cos he am a centipede."

"Here, take it off, you silly coon!" cried Sam. "Those things bite in this country."

"Golly!" exclaimed Pete, slipping a thistleburr down the back of Sam's hunting-shirt. "De little debil hab disappeared now!"

"Hellup!" roared Sam. "He's disappeared down the back of my neck, and he's biting like angry bulldogs!"

"Keep still, Sammy. I'll soon settle his hash. Take dat, Massa Centipede!"

And Pete gave Sam a slap on the back that made him yell and leap into the air, for it drove the business ends of that thistle well home.

"Neber mind, Sammy; 'spect dat was de little joker's last bite."

"You bet I'll bite him again!" came a squeaky voice, apparently from Sam's back.

Then, knowing Pete's wonderful ventriloquial powers, he guessed he had been the victim of one of his practical jokes. Wishing up the bufr, he gazed at it in a manner that made Jack roar with laughter.

"I reckon I know where that came from," growled Sam.

"'Spect he dropped from dat tree, Sammy."

"Maybe—though it's the first time I ever knew thistles to grow on mahogany trees. All right, my beautiful blackbird; jest you wait till my turn comes!"

"Yah, yah, yah! Did he bite you, Sammy?"

"Just a few, you stupid coon! I wish you'd play some of your nigger tricks on Jack. Now, jest collect some wood, and light a fire."

"Dere's no good in dat, Sammy. We hab got noting to cook. Plenty hot enough widout a fire."

"Why, so it is, mate. But night is coming on—bother that centipede!—and there are wild beasts in this forest. However, we'll chance it. They can't be so dangerous as niggers."

The gloom beneath the enormous trees quickly changed to the darkness of night. Then the howling of the beasts of prey commenced, but these were sounds that the comrades were well accustomed to.

"It is strange how one becomes accustomed to this wild life," exclaimed Jack.

"Not getting tired of it, I hope, mate?"

"Not I, Sam! It has a wonderful fascination for me. Perhaps that is because our wanderings have brought us untold wealth? No. Give me the wild, free life of a hunter and explorer. What could be more enjoyable than a meal cooked over a camp-fire after a hard—"

"Roast pheasant an' bread-sauce!" growled Pete, who was getting sleepy.

"Fried fish an' fricasseed frogs, wid dollops ob oyster-sauce. Ringbone-hoss soup, flavoured wid de hoofs."

"You dirty nigger!" gasped Sam.

"Groo!" snored Pete. "Groo-ah!"

"Well, he's safest asleep," exclaimed Sam. "The silly coon has made my back feel as if I'd been lying on stinging-nettles."

For half an hour or so they remained chatting; then they were surprised to see a flickering light among the undergrowth. With some difficulty Pete was aroused, and they proceeded cautiously towards the spot.

"It's a camp-fire," murmured Sam. "Follow me, without the slightest sound."

"Aytishoo!" sneezed Pete, and you might have heard it a quarter of a mile away. "Golly! Hope no one—aytishoo!—heard dat. 'Spect dat centipede—aytishoo!—hab got up dis child's snout."

"Well, I'm blowed!" growled Sam, as the man who had been seated by the camp-fire leapt to his feet and levelled his rifle at Sam's breast.

He was very young, with a bronzed, handsome face, and dark, brilliant eyes. He was at least six feet in height, and his figure was beautifully proportioned.

"Don't draw, mate," said Sam, pointing his rifle to the ground. "We are not foes."

"Then you are English?"

"Well, English, American, and negro."

"Pardon me," exclaimed the stranger lowering his weapon, "but so many in this part seek my life that it makes me doubt all men."

His voice was musical, with a slight foreign accent.

"At any rate, we are not likely to be enemies," said Jack.

"Still, you might hand me over to Venezuelan 'justice' did you know a heavy price was placed upon my head."

"Not for all the gold in this country, provided no great crime lay at your door. And you do not look like a man to have committed such."

"I have wronged no man knowingly, but have risked fortune and life to help the helpless. We may never meet again; it is better for you that we never should, because even to speak to me means death, or worse than death, to you."

(Continued overleaf.)

"Reckon we can look after ourselves, stranger," said Sam.

"Might I ask a favour of you?" inquired the young man.

"Certainly," answered Jack.

"Are you travelling southwards?"

"Yes."

"Forty miles south of this is a river. Along its bank is a woodman's hut. I was on my way there, but would save the time. The owner of this hut is Santos. Give him this ring. Say Enrique sent it. He will understand. Adios!"

"Here, stranger, jest you stop a bit!" cried Sam, for the young man had pushed his way through the undergrowth without waiting for a reply, and, though he must have heard Sam's shout, he did not return.

Jack examined the ring which Enrique had placed in his hand. It was a plain band of gold, with "Reno" engraved upon it.

"He seems to have a good deal of confidence in the honesty of strangers," exclaimed Jack. "This gold might tempt some—that is to say, if it is gold."

"It's gold right enough, mate," said Sam, examining it by the firelight. "And I suppose we will have to deliver it. But I, for one, don't much care for the job. There's too much mystery about it."

"It's a pretty cool piece of business!" exclaimed Jack. "Our unknown acquaintance is cunning. Of course, we must deliver the ring, seeing it is of value. However, I don't suppose there is any harm in it. Perhaps it's some love-token. We will deliver it."

"I reckon there's no alternative," answered Sam. "But we won't hurry over the job. Lie down, you two. I'll keep watch."

The following morning, after breakfast—which Sam's rifle provided—they continued their journey. As they travelled through the forest that day their progress was necessarily slow, and it was not until the evening of the following day that they came in sight of the little hut.

It stood on the bank of a broad river, and the surrounding ground for some distance had been cleared of trees.

Sam opened the door without knocking, and a small, wiry-looking man, with particularly keen eyes, sprang to his feet, and levelled a revolver at Sam.

"Don't get excited, mate. We are friends," said Sam. "At least, we ain't foes. We have a message for you, if your name is Santos."

"Pardon, gentlemen!" he exclaimed. "A mistake I commit. Easy it is to mistake friends and foes in these bad times. Yes, my name is Santos. You bring from the great Reno a message? Be seated, my friends. See, two stools and a box must serve."

"A man named Enrique handed us this ring to give to you," said Jack, placing the ring in Santos' hand.

"Ah! How to thank you I know not!" he exclaimed. "Pardon a minute."

He went to the inner room, and returned with a bottle of spirit and four small tin mugs, and, having mixed some of the spirit with water, invited them to drink.

"Here's luck, old boss!" exclaimed Pete, taking his at a draught.

Jack and Sam drank more cautiously; but, finding the stuff palatable, they drained their mugs.

"Shall I bring food to you, gentlemen?" inquired their host.

"I reckon we could do with some," answered Sam.

"Good! I will draw the bolt. One never knows who may enter."

Having fastened the door, he entered the inner room.

"Golly!" exclaimed Pete, gazing round the place. "Dere's someting mighty strong about dat spirit, else dis child am mortal sleepy."

Jack rose to his feet, and staggered to the door. It was not only bolted, but locked, and the key had been taken away.

Now the inner door was shut, and they heard the bolts shot.

"The scoundrel has poisoned us!" gasped Sam, reeling across the room towards the inner door, though he fell before he reached it.

Jack remembered nothing after this, and when they regained consciousness their limbs were securely bound, while their host watched them with an evil smile, as he smoked his cigarette.

"Everyone I like to think well of me," he said. "Therefore explanations are necessary. I am Baja the spy, in the employ of Colonel Paulo Verguenza. It is good. I am not Santos. He lies beside you. See? I have dragged his cuerpo

—er, corpse, I think you call it?—into the room. In the exercise of my office I had to shoot him. It is sad, but a man must do his duty. Colonel Verguenza offered me twenty men to come here. No; I take none. Baja the spy does his work alone. Fame is the object. Shall I not have fame in taking four strong men to Colonel Verguenza? I think it. Had you noticed I drank not with you? But then, you are not clever. I am clever. You know it. Many things have you to say. You shall say all to Colonel Verguenza."

"It is useless answering the ruffian," said Jack. "We shall be able to explain our position to this precious colonel."

"Never thought Sam Grant was such a fool," growled Sam.

"The corpse I take first," exclaimed Baja, rising. "That proves my bravery. You will prove my ability as a spy."

He seized his victim's lifeless form and dragged it from the hut. While he was absent the comrades wrenched fiercely at their bonds. But Baja the spy had done his vile work too securely.

"See, Massa Baja," exclaimed Pete, when the little ruffian re-entered the hut, "dis child don't want to act anyting but right. Dose white men want binding. Serbe dem right! Always ill-treating a poor nigger. Just you set me free and I'll help carry de brutes."

"What a scoundrel you are, Pete!" cried Jack, in the faint hope that Baja would swallow the bait.

"I am amused," said Baja. "Many thanks for your help, my simple nigger! With thanks it is declined. You shall come next."

He flung a lasso round Pete's legs, taking particular care not to get within reach of them; then dragged him to the river, where a boat was moored.

With some difficulty, because of Pete's struggles, he got him into the boat. Then he brought the other two. But before he got Jack into the boat, Baja was kicked into the water.

For a long distance the spy rowed with the tide.

It was nearly midnight when they came in sight of a town, and on the river-bank appeared a large stone building, which looked like an ancient fortress.

"You are now in Verena," observed Baja. "Soon you vill be in another world altogether. But first you vill suffer. Oh, yes, you have much suffering to bear!"

"Guess you'll hab de same if dis child eber gets at you," said Pete.

Rowing up a narrow archway which appeared in the wall of the fortress, Baja made the boat fast to a flight of stone steps; then, unlocking a heavy iron door, he shouted to some soldiers, who bore the captives and the lifeless body into a vault.

Here Baja kept watch, and presently a tall man, with a very evil face, entered the dungeon.

"Colonel Verguenza!" exclaimed Baja, speaking in English. "You ordered me to keep watch on Santos and bring him to you. He is there. To shoot him was necessary. But the three other ruffians, bringing this ring as a message from Reno, I have captured alive. It would appear Enrique gave them the ring. You will know how to question them."

"Baja, you have done magnificently! Rest assured the service you have rendered your country shall be recompensed. Your wisdom and bravery are splendid. To capture those three rebels single-handed! Ah, it is superb!"

"He drugged us!" said Sam. "As for being rebels, we know nothing about it. We were——"

"Let them be taken to the torture chamber!" ordered Verguenza. "It is the only way to learn the truth from such villains."

"And Santos, Colonel?" inquired Baja.

"Let him be buried. It does not matter your having shot him, at all. In fact, it is rather a good thing. Take them away, men. I will come and question them."

The helpless captives were dragged into another dungeon, where various instruments of torture appeared.

How Jack, Sam, and Pete are put to the torture, and how Pete subsequently gets his own back upon his ruffianly tormentors, is the subject of S. Clarke Hook's interesting and exciting adventure tale, entitled "Baja the Spy." In addition to this splendid story, the current issue of "The Penny Popular" contains: "Tom Merry's Test," a grand school tale of the Chums of St. Jim's, by Martin Clifford; and "Counterfeit Coin," a magnificent complete tale of Sexton Blake, Tinker, and Pedro, on the track of the coiners. Get this great number of "The Penny Popular" to-day!