

THE SCHOOLBOY LAWYER

A Magnificent Long Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By Frank Richards.



FISHER T. FISH IN THE STOCKS!

(An amusing scene in the splendid complete school tale in this issue.)

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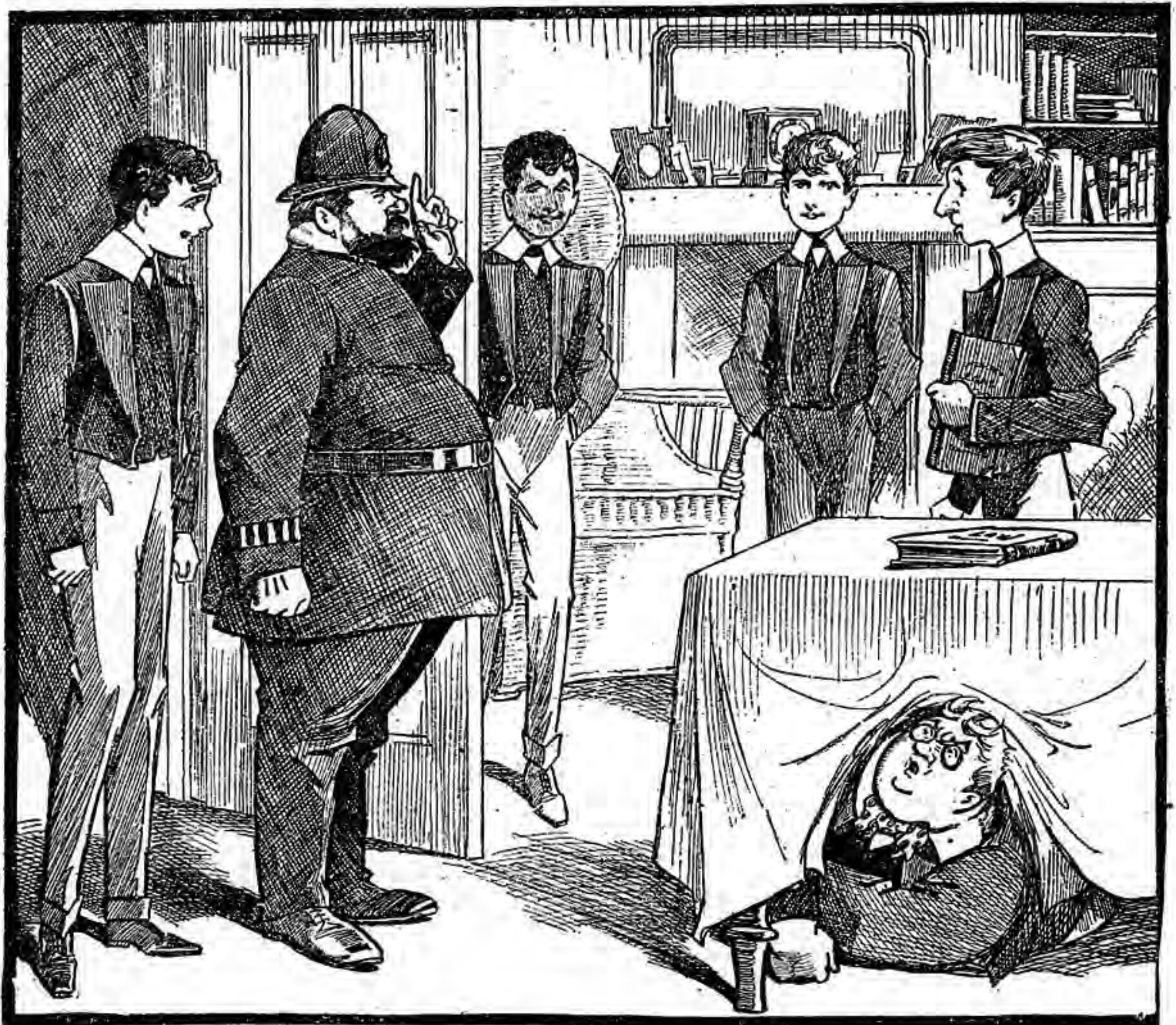


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hand this book, when
finished with, to a
friend.

THE SCHOOLBOY LAWYER!

A New, Long, Complete Tale of Harry Wharton & Co
at Greyfriars School.

By FRANK RICHARDS.



Billy Bunter gave a howl of terror, and dived under the table. "I'm wanted 'ere, young gents?" asked the constable, touching his helmet. (See Chapter 3.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER. Shell Out!

"**H**OW much from you, Wharton?"
Harry Wharton & Co., of the Greyfriars
Remove, were chatting in the passage, after
morning lessons, when Billy Bunter bore down
upon them. The Famous Five were discussing their

plans for the afternoon, which was a half-holiday. Billy
Bunter's question interrupted the discussion.

Bunter had a notebook in one fat hand, and a stump
of pencil in the other fat hand. And he had an ex-
pression of the most important seriousness upon his fat
face. He blinked inquiringly at Wharton through his
big spectacles, and wetted the stump of pencil.

"How much what?" asked Wharton, in some surprise. Bunter sniffed.

"Money, of course. What do you think I'm asking you for?"

"Well, I might have guessed it was cash you were after," said Wharton, laughing. "Did you say how much?"

"Yes, I did."

"You want to know the exact amount?"

"Certainly."

"Well, nix."

"Eh?"

"Nix," said Wharton. "N-I-X—nix!"

Billy Bunter gave the captain of the Remove a blink of unmeasured contempt. Then he turned his big glasses upon Bob Cherry.

"How much from you?" he demanded.

"Oh, put me down for the same amount!" said Bob Cherry humorously. "I always follow my leader."

"How much from you, Nugent?"

Frank Nugent grinned.

"What it is—a subscription?"

"Of course it is! I'm putting down the names along with the amounts in this notebook," explained Bunter. "I've got some already. Todd has made it threepence, and Tom Brown's stood sixpence, and Bulstrode tuppence."

"Why, you're rolling in wealth, then!" exclaimed Squiff. "You can let us off this time."

"Oh, really, Squiff, I'm not letting anybody off!" said Bunter firmly. "Every chap in the Remove is going to contribute, or I'll jolly well show him up!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How much from you, Inky?" demanded Bunter, addressing Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Indian member of the famous Co.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh smiled a dusky smile.

"The same as my esteemed chums, my worthy fat Bunter. The same amount precisely," he replied, in the wonderful English he had learned from the best native master in Bengal.

"Well, I'll jolly well show you up!" growled Bunter.

"I prefer the showupfulness to handing out my esteemed cash, my excellent and ludicrous Bunter!"

"I suppose you're handing out something, Squiff?"

Sampson Quincy Iffley Field shook his head. On the first day after Squiff's arrival from New South Wales Billy Bunter had succeeded in extracting a loan from him. Since then he had used no other, so to speak. Once was quite enough for Squiff.

"How much, Squiffy?" said Bunter persuasively.

"Nix!"

"The nixfulness is terrific, my esteemed Bunter!" purred Inky. "You must travel a little further to look for mugful leaders."

"I'm not asking you to lend me anything!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "Haven't you seen my notice on the board? Well, you must be silly asses. I stuck the notice on the board after lessons. Everybody ought to have seen it by this time."

"I thought I saw something smudgy there," said Squiff. "Looked like a study in blots, or a new thing in smears. I didn't try to read it. So you've been putting a notice on the board that you're hard up, and want to raise the wind. What cheek!"

"I haven't!" roared Bunter. "You silly duffers, this money ain't for me! I'm not trying to borrow your beastly money. I object to borrowing on principle!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And I'm subscribing to this myself. I'm going to put ten shillings," said Bunter. "I'm expecting a postal-order this evening, and I'm going to stand the whole of it—that's my whack. I'm patriotic, if you fellows ain't. But I thought you'd be decent enough to shell out for this subscription—I did really."

"What's it all about?" demanded Harry Wharton, puzzled.

"Come over here and look at my notice," said Bunter, with a wave of his fat hand towards the school notice-board. "That'll tell you. It was left to me to do this; I'm patriotic. I can think of the chaps who are fighting for us in Belgium. I don't think only of

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making arrangements for a half-holiday," added Bunter crushingly.

The Famous Five, their curiosity aroused at last, stepped over to the notice-board, and looked at it. There was Bunter's notice, sure enough. It was not easy to read, Bunter having contributed at least two blots and a smear for every word written on it. But there it was, and, being deciphered, it ran:

"NOTICE TO THE REMOVE!"

"BUNTER'S HELP FOR HEROES FUND!"

"You fellows are aware that Chirpey, the plumber, has gone to the front. Mrs. Chirpey is in poor circumstances, as is well known. There is nobody to send poor old Chirpey any parcels. The undersigned, William George Bunter, has therefore decided to raise a subscription for the purpose."

"Every patriotic member of the Remove is called upon to contribute something. Pennies will be accepted, but shillings are gratefully preferred. Think of poor old Chirpey in the trenches without a smoke! The sum raised by the undersigned, William George Bunter, will be expended in the purchase of cigarettes to be sent to Private Chirpey. Postage will be paid by the undersigned, William George Bunter. All true patriots are expected to play up, and rally round."

"(Sined) WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER, Remove."

"My hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"Now you understand," said Bunter loftily. "This man Chirpey is a respectable character. You remember he used to come here and leave a bag of tools in the hall, when the water-pipe burst. Well, he's fighting the Huns now, and somebody ought to send him something, oughtn't they?"

"How on earth did you come to think of it?" exclaimed Bob, in great perplexity. "What do you care about Chirpey? You can't eat Chirpey. And you never care a button about anything you can't eat."

"Oh, really, Cherry— You see, I was in the post-office the other day, when Mrs. Chirpey came in. She had a parcel for her husband, and she couldn't afford to send it because the postage was too high."

"So you paid it for her?" asked Bob.

Bunter snorted.

"I couldn't, you ass! I had only two bob, and I wanted that for tea. But it came into my head, you know, that it would be a decent thing to raise a subscription to send something to Chirpey. So I've started this. If you fellows give it a leg-up the other fellows will shell out when they see your names down."

"I dare say they will," said Harry Wharton. "But will the subscription get any further than the tuck-shop—that's the question?"

"Hear, hear!" said the Co. They knew their Bunter.

William George Bunter drew himself up to his full height, which was not great. Bunter was, as Peter Todd had said, tall sideways.

"If you can't trust to my honour, Wharton, I decline to accept your contribution," he said. "Now, how much?"

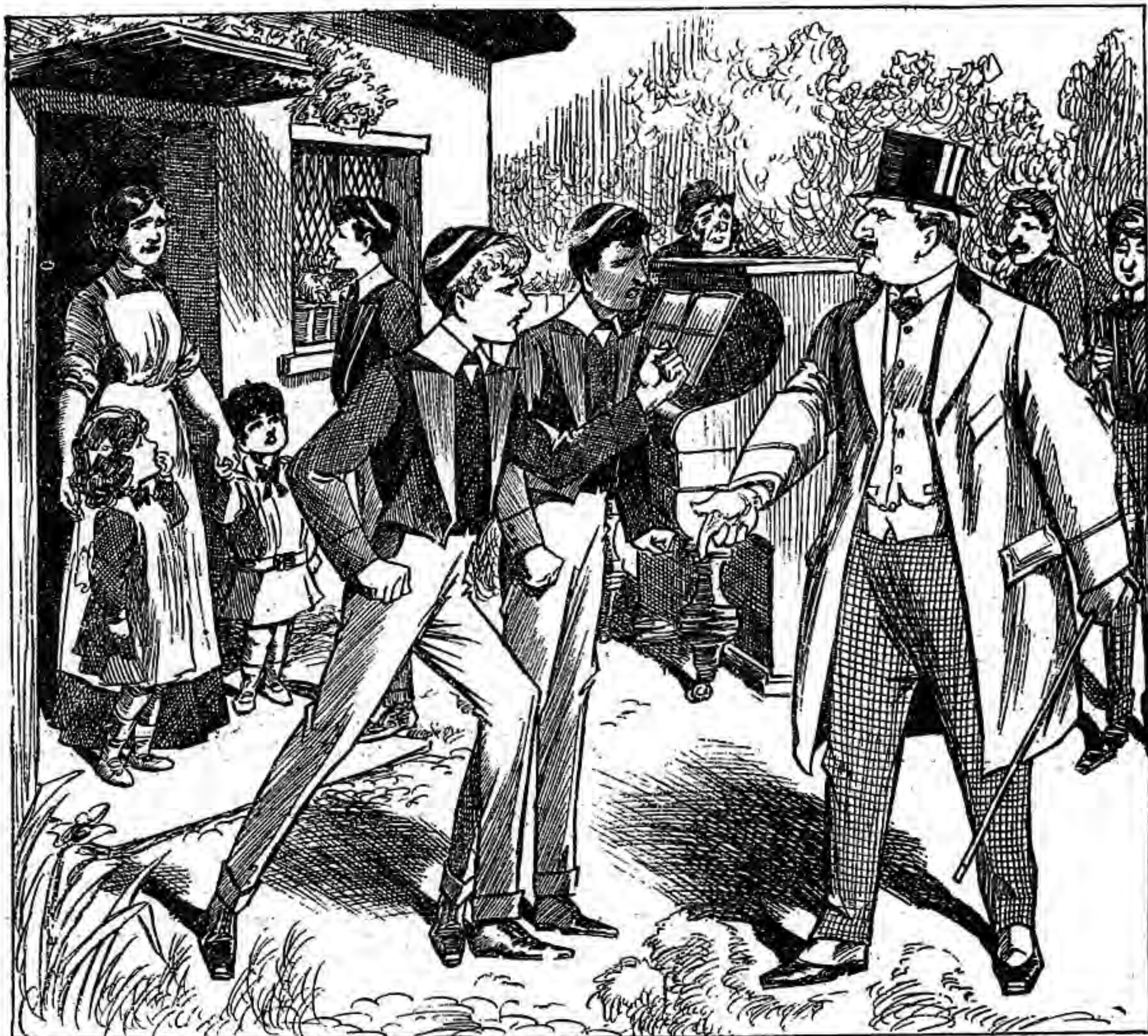
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" growled Bunter. "I suppose you fellows are not going to be mean. Where would you be if the Germans landed here, I'd like to know? I call it mean to hide behind Tommy Atkins, and then grudge him a few things he's in need of."

That was an appeal there was no resisting. The hands of the Famous Five went into their pockets at once. They were only too willing to stand their "whack" in providing Private Chirpey with some little comforts; their doubt was whether the little comforts would ever reach Private Chirpey. Billy Bunter had a way of regarding all money that came into his hands as his own.

The Co. decided to risk it. Five shillings was produced, and Billy Bunter's little round eyes glistened behind his spectacles.

"That's better," he said. "I was beginning to think you were unpatriotic beasts. I'll put your names down. The list of contributors will be stuck up on the board afterwards. It would look well if I could mark you chaps down at half-a-crown each—"



"Move that piano, and we'll smash you!" said Bob Cherry, doubling his big fists. The two rough-looking men hesitated at their work. (See Chapter 5.)

"Thanks, we don't want it to look too well," grinned Bob Cherry. "Might look like swank, you know."

"I shouldn't think about that, if I were you."

"But you're not me; I'm me," said Bob. "If those smokes get to Private Chirpey, I think I'll send him a telegram of congratulation. Come on, you chaps, and let's dig Toddy out, and go for a spin."

"I say, you fellows—"

But the chums of the Remove did not listen to Billy Bunter. They were deaf to the voice of the charmer. Considering the great doubt there was that the subscriptions would reach Private Chirpey at all, they thought their "whack" was quite big enough.

"Beasts!" murmured Bunter.

The fat junior put his notebook into his pocket, and blinked at the five shillings in his fat hand. He was thinking. While he was thinking, his steps took him in the direction of the school shop, across the Close.

If anyone had been looking at Billy Bunter then, he might have observed a remarkable hesitation in his manner.

The Owl of the Remove rolled up to the door of the shop—stopped, and rolled away again. Billy Bunter's inner man was struggling with his conscience. The struggle was keen; but the inner man apparently got the

best of it, for the fat junior rolled up to the doorway again. This time he rolled in.

Mrs. Mimble, who was behind her little counter, gave him an inquiring look. She was prepared to serve Bunter if Bunter was provided with ready cash. Otherwise, decidedly not.

"I say, Mrs. Mimble, I'm expecting a postal-order," Bunter remarked, in a casual way. "I suppose you'd have no objection—"

"I should!" said Mrs. Mimble grimly, without waiting for him to finish.

Bunter coughed.

"It's sure to come, you know," he remarked. "My pater's been making heaps of money lately. He sells things to the War Office."

Mrs. Mimble polished a tumbler and remained unmoved. Even the news that Bunter's pater was in possession of that source of unlimited wealth did not move her.

"I—I say, those tarts do look ripping!" exclaimed Bunter hungrily. "I—I—I think I'll have some."

"You can have them all if you pay for them, Master Bunter," said Mrs. Mimble stolidly. "You know I never give credit."

Bunter's fat hand came out of his pocket. A shilling each from the Famous Five, twopence from Bulstrode,

sixpence from Tom Brown, and threepence from Peter Todd, made up a sum of five shillings and elevenpence. The amount of tuck that could be obtained for five shillings and elevenpence was too strong a temptation for the Owl of the Remove.

"It's all right," he murmured. "When my postal-order comes—that's ten bob—I'll stand four and a penny myself, and the rest will make this up exactly. That will be quite square. Even those beasts can't grumble at that. Gimme those tarts. And some dough-nuts. And some ginger-pop. And that cake."

Billy Bunter's jaws were soon working away busily. He was hungry—it was more than half an hour since dinner. And Billy Bunter's jaws did not cease working until he had consumed tuck to the exact value of five shillings and elevenpence. His conscience was clear—his postal order was coming! He had simply borrowed Private Chirpey's little subscription for a few hours. Nothing could be simpler! But whether Private Chirpey, far off in the muddy trenches of Belgium, was ever likely to be comforted by those smokes for which the juniors had subscribed, was extremely doubtful—or rather, there was no doubt about it at all.

THE SECOND CHAPTER. The Terrors of the Law!

"COME on, Toddy!"

The Famous Five kicked open the door of No. 7 Study, and looked in. Peter Todd was seated at his study table, with three immense volumes before him. The chums of the Remove looked at him in amazement. Peter Todd was a hard worker, but it was not like him to "swot" on a half-holiday.

"Come on!" repeated Bob Cherry.

Todd looked up with a wrinkle in his brow.

"Buzz off, kids!" he said.

"Ain't you coming out?"

"Can't!"

"We're going for a spin, and tea at Redclyffe bunshop before we come back," said Harry Wharton. "Come along, Toddy!"

"I'd like to," admitted Peter Todd. "But I'm swotting this afternoon."

"Oh, rats!"

"The ratfulness is terrific, my esteemed Todd. Come alongfully!"

Peter Todd shook his head.

"My pater's sent me these books, and I'm mugging through them," he said. "You know, my pater's a solicitor, and I'm going to be the same when I grow up. The pater thinks I ought to be imbibing a knowledge of the law—teaching the young idea how to shoot, you know. It's a good idea, you know. With a thorough knowledge of the law, you can get anybody's money off him before a chap can say knife."

"You ass!" said Wharton. "Chuck it, and come out!"

"Can't be did! Do you know, I've thought of a ripping wheeze," said Peter Todd. "I've made up my mind to be an honest lawyer. Novelties catch on, you know, and I shall bag all the business—what?"

"Let's chuck his silly law-books in the fireplace, and yank him out by his ears," said Bob Cherry. "Come on, Toddy!"

But Peter Todd was firm. He had determined to spend that afternoon mugging up law, and he was not to be persuaded.

"You run away and play," he said. "It may be useful to you some day to have a lawyer in the Form—when you get taken up for stealing apples, or when P.-c. Tozer runs you in for pea-shooting him. Run away, and leave me to exercise my mighty brain. Shut the door after you."

"Fathead!" said the Famous Five, with one voice; and they departed, and left Peter Todd to his tremendous volumes.

The juniors made their way to the bicycle-shed. It was a sunny, spring afternoon, and ripping weather for a cycle spin. They wheeled out their machines in great spirits. As they were wheeling down towards the gates Billy Bunter came rolling out of the tuckshop. The short-

sighted Owl of the Remove did not see them, and he bore down upon them on his way to the School House. He had his notebook and pencil in his fat hands again. Bob Cherry burst into a chuckle.

"The subscriptions have been disposed of," he remarked. "I shan't have to send that telegram of congratulation to Private Chirpey after all."

Harry Wharton frowned, while the other fellows chuckled. They had expected it of Bunter, but they were not pleased.

"Dash it all!" growled Wharton. "It's all very well the fat rotter squeezing money out of fellows with any other kind of dodge, but he's no right to use that dodge. It's a swindle. Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows," said Bunter, perceiving the Famous Five at last. "Would you like me to put your names down again—second list?"

"What have you done with the subscriptions?"

"I—I haven't enough yet to—send, you know."

"You mean you've blued it in the tuckshop?"

"Nothing of the sort," said Bunter, with dignity. "I trust you don't imagine that I should spend money subscribed for a soldier at the front."

"Then you've still got it about you?" demanded Squiff.

"Ahem!"

"Have you got it?" roared Wharton.

"N-n-not exactly in cash, you know," stammered Bunter. "I've got it, but not in cash. It's the same thing."

"How have you still got it, if you've spent it?"

"I'm expecting a postal-order—"

"What?" yelled the juniors.

They had heard of that postal-order before; many a time and oft.

"Of course, it's exactly the same thing, if I use my postal-order to buy the smokes for Private Chirpey," said Bunter.

"You fat spoofer!"

The juniors leaned their bikes up against the elms, and surrounded Bunter.

Billy Bunter blinked at them in alarm.

"I say, you fellows, it's all right, you know. My postal-order's sure to come, and I'm going to make a whacking contribution myself—"

"Bump him!"

"Oh, really, you know—I say, you fellows, just think a minute—it's exactly the same thing. My postal order—"

"Let's take him in to Toddy!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "Toddy's a lawyer, and he can judge him."

"Ha, ha! Good egg!"

"Here, I say—I say, you know, Toddy wouldn't understand. You see, you fellows know just how it was, but Toddy—Leggo, you beasts! I say—Yaroooooh!"

Five pairs of hands grasped the Owl of the Remove, and he was rushed across the Close at a speed that took his breath away. Five shillings and elevenpence-worth of tuck had some effect, even on Billy Bunter, and he was very short of breath and very shiny in the face.

He gasped spasmodically as he was rushed into the house. He had a rooted objection to facing his study-mate, Peter Todd. Peter was liable to come down very heavy. Peter Todd's declared intention of making a man of Bunter, unless he—Bunter—perished in the attempt, had often caused anguish to the fat junior. But Billy Bunter's objections did not count. He was rushed towards the stairs, gasping and puffing.

"Leggo, you beasts! I say, old chaps! Oh, you rotters! Yow!"

Billy Bunter clung to the banisters. But Bob Cherry pulled him upstairs by his fat ears, and he decided to let go. He was rushed along the Remove passage, and bumped against the door of No. 7 Study. The door flew open, and Bunter rolled into the room, and collapsed on the carpet.

Peter Todd jumped up in surprise.

"You duffers! What the dickens—"

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" stuttered Bunter. "Oh, you beasts! You've broken my backbone in four places—yow!—and sprained my spinal column, too. Yow!"

"I'll sprain your neck if you don't shut up that row,"

said Peter Todd. "What have you rolled that porpoise in here for, when I want to work?"

"He's brought up for judgment," explained Bob Cherry. "You can find out from those whacking books what the punishment is. Bunter has been embezzling."

"I ain't!" yelled Bunter.

"Caught in the act!" said Squiff. "Bunter has raised a fund to send smokes to a man at the front, and squandered it in tuck."

"What!" roared Peter Todd. "Why, I stood three-pence towards that fund!"

"I haven't!" gasped Bunter. "I—I've borrowed it. I'm going to make it up out of my postal-order."

"Shut the door!" said Peter Todd. "I've got it all here in these books, and I'll look it out. I'm afraid we shall have to call in the police."

Bunter scrambled up.

"Toddy—I say, Toddy—"

"Silence!" said Peter Todd, opening one of the big volumes. "Keep him there, you chaps—don't let him bolt!" Bunter had made a sudden break for the door, but Bob Cherry interposed a large boot, and Bunter retreated. "You know the number of the police-station at Friardale, Wharton? Would you mind 'phoning?"

"I—I say, you fellows, d-d-don't—I d-d-didn't mean to embezzle!" groaned Bunter.

He blinked beseechingly at the juniors. But their faces were hard as iron. Their impression was that Billy Bunter required a lesson, to keep him from sliding into the paths of dishonesty, and they also had the impression that he was going to have it. A half-holiday could not be better spent than in impressing the laws of morality upon Billy Bunter's shifty mind.

"I—I know you're only j-j-joking," mumbled Bunter.

"You'll find that the law is no joke," said Todd grimly. "There never was a man who came in contact with the law without wishing that he hadn't. What you've done is embezzlement, and if we kept it dark, it would be confounding a felony—I mean, compounding a felony. We should all be liable to imprisonment as much as you."

"Oh, dear!" groaned Bunter. "I didn't mean—I—I say, Toddy, my postal-order's really coming this time! My pater deals with the War Office, you know, and he does 'em brown!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This is not a laughing matter!" thundered Peter Todd. "Cherry, I am surprised at you. Bunter, your father's crimes are no excuse for yours, excepting insofar and inasmuch as you can prove, to the satisfaction of the jury, that your crime is due to the maleficent results of a pernicious home influence. Wharton, this matter is too serious for us to deal with. Will you oblige me by fetching in a policeman? Take this note and give it to him."

Peter Todd scribbled a few words on a sheet of impot paper, and handed it to Wharton. Wharton nodded, and quitted the study. In the passage he read Todd's note. It ran:

"Tell Wib to shove on his bobby clobber and come here."

Wharton chuckled. He hurried down the passage to Wibley's study. Wibley, the great and shining light to the Remove Dramatic Society, was in his study, experimenting with make-up. Wibley often spent his leisure moments that way. Wibley was a youth with marvellous histrionic abilities. He turned a face towards Wharton as he came in that made the captain of the Remove jump. It was a little startling to see a bearded face of sixty-five on a junior in Etons.

"My hat!" ejaculated Wharton. "You—you blessed ass! I suppose that is you, Wib?"

Wibley grinned. He was quite unrecognisable.

"Well, when I look in the glass, I have my doubts," he replied. "Isn't it topping? This is my make-up for our next play 'The Wicked Uncle.'"

"Never mind the wicked uncle now. We want you to deal with a wicked porpoise. Got your bobby clobber handy?"

"Yes, in the property-box. What's the little game?" Wharton explained.

"I'm on!" said Wibley at once. "Go and tell 'em the bobby's coming in ten minutes."

Wharton, chuckling, hurried back to No. 7 Study; and Wibley, still keeping the bearded countenance he had designed for the character of the Wicked Uncle, proceeded to don the imitation uniform.

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Arrest of Billy Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON composed his face to an expression of deadly seriousness as he entered No. 7 Study. He found Billy Bunter blinking beseechingly at Peter Todd, and all the Co. looking as solemn as owls. Bunter was getting a valuable lesson in keeping to the straight path of virtue. It had never occurred to him that what he had done was what is legally called embezzlement, and Peter Todd intended to impress that fact upon his mind, before he was done with him, as a warning for the future. Peter Todd wore a sad and sorrowful expression as he gazed at Bunter. He seemed to regard him more in sorrow than in anger. But he was immovable. Bunter's beseeching looks might as well have been bent upon the study table.

"Well?" said Todd, as Wharton came in.

"I've done it," said Harry.

"He's coming?"

"Yes."

Billy Bunter gave a yelp of terror.

"I—I say, you fellows, d-d-don't be beasts, you know! I—I didn't really mean to embezzle, you know. I was going to make it up out of my postal-order, really."

"What you were going to do isn't evidence," said Peter Todd, with a shake of the head. "I'm sorry for you, Bunter. I'm willing to believe that you are more fool than rogne. But the law's the law. Let's have this plain. You fellows are witnesses that he raised a certain sum of money, pretending that it was to purchase comforts for his Majesty's troops on active service?"

"He did!"

"He used the name of Private Chirpey, now a member of the armed forces of his blessed Majesty, King George the Fifth?"

"He did!"

"Then he spent the money for his own personal ends."

"He did!"

"Then the case is clear." Peter Todd took up his book and read aloud, or seemed to read aloud. "Here it is—Snooks upon Littleton, Cap. 1. If any person, holding in his charge money that is not his own personal possession, shall convert the said money, cash, tin, spondulicks, or rhino to his own personal uses, he is guilty of embezzlement within the meaning of the act, and it is not held an excuse in law if the said person shall have had the intention afterwards to replace the said money, cash, tin, spondulicks, or rhino."

"That's clear enough," said Squiff, with a shake of the head.

"I—I know you're only r-r-rotting," stuttered Bunter. "I d-don't b-believe there's a bobby coming at all."

"And if the said person," read on Peter Todd, "shall use the name of his Majesty or of the armed forces of the Crown for the purpose of obtaining money, tin, cash, spondulicks, or rhino, and shall afterwards, inasmuch and heretofore, convert the money, tin, cash, spondulicks, or rhino to his own use, he shall be adjudged guilty of lese-majeste and high treason, without the option of a fine, and deprived of the benefit of the doubt."

"Oh, dear!"

"Clear as mud!" said Bob Cherry.

"The clearfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset-Ram Singh sadly. "But what is the punishfulness of the embezzleful Bunter?"

"That depends. He may be dealt with lightly on account of his youth, and so he may be let off with fifteen years penal servitude."

"Ow!"

"Of course, being war-time, he may be shot!"

"Yow!"

"It depends upon whether he's tried by the Court of Uncommon Pleas, or by a court-martial," explained Peter Todd.

"Oh, dear!" groaned Bunter. "I—I say, you fellows, I—I didn't know it was embezzling—I didn't, really. Look here, you keep it dark—"

"That's likely!" said Peter Todd. "Listen to this: 'Anyone having knowledge of a crime, and not imparting the same to the officers of the law, is guilty of compounding a felony and the longer they withhold information,'

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the more the felony mounts up at compound interest.' Isn't that clear enough?"

The juniors agreed that it was. They cast pitying looks at Bunter.

"You—you rotters!" groaned the Owl of the Remove. "I—I know you're only spoofing. I don't believe there's a policeman coming at all."

Knock!

Bunter's jaw dropped. Wharton opened the door. At the sight of a short, stout, bearded man in uniform and helmet Billy Bunter gave a howl of terror, and dived under the table. The constable touched his helmet.

"I'm wanted 'ere, young gents?" he asked.

"Yes, officer," said Todd. "It's a very serious case—embezzlement of public funds, mixed up with high treason, not to mention an attempt to induce witnesses to compound a felony."

"Where's the prisoner?" demanded the policeman, jingling a bunch of keys in his pocket. "I'd better put the bracelets on at once. This 'ere is a serious case."

"Come out, Bunter!"

"Kim out, you young villain!" shouted the officer of the law, seizing Bunter by a fat ankle and dragging him out on the carpet. "Stand up! I 'ereby takes you in custody, and I warns you that anythink you say will be took down to be used in evidence agin yer."

"Ow! Yow! I—I won't go! Toddy—I say, you fellows—yow!"

"Take him away, officer!"

"Good-bye, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry, with a look of commiseration. "Do let this be a warning to you, old chap."

"Keep your esteemed hands from the pickfulness and the stealfulness, my esteemed and venerable Bunter," murmured Hurree Singh, wiping away a tear.

"Har you coming?" demanded the officer of the law. "If you resists, I s'pose you know that it's piracy and murder on the 'igh seas!"

Billy Bunter fell upon his fat knees.

"Ow! Mercy! Lemme off this time! I won't do it again! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Too late!"

"The too-latefulness is——"

"Terrific!" said Bob Cherry solemnly.

"Yow! Make him gerraway!" wailed Bunter. "I won't go! Toddy, you beast—I say, you fellows, tip him, and make him go! Ow-yow!"

"It's impossible to tip a policeman, Bunter," said Harry Wharton, shaking his head. "Such a thing is unheard-of."

"Har you coming?"

"Yow! I won't come!" roared Bunter, dodging round the table. "Keep him off, Toddy! Yow-ow!"

Police-constable Wibley rushed in pursuit. Bunter dashed to the door, but the Famous Five were in the way, and he dodged round the table again, with the myrmidon of the law on his track. The Removites were nearly suffocating with suppressed merriment. But Billy Bunter was not feeling merry. He was quaking with terror; it seemed that the punishment of his shiftiness had come at last; the chopper had fairly come down.

"I takes you gents to witness as this 'ere desprit character is resisting arrest!" panted the constable. "Which it amounts in law to burglary and piracy to resist a hoffer in the execootion of his dooty. This will be took down to be used in evidence."

"I say, you fellows——"

"Better go quietly, Bunter," urged Bob Cherry. "The officer is only doing his duty. Think of us when you are in chokey."

"Remember us when you're picking oakum, Bunter, old chap!"

"Oh, you rotters!" groaned Bunter. "It—it was all a mistake! I—I'm going to send Chirpey his smokes out of my postal-order; you know, my pater's got lots of money now he's selling things to the War Office——"

"Har you coming, or har you not? Gents, I'm sorry, but I shall 'ave to put the darbies on." The bunch of keys rattled again, and the clink of metal made Bunter gasp with affright. Already he seemed to feel the cold contact of the handcuffs upon his fat wrists. He saw himself, in his mind's eye, led away handcuffed, through

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a mocking crowd. Never had a shift young rascal so sincerely repented of his shiftiness as William George Bunter did at that moment.

There was a thump at the door, and Tom Brown and Hazeldene and several other fellows looked in. The howls of Billy Bunter could be heard all along the Remove passage.

"What the thunder's the matter?" exclaimed Tom Brown, staring at the man in blue. "What's a policeman doing here?"

Peter Todd closed one eye at the New Zealand junior.

"He's come for Bunter," he said sorrowfully. "I'm afraid this is the finish for Bunter. He's found out at last."

The juniors crowded into the study, grinning. Some of them had recognised the policeman's uniform as one of the latest purchases of the Remove Dramatic Society, and they guessed who the constable was, though they could not recognise him. Billy Bunter blinked beseechingly at them.

"I say, you fellows, you back me up, you know. You hold that beastly bobby while I get away!"

"No fear!" said Bulstrode promptly. "We're not getting mixed up in your crimes, Bunter."

"You can't expect it, Bunt," said Tom Brown.

"I haven't committed any crimes!" wailed Bunter. "It was all a mistake—a matter of five and elevenpence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"This isn't a larfin' matter," said the policeman sternly. "Now, I ain't wasting any more time of that there desprit young rascal. He's resistin' the lor. I calls on you young gents to 'elp me in the execootion of my dooty!"

"That's the law," said Peter Todd, nodding. "You're bound to help when called upon by a constable—ahem!—in uniform."

"Pile in," said Bob Cherry. "It can't be helped. It's your own fault, Bunter. You've only got yourself to thank. Collar him!"

"Yow-ow-ow!"

Billy Bunter was promptly collared by half a dozen pairs of hands, and delivered to the limb of the law. Police-constable Wibley's grasp closed upon his collar, and his knuckles ground into Bunter's fat neck.

"Got 'im!" said the policeman. "Open the door, young gents, and I'll take 'im away!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Balled Out!

BILLY BUNTER wriggled spasmodically in the grasp of the stout constable.

He blinked imploringly at one face after another, but there was no help for him. The juniors all shook their heads seriously.

"Get it over," said Bob Cherry. "Good-bye, Bunter! I'll let you off the three bob you owe me."

"We'll see if we can bail you out later," said Nugent.

"Hold on," said Peter Todd, opening his huge volume again. "It's possible—barely possible—that it might be arranged. Do you mind waiting a few minutes, officer?"

"Suttingly, sir!"

Bunter's face brightened up.

"I say, Toddy——" he began.

"I'm not sure," said Peter Todd. "But, lemme see. Yes, here it is. Vic IV., Cap. 1, Sec. 39. Precedent, case of Hooker v. Snooker and Others, tried in the Court of Uncommon Pleas, before Justices Mugg and Slugg. Listen to this." Billy Bunter fairly hung upon Todd's words as he read on: "'If the accused shall write out a free and full confession, and shall find six respectable persons to go bail for his appearance if called upon, he may be left in enjoyment of a restricted liberty—e.g., he may remain within his own house, or in case of a schoolboy, within the walls of his own study. If he shall transgress these limits he shall be entitled to summary execution as a deserter.' That's clear enough."

"The clearfulness is terrific."

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ONE
PENNY.

"Are you willing to confess, Bunter?"
"I'll do anything you like!" groaned Bunter.
"Then there's a question of finding bail," said Todd.
"Who's willing to go bail for Bunter?"
"Rather a risky business," said Tom Brown, with a shake of the head. "Bunter's such a slippery customer. Leave me out."

"Oh, really, Browney——"
"Leave me out, too," said Nugent. "I couldn't answer for Bunter. I've got a conscientious objection."

"I say, Nugent——"
"Let's see the confession first," said Wharton.
"Very well. Take that pen, Bunter."

Bunter took the pen.
"Now write as I dictate," said Todd. "Mind, if you don't make a full confession you are liable to imprisonment as a prevaricator, without the option of a fine. 'Now, I hereby and herewith confess that I got the fellows to hand me cash, legally termed spondulicks.' Got that?"

"Yow! Yes!" mumbled Bunter, as his pen scratched over the impot paper.

"Under pretence of sending smokes to Private Chirpey, now doing his duty to King and country in the trenches.' Got that?"

"Yes."
"With the intention of blowing it in guzzling in the tuckshop, which I have accordingly done, thereby and therewith committing the crime of embezzlement and high treason."

"Oh, dear!"
"Got that down?"
"Yow-ow! Yes!"
"For which I now repent sincerely, as witness my signature hereinunder appended.' Now sign!"

Bunter signed.
"That's all right," said Peter Todd, scanning the valuable document. "This document will be sent to the proper quarter, and I hope that Lord Kitchener may take a lenient view of the matter. Now about bail."

"I say, you fellows——" pleaded Bunter.
"We'll risk it," said Bob Cherry generously. "I'll go bail for Bunter."

"Oh, thanks, Bob, old man! You're a good sort!" said Bunter, grateful for once in his life. "I really didn't mean, you know——"

"Put me down, too," said Wharton. "I'll chance it."

"I will also chancefully bail the esteemed Bunter."

"And I suppose I ought too, as he's in my study," said Todd. "That's four. Two more required. Hazel——"

"Oh, put me down!" said Hazeldene.

"And you can have my name," said Squiff, in a burst of generosity. "We'll do our best for Bunter."

"That's settled, then," said Peter Todd. "All the requirements of the law have been fulfilled. Officer, you can leave Bunter here. He undertakes to remain within the walls of the study until called upon to appear in the Military Division of the Court of Uncommon Pleas. Isn't that so, Bunter?"

"Yow! Yes!"
"Werry well, young gents. But mind, Master Bunter," said the constable sternly. "I shall keep my eye on you. Good-afternoon, gentlemen!"

"Good-afternoon, officer!"
The policeman left the study with his heavy tread.

"I say, he hasn't taken the confession," said Bunter eagerly. "We—we can tear it up now, you fellows."

"Breaking the law again already!" roared Peter Todd.

"Oh, I say——"
"I'm taking care of this confession. Gentlemen, the seance is over. Bunter is imprisoned in this study till further notice. We'll let him have it to himself."

Keeping their faces solemn, though with great and heroic efforts, the juniors filed out of the study, and Billy Bunter was left alone. The fat junior collapsed into the armchair and gasped with relief. He felt that he had had a terribly narrow escape, and that only Toddy's intimate knowledge of the intricacies of the law had saved him.

He started as he heard a sound from the passage—a sound that was not in keeping with the solemnity of the proceedings. It was a roar of laughter.

Billy Bunter started up.
"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter gasped.

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NEXT
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"THE MYSTERY OF THE CABLES!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS

"Oh, the beasts—they're cackling over it, as if it wasn't a serious matter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
"Oh, the rotters—the beasts—they've been spoofing me!"

Bunter rolled to the door and opened it, and blinked out into the passage. The Removites were doubled up with laughter, and among the hilarious juniors was the policeman, with his helmet and beard off now, and recognisable as Wibley of the Remove. Billy Bunter's eyes almost started through his spectacles.

"Wibley—you beast——"
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've been spoofing me, you rotters!" yelled Bunter.
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you—you——" Bunter spluttered with wrath.

"Toddy, you beast—Bob Cherry, you rotter——"
"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that your gratitude for being bailed out?" demanded Bob Cherry.

The juniors yelled.
"Oh, you rotters—oh, you spoofers—I knew it wasn't high treason all the time!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Take him into custody, Wibley!" roared Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter, crimson with rage, brandished his fists at the juniors as they staggered away almost in hysterics. There was only one consolation for the Owl of the Remove—the terrible prospect of having to appear in the Court of Uncommon Pleas had faded away. But he thought of another consolation a little later; and half an hour after the "bailing out" in No. 7 Study, William George Bunter was busy once more with the notebook and the pencil, seeking subscriptions to provide Private Chirpey with "smokes."

Harry Wharton & Co. wheeled out their bicycles in great spirits. Peter Todd had brought out his bike, too—his legal studies being finished for the afternoon. The legal proceedings concerning Billy Bunter had taken up most of the time the juniors had intended for their spin; but they felt that the lesson Bunter had received was worth it. Bunter's free and full confession was in Peter Todd's pocket—to be produced in public next time Bunter started a subscription for Private Chirpey. The juniors pedalled away, still chuckling, and Billy Bunter shook a fat fist after them. And even Peter Todd, with all his legal acumen, did not guess that even while the party were cycling down to Friardale the Owl of the Remove was once more making free use of the name of Private Chirpey.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Champions of the Oppressed!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Looks like a row!"
"It do—it does," agreed Nugent. "Hold on a bit!"

The six juniors were pedalling through Friardale village when they came upon the "row" that attracted their attention. They had to slacken down, for there was a crowd gathered in the street—half Friardale seemed to be there, and the road was blocked by a big furniture-van.

The furniture-van was drawn up before one of the little old-fashioned cottages in the ancient High Street. Upon the van large letters in gold leaf announced that it was the property of the Courtfield General Benefit Hire-Purchase Company. It was evidently a removal that was going on; but an unusual sort of removal to have such a crowd. Some of the onlookers were hissing, and some were yelling "Shame!"

The juniors jumped off their machines. They knew that cottage; it had been the dwelling of Mr. Chirpey, the local plumber, before Mr. Chirpey enlisted in Kitchener's Army and went to Flanders to fight the Germans. Mrs. Chirpey was standing in the little porch—a plump little woman in an apron and with her sleeves rolled up—apparently having been surprised at the "washing" by the visit of the furniture removers.

Two children were clinging to her skirts, and as Mrs.

Chirpey was crying the two little "nippers" were wailing too to keep her company.

A fat man with a very flowery waistcoat and a silk hat and a pointed shiny nose was superintending the removal. A little cottage piano was being carried out of the house by two rough-looking men, and in the little garden were standing chairs and other articles of furniture waiting their turn to be put into the van.

"I say, this is rotten," murmured Bob Cherry, his rugged, good-natured face clouding over. "They're being sold up, I suppose."

Harry Wharton knitted his brows.

"While the husband's away at the war," he exclaimed, "it's disgusting! It ought to be stopped!"

The Friardale folk were evidently of the same opinion. They howled "Shame!" at the top of their voices, and the shiny gentleman in the silk hat was in danger of being hustled.

"The disgustfulness of these honourable proceedings is terrific!" said Hurree Singh. "The chip-infulness would be a wheezy good idea."

"Let's see if anything can be done," said Nugent. "I suppose the poor woman owes Nosey Parker some money."

The shiny gentleman, whom Nugent alluded to disrespectfully as Nosey Parker, heard the remark and frowned. As he was evidently in charge of the proceedings, Harry Wharton walked up to him.

"May I ask what you are taking away Mrs. Chirpey's things for?" he asked, as politely as he could.

"I am removing the property of the Courtfield General Benefit Hire-Purchase Company," said the shiny gentleman. "I am acting under instructions from the company."

"He's the company 'isself!" growled one of the spectators. "Which his name is Jacobs, though he calls hisself Gordon."

Mr. Gordon scowled. Mr. Gordon's features, as well as his conduct, showed that he did not belong to the variety of Gordon that hails from Bonnie Scotland.

"But what's the matter?" persisted Wharton. "Why are the things being taken?"

"The instalments are unpaid."

"Is there much owing?"

"That does not concern you."

Wharton flushed.

"I was thinking the money might be paid," he said. "If it is not a large amount, we could raise it."

"You have nothing to do with the matter," said Mr. Gordon; and he turned his back on the captain of the Remove.

Harry Wharton came very near to flattening Mr. Gordon's silk hat over his head, but he restrained himself.

"Will you tell me how much is due?" he exclaimed.

"I will tell you nothing."

"Which he don't want to be paid," went on the man who had spoken before. "The things is nearly paid for, and he wants to take 'em away."

"That's it!" chimed in another voice. "Which he sells the same lot hover and hover agin, and collars 'em back hevery time."

Mr. Gordon scowled furiously, and moved away. He rapped out orders to his two assistants to hurry up. Harry Wharton exchanged a glance with his chums. Peter Todd seemed to be buried in thought; but the other fellows were quivering with indignation. They were quite prepared to seize Mr. Gordon and bump him in the nearest puddle at a word from their leader.

"We're not going to allow this," said Harry Wharton. "You fellows will back me up?"

"You bet!"

"The back-upfulness will be terrific! Let us collarfully bump that esteemed Nosey Parker in the mud!"

Wharton stepped into the gateway through which the two assistants were about to drag the little piano. Wharton's back was up, and he meant business.

"Stop!" he said.

"Eh?"

"Put that piano down!"

"What?"

"You're not going to move any of these things till we've inquired into the matter," said Wharton coolly.

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"My heye!"

The two men looked inquiringly at their employer. Mr. Gordon's face became inflamed with rage. The crowd gave Harry Wharton a cheer. Whether he had any right to "chip in," in that somewhat high-handed manner was perhaps doubtful; but there was no doubt that his action was popular.

"Stand out of the way!" shouted the shiny gentleman. "How dare you interfere!"

The two men set down the piano, however. The Famous Five were all in the gateway, and they were ready to use force. And it was quite clear that two men could not carry a piano and fight five schoolboys at the same time.

Wharton turned on the shiny gentleman.

"Look here, Nosey Parker——"

"My name is Gordon!" roared the shiny gentleman.

"I don't believe your name is Gordon," said Wharton. "You can call yourself what you like until they bring in a law to stop skunks from borrowing honest men's names."

"What—what!" The shiny gentleman raised his cane, which had a heavy gilded head, but he lowered it again. "You—you insolent young rascal!"

"Better language, please!" said Harry, with a glint in his eyes. "For two pins we'd send you flying into the mud. You shall not touch this poor woman's things if we can prevent you. If you weren't a disgusting beast, you'd let her alone while her husband is away at the war."

"That is no business of mine."

"It is your business. What would become of your shop if the Germans came here?"

"I do not intend to argue with you. Stand out of the way."

"Mr. Chirpey is away defending your shop," went on Wharton calmly. "It's up to you to treat his family decently."

"Will you move?"

"No!"

"I shall call a policeman!"

"Call away! This matter is going to be arranged."

"If you do not move this instant, I shall use violence!" shouted the shiny gentleman.

"Go ahead!"

Mr. Gordon looked as if he would keep his word for a moment. But he did not quite like the look of the Famous Five. He raised his gilded cane, and lowered it again, and spluttered with rage.

"Now, Mr. Parker——"

"My name is Gordon!" shrieked the shiny gentleman.

"I prefer to call you Nosey Parker, and it's a free country. How much does Mrs. Chirpey owe you?"

"That is my business."

"Then I'll ask Mrs. Chirpey."

"You will not prevent my employees from doing their work. Men, put that piano in the van at once!"

"Move that piano, and we'll smash you!" said Bob Cherry, doubling his big fists.

The two men hesitated. They were rough-looking customers, but probably their hearts were not in their work.

Harry Wharton passed them, and approached the cottage porch, and raised his cap to Mrs. Chirpey. The poor woman looked at him tearfully.

"Please excuse me for interfering, Mrs. Chirpey," said Harry. "You don't want those things taken away, of course?"

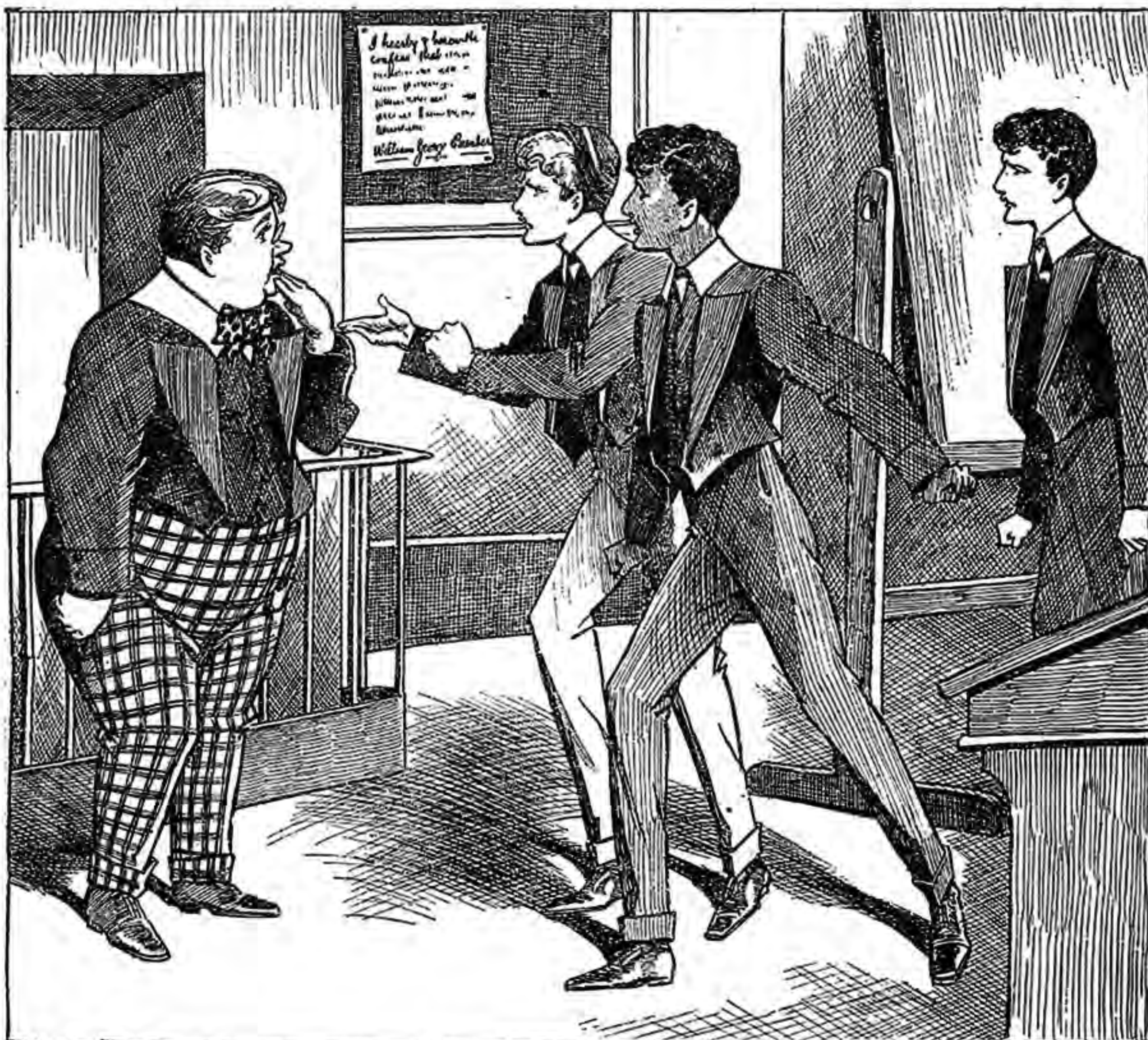
"Indeed, no, sir!" said Mrs. Chirpey. "Only they must go, sir. I haven't been able to keep up the instalments since my Jack went away. Jack always had good money, sir, and we never thought about it when he listed. There ought to be a law to protect poor women whose husbands go to the war," said poor Mrs. Chirpey.

"Let us help you out," said Harry.

"But—but——"

"We've got some tin," said Wharton. "Now, let us arrange this for you, there's a good soul. It would be rotten for old Chirpey's family to suffer because he's doing his duty for the King. Now, how much is it?"

"You see, if the instalments are not paid, all the rest becomes due at once," said Mrs. Chirpey. "There's two weeks in arrear—that's fourteen shillings—but the rest



The subscribers to the Bunter Patriotic Fund gathered round the Owl of the Remove, and Billy Bunter blinked at them in dismay. (See Chapter 7.)

of the instalments becoming due, that makes four pounds. And we've paid sixteen pounds already," said Mrs. Chirpey, sobbing, "and all that will be lost."

"Four quid!" said Harry, wrinkling his brows.

"You couldn't pay that," said Mrs. Chirpey, smiling faintly through her tears. "You are very kind, Master Wharton, but I shall 'ave to let my little home go. And what poor Jack will think when he comes back, I don't know."

"They sha'n't take the things, that's settled," said Harry. "Leave it to me, Mrs. Chirpey!"

"Oh, Master Wharton, if you only could——"

"It will be all right."

Wharton returned to the gate. Mr. Gordon, who was almost in a state of apoplexy by this time, was urging his men to get on with the moving. But the chums of Greyfriars barred the way, and showed no intention of budging.

"It seems that there's only fourteen shillings in arrears," said Harry, addressing the shiny gentleman. "We can raise that easily enough. Will you take the fourteen shillings, and let the things stay here?"

"No, I will not."

"It would be only decent, you know."

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"And who is to pay for the expense of bringing the van from Courtfield?"

"We'll pay that, too."

"I decline to have anything to do with you," said Mr. Gordon. "Unless you let my men do their work, I shall call the police."

"Very well," said Harry. "It appears that you have a caddish agreement with this poor woman, which gives you the right to claim all the instalments if there are any arrears. You want four pounds before you'll let the things alone. I suppose you chaps haven't got that sum about you?"

"Ahem! We could raise a quid or so," said Squiff.

"Turn out your pockets."

"I refuse to have any dealings with you!" thundered the shiny gentleman.

"You can't refuse, if Mrs. Chirpey offers you the money due," said Wharton coolly. "Now, how much can you fellows raise?"

The chums of the Remove turned out their pockets at once. Bob Cherry produced a shilling, Nugent a half-crown, Squiff five shillings, and Hurree Singh two half-sovereigns. Wharton added eight shillings.

"One pound sixteen-and-six," said Wharton. "How much can you stand, Toddy?"

"Sixpence!" said Peter cheerfully.

"Ahem! That's one pound seventeen. Mr.—ahem!—Gordon, will you accept one pound seventeen, and my promise to send the rest this evening by post?"

"Certainly not!"

"Very well! You can wait a bit, while we raise the tin. You cut off to the school, Bob, and borrow some tin from Smithy and Mauly. They'll lend it to you like a shot."

"Right-ho!" said Bob. "I'll be back in half an hour, Nosey Parker. You can wait till then."

"I will not wait one minute!" shouted the shiny gentleman. "Hooks, go and fetch a policeman at once."

"Hold on, Bob!" said Peter Todd. Peter Todd had been going through his pockets, apparently in search of something.

"Found some quids?" asked Wharton, greatly relieved. Peter Todd grinned.

"I'm not a millionaire like Mauly," he replied. "I do find quids I've forgotten in my pockets. But I've found my notes."

"Banknotes?" asked Squiff.

"Just as good as banknotes in this case," said Todd cheerfully. "Notes I've been making in my legal studies."

"Oh, blow your legal studies!" growled Bob Cherry, disappointed.

"Wait a bit till you see my notes," said Todd. "You can leave this matter to me. I'll deal with Nosey Parker." Peter Todd strode towards the shiny gentleman. "Mr. Parker—"

"My name is Gordon!"

"Mr. Parker, you have some of Mrs. Chirpey's property in that van. Take it out immediately and replace it in Mrs. Chirpey's house, or I'll call a policeman and have you arrested on a charge of house-breaking!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Good Law!

PETER TODD'S voice rang out sharply as he uttered that astounding threat. Mr. Gordon stared at him blankly. His chums stared, too. For the moment they thought that Peter Todd was "spoofing" Mr. Nosey Parker in the same way that he had spoofed Billy Bunter in No. 7 Study. But Mr. Nosey Parker did not look as if he would be spoofed so easily as the Owl of the Remove.

"Oh, chuck it, Toddy!" said Bob Cherry.

"Rats!" said Peter.

"But look here—" began Squiff.

Peter Todd sniffed.

"I know what I'm talking about! What's the good of having a pater a solicitor if you don't know anything about the law? Nosey Parker is breaking the law."

"But—but not really—" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes, ass, really!" said Todd. "I stake my reputation as a lawyer upon it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My professional reputation is at stake," said Peter Todd loftily. "You hear me, Mr. Parker?"

"You—you—you young scoundrel!" roared Mr. Gordon.

Peter Todd wagged an irritating forefinger at the infuriated shiny gentleman.

"You're breaking the law, Mr. Parker, and you know it, or you ought to know it. Mrs. Chirpey!"

"Yes, Master Todd."

"That man has no right to touch your furniture, whether the instalments are paid or not, until the end of the war."

"Oh, Master Todd!" gasped Mrs. Chirpey.

"You remarked just now," went on Peter, "that there ought to be a law to protect soldiers' wives while their husbands are away at the war. Well, madam, our respected House of Commons is quite in agreement with you. In spite of the heavy vocal labours they have to go through, the honourable members have found time to pass a law on that very subject. Your property is quite safe until the end of the war, and Mr. Nosey Parker has no more right to touch it than I have. If

he should remove a single article from your house, you have a right to take legal proceedings against him."

"Oh, Master Todd!"

"But—but is that so, Toddy?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"That is so, my son," said Peter Todd. "I stake my professional reputation upon it, my infant. To enlighten Mr. Parker, who does not seem to know the law so well as a professional burglar ought to know it, I will read it out from my notes." And Peter Todd read out cheerfully, with the whole crowd listening with great eagerness and satisfaction: "Courts Emergency Act, 1914. Goods held under hire and purchase agreements cannot be seized by the owner where payments have fallen in arrear, if the holder can show that the default is due to the war." Is that plain enough?"

"Plain as your face, Toddy!" said Bob Cherry joyfully.

"How do you like that, Nosey Parker?"

"Hurrah!"

"Mrs. Chirpey can show that the falling into arrears is due to the war," grinned Peter Todd. "Isn't that so, Mrs. Chirpey?"

"Yes, indeed, Master Todd. It's because my poor husband joined the Army, and the allowance is only half what he would be earning."

The shiny gentleman's face was a study. It was very probable that he knew the law on the subject quite as well as Peter Todd, if not better, but he had chosen to take advantage of the poor woman's ignorance of that wise provision made by Parliament for the protection of soldiers' dependents.

"Now, Nosey Parker, you touch Mrs. Chirpey's property at your peril," said Peter Todd. "In taking these goods without Mrs. Chirpey's permission, you are house-breaking. You know it as well as I do."

"You—you—you—"

"Mrs. Chirpey, this man has no right to touch your property. He breaks the law in entering your house without your permission. You have nothing whatever to be afraid of till the end of the war, and then I hope old Chirpey will be back safe and sound. Would you like your property replaced in your house, Mrs. Chirpey? We'll all lend a hand."

"Oh, Master Todd, are you sure—"

"Quite sure, ma'am. My father's a solicitor, and I'm studying the law," said Peter Todd. "Nosey Parker knows it as well as I do—look at his face—I suppose he calls it a face!"

"Shove the things back!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"And if you interfere, Nosey Parker, we'll shove you into the nearest puddle," said Peter Todd.

"I will accept the four pounds—I will wait half an hour!" said the shiny gentleman, choking back his rage.

"You won't do anything of the sort," said Todd.

"You can claim the instalments at the end of the war."

"I—I am willing to forego the claim if the instalments due are paid up—fourteen shillings—"

"Nothing whatever will be paid up," said Peter Todd calmly. "Not a stiver, Mr. Parker. You can't claim anything in law, so long as Mrs. Chirpey's inability to pay is due to the war, and you know it."

The shiny gentleman almost danced with rage. It was true, and he did know it.

"And you ought to be pleased," said Peter Todd severely, "as a patriot, you ought to be glad of it. Think of the effort it must have been to the Honourable Members to leave off gassing for ten minutes and pass a really useful law like that! You ought to be proud of the House of Commons, Mr. Parker."

"You—you—you—" Mr. Gordon seemed on the point of exploding. "Don't you dare to touch those things!"

"Rats! Take 'em out of the van, you fellows!"

The juniors did not need a second bidding. They piled in, and soon had the articles out of the van. Then they proceeded to carry Mr. Chirpey's property back into the cottage. Mrs. Chirpey was weeping with joy now. Mr. Gordon looked as if he would like to commit six cases of manslaughter on the spot. Chairs and tables were rushed back into the house, and then the juniors laid hands on the little piano. The two men blinked inquiringly at their employer, but Mr. Gordon made no sign. He was beaten, and he knew it.

The Famous Five rushed the little piano into the house again, amid loud cheers from the villagers.

"It's all right, Mr. Parker," said Peter Todd comfortably. "If you're not satisfied, there's the County Court, you know. There's lots of law in this country—heaps of it—too much, in fact. You can apply for a writ if you're not satisfied. But I warn you that Mrs. Chirpey will have a first-class solicitor. I shall make my pater take her case without fees. And we'll get damages out of you, Mr. Parker; you look as if you could afford to pay damages," said Peter, squinting at Mr. Gordon in quite a professional manner.

"You—you—you—" stuttered the shiny gentleman.

"My hat!" said Peter, as if struck by a sudden reflection. "I'll get my pater to take it up anyway, and bring an action for wrongful distraint. You wouldn't have a leg to stand on—we should win hands down, and Mrs. Chirpey would get damages—"

The shiny gentleman looked quite sickly.

Without a word more, he turned and walked away, and his two men, grinning—apparently not at all displeased by the defeat of Mr. Gordon—mounted into the van and drove off. The crowd of villagers followed Mr. Gordon down the street, hissing and booing, till he dodged into the railway-station and escaped them.

"Jolly good afternoon's work," said Bob Cherry, as the juniors came out of the cottage. "We've lost our little spin, but it was worth it."

"We're learning a lot of law," grinned Squiff. "Who'd have thought the House of Commons would have so much sense? I shall tell them about this in New South Wales when I go home."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good-bye, Mrs. Chirpey!"

Mrs. Chirpey's plump face was all smiles now.

"I don't know how to thank you, young gentlemen—"

"Oh, don't mench!"

"Jack will be so glad when I write and tell him," said Mrs. Chirpey. "He'd have felt so bad, out there in the trenches, if I'd 'ad to tell him as his little home was broke up. You dear, good boys—"

"And you remember, Mrs. Chirpey, that if that man comes along again, shut your door and send one of the nippers for a policeman," said Peter Todd.

"I'll remember, Master Todd!"

"And if you're in trouble again, you let me know," went on Peter Todd. "I'm going to be a lawyer, you know, and I know all about these things. If your landlord bothers you, for instance, you let me know. I'll bottle him up. Now promise me."

"Indeed I will, Master Todd!" said Mrs. Chirpey gratefully. "I'll let you know at once."

"That's right! Good-bye, Mrs. Chirpey!"

And the chums of the Remove returned to their bicycles exceedingly satisfied with their afternoon's work.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Gilt-Edged Stunt!

"I GUESS that's a ripping stunt!"

Thus Fisher T. Fish.

Billy Bunter brightened up. It was the day after Bunter's "bailing out" in No. 7 Study—and the Owl of the Remove was at work again on the Chirpey subscription. Bunter had had so much success that he was quite encouraged. While Harry Wharton & Co. were dealing with the shiny gentleman, and rescuing Mrs. Chirpey's little home, Billy Bunter had been going round with his notebook and pencil raising subscriptions for "smokes" for Private Chirpey.

The subscriptions had all found their way to the tuck-shop. Bunter salving his conscience with the reflection that he was going to make it up out of his postal-order—when it came. It had not come yet.

There seemed to be quite a lot of patriotism in the Remove lying about unused, so to speak. William George Bunter had made quite a good thing out of it so far. Indeed, by this time he had come to look upon Private Chirpey and his alleged need of smokes as a regular source of income.

Most of the Remove had handed out something, and some of the Fourth, and the fellows were beginning to inquire when the smokes were to be despatched to Private Chirpey.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 387.

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MYSTERY OF THE CABLES!"

EVERY
MONDAY,

The "Magnet"
LIBRARY.

ONE
PENNY.

Bunter was so much encouraged that after lessons on this special afternoon, he ventured to tackle Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. To get any money out of Fisher T. Fish would have been a thirteenth task for Hercules, which would have put the original twelve quite in the shade. But Bunter, having squeezed the rest of the Form dry, so to speak, made the attempt. And Fisher T. Fish's remark seemed to promise success.

"A regular top-notch stunt!" repeated Fisher T. Fish enthusiastically. "Blessed if I know how a galoot like you came to think of it, Bunter!"

"I'm a patriot, of course," explained Bunter. "There's lots of people who just yell 'Rule, Britannia!' and keep their money in their trousers' pocket. I ain't one of that sort. I believe in looking after the soldiers."

"How much are you making out of it?" asked Fisher T. Fish, in his business-like way.

"Oh, really, Fishy—"

"It's a gilt-edged stunt!" said Fish.

"Well, I thought it was a good idea," assented Bunter.

"How much are you going to subscribe, Fishy?"

"Subscribe! Nix, I guess!"

"Now, look here, Fishy, you said yourself it was a good idea—"

"So it is," said Fish. "I'm on to this, you bet!"

"Well, then, how much are you going to hand out?"

"Nix!"

"I put it to you as a patriot—" urged Bunter.

"Rats! I'm a neutral!"

"Still, you ought to hand out something, you know," argued Bunter. "If the Germans should lick us, they'll go for the United States next, you know, and mop up the ground with you Yankces!"

"I guess I know that. That's where our cuteness comes in," explained Fisher T. Fish. "We're letting John Bull do the business for us, and saving the money—see? I guess Uncle Sam is cute, sonny. But to come to business, how much are you making out of this stunt?"

"I'm not making anything," said Bunter indignantly.

"Oh, come off!" said Fish. "People don't raise funds for nothing."

"I'm going to send smokes to the soldiers, you know."

"Bow-wow! When I want to stand a soldier a smoke I guess I'll find the soldier, and hand it to him personally," said Fish. "There's too many galoots on the make to suit me, Bunt. Not that I want to hand out anything. No fear! Look here, what are the profits so far?"

"There ain't any profits!" roared Bunter. "I've raised twelve bob so far, and I'm going to send it in smokes to Chirpey."

"Twelve bob!" said Fish thoughtfully. "Well, that ain't bad. You're doing pretty well, I guess."

"It ain't mine, you fathead!"

"I guess it's more yours than Mr. Chirpey's," chuckled Fisher T. Fish. "It's simply a stunt—a gilt-edged stunt. I wonder I never thought of it before. I guess I'm on to this—just a few!"

"Why, you—you rotter!" ejaculated Bunter, as Fishy's idea dawned upon him. "What are you going to do?"

"I guess I'm going to raise a subscription for soldiers' smokes!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish.

"Why, you spoofing rotter—"

Fisher T. Fish hurried away. It was really an excellent "stunt," as he called it in his native language. If Bunter had made twelve shillings there was no reason why Fish, with his superior business abilities, should not make twelve pounds. Fisher T. Fish hurried to his study in a state of great glee. He did not intend to "mooch" about cadging for tanners in the Lower Fourth. His idea was to place all Greyfriars under contribution. The business-man of the Remove gave the matter a great deal of thought, and the more he thought about it the more satisfied he was with that excellent "stunt."

Fisher T. Fish had often schemed little schemes for making money, but he had generally found a difficulty in raising the capital necessary to his little enterprises. But this "stunt" did not require any capital. It was

the best "stunt" Fisher T. Fish had ever thought of, and he was greatly obliged to Billy Bunter for putting that valuable idea into his businesslike head.

Bunter stood blinking with dismay and wrath. There was to be a rival in the field, and contributions would certainly fall off. The Owl of the Remove was indignant. It was his idea, and Fisher T. Fish was collaring it in the most barefaced way. Besides, Billy Bunter was shocked at Fish's unscrupulousness. Fish was evidently on the make. And Bunter's intentions, at least, were good; he fully meant to despatch those smokes to Private Chirpey when his postal-order came.

"The awful rotter!" murmured Bunter. "Fancy wanting to make money out of a patriotic fund! I never heard of anything quite so low down as that. The beast will get in subscriptions that really belong to me—to my fund, I mean. The mean beast!"

And Billy Bunter resolved to make a desperate effort to raise some more subscriptions before Fisher T. Fish could get to work. He rolled into the common-room, where he found most of the Remove. Harry Wharton & Co. were discussing an approaching cricket match with Rookwood School, when Bunter came up, notebook and pencil in hand.

"I say, you fellows, my subscription will be closing soon," said Bunter. "I suppose you are going to whack out a little more?"

"What!"

"I want to make it up to an even quid," said Bunter firmly.

"So you're at it again!" demanded Harry Wharton.

"You remember the narrow escape you had yesterday," said Squiff sternly. "You remember we had to bail you out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, how much are you going to subscribe?" asked Bunter, unheeding. "That cad Fishy is going to start a fund."

"Another giddy Richmond in the field!" grinned Squiff. "This seems to be catching."

"If you fellows will make up eight bob that will make the quid—"

"You fat rotter!" said Peter Todd. "Give me that notebook!"

"Wha-a-at for?"

"To put in the fire!"

"But—but it's got all the subscriptions down in it."

"And where's the money?"

"Ahem! When the time comes to send the smokes to Private Chirpey that will be all right. You have the guarantee of my word for that!" said Bunter, with dignity.

"Fat lot of good that is," said Peter Todd. "Gentlemen, will you do me the favour to cast your eyes upon this document?"

Peter Todd took a sheet of impot paper from his pocket. Billy Bunter gave a yell as he recognised his confession.

"You beast, Toddy! Give it to me!" he shouted.

Peter Todd pinned the paper on the wall, out of the reach of the fat junior. The Removites gathered round to read it with great curiosity. It was a very interesting document, somewhat original orthographically.

"I hearby and hearwith confess that I got the fellows to hand me cash, legally turned spondulicks, under the pretence of sending smoaks to Privit Chirpey, now doing his dewty to king and country in the trenches, with the intenshun of blowing it in gussling in the tuckshop, wich I have akordingly dunn, thereby and therewith comaiting the crime of embezzlement and high treason, for wich I now reppent sincearly, as witness my signature here-inunder apended. WILLIAM GEORGE BUNTER."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotter! Gimme that paper!" yelled Bunter.

"Gentlemen, this confession was written out and signed

by William George Bunter, in the presence of Police-constable Wibley, of the Remove—

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And now you know where your money goes when you subscribe to Bunter's fund."

"The fat rotter!" roared Bolsover major. "He's had ninepence out of me. Where's my ninepence, Bunter?"

"Where's my tuppence?" demanded Micky Desmond.

"Where's my tanner?"

"Where's my bob?"

The subscribers to the Bunter patriotic fund gathered threateningly round the Owl of the Remove. Bunter blinked at them in dismay.

"I—I say, you fellows, it's all right," he stammered. "I—I'm going to make it up out of my postal-order, you know."

"Collar him!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Leggo!"

"Shove that notebook in the fire," said Bolsover major. "He's swindled us, and we sha'n't see the money again. We'll give him smokes for soldiers! We'll give him the frog's march round the Close!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Oh, I say—I say, you fellows! Mum-mum-mum—my postal-order's coming this evening, and—and I'm going to blue it on old Chirpey, you know—all of it! Yow-ow! Leggo my ear, Bulstrode! You beast! Yaroooooh! Oh, crumbs!"

"Bring his along!"

"Ow-yow! Help!"

Billy Bunter was rushed out of the common-room in the midst of a swarm of indignant juniors. They rushed him into the Close, and then the patriot of the Remove was whipped up, and frog's-marched round the quadrangle.

Bump! Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Yarooooh! Help! Fire! Murder! Ow!"

Bump! Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Oh, crumbs! Chuck it! Leggo! I—I won't do it any more!" wailed Bunter. "I say, you fellows—I say— Yarooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

When the frog's march was over, William George Bunter was left on the ground, trying to get his second wind. And to judge by his wild gurglings and gugglings it was a long time before he got it.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Smokes for Mr. Chirpey!

THE next day Billy Bunter's notice had disappeared from the board. The Owl of the Remove was fed up with patriotic funds. He announced that the Army in Flanders could go and eat coke, so far as he was concerned. But though Bunter's notice was gone there was another pinned up in its place, which the Remove fellows read with great interest. It was in the "list" of Fisher Tarleton Fish.

"NOTICE!"

"Grand patriotic meeting will be held in the Rag after lessons! All true patriots are requested to attend! England expects every man to do his duty."

"F. T. FISH."

There was a buzz of comment over that extraordinary notice. The general opinion was that Fishy was "on the make" again. True, Fisher T. Fish was a great patriot, but his patriotism was of the star-spangled variety, naturally, and was confined to the great Yew-nited States, as he called his native land. The juniors agreed that it was like Fishy's cheek to call a patriotic meeting at all.

"We'll go," said Bob Cherry. "We'll jolly well go and rag him for his cheek!"

"The beast's on the make!" growled Billy Bunter. "He's borrowed my idea—only he's going to keep the money!"

"And what did you do with it?" demanded Squiff.

"I'm going to make it up out of my postal-order," said Bunter loftily. "I'm expecting a postal-order shortly."

ANSWERS

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THE BOYS' FRIEND
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CHUCKLES, 1d.
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"And I'll tell you what," said Bolsover major emphatically. "When you do get a remittance, Bunter, you're going to do it, too. You do get some money now sometimes, now your pater's swindling the War Office."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And the next cash you get goes to Private Chirpey," said Bolsover. "We'll all see to that!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's the postman!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter's face was a study. In point of fact, he was really expecting a remittance at last. It is an ill wind that blows nobody good, and the war had brought profit to Bunter senior, and Billy had benefited by it. The juniors surrounded old Blagg in the Close.

"Is there a letter for Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Yes, sir."

"Hooray!"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Hand it out!" said Peter Todd. "As Bunter's legal representative, I take charge of his correspondence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Toddy, you beast, gimme my letter!" yelled Bunter.

"Here you are, my son! Come on, and we'll all help you open it!"

"I don't want you to help me. I—I——"

"Tain't a question of what you want, but what you're going to get," explained Peter. "Open that letter!"

"Look here——"

"Open it, or we'll jolly well open it for you!" roared Bolsover major.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Bump him!"

"Yow! Leggo! I'm opening it, ain't I?" yelled Bunter, digging his fat thumb into the envelope.

A ten-shilling currency note came into view as Billy Bunter opened the letter. It was a remittance at last.

"Good!" said Peter Todd. "Bunter owes Private Chirpey twelve shillings, and I'll tell you what. We'll lend him two, and make it up."

"Hear, hear!"

"Come on, Bunter! We'll come with you and get the things sent off," grinned Bob Cherry.

"Look here——"

"Yank him along!"

"I say, you fellows, this isn't a postal-order, you know. This—this is a currency note!" howled Bunter.

"I told you plainly that I was going to take it out of my postal-order—when it comes."

"Bring him along!"

"Look here, you rotters—— Yow! Leggo my ear! Oh, crumbs! Oh! Ah! Yah!"

The grinning crowd hustled the Owl of the Remove down to the gates. They were grinning, but they were in deadly earnest. Bunter had raised the fund for Private Chirpey, and Private Chirpey was going to have the benefit of it.

"Just time to get down to Friardale and send off the smokes, and get back to dinner," said Bob. "We shall have to run all the way. Put it on, Bunter."

"Yow! I c-c-can't!"

"Oh, buck up! Remember this is your own idea, and we're helping you carry it out. Besides, it's patriotic, and you're nuts on patriotism."

"You beast!"

"Ha! ha, ha! Help him along!"

Billy Bunter was helped along the lane. He had a strong objection to running all the way to the village; but with Bolsover major behind him, dribbling him like a football, he decided to run. Puffing and panting like a pair of very old bellows, the Owl of the Remove charged along the lane, letting out a wild yelp whenever he received assistance from a friendly boot.

He was gasping spasmodically, and streaming with perspiration, by the time he reached the village tobacconist's. The crowd of juniors marched him into the little shop. The astonished tobacconist at first declined to serve them, but, on Bob Cherry explaining that the required smokes were for Mr. Chirpey, he handed out his goods. Bolsover major fastened a thumb and finger that felt like a vice upon Billy Bunter's fat ear, and proceeded to apply pressure at the first hint of objection from Bunter. Bunter made only one attempt to object; then he wailed with anguish, and gave it up.

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NEXT MONDAY—**"THE MYSTERY OF THE CABLES!"**

Smokes to the value of twelve shillings were made up into a neat little bundle, and were paid for with Bunter's ten-shilling note, and two shillings generously subscribed by the juniors. Then the parcel was handed to Bunter.

The fat junior gasped with wrath as he was marched out of the shop. That remittance was to have provided him with a first-class feed, and now the feed was gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream. His feelings were almost too deep for words.

Straight to the post-office his unmerciful comrades marched him, and there the parcel was addressed to "Private J. Chirpey, 1331, 1st Batt. Loamshire Regiment, British Expeditionary Force, France." Billy Bunter groaned as it was passed over the counter.

"Better register it, Bunter," said Nugent. "It's safer."

"Only cost you fifteenpence," said Bob Cherry.

"I haven't got fifteenpence!" howled Bunter. "I'm stony!"

"Well, I'll lend it to you," said Peter Todd. "But, mind, I shall expect it out of your next remittance."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fifteenpence was duly paid, and the parcel registered to Private Chirpey. Then the juniors quitted the post-office, chuckling.

"Just time to get in, if we put it on!" said Bob Cherry. "Run for it!"

"Come on, Bunter!"

"Yow! You rotters! I'm tired!"

"All serene! We'll help you! Take his other ear, Franky!"

"Yarooooop! Leggo!"

"Stuff! We're not going to let you be late for dinner, and get ragged by old Quelch," said Bob. "After the noble way you've raised a patriotic fund we're going to look after you, Bunter."

"Oh, you rotter! Ow! Leggo my ear! I'll be late! I won't run! Yah! I'm not coming! Beast!"

"Well, your ear's coming," said Bob. "I'm taking that with me, anyway. You can do as you like about the rest."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry started off at a run, with an iron grip on Bunter's fat ear. Bunter's ear went with him, and, needless to say, Bunter went, too. The juniors did not slacken down till they reached the school, where they were just in time to hear the bell ring for dinner. Billy Bunter dropped into his seat at the Remove table, with a gasp that was like air escaping from a badly-punctured tyre.

It was a good five minutes before he could start on his dinner. Still, when he did start, he soon made up for lost time. When the Removites came out of the dining-room after dinner Bob Cherry tapped Bunter affectionately on the shoulder.

"Ripping good ideas of yours, raising these funds, Bunter!" he said affably. "I'll tell you what—we'll help you as much as you like after this. Whenever you raise any subscriptions we'll see that you send them off—what?"

Billy Bunter replied only with a snort. The last had been heard of the Bunter Patriotic Fund.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Square as a Die!

MR. QUELCH, the master of the Remove, looked surprised.

There had been a knock at his study door, and, in response to his "Come in!" Fisher T. Fish had entered, carrying in one hand a notebook, and in the other a large biscuit-tin. Mr. Quelch's surprised glance rested on the biscuit-tin. Why the Yankee junior should present himself in his Form-master's study with a biscuit-tin was a mystery.

"Well, Fish?" said the Remove master inquiringly.

"I hope I'm not interrupting you, sir?"

"As a matter of fact, you are. However, what is it?"

"I guess it's something I want to ask your approval of,"

sir. A good idea came into my head—a first-class idea, sir, and very patriotic—but I wanted to submit it to your judgment before carrying it out."

"Indeed! You may go on."

"You see, sir," rattled on Fish glibly, "as a citizen of the Yewnited States, I guess I'm a neutral in this war. But my idea is, sir, that a citizen of the Yewnited States is bound to back up the Old Country—as the song says, sir:

"Motherland—Motherland,
See thy children hand-in-hand!"

"Really, Fish," said the puzzled Form-master, "I do not quite understand you."

"I guess I'll explain, sir. I've had a remittance from my popper—"

"Your what?"

"My popper, sir, in Noo York."

"May I ask what a popper is, Fish?"

Fisher T. Fish with difficulty repressed a snort of disgust. That a man who had the cheek to be a Form-master in a public school should be so densely ignorant as not to know what a popper was made him tired.

"I mean my father, sir."

"Oh, I see! But—"

"My popper has remitted me a first-chop tip," said Fish, "and my idea is, to use it up, sir, in sending chocolate to the troops."

"My dear Fish, that is a very generous resolution!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, greatly surprised. He had never suspected Fisher T. Fish of being generous. "You certainly have my approval."

"Ahem! That isn't all, sir. I guess I want to make a big order of it. And my idea is to raise an equal amount among the fellows."

"Certainly, that is not a bad idea, Fish, though you must not press boys for subscriptions. Everything that is given should be freely offered."

"Oh, quite so, sir! I really think it is a gilt-edged stunt, sir."

"A—a—a what?"

"A ripping wheeze, I mean, sir. We say stunt in the Yewnited States. May I put a notice on the collecting-box, sir, that I have your approval?"

"Certainly, Fish!"

"And perhaps you would be kind enough to start the subscription?" suggested Fish.

"Very good, Fish. I suggest, however, that you should not carry this matter through by yourself: It would be more satisfactory to place it in the hands of an older boy—one of the prefects, for instance."

"I guess I could handle it all right, sir. But if you think best, sir, I'll form a committee of older fellows than myself to see it through."

"Yes, that will certainly be more satisfactory."

Fisher T. Fish put the biscuit-tin on the table; and Mr. Quelch, understanding now what it was for, dropped a half-crown into it.

"Thank you,
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sir! I'm putting your name down to head the list. Mr. Quelch, two-and-six," said Fish, making an entry in his book. "This is very kind of you, sir. Chocolate is an awfully good thing for soldiers on the march, especially when they run short of grub. Thank you very much, sir!"

"Not at all, Fish."

Fisher T. Fish left the study in a state of great satisfaction. His subscription had started well—under the auspices of the Form-master. The suggestion Mr. Quelch had made amounted to a command, and Fish could not venture to disregard it, in case of inquiry afterward by Mr. Quelch. But Fish did not intend to have any senior prefects meddling with his fund. He prided himself upon the fact that he was quite deep enough to deal with Mr. Quelch. He had undertaken to form a committee of older boys than himself. Mr. Quelch understood, by that, a committee of seniors. But there were older boys than Fish in the Remove. Fishy intended to carry out the letter of his promise, and leave the spirit of it to take care of itself.

There was a crowd in the Rag waiting for Fisher T. Fish. They had come there with the intention of ragging the enterprising Yankee—concluding at once that his "Grand Patriotic Meeting" was a new "stunt" for squeezing money out of his schoolfellows, and sticking to it. Probably Fisher T. Fish had foreseen that. But the juniors could hardly rag a movement that had received the benediction of their Form-master.

"Here he is!" exclaimed a dozen voices, as the Yankee junior came into the Rag with the biscuit-tin under his arm.

"What's the swindle this time, Fishy?"

"Who are you spoofing?"

Fisher T. Fish slammed the biscuit-tin down on the table, and pointed to it with a bony forefinger.

"Look at that!" he said.

The juniors looked at it. On the tin was an inscription in large letters:

"GREYFRIARS SOLDIERS' CHOCOLATE FUND,
UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF MR. QUELCH."

"Gentlemen—" began Fish.

"You spoofer!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "You've no right to use Quelch's name!"

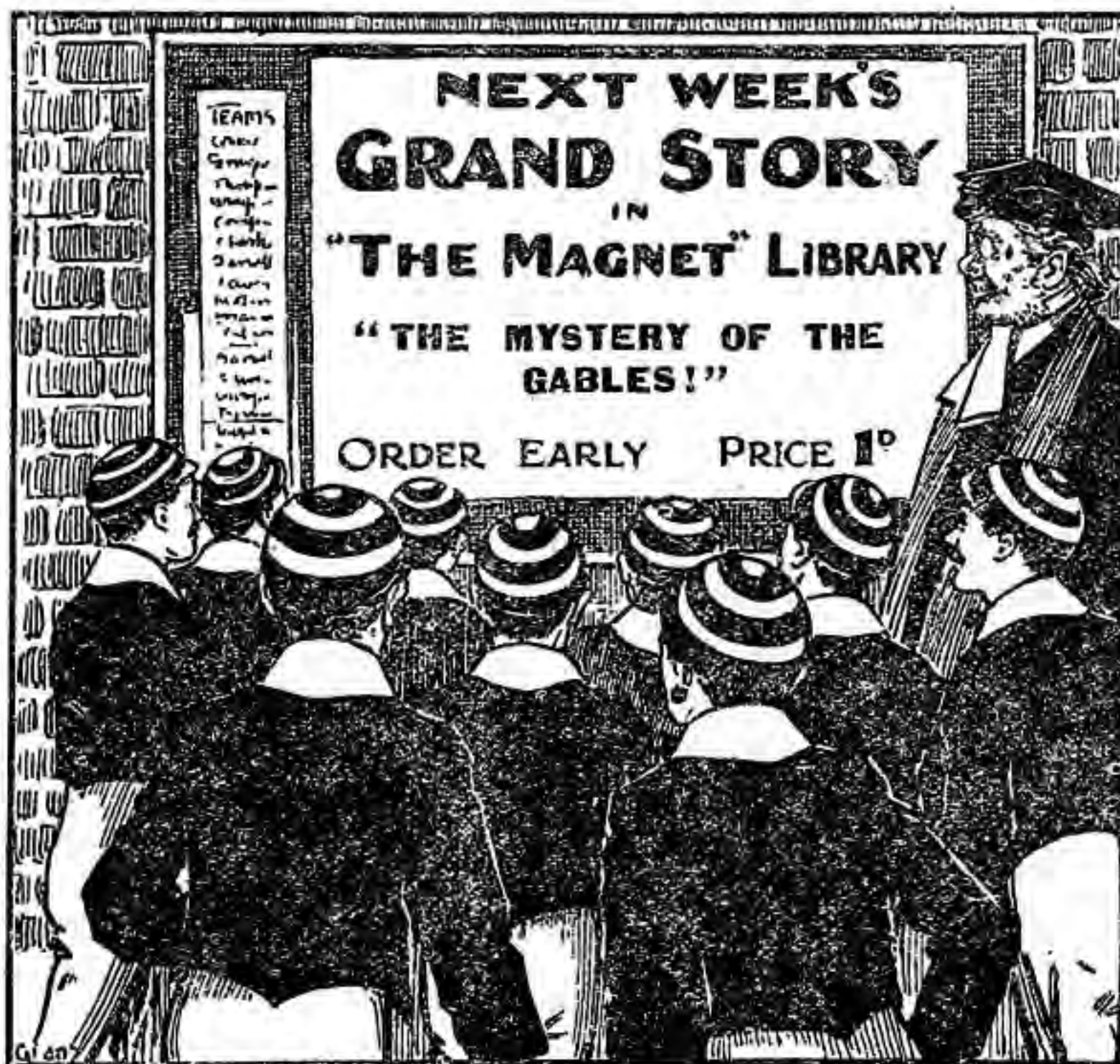
"Mr. Quelch has taken the fund under his patronage," said Fish loftily. "He has subscribed the first half-crown. There's the half-crown, and here's the entry in the book."

"My hat!"

"The hatfulness is terrific! Fishy must be playing gamefully this time!" exclaimed Hurree Singh. "Our venerated Form-master would not payfully subscribe to a Fishy swindle."

Harry Wharton & Co. were puzzled. The ragging did not begin. The Removites decided to hear what Fisher T. Fish had to say first.

"Gentlemen,





"Are not these boys to be punished for their insolence?" stuttered Mr. Grubb. "I should hardly be likely to punish my boys for generously defending a poor woman against an extremely heartless and unscrupulous man, sir!" said the Head, with a flash in his eyes. He touched a bell, and Trotter appeared. "Trotter, kindly show this man out at once." (See Chapter 14.)

allow me to explain. My popper in Noo York has sent me a remittance. I guess I'm whacking it out. Gentlemen, every subscription made to my chocolate fund will be added to by me, out of my own dollars. Got that?"

"Gammon!"

"At Mr. Quelch's suggestion, I am forming a committee to administer the fund——"

"Oh!"

"I hereby call upon three fellows to volunteer to act on the committee——"

"I'm your man!" exclaimed Billy Bunter promptly. "I'll take charge of the money, Fishy."

"Keep your fat paws off that biscuit-tin!" roared Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I want three fellows older than myself. Who's older than I am?"

"I am," said Peter Todd. "Three months in time, and a thousand years in brains."

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"You'll do, Toddy. Mauleverer, too——"

"Begad!" said Lord Mauleverer.

"And Wharton, you're only two days older than I am."

"All serene," said Harry. "But I warn you that if I'm on the committee, this is going to be a fair deal."

"Yaas, begad," said Lord Mauleverer. "None of your larks, Fishy."

"I'll see to that," said Peter Todd. "You can regard me as the solicitor to the fund. Get on, Fishy."

"Of course, it's a square deal!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish indignantly. "Do you think I'm a swindling spoofer like Bunter? The committee will see that the money is expended in chocolate of the first quality, and despatched to Kitchener's Army. It will be up to them to see it done."

"Well, that looks square enough," said Bob Cherry.

"I guess it's square as a die."

"But if it's square, what have you got a hand in it for, Fishy?"

"I guess I'm not hyer to answer goat questions," said Fish loftily. "Listen to me! Every subscription to the fund increased by ten per cent. by me personally. Every fellow who puts up half-a-quid, f'rinstance, will know that I put a shilling to it. And I guess you can see me do it."

"Great Scott!"

"The great-Scottfulness is simply terrific. Fishy is turning over an esteemed new leaf."

"Well, this beats the band!"

The juniors were simply astounded. They had taken it for granted that Fisher T. Fish was on the make again. But this seemed amazingly square. If Fisher T. Fish added ten per cent. to the subscription, and the administration of the fund was in the hands of a committee of three fellows who were known to be above suspicion, it did not seem possible even for the cute and businesslike Fishy to "make" anything. Look at it how they would, the juniors could not see a hole for the business-man of the Remove to creep out of. Fish would be out of pocket to the extent of ten per cent. of the total amount of the fund; there did not seem to be the slightest doubt about that.

It was incredible, but there it was. Harry Wharton & Co. began to feel that they had done Fishy an injustice. They had believed that it was impossible for the cute business-man of the Remove to be "square." But this scheme was, as Bob Cherry remarked, perfectly quadrilateral.

"I guess I've surprised you, what?" remarked Fish.

"You have!" gasped Wharton. "So far as I can see, this isn't a swindle at all."

"Of course it isn't, you jay. It's a patriotic fund, under the patronage of Mr. Quelch. I guess I'll show you I mean business from the word go. There's half-a-crown in the tin. Ten per cent. of half-a-crown is threepence. There's the three D."

Fish clinked three pennies into the tin.

"Fishy, old man," said Bob Cherry, "I beg your pardon. Here's a bob from me."

"And another from me."

"Here's another!"

"Hear, hear!" said Fish. "Gimme time to put my little bit in. No deception, gentlemen. I shove in ten per cent. along with the sub; and you all see me do it, and every amount is entered in this book under your eyes. I guess nothing could be squarer than that."

And, to the amazement of the juniors, Fisher T. Fish kept his word. He even erred on the side of generosity when the sum went into fractions. For instance, ten per cent. of a shilling was a penny and a fraction; and Fish made it three-halfpence. Lord Mauleverer, who rolled in filthy lucre, dropped a sovereign into the tin, and Fish promptly backed it up with a two-shilling piece. The Bounder handed out two sovereigns, with rather a flourish, and Fish added four shillings. Hurree Singh contributed half-a-quid, and Fish put a shilling to it.

Evidently the thing was "square." For every sub was entered immediately into the book, and every sum was on record, for reference; and the committee of three could be trusted to see that the accounts were not cooked.

The subscription was a tremendous success. Every fellow in the Rag shoved in something, excepting Billy Bunter. Bunter couldn't, having been disappointed about a postal-order. Snoop put in a penny, and grinned as he waited for Fish to add ten per cent. of that. Fish made it a halfpenny, proudly announcing that he was going up to fifty per cent. on small contributions.

"Well, this is a wheeze," said Bob Cherry. "If you keep this up, Fishy, you'll be standing more than anybody else."

"I guess that's the stunt; that's what I mean to do," said Fish loftily. "Now, then, any more contributions? You can all begin over again if you like."

"I guess we're done," grinned Peter Todd. "Now let's see how much there is, and—"

"The subscription isn't closed yet," said Fish. "I'm taking this tin round for a bit. The Third and the Fourth and the Shell ought to have a chance. The sub-

scription closes to-morrow evening, when I shall expect the committee in my study to make up the accounts, and take charge of the money. The administration of the fund is wholly in the hands of the committee; I guess I shall wash my hands of it when I've finished collecting."

And Fisher T. Fish walked away with the clinking biscuit-tin, leaving his Form-fellows overcome with astonishment.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Balance-Sheet!

THE next day Fisher T. Fish's chocolate fund was going very strong.

Some of the fellows put in contributions for the mere sake of making Fishy shell-out. But Fishy took it quite cheerfully. For every sub, he made an entry in his little book, and clinked ten per cent. into the biscuit-tin.

The juniors had not recovered from their amazement.

Harry Wharton and Mauleverer and Todd, the committee, meant to see that the money was expended for the purpose for which it was raised; there wasn't going to be the slightest doubt about that. If the cute Yankee had any "stunt" up his sleeve for "freezing" to the fund, or any part of it, they were quite prepared to deal with him in the most drastic manner, by "methods of barbarism" if necessary.

As Fisher T. Fish could not fail to be aware of that, they concluded that, for once, F. T. Fish was acting on the square.

The biscuit-tin occupied a prominent place on the table in No. 14 that day, and a good many fellows came along with contributions. After morning lessons, Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth dropped in. They were very suspicious—they knew Fishy. Fisher T. Fish, with untiring patience, explained the whole scheme to them, and cheerfully showed his account-book with the entries marked in it.

"Blessed if I can understand it," said Temple. "This'll cost you two or three pounds, if it's all square."

"I guess I'm prepared for that!"

"And you're shelling out the ten per cent. every time?" demanded Fry.

"Yep! You can see me do it."

"And Wharton and Todd and Mauleverer dispose of the fund?"

"Sure!"

"Well, that's square enough. There's five bob."

Fisher T. Fish added sixpence at once.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "And there's a boblet."

Fish clinked three-halfpence into the tin.

"Well, this beats me," said Temple. "But it must be square—Wharton wouldn't have a hand in a swindle. I wish you luck, Fishy!"

"Thanks!"

Temple, Dabney & Co. departed convinced, but very much puzzled. Coker of the Fifth came along later. Coker, too, wanted convincing, but he was open to conviction, and he put in a half-sovereign. Coker had an uncle in the war, so he was naturally interested in war funds. Coker watched Fish make the entry in the book and add a shilling to the half-sovereign.

"Well, this takes the cake," said Coker. "I take back some of the things I've thought about you, Fishy."

"Oh, that's all right," said Fish airily. "You can always depend on me for a square deal. That's where I live, sir."

During the day the fund under the patronage of Mr. Quelch progressed remarkably. After lessons Fisher T. Fish, who was blessed with any amount of nerve, made a round of the masters' studies, and "squeezed" contributions from Mr. Prout, and Mr. Capper, and Mr. Blaine, and Mr. Twigg. He tried the Sixth Form passage, and, after due explanation, several of the seniors "whacked out" contributions. Fisher T. Fish seemed likely to raise enough cash to purchase chocolate enough for half the New Army.

As the time drew near for the committee meeting in Fish's study, there was considerable excitement in the Remove on the subject.

It was all square—square as a die, apparently; but the juniors knew their Fish so well that there was a lingering doubt in some minds—in the back of their minds, as it were.

Some of the fellows could not help thinking that Fishy had some sort of a scheme for sticking to some of the cash. Otherwise, what had he done it for? The gentle Alonzo Todd suggested that Fishy had seen the error of his ways, and had turned over a new leaf, and resolved to be a model character, and it really looked as if Alonzo was right. And Fish was gratified with the assurance that Alonzo's celebrated Uncle Benjamin would highly approve of his conduct.

At seven o'clock—the hour fixed for the committee meeting to take over the fund—quite a little army marched to Fish's study. But the Yankee junior was on guard at the door.

"No admittance except on business!" he announced. "Members of the committee, this way, please! Other galoots not admitted."

Wharton and Peter Todd and Lord Mauleverer came in. They were ready for business. Fisher T. Fish unmercifully closed the door on the rest, and locked it.

"Sit down, gentlemen," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess we're going to have this in order—all fair and square."

"I guess we are," said Peter Todd, with emphasis.

"Where's the cash?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Ahem!"

"Begad, I don't see the biscuit-tin!" remarked Lord Mauleverer, blinking round in his sleepy way. "What have you done with the cash, Fishy?"

"I guess the durocks will be produced at the right moment," said Fisher T. Fish. "I want you to go over the accounts first. I've got 'em all written out, fair and square. If there's anything you don't understand, just point it out, and I shall be pleased to explain. We're running this thing on business lines—pure business lines."

The committee began to look suspicious. The absence of the cash, and the mention of "business"—which, with Fisher T. Fish, covered a multitude of sins—made them so. Was it possible, after all, that the "slim" Fishy was "ringing in a cold deal on them," as he would have expressed it in the American language.

"Not so much gas," said Peter Todd; "let's see the money."

"All in good time. In the first place, it's understood that the committee give their services free of charge?"

"Eh?"

"I mean, you galoots don't put in a claim for expenses on the fund?"

The juniors stared.

"Of course we don't," said Wharton angrily. "Do you think we're on the make?"

"All serene—keep your wool on! Nothing like having everything out plain, in business matters," said Fish smoothly. "That's settled, then."

"Begad!" remarked Lord Mauleverer, who had apparently been thinking—an unaccustomed exercise with Mauly. "It looks to me, you know, as if Fishy is a jolly long time producing that cash, my dear fellows."

"He's going to produce it," said Peter Todd grimly, "and we're not going to wait much longer, either."

Fisher T. Fish coughed.

"I guess the cash is here," he said. "But I want you galoots to go over the statement first, and see that all's square."

"Well, hand out the statement."

Fisher T. Fish produced a sheet of impot paper, nicely ruled and made up. He laid it on the table before the committee with a flourish.

"There you are!" he said.

And the committee gazed upon the statement of accounts, their eyes growing wider and wider as they gazed. For the statement ran:

F. T. FISH CHOCOLATE FUND.

			£	s.	d.
Total contributions	...	...	11	0	0
Ten per cent. bonus	...	...	1	2	0
Total	...	...	12	2	0
Personal expenses	...	...	5	0	0
Net	...	...	7	2	0

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ONE PENNY.

While the committee stared blankly at that business-like statement, Fisher T. Fish laid upon the table the sum of seven pounds two shillings.

"Count that!" he said briskly. "I reckon you'll find that correct!"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Legal Proceedings!

FISHER T. FISH rubbed his hands with an air of satisfaction. The committee stared at the statement of accounts, then they stared at the seven pounds two shillings, and then they stared at Fisher T. Fish.

They could hardly believe their eyes and their ears at first.

"Better count the money," said Fish. "I believe in having matters of this sort on a business footing. You can't be too careful in financial matters. That sum—seven pounds two shillings—is in your hands—you're responsible for it. You are to see it spent on chocolate, and forwarded to the Front. My part of the business ends here."

"Does it?" gasped Peter Todd. "Not quite, I think. Where's the rest of the money?"

"Eh? What money?"

"There's five pounds missing."

Fisher T. Fish looked tired.

"I guess that statement accounts for every penny," he said. "Here's the account-book with the list of contributions. If you go over 'em carefully, you'll see that the exact amount is eleven pounds. To that is added a ten per cent. bonus, subscribed by me out of my own pocket. That makes twelve pounds two shillings. Deducting five pounds for personal expenses, that leaves a net result of seven pound two. I don't reckon anything could be clearer than that."

"P-p-personal expenses!" ejaculated Wharton, finding his voice at last.

"Yep!"

"Begad! We ought to have known he was swindling," said Lord Mauleverer, with a shake of the head. "He's spoofed us often enough, my dear fellows."

"Who's swindling?" demanded Fish hotly.

"You are, dear boy."

"That is a libellous statement, Mauleverer. If you can find anything wrong in the accounts, you're welcome to point it out."

"I'll do that," said Peter Todd; "I'm lawyer for the fund. It was not stated there would be any deduction for personal expenses."

"If you know anything about the law, you know that that's not essential," said Fish. "Nobody ever states that in advance. Why, in every street in London there are cadgers with collecting-boxes, making collections on the same lines. So long as a certain proportion of the money collected is devoted to the fund, the law can't touch them."

"It can't be so," said Wharton.

"Ask Toddy—he knows all about the law, I guess,"

Peter nodded.

"It's so," he said. "Lots of thieves are making money out of the war like that, and they can't be touched. Everybody ought to be careful that he only gives money to a bona-fide fund, of course."

"I guess this is all square," said Fish. "There's a giddy lawyer's opinion on it. I calculate you don't want more than that."

"Yes—we want a little more," said Wharton. "We want another five quid."

"I guess you can want."

"You've whacked out one-pound-two in bonuses, and you've collared five pounds," said Wharton, looking at the statement again. "So you make a clear profit out of the fund of three pounds eighteen shillings. Is that it?"

"Not profit—expenses."

"What expenses have you been put to?"

"I guess I provided the collecting-box."

"The use of it," said Todd

"Exactly. I can charge what I like for the use of my collecting-box for two days, unless there is a special agreement to the contrary. But that's only an item. There's my time."

"Your time!" ejaculated Wharton.

"Sure! I calculate—I've got it down in black and white—I've put in ten hours solid work for this fund. At merely ten shillings an hour that would work out at five pounds for time alone. But I guess I'm letting the fund off lightly. I'm not on the make. I'm out for philanthropy this time."

"You spoofing thief—"

"Hyer, draw it mild! I guess I can't give my valuable time for nix!"

"You'll be doing time some day," said Todd; "and you won't be doing it for nix—you'll be doing it for stealing."

"I guess—"

Harry Wharton rose to his feet.

"Where's the five pounds?" he asked.

"I guess my money's in a safe place."

"Are you going to produce it?"

"Nope."

"Then you're going to be hammered until you do."

"Look hyer, that isn't business!"

"You thieving rotter!"

"Keep off, you jay! I guess if I get my mad up, I'll mop up the study with you. And I calculate that if you hammer me black and blue and pink, you won't catch sight of my five pounds. I know how to look after my money, sir. You hear me?"

"Hold on!" said Peter Todd. "There's plenty of time for hammering. We'll settle this matter legally—quite according to law. Hold on, Wharton!"

"Look here—" roared Wharton.

"Shush! Let's be legal," said Peter Todd. "Fishy has acted legally—he's as legal a thief as you could find outside prison. Now we're going to nail him legally, and Fishy will be satisfied. Let the other fellows in."

"I guess—"

Wharton opened the door. He was willing to let the lawyer of the Remove take the matter in hand; but upon one point he was resolved—that the schemer should hand over the whole amount of the money.

The crowd in the passage came swarming in. They were eager to know how the committee was getting on. They had heard Wharton's raised voice, and guessed that all was not going smoothly. And they were prepared to make mincemeat of Fisher T. Fish, if needed.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the row?" Bob Cherry inquired.

"Fishy stealing again?" asked Squiff.

Wharton held up the balance-sheet.

There was a roar of wrath at once. Fisher T. Fish dodged round the table. He was getting alarmed. It was always a difficulty in his little schemes that the other fellows had no understanding of business as understood in "Noo" York.

"Why, that beats Bunter!" exclaimed Nugent. "Bunter's a model of honesty compared with that! Coliar him!"

"Squeeze the quids out of him!" shouted Tom Brown.

"Order!" rapped out Peter Todd. "Gentlemen, calmness, I beg! Close the door, and calm yourselves! This matter cannot be settled in a temper. It must be settled by legal proceedings."

"I guess that's correct," gasped Fisher T. Fish. "You hear that, you jays? Toddy knows all about the law. He knows that balance-sheet is all right."

"We all know that you're not sticking to any of the money, you thafe of the world," said Micky Desmond. "That's settled."

"Oh, bump him, and go through his pockets!" said Bolsover major impatiently.

"Order—order!"

"Give Toddy his head," said Bob Cherry. "Toddy will settle him. We can bump him after he's been condemned according to law."

"Go it, Toddy!"

"Gentlemen, although there is no doubt that Fish is an unscrupulous rascal, he has kept within the law in

picking our pockets in this especial manner. There are two ways of picking pockets—one you can be sent to prison for, and one you can't be sent to prison for. This is the latter kind. However, there are ways and means of dealing with rogues of this description."

"Look hyer, you jay—"

"Anyone found in the act of collecting money, unless officially authorised, may be treated as a vagrant, a rogue, and a vagabond. I call upon Fish to produce his authorisation from any public body in this realm."

"I—I guess—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The accused cannot produce any official authorisation for making a public collection of money," said Peter Todd. "The accused is therefore liable to be dealt with as a rogue and a vagabond."

"I calculate—"

"According to the ancient law of England, rogues and vagabonds shall be confined in the stocks for the space of three days, and may be fined at the discretion of the court. I suggest five pounds as a suitable fine for this rogue and vagabond."

"Hear, hear!"

"This rogue is, therefore, sentenced to a fine of five pounds, and detention in the stocks for the space of three days."

"Bravo!"

"Hold on!" roared Fisher T. Fish. "That ain't legal. This isn't a court. I protest against these proceedings. There's no jurisdiction."

"If the accused is not satisfied with the jurisdiction under which he is tried, it is open to him to appeal to the Court of the King's Bench," said Peter Todd calmly. "His legal advisers will doubtless take the necessary steps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look hyer—"

"Collar him!"

"I order the sentence of the court to be carried out at once," said Peter Todd. "The accused is not allowed to raise any question of jurisdiction. I am prepared to consider any objection made in writing by his counsel."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's your counsel, Fishy?"

"You—you jays—"

"Kindly place the accused under arrest."

"You bet!"

Fisher T. Fish was placed under arrest immediately. A dozen hands grasped him, and he was yanked out from behind the table. And to judge by the wild howls that proceeded from the accused he found being placed under arrest a very painful process.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

In the Stocks!

"PRISONER—"

"Oh, you jay!"

"Are you prepared to pay the amount of the fine?"

"Nope!" yelled Fisher T. Fish.

"Then you will be placed in the stocks until the fine is paid. Gentlemen, pray do not bump the prisoner; that is not legal. Bumping is not one of the punishments recognised by law. Place the prisoner in the stocks."

"But where are the giddy stocks?"

"We shall have to make some. Keep the vagabond secure—see that he don't bolt. We can soon make some stocks. Where's your tool-chest, Squiff?"

"Here you are!" grinned Squiff.

"This desk belongs to Fishy. Pitch it over so—"

Crash!

"Now saw two big holes in the lid large enough for the prisoner's legs to pass through."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—don't you dare to saw holes in my desk!" shrieked Fish.

"Silence in court!"

"I tell you, I—I guess, you jays, you mugwumps—you—groooooooh!"

A cushion was jammed over Fish's head, and he spluttered into silence.

Squiff, who was an amateur carpenter among his other gifts, got to work on the spot. The lid of the desk was large enough for the purpose. In next to no time Squiff's brace and bit bored two holes in it, and then he started with a saw. The crowd in the study looked on with great interest, some of them sitting on the prisoner to make sure that he did not escape.

When Squiff had sawed two huge circular holes in the lid of the desk, Fisher T. Fish's long, thin legs were thrust through them. The Removites were quite enjoying the legal proceedings now. Fish's necktie and braces were used to bind his legs in position in the improvised stocks. The big desk lay on its side, with its contents streaming over the floor, recklessly trampled on by many feet. Fisher T. Fish's legs passed through the holes in the lid, and were firmly secured there. The Yankee junior sat on the floor and simply spluttered with wrath. He made a clutch at the bonds, to untie them, but his hands were promptly seized and tied behind his back.

"Gentlemen, the proceedings are now at an end," said Peter Todd. "The prisoner will remain in the stocks for three days—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Clear the court!"

With howls of laughter the Removites streamed out of the study, leaving Fisher T. Fish in the stocks. Fish glared after them with a homicidal expression on his face.

"Lemme outer this!" he yelled.

"Good-bye, Fishy!"

"Yow! I'm getting the cramp!"

"You're welcome to it! No charge!"

"You heard the sentence of the court!" said Peter Todd sternly. "You remain in the stocks till the fine is paid."

"Oh, you jay!"

"The fine, when paid, will be handed over to the chocolate fund."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I'll yaup for help, you mugwump!"

"Yaup away!" said Peter cheerfully; and he closed the door of the study, leaving Fisher T. Fish to "yaup" as much as he liked.

The unhappy business-man of the Remove wriggled in his bonds. But he could not get loose. Harry Wharton & Co. were Boy Scouts, and they knew how to tie knots. And their knots were altogether too much for Fishy. If the stocks had been real stocks of the old-fashioned kind he could not have been held more securely.

"Oh, Jerusalem!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "What a go! The jays! The rotters! As if a galoot wasn't entitled to his expenses—all my valuable time, too! What the thunder do they think galoots raise funds for, except to get their expenses out of them? The blithering jays! Oh, yow!"

For some time Fishy hoped that the juniors would return. But they did not return. The committee had carried off the seven pounds two shillings with them. Squiff, who shared that study with Fisher T. Fish, went into No. 1 to do his preparation with Wharton and Nugent, so as to leave the prisoner in the stocks on his "lonely own."

Fish thought of yelling for help. But he refrained. Certainly if a master had found him in the stocks there would have been trouble for the cheerful youths who had inflicted upon him those legal proceedings. But then the whole story would have come out. Fisher T. Fish might, or might not, feel easy in his conscience about keeping five pounds from the fund under the head of expenses. His conscience was a remarkably easy-going one. But he knew that Mr. Quelch would not be satisfied—indeed, that he would be terribly angry if he discovered the use Fish had put his name to. Fisher T. Fish would rather have remained in the stocks all night, then have explained to Mr. Quelch how he had "worked" the "gilt-edged stunt" to his own advantage.

"Oh, the jays—the Thugs—the wasters!" groaned Fish. "How long is this hyer going on? Oh, Jerusalem!"

It seemed to be going on permanently. Sometimes Fishy heard the sound of laughter in the passage, but no one came to the study. It was past the time for Fish to begin his prep, and if he did not do his preparation it meant trouble in the Form-room the next day. But he certainly could not do his prep while he was in the stocks.

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ONE
PENNY.

His faint hope that the juniors would relent soon died away. They meant business, and Fishy, as a business-man, ought to have approved of that. But he didn't.

Two hours passed, and then the Yankee junior could stand it no longer. It would be bed-time soon, and if he was not released he would be looked for and found—and then it would all come out! And, whatever happened, one thing was quite certain—Mr. Quelch would not allow him to keep that five pounds for expenses. It was quite probable that he would be flogged. Fisher T. Fish yelled at last:

"Come hyer, you galoots!"

There was no reply, and he yelled away. The study door was opened at last by Peter Todd. He looked in inquiringly.

"Ready to pay your fine?" he asked.

"Look hyer, Toddy!"

"Yes or no?"

"Nope!" said Fish desperately.

Slam! The door closed again. Fisher T. Fish howled to Todd to come back, but it was ten minutes before that judge reappeared.

"It's getting near bed-time!" groaned Fish. "I guess I've got the cramp! Look hyer! I'll go halves! I'll have two pound ten exes—"

"Good-bye!"

"Oh, Jerusalem! You've got me by the short hairs!" gasped Fish. "Lemme out of this, and I guess I'll give in! I'll only keep the amount of the bonus."

"You won't," said Todd coolly. "You offered that bonus of your own free will, my tulip, and that bonus has been paid, and can't be withdrawn. Five pounds wanted, please!"

"Why, you—you jay!" shrieked Fisher T. Fish. "At that rate I shall be one pound two out of pocket."

"That's your whack in the chocolate fund."

"Blow the chocolate fund!" howled Fish.

"You don't seem to think very much of your own fund," said Todd, in surprise. "Only a few hours ago you were calling it a gilt-edged stunt."

"Will you lemme out, you mugwump?"

"Certainly; when you've paid your fine."

"I say, Toddy, old man, lemme keep the bonus," pleaded Fisher T. Fish pathetically.

"Not a stiver."

"I—I can't lose money over the deal, you know," said Fish, with a groan of heart-felt anguish at the thought.

"Looks to me as if you must," said Todd. "But please yourself."

"Look at my desk, too—that'll cost ten bob for a new lid!"

"More than that, I should think," said Peter calmly.

"Oh, you jay, lemme out!"

"Hallo, bed-time," said Peter Todd, looking at his watch. "I'm afraid I must love you and leave you, Fishy. Good-night!"

"Hold on—lemme out—I'll pay the quids!"

"Wait till I call the rest of the committee, then."

"Lemme out—I'm cramped, you slabsided jay!"

Peter Todd called the other members of the committee. They came, smiling, with most of the Remove after them.

"The prisoner has decided to pay the fine," said Peter Todd.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Where's the cash, Fishy?"

"Yow-ow!" groaned Fishy. "It's in the crayon-box in the drawer of the desk—hidden under the crayons! Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd extracted the five "quids" from their hiding-place. They were added to the seven pounds two shillings amid general satisfaction. Then Fisher T. Fish was released from the stocks, and the Removites crowded off to their dormitory, chuckling. The rapacious business-man of the Remove had over-reached himself once more. When he came into the dormitory, looking as if he found life a weary burden, he was greeted with a howl of laughter.

Fisher T. Fish turned in without a word. He was too dispirited to talk. There was a buzz of talk for a long

time on the subject of the chocolate fund all directed at Fisher T. Fish. But Fish was not to be drawn. He lay in glum silence. And when the rest of the Remove had dropped off to sleep, Fisher T. Fish still lay awake in a most unhappy mood. His gilt-edged stunt had worked out in the loss of one pound two shillings in cash, two hours in the stocks, and ten shillings' worth of damage to his property—which could not be called a howling success.

For quite a long time Fisher T. Fish lay thinking of the one pound two, and when he dropped off to sleep at last he dreamed of it. In the morning he looked-woeful and dispirited. Like Rachel of old, Fisher T. Fish mourned for that which was lost, and would not be comforted.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Legal Assistance Required!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! That's a little Chirpey!"

It was Wednesday afternoon in the following week. The Famous Five of the Remove were about to leave the gateway for an afternoon's expedition when a little "nipper" of about eight came up. The chums of the Remove recognised him as one of the olive-branches of the Chirpey household.

They stopped at once. They could see that the little chap was coming into the school, and there were signs of woe in his chubby face.

"Hallo, kid," said Harry Wharton kindly. "Coming to pay us a visit—what?"

A chubby fist was introduced into a moist eye.

"Boo-hoo!" said Master Chirpey.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the water-works about?" asked Bob Cherry. "What's the matter, kidlet?"

"Boo-hoo!"

"Something wrong at home, I suppose," said Wharton, with a frown. "That cad Nosey Parker worrying them again, perhaps." He patted the little fellow on his head. "Now, then, kid, tell us what's the row. We'll see you through."

"It'll be right as rain," urged Squiff. "Now, out with it, kiddy!"

"Muvver wants Master Todd."

"Our blessed lawyer wanted," grinned Nugent. "All serene, kid—muvver shall have Todd. Come in with us and we'll take you to him."

The Famous Five marched Master Chirpey in. They had been about to start on a ramble over the cliffs, ending up with tea at Cliff House. But they were quite willing to put off their ramble to serve the interests of the Chirpey household. They flattered themselves that they would be able to deal with Mr. Nosey Parker again and finish with him before the hour at which Marjorie and Clara expected them at Cliff House School.

Peter Todd was in his study, devoting his time once more to "mugging" up the fearsome contents of the law-books his thoughtful parent had sent him. Those books made the other fellows' heads ache simply to look at them; but Peter Todd seemed to thrive on them. They had other uses, too, for which their learned compilers had never intended them. With the heaviest volume Peter Todd had dealt with Fisher T. Fish, when that cheerless person came in inquiring whether Todd meant to pay anything towards the mending of his desk. Fisher T. Fish had begun by declaring that he wasn't going to pay the cabinet-maker's bill. By the time Peter had landed two or three swipes with that legal volume, Fish felt that he was likely to have to pay a doctor's bill as well as a cabinet-maker's bill. Indeed, if he had not fled from the study without standing upon the order of his going, there might have been a coffin-maker's bill to pay, too!

Peter Todd, much pleased with that legal victory, was settling down to study, when Billy Bunter came in. Bunter had barely time to state that it was up to Toddy to lend him half-a-crown, after the way he had whacked out his currency note for the Chirpey fund. Then the legal volume was brought into play again, and Billy Bunter rolled out of the study at a terrific rate. The cheerful Peter chuckled, and settled down to work, feeling

ing reasonably secure from any further visits from William George Bunter or Fisher T. Fish.

But he had barely concentrated his mighty brain upon Rex V. Hooker, Wooker, and Others, when the door was kicked open with a bang, and Bob Cherry came in, followed by his chums and Master Chirpey. Peter Todd gave a howl of wrath.

"You thundering duffers! I'm swotting! Gerrou!"

"You're wanted—here—hallo, hallo, hallo! Wharrer you at?" roared Bob, as Peter swung the fearsome volume aloft. "Here, hold on—"

"Outside!"

"Lawyer wanted!" shouted Wharton. "Client come for legal advice, Toddy!"

Peter Todd lowered the volume.

"Oh, that alters the case!" he said. "Always open to give legal advice to young innocents. Hallo, what is that kid doing here?"

"He's the client!" grinned Squiff.

"Boo-hoo!" said the client.

"Oh, good!" said Peter Todd. "Don't howl, young'un. Nothing to howl about when you come to see your legal adviser. Give him some toffee, somebody."

Master Chirpey was provided with a chunk of toffee, and he ceased to boo-hoo. His chubby face brightened up very considerably.

"Your mater sent you?" asked Todd.

"Muvver sent me to see Mister Todd."

"Good! What's the trouble?"

"Please Mr. Grubb is putting a man in!"

"Putting a man in?" said Peter. "My hat! Then we'll just come along and put a man out. Who's Mr. Grubb—landlord?"

"Man muvver pays six shillings every Saturday."

"That must be the landlord," remarked Nugent.

"Although not a legal definition, undoubtedly it means the landlord," said Peter Todd loftily. "So's he's putting a man in, is he? Is the man there yet?"

"Please he's coming this afternoon."

"So are we—you chaps coming to help?" asked Peter.

"Yes, rather!"

"The helpfulness will be terrific. Shall we take some cricketful-stumps, my esteemed Toddy, in case there should be some scrapfulness?"

"There won't be any scrap. There's an institution in this country called the law," said Peter Todd. "We'll give old Grubb law. He knows the law as well as I do, but, of course, he knows Mrs. Chirpey doesn't. Kim on!"

"I say, can you really stop him, Toddy?" asked Squiff, in great admiration.

Peter gave a snort.

"Stop him! You'll jolly well see!"

Peter Todd reached for his cap, and started out of the study. The Famous Five followed him, keenly interested. Bob Cherry led Master Chirpey by one chubby and somewhat sticky hand—the other chubby hand, which was still more sticky, was holding the toffee. A considerable amount of toffee was spread over the chubby face, too, and Master Chirpey had forgotten his woes.

The chums of the Remove walked down to Friardale at a good rate. When Master Chirpey's little legs were tired, Bob hoisted him on his shoulder. By the time they reached the little cottage in the village, there was as much toffee in Bob Cherry's hair as there was upon Master Chirpey's face.

They found Mrs. Chirpey in the cottage-porch, with two or three sympathetic neighbours. The juniors saluted Mrs. Chirpey very politely.

"Now, what's the trouble, ma'am?" asked Peter Todd, in his business-like way.

Mrs. Chirpey wiped her eyes.

"I sent Jacky to tell you, Master Todd, because you made me promise to tell you if I was in trouble again."

"Quite so—that's what I wanted. And depend on it, we'll see you through," said Peter. "What is it—rent?"

"Yes, Master Todd; but I don't want you to give me any money. It isn't that—I couldn't take it. But seeing as you know so much about the law—and the way you stopped them taking my bits of things last week—"

"Exactly! I'm your man!" said Peter.

"Because I thought it over, and I said to Mrs. Blookey, that if there was a law to keep Mr. Gordon from taking my things, there might be a law to keep Mr. Grubb from taking them," explained Mrs. Chirpey. "Didn't I, Mrs. Blookey?"

"Which you did, Mrs. Chirpey!" corroborated Mrs. Blookey.

"So I thought I would send Jacky to speak to you, sir, and ask you——"

"Best thing you ever did in your life," said Peter Todd. "I'm just the man you want. Who's Mr. Grubb?"

"He's the bailiff and rent-collector, and he owns these 'ouses," explained Mrs. Chirpey, "and when my Jack was at home, we always paid up every Saturday regular, and Mrs. Blookey knows it."

"Well I knows it," assented Mrs. Blookey.

"But what with the hire-purchase, and little Jacky havin' been ill, and my father being out of work," said Mrs. Chirpey, "and the allowance being only half what we used to have when my husband was at home, I haven't been able to keep it up, and I've tried hard enough—Mrs. Blookey knows that!"

"Goodness knows you 'ave, Mary Jane!" said Mrs. Blookey.

"And there's four weeks owing," said Mrs. Chirpey tearfully, "and Mr. Grubb has been threatening, and now he's going to distrain."

"The rotter!" murmured Bob Cherry. "While old Chirpey is away fighting for him!"

"The rotterfulness of the esteemed Grubb is shockful. It was a mistake not to bring a cricket-stump."

"Mr. Grubb's been round," pursued Mrs. Chirpey, "and he said, said he, that if I didn't pay him to-day, he was coming at three o'clock with his man to distrain."

"We're here first," remarked Harry Wharton. "It's close on three. What are we going to do, Toddy?"

"We're going to keep Mr. Grubb's hand from picking and stealing," said Peter Todd. "I understand that the rent of your house is less than fifty pounds a year, Mrs. Chirpey?"

"Bless you, sir, yes—six shillings a week."

"Then you're as safe as houses," said Peter Todd. "Your sticks are as safe as if you had them in the Bank of England. I'll talk to the Grubb-bird!"

"Oh, Master Todd——"

"Cheer up!" said Bob Cherry. "Toddy's our tame lawyer, you know, and he knows all about it. He'll simply eat Grubb."

"Is that the man, Mrs. Chirpey?" asked Peter, as a tall, thin, miserable-looking man in rusty black came in at the gate.

Mrs. Chirpey wiped her eyes with her apron. In spite of Peter Todd's assurance, the sight of the cadaverous gentleman filled her with terror. Mrs. Blookey, however, shook a large fist at the rusty man as he came up to the door, with a seedy-looking man at his heels.

"That's him, Master Todd," murmured Mrs. Chirpey. "Leave him to me."

And Peter Todd swung round and faced the man in black, while the Famous Five lined up in the little porch. If Toddy's legal arguments failed, they were prepared to pitch Mr. Grubb out on his neck if he attempted to enter the cottage. Whether that proceeding would be quite legal they did not stop to think.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

All Serene!

MR. GRUBB stared at the Greyfriars fellows. They returned his stare cheerfully.

Peter Todd raised his cap with exceeding politeness. Peter Todd preferred to do things politely; it was more legal.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" he said, in a honeyed voice.

"Good-afternoon!" snapped Mr. Grubb, very shortly.

"Mr. Grubb, I understand?"

"Yes. Please stand aside; I want to speak to this woman!"

"As Mrs. Chirpey's legal adviser, I request you to address your observations to me," said Peter Todd, with a manner that his pater, the solicitor, could not possibly have improved upon. The look that came over Mr. Grubb's cadaverous face made the juniors chuckle. He

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had not been prepared to find Mrs. Chirpey in possession of a legal adviser at all—and certainly not a legal adviser of fifteen, in etons. He stared, as well he might.

"What's that?" snapped Mr. Grubb.

"You are afflicted with deafness?" asked Todd urbanely. "Very well, I will raise my voice."

"I am not——"

"I don't mind a bit; I have a deaf study-mate, and I'm quite used to it."

"I am not deaf!" roared Mr. Grubb.

"Dear me! Then surely you must have heard me state that I am Mrs. Chirpey's legal adviser, and that I request you to address your observations to me?"

Mr. Grubb seemed to experience some difficulty in breathing. Apparently there was something about Peter Todd that annoyed him.

"I did not come here to bandy words with a parcel of schoolboys!" jerked out Mr. Grubb at last. "I am here to distrain for four weeks' rent, Mrs. Chirpey. You have been given every opportunity to pay——"

"'Ow can I pay the rent reglar when my man's away at the war?" said Mrs. Chirpey, in tears again. "There's only 'arf as much money coming in, and there's only one less mouth to feed, sir."

"That is no business of mine. I have to live, my good woman. I did not invest in these buildings with the object of letting them rent free?"

"What would become of them if the Germans got here?" demanded Bob Cherry.

"Don't address me!"

"What would you do if Chirpey and Chirpey's chums weren't over there fighting for you, you ungrateful beast?" demanded Squiff.

Mr. Grubb turned purple.

"You insolent young rascal! Mrs. Chirpey, I ask you for the last time, will you pay your rent, or will you not pay your rent?"

"'Ow can I when I haven't the money, sir?" said Mrs. Chirpey wretchedly. "There's Mr. Gordon 'as took all I had."

"You see, you're not the only vulture in the place," explained Peter Todd.

"What!"

"I mean, there are other rascals of your kidney playing the same rotten game!"

"You—you——" stuttered Mr. Grubb, almost beside himself. "I will complain to your headmaster of this insolence! I know you are Greyfriars boys. I will go up to the school. Judkins, is that van coming?"

"Coming, sir," said the seedy man.

"The van won't be wanted," said Peter Todd coolly. "Mr. Grubb, you are a scoundrel!"

"Boy!"

"You are breaking the law, depending upon this poor woman's ignorance of it to escape punishment," pursued Peter Todd. "Luckily, Mrs. Chirpey has had legal advice. Allow me to recall to your memory, Mr Snubb——"

"My name is Grubb, you insolent young rascal!"

"What's in a name?" said Peter. "The matter before the court is not your name, but your game, and that game is going to be nipped in the bud, Mr. Hubb. Allow me to recall your recollection, as I was remarking when you interrupted me so rudely, that there is in this country an institution known as the House of Commons. Well, sir, in the midst of the usual escape the gas in that historic place, the honourable members have found time to pass the Courts Emergency Powers Act——"

Mr. Grubb started.

"Under that Act," continued Peter Todd calmly, "execution cannot be levied on rents below fifty pounds a year!"

"You—you——"

"If the tenant can show that inability to pay is due to the war," added Peter Todd. "In this case there is no shadow of doubt on that point."

Mr. Grubb almost choked. The Friardale bailiff was in the habit of carrying matters with a high hand among the poor folk of Friardale, and it was probable that he broke the law every other day, safe in the ignorance

and poverty of his victims. But in the schoolboy lawyer of Greyfriars he had met his match.

"You will proceed to distrain upon Mrs. Chirpey's property at your peril," said Peter Todd. "You know all about the new Act as much as I do, but you knew that Mrs. Chirpey didn't, and you were going to take a scoundrelly advantage of it."

"I—I—I—"

"So long as Mrs. Chirpey's inability to pay is due to the war you cannot levy execution for rent, and you know it, and if the war should last ten years you will be bottled up for exactly ten years," said Peter Todd. "In those circumstances you may be driven to the awful resource of doing honest work for a living. I am sorry for you. I know it would give you a pain to be honest. But the law must take its course."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Grubb's seedy follower was grinning behind his hand. Mr. Grubb looked as if he had an attack of apoplexy coming on.

"Mrs. Chirpey," said Peter, "if this man should attempt to enter your house, lock the door and send for a policeman, the same as in the case of Nosey Parker. If they should take you by surprise and collar your things, I promise you that my pater will take up the case, and bring an action for illegal distraint, and get damages out of that skunk!"

Mr. Grubb's seedy man gurgled, and turned away quickly to escape his master's fiery eye. Mr. Grubb clenched his fists, and glared at Peter Todd. Peter put his smiling face quite close to Mr. Grubb.

"You'd like to hit me?" he said sweetly. "Hit away! There's my chivvy! I warn you that it will cost you a pretty penny, my grubby tulip! My pater isn't a solicitor for nothing. Why don't you hit? There's quite an army of witnesses, and you couldn't find a better occasion. I won't hit back. Honour bright. Punch away! I'll go for your pocket in return."

Mr. Grubb lowered his raised hand.

"I shall complain to your headmaster of your insolence!" he snorted. And he turned and strode away, signing to his seedy man to follow.

"Is—ain't he going to take my furniture?" gasped Mrs. Chirpey, scarcely able to believe in her good fortune.

"No fear!" grinned Peter Todd. "Your furniture's quite safe, ma'am. If he bothers you again you let me know. We'll simply squash him. Why, if he took your things we could squeeze damages out of the beast. My pater would take it up simply for his costs. Grubby would have to pay the costs. It's all serene."

Mrs. Chirpey surprised Peter Todd by suddenly kissing him. Mrs. Blookey kissed him on the other cheek.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Peter. "What would Chirpey say?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You dear, dear, dear boy!" sobbed Mrs. Chirpey. "You kind, clever boy—"

"Oh, pile it on!" said Peter. "Good-bye! Keep your pecker up!"

And the chums of the Remove beat a retreat, leaving Mrs. Chirpey and Mrs. Blookey mingling happy tears.

"Well, you bounders," said Peter, as they marched victoriously down the High Street in great glee, "it's worth while mugging up the law sometimes—what?"

"What-ho!" said Bob Cherry. "But you're not going to mug up any more law this afternoon. You've given Grubby and Nosey Parker enough law to go on with. You're coming with us to Cliff House, and we'll tell Marjorie and Clara about it."

"Oh, all right!" said Peter. "I dare say we shall find Grubby at Greyfriars when we get back. He's going to worry the Head."

"May mean a row," said Nugent.

"Who cares?"

"Nobody!" chuckled Squiff. "Hooray for us and our giddy tame lawyer!"

"Hooray!"

The chums of the Remove thoroughly enjoyed their afternoon. The squelching of Mr. Grubb had put them into the highest spirits. And when they arrived at Cliff House to tea the story was related to Marjorie and

Clara, and they overwhelmed Peter with compliments. But when Harry Wharton & Co. reached Greyfriars their exuberant spirits received a check as they met Wingate in the hall. The captain of Greyfriars informed them that they were to go to the Head's study immediately, adding that Mr. Grubb was there.

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "That means a row."

"Rats!" said Peter Todd. "We've only explained the law to Grubby. He's got nothing to complain about. The Head will see that."

"I hope he will," murmured Wharton. "Anyway, we've got to go. Come on!"

They presented themselves meekly in the Head's study.

Dr. Locke was looking a little worried. Mr. Grubb was there, and he started up as the juniors came in.

"These are the boys!" he exclaimed.

"Boys, Mr. Grubb has complained to me that you treated him with impertinence in the village."

"Insolence, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Grubb.

"Mr. Grubb is quite mistaken, sir," said Peter Todd. "We are sorry this unscrupulous man should have come here and troubled you, sir."

"Todd!"

"You hear him?" roared Mr. Grubb.

"Moderate your voice, please, Mr. Grubb," said the Head sharply. "Todd, you should not allude to Mr. Grubb in such terms—"

"Excuse me, sir," said Peter. "If you saw a man breaking the law to take advantage of a poor woman whose husband was away at the war, wouldn't you call him unscrupulous, sir?"

"Certainly. But—"

"Well, sir, that's what Grubb was doing, and we stopped him!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We didn't touch him, sir. We would have liked to, but we didn't."

"It was all quite legal," murmured Squiff.

"The legality of the proceedings was terrific, honoured sahib."

"Tell me all that occurred, please," said the Head.

"I have already told you what occurred, sir!" shouted Mr. Grubb.

"I prefer to hear both sides, Mr. Grubb. Now, Todd!"

Peter Todd explained at full length. The Head listened with growing indignation, but his anger was not directed against the juniors. When Peter had finished Dr. Locke turned a glance upon Mr. Grubb, which made that gentleman flush.

"Now I understand," said the Head. "Todd, you have acted quite rightly, and I compliment you upon the knowledge of the law, which enabled you to rescue a poor woman, the wife of one of our brave defenders, from the clutches of this unscrupulous man!"

"Sir!" roared Mr. Grubb.

"As for you, sir, I bid you good-evening!" said the Head icily.

"Are not these boys to be punished for their insolence?" stuttered Mr. Grubb.

"I should hardly be likely to punish my boys for generously defending a poor woman against an extremely heartless and unscrupulous man, sir!" said the Head, with a flash in his eyes. He touched a bell, and Trotter appeared. "Trotter, kindly show this man out at once."

"Yessir!" said Trotter.

Mr. Grubb, in a gasping condition, was shown out by Trotter. Dr. Locke gave Peter Todd a few more complimentary words, and dismissed the juniors.

The chums of the Remove came out of the study smiling. Mr. Grubb had disappeared. Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another, and smiled serenely.

"The Head's a brick!" said Harry.

"Hear, hear!"

The Co. were immediately surrounded by a crowd of Removites, eager for information. And when the story was told there were three cheers for the Schoolboy Lawyer.

THE END.

(Next Monday's Magnificent Story of Harry Wharton & Co., is entitled, "The Mystery of the Gables." Order Now!)

OPENING CHAPTERS. START TO-DAY!



Driven to Sea!

The Opening Chapters of a Magnificent New
Serial Adventure Story.

By T. C. BRIDGES.

THE FIRST INSTALMENTS.

Dick Damer, in consequence of an offer received from his uncle, goes out to Australia to live with him. On arriving he hears of his uncle's death from a man named Wesley Crane, his uncle's former partner.

Wesley Crane, in furtherance of a scheme best known to himself, has Dick drugged and smuggled aboard the Rainbow, a small schooner commanded by Captain Cripps, and bound for an unknown destination.

On the fourth day out a derelict is sighted. Captain Cripps and Dick go aboard, and discover a boy, who has been left behind, overpowered by gas-fumes.

Dick and the castaway, Barry Freeland, reach the Rainbow in safety, but Captain Cripps, who stayed longer on the derelict, is drowned owing to a storm rising, which causes the vessel to founder.

Barry Freeland takes charge of the Rainbow, and among the late captain's papers finds a letter from Wesley Crane, hinting at a shady transaction, and also a chart showing a mysterious island.

Dick and Barry determine to trace this island and obtain the pearls which are supposed to have been hidden there, as it is discovered that Dick, as his uncle's next-of-kin, is entitled to them.

They reach the mysterious island, and discover there a man named Captain Kempster, who informs them that he is the sole survivor of the Stella, a vessel commissioned by Dick's uncle to recover the pearls. The Stella was attacked by the Brant, a vessel captained by a notorious scoundrel named Burke, and the pearls are stolen.

While on the way to the Solomon Islands—where they believe Burke to be hiding—the comrades on the Rainbow pick up three shipwrecked men. These prove to be some of Burke's colleagues, and one of them—Barstow—on certain terms, guides the comrades to a pit on the island, San Cristobal, where Burke has hidden the pearls.

Barstow, going into the pit, is later seen with two bags which presumably contain the pearls.

Barry Freeland, thinking that Barstow intends playing them false by making off with the pearls, makes a wild dash after him, and deals Dick a heavy blow for trying to divert him from his purpose.

(Now go on with the story.)

Dick Plays a Lone Hand!

Dick struggled to a sitting position. His nose was bleeding badly, and he fumbled for a handkerchief.

He looked round. The pit was empty. The moonlight silvered the black rocks, but there was no one in sight. No sound broke the stillness of the tropical night except the tinkle of the brook in the hollow far below.

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For the moment he could not think what had happened, but as his head cleared, he remembered Barry's blow, and such a spasm of rage as he had never felt before shook him.

He had saved Barry's life at the risk of his own, and this was his reward. At that moment, if Barry had been before him, Dick would have gone for him like a fury.

But Barry was gone—gone in pursuit of Barstow, and, apparently, he had taken Chang with him, for there was no sign of the Chinaman. So Dick was deserted, left to shift for himself. He was so angry that he forgot all about the pearls. His one idea for the moment was to find Barry and have it out with him, and he sprang to his feet, determined to go after him.

But before he reached the ruin of the crater he began to realise that he was bound on a regular wild-goose chase. He had not the faintest idea in which direction Barry had gone. He paused and considered a moment, and then it came to him that by far the best thing he could do would be to go straight back to the boat.

Sooner or later Barry must come back to the beach.

Then he remembered what Chang had said—that he had heard someone among the trees. Burke's crowd apparently were aroused, and if he was not careful he would only run straight into their arms. Then he would probably never set eyes on Barry again.

The thought brought caution, and he lifted his head, and had a good look round before climbing over the edge. Nothing in sight, so he pulled himself up and set off down the hill towards the stream. But he took pains to show himself as little as possible, and kept well in the shelter of the boulders which strewed the slope.

Lucky for him that he did, for the sound of a twig cracking brought him up short, and he ducked behind a rock, and waited.

The belt of timber which lay between him and the brook was not more than thirty yards away. Out of the thick shadow a man stepped softly into the moonlight, and stood looking about. He was so near that Dick could actually see the whites of his eyes as he glanced round in every direction.

Dick dropped lower still, and crouched, motionless, hardly daring to breathe. He had never seen the man before, so took it that he must be one of the pirates. Whoever he was, he was not nice to look at.

He was short and stout, and was dressed in a pair of ragged, blue-serge trousers, and a dirty undervest. Dick could distinctly hear his heavy breathing, and even see the sweat-drops glistening on his flabby cheeks. His eyes, small, like those of a pig, seemed sunk in fat, he had no eyebrows at all, and the whole of his large, dirty-white face was as smooth as if newly-shaven.

One other thing about him impressed itself upon Dick's notice. This was a large diamond-ring which he wore on the fourth finger of his left hand. The stone glistened in the moonlight, throwing out many coloured rays. It seemed to Dick the oddest thing that a man whose clothes would not have fetched a shilling from a rag-and-bone merchant, should wear a ring which, if genuine, must be worth some hundreds of pounds.

Half a minute passed, then the fat man suddenly moved forward again. To Dick it seemed as though he were going to walk right over him, and he sank down flat behind his rock, making himself as small as possible.

But the steps passed a few yards to his left, and went on towards the gas-pit, and presently Dick dared to turn his head and take another look.

The stranger had reached the edge of the gas-pit, and,

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MYSTERY OF THE CABLES!"

A Grand, Long, Complete Story of Harry
Wharton & Co. By FRANK RICHARDS.

After staring down into it for a moment, began to coast around the edge.

Dick, much interested, came out of his hiding-place, and started to creep very softly up-hill again. He had to go slowly, and by the time that he had gained the edge of the crater, the fat man was on the far side. Dick dropped into cover again, and watched him.

The fat man came to a spot exactly above the cache where the pearls had been hidden, and once more had a good look round. Then he dropped down over the edge, and made straight for the hole.

Dick drew a long breath. He had realised all of a sudden that this fat, insignificant-looking person could be no other than Rolf Burke, notoriously the most bloodthirsty and unscrupulous scoundrel who sailed the South Seas. Barstow had declared that no one else but Burke and himself knew of the hiding-place. If that had been the truth, there was no doubt but that this was Burke himself.

Just as Barstow had done, Burke spread himself flat upon the slope, and thrust his arm to its full length into the hole. He groped for several seconds, then drew out his arm, and Dick, waiting breathlessly, distinctly heard the low-voiced, yet savage imprecation which escaped his lips.

Burke sprang to his feet, and shook his fist furiously. Then, seeming to realise that this was no way to recover his spoil, he scrambled rapidly back to the top of the bank, and, dropping on hands and knees, began examining the ground, sniffing around like some great, ungainly dog.

Another minute, and he was on his feet again, and questing onwards among the rocks and scrub.

Dick forgot all about the way in which Barry had treated him. He realised that this piratical brute was on Barry's track, and that Barry himself was in deadly danger. If Burke could trail him over ground like this, it was quite clear that, once in the woods, he would be able to run him down like a bloodhound. And from what he had seen of Burke's work on Nameless Island, he had a pretty good idea of the fate that was awaiting Barry.

He flung up his rifle. In the brilliant moonlight Burke's thick, solid figure made a mark that he could not have missed if he had tried.

His finger quivered on the trigger. Yet he did not pull. The fact was that he could not bring himself to shoot the man in cold blood.

Barry, he knew, would jeer at such scruples, and Dick himself had more than a suspicion that he was acting very foolishly. The atrocities Burke had committed left him no more claim to consideration than a tiger.

Yet he could not do it. That was all there was about it, and after a full twenty seconds' indecision, he slowly lowered his rifle again.

At the same time it was out of the question to leave Burke to work his wicked will on Barry. Caught between Burke and Barstow, Barry's chance would be that of a snowflake in a furnace. There was only one thing to do—to follow Burke, and hope to cut in in time to save Barry.

So Dick set himself to the task, and went creeping away around the gas-pit. He was no woodsman, and he found it back-breaking work. Fortunately, Burke was moving slowly. The trail could hardly be easy to follow across the stony ground, and this gave Dick time to catch up.

Soon he saw that Burke was turning to the left in a half-circle, and coming down hill again towards the brook. So Barstow had gone that way. Dick wondered greatly what Barstow had been making for. It was most unlikely that he would have ventured back to the pirate camp. He thought it more probable that he had gone for the boat. If he could reach the boat before Barry, he would be able to get safe away, pearls and all.

But Dick had not much time for thought. It took all his energies to keep Burke in sight, and at the same time prevent Burke from seeing or hearing him—the latter in particular.

The night was deadly still and calm, and every time that a pebble moved under his foot, it sent a horrid throb all through his body.

Burke reached the belt of timber above the brook, and vanished. Dick, in a panic for fear he might lose him, quickened his pace and gained the trees only a few yards behind Burke.

It was very dark under the thick branches, but though he could no longer see the other, at any rate he could hear him.

It occurred to him with a nasty shock that, if he could hear Burke, Burke would most certainly be able to hear him, and he began to creep along with even more caution than before.

Even so, he could not help treading on a dry stick, the snap of which sounded to him as loud as a pistol-shot. In fresh panic, he stopped short and crouched behind a tree-trunk.

Listening hard, he caught the sound of Burke moving for-

wards. But the steps were growing fainter every moment, and, noise or no noise, there was nothing for it but to go ahead. Once he lost Burke, Dick knew very well that he would never find him again.

It was a nightmare, that prowl through the bush. It had been bad enough before, when he had had Barstow to find the way; now it was ten times worse. The shadow was so dense that he could hardly see a yard in front. Trailing creepers, some covered with thorns as sharp as steel fish-hooks, caught him every moment. Under foot the ground was soft and soggy, and strange, unseen creatures rushed away through the thick undergrowth. The hot air was thick with rank smells of decaying vegetation, and, to make matters worse, swarms of hungry mosquitoes rose at every step, covering his face and hands and driving him nearly frantic with their venomous bites.

On and on he went, making a great deal more noise than he liked. Each time he trod on a stick, or stumbled over a vine, he stopped in fresh panic; then, as Burke's footsteps died away in the distance, he hurried recklessly on again.

By this time he had lost all sense of direction, and could no longer even hear the stream. Ah he knew was that he had not crossed it yet.

At last, to his immense relief, he came out on a piece of sloping ground where the bush was not quite so thick. He stopped again to listen for Burke.

To his alarm, he could hear nothing.

He waited and waited, but the footsteps had ceased altogether.

Never in all his life had he been in such a state of anxiety. He could actually hear his own heart thumping. In his mind's eye he pictured Barry lying on his face somewhere in the ghastly forest, with Burke's knife sticking between his shoulderblades. He had difficulty in checking a frantic impulse to shout out loud.

After a bit he realised that it was no use staying where he was. He must push on and try to get somewhere. Push on he did, and, forcing his way through a screen of tangled bushes, got a fresh and most unpleasant surprise.

He found himself on the edge of a ravine.

The ravine was too wide to jump, and seemed to be tremendously deep. The sides, draped with a matted tangle of vegetation, dropped down as sheer as the walls of a house. Out of the black depths below came a thin tinkle of running water.

He looked to right and to left, but there was no way of crossing. The ravine ran like a great gash through the forest, forming a barrier that nothing but a bird could cross.

"There must be some way across!" muttered Dick in sheer desperation. "Burke must have crossed!"

"Burke didn't cross."

The words, spoken in a voice so low it was little more than a whisper, came from just behind Dick's shoulder, and gave him such a shock that his knees shook under him and all the strength seemed to go out of him.

"No, my young friend, he didn't cross," came the voice again, and Dick, with an effort that brought the sweat rolling down his face, managed to turn round.

Burke stood there. A shaft of moonlight striking through the laced branches overhead fell full upon his great, smooth face, and showed his lips parted in a grin which was the cruellest thing that Dick had ever seen.

Burke Calls Up Reinforcements.

"And why did you think I was across—eh, sonny? Why did you think I was across?"

His voice was thick, and soft, and oily, like himself, and all the time he showed his large front teeth in the same grin. He was not in the least formidable in outward appearance, and yet—yet there was something about the man which made Dick's blood run cold in his veins.

Dick still had his rifle in his hands, yet it never even occurred to him to use it. He was paralysed as a bird is when fixed by the glittering eyes of a coiled snake.

"You ain't dumb, are you, sonny?" went on Burke in the same thick whisper. "Don't say you're dumb, for there's a whole lot I want you to tell me. Just for instance, I'd like to know what made you trail me all along through these here woods? Was you playing scout, now? I do hear as that's quite a game in the old country."

Dick hardly heard the last words. His mind was full of one thing only.

"Where is Freeland? What have you done with him?" he demanded.

Burke's smile broadened.

"Freeland—eh? So that's his name, is it? Well, sonny, to say truth, I ain't set eyes on 'he gent yet. But I'm hoping to. Oh, I'm hoping."



"Shoot him! Shoot him!" yelled Barry frantically. Yet even then Dick shrank from killing the man. Instead, he grasped the pistol by the barrel, and brought the butt end down upon Burke.

Dick realised suddenly what a fool he had been to speak as he had. He bit his lip fiercely.

"And who is Mr. Freeland?" continued Burke in his hideously soft voice.

Dick had got some sort of grip on himself. He faced the man boldly.

"I'm not going to tell you," he answered shortly.

"Tch! Tch!" Burke made a queer clicking sound of pretended annoyance. "Say, sonny, but it's not polite to talk that way. Here am I, pleasant and polite as can be, and you won't answer a civil question. Will ye tell me what your name is?"

"No!" said Dick curtly.

"Say, but that's too bad! Rude, I call it—real rude!"

With a motion so startlingly rapid that it caught Dick quite unprepared, he suddenly seized Dick's rifle and wrested it out of his hands.

"Jest by way of precaution," he said, without the slightest change of voice or expression, and still with the same grin on his face. "Jest to make things safe, so to speak. No, sonny," as Dick's fists clenched and a flush of rage made his cheeks burn, "don't you go a-trying to hit me. There's others has tried that little game, but I guess there ain't many left alive to talk about it afterwards."

"And now, if you please," he continued, "I'll just ask you to move along with me. P'raps by the time I've took you home you'll have changed your mind and opened your mouth."

Soft as ever his tone was, yet there was a deadly menace underneath.

"This way, if you please, sonny," said Burke, with cruel politeness, as he turned to the left. "There is a way across

the gulch, as I'll show ye presently. And maybe we'll meet your Mr. Freeland somewhere in this direction."

"And maybe you won't."

The voice, loud and sharp, came apparently from the other side of the ravine, and, like a flash, Burke flung Dick's rifle to his shoulder, at the same time stepping behind the shelter of a tree-trunk.

His eyes were off Dick. The spell was broken, and without a moment's hesitation Dick leaped at Burke.

For once in his life Burke was taken unawares. The fact was that he had never for one moment dreamed that the boy had it in him. He would not have been more surprised if he had been attacked by a guinea-pig.

Dick landed fair and square on Burke's back, and Burke pitched down head foremost, with the rifle underneath him. The shock knocked the wind out of his fat body, and for the moment he lay quiet.

Dick, who had learnt by bitter experience not to let go too soon, shifted his grip to the nape of the man's neck, and held on like grim death.

Next moment Burke, recovering himself, got his hands against the ground, and gave a great heave, nearly unseating Dick. He was twice the boy's weight, and, in spite of his fat, enormously strong.

"The pistol, you ass! Use your pistol!" came Barry's voice from the far side of the ravine.

Dick had clean forgotten the revolver which Barry had given him. He thrust his hand into the pocket of his dungaree jacket, and snatched it out.

Burke, too, had heard Barry's warning. He was struggling furiously. And Dick, with only one hand to hold him, was fast losing his grip.

"Shoot him! Shoot him!" yelled Barry frantically.

Yet even then Dick shrank from killing the man. Instead,

NEXT
MONDAY—

"THE MYSTERY OF THE CABLES!"

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he grasped the pistol by the barrel, and brought the butt down hard on the top of Burke's big head.

With a gasp, Burke fell forward and lay still.

"Shoot him!" roared Barry again.

"I can't! I won't!" retorted Dick, as he sprang to his feet.

"Idiot!" growled Barry. "Then get your gun, and come on. Sharp, I tell you! We'll have the whole hornet's nest about our ears in about two two's!"

"This way!" he added, turning down-hill along the ravine. "It runs into the brook. You can cross at the bottom."

It was not so far to the brook as Dick had thought, but it was the very vilest going, and by the time he had reached the brook, his clothes were in rags, and he was dripping at every pore.

"Here, over this log!" said Barry. "What in thunder have you been doing all this time?"

Dick turned on him in a blaze of anger.

"What have I been doing? You have the cheek to ask me that when you knocked me down yourself, and left me lying there in that beastly pit to be collared by Burke, or anyone else who came along!"

For once Barry was taken aback.

"Did I hit you? By Jove, I'd clean forgotten! Tell you the truth, I was so excited about those blessed pearls, I never thought what I was doing. I'm sorry, old chap! I really am. And, anyway, I came back for you."

Dick's anger vanished as quickly as it had risen.

"It—it's all right," he stammered. "D-don't say anything more about it."

Barry looked at him a moment.

"You're a decent sort, kid. I'm not fond of apologising, but I do honestly this time. I suppose I was a bit loony with that gas. Fact is, I don't remember a thing that happened until I caught up with Barstow."

"You caught him?" exclaimed Dick. "What did you do with him—kill him?"

Barry gave a short laugh.

"Kill him? What for?"

"For stealing the pearls, of course."

"He didn't. He bolted back to the edge of the wood, and hid the pearls, and was coming back again when I met him. You see, Chang had said that Burke's crowd were on our track, so he thought he'd make things safe."

"And where is he now?"

"Down by the stream, bathing his foot. He's had the deuce of a tumble, and sprained his ankle."

"And Chang—where is he?"

"I've sent him down to the boat to keep an eye on it."

"And who's got the pearls now?"

"I have, but I sha'n't have 'em much longer if we stick here yarning all night. Come on! The sooner we're back at the boat and off to the ship, the better."

He turned and plunged rapidly through the bush, and Dick followed.

Fifty yards farther down, in a little opening, they found Barstow sitting on a rock. His left boot was off, and his foot dangling in the running water.

"How is it?" asked Barry.

"Rotten!" growled Barstow. "The derved thing's swelled like a bladder! I guess it'll be a week afore I kin walk like a white man!"

"Don't matter what sort of a man you walk like so long as you get to the beach," returned Barry. "Dick here has knocked out Burke with a whack over the head with a pistol, but he wouldn't shoot him as I told him, and the place ain't going to be precisely a health resort when that fat blighter gets on our trail again!"

"Snakes, Damer, ye'd ought to ha' made a job of it!" said Barstow reproachfully. "There'll sure be trouble when he wakes up again. Wal, I guess we'd better be moving!"

He scrambled up, but when he took his foot out of the water Dick saw at once that he could never get his boot on again. The ankle was puffed up like a football.

"We'll have to carry him," he said to Barry.

"Guess you'll find that a mighty tough contract," remarked Barstow. "I ain't what you might call fat, but I weighs a hundred and fifty, stripped."

"Don't jaw! Come along!" said Barry curtly. "Dick, you go one side; I'll go the other. Now, Barstow, you keep that foot off the ground, and your weight on us. Go easy!"

Easy they had to go, there was no question about that. It was not as though they had an open path back to the beach. It was all through the thickest kind of scrub, where there was often not room for one, let alone for three abreast.

Neither Barry or Dick were feeling any too fresh after all they had done that night already, and progress grew slower and slower, till it was a regular snail's crawl.

Barstow, too, was in great pain. Though he was plucky enough, now and then a groan or an oath was wrenched from him, and when a shaft of moonlight struck down through the trees on to his face, it showed it white and twisted with agony.

"Say, boys, I'll have to rest a minute," he said at last.

Barry grunted impatiently as Barstow dropped down on a fallen tree, and took his damaged foot in both hands.

"I'll bandage it," said Dick, as he pulled out his handkerchief, and ripped it in four. He knotted the pieces together, rolled them up like a bandage, and was just setting to work when a distant shot came echoing down the valley.

"Gosh, that's Burke!" exclaimed Barry sharply. "He's come round!"

"That's right, Mr. Freeland. It's Burke for a dollar, and getting mighty agitated, too, or he wouldn't be burning powder all on his lonesome up there in the scrub! Reckon he's a-calling up his reserves, so to speak."

"You mean he'll have the whole caboodle down on us?"

"He will that, if he gets his niggers out. They kin track like bloodhounds!"

"Then come on, for any sake! I don't mind a scrap, but I bar losing those pearls!"

Barstow glanced up.

"Say, you chaps have treated me white. I guess you'd best shove along and leave me right here. Gimme a gun and I'll look after myself. I can't bring myself to walk nohow."

"Rats!" snapped back Barry. "Come along. We haven't a great way to go!"

"Far enough to lose them pearls, I reckon," replied Barstow coolly.

There came another shot, and it was much closer than the first.

"That's some o' them answering him from the camp," said Barstow. "I tell you right now, you'd best shove along. Get the pearls off to the ship. Then if you wants to, you kin come along back fer me. I'm right smart as a gun-man, I am, and ef I kin hold them off, I'll maybe get along down to the beach afore morning."

It was Barry who, with his customary directness, cut in and solved the difficulty.

"Dick, you take the pearls, go along down to the boat, and you and Chang pull out to the schooner, and leave 'em with Captain Kempster. Then get two more of the Chinks, and come back for Barstow and me. I'm going to stay along with Barstow."

Dick gasped.

"But Burke. Suppose he gets all his crowd together? What chance will you have then?"

"Same as we've got now, I guess!" snapped back Barry. "And, anyway, if the pearls are safe aboard the Rainbow, Burke won't get 'em."

As he spoke, he pulled the two bags of pearls out of his pockets, and handed them to Dick.

Dick still hesitated.

"Git!" said Barry curtly. "I'm going to carry Barstow up into them rocks"—pointing to a huddle of crags on the hill-side to the left. "We've got plenty o' cartridges, and if they

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do find us, we'll make one or two sorry before we get through!"

It was clear that Barry meant what he said, and Dick very reluctantly stowed the pearls in his side-pockets.

"You know the way?" said Barry.

"Oh, yes, I know the way now," Dick answered.

"Then hurry. No one won't interfere with you, for this is the only way down to the cove, and"—with a grim set of his lips—"there won't be no one get by so long as we can hold a gun."

Dick had felt badly enough when he was hunting Burke through the bush, but that was nothing to his present feelings as he started away down the gorge, leaving Barry and Barstow behind.

For the first time since he and Barry had been on the track of the pearls he had them in his own keeping, and realised their enormous value. The responsibility made him so nervous that the merest rustle of a leaf or the click of a pebble under foot brought his heart into his mouth.

And all the time his ears were straining for the sound of Burke's people, and in his mind's eye he seemed to see the fat man with his terrible smile creeping down the valley with his crew of cut-throats behind him on the trail of Barry and Barstow.

But he heard nothing. There were no more shots. The stillness of the sultry night was unbroken, except by the stream as it poured down its rocky channel on the right.

At last the trees broke away, and he got a glimpse of the bay sleeping peacefully in the moonlight. Reaching the edge of the bush, he dropped down and peered out on to the beach. He felt he could not be too cautious. It was just possible that some of Burke's people had got ahead of him and might be waiting for him.

But all was quiet, and he began to push on towards the rocks behind which the boat was hidden. Then, to his immense relief, he caught sight of Chang's blue blouse as its owner sat coolly on a rock close by the boat.

"Chang!" Dick called softly.

The Chinaman was on his feet in a flash.

"Dat you, Mistel Dame!"

Dick came forward quickly.

"Chang, you and I have got to go back to the schooner as quickly as we can and get help. Barstow is hurt, and Mr. Freeland is looking after him. They are among some rocks about half-way up the hill."

Dick did not mention the pearls. Though he had no reason to mistrust Chang, he had begun to acquire a certain amount of worldly wisdom, and to realise clearly what an enormous temptation such a gigantic fortune must be.

"Welly well," Chang answered simply, and moved towards the boat, which he had already got afloat.

Dick was following, when all of a sudden the sharp crack of a rifle broke the stillness of the silent forest, and was echoed back from the tall cliff on the far side of the bay.

"That's Barry!" said Dick, pulling up sharply.

"Me tink dem pletty close," observed Chang.

Next moment there burst out a regular volley—eight or ten shots in quick succession.

"They're tackling Mr. Freeland, Chang!" exclaimed Dick.

"I can't stand this! I must go back and help!"

"Me come along, too," said Chang coolly. "Me help Mistel Freeland kill one piece pilate!"

"Good man, Chang! But have you a gun?"

"One piece life left in boat. Me gettum," said Chang.

At that moment Dick remembered the pearls. There was not only the danger of getting caught with them in his possession and losing them, but also they were a very considerable weight.

He made up his mind quickly. He must hide them.

He looked round. Rocks fallen from the cliff above littered the foreshore. One, he noticed, had fallen against another, leaving a deep crevice between them. That was the place, and he ran towards it.

Then he remembered that he must not leave tracks, and he sprang on the nearest rock and began jumping from one to another. In this way he reached the spot without touching foot to the sand, and, taking the two bags from his pockets, pushed them into the crevice as far as he could reach, and wedged them fast. As he turned to come back, a fresh volley rang through the timber above.

He thrust a clip of cartridges into the magazine, and, with Chang at his heels, ran hard up the brookside.

There were no more volleys, but every now and then a single shot, the sound of which served to guide them to the scene of the fighting. Soon they were so near that they could see the flashes from the muzzles.

Dick pulled up.

"Mr. Freeland is up in those rocks on the hillside," he explained to Chang. "I can't see where the others are."

"Me tink dem pretty close down below," Chang answered.

"Me tinkum bettel wait one piece minute. See where dem pilates lie, den shoot stlait at dem."

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Chang's advice seemed sound, and he and Dick stood side by side, waiting breathlessly for the next outburst of firing.

But the firing seemed to have ceased, and all was as still as though there was not a human being within miles.

"Can't make it out!" muttered Dick. "What the mischief are they up to?"

As if in answer to his question, there came one shot from up among the rocks, then shouts and the sound of a furious scuffle.

Dick started forward, then stopped. He was half frantic with anxiety, yet did not know what to do.

"What are they at, Chang? They must have crept in on them."

"Me tinkum pilates clawl in fion behind," said Chang sagely. "S'pose we climb up topside, den we see bettel?"

Dick nodded, and started up the hillside at the rate of knots.

He had to force his way through a lot of thick brush before he could get a clear sight of the rocks from among which came the sound of the struggle. But he was so excited that he hardly noticed the thorns that ripped his remaining clothes to ribands or the branches that switched his face.

Panting with exertion, he at last broke his way into the open, and found himself on the edge of a big strip of bare hillside so thickly covered with loose stones that nothing grew except a few stunted shrubs.

A groan of dismay burst from his lips.

Half-way down the slope he saw Barry Freeland and Barstow, each in the grip of a couple of ugly-looking natives, who were dragging them down towards the brook.

It was clear enough what had happened. While some of the rest of Burke's crew had kept up a fusillade from below, the niggers had stolen round and swooped down on the clump of rocks from the rear.

Dick turned to Chang with a gesture of despair.

"Too late!" he muttered. "We're just too late!"

Not a muscle of Chang's face moved.

"Me no tinkum too late. What for you shoot dem bottle if you no can shoot dem black niggels?"

Dick started.

"You mean I'm to shoot the men who are holding them? But it's an awful risk. I might kill Barry."

"If you no shoot niggel, Burke he shoot Mistel Freeland plenty klick," was the stolid answer, and Dick realised that Chang probably spoke the truth.

Burke, indeed, would probably not be content with mere shooting. Dick's flesh crawled as he thought of the fate that was most likely in store for his friend. It was up to him to shoot, and he dropped flat on the ground and rested his rifle on a rock in front of him.

He was shaky with the hurried rush up the hillside, the light of the moon was new to him for shooting, and the niggers bobbed up and down as they dragged their captives over the rough, stony ground.

There was no time to waste. The men were getting terribly near to the trees at the bottom of the bare patch. He drew a bead on the nearest man, who was on the left-hand side of Barstow, and, with a silent prayer that he might not miss, pulled the trigger.

With the flash and crack the burly black brute leaped three feet into the air, and pitched headlong down the hill.

"Me tinkum topside shot!" came Chang's voice close alongside. "Now shootee klick again."

At Dick's successful shot, the second nigger who was holding Barstow, dropped him like a hot coal and bolted down hill. He had not gone ten steps before Barstow drew a pistol and brought him down. Barry's niggers, however, were evidently made of sterner stuff. They hung on and rapidly dragged Barry towards the trees.

Dick took careful aim at the nearest of them, and was in the act of pulling the trigger, when a rifle barked from near the brook, and the bullet whined just over his head. He started ever so slightly, yet enough to jerk his muzzle an inch or so. The result was a clean miss.

At the same moment, Barstow, who was lying in among the stones, took a snap at Barry's captors. But he, too, missed.

"Sharp, now!" came a shout from one of Burke's men below. "A bottle o' gin apiece if you get him in safe."

The natives swung Barry clear off his feet, and ran him down the hill at a furious pace. They were not twenty yards from the trees as Dick sighted again.

It was neck or nothing this time, and he knew it. If he missed again it was all up with Barry.

Another splendid, long instalment of this fine serial story next Monday. Order your copy early.

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"THE MYSTERY OF THE CABLES!"

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"THE MYSTERY OF THE GABLES"

is a mystery no longer.

FROM A VERY PEEVISH READER.

If ever I were granted sufficient leisure to sit down and write a work on "What an Editor has to Put Up With," I feel sure it would run into several volumes. Slanged without mercy by disappointed readers, and called over the coals by aspiring critics, an editor's lot in no wise resembles the proverbial bed of roses. Those individuals who see the controller of the companion papers—in imagination—lounging in a cool, charming sanctum, and fanned vigorously by divers office-boys, the while he imbibes lemonade through a straw, may dismiss their dream at once. The work of editing a boys' paper—to say nothing of editing half a dozen—can only be described as strenuous.

Of course, there is a bright side to it all. Rather! And it is the bright side which I usually endeavour to show in these confidential little chats with my chums. But, as I have just pointed out, the seamy side is there, too.

That's why it is so unfair for a reader to get up on his hind legs and howl out frenzied abuse at his poor Editor, whose hair already threatens to become an art shade in grey. The young gentleman below does so, however, and this is the letter he sends me:

"Dear Sir,—I have written to you twice to answer me a question, but you did not. I will ask you for the last time, and if you don't give me an answer in next week's "Magnet" or "Gem," I will stop buying the "Magnet," "Gem," "Penny Popular," "Boys' Friend," and "Chuckles"—in fact, any paper controlled by you. I will also stop everybody else from reading your papers, so please answer me, as I don't see it fair you should answer others but not me, after me buying all your books for over two years.

"I remain, yours truly,

"J. S. S. K."

Poor old J. S. S. K.! It cuts me to the heart to find you so upset. My editorial knees knock together at your threats, and I throw myself upon your mercy. Whatever will become of the "Magnet," the "Gem," and their companion papers after you have discontinued reading them? It doesn't bear thinking of!

Seriously, though, J. S. S. K., I must say your attitude is a very silly one. True, you have written to me on two previous occasions, but it is a sheer impossibility to give you a reply at such short notice as that mentioned in your letter. The "Magnet" Library goes to press three weeks in advance, and even then there are such a number of readers' queries to answer, that a good many of my chums are kept waiting five or six weeks.

If you consider this an interminable delay, then you should send your full name, together with a stamped addressed

envelope, when a reply will be sent through the post. This is fair dealing, and if every paper studied its readers to the same extent as the "Magnet" Library, there would never be any discontent.

It is an open boast of mine that every boy, girl, or parent who writes to me is replied to in one form or another—either through the medium of one of my papers, or through the post. J. S. S. K.'s remark that some readers are favoured with replies and others ignored is an entirely foolish and unfounded accusation. As to his threat to stop purchasing the companion papers, he can, of course, please himself. To my mind, the boy who can give up such periodicals as the "Magnet" and "Gem" at a moment's notice cannot be a very keen reader of them, neither can he be a disciple of such straightforward fellows as Harry Wharton & Co., or he would try to live up to their principles a little more.

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

Walter Rougvie (Fife).—Thanks very much for your letter and loyalty.

B. Prime (Highgate).—Glad to hear the "Magnet" ranks so high in your estimation.

Dorothy Beswick (Hendon).—Thanks for your cheery postcard.

A. W. Bitton (Transvaal).—The enlistment of a boy of sixteen depends mainly upon his stature. Application may be made at any of his Majesty's recruiting-offices.

Mrs. Lillian Carlton (Belfast).—I am deeply grateful to you for your many kind suggestions relating to the welfare of this paper.

"A Loyal Reader" (Belfast).—You must let Nature take her course.

"A Bookworm" (Trowbridge).—Loder is still at Greyfriars.

S. B. (Manchester) and others.—I greatly regret the error which you have been good enough to point out.

"A High Wycombe Reader."—The idea you sent me was excellent, and I shall be pleased to receive further suggestions from you.

F. F. (Chiswick).—More fine yarns dealing with Fisher T. Fish will appear shortly.

Leslie McMahon (Tooting).—No hard-and-fast rule can be laid down as to the time a boy of sixteen should go to bed or get up. I should say that if he retired at ten, and rose at seven, his health ought not to suffer. Many thanks for your loyalty to my journals.

"A Staffs Lad" (Wednesbury).—Many thanks for your long letter and staunch support. I well remember the story you mention. It was probably the most touching tale Frank Richards has ever written. With regard to the final paragraph of your letter, I have nothing but admiration for the Staffordshire lads now fighting at the front.

E. Bramall (Leicester).—I will bear your suggestion in mind. The age of the gentleman you mention is uncertain.

H. D. (Manchester).—Bhanipur is a small State in India.

G. B. (Birmingham).—You have my full permission to use the characters you mention in your magazine. It will not be necessary to have your journal registered at Stationers' Hall.

A. Short (Battersea).—Write for the book referred to to Messrs. Glaisher & Co. Charing Cross Road, W.C.

John Horne (Southampton).—Squiff is no longer a member of the Famous Five. He merely stepped into the breach while Johnny Pull was away from Greyfriars.

The Editor

BRAND NEW
3½ HORSE POWER
RUDGE
MULTI



MULTI-PLATE
FREE ENGINE
CLUTCH
PEDAL ENGINE
STARTER
MULTI-SPEED
GEAR
FULL EQUIPMENT

This may be YOUR PRIZE.

GREAT NEW COMPETITION

FOR ALL BRITISH BOYS.

5,000 PRIZES

FIRST PRIZE: A GRAND NEW MOTOR BICYCLE.

THE BIGGEST LIST OF PRIZES EVER OFFERED.

LIST OF PRIZES:

FIRST PRIZE: A magnificent new
MOTOR BIKE,
and 4,999 other prizes
consisting of
RUDGE-WHITWORTH BICYCLES,
RADIUM WATCHES, CAMERAS,
BOXING GLOVES. FOOTBALLS
FOUNTAIN PENS.
ROLLER SKATES.
POCKET KNIVES, ETC., ETC., ETC

HOW TO WIN THEM.

All you have to do is to introduce "THE MAGNET" LIBRARY to your chums. Show this copy to them and let them read it. Then get them to sign their names. You can rule a sheet of paper in the manner shown below, and the readers who send in the largest list of names will win these magnificent prizes. This Competition is being run together with our companion papers, "The Union Jack," "Boys' Friend," "Boys' Realm," "Marvel," "Nelson Lee Library," "Gem," "Pluck," and "Penny Popular." It must be understood that this is one Competition, and that the decision of the Editor of the "NELSON LEE LIBRARY" must be accepted as final and binding in all matters concerning the contest. It does not matter which, or how many of these you get your chums to read. While one chum is reading the "NELSON LEE LIBRARY," get another to read the "Boys' Friend," and so on. Keep your lists by you until we announce the date for sending in.

WRITE YOUR SHEET OUT IN THIS FORM.

I.....
of.....

.....
have shown the papers mentioned to my chums, who have signed their names on my list, and I have got them to read them.

Let your chums sign their names and addresses
on one side of the column, like this.

Name of paper which they have read.

.....
.....
.....

THE JUDGE:

The Decision of the EDITOR of the "NELSON LEE LIBRARY"
must be accepted as ABSOLUTELY FINAL.



READ

"THE OUTCAST OF THE FOURTH!"



A Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of Jimmy Silver & Co. and the Chums of Rookwood, in

TO-DAY'S ISSUE OF

