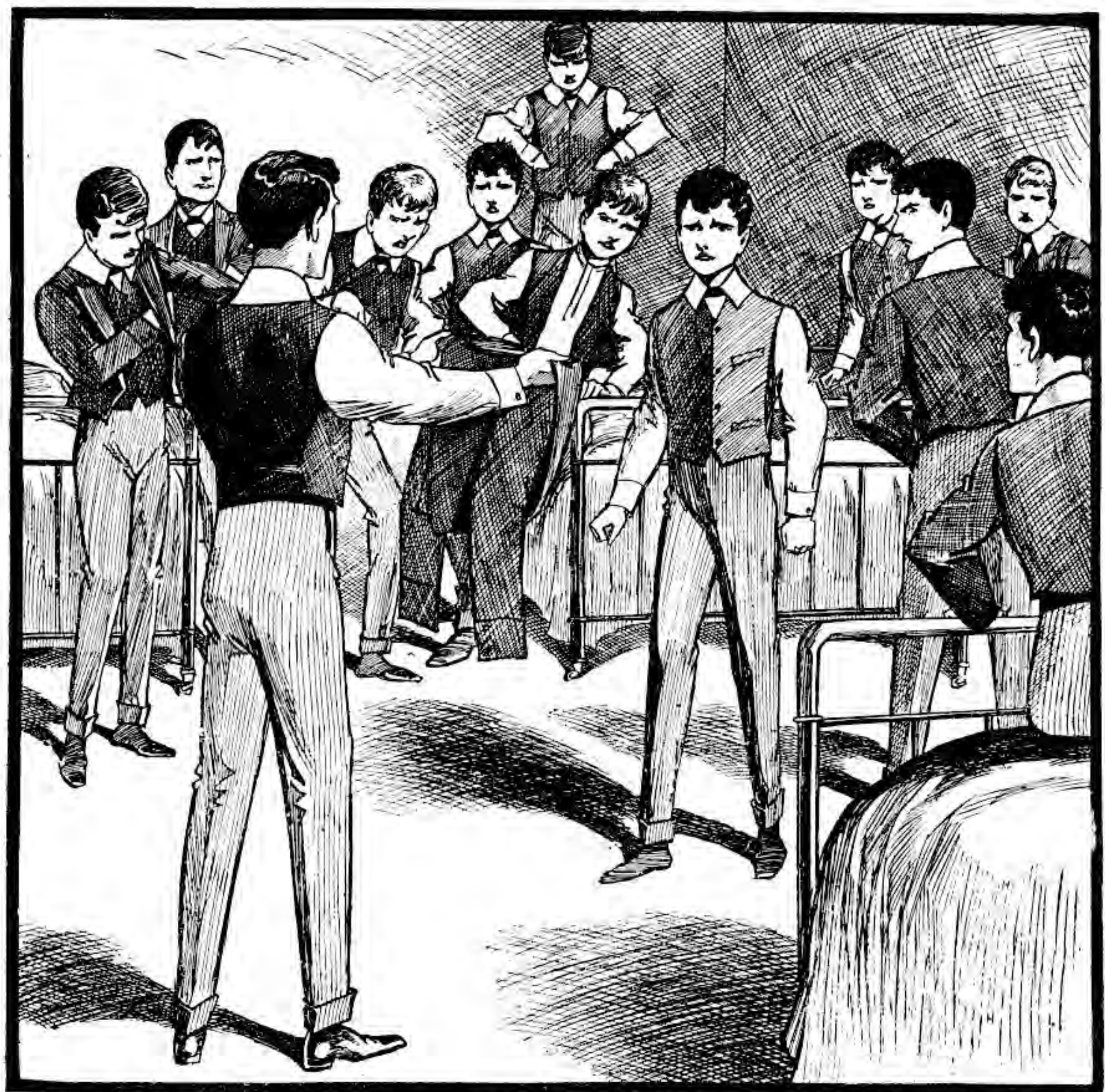


STRAIGHT AS A DIE!

A Magnificent New, Long, Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars.



THE DORMITORY SEARCH!

(An Exciting and Dramatic Scene in the Splendid Complete School Tale in this number.)

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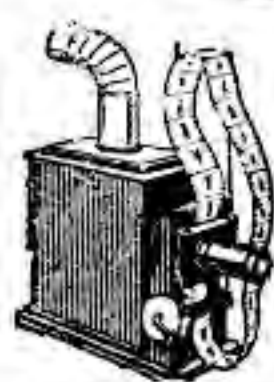
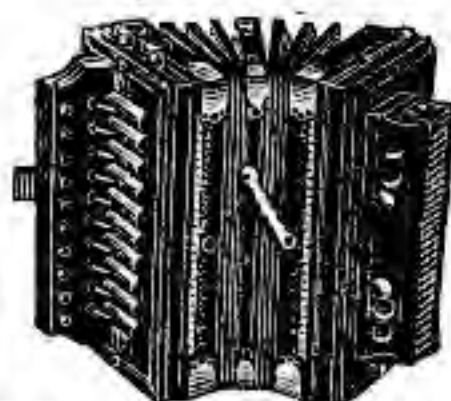
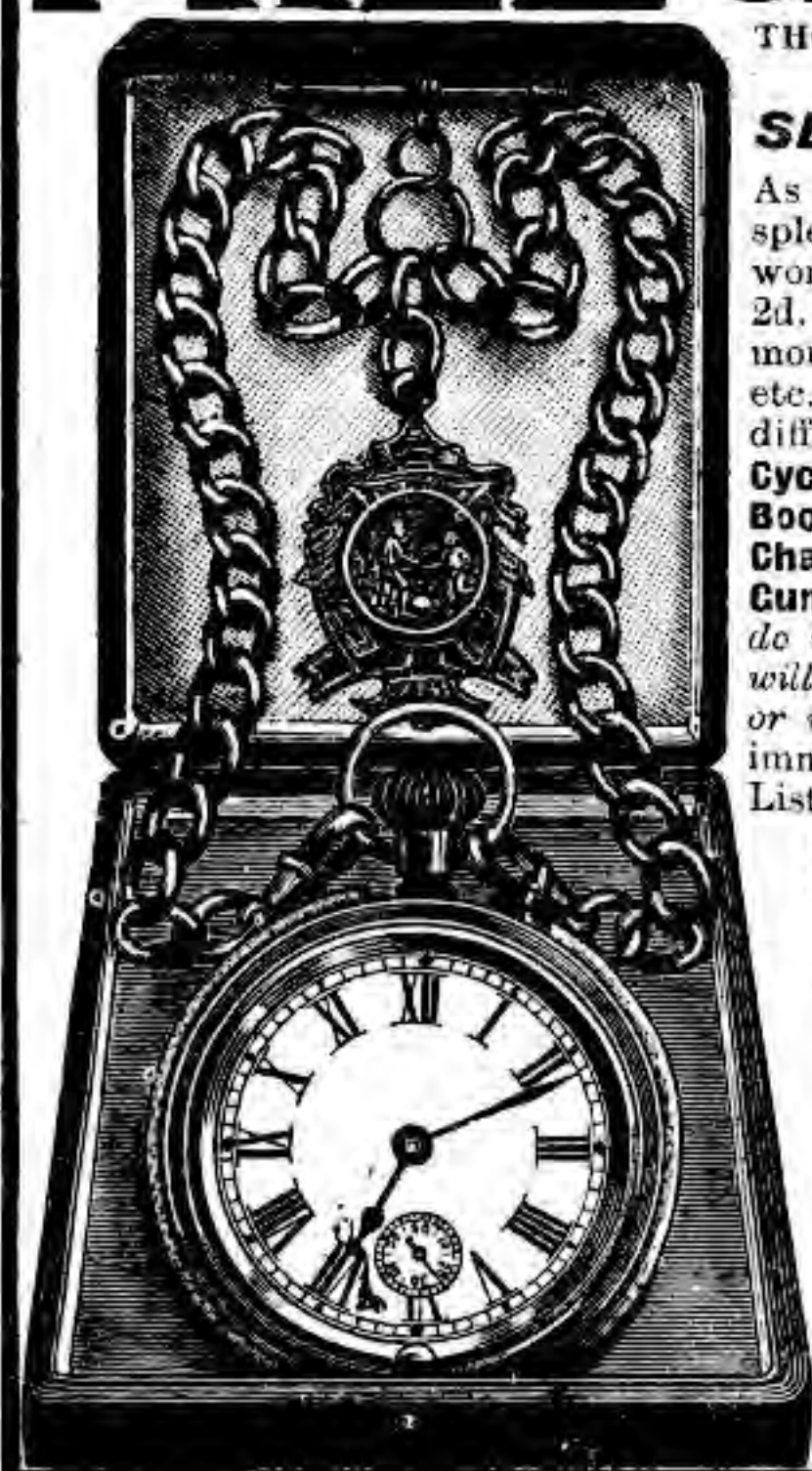


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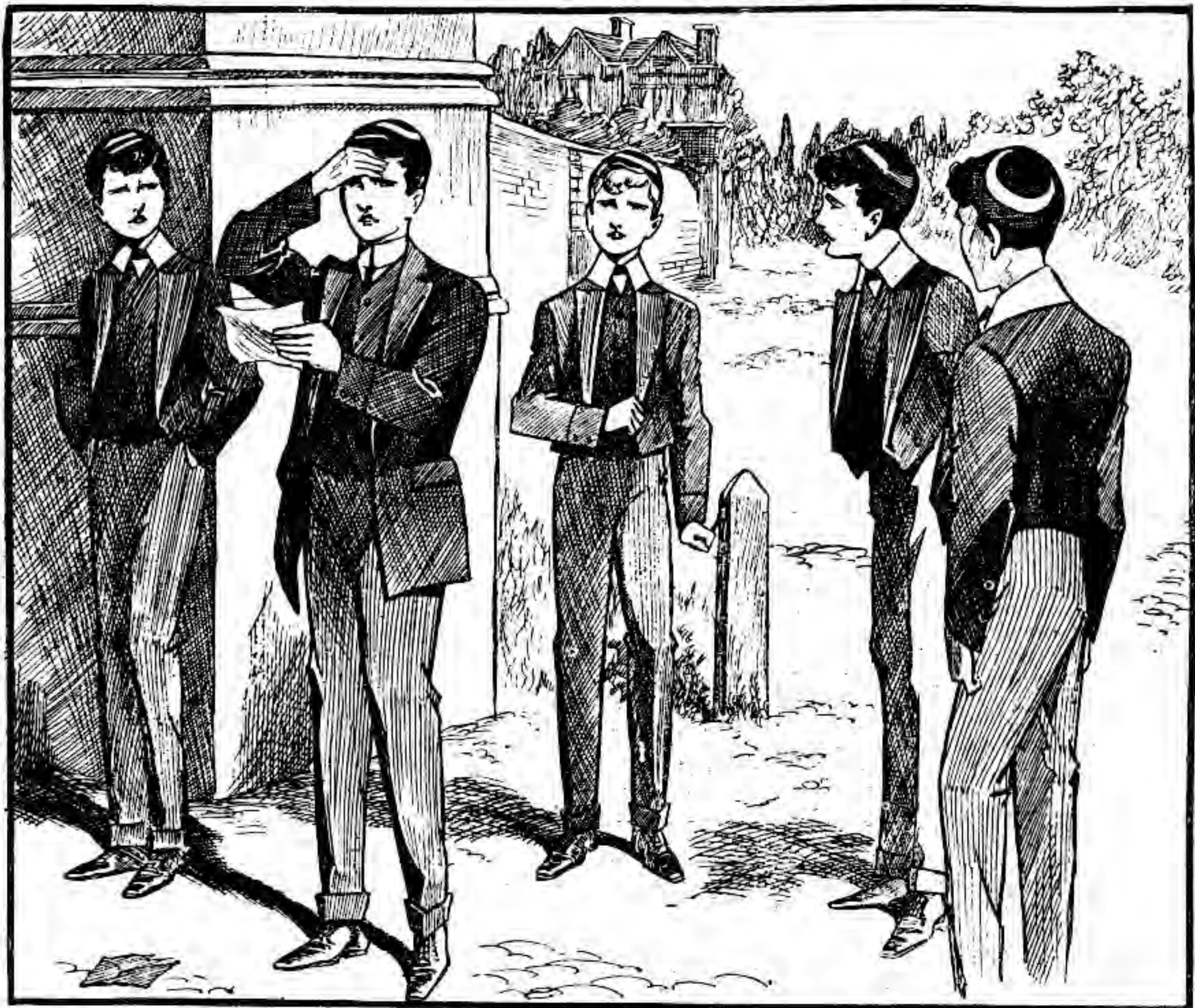


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obliged if you will
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STRAIGHT AS A DIE!

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

By FRANK RICHARDS.



The Shell fellow was standing with the telegram clutched in his hand, apparently rooted to the ground. The Removites quite forgot their hostile intentions, for Snaith's face was as white as a sheet, and his lips were trembling. (See Chapter I.)

THE FIRST CHAPTER, Not a Winner!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. of the Remove Form at Greyfriars were adorning the old gateway of the school with their persons when Snaith of the Shell came along.
The Co. were watching the road, evidently in expectation of a visitor.
Their faces were merry and bright.

It was not exactly a visitor for the Co. who was coming to Greyfriars. It was, in fact, a relative of the Head, Dr. Locke, and he was coming to see the Head. As a rule, the Famous Five were not much concerned about the Head's visitors.

But this was an exceptional occasion. For the visitor who was coming that afternoon was none other than Ferrers Locke, the celebrated detective. And as the chums of the Remove were already acquainted with him,

they naturally wanted to see him. Hence it came about that Harry Wharton, Nugent and Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh were chatting in a cheery group in the gateway when Snaith of the Shell came up.

Snaith's brows contracted as he saw them there. Snaith was not on good terms with the Famous Five. He was much older—the oldest fellow in the Shell. But there was not one of the five who could not have knocked him out in a single round with the gloves on. Indeed, Bob Cherry had done so on one occasion; being fed up, as he stated, with Snaith's swank. Snaith was a "sport"; at all events, he called himself one, and in his study the talk generally ran upon geegees and odds and certs and sure snips. Snaith was so keenly interested in geegees that he had no time for cricket or footer, and never troubled about keeping himself fit. Hence his downfall on the occasion when Bob Cherry had become "fed up" with him.

Snaith frowned as he spotted the Famous Five; but the Famous Five smiled as they spotted Snaith.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob Cherry affably. "What's the odds, dear boy?"

"Who's going to romp home in the Swindlem Stakes?" asked Johnny Bull.

"How's your pal the bookie?"

Snaith frowned still more darkly at these humorous greetings.

"You cheeky young sweeps!" he growled. The Shell fellow cast an anxious look along the road. "I suppose you haven't seen the telegraph-boy?"

"Not a sign of him."

"Confound it!" said Snaith.

He leaned against the gate, his eyes on the road towards Friardale. Bob Cherry looked remorseful.

"I hope you're not expecting bad news, Snaith, old scout!" he said. "I didn't know you were expecting a telegram. Anything wrong at home?"

"No!" snapped Snaith.

"Well, don't bite a fellow's head off!" said Bob, good-humouredly. "Telegrams don't come every day for kids in the Shell, so I thought——"

"Oh, dry up!"

Bob Cherry's eyes gleamed, and he looked for a moment as if he would repeat his former pugilistic experiment upon Snaith.

"Cheese it!" said Wharton. "Ferrers Locke may be along any minute now. You don't want to be punching Snaith when he arrives."

Bob Cherry's brow cleared.

"Right-oh! But I never see Snaith's nose without wanting to punch it," he said. "Can't you clear off, Snaith? You know your face worries me!"

"I'm waiting for a telegram!" growled Snaith. "And you kids can keep your heads shut about it, too!"

"Oh, I savvy!" said Bob, with a sniff. "You needn't be afraid of us talking; but it would serve you right if a prefect dropped on you."

Snaith did not reply; he watched the road anxiously.

The Famous Five could guess now from whom Snaith was expecting his telegram. The wire was undoubtedly to announce the winner of a race in which the "sport" of the Shell was interested. It was a risky proceeding having such a wire sent to the school, and for that reason Snaith had come out into the road to meet the messenger. There would have been trouble for him if the wire had fallen into the hands of a master or a prefect, or if the Removites had talked indiscreetly about it. They quite understood now his annoyance at finding them there.

"There he is!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly.

A lad in uniform, on a bicycle, appeared round the bend in the road, making for the school gates. It was the messenger from the post-office.

Snaith made a quick step towards him as he jumped off his machine.

"Telegram for me?" he exclaimed.

"Name's Snaith, sir."

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"That's right!"

The Shell fellow took the telegram eagerly. The messenger remounted his bicycle, and pedalled back to the village. Harry Wharton & Co. watched Snaith curiously as he tore open the buff envelope.

His face was flushed, his eyes glistening, and his fingers trembling. It was evident that the sport of the Shell had a good deal at stake, and that much depended upon whether that wire announced a "winner" or only an "also ran." Snaith had not been content to wait to see the evening paper, in which the result of the race would have been announced. He had wanted to know the result as quickly as possible after the race had been run.

"The cheeky bounder!" murmured Bob Cherry. "A telegram from a racecourse—sent to Greyfriars! That's about the limit!"

"If the Head knew——" grinned Nugent.

"The order of the sack for Snaithy, short and sharp," said Johnny Bull. "And it's like his cheek to expect us to keep his beastly secrets dark!"

"Let us bumpfully rag him for his own good?" suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The stitch in time goes longest to the well, as your English proverb says. Let us make him eat his esteemed telegram!"

"Not a bad idea," agreed Harry Wharton, laughing. "It's up to the Remove to keep a fatherly eye on the Shell."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Snaith's on the giddy road to ruin," said Bob, "and if he can be bumped off it it's worth the trouble of bumping him. As scouts, we're bound to do a good turn every day. Let's do Snaith a good turn this afternoon."

"Hear, hear!"

"Come on!" said Bob.

The merry juniors, with the excellent intention of bumping Snaith off the road to ruin, started towards the Shell fellow.

But they stopped suddenly.

The Shell fellow was standing with the telegram clutched in his hands, apparently rooted to the ground. As they saw his face the Removites quite forgot their hostile intentions. For Snaith's face was as white as a sheet; his lips were trembling, and his nostrils dilated. He seemed almost stunned.

"Hold on!" said Wharton, in a low voice.

Snaith did not heed them. He was staring at the telegram as if his eyes would start from his head.

"Looks a picture, don't he?" murmured Bob Cherry. "Who wouldn't be a sport, and a bold blade?"

"He has got it neckfully," whispered Hurree Singh.

Wharton tapped the Shell fellow on the shoulder. Snaith started, and gave him a ghastly look. In spite of his contempt for the foolish and reckless blackguard of the Shell, Wharton could not help feeling compassion for him at that moment.

"Buck up!" said Harry, not unkindly. "What's the matter with you?"

"Fourth!" muttered Snaith. "Fourth—he came in fourth! I was absolutely certain of him—absolutely! I'd have put my shirt on it. And—and he's been beaten—beaten to the wide! I—I've lost! Tick-Tick has got in fourth, do you hear? Oh!"

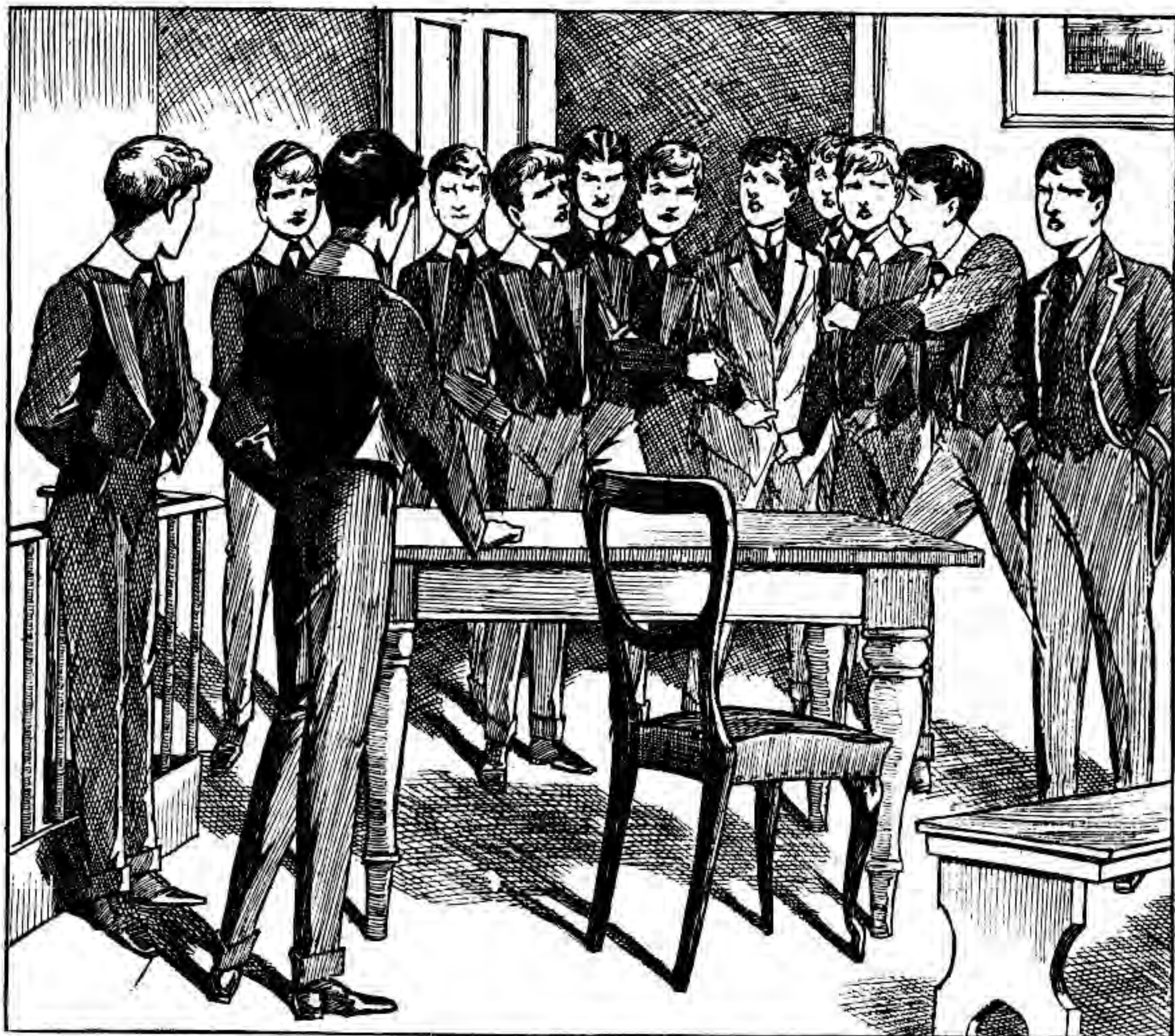
With those incoherent words, Snaith crumpled the telegram in his hand, and went in unsteadily at the gates. Bob Cherry whistled softly.

"The silly fathead!" he said. "That looks like trouble, you chaps. He wouldn't look like that unless he was hard hit. He's put more money than he can pay on his precious Tick-Tick—and he's lost! Blessed if I don't feel sorry for him!"

"Serve him jolly well right!" grunted Johnny Bull. "What right has a Greyfriars chap to get mixed up in racing—especially in war-time?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes our man!"

The athletic figure of Ferrers Locke appeared in sight striding towards the school. And Snaith of the Shell and his affairs were driven at once from the minds of the Co.



Harry Wharton pushed his way through the crowd, and reached Sydney's side. "Let him alone!" he said, curtly. "Your bullying isn't wanted now, Bolsover." (See Chapter 13.)

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The New Boy!

FERRERS LOCKE was not alone. His companion was a lad of about fifteen, in Etons. The juniors glanced at him curiously as he came up towards the school gates with the detective.

He was a slim, somewhat good-looking, and quiet-faced lad; his manner a little timid. They noted that he paused as he saw them at the gate and spoke to Mr. Locke in a hurried undertone, his cheeks flushing.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that a new kid?" murmured Bob Cherry. "Some relation of Mr. Locke coming to Greyfriars—what?"

"We'll give him a good reception, if it is," said Harry.

"Oh, yes, rather!"

The juniors liked Ferrers Locke, and they had a tremendous admiration for him. If a relation of his came into the Remove, the "new kid" could depend upon a cordial reception from the Famous Five.

Ferrers Locke paused at the gate, with a kindly nod and smile to the chums of the Remove.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" chorused the juniors.

"Good-afternoon, my young friends!"

"The gladfulness to see your esteemed face again is terrific, honoured sahib!"

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"GOING THE PAGE!"

Ferrers Locke laughed.

"Thank you!" he said. "I am glad to see you again, also. All the more as I have brought a young friend of mine to Greyfriars, who will be in your Form."

"We'll look after him, Mr. Locke," said Bob Cherry, with quite a fatherly manner.

"He shall be the esteemed apple of our glad eye," said Hurree Singh.

The new boy was hanging back a little, evidently very timid. His timidity, however, was not at all against him in the eyes of the Famous Five. It was only right and proper for a new kid to be a little timid; and to regard the famous Co. of the Remove as a little awe-inspiring.

"A relation of yours, Mr. Locke?" Harry Wharton asked.

"Not a relation, but a young friend," said Ferrers Locke. "A lad in whom I am very much interested. Let me introduce you. Paul Sydney—Masters Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Bull, and Hurtee Singh." Ferrers Locke never forgot names.

The juniors, somewhat flattered that Ferrers Locke had remembered all their names, shook hands solemnly with Master Sydney in turn. His timidity seemed rather to increase than to diminish; and they wanted to encourage him.

"Jolly glad to meet you, kid!" said Bob Cherry.

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

"We'll make you feel at home in the Remove."
 "We will look after you fatherfully," said Hurree Singh.
 "We'll find you a good study," said Wharton.
 Ferrers Locke smiled.
 "I was going to see you specially, Wharton, and ask you a favour," he remarked.
 "Anything, sir," said Harry, at once.
 "If I remember correctly, you and Nugent share a study—No. 1, I think. I had the honour of having tea with you there when I visited Greyfriars before. I was thinking of asking you—" Mr. Locke paused.
 "Yes, sir? Anything you like."
 "My ward—Sydney is my ward for the present—is not to stay permanently at Greyfriars. He will be here only for the remainder of the present term. I was thinking of asking you to take him into your study."
 Wharton's face changed ever so little; but only for a second. Then he assumed his most cordial smile.
 "Certainly, sir! We'll have him in No. 1—eh, Franky?"
 "Certainly!" said Nugent.
 "Thank you very much!" said Ferrers Locke. "My ward is unaccustomed to a school like Greyfriars, and I should be very glad to know that he was with you, and that you would help him a little at first."
 "I'll be jolly glad to, Mr. Locke."
 "Then I will mention to the Head that I have spoken to you," said Ferrers Locke. "Thank you very much, my boys."
 And, with a kind nod, Ferrers Locke walked on into the quad with his ward, and went into the School House.
 "Hum!" said Nugent.
 "Hum!" repeated Wharton.
 Bob Cherry grinned.
 "A new study-mate for you," he remarked. "You didn't quite expect that—what?"
 "Well, no," said Wharton. "We're not exactly anxious to have new kids planted in No. 1 Study, of course. Still, Ferrers Locke is a really good sort, and we'll look after his ward, and make him welcome. Seems a decent-looking sort of chap—rather timid."
 "Bit mum-chance," said Bob. "But he'll soon get that knocked out of him in the Remove. We'll take him under our wing."
 "The wingfulness shall be——"
 "Terrific!" said Nugent, laughing.
 The chums of the Remove sauntered into the quadrangle. They were making their way to the school shop, to obtain supplies for tea, when Billy Bunter bore down on them. Billy Bunter's eyes were gleaming behind his spectacles, and the expression on his fat face showed that he had news. Bunter often had news; he had his own ways and means of getting news.
 "I say, you fellows, have you heard?" began Bunter.
 "I have!" said Bob Cherry.
 "Oh, have you?" said Bunter, somewhat taken aback.
 "What have you heard, then?"
 "That war has been declared on Germany," said Bob seriously.
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Oh, really, you silly ass!" said Bunter. "I mean about Ferrers Locke. He's come to see the Head."
 "Go hon!"
 "And he's brought a new kid with him," said Bunter. "I happened to be passing the Head's study, and I heard——"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "New kid named Sydney, and he's going into the Remove," persisted Bunter. "Blessed if I see what you're cackling at! There's something else, too, that you won't be jolly glad to hear, Wharton. The new kid's going to be planted in your study!" said Bunter triumphantly.
 "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.
 Billy Bunter was a little late with his news, for once.
 "I tell you it's a fact!" roared Bunter. "I happened to stop to tie my bootlace, and I heard Ferrers Locke say——"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "And the Head said——"
 "Never mind what the Head said," said Harry

Wharton. "It's a pity he didn't catch you tying your bootlace outside his keyhole."
 "But the Head said——"
 "Bow-wow!"
 "No, he didn't, you fathead! He said——"
 "Ring off!"
 "I tell you there's something queer about that new kid!" howled Bunter. "He's only going to stay this term, for one thing——"
 "Really?"
 "And the Head said he was sure the experiment would be a success, as he relied on Locke's judgment; but that its success depended on Sydney."
 "What!"
 "Oh, you're interested now, are you?" snorted Bunter, satisfied at having made an impression at last. "And the Head said he fully agreed with Ferrers Locke's opinion about Wharton."
 About me!" exclaimed Harry.
 "Yes, you. And he said——"
 "And you were tying your bootlace all the time?" said Bob Cherry. "Gentlemen, I suggest that Bunter be forthwith taught to tie his bootlaces more quickly when he's outside a keyhole. Lay hold!"
 "Look here! Chuck it! Oh, you silly asses!" roared Bunter, and he fled across the quadrangle, leaving the rest of his news untold.
 "That's jolly queer!" said Johnny Bull.
 "None of our business, though," said Bob. "Let Bunter worry it out if he likes. Now for tea! Suppose we get in something extra special, and ask the new kid?"
 "Hear, hear!"
 Which the hospitable chums of the Remove proceeded to do

THE THIRD CHAPTER. A Little Rag!

NO. 1 STUDY wore its most festive aspect about an hour later.
 There was a cheery blaze in the grate, a spotless cloth on the table, and good things galore neatly arranged on the tablecloth. The Famous Five, as a rule, did not bother their heads very much about new kids. New kids might come and go without ruffling their lofty serenity. But the ward of Ferrers Locke was a new kid whom the heroes of the Remove delighted to honour.
 Ferrers Locke was gone, and Master Sydney was shut up with the Remove Form-master, Mr. Quelch. Bob Cherry was on the watch to catch him as he came out, while the rest of the Co. were giving the finishing touches to the preparations in the study.
 Paul Sydney was staying quite a long time with Mr. Quelch. Bob Cherry, waiting at the end of the passage, whistled with subdued shrillness to pass the time. Skinner of the Remove came along while he was so engaged. Skinner had "lines" to take in to Mr. Quelch.
 "Tell the new kid to buck up, Skinny," said Bob humorously. "Give Quelch a hint that we're waiting tea for him."
 "New kid?" said Skinner, pausing. "The new kid Bunter's been babbling about, eh? A ward of Ferrers Locke?"
 "That's the johnny," said Bob.
 "You know him?" asked Skinner. "Friend of yours?"
 "Apple of my eye," said Bob.
 "I don't believe in pampering new kids," said Skinner. "Let 'em rough it."
 "Bow-wow!" was Bob Cherry's rejoinder.
 Skinner sniffed, and went on to Mr. Quelch's study, to deliver his lines. He came back along the passage in a minute or two.
 "Are they near the finish?" asked Bob.
 "Jawing away nineteen to the dozen," said Skinner. "Looks as if they'll be another hour yet. New kid looks frightfully nervous; but Quelch has his best grin on. You can wait here another hour, old chap. Hope you'll enjoy it."
 "Oh, my hat!" said Bob. "I think I'll take a stroll and come back."
 And Bob Cherry, who always found it difficult to remain

still for more than a few minutes at a time, strolled away whistling.

Skinner chuckled, and hurried down to the common-room. Bolsover major and Snoop were there, and Skinner beckoned to them hurriedly.

"What's the little game?" asked Bolsover, the bully of the Remove. "Snoop says there's a new kid—he had it from Bunter—"

"That's the little game," said Skinner. "New kid in Quelch's study; he's just coming out. Old friend of Bob Cherry's, and they're killing the fatted calf for him in No. 1 Study."

Bolsover major gave a snort.

"I believe in putting new kids into their places," he said. "Look at that fellow Field—I mean Squiff, you know. Walked into the school, when he came, as if it belonged to him, and he's had his ears up ever since. I believe in new kids keeping their places. Let 'em rough it."

"Just what I say," agreed Skinner. "Looks a timid johnny, as if he didn't know how to say 'Bo!' to a goose. Bob Cherry was waiting for him to come out, but I've cleared him off. Let us wait for him instead."

"Rot!" said Bolsover. "I tell you I believe in putting new kids through it, to start with. It teaches 'em their place."

"Well, that's what I mean!" explained Skinner.

"Oh!" Bolsover understood. "Right-ho; I'm on! Come on, Snoop!"

The three young rascals hurried away down the passage. Mr. Quelch's door had opened, and Paul Sydney had come out. He was coming quietly down the passage, when the trio met him at the corner.

"Hold on, kid!" said Skinner affably.

Sydney halted.

"Come into the common-room," said Snoop. "This way! We want to talk to you."

"Yes, if you like," said Sydney.

Skinner & Co. led the new boy into the common-room. Stott and Fisher T. Fish and two or three other fellows joined them. They were not averse to having a little fun with the new kid. The unfortunate Sydney was going like a lamb to the slaughter.

Billy Bunter rolled into the common-room after them, grinning.

"I say, you fellows, Wharton's waiting in the study for that chap," said Bunter.

"Shut up!" said Bolsover major.

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

"Shut up!" roared Bolsover.

Billy Bunter shut up.

Sydney was looking a little alarmed now. He made a movement towards the door, which Bolsover major promptly slammed. There were half a dozen fellows round the new boy, and he was hustled to the table.

"Get on the table!" said Bolsover major.

"Wha-at for?"

"Because I tell you to!" said Bolsover, in his most bullying manner.

"Why should I do what you tell me?" asked Sydney.

"Because I shall jolly well lick you if you don't!"

Sydney looked at the burly Removite, who towered over him. He cast a quick glance round him, but there was no escape. Slowly and reluctantly he climbed on the table. The grinning juniors gathered round the table.

"Now you're going to be examined," said Bolsover.

"I've been examined by Mr. Quelch," said Sydney.

"Oh, Quelch don't count! We're going to examine you, and see whether we can allow you to be admitted to the Remove. Name?"

"Sydney," faltered the new boy.

"Front name?"

"Paul."

"And what the dickens do you mean by coming to Greyfriars with a front name like that?" demanded Bolsover.

"I can't help my name," faltered Sydney.

"I suppose you'll say next that you can't help your face," said Bolsover contemptuously. "What do you mean by bringing a face like that here?"

"I—I—I—"

"I—I—I—" mimicked Bolsover. "So you stutter, do you?"

"No, I don't stutter!"

"I wonder what Greyfriars is coming to!" said Bolsover.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"GOING THE PAGE!"

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ONE
PENNY.

"Stuttering kids like that being shoved into the Remove? Where do you come from?"

Sydney coloured deeply, and was silent.

"What are you blushing about?" demanded Bolsover.

"Blushes and stutters—my hat! Nice kind of a merchant to put in the Remove."

"I—I—"

"Don't begin stuttering again. Get the tongs, Skinner, and give him a nip when he doesn't answer questions."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now, Saul—did you say your name was Saul?"

"Paul!"

"Well, Paul, where do you come from?"

"I—I have been staying in Mr. Locke's house."

"Oh! Nephew of his—what?"

"No."

"Any relation?"

"No."

"Ward?"

"Yes."

"Been to school before?"

"No."

"Then what do you mean by coming into the Remove? You ought to be put in the First Form. Can you read and write?"

"Yes," said Sydney, amid laughter from the raggers. "I've been taught. And Mr. Locke had a tutor for me for a long time."

Huh!" said Bolsover major. "I suppose you're a dunce."

"I—I hope not."

"What's the good of hoping not, fathead? I suppose you know whether you're a dunce or not. Now, I'm going to examine you, mind. What is the distance, in feet, from Petrograd to Potsdam?"

"I—I don't know."

"That's one mark against you," said Bolsover. "Ignorant of geography. Now, if you add twelve to nineteen, take away forty-five, multiply by one and a half, and subtract the number you first thought of, how many cubic yards would there be to a square foot?"

"I—I—"

"Ignorant of arithmetic," said Bolsover major. "Now we'll try him in Latin. Are you well up in Latin?"

"I—I don't know."

"Very well, we'll see. What is the difference between the genitive and ablative causes of Popocatepetl?"

"I—I don't know," stammered the wretched victim.

"Ignorant of Latin," said Bolsover major. "We'll try French. State the irregular and defective forms in the past tense of the future of Parley-voo."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here—" began Sydney.

"Ignorant of French," said Bolsover major. "Is there anything the fellow knows? Pretty dunce to put in the Remove, I must say. We'll try history. Tell me the date when Old King Cole ascended the throne."

"I—I—"

"Blessed if the dunce knows anything at all!" said Bolsover major. "We can't have him in the Remove. He would be a disgrace to the Second Form. Do you play cricket and footer?"

"N-no."

"Well, of all the worms," said Bolsover major, in disgust. "Can you fight?"

"I—I don't want to."

"I dare say you don't want to," chuckled Bolsover. "Now, understand this, we have exactly a dozen fights every day in the Remove. I myself always have a fight before breakfast, to give me an appetite. I generally cripple the chap I fight with. Any chap who can't fight is no good in the Remove. You're going to show us what you can do, Bunter!"

"Hallo!" said Bunter.

"Take your jacket off!"

"Wha-a-at for?" stammered Bunter, in alarm.

"You're going to fight this chap. I'll hold your barnacles."

"I'm not!" roared Bunter. "I—I—"

"Collar him, and bring him here!" roared Bolsover. Bunter made a leap for the door, tore it open, and fled.

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

He was gone in a flash. Even Sydney, worried as he was, grinned at his sudden exit. Bolsover major strode to the door, and put his back against it.

"Rotten funk!" he growled. "Fishy!"

Fisher T. Fish looked uneasy.

"Take your jacket off!" commanded Bolsover.

"I guess——"

"Take yours off, Sydney. You're going to fight Fishy. Don't be alarmed, Fishy is a funk!"

"I guess I could make potato-scrappings of him!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "But I ain't going to scrap—not jest now. I've got an appointment."

"Take his jacket off," said Bolsover major.

Fisher T. Fish cast a despairing glance at the window. But Skinner and Snoop and Stott and Trevor surrounded him. His jacket was jerked off.

"Now, then, toe the line," said Bolsover major. "Walk up, Fishy!"

"I guess——"

"Are you ready, Sydney?"

"I'm not going to fight to please you."

"You'll fight him or you'll fight me!" roared Bolsover.

"Well, I won't fight him!" said Sydney.

"Then I'll take on the pair of you, you blessed funks!" said the bully of the Remove, throwing off his jacket. "Come on, Fishy!"

"I—I guess I'd rather fight the new kid!" stammered Fisher T. Fish, dodging round the table. "I—I reckon I'm rather keen on it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I give you one second to begin, then," said Bolsover.

Fisher T. Fish suppressed a groan, and pushed back his cuffs. He was somewhat encouraged by the hesitation only too visible in the new boy's face. Fisher T. Fish was a great warrior in words, but his warlike ardour seldom went as far as fisticuffs. But now he had no choice, and the timidity of the new boy gave him an impression that there was some cheap glory to be gained. So for once the Yankee junior looked really warlike.

"Come on, you jay!" he said.

"I—I don't want to fight you!" stammered Sydney.

"I guess I'm going to lick you, to give you a lesson to begin with," said Fisher T. Fish confidently. "I guess new boys want licking, some. Now, then, where will you have it?"

"Let me alone, please!"

"That's one for your boko!" said Fish, tapping the new boy on the nose with his bony knuckles. "Now I guess—— Yarooooooh!"

Sydney's eyes watered from the tap on his nose, but his face flushed, and he hit out in response. Fishy caught the blow with his sharp chin, and went to the floor with a crash.

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!" he howled. "Oh, my chin! Yah! Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Get up!" shouted Bolsover.

"Yow-ow! I ain't a hog!" gasped Fish. "I guess I know when I've had enough. I ain't taking any more. Yaroooh!"

"If you don't get up I'll make the new kid wallop you with a cushion!" shouted Bolsover major.

"Yow! I guess I've got a sprain. I can't get up!"

"Here's a cushion, Sydney. Whop him!"

"I won't!" said Sydney.

"You won't!" ejaculated Bolsover. "Well, if you won't, I'll jolly soon teach you to do as you're told! Now, then!"

Bolsover caught the new boy by the collar with his left hand, and sprawled him across the table. Then the cushion rose and fell with loud and heavy whacks, accompanied by equally loud yells from the unfortunate new boy.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Tit for Tat!

I SAY, you fellows!"

"Kick him out!" said Nugent.

Billy Bunter was blinking into No. 1 Study. His eyes glistened behind his glasses at the sight of the well-spread table. Bunter had an unfailing instinct which led him in the direction of a feed.

"I say, that cake looks ripping," he remarked. "You didn't mention there was a feed on, you fellows."

"Buzz off!" said Wharton. "I wonder how long that new chap's going to be?"

"He, he, he!"

"What are you cackling at, tubby?"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "If you had asked me to the feed I might tell you something. He, he, he!"

"For goodness' sake, stop going off like an alarm-clock!" said Johnny Bull. "Hallo, here's Bob! Where's the new kid?"

"Blessed if I know!" said Bob Cherry, coming into the study. "I've just been back to Quelchy's study, and he's not there. I looked in, and asked Quelchy a question about 'auspice Teucro,' just to give him a hint to get done. But the new kid had gone."

"He, he, he!"

"He wandered off somewhere," said Wharton. "What the dickens are you cackling about, Bunter? Have you been playing any tricks on Sydney?"

"He, he, he! Yoop!" yelled Bunter, as Bob Cherry took him by the back of the neck and shook him. "Leggo!"

"Where's Sydney?" demanded Bob.

"Grooh! How should I know? Leggo!"

"You jolly well do know!" said Bob suspiciously. "You've been japing him, you fat boulder! Where is he?"

Shake! Shake! Shake!

"Leggo!" roared Bunter. "Perhaps some fellows are ragging him, and perhaps they ain't. Perhaps I'd tell a chap who asked me to tea!"

Harry Wharton looked anxious.

"Dash it all, we don't want Sydney ragged his first day here!" he exclaimed. "Where is he, you fat toad? You can stay to tea!"

"Oh, really, you know, if you put it like that——"

"Where is he?" roared Bob.

"Yurroooh! S-s-stop sh-sh-shaking me!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'll come to tea, you fellows, as you make a p-p-point of it. And Sydney's in the common-room, and Bolsover's ragging him!"

"My hat!"

"Come on!" shouted Bob Cherry

He pitched Bunter into the armchair, where he collapsed with a grunt, and rushed out of the study. Wharton and Nugent and Bull and Hurree Singh followed him fast.

It was just like Bolsover major to rag a timid new boy; it was his idea of a joke. More than once the Famous Five had chipped in to stop such little amusements on the part of the bully of the Remove.

But they were especially incensed now, as the new boy whom Bolsover was ragging was Ferrers Locke's ward, and they were taking him under their wing.

They rushed at top speed for the common-room.

Snaith and Hobson of the Shell were talking on the landing as they came speeding by. Hobson was just saying, "Sorry, Snaith, hard up myself," when the Famous Five rushed upon them, and they went flying. Hobson gave a roar and Snaith a shriek as they spun round and sat down on the landing. The Removites did not stop to see whether they had hurt them. Perhaps they knew they had! Anyway, there was no time to waste.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Hobson, sitting up. "The young villains, I'll scalp them!"

"Yow-ow-ow!" said Snaith.

Unheeding, the chums of the Remove sped down the stairs. They sprinted along the passage, and burst into the common-room like thunderbolts.

Loud yells were sounding in the common-room.

Sydney was face downwards across the table.

ANSWERS

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struggling, and Bolsover major was dealing him terrific "whacks" with the cushion.

"Draw it mild," Trevor was saying. "Dash it all, don't be such a beastly bully, Bolsover. The kid's done no harm."

"I'm going to take the cheek out of him!" roared Bolsover. "I'm going to— Yah! Who's that? Yooop!"

Bob Cherry was the first to reach Bolsover. He grasped him by the back of the collar, and yanked him away from his victim.

Bolsover spun over, and crashed on the floor, dragging Bob down with him. Bob promptly sat on his chest, and pinned him down.

Wharton helped the new boy off the table. Sydney was red and flustered, and gasping for breath.

"Hurt, kid?" asked the captain of the Remove kindly.

"A—a—little!" panted Sydney. "Never mind."

"But we do mind," said Johnny Bull. "What are you fellows ragging the new kid for?"

"Only a little j-j-joke!" stammered Skinner, backing away towards the door. Johnny Bull swooped on him and dragged him back.

"One good turn deserves another," he remarked. "You're not going to make all the jokes, Skinner. I'm going to joke with you now!"

"Look here— Leggo! Oh, dear! Leggo!" roared Skinner, as the sturdy Johnny swung him across the table. "Oh, my hat! Yah, yah, yah!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

Johnny Bull had a hard and heavy hand. The spans that he bestowed upon Skinner rang through the room like pistol-shots. Stott and Fisher T. Fish and Trevor bolted, but Snoop was too late. Hurree Singh headed him off from the door. Snoop dodged away round the table, and Nugent caught him.

"Lemme alone!" yelled Snoop. "I—I—I—"

"Only a little jokefulness," explained Hurree Singh. "It is very humorous to whack an esteemed rotter with a cushion—thusfully!"

"Yaroooh!"

"And thusfully, and thusfully!" pursued Hurree Singh as the cushion rose and fell. "Do you not see the jokefulness, my esteemed Snoopy?"

"Yow-ow! Help!"

"And thusfully! And thus—"

Snoop tore himself away and fled. Johnny Bull was still spanking Skinner. Johnny had a powerful arm, and he did not seem to get tired. Skinner looked quite crumpled up when he slid off the table at last and escaped.

Paul Sydney was looking on in an amazed way. It was his first experience of the Greyfriars Remove.

Bolsover major was roaring, and uttering blood-curdling threats. But he could not dislodge Bob Cherry from his chest. Bob sat tight.

"When you've done with that cushion, Inky—"

"I have donefully finished, my esteemed Bob!"

"Bolsover wants some!"

"Don't you bring that cushion near me!" roared Bolsover major. "I'll skin you, you nigger! I'll pulverise you!"

"Turn him over," said Nugent. "Get over, Bolsover! Don't make us waste time; our tea will spoil. Now, then, all together!"

The Famous Five all grasped Bolsover major together, and the burly Removite was rolled over. Then Bob Cherry started with the cushion. Whack! Whack! Whack!

Bolsover struggled and roared.

"I—I say—" stammered Sydney.

"That's all right, kid," said Bob Cherry. "This is the only way of talking to Bolsover. Say when you've had enough, dear boy!"

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ONE
PENNY.

Whack! Whack! Whack! Whack!

"I—I'll smash you!" bellowed Bolsover. "I'll squash you, and that moony-faced new kid, too! I'll—I'll— Yaroooh! Leave off!"

"You're going to beg Sydney's pardon before I leave off," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "No hurry; say when!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover made a desperate effort, and almost tore himself loose. But he went down with a bump again in the grasp of the Co.

"No, you don't!" said Harry Wharton.

"Pile infully, my esteemed Bob!"

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Leave off, you beast!" gurgled Bolsover. "I—I—I'm sorry, Sydney. Oh, crumbs!"

"That's better," said Bob. "Sure you've had enough?"

"Ow! Ow! Ow!"

"Now kick him out!" said Bob.

Bolsover major was allowed to rise. He did not wait to be kicked out. As five boots came towards him he dodged out of the common-room and fled. Even Bolsover major had had enough.

"Now, come on, Sydney," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Tea's ready. We want you to come to tea in the study; it's going to be your study, too, you know."

And the Famous Five led the rescued new kid away in triumph to No. 1.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Little Queer!

BILLY BUNTER was busy in the study when the chums of the Remove arrived with the new junior. Bunter did not believe in wasting time, or in waiting tea for anybody. And lavish as the supplies were, Bunter had succeeded in making an impression upon them already. He blinked round at the new arrivals with his mouth full.

"I say, you fellows, you don't mind my beginning, do you? I've left you some of the ham and beef. I thought you'd like it."

"Why, you cheeky rotter—"

"Oh, really, Wharton, that's not the way to speak to a chap you've asked to tea," said Bunter reprovingly. "Hallo, Sydney, you can come in. Don't be nervous; I'm not going to eat you," added Bunter graciously.

"Even Bunter don't eat new kids!" grinned Bob Cherry. "He will eat anything else. Come in, Sydney!"

The new junior went in. He was given a chair at the table, and sat down, still looking very timid and uncertain.

"Hungry after your journey, surely?" said Wharton.

"Yes, a little."

"Pass the ham this way. Where's the ham?"

"Ahem! I've nearly finished that, Wharton. There's some beef—not much, as I was rather hungry!"

"Where's the cake?" asked Nugent.

"The—the cake?"

"And the poached eggs?" roared Johnny Bull.

"The—the poached eggs?"

"And the tomatoes?"

"Oh, really, Cherry, if you are going to count up everything a chap eats when you ask him to tea—"

Harry Wharton burst into a laugh.

"Cut down to the tuckshop, Bob. We shall have to begin again."

Bob Cherry gave the Owl of the Remove an expressive look, and started for the door.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"GOING THE PAGE!"

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Bunter called after him.

"Don't forget to bring another cake, Bob, old man. I like that cake. You might bring two while you're about it. You fellows would like some, I suppose."

Bob Cherry did not reply, but when he returned he had two cakes. Billy Bunter nodded with satisfaction. The supplies having been renewed, the chums of the Remove sat down to tea.

Sydney's manner was still very diffident, and the Co. tried their best to put him at ease. They found it a little difficult to understand the new boy. In the cheery atmosphere of No. 1 Study shyness was usually quick in wearing off. And Paul Sydney did not seem exactly shy either. He seemed to be troubled with some inward uneasiness that the juniors could not comprehend.

When tea was over Billy Bunter took his departure, after a blink round the table to make sure that there was no cake left.

"Sorry I can't stop," he remarked. "But Toddy will be having tea soon in my study, and I don't want to be late for tea!"

And Bunter rolled out.

"Is that chap going to have another tea?" asked Sydney, in astonishment.

"Oh, that's nothing to Bunter!" said Bob Cherry, laughing. "You haven't seen Bunter at his best. I'd like to plant Bunter on the Germans; their supplies would run out in half the time."

"Now we've had tea we'll help you put your things away, my son," said Wharton. "Then we'll take you for a trot about the place, and show you the sights—what?"

"You are very kind," faltered Sydney.

"Naturally," said Bob Cherry. "We're the best of the bunch, you know."

Sydney looked curiously at Bob for a moment, and then burst into a laugh. Bob Cherry had most success in "thawing" him.

The chums of the Remove helped the new boy sort out his books and other belongings, and dispose them about the study. Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh and Johnny Bull went to their own quarters, leaving Wharton and Nugent with their new study-mate. Both the juniors were puzzled with him. Sydney answered brightly enough when he was spoken to, but he hardly ever made a remark "on his own." He was still apparently oppressed by some secret misgiving.

"How did you get on with Quelchy?" asked Nugent.

"Quelchy!" repeated Sydney.

"Mr. Quelch, our Form-master."

"Oh, he was very kind!" said Sydney. "Very kind indeed, considering——" He paused.

"Considering what? Quelchy always goes easy with a new kid," said Nugent. "He will very likely come down heavy afterwards. The iron hand in the velvet glove, you know. Are you a swot?"

"I—I don't know what a swot is."

"Ha, ha! Chap who mugs up his lessons, and lives inside the covers of his Latin grammar."

"Mr. Locke told me to work hard here," said Sydney. "I am a good worker, if that is what you mean by a swot."

"Then you'll please Quelchy," said Nugent, "and I'll give you a tip. Drop in on him in his study some time and ask him to explain a passage in Virgil. Lots of the fellows do it, and it doesn't take long either. You don't need to understand what he says; he doesn't like being interrupted. Just let him rip!"

Sydney laughed.

"Now we'll have a trot round," said Wharton. "Lots of historic sights to show you—the old tower, where there was a barring out once."

"And the place where Bob Cherry fought Bolsover major—original bloodstains!" said Nugent.

"It's awfully good of you fellows to bother about me like this," said Sydney, in a low voice. "I—I suppose you know Mr. Locke well?"

"Only seen him once or twice," said Wharton. "But we know he's a good sort. He came down here on business once to find a kid who'd been kidnapped. Awfully

clever beggar; beats Sherlock Holmes right off the wicket. I suppose he's a great friend of yours."

"The best friend a fellow ever had," said Sydney. And, somewhat to the alarm of the juniors, the tears welled into his eyes. "Without Mr. Locke's kindness I—I—" He broke off. "But I suppose Mr. Locke, or anybody, hasn't told you anything about me?"

"He's only told us what you heard him tell us at the gate," said Harry, looking at him rather curiously. "Nothing much more to tell, I suppose?"

"Yes—no. I—I suppose Mr. Locke knows best," said Sydney hesitatingly.

"My hat!" said Nugent. "That's a bit mysterious. I suppose you are not an Italian prince in disguise, by any chance?"

"Eh? No!"

"Nor a Russian Grand Duke?"

"No," said Sydney, laughing.

"Nor an escaped convict?" added Nugent humorously.

Sydney started, and, to the amazement of Wharton and Nugent, he turned deadly pale.

Nugent's remark had been humorous and carelessly spoken; but it had not had a humorous effect upon the new junior.

"What—what do you mean?" exclaimed Sydney.

"What——"

"I don't mean anything," said Nugent, in wonder. "I was only chipping you, because you were so jolly mysterious."

"Oh!" Sydney drew a deep breath. "Of—of course, I'm not a convict——"

"Ha, ha! Do you think I thought you were, you ass?" said Nugent. "Blessed if you aren't as green as grass. Come on, let's have a trot round the school."

Sydney nodded, and accompanied the two chums from the study. They walked him round Greyfriars, and showed him the sights, and introduced him to their friends in the Remove, and, with a view to cheering him up, they showed him Coker of the Fifth, and told him how Coker played football. At the end of that little walk they were on quite friendly terms with their new study-mate, and they felt that they liked him. But—like Billy Bunter after his keyhole exploit—they came to the irresistible conclusion that there was "something queer" about the new junior.

Exactly what it was they could not define, but they felt that Paul Sydney was not built on quite the same lines as the other fellows in the Remove. But he was their study-mate, and they rather liked him, and they meant to make the best of him.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Snaith Meets His Match!

PAUL SYDNEY soon found himself at home in the Greyfriars Remove.

He was an object of interest to the other fellows for a day or two, as Ferrers Locke's ward. He was asked a good many questions about Ferrers Locke—and was expected to tell long stories of the great detective's exploits—but he had little to say on the subject. The interest died out in a few days. Sydney had expected trouble with Bolsover major, after his painful experiences in the common-room on the day of his arrival. But the bully of the Remove let him alone—partly, perhaps, because the Famous Five were always ready to look after the fellow they had taken under their wing; but partly because a new kid wasn't worth the trouble of the great Bolsover's special attention.

Billy Bunter announced that the new fellow was a decent sort; from which the fellows who knew Bunter guessed that Sydney had cashed a postal-order for him—in advance; the debt to be settled when the postal-order arrived. But on the following day Bunter was heard to declare that he was fed up with Sydney; from which again it could be deduced that the new junior had declined a second postal-order in advance. It appeared that he was good-natured, but not quite an ass; and was not, as Bob Cherry remarked, to be caught twice with the same chaff.

He seemed quiet and inoffensive—so much so that



"That's one for your boko!" said Fish, tapping the new boy on the nose with his knuckles. "Now I guess—Yaroooooh!" Sydney's eyes watered from the tap on his nose, but his face flushed, and he hit out in response. Fishy caught the blow with his sharp chin, and went to the floor with a crash. (See Chapter 3.)

Fisher T. Fish conceived the warlike idea of avenging his downfall in the common-room, and of showing the Remove fellows how they boxed "over there," by inviting Sydney into the gym one evening for a "mill" with the gloves on. Sydney declined, stating that he had no quarrel with Fish, and would not fight him. Whereupon Fishy, as might have been expected, became not only warlike, but perfectly ferocious, being convinced that the new fellow was afraid of him.

Then Sydney, after being called a funk, a jay, a mug-wump, and a slabsided galoot, consented to go into the gym for that little "mill," and a ring of Removites surrounded them to watch the scrap, and to cut off Fisher T. Fish's retreat if he tried to bolt.

In the first round Sydney showed plainly enough that he was not a funk; but the same could not be said for Fisher T. Fish. In the second round Fishy was a very repentant Fish, and felt like kicking himself for having awakened the wrong passenger. In the third round Fish was knocked right and left, and he "guessed" that no inducement on earth would make him toe the line for a fourth round. So the new boy was victorious, and as he had shown that he could fight, he was relieved of certain kind attentions which Skinner and Snoop had had in store for him.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"GOING THE PACE!"

Wharton and Nugent were quite pleased with their protege; it was "up" to any member of No. 1 Study to be able to take care of himself, and in the Remove a fellow who was suspected of "funking" was sure to have a rough time. The Remove prided themselves on being hard nuts to crack. But Sydney had proved that he was not a funk, and they were satisfied, though Bob Cherry remarked that in patience he was a good second to the celebrated Job.

Sydney's next trouble was with Snaith of the Shell. He had been nearly a week at Greyfriars when that little trouble arose. Cecil Snaith was a great nut, as well as a sporting character, and he did not deign, as a rule, to take any notice of the existence of mere fags. Sydney had never come into contact with him, and barely knew him by sight, when their encounter took place.

The Famous Five had gone over to Highcliffe on their bikes, to visit Frank Courtenay there, and Sydney had been in Mark Linley's study, where Linley was helping him with his Latin. Sydney came along the Remove passage, with his book under his arm, thinking of anything and anybody but Snaith of the Shell.

As he came up to No. 1 Study he heard a movement within, and he threw open the door, surmising that Billy Bunter was there raiding the study supplies. He had

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already learned a good deal of William George Bunter. But it was not Bunter.

Snaith of the Shell was in the study. As Cecil Snaith was hardly on speaking terms with No. 1 Study, Sydney would have been surprised to see him there at any time. But he was astonished to see what Snaith was doing.

The Shell fellow was at Wharton's desk, and the desk was open. Snaith was going through it in quite a methodical manner, as if in search of something. He started round with a sudden exclamation as Sydney came in.

Sydney's eyes flashed as he looked at him.

"What are you doing here?" he exclaimed.

The question was hardly necessary, for it was evident enough that Snaith was rummaging through Harry Wharton's desk.

"I—I thought—" stammered Snaith. "I—I—didn't you go over to Highcliffe with them?"

"No, I didn't," said Sydney, with a curling lip. "And I shall jolly well let Wharton know that you were going through his desk!"

Snaith pulled himself together.

"I—I was doing no harm," he muttered. "I—I was looking for something—for—for—" His halting manner proclaimed only too clearly that he was seeking for some falsehood that would throw dust in Sydney's eyes. "I—I—I'm doing French verbs, and Wharton has a list I wanted to use—"

"Oh, cheese it!" said Sydney. "You weren't looking for a list of French verbs in the inside drawers of a desk. I suppose you were spying on letters, or something of that sort. You're a rotten sneak, and I shall warn Wharton to keep his desk locked."

Snaith's eyes gleamed. The Shell fellow was nearly a head taller than the new junior, and looked more than his match in every way. He made a sudden movement, and placed himself between Sydney and the door. Sydney watched him coolly.

"You won't mention this matter to Wharton at all," said Snaith, in a low voice, between his set teeth.

"You mean you haven't found whatever it was you were looking for, and you want to try again another time," said Sydney.

"I was looking for Wharton's list of French verbs."

"Oh, rot!"

"And you won't mention it."

"Why not, if it was only French verbs you wanted?" said Sydney caustically. "Wharton would lend it to you like a shot."

"I don't want it mentioned, all the same. Wharton might misunderstand."

"He would understand, you mean."

"Never mind that; you're going to give me your word, honour bright, not to mention to Wharton or anyone else that I've been in the study at all."

"Bosh!"

"Or else," said Snaith, his eyes glittering, "I'll give you the licking of your life, here and now!"

Sydney shrugged his shoulders.

"Will you give me your promise?" asked Snaith.

"No. I shall warn Wharton that you were going through his desk, and let him keep it locked. I don't know what you were after, but you were after no good, that's certain. I'm bound to let him know."

Snaith gritted his teeth.

"You'll give me your promise, or I'll hammer you till you do," he said.

"You'd better get on with the hammering, then."

"You silly fag, I could wipe up the study with you, if I began!" shouted Snaith angrily.

"Well, go ahead," said Sydney.

Snaith went ahead. He made a rush at the new junior, and collared him, intending to get his head into chancery. He had no doubt at all that Sydney would give the required promise when he had been sufficiently hammered.

But Sydney's head did not go into chancery. He returned grasp for grasp, and blow for blow. The two juniors struggled furiously, and crashed against the table and sent it reeling. Then Sydney went down, with Snaith on him. The Shell fellow planted a knee on his chest.

"Now, you cheeky young cad——"

"Go and eat coke!"

Snaith was furious now, and he had the advantage. But as his blows descended upon Sydney, the door opened again, and Mark Linley came in.

"What's the row?" began the Lancashire junior; and then, as he saw Snaith, "You rotten cad!"

He grasped the Shell fellow and dragged him off. Sydney, panting, leaped to his feet.

"Let him go!" he exclaimed. "I can handle him!"

"Then I'll see fair play!" said Mark. "Go it!"

For the next five minutes there was a wild and whirling scene in the study. Snaith was bigger, and stronger; but the new junior was full of pluck, and he was not to be beaten. He took a good deal of punishment, but he gave more than he received.

At the end of the five minutes Snaith broke away, and fairly bolted. He went down the Remove passage with one hand to his nose, and one of his eyes closed. Paul Sydney remained the victor, though he was looking considerably damaged.

"Well, you licked him," grinned Mark. "That's one up for the Remove—licking a Shell bounder. What was the row about?"

Sydney gasped.

"Oh, we had an argument!" he said. Sydney intended to put Wharton on his guard against Snaith's peculiar investigations in his desk, but he did not feel justified in publishing the matter far and wide. "Oh, my eye!" continued Sydney. "I—I think I'll go and bathe it."

"It needs it," said Mark, smiling. "But Snaith's eyes both want bathing."

Sydney grinned, and made his way to the dormitory to bathe his eye. Cecil Snaith was engaged in the same occupation in a bath-room. But bathing booted not, as the poets say; and when the two heroes appeared in public again, each was adorned with a blossoming black eye.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Lie Direct!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Where did you dig up that eye?"

The Famous Five had come in, and they found Paul Sydney in the study. As he looked up from his preparation, his black eye was only too evident.

Sydney smiled faintly. He was feeling considerably "used up," after the fight with the Shell fellow; and his eye was painful.

"I had a row," he explained.

"Bolsover?" asked Harry Wharton, with a frown.

"No; Snaith of the Shell."

"What in thunder have you been fighting with Snaith for?" demanded Nugent. "Why, you don't know the chap."

"We had a row," said Sydney.

"Licked?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I think not. Snaith has two eyes like this."

"Good for you!" said Johnny heartily. "Snaith is rather a worm, and a licking will do him good. Blessed if I see what you found to quarrel about, though!"

Johnny Bull and Bob and Hurree Singh went to do their preparation in their studies, and Wharton and Nugent sat down to work. Then Sydney made his explanation a little more fully. The chums of No. 1 Study were entitled to know the facts.

"Who's been upsetting the ink," ejaculated Nugent, "and smashing the inkpot, by Jove? Did you have your fight here, Sydney?"

"Yes."

"Well, my hat! Snaith came here to scrap with you?" exclaimed Wharton, in astonishment.

"I found him here," said Sydney. "I don't want to talk about the fellow, but I think I ought to tell you. I don't want it jawed about, because Snaith may not have meant any harm, and it's an unpleasant matter, anyway. He was rummaging through your desk when I found him in the study."

"My desk!" exclaimed Harry.

"Yes."

"What on earth for?"

"He said he was looking for your list of French verbs, but I did not believe him. He was turning the desk fairly inside out."

Wharton's brows contracted.

"Blessed if I see why he should do it!" he said. "If it was Bunter, I could understand it; he reads fellows' letters. But Snaith couldn't be interested in anything of that kind. You're sure——"

"Look at the desk; it's just as he left it."

Wharton examined the desk. The inner drawers were nearly all pulled out, and the contents in great confusion. Snaith had doubtless intended to restore the desk to order before he left; but the interruption had prevented that. Wharton's brows grew darker. The idea of his private property being rummaged in that way was decidedly irritating.

"The mean cad!" he exclaimed. "I'll jolly well talk to him about this!"

"I talked to him," said Sydney. "I thought I ought to mention it to you, so that you can keep your desk locked, if there's anything in it you don't want spied into."

"Quite right," said Harry. "But I can't make it out. I've got letters there from my people, and so on. Bunter might like to nose into them, but I don't see why Snaith should; there's nothing really secret."

"You don't keep money there?"

"Money!" exclaimed Harry, starting.

Sydney coloured.

"I—thought perhaps——"

"Dash it all, the fellow can't be a thief!" said Harry, a little shocked that such an idea had come into Sydney's mind.

"Hold on," said Frank Nugent quietly. "The money of the Dramatic Club is there, Harry; better make sure that it's safe. We've got all the subscriptions in, and there's a good bit—over three quid."

"But—Franky——"

"Snaith is in difficulties for tin," said Nugent. "You remember last week—the day Sydney came—about Snaith getting that telegram."

Wharton pursed his lips.

"I can't believe he was thinking of anything of the sort," he said. "Snaith is a bit of a blackguard; but it's a long step from that to stealing. Besides, the drawer with the money in it is locked. Bunter would have borrowed it without asking, before this, if I didn't keep it locked up. But I'll look."

The old mahogany desk had a secret drawer in the interior; not much of a secret, as a matter of fact, as it was revealed by a sliding flap. But there was a lock on that drawer, and Wharton carried the key about with him.

"It's still locked," said Harry.

"Look in it, all the same."

Wharton unlocked the drawer. A sovereign, two currency notes for a pound each, and some silver lay in the drawer.

"Safe as houses," said Harry.

"Just as well that Sydney interrupted Snaith, I think," said Nugent. "I don't like to think it of him. But everybody knows you take charge of the club funds, and that desk's the only place you could keep them in. We know that Snaith was hard hit the other day. And gambling isn't so very far from stealing, after all; only a different way of getting something for nothing. I think it would be a good idea to have a straight talk with Snaith."

"I'm going to," said Wharton, frowning.

Leaving Nugent and Sydney engaged on their preparation, the captain of the Remove made his way to the Shell quarters. He felt that it was imperative to have a straight talk with Snaith. Whatever had been the Shell fellow's object in rummaging through his desk, Wharton did not mean to have any more of it.

Snaith was in his study, which he shared with Hobson and Hoskins of the Shell. The three Shell fellows were at their preparation, and Snaith's eyes were of a beautiful black. He blinked painfully at the Removite as he came in.

"I want to speak to you, Snaith," said Wharton abruptly.

"You can go ahead," said Snaith.

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"GOING THE PACE!"

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ONE
PENNY.

"If you'd rather these fellows didn't hear, you can come outside."

"Why should I care whether they hear or not?" asked Snaith, looking surprised. "I've got no secrets with a Lower Fourth fag, that I know of."

Hobson and Hoskins looked up from their work. They were surprised.

"It's about what happened in my study while I was out," said Wharton.

"Yes, I was going to mention that to you," said Snaith.

"You—you were going to mention it?" exclaimed Wharton, taken aback.

"Yes; when I saw you again."

"Quite right," said Hobson. "Wharton ought to be told. He ought to know what kind of a chap that new kid is in his study."

"You've told Hobson about it, Snaith?" exclaimed Harry, greatly astonished.

"Yes, I've mentioned it," said Snaith. "I asked Hobby whether he thought I ought to tell you. I don't want to make trouble in your study, and I don't want to bother about a set of fags, anyway. But Hobby said I ought to tell you."

"I think so," said Hobson, with a nod.

"Look here, what are you driving at?" exclaimed Wharton. "Sydney caught you rummaging through my desk, and licked you——"

"What!"

"I suppose you don't deny it?"

"Do you mean to say that Sydney told you that?" asked Snaith, with a sneer.

"Certainly he did!"

"And you believed it?"

"Yes."

Snaith shrugged his shoulders.

"Then I've got nothing to say. You can go and eat coke!"

"Hold on," said Hobson. "Wharton ought to know the truth. Look here, Wharton, it was Snaith who caught young Sydney going through your desk."

Wharton started.

"Were you there, Hobson?" he exclaimed. "I know I can take your word. I can't take Snaith's."

"I wasn't there, of course," said Hobson. "I never knew about it till Snaith told me, and asked my opinion about putting you on your guard against Sydney."

"Well, Snaith told you lies," said Wharton directly. "I believe Sydney. He found Snaith going through my desk."

"Oh, rot!" said Hobson. "What should Snaith do that for?"

"That's what I want to know," said Harry. "I've got no doubt about it. Let Snaith explain what he was doing in my study at all."

"I've already told Hobson," said Snaith disdainfully. "I don't mind explaining to you, as that young cad seems to have taken you in. I was going through the passage to get to the upper box-room, when I passed your door. It was partly open, and I saw him as I passed. He was going through your desk. I stopped to speak to him, and told him what I thought of him, and he started on me. We had a row. That's it, in a nutshell."

Wharton looked hard at Snaith. The cad of the Shell told his story coolly and consistently enough. But for his knowledge that Cecil Snaith was very far from being "straight," Wharton would have been in great doubt. But he had a good opinion of Paul Sydney; and he knew that Snaith was a fellow who chummed with bookmakers, betted on horses, smoked, and gambled, and was a blackguard generally. For that reason he was not in doubt for a single moment.

"Now you understand," said Hobson, who, naturally enough, put his faith in his study-mate, especially as he had heard Snaith's version first.

Wharton's lip curled.

"Yes, now I understand," he said—"I understand that Snaith knew that Sydney would warn me, and that he got this yarn all ready for me. I believe that he is telling lies from beginning to end, and that Sydney is as straight

as a die. I believe every word Sydney has told me, and I don't believe a word that Snaith has said!"

"Then you're a cheeky young ass, and you'd better get out of this study!" grunted Hobson.

"You can believe as you like," said Snaith. "I've got nothing more to say. You'll find the fellow out yourself some day, I dare say."

"Very likely," assented Hobson.

Wharton clenched his hands.

"You've told rotten lies about my study-mate, Snaith," he said. "You're not in a fit state to put up your hands now. But if I hear that you've said another word against Sydney, you'll have to back it up with your fists. That's all!"

And Wharton strode out of the study.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Confession!

"WHAT about Sydney?"

It was the following Saturday afternoon, and Wharton and Nugent were discussing the afternoon's proceedings. Nugent was going home for the afternoon, and Wharton was going with him. The other three members of the famous Co. were going over to Cliff House.

"Sydney!" repeated Wharton. "Good idea, Franky, if your people won't mind your bringing another chap along."

"Oh, they won't mind!" said Nugent. "Sydney seems a decent sort, and he might as well come if he'd like to."

Wharton assented cordially. They had known Sydney more than a week now, and they liked him. They had got used to him in the study, and, indeed, were rather pleased than sorry he had come. They could not help observing that there was a kind of reserve about the new boy that puzzled them a little; but they had got used to that, too.

There had been no more talk about the incident of the desk. Snaith had said nothing further on the subject. He explained to his study-mates that fellows were as likely to believe Snaith's version as Sydney's. It was an unpleasant matter, anyway, and all concerned were glad to dismiss it from their minds.

"We'll take Sydney," said Nugent. "Most of the chaps are going out somewhere, as there's no game on, and he won't want to be left on his lonesome. Let's go and find him."

The chums of the Remove proceeded to look for Sydney. They found him in the shady old cloisters, with a book. He was not reading, however; he was seated on the base of one of the old stone pillars, with the book open on his knees, but his brow was lined with thought, and his thoughts evidently were far away.

"Penny for 'em!" said Nugent.

Sydney started, and coloured.

"We've been looking for you," went on Frank. "You don't seem keenly interested in that book. How would you like a little run this afternoon?"

"First-rate!" said Sydney, rising.

"A run on the railway, and then tea," said Nugent, laughing. "It's not very exciting, but if you'd like to come along with us——"

"I'd be glad to," said Sydney. "I was getting depressed, as a matter of fact."

"You're like old Cassius—you think too much," said Wharton good-humouredly. "You always seem to be doing some deep thinking. Has Quelchy been down on you?"

"Oh, no; he is very kind, and I get on very well with the lessons. It is not so difficult here as I thought it would be," said Sydney. "Mr. Locke was right, as he always is. Greyfriars is a ripping place!"

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent. "Well, come and get your best bib and tucker on."

"Where are we going?" asked Sydney.

"To my place."

"Your place?" repeated Sydney.

"Yes—home, you know. You'll see my mater and pater and sister—three of the best," said Frank. "Sister's home now—she's been at school on the Continent, but came home on account of the war. Hallo, what's the matter with you?"

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Sydney stopped dead, and the colour was wavering in his cheeks.

"My sister won't eat you," said Frank humorously.

"I—I——"

"Train goes in half-an-hour; good time to walk to the station," said Nugent.

"I—I don't think I'll come, thanks all the same!" stammered Sydney.

Nugent stared at him.

"A minute ago you said you'd be glad to come," he said.

"Yes; I—I thought it was a little run somewhere," said Sydney, crimsoning. "I—I didn't know you were going home."

"Oh!" said Nugent, nettled.

"I—I mean to say——"

"It's all right," said Frank, coldly enough; "if you don't want to come home with me, you need not. I thought you might like to. My people aren't Gorgons, and they'd make you welcome."

"I—I know, but—but——"

"But you don't want to come. Well, don't, then."

Nugent walked away, his face very red. It had been sheer kindness of heart that made the good-natured junior think of taking the new boy home with him. Personally, he did not care a rap whether Sydney went or not. But it was offensive to have his kind invitation refused in this way. Even if Sydney anticipated a dull and boresome family party at Nugent's home, he ought not to have withdrawn in that way when he found out what the destination was. That was the only conclusion Nugent could come to, and, naturally, he did not like the idea of his family being considered too dull and boresome for Sydney to visit.

Sydney looked after him, his face pale now. He seemed perilously on the verge of tears. Wharton made a step to follow Nugent, and then paused. He wondered whether it was only Sydney's curious shyness and diffidence that was at the bottom of the matter.

"Hold on, Franky!" he called out.

"Oh, come along!" said Nugent.

"Hold on, fathead! Don't get in a huff!"

"I'm not in a huff," said Nugent, from a dozen feet distance, and speaking hotly. "If Sydney doesn't want to see my people, he can please himself; nothing for me to get huffy about. He can go and eat coke! I should think going to my place was pretty nearly as good as mooching about the cloisters, in the blues. Look here, are you coming, Harry?"

"Yes, I'm coming. Wait a tick!"

"If you'd rather stay with Sydney, you needn't bother to come," said Nugent tartly.

"Do dry up for a minute, old chap, while I speak to Sydney!" said Wharton. "Look here, Sydney——"

"I'm going!" said Nugent.

And he went.

Wharton hesitated a moment, and then ran after him. He caught him by the shoulder and stopped him, half-way through the cloisters.

"For goodness' sake don't play the giddy ox, Franky!" he said. "Sydney didn't mean to offend you—it's only that the silly kid's shy."

"Oh, rats!" said Nugent. "'Tain't shyness—it's dashed cheek. It's the first time I've ever asked a new kid home, and I don't want him, as a matter of fact. I thought it would be only decent, as he's stuck in our study."

"Here he comes," said Harry.

Paul Sydney joined them, his face troubled and miserable. Nugent relented a little as he saw his expression.

"I—I think I ought to explain to you," said Sydney, in a tremulous voice. "I—I don't want you to think me an ungrateful beast, Nugent. If—if you'll listen to me for a few minutes——"

"There's nothing to explain," said Frank. "If you don't want to come, you don't want to, and there's an end. No reason why you should want to."

"I do want, but I can't!"

"Another engagement?" sniffed Nugent. "New kids are generally piled up with engagements on half-holidays—I don't think!"

"I can't come," repeated Sydney, steadily now. "Be-

cause—because, if you'd known more about me, you wouldn't have asked me."

"What?"

"I'm not a fit chap to take to your home and introduce to your people," said Sydney, his lips quivering. "I should be a rotten brute if I let you take me there without knowing what I am—what I have been, I mean. If you found it out afterwards, you'd be down on me, and I should deserve it, too."

The chums of the Remove stared blankly at Sydney. He had succeeded in astonishing them.

"Blessed if I see what you're getting at," said Nugent, after a pause. "You've been jolly mysterious before this. I don't like mysteries. What's the blessed secret you're talking about? I suppose you're not a runaway murderer, are you?"

"No."

"No," repeated Nugent; "nor a German spy!"

"Cheese it, Franky," said Wharton; "there's something in this, and we've got to get to the bottom of it. Now, Sydney, old son, why can't you go home with Nugent? What bee have you got in your bonnet?"

"I've told you," said Sydney, "I'm not fit to take home to Nugent's place and introduce to his people. I'm not fit to be here with you fellows at all. Mr. Locke thought it best, and I—I was willing to do as he considered best. But—but I can't take advantage of it. I—I don't want you fellows to talk about it, of course, as Mr. Locke thought it best to keep it a secret. But—but—"

He broke off.

"But what?" asked Nugent impatiently. "What the deuce were you before you came to Greyfriars?"

"I was a thief!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Snalth Makes a Discovery!

A THIEF!"

Wharton and Nugent gasped out the terrible word blankly, incredulously.

They could not realise it for a moment.

Sydney was pale as death now. His lips were quivering, and a rush of tears dimmed his eyes. It was the first time the juniors had had a glimpse of the tragedy that was hidden behind the reserve of the strange new boy.

"A thief?" said Nugent. "Are you dotty?"

"What on earth do you mean, Sydney?" exclaimed Wharton, almost angrily.

"I mean what I say."

"You—you were a thief before you came to Greyfriars?" said Nugent, still unable to grasp it. "I think you must be mad! They wouldn't let a thief into this school, I should think."

"It's true."

There was a brief silence. The look on Sydney's face was only too clear evidence that it was true. The juniors had to believe him; and instinctively, involuntarily, they moved back a pace. Sydney smiled bitterly as he observed it. To the clean and healthy minds of the juniors a thief was something unclean, something contaminating. They could not help the feeling.

"You see how you feel about it now that you know," said Sydney, in a low voice. "What would you have thought if you had found it out afterwards—after you'd taken me home among your people?"

Wharton coloured. That movement on his part had been instinctive.

"I don't understand this," he said. "If that's really true, Sydney, you'd better tell us more about it. I always took you for a decent chap."

"So did I!" said Nugent.

All Nugent's anger was gone now. Whatever Sydney had been, his motive for refusing Nugent's invitation home was an honourable one, and it showed that he was decent at heart, at least. An unscrupulous fellow would most certainly have kept his secret, and would have taken full advantage of the confidence placed in him by unsuspecting juniors.

"I hope I am decent—now," said Sydney. "But—but that doesn't alter the fact. It's been on my tongue to tell you this before—since you made a friend of me. It's tormented me to think I was taking you in. But—but I couldn't tell you. I—I knew I ought to."

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"GOING THE PAGE!"

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ONE
PENNY.

"But—but it's too thick!" exclaimed Nugent. "Do you mean to say that Ferrers Locke knew it, and still sent you to Greyfriars?"

"Yes."

"And the Head?"

"He knew."

The juniors remembered what Bunter had told them, of the "experiment" mentioned in the talk between Ferrers Locke and the Head. Sydney's confession was throwing light on several circumstances that had puzzled them.

"There isn't much to tell, but I'll tell you," said Sydney. "I don't want you to think it's worse than it is, though, goodness knows, it's bad enough. But for Mr. Locke's kindness I should be now what I was before. He saved me from it—and saved me from prison. Fellows brought up as you've been have no idea of the kind of life Mr. Locke saved me from. It wasn't really my fault. A kid who's taught to pick pockets when he's five years old hasn't much of a chance."

"Good heavens!" said Wharton.

Sydney smiled patiently.

"You can't imagine a kid without any people," he said. "You've never seen the side of life that I've seen. I never had any people. The first thing I remember is being taken round to beg by a professional beggar. I lived in a London slum—the kind of place you've never seen, I suppose. I was a thief before I was old enough to know the meaning of the word. After that I was used by a gang of rascals to help them in their robberies. They used to take me with them—I was small and active, and I was useful to them—to get into windows, and so on. I lived that life without thinking of anything different. It seemed the natural thing to me, brought up as I was. At twelve years old I could hardly read or write."

Nugent shuddered.

There were many phases of life quite unknown to the Greyfriars juniors. They had heard of such things as Sydney was telling them, but had never realised them. And this lad, no older than themselves, had been through it—had been barely rescued from the shadowy underworld.

"It's horrible!" said Wharton.

"I didn't know how horrible it was," said Sydney. "I couldn't. The people I lived among lived by robbery, and we all looked on the police as our natural enemies. You may wonder why I didn't think of reforming—the idea of it simply never entered my head. You might as well ask why an African savage doesn't become civilised. I hardly knew there was any other kind of life."

"Poor kid!" said Nugent. "I—I've heard of such things, but I never thought—"

"How did you get out of it?" asked Wharton, deeply interested, and moved by the new boy's strange story.

"I didn't get out of it; it was impossible to get out of it. I was lifted out of it—as you might lift a drowning kid out of the water," said Sydney. "Ferrers Locke did it. He broke up the gang that kept me, and he found me there. And I suppose he judged I had something decent in me. Perhaps he thought there was a chance for me—I wasn't thirteen then. Instead of sending me to a juvenile prison, instead of letting the police take me, he took me himself, and gave me a chance."

"It was ripping of him!" said Wharton.

"I was put into a place in the country, and an old clergyman took charge of me and taught me," said Sydney. "I learned pretty quickly, for all that time I could barely write my name."

"And you were jolly glad of the change?"

Sydney's face quivered.

"You don't understand—you can't understand!" he said—"of course you can't! When you put a lion in a cage he doesn't like it, however much better it may be than the jungle. I was in a beautiful country, in a clean and decent home—and all my thoughts went back to the slums and the streets, and the excitement. You can't cure a London outcast in a day. I was grateful to Mr. Locke, but I didn't understand. I ran away."

"You ran away!" repeated Wharton. "Back to—"

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

Sydney crimsoned.

"Yes, after a few months, back to what I had left. You're shocked, of course! So am I when I think of it now. But I can see that it was natural enough. You can't unlearn in a few months what you've been taught from birth. Ferrers Locke looked for me, and he found me again. I expected him to deal harshly with me—that would have ruined me for ever, I know now—but Mr. Locke simply took me back this time to his own home. I've been with him ever since. And then—I learned. I—I came to understand what he wanted me to understand. And—and at last I would have died rather than go back to my old life. But I couldn't forget it. It haunts me like a nightmare!"

"And then you came here?"

Sydney nodded.

"Mr. Locke wanted to make a complete break for me between my new life and the old. And—and there were some fellows here he thought highly of, and he knew their influence over me would do me good. That was what he talked about with the Head. He told Dr. Locke the whole story, and that he believed I was quite reformed; and the Head agreed to take me here for a term, to give me a chance of mixing on equal terms with decent fellows. Of course, it had to be kept dark what I had been."

Wharton smiled slightly.

"So that's why Mr. Locke wanted you put in our study? We're much obliged to him for his good opinion!"

"I—I was scared at the idea of coming," said Sydney. "I thought it would be guessed—that the fellows would find out somehow. And—and I couldn't help thinking all the time what they would think if they knew. But I said nothing, as Mr. Locke had told me. But—but when you chaps got friendly with me it worried me. I knew you wouldn't speak to me if you knew, and I couldn't tell you. And—and when Nugent asked me home, you see——"

His voice faltered.

"I see," said Nugent softly.

"It was jolly decent of you to own up," said Harry.

"I've tried to be decent ever since I understood," said

Sydney quietly. "I had to tell you. But I've got to stay here for the term, and you'll keep it dark. I don't expect you to chum with me after this."

"It won't make any difference to that," said Harry Wharton, a little awkwardly. "I—I suppose you couldn't help it—and you're all right now, anyway. We shall keep it dark, of course. And it won't make any difference."

"None at all," said Nugent.

Sydney shook his head.

"I know you mean that," he said. "But it will make a difference, all the same; you can't help yourselves. But I'm glad I've got it off my mind; it's a relief not to be deceiving you any longer."

He turned and walked quickly away.

Wharton and Nugent looked at one another in silence for a full minute. Sydney's confession had disturbed them greatly.

"Well, this is a go," said Nugent at last.

"The poor kid's been hard done by," said Wharton. "He seems to have become decent as soon as he had a chance. Mr. Locke is a brick!"

"But—but——"

"We're going to treat him just the same, Franky."

"I suppose so. He must be decent, or he wouldn't own up like that. It was the right thing to do, as I'd asked him to see my people. Some fellows wouldn't have done it. Let's go off—we shall lose the train."

The chums of the Remove walked away with clouded and thoughtful faces. They were very silent as they made their way to the station. The impression of Sydney's strange story was slow in wearing off.

When they had left the cloisters, a face appeared from behind one of the old stone pillars, and a pair of cunning eyes glanced up and down. The cloisters were deserted, and, after that keen look, Snaith of the Shell came out into view and smiled. He held an unlighted cigarette between his fingers. The blackguard of the Shell had retired to that secluded spot for a smoke, and, unseen, he had heard every word that the juniors had uttered.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Good Turn!

PAUL SYDNEY was in the study when Wharton and Nugent came in, somewhat tired after their journey. The new junior was working at the table, and he looked up, his face flooded with crimson, as the chums came in. It was an awkward moment, and Wharton and Nugent coloured, too. The chums had talked the matter over while they were away, and they had determined that Sydney's confession should make no difference in their treatment of him.

But, in spite of themselves, there was a sense of constraint.

Sydney had made the confession of his own accord, and, consequently, it was hardly possible to doubt that the reformation of his character was sincere. Indeed, badly as he had started in life, it was evident that he had grown to understand what a sense of honour was more clearly than some fellows the chums knew at Greyfriars, such as Skinner and Snoop. His confession, rather than allow himself to be introduced into Nugent's home under false colours, proved a sensitive honour that would have been a credit to anyone.

The juniors understood that, and they pitied him, and respected him, too. Yet it was uncomfortable to feel that their study-mate had been a thief.

"GOING THE PACE!"

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Snaith was at Wharton's desk, and the desk was open. He was going through it in quite a methodical manner, as if in search of something. He started round, with a sudden exclamation, as Sydney came in. Sydney's eyes flashed as he looked at him. "What are you doing here?" he exclaimed. (See Chapter 6.)

Sydney smiled a little as he read their expressions. His strange experience had made him unusually keen, and he easily divined their half-conscious thought.

"Would you fellows like me to change into some other study?" he asked. "I could manage it, if you liked."

"No," said Wharton.

"Not a bit," said Nugent.

"Look here!" said Sydney. "I've told you my secret; I felt I had to. It makes you feel different. You can't help that. It would be better for me to get out, and some of the other fellows would have me."

Wharton shook his head.

"To tell you the truth," he said frankly, "it does want some getting used to. But we believe you're all right, and we want everything to go on as before."

"Honour bright!" said Nugent.

"Just as you like," said Sydney. "I won't bother you more than I can help."

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"You won't bother us at all, old chap. Help us get rid of these chestnuts—Nugent's got his pockets full."

And the evening in No. 1 Study wound up quite agreeably.

The next day was Sunday, a quiet day at Greyfriars. The chief occupation in the morning was a "Sunday walk" after early service, and the Famous Five generally went for that Sunday walk together. After service Sydney disappeared into the cloisters by himself. He was promptly routed out by Frank Nugent, who took his arm and marched him off, and the new junior joined the Five. Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh were in ignorance of what Wharton and Nugent had learned of their study-mate, and they suspected nothing of it. Wharton and Nugent had resolved to dismiss the whole matter entirely from their minds.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, as the juniors turned from the lane across the fields at some distance from the school. "There's Snaith!"

Harry Wharton's lip curled as he glanced towards the Shell fellow. Snaith was not alone. He was talking under a thick clump of trees with a short, thick-set man who had a bulldog at his heels, a cigar in his mouth, and a bowler-hat tilted over one ear.

"I've seen that chap before," said Bob Cherry. "His name's Carker, and he hangs about the Cross Keys sometimes."

"A bookie, and a shady sort of bookie," said Johnny Bull. "Pretty kind of chap for a Greyfriars fellow to meet. Let's give Snaith a ducking. There's a ditch handy."

Wharton shook his head.

"No business of ours," he said.

"They seem to be having a giddy argument," grinned Bob. "Snaith may be a merry blade, but he doesn't seem to be enjoying it."

Mr. Carker was speaking in raised, bullying tones that came to the ears of the juniors across the field. They did not hear his words; but the tones were unmistakable.

There was evidently disagreement between Snaith of the Shell and his sporting friend.

"Surely Snaith would get into trouble if he were seen with that man?" said Sydney.

"I should jolly well say so!" exclaimed Nugent. "He would be jolly well flogged, and serve him right! I wonder if that's the rotter who gave him that dead cert about Tick-Tick, who came in fourth last week."

The footpath the Removites were following took them towards the clump of trees, and Mr. Carker's bullying tones became clearer as they advanced. Mr. Carker had his broad back turned to the juniors, and Snaith had his eyes on the ground. His face was almost livid.

Neither of them saw the juniors coming.

"Dash it all! We don't want to hear their rotten secrets!" said Wharton. "Cut across the field."

The six juniors turned from the path and crossed the field, and reached the road by a gap in the hedge. They

walked back to Greyfriars, leaving Snaith of the Shell still in talk with the racing sharper.

They could not help glancing at Snaith when he came in to dinner. Snaith was a great "nut" in prosperous times, and he had a swanking manner as a rule. But he was very quiet and subdued now. His face was pale, and his brow was clouded.

"Who wouldn't be a bold blade!" murmured Bob Cherry. "It's an enjoyable life—Snaithy looks like that, don't he? I suppose another of his geegees has come in fourth or fifth—that's the worst of these dead certs!"

Harry Wharton had a thoughtful look. After dinner he spotted Snaith in the Close and came up to him. The nut of the Shell gave him a very surly look.

"Excuse my speaking to you about what isn't my business," said Harry, taking no notice of Snaith's manner. "We saw you this morning talking to Carker."

Snaith started.

"Anybody might have seen you," went on Harry. "I thought I'd give you the tip—though you'd do better not to see that man again at all. If Wingate had seen you—"

"Thanks for the tip!" said Snaith. "And when I want a sermon from a Lower Fourth fag, I'll ask for it!"

Wharton smiled.

"I'm not giving you a sermon," he said. "I think you're playing the giddy ox, but I know how to mind my own business. Look here, Snaith"—he paused—"I couldn't help seeing that that man was ragging you. I came to the conclusion that you owe him money and can't pay it."

"Like your cheek to think about the matter at all!" said Snaith.

"I thought about it because I happen to be in funds just now," said Wharton quietly. "We're not friends, but I don't like to see a Greyfriars chap in trouble. If it's that, and a couple of quid would help you out of it, I've got the couple of quid."

"A couple of quid?" said Snaith.

"Yes!"

The Shell fellow's face softened a little.

"So you think I owe him money and am hard up?" he said, giving Wharton a very curious look.

"That's what it looked like to me; but if it isn't so, all the better."

Snaith drew a deep breath.

"I don't want two quid," he said. "I owe the man thirty shillings. If you like to lend me that, I'll square him, and never see him again. Of course, mum's the word! You'll keep it dark?"

"Of course!" said Harry. "Here's the tin."

Snaith's look was very peculiar as he closed his hand on the two currency notes—one for ten shillings, and one for a pound—that Wharton slipped quietly into his fingers.

"It's jolly decent of you!" he said. "I sha'n't forget this."

"And that gets you right out of it?" asked Harry.

"Right out," said Snaith.

"I'm glad," said Harry simply.

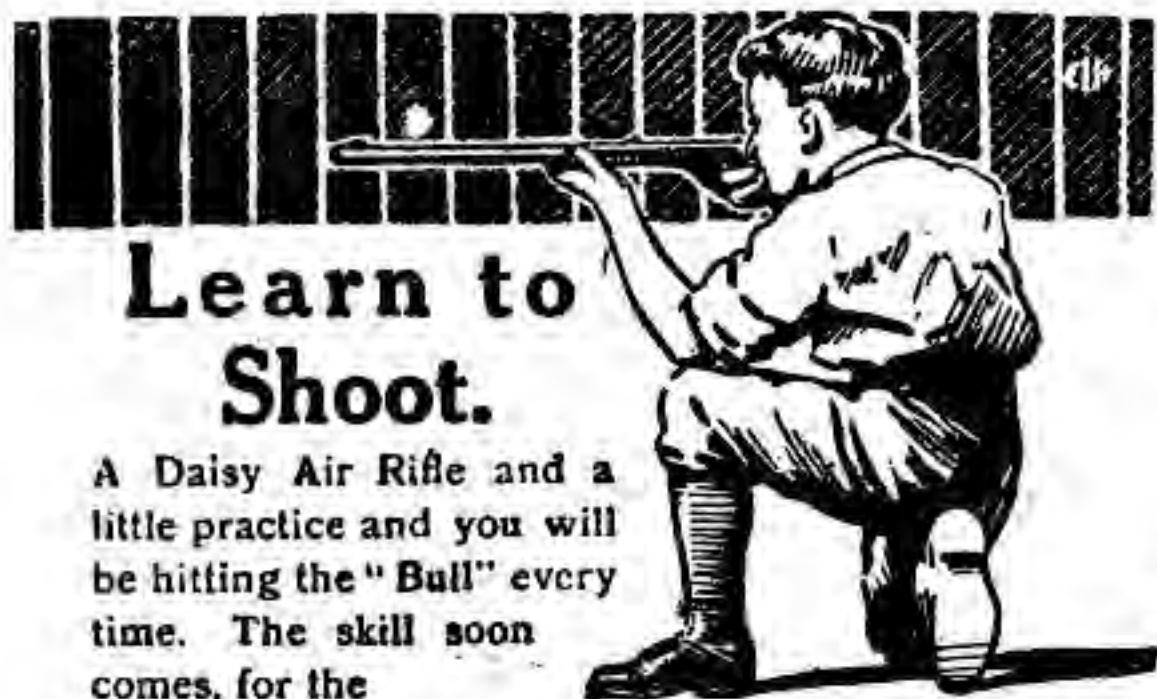
"I'll settle this in a couple of weeks," said Snaith.

"That's all right."

Harry Wharton nodded cheerily, and walked away.

It had been a little wrench, naturally, to part with three-quarters of an unusually generous remittance, especially as Snaith's promise of repayment was, to say the least, doubtful. But he was glad that he had done so. Snaith was not his friend; they were rather enemies than friends, so far as they came into contact at all. And the reckless fellow had only himself to thank for the difficulty he was in. Yet it was "up" to a fellow who was strong enough to keep straight, to lend a helping hand to a weaker character, and it was like Wharton to help any lame dog over a stile. It was worth the money, if Snaith really kept his word, and gave such fellows as Carker a wide berth afterwards.

Wharton little dreamed of what was passing in Snaith's mind when he left him. Had he been able to guess the Shell fellow's thoughts he would have been startled.



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THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Thief in the Night!

"BEGAD!" said Lord Mauleverer.

It was Tuesday morning, and the Remove had turned out at the clang of the rising-bell. Lord Mauleverer, the dandy of the Remove, was standing beside his bed, holding up his jacket, and looking startled.

"Begad!" he repeated. "I suppose this is a little joke. Which of you fellows has taken my pocket-book?"

"Your pocket-book!" said Wharton, looking round. "Have you lost it?"

"No."

"Then what's the trouble?"

"It's been taken out of my pocket."

"Rats!" said Harry. "You're always losing something. Look again."

"No good looking in an empty pocket," said Lord Mauleverer. "It was there last night. I suppose some ass has taken it for a joke. I don't see the joke myself."

"Anything in it?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Yaas!"

"Money?"

"Yaas! Some currency notes."

"How many?"

"How should I know?"

"Fathead!"

"Bunter!" rapped out Wharton.

Billy Bunter turned his glasses indignantly upon the captain of the Remove.

"Have you been doing any more of your borrowing?" asked Harry.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

There was a sudden roar from Bolsover major.

"Who's been going through my pockets?"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, you, too!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "There's been a giddy burglar here, then. I'm going through my pockets. I had twopence last night!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry went through his pockets, and found his twopence quite safe. But several other fellows who followed his example gave vent to loud and wrathful exclamations.

"Sure, somebody's taken five bob off me!" shouted Micky Desmond.

"Who's got my half-quid?" yelled Rake.

"Where's my pound?"

"Somebody's boned my seven-and-six!"

"I've missed ten bob!"

"Fifteen bob here! Who's got it?"

"By Jove!" said Wharton. "And I've lost ten bob! I say, this is rather serious. It must be a jape by some silly idiot, I suppose!"

"Jape, be blowed!" roared Bolsover major furiously. "There's a blessed thief in the dorm! Somebody's taken over twelve bob out of my pockets!"

"A thief!"

Wharton and Nugent instinctively turned their eyes upon Sydney. They could not help it. Only a couple of days before their new study-mate had confessed that he was a thief.

Sydney's face was deadly pale, and his eyes had a hunted look.

His lips were trembling. He looked as if he were the prey of an overpowering terror.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob, noting his ghastly look, and clapping him on the shoulder. "Have you lost a giddy fortune, young 'un?"

"I—I"—Sydney's voice quivered pitifully—"I—I haven't looked."

"Then what's the matter with you?" said Bob, in wonder. "You'd better look."

Paul Sydney nodded, and looked through his pockets. Then he shook his head.

"I've lost nothing," he said. "I had fourteen shillings, and it's still there."

"If this is a jape of any fellow present, the sooner he owns up the better," said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, rot!" said Skinner. "It's not a jape. It's a robbery!"

"And the thief's jolly well going to be found!" said Bolsover major. "I'm going to Mr. Quelch about it!"

"Mr. Quelch will have to know, of course, if it's really a theft."

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NEXT
MONDAY—

"GOING THE PACE!"

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ONE
PENNY.

"Of course it is," said Vernon-Smith. "Whoever has taken my three quid hasn't taken it for a joke."

"I guess there's going to be a kick-up about this!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I've lost two-and-six! And I kinder guess I ain't losing two-and-six without raising Cain about it—just a few!"

"How much have you lost, Mauleverer?"

"Well, I know there was five pounds in the pocket-book," said Lord Mauleverer. "There may have been more."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here's the pocket-book!"

"By gad!"

Bob Cherry picked up the pocket-book, which lay under the window at the end of the dormitory. It was open.

"Look in it, Mauly——"

"The quids are gone, dear boy," said Lord Mauleverer, examining his pocket-book. "I know there were five currency notes for a quid each. It's empty now."

"Somebody's made a jolly good haul," said Skinner. "Lucky I was stony broke. How much does the lot come to?"

The juniors compared notes.

"Over twelve pounds, if there was no more than five quid in Mauly's pocket-book," said Nugent.

"Somebody wanted a lot," said Skinner. "What have you done with it, Bunter?"

Bunter uttered an indignant yell.

"You beast, Skinner! I don't know anything about it. I say, you fellows, you know I haven't done it, don't you? I say, Toddy——"

"All serene, Bunt," said Peter Todd. "We know it wasn't you. But we've jolly well got to find out who it was."

"Somebody who's here now," said Bolsover major. "Let's search every chap in turn, and we'll find it all."

"That's no good," said Wharton. "If it's a Remove chap he wouldn't be idiot enough to keep it here in his pockets."

"If!" said Bolsover. "Of course it was a Remove chap. You don't think it was a burglar, do you?"

"Of course I don't. But it may have been a chap from another dormitory."

"Well, that's possible, I suppose," admitted Bolsover.

Nugent gave a whistle. He remembered Snaith of the Shell and his difficulties with Mr. Carker.

"One of us had better go and call Mr. Quelch," said Wharton. "Keep in the dorm, all of you, till he comes."

Wharton left the dormitory to fetch the Remove master. He came back in a few minutes with Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Quelch was looking his sternest. The unpleasant news of a theft in the school had brought his blackest frown to his brow.

He rapped out questions, which the juniors answered promptly enough. Wharton noted that the Form-master's eyes dwelt strangely on Sydney, though he did not address him.

Wharton's heart was heavy. He could not help thinking of Sydney himself. Upon whom else could suspicion fall? And Sydney's look showed that he realised it. Innocent or guilty, he was bound to be suspected.

Mr. Quelch left the dormitory, after ascertaining the facts, and the Remove went down soon afterwards. The Famous Five drew together in the quadrangle. Johnny Bull voiced the thought that was in the minds of Bob Cherry and Hurree Singh as well.

"I don't believe it was a Remove chap," said Johnny Bull, in his decided way. "It was easy enough for a fellow to sneak along from another dorm. Look here, we know that fellow Snaith was in trouble with a bookie; you remember what we saw on Sunday. It was as clear as daylight that he owed the man money. Carker was bullying him. It looks to me——"

"The lookfulness to me is greatly suspicious," remarked Hurree Singh.

"Just what I was thinking," concurred Bob Cherry. "Of course, 'tain't fair to suspect a fellow without proof, but somebody's a thief, and it's only natural to think of a fellow we know to be a blackguard, and who owes money."

"He doesn't," said Wharton quietly.

"How do you know?"

"I'd better explain," said Harry, colouring. "I told Snaith I would keep it dark, but under the cires he'd rather I told you than that you should suspect him. Snaith owed Carker some money, but it was lent to him, and he paid up. So that sees Snaith clear."

"But how do you know?" persisted Nugent. "We know Snaith's a liar. You remember his yarn about seeing Sydney at your desk, when we know from Sydney that it was Snaith himself——"

Nugent broke off suddenly. An unpleasant thought came into his mind, and he was silent. What if Snaith's version had been the true one after all?

Nugent almost hated himself for the thought. But—there was a "but."

"I do know," said Harry. "Snaith didn't tell me. As a matter of fact, I lent him the money. He told me the amount, and I lent it to him, to get him clear of that scoundrel Carker. That clears him."

"More ass you, chucking money away into a bookie's pockets!" grunted Johnny Bull. "But it does see Snaith clear, I admit that."

"Well, it looks like it," said Bob Cherry. "Of course, I didn't know that, or I shouldn't have thought of Snaith. But who the deuce was it, then?"

Wharton did not reply.

But a little later, when he was alone with Nugent, the two chums looked hard at one another.

"What are you thinking of, Harry?" Nugent asked suddenly.

Wharton flushed.

"I can't help thinking of Sydney," he said. "It's rotten, but I can't help it. We know it wasn't Snaith; and we know there wasn't a thief at Greyfriars before Sydney came. And he's told us he was a thief before he came here. He's told us that he broke out once, after Ferrers Locke tried to reform him. I can't help thinking that he's broken out again now. It's rotten, I know."

"And—and that time he said he found Snaith at your desk——"

"Snaith denied it."

"We believed Sydney," said Nugent, looking distressed. "But, of course, it was only his word against Snaith's. I—I believe him still, I think."

"I'm trying to," said Wharton gloomily.

There was a glum silence between the two.

"At any rate, we've got to keep mum," said Nugent, at last. "Sydney told us about himself in confidence. We can't give him away."

"We can't, of course. But there won't be any need. The Head will think of him at once, knowing his history," said Harry. "I'm afraid it's all up with Sydney here. But it isn't in our hands."

And the chums of the Remove went glumly in to breakfast. They had grown to like Paul Sydney, in spite of his dark secret. Was he innocent? How could he be innocent? Innocent or guilty, it looked as if it was all "up" with him at Greyfriars.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER

Gated!

THERE was a good deal of suppressed excitement in Greyfriars School that morning. The story of the robbery in the Remove dormitory was known all over the school by breakfast-time. The fellows were discussing it when they went into the Form-rooms.

The Head and Mr. Quelch had the matter in hand. There would, of course, be a strict inquiry. Very few doubted that the thief would come to light. Until that happened, there was not likely to be much ease of mind in the Remove. The knowledge that there was a thief in the Form was extremely uncomfortable; and the Third and Fourth fellows had already begun to chip the Removites about it. It was possible, of course, that the thief had come from another dormitory in the night. The Remove generally inclined to that theory; but the other Forms declined to entertain such an idea for a moment.

After morning lessons, it came out that the Head had

sent for Ferrers Locke. He had telephoned to the detective early in the morning, and Mr. Locke was expected at Greyfriars. That settled it, in the opinion of the juniors. Ferrers Locke would "nail" the rascal in no time.

But Wharton and Nugent surmised that the Head had had another reason for sending for Mr. Locke, apart from investigating the theft. They surmised that Dr. Locke's suspicions were fixed upon Paul Sydney, and that he had sent for his relative as the boy's guardian. They had half expected that Sydney would be called in to the Head; but, so far, the masters had not taken any special notice of the new boy. Probably they were giving him the benefit of the doubt until the detective arrived.

Paul Sydney joined Wharton and Nugent in the quad as they were discussing the matter in low tones. Sydney was so pale and harassed-looking that it was really surprising that it had not attracted general attention; and drawn suspicion upon him. The two chums fell silent as he came up.

"I—I want to tell you something," faltered Sydney. "I know what you must be thinking, after what I told you on Saturday. I—I give you my word that I know nothing about it. I was fast asleep last night. I did not wake up once. It was as big a surprise to me as to anybody when I heard of the robbery this morning."

Wharton shifted uncomfortably.

Nugent looked on the ground.

"You don't believe me?" asked Sydney, in a low, wretched voice. "I suppose you can't. But it's true."

"I—I believe you," stammered Wharton. "It looks jolly queer, of course. But—but I'm trying to believe you, anyway."

Sydney's face quivered.

"You can't," he said. "I can't expect you to. But I don't know anything about it. I'm innocent."

"Of—of course," stammered Nugent.

They were trying to believe what Sydney said. But in the light of what they knew of him, it was difficult to give him their faith.

"For goodness' sake, buck up a bit!" said Wharton. "You don't know how you're looking. If the fellows notice it, they'll think at once that you've got something on your mind."

"I have got something on my mind," said Sydney. "I know that I must be suspected. The Head must suspect me. He's sent for Mr. Locke, and I know what that means. It was an experiment, sending me here; and the Head thinks it has failed, and that I'm what I used to be. He can't think anything else. When Mr. Locke comes, I shall be sent away in disgrace. But I'm innocent, all the same. But I know I've got to go, and that you fellows will believe that I'm a thief still. And I suppose Mr. Locke will believe it, too."

"Mr. Locke will find out the thief," said Harry. "He's awfully clever, and he's bound to find him out. That's his business."

Sydney shook his head.

"He will believe it was I," he said. "He will take that for granted. I know that the Head does; I saw the look on his face when I passed him a little while ago. It can't be helped. I thought I was going to have a chance; but it was too good to be true."

He turned away, leaving the chums of the Remove looking very uncomfortable.

"It's pretty rotten for him if he is innocent," said Nugent. "He's bound to be suspected, of course. Here comes Bunter; let's get out!"

Wharton and Nugent walked away to the gates, deaf to the voice of Billy Bunter. But at the gates they had to stop. The gates were locked.

Nugent looked into Gosling's lodge.

"What the dickens are the gates closed for, Gosling?" he demanded.

"Ead's horders, sir," said the porter.

"But what on earth for?"

"Nobody is allowed out of gates to-day."

"My hat!"

"I say, you fellows——"

The two juniors dodged Bunter again, and walked away across the Close.

"Nobody allowed out of gates," said Wharton. "That

means that the Head won't give the thief a chance to get the loot out of the school. Plenty of places inside the walls where he could hide it, though."

Snaith of the Shell passed them on the drive, wheeling his bicycle towards the gates. Wharton called to him.

"School's all gated, Snaith. You can't go out."

Snaith halted.

"What rot!" he said. "What are we gated for?"

"I suppose it's on account of the affair in our dorm. Gosling's locked the gates."

Snaith bit his lip.

"What utter rot," he said. "Is the school going to be gated till the thief's found out? Then the sooner he's found out the better."

"We all think that," said Nugent.

"You fellows ought to be able to spot him," said Snaith. "You know everybody in the Remove, and you ought to be able to fix on the chap."

"We're not so jolly sure it was a fellow in the Remove," said Wharton tartly.

Snaith laughed.

"What rot! Of course it was a Remove chap. It happened in your dorm, didn't it? Anyway, I'm going out for a spin."

He wheeled his bike away. The Removites saw him try the gate, and then step into Gosling's lodge. Gosling gave him the answer he had given the Removites.

"Look here, Gossy," said Snaith, "I want to go out for a spin. You can let me out."

"Ead's horders," said Gosling stolidly.

"Are we all going to be gated until that blessed thief is found out?" exclaimed Snaith angrily.

"Better ask the 'Ead, Master Snaith," said Gosling.

"What the deuce are you doing, Gosling?" exclaimed the Shell fellow, as Gosling wetted a stump of pencil and made an entry in a little memorandum-book.

"Puttin' down your name, Master Snaith."

"My name! What the thunder are you putting down my name for?"

"Ead's horders!" said Gosling.

"The Head's orders! You're taking the names of the fellows who want to go out of gates?" exclaimed Snaith.

"Yes, Master Snaith!"

Snaith turned and wheeled his bicycle away, back to the shed. His face was darkly clouded.

The meaning of the Head's order was clear enough. Every fellow who wanted to go out of gates had his name taken, and that list of names was to be given to Ferrers Locke when he came. Among them, it was probable that there would be the name of the thief; since it was probable that the thief would seek to get out of the school to get rid of the plunder, or to conceal it in a safe place. Ferrers Locke's investigations would begin with the fellows who had applied to Gosling to let them out.

There would be plenty of names in the list, of course; and only one of them would be the name of the dormitory thief. But it would narrow down the investigation to some extent.

Each of those fellows would be the subject of a close inquiry, and Snaith of the Shell, at least, was not anxious for a close inquiry into his personal affairs. He had too many shady little secrets for that. An investigation might bring all sorts of things to light.

Snaith set his teeth.

"The thief's got to be found!" he muttered. "He's got to be found—and at once!"

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Condemned!

PAUL SYDNEY found himself the centre of attention at the dinner-table.

Almost all eyes in the Remove turned on him incessantly, and fellows looked across from other tables at him.

Wharton and Nugent observed it, and wondered. They had their own reasons for feeling dubious with regard to Sydney. But they had said no word, not even to their closest chums. Was it simply the fact of Sydney's pallor and agitation that had drawn general attention upon him? They felt that there was something more than that in it.

After dinner, as the Greyfriars fellows marched out of the dining-room, there was a buzz among the Removites. Billy Bunter pounced upon Wharton and Nugent at once in the passage.

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"GOING THE PAGE!"

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ONE
PENNY.

"Haven't you heard?" he demanded.

"Heard what, you tattling ass?" said Wharton irritably.

"About Sydney."

"What about him, fathead?"

"He's the thief!" said Bunter triumphantly.

Wharton's brows contracted, and he grasped Billy Bunter by his fat ear.

"Look here, you young idiot, if you're not careful what you say——"

"Yow! Leggo! Everybody knows it!" howled Bunter. "He was a thief before he came here—a regular pickpocket and burglar, perhaps a murderer, for all I know, and all the fellows know it."

"And how do they know it?"

"It's come out, somehow!"

"Rot!" said Wharton.

"Bolsover major's going to make him own up!" said Bunter. "They're going to get him into the common-room, and—— Leggo my ear! I'm going to see it done."

Billy Bunter rushed away to the common-room. Nearly all the Remove were streaming in that direction; Paul Sydney among the rest. Sydney had no choice about the matter, for Bolsover major had taken one of his arms, and Ogilvy the other. Harry Wharton and Nugent looked at one another blankly.

"It's out now," said Nugent. "You haven't said anything?"

"Of course not. And you——"

"Not a whisper."

"Sydney couldn't have told anybody. Bunter must have been listening again—the Head may have been talking to Quelchy," said Wharton, in dismay. "It's all up with Sydney now. The fellows will all believe he is guilty."

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, coming up to them, with a very startled face. "What's all this about, Sydney?"

"Let's get on the scene," said Harry.

The Famous Five went together into the common-room. It was crowded with juniors, many of the Fourth and the Third being there with the Remove. Paul Sydney stood with one hand resting on the table, his face white and scared. The misery in his face might have touched a heart of stone; but the juniors had no compassion to waste upon a thief.

"Own up, you skunk!" Bolsover major was shouting, in his bull-voice. "Tell us the truth. Why can't you speak up?"

Harry Wharton pushed his way through the crowd, and reached Sydney's side.

"Let him alone!" he said curtly. "Your bullying isn't wanted now, Bolsover."

"I'm not bullying him!" roared Bolsover, in his most bullying tone. "I'm only asking him to tell the truth. It's come out that he's a thief—that he's always been a thief. If it isn't true, why can't he say so?"

"Who says so?" asked Nugent.

"Everybody."

"Everybody's a big word," said Wharton. "I want to know who started it?"

"I don't know who started it. Ogilvy told me."

"Bunter told me," said Ogilvy.

"And who told you, Bunter?"

"I heard it," said Bunter. "Snaith asked me if it was true—Snaith of the Shell. He'd heard it somewhere. That was the first I knew of it. I got it out of Snaith." "Snaith must have got it from somewhere," said Skinner.

"He said he'd heard it, and wanted to know if it was true," said Bunter. "I didn't know; I've been asking all the fellows——"

"Why can't the fellow speak up for himself?" demanded Bolsover loudly. "If it isn't true, he's only got to say so, and we'll all find out who started it. If it is true, we haven't got any further to look for the thief last night."

"Speak up, Sydney, old chap," said Bob Cherry. "It's a rotten lie, I know that. We shall take your word!"

"Speak up, my esteemed chum," said Hyrree Singh,

clapping Sydney on the shoulder. "We know it is a rottenful whepper."

"Why the dickens don't you answer, Sydney?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

Sydney did not speak.

His tongue seemed to cleave to his mouth. His face was quivering. His look was enough for the juniors.

"It's true!" said Bulstrode contemptuously. "He's a thief."

"Where's my two-and-six?" howled Fisher T. Fish. "I guess we know now why Sydney wasn't robbed last night! I calculate he wasn't going to rob himself."

"What have you done with the money?" roared Bolsover.

Johnny Bull shook Sydney by the shoulder.

"Speak up, you ass. There's nothing to be afraid of. Can't you see what all the fellows will think if you don't answer up?"

"We know what to think!" sneered Skinner.

Sydney's lips opened. He made an effort to speak, and his voice came in shaking, barely audible tones:

"I—I haven't got much to say. I'm not going to tell you lies. It's true that I was a thief before I came here. Wharton and Nugent know it—I told them."

"We never said a word!" exclaimed Wharton quickly. "You can't believe that we gave you away, Sydney, after our promise!"

Sydney nodded.

"I know you wouldn't," he said. "Some cad has been spying—somebody heard you speaking, perhaps, or perhaps the Head. Not that it matters. It's out now."

"You—you were a thief!" stammered Bob Cherry.

"Yes."

"And they let you come here!" shouted Bolsover major.

Sydney smiled bitterly.

"Yes. I was a reformed thief; Mr. Locke saved me from it. I wasn't going to stay here for good; only for one term. Now I shall have to go."

"You'll hand the money back before you go," said Bolsover.

"I have taken no money."

"What!"

"Rats!"

"Let me speak," said Sydney. "I was a thief before I came here, and might have been a thief still, but for the kindness of Mr. Locke. But I am not a thief now. I did not take the money last night. I don't know anything about it."

There was a yell of derision at once. Sydney's statement was not likely to be believed.

"Listen to him!" exclaimed Bolsover major, exasperated. "He confesses that he was a regular thief, and wants us to believe that he didn't rob us last night. What the dickens does he take us for?"

"I've told you the truth," said Sydney.

"Liar!"

"Rats!"

"Rot! Shell out!"

"I guess I want my two-and-six!"

"Rag the cad! Make him shell out!"

"Hands off!" exclaimed Wharton, springing in front of Sydney as the juniors made an angry rush at him.

"Get aside!" roared Bolsover major. "We're going to rag the thief, and make him shell out, and then kick him out of the school!"

"Collar him!" shouted Snoop.

There was a fierce rush. Wharton and Nugent were swept aside, and many hands closed on Paul Sydney. At the same moment there came a sharp, rasping voice from the door.

"Cease this instantly!"

Mr. Quelch strode into the room.

The juniors hung back, barely stayed by the voice of their Form-master. Mr. Quelch reached the side of the shrinking boy.

"He's a thief, sir!" roared Bolsover. "We've found him out! He's been a thief all his life; he owns it!"

"Silence, Bolsover! You need have no doubt that justice will be done, if Sydney is guilty. Come with me, Sydney!"

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Mr. Quelch dropped his hand on Sydney's shoulder, and led him away.

The common-room was in a roar.

"Well, he's found out," said Bolsover major savagely. "He will be kicked out, that's one comfort."

"And you fellows knew it all along?" said Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five left the common-room together.

"Sydney told us," said Wharton. "It was his secret, and we had to keep it."

"There can't be much doubt now," said Johnny Bull hesitatingly.

"I don't know," said Harry. "It looks pretty bad for Sydney; but I can't help thinking he's all right, all the same. I hope he is, anyway. He wasn't forced to own up; he could have told lies. He wouldn't do that. That's honest, anyway. I hope it will turn out that he's all right."

But the hope in Wharton's heart was very faint. His chums were silent. That sudden discovery as to Sydney's past had completely shaken their faith in him. As for the rest of the Remove, they had not a single doubt; and as the news of the discovery spread through the school it had its inevitable result. Guilty or innocent, Paul Sydney was condemned by all Greyfriars.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Ferrers Locke Investigates!

"FERRERS LOCKE at last!" said Harry Wharton.

Ferrers Locke nodded kindly to the chums of the Remove as he passed into the School House. The detective's face was very grave. Trotter showed him in to the Head's study at once.

Paul Sydney was still in Mr. Quelch's room. The feeling against him in the Remove was so high that the Form-master had thought best to keep him there. Of all the Greyfriars fellows it seemed that only Wharton and Nugent nourished a lingering doubt.

Ferrers Locke entered the Head's study, and he found the old gentleman looking troubled and depressed. They shook hands silently. The gloom in Dr. Locke's face was reflected in that of his visitor.

Dr. Locke coughed uneasily.

"I was sorry to give you such bad news this morning, Ferrers," he said.

"It was startling news to me, as well as bad news," said Ferrers Locke. "I had pinned my faith to Sydney. If I have been mistaken in him, I shall hardly dare to trust my own judgment again. But it appears that he has not confessed."

"I have not questioned him. I felt it better to leave it in your hands."

"What is the proof against him?"

"A number of juniors were robbed last night in his dormitory. Only money was taken. Sydney was not robbed."

Ferrers Locke smiled slightly.

"And you concluded that Sydney had done this?"

"What else could I conclude?" said the Head, in surprise. "His coming here was in the nature of an experiment. I was willing, on your recommendation, to give the unhappy boy a chance. A robbery follows in less than two weeks after his admission to the school. It happens in his dormitory. There is surely only one conclusion to be drawn."

"I do not think so, sir; at least, I believe in giving every dog a chance," said Ferrers Locke. "If Sydney is guilty, I shall know that I have taken trouble with him in vain, and he will go to a reformatory. But there must be absolute assurance on the subject."

The Head flushed a little.

"If Sydney is not guilty, Locke, that is a suggestion that a thief exists among the boys of this school."

"I am sorry to make the suggestion, but you will admit that it is at least within the bounds of possibility."

"I suppose I must admit that," said the Head. "That, then, was the reason of the request you made me on the telephone, to keep all the boys within gates till you arrived."

"Exactly. And the list——"

"Gosling will have carried out his instructions," said the Head. "I think you are entering upon a wild-goose

chase, Locke, but Heaven forbid that I should leave a stone unturned to secure justice even for that unfortunate lad!"

"I need not ask whether his unhappy secret was kept," said Ferrers Locke.

"On my part, and Mr. Quelch's, certainly. But the boy must have talked carelessly himself, for it is unfortunately known to the whole school to-day. The Lower Fourth are very excited about it, naturally, and have no doubt of his guilt."

Ferrers Locke frowned.

"I can hardly imagine Sydney talking recklessly on such a subject," he said. "When was this known, sir?"

"Only this day. It appears to have come out suddenly."

"Ah! If it had been known before, the thief might very well have carried out his thefts in the Remove dormitory, knowing that suspicion must fall upon Sydney."

"But it was certainly not known before to-day, as I have ascertained; and the thefts took place last night."

"Will you send for Sydney?"

"Certainly!"

The Head rang, and sent Trotter to Mr. Quelch's study. In a few minutes the Remove-master entered with Paul Sydney.

Ferrers Locke's keen eyes dwelt searchingly on Sydney's face as he entered. Sydney was white and shaken. He hardly dared to meet the detective's glance.

"Look up, my boy," said Ferrers Locke gently. "You know what you are suspected of, Paul?"

"Yes, sir," faltered Sydney.

"Have you anything to confess?"

"No, sir."

"You deny that you were concerned in the robbery, Sydney?" asked the Head sternly.

"Yes, sir," said Sydney, more steadily. "I know nothing about it. I have taken nothing that does not belong to me. I know you cannot believe me."

"We shall see," said Ferrers Locke. "It appears, my boy, that the story of your past is known in the school. How did it become known?"

"I cannot guess."

"You have told no one?"

"I told Wharton and Nugent, my study-mates," said Sydney, flushing. "I—I had to."

"Why had you to?"

"Nugent asked me home to see his people. He was offended when I refused. I felt I oughtn't to go, but—but I didn't want to offend him; he's been a good friend to me. I told them both, and they promised to keep the secret."

"Yet it is known——"

"Wharton and Nugent didn't tell it, I am sure of that," said Sydney. "They gave me their word."

"Then how——"

"I don't know."

"When did you first learn that the secret was out?"

"This afternoon," said Sydney, with trembling lips.

"It was not known before this afternoon?"

"Just before dinner, I think," said Sydney. "Not much before that, for, of course, the fellows all tackled me about it as soon as they knew."

"And, having suddenly learned of your past, they all concluded at once that you were the thief of the dormitory."

"Yes, Mr. Locke. I suppose it was natural."

"Quite natural," said Ferrers Locke. "It would be surprising if they had come to any other conclusion. You see that, sir?" he added, turning to the Head.

"I see it, Ferrers. I do not see its bearing on the case, however," said Dr. Locke. And Mr. Quelch shook his head.

"Let me point it out, then," said the detective quietly. "Somebody, evidently, had learned Paul's secret. I cannot believe that Wharton or Nugent betrayed him, after promising not to do so. I know those two lads too well. Some third party was in possession of the secret. He may have heard those two lads talking it over; or he may have heard Sydney telling them, in the first place. Where were you when you told them, Sydney?"

"In the cloisters, sir."

"You saw no one——"

"No, sir. Anybody might have been among the pillars, I suppose. I never thought about it."

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ONE
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"Quite so. I take it that a third party, by some under-hand means, knew the secret," said Ferrers Locke. "That is certain, because the secret was revealed to-day. Sydney is sure, and I am sure, that Wharton and Nugent would not break their word. Taking it that a third party knew Sydney's history, why did this third party reveal it this afternoon, and not before?"

"I really cannot say," said the Head.

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"You do not know, Sydney, from whom this discovery proceeded?"

"No, Mr. Locke. Nobody seems to know. Every fellow says he heard it from another fellow. Bunter started it in the Remove, I think, but he got it from a Shell fellow, who said he heard it from somebody else."

"Exactly," said Ferrers Locke. "Now, a boy discovering that secret, and knowing that a theft had been committed, might very well make his knowledge public. But why should he contrive so cunningly to do so without revealing his own agency in the matter? That is the first point to be ascertained. Mr. Quelch, if you are prepared to take some trouble in the matter——"

"I am entirely at your service."

"Then you will make an inquiry among the boys as to which boy revealed this secret of Sydney's past?"

"I hardly see the object," said Mr. Quelch. "But I will certainly do so. I will question every junior in the school, if necessary."

"Then I will wait."

Mr. Quelch left the study. Sydney looked almost beseechingly at Ferrers Locke.

"You believe in me, Mr. Locke?" he faltered.

"Yes," said Ferrers Locke.

"My dear Locke——" murmured the Head.

"If my judgment is at fault, sir, the truth will soon be known," said Ferrers Locke. "I have not the slightest doubt that I shall find the guilty party, whether it is Sydney or another. Perhaps I have some little prejudice in favour of my protege. But we shall see."

Dr. Locke nodded, and they waited in silence. The Head took up his pen, but it remained idle in his fingers. He could not put his thoughts even into his favourite *Æschylus* at that moment. The minutes dragged by, but Mr. Quelch returned at last.

Ferrers Locke fixed his eyes inquiringly upon the Remove-master.

"I have questioned the boys very extensively," said Mr. Quelch. "Wharton and Nugent assure me that they uttered no word, even to their own friends, concerning Sydney. I must say that I believe them absolutely. It appears that Bunter was the first boy who knew it in the Remove, and it spread from him—that is clear. Bunter has a somewhat unenviable reputation as an eaves-dropper; but he assures me that the first he knew of this matter was from Snaith of the Shell asking him if it were true. I have questioned Snaith, and he tells me he heard it from others; but he does not recall the name of the boy who told him. I have asked him to tax his memory very carefully, but he cannot recall which boy told him. He says, however, that he thinks it was known to a good many by the time it reached him."

"Very good," said Ferrers Locke. "The story is traced, then, so far, to this boy Snaith. May I question him?"

"Certainly," said the Head. "Pray call him in, Mr. Quelch."

"Pray also ask the porter for the list of boys who wished to leave the school this day and go out of gates," said Ferrers Locke.

Mr. Quelch nodded, and quitted the study again. Dr. Locke gave his relative a curious look.

"Gosling's list will probably be a long one, Ferrers," he remarked.

"Probably. I am, however, curious to see whether one name is in it."

"And that name——"

"The name of the boy to whom the story about Sydney can be traced, and who does not recall the name of the fellow who told him," said Ferrers Locke quietly.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Run to Earth!

"SNAITH!"

"Where's Snaith?"

"You're wanted, Snaith!"

In the passage and the Hall was a buzzing crowd. Word passed along that Mr. Quelch wanted Snaith of the Shell. The Shell fellow came forward, with his lips hard set.

"You want me, sir?"

"Pray follow me to the Head," said Mr. Quelch.

The Remove-master had a memorandum-book in his hand, in which was Gosling's list.

Snaith followed Mr. Quelch into the Head's study, and the door closed behind him. The crowd was left in a buzz.

"What the deuce do they want with Snaith?" said Bob Cherry.

Wharton knitted his brows.

"That's the fellow I should have expected Ferrers Locke to want to see, if—if I didn't know for certain that Snaith had got out of debt," he said, in a low voice.

"But we do know it, old chap."

"Yes, I know."

The crowd waited, with a low buzz of voices. All of them expected something to happen now that Ferrers Locke had come. The general impression was that Mr. Locke would take his precious ward away with him, to be sent to a reformatory. But the juniors wondered what Snaith was wanted for.

Snaith wondered, too. He felt considerably uneasy as he stepped into the Head's study, and found himself under the clear, piercing gaze of Ferrers Locke. The detective nodded as he looked at him, as if in answer to his own thoughts. The weedy form, the unhealthy complexion, and the cigarette-stains he detected on Snaith's thin fingers were quite enough to inform the detective of Snaith's way of life, which was carefully concealed from the knowledge of masters and prefects at Greyfriars.

"You are Master Snaith?" asked Ferrers Locke.

"Yes, sir?"

"It appears that you were the first boy to be aware of the secret history of my ward, Paul Sydney?"

"Not at all, sir," said Snaith. "I've heard it talked about."

"You told Bunter of the Remove?"

"I asked Bunter whether it was true."

"Where did you hear the story yourself?"

"I heard a fellow speaking about it. I've told Mr. Quelch already. I didn't pay much attention, and I don't remember who it was."

Ferrers Locke took the memorandum-book from Mr. Quelch, and read down the list of names in Gosling's straggling "list."

"Wharton, Nugent, Hobson, Coker, Rake, Fish, Snaith—ah! I see your name is here, Master Snaith. You wished to go out of gates to-day?"

"I was going out for a spin on my bike, sir, when Gosling told me the whole school was gated," said Snaith.

"When was that?"

"Soon after morning lessons, sir—about half-past twelve."

"At what time was it that you asked Bunter about Sydney?"

Snaith hesitated.

"Bunter has already told me that," said Mr. Quelch.

"It was just before the boys went in to dinner. That would be one o'clock."

"After Master Snaith had found that he could not go out of gates," commented Ferrers Locke. "Now, Master Snaith, I wish you to make an effort to remember who told you about Sydney in the first place."

"I've tried, sir, and I can't remember," said Snaith, with dry lips.

"It is very important that you should remember," said Ferrers Locke quietly. "I will explain to you why, Master Snaith. The order concerning gating was given so that the thief, whoever it is, should not be able to take his plunder out of the school. The thief would be anxious to do so. I imagine that he had some pressing

debt to pay, or he would not have become a thief at all. I imagine that the thief is some wretched boy who has got himself into difficulties, and turned to theft as the only means of extricating himself. I imagine that, whatever Form he may belong to, he chose the Remove dormitory as the scene of his depredations because he had already found out the secret of Sydney's past, and concluded that the headmaster's suspicion would naturally fall upon Sydney."

Snaith turned deadly pale.

"I imagine," continued the detective, "that finding that the whole school was gated until the thief should be discovered, he would be very anxious for that discovery to be made—concerning Sydney. I imagine, therefore, that, knowing Sydney's secret, he proceeded to reveal it in a cunning manner, covering up his own tracks as much as possible in order not to appear at all in connection with the matter."

The Shell fellow licked his dry lips.

"I imagine," pursued Ferrers Locke, "that the thief is the person who knew Sydney's secret, and revealed it to the whole school. The fact that his identity cannot be discovered is a good proof of this. So you see, Master Snaith, that it is very important to remember who told you. You are the last person to whom the story can be traced. You must try to remember from whom you heard it."

"Bless my soul!" murmured the Head.

Snaith closed his hands hard.

"I can't remember!" he said desperately and sullenly.

"Let me help you," said Ferrers Locke. "You state that some boy told you the story. Was that before you asked Gosling about the gating? You say that it was generally known at the time?"

"It—it was after," said Snaith.

"Very good. It was after half-past twelve, and before one o'clock, as you told Bunter about it at that time. Now, you must try to recall what you did, and whom you spoke to, in that interval. Where did you go after leaving Gosling?"

"I—I went to put up my bike in the shed."

"And after that?"

"I—I was in the common-room for a bit."

"Was it there that you heard about Sydney?"

"I—I can't remember."

"You must remember!" said Ferrers Locke grimly. "Your memory appears to be very bad, Master Snaith. You cannot remember the name of the boy who told you, and you cannot remember where you were when he told you."

"Snaith!" said the Head warningly.

"It—it wasn't in the common-room," muttered Snaith.

"Where did you go after that?"

"In the quad."

"And there you were told about Sydney?"

"I—I suppose so—yes!" muttered Snaith. "Yes, it must have been in the quad. A fellow told me. Lots of fellows knew it. Then I asked Bunter if it were true."

"Now we are coming to the facts," said Ferrers Locke. "In the quadrangle, a boy told you what had been found out about Sydney."

"Yes, sir."

"You cannot remember his name?"

"No, sir. I—I don't know all the fellows' names, of course."

"You would recognise him again?"

"I—I don't think so!" stammered Snaith. "I—I wasn't paying much attention."

"You were not paying much attention, yet you went immediately to Bunter and asked him if the story were true?"

"I—I happened——" Snaith's voice died away. "I—I thought Bunter would know, so—so I asked him."

"I remember this boy Bunter," said Ferrers Locke. "He is a chatterbox. Asking Bunter about it was the surest means of getting the whole story spread over the school in the shortest possible time."

"That is doubtless correct," said Mr. Quelch, with a very strange look at Snaith.

"We seemed to have come to an impasse," said Dr.

Locke. "It is unfortunate that Snaith's memory is so bad, but—"

"A matter of little moment, sir," said Ferrers Locke. "Snaith cannot remember who told him, he declares; but the other boy's memory will probably not be so bad. If every boy in the school is questioned in turn, we shall discover who told Snaith—if anybody told him."

Snaith's teeth chattered.

"I shall accept nothing without proof," said the Head sternly. "But this matter must be thrashed out, Snaith. It is extraordinary, to say the least, that you cannot recall who told you about Sydney. If it comes out that you are indeed in debt—"

"I am not."

"Then you can have no objection to Sydney stating what he knows. You may speak, Sydney!"

"I—I don't want to say anything against Snaith, sir!" faltered Sydney. "I can't sneak about a chap."

"The matter is too serious for scruples of that kind, Sydney. Your honour and Snaith's honour are at stake. However, to ease your mind, I undertake that Snaith shall not be punished for anything you may reveal, excepting for the theft if he should prove to be the guilty party. Any other matter that comes to light I shall pass over."

"That thief would say anything to get out of his scrape!" said Snaith bitterly.

Sydney crimsoned.

"I will say nothing, then!" he exclaimed. "But other fellows know—Wharton and Nugent and others."

"Please send for Wharton and Nugent," said Ferrers Locke.

There was a fresh buzz in the passage when the chums of No. 1 Study were called into the Head's presence.

Wharton and Nugent came in, looking very surprised.

"Your assistance is required, Wharton," said the Head.

"Are you aware whether Snaith was in debt of late?"

Wharton started, and his lips closed.

"You will kindly speak freely, Wharton," said the Head severely. "Snaith will not be punished—whatever he has done. My object is only to bring the truth to light concerning the theft in the dormitory."

Snaith broke out:

"Wharton lent me some money to pay my debt, sir. He knows that I was clear. He will say so himself."

"It is not for you to speak, Snaith; kindly allow Wharton to speak for himself."

"What Snaith says is quite right, sir," said Wharton.

"I found that he owed some money, and I offered to lend it to him."

"What was the amount?" asked Ferrers Locke.

"Thirty shillings, sir."

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"Snaith borrowed thirty shillings of you to settle a debt," said Ferrers Locke. "Very good. When did this take place?"

"On Sunday, sir."

"How did you know that he was in debt? You say you found out?"

"I—I had an idea that he was, sir, and I asked him."

"If you had not lent Snaith money, and if he had not settled his debt, you would perhaps have thought of him in connection with the robbery, when money was missing?"

"I—I might have, sir—"

"But I did settle it!" panted Snaith. "Wharton knows I did."

"Supposing that Snaith's debt had been a large one—several pounds—ten or twelve pounds—would you have lent him the money, Wharton?" asked Ferrers Locke.

Wharton smiled involuntarily.

"I would have if I could have, sir, but I couldn't have. I had only two pounds."

"Then Snaith could not have raised such a sum by borrowing of you?"

"No, sir."

"Have you any proof that Snaith's statement of the amount of his indebtedness was correct?"

"I—I suppose it was, sir. I could have lent him two pounds, but he only wanted thirty bob—I mean, shillings."

"But supposing that Snaith owed a larger sum than you could have lent him—it did not occur to you that he might pretend to you to have been able to pay his debt with your loan, in order to dispel any suspicion you might have had of him when a theft took place?"

Wharton jumped. Certainly that suspicion, obvious as it was, had not occurred to his mind.

"I—I certainly never thought of that, Mr. Locke!" he exclaimed. "I—I supposed that Snaith was clear."

"Because he said he was?"

"Well, yes."

"But you had no proof?"

"Oh, no!"

"I think we are getting clear," said Ferrers Locke. "You will now acquaint us with the name of your creditor, Master Snaith."

Snaith's lips clove together.

"Answer Mr. Locke, Snaith," said the Head sternly.

Snaith did not answer. He realised that all was over, and he burst into tears. Ferrers Locke gave him a compassionate glance.



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"You may as well confess, Master Snaith," he said. "I may say, Dr. Locke, that I have had no doubt of this boy's guilt in my mind all through this questioning. I should not have pursued it, but for the reason that the innocent must be cleared."

"Snaith!" said the Head, almost dazedly. "Snaith! Wretched boy, what possessed you to do such a thing?" Snaith sobbed.

"Snaith wasn't the only one to blame, sir," said Wharton, feeling that he must say what he could for the wretched culprit. "He was being threatened by an awful rascal, who ought to be put in prison. That was why I lent him the money, and I thought it saw him clear."

"And the name of that rascal?" said the Head.

Wharton looked at Snaith.

"I suppose it's no good keeping it secret now," he said. "It was Carker, the bookmaker."

"Snaith!"

Snaith did not look at the Head. He covered his face with his hands. In his terror and dismay he could not keep up the barricade of lies he had sought to build between himself and detection. But for Ferrers Locke he would have succeeded—his scheme had been cunningly laid to throw the guilt upon Paul Sydney. But too late he realised that against the experienced detective he had had no chance from the first.

"One question, Snaith," said the Head. "Have you yet parted with the stolen money?"

"No, sir!" groaned Snaith. "It—it's hidden in the box-room. I—I was going out to look for Carker when Gosling stopped me. I—I thought—I—" His voice trailed away wretchedly.

"You foolish lad!" said Ferrers Locke. "You have tried to throw your crime upon another; yet if you had reflected, you should have known that the truth must be brought to light."

"I was at the end of my tether!" groaned Snaith. "Carker wouldn't wait; he was going to see the Head and give me away—and—and he suggested that there were a lot of rich fellows here, and I—I could—I—I was scared, and—and I never meant to do it, but—but Sydney was a thief, anyway, and I thought it would be put down to him, and—and as he was a thief it wouldn't matter much. I wouldn't have put it on anybody else, I swear that—"

"Say no more!" said the Head angrily. "You will leave Greyfriars to-day, Snaith. You may consider yourself fortunate that you are not sent to prison, as you deserve. Mr. Locke, I don't know how to thank you. You have prevented an act of terrible injustice."

Wharton and Nugent left the study quietly.

Snaith of the Shell left Greyfriars that afternoon. The money hidden in the box-room was recovered. Mr. Carker waited in vain for payment of his little debt. Mr. Carker waited, with growing fury, for several days, but received no word; and at last, having primed himself with spirits for the occasion, he went to Greyfriars with the intention of "giving Snaith away" to the Head. He was met by Wingate of the Sixth, who handled Mr. Carker in a masterly manner, bestowing upon him so thorough a thrashing that the rascal limped home to Friardale, looking and feeling a complete wreck.

Paul Sydney left with Ferrers Locke.

His name had been cleared, and most of the Removites had frankly enough asked his pardon; and if he had remained he would have had many friends there. But now that the story of his past was known, the detective's "experiment" had come to an end, and he left. But he went happy enough, after a general handshaking from the chums of the Remove. For the experiment had proved, after all, a success, and Ferrers Locke's faith in the lad he had rescued from crime was justified.

Wharton and Nugent once more had No. 1 Study to themselves, but they retained an affectionate remembrance of the lad who had been their study-mate, and who, after black doubt and suspicion, had been proved "Not guilty."

THE END.

(Next Monday's magnificent story is entitled "Going the Pace." Order now.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 403.

OUR COMPANION THE BOYS' FRIEND, "THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Monday, Every Wednesday.

FAVOURITE FRIENDS IN FICTION.

No. 12.



I sing the praise of Peter Todd
And innocent Alonzo,
Whose exploits are so strange and odd,
Small wonder they catch on so!
In Study 7 they both abide,
With Bunter and Tom Dutton;
Two freaks of Nature side by side—
A deaf boy and a glutton!

The mighty mind of Peter moves
In quite ambitious channels;
Renowned and resolute, he proves
A Trojan when in flannels.
And on the Greyfriars footer-ground
He joys in making merry;
No junior half-back is as sound,
Except, perhaps, Bob Cherry.

Tom Dutton shows up fairly well
In sporting feats and races;
The other couple, sad to tell,
Are really hopeless cases.
The Owl's capacity to eat,
And Lonzy's studious habits,
Would not enable them to beat
A team of mice or rabbits!

Such drawbacks are a fatal check
To Peter's fond ambition
Of smiting Wharton "in the neck"
And winning chief position.
Although he's quick to get to biz,
And stop the freaks from slacking,
The leadership will ne'er be his
Through insufficient backing.

His knowledge of the law is great,
And never seems to dwindle;
And dire and dreadful is the fate
Of those who try to swindle.
And when the youth from Yankee-land
Makes plans to line his pockets,
The schoolboy lawyer takes a hand,
And Fishy sees sky-rockets!

Whatever Peter may become
When he's a few years older,
At present he can make things hum,
And smite straight from the shoulder!
The leader of the funny freaks
Will win our praises ever;
For every act of his bespeaks
A sportsman true and clever!

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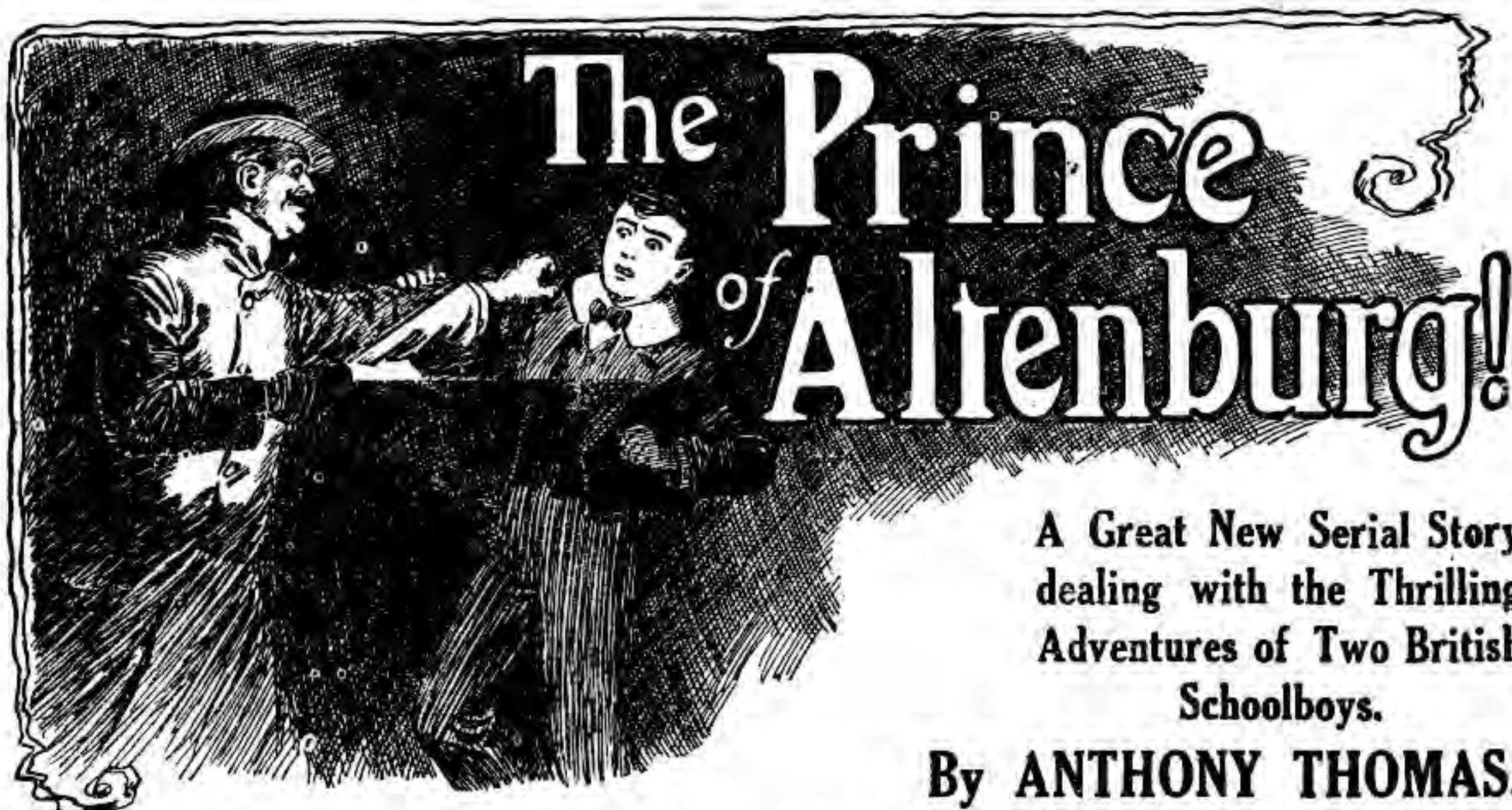
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A Great New Serial Story
dealing with the Thrilling
Adventures of Two British
Schoolboys.

By ANTHONY THOMAS.

THE FIRST INSTALMENTS.

Two boys of St. Dunstan's School, JACK DARRELL and TEDDY BURKE, are discovered trespassing by an irate farmer, Mr. Stone.

In order to appease the farmer's wrath, Teddy Burke shows him a copy of a newspaper containing a portrait of THE PRINCE OF ALTENBURG, and leads him to believe that Jack Darrell, who bears a strong resemblance to the portrait, is really the prince, and that they were coming to ask his permission to be shown over the farm.

Mr. Stone is unable to keep the knowledge that a prince is a scholar at the local college to himself, and eventually the news reaches the ears of a person named LEWIS MACKAY, who is staying in the neighbourhood.

Mackay, under the impression that Jack Darrell is really the Prince of Altenburg, kidnaps both him and his chum, Teddy Burke.

The chums eventually find themselves on board the Kielberg, a German cruiser, under the care of BARON ZELLING.

DERWENT HOOD, chief of the British Counter-Espionage Department, goes in search of the Kielberg on H.M.S. Chatswood. The German cruiser, being hard pressed, seeks refuge up the River Kunene, on the West Coast of Africa, where she runs aground.

Accompanied by two members of the Chatswood's crew named Dexter and Walters, Hood proceeds up the river in a motor-launch. They succeed in rescuing the two boys; but, owing to the vigilance of their German pursuers, are forced to go into hiding.

Dr. Margards, headmaster of St. Dunstan's, hearing that the two boys are on board the Kielberg, becomes alarmed about their safety, being of the opinion that the Chatswood will sink the German vessel regardless of their fate.

Lord Bassington, a friend of Dr. Margards, places his yacht, the Moonbeam, at the headmaster's disposal, and they journey to Africa in search of the boys.

(Now go on with the story.)

Hide and Seek.

"Luck?" Midshipman Dexter demanded bitterly. "Did you ever see anything like it? No sooner do I get round one difficulty than something worse comes along. But this is just about the limit!"

He lay on the ground, his right foot raised and resting on the knees of Derwent Hood, who was examining Dexter's limb with care.

His ankle had swollen to twice the usual size, and the pain could be judged from the way in which the midshipman set his jaws. Only once or twice did he make any exclamation, but it was obvious that for a time he suffered acutely.

Even when it grew less painful he could not stand on the

foot. Hood had bandaged it with handkerchiefs, the worse for long wear, and made it as comfortable as possible.

"I'm afraid it will be some time before you're able to walk comfortably," Hood said. "The best thing we can do is to hunt round and find the most suitable camping-ground."

In his own mind Hood had long ago decided that their course would be to get as far as possible down the river. The further they went from Zelling the safer it would be; and the greater distance they could cover towards the mouth of the river the nearer they would be to the Chatswood.

If their ship decided to send anyone up the river to search for them they would be able to intercept it.

But for a time there was no hope of carrying that into execution. For the present they were fixed here, and would have to make the best of a bad job.

"Only thing I hope," Dexter said, as he and Hood talked the whole thing over, "is that Zelling doesn't try to get at us again. He is a persistent beggar."

"He is!" Hood agreed. "I am still hopeful that we'll beat him, but I'm bound to give him credit for having stuck to the business like grim death."

"Well, I guess he's in a tight corner now," Dexter laughed. "We've got nothing to be wonderfully pleased about, but we have a decent chance of getting out of the trouble presently. Zelling and his crowd haven't."

Hood shook his head.

"I'm not going to be too sure," he said. "When I'm safe back in England with those two youngsters I shall feel happier. We'll do it all right—but I'm keeping my eyes open for Zelling all the time."

He rose and called to Darrell and Burke.

"We'll just scout round," he told them, "and select our home for a day or two. Dexter can't walk, so we shall have to put up here for a day or two. How are you feeling now?"

"Very fit," Darrell answered. "I don't even feel tired."

"You will before the day's over," Hood said cheerfully. "What about St. Dunstan's now? It's hard to think that you were there only a few short weeks ago!"

"It is," Burke said thoughtfully. "I wonder what old Margie will be thinking? I'll bet he'll blame me for it, anyhow."

In which, however, Teddy Burke did Dr. Margards an injustice, as he was to discover in the fullness of time.

They found a site at last which they decided to make their headquarters. It was just at the entrance to another stretch of trees, and they would be sufficiently protected from the heat of the day.

They went back to where Dexter lay, and with their help he hobbled to the new camp.

Under Dexter's instructions they were kept pretty busy the whole of that day.

A kind of rough shelter was constructed, in which all the

belongings they had brought up from their launch were stored.

Then the water supply had to be arranged, and it was no light task to go down to where their useless launch lay and get various receptacles filled and carried to the top of the mound again.

Here Walters did what he could in the way of purifying the liquid. Fortunately they had still a fair supply of tea and coffee, and, taken in that way, the water held no risks.

"We'll have to go carefully with the food, I'm afraid," Dexter said. "Walters tells me that we lost quite a lot in the fire. So, unless you can find some way of adding to the larder, it's going to be short rations for all of us."

"It suggests the possibility of having to raid the Kielberg again," Hood laughed. "But for the present we'll go slow with the food department until we find the possibilities round here. Is Walters on guard?"

"Yes. I've drawn up a list. We only want one man on the job at a time, and he ought to keep right over to the left, where he'll get a fair view of everything."

"It's the only safe plan," Hood said thoughtfully, as he looked at the little list of times and names that Dexter had scribbled out. "And we'll do what we can to give us a chance to put up a good defence if they do come. I don't think Zelling will let it drop."

"He may think we got wiped out in the fire that nearly did his crowd in," Dexter suggested.

"He may," Hood answered. "But I'm also fairly confident that he would make certain. He's got to stop us from getting back and saying how he's fixed up here. And if he possibly can he will get hold of Darrell and stick to him. Zelling hasn't given in yet, if I know anything about the man."

"I think the best idea would be for you and the two youngsters to start on the walking-tour you suggested before I was crocked," Dexter said presently. "You would probably get down to the mouth of the river in four days or so with luck."

"And leave you here?" demanded Hood.

"Yes; Walters and I would be quite all right—until you turned up with a rescue-party or something of that kind."

Hood shook his head decidedly.

"It's rough luck that you've got bowled out in this way," he said. "But there's only one thing to do now, and that is to stick together. As soon as that foot of yours is fit we start."

Dexter saw that Hood would not alter his view, and did not argue the matter further. Instead, he put forward another idea.

"What are the prospects of getting away in the boat even now?" he asked. "We should have to make some sort of oars, or collar them from the Kielberg; and if we could steal quietly away at night it would be simpler than walking the whole distance. And I'm still keen to take the launch back, though she is pretty badly damaged."

Hood considered the question for a short time.

"There may be something in that," he said at last. "They are still pretty busy on the river and at the bend, but granted a dark night, it might be done. And your foot wouldn't be a handicap then. Anyway, we'll talk that over. It's my turn for watch-duty about now, I think."

They kept rigidly to the plan of having a look-out right at the top of the hill, and a little way from the entrance to the wood which ran down to the river.

It was the only safe plan, and signals had been arranged whereby the one on sentry-duty could attract the others, or, if need be, warn them. Both Darrell and Burke took their turn, though Dexter refused to allow them to go on during darkness.

Dexter himself was helped to the chosen spot, and insisted on taking his turn.

But nothing came during the night, and at six in the morning Teddy Burke went on guard.

It was a dull job, but Darrell came to see him once or twice. The spot they had chosen for their camping-ground was about two hundred yards away, and was practically hidden from the view of the one on sentry-duty.

It was Darrell's turn to mount guard after Burke, and they stayed together for a time.

"Not seen anything of old Zelling and his crowd?" Jack asked jokingly.

"No; but once or twice I thought I heard something," Burke answered. "I saw a boat come out, and it hasn't gone down the river. It seemed to be making for this side. But I've just been inside the wood there, and seen no sign of anybody."

"I should tell Dexter, anyhow," Jack said. "If those beasts get on our track again, it will be rotten. I'll be jolly glad when old Dexter can begin to move again. I've had enough of this part of the globe."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 405.

OUR COMPANION PAPERS; THE BOYS' FRIEND, Every Monday. "THE GEM" LIBRARY, Every Wednesday. THE BOYS' FRIEND 3^d. COMPLETE LIBRARY. THE PENNY POPULAR, Every Friday. CHUCKLES, 1^d Every Saturday 2

"So have I!" agreed Teddy Burke. "I'll cut along now and see Dexter, then, if there's nothing much to do, I'll come back here. I expect I'll have to go along with Walters and get some more water up, so I'll be coming this way for certain. Ta-ta!"

He went across the open space towards the woods behind, and for a moment Darrell stood watching him. Then he turned and looked down at the river.

A little movement of the leaves attracted his attention. It was nothing really, but with the ever-present fear of Zelling in his mind, Jack went forward, and down into the wood a little way, where he stood peering about, making quite certain that there was really no one there.

Meantime, Burke had reached the shelter where Dexter lay. He was half dozing, but quickly awakened when Teddy entered.

"Well, young Burke," he said, "have you come to report that all's well?"

"I think so," Burke answered. "Only I believe they've sent a boat across to this side."

"Oh!" Dexter sat up, and listened to the story which Teddy had already told to Jack Darrell.

"And you thought you heard someone moving?" Dexter asked.

"It sounded as though it might be someone," Burke answered carefully. "But I went to the edge of the wood, and looked round, and there wasn't any sign at all."

"Good!" Dexter said. "Still, we can't afford to take any risks. Go and give Hood a call; he's only a little way in the wood. Tell him your yarn, and ask him what he thinks about it."

Burke went into the wood, and in a few minutes discovered Hood with Walters. Both of them were running, and seemed anxious to get back.

"Hallo!" Derwent Hood said, when he saw Teddy. "You're not going far, are you? You'd better keep within sound of our camp!"

Burke quickly told him of the boat, and his later suspicions. "Sounds as though Zelling has got a scouting party out again," Hood said. "What does Dexter think? But I'll ask him myself."

They went into the little shelter, and Dexter spoke at once.

"Burke's told you, hasn't he?" he said quickly. "I'm jumpy this morning, but I wish one of you would cut across and see how Darrell is getting along. I could swear I heard the signal, only it wasn't repeated."

Hood's face became suddenly grave.

"I'll go now," he said. "Walters and I have seen something to surprise you. But it can wait until we make certain of this other thing."

He ran across the open space and reached the spot where the guard on duty was supposed to be.

But there was no one there now.

"Darrell!" Hood called the name softly and clearly.

There was no answer, and he called again.

Hastily he ran in and out of the trees, peering about him everywhere in the hope that he might find some sign of the youngster.

Burke and Walters had now come up, and heard with alarm that Darrell was missing.

"It's no good," Hood said at last. "He's gone! Zelling hasn't wasted much time!"

An Amazing Discovery.

For a moment or two, Hood stood undecided what course to take. Then he turned to Walters.

"Come on! There may be a chance even yet," he said. "I've got the revolver if it's needed. You stay here, Burke, and yell for all you're worth if anything happens."

He plunged into the wood, and Walters followed him.

They went as swiftly as they could, not caring much about the noise they made; tumbling and crashing through the shrubs and bushes, they came at last to the waterway where their own launch lay.

The traces of the fire were plain to be seen, and for the latter part of their journey there had been no undergrowth to trouble them; the flames had effectually cleared the space near the launch.

Nothing apparently had been touched here, and they ran along the stream to the main river. Here they were constrained to show more caution, and, hiding behind the trees, looked up and down the river.

At first Hood could see nothing. For a wonder there was no sign of a boat moving up or down.

Then Walters touched him on the arm, and pointed up the river.

"There's a boat, sir, and it's keeping close to this side," he said.

They watched it carefully until it disappeared among the

trees. Patiently they waited for it to come out and cross over to the Kielberg, in the hope of distinguishing someone who was in it, and confirming their fears that Jack Darrell was aboard.

But the boat did not reappear, and Hood at last decided to go back.

Teddy Burke was still on guard when they reached the top of the hill. But he had seen nothing to report, and they went back to the camp.

Almost before they spoke, Dexter guessed that something was wrong.

"Where's Darrell?" he asked the moment Hood stepped inside the shelter.

For a moment Hood said nothing. He felt almost too sick at heart to speak.

"Zelling's point again," he said at last. "Darrell's gone!"

The midshipman felt the same as Hood himself; words were utterly useless just then.

Hood threw himself on the ground, and lay there, studying the grass, it seemed.

He understood exactly how Dexter felt. The same miserable sense of failure was in his own mind, though he would never have admitted it aloud.

Presently Hood looked up quickly, and broke the silence, which had lasted for a considerable time.

"I was hurrying to bring you some strange news when Burke met me," he said.

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"What's that?" asked Dexter quickly.

"Walters and I explored this wood—came to the end of it, in fact," Hood explained. "What do you think we saw at the other side?"

"Can't guess," answered Dexter.

"A motor-car—a big, powerful machine, that would carry six people at least," said Hood.

"A what?"

Dexter stared at him in amazement.

"We saw this car—a really first-class one, I imagine—just waiting at the other side of the wood."

Hood repeated his statement, as though to emphasise its exactness.

"But—Great Scott!" Dexter seemed unable to grasp the fact. "Was anyone in it, or was it just standing there alone?"

"There were two big black fellows on guard," Hood answered; "and standing near was a little crowd of blacks, but not of the same race as the big fellows, I imagine. They seemed to be merely spectators interested in the machine."

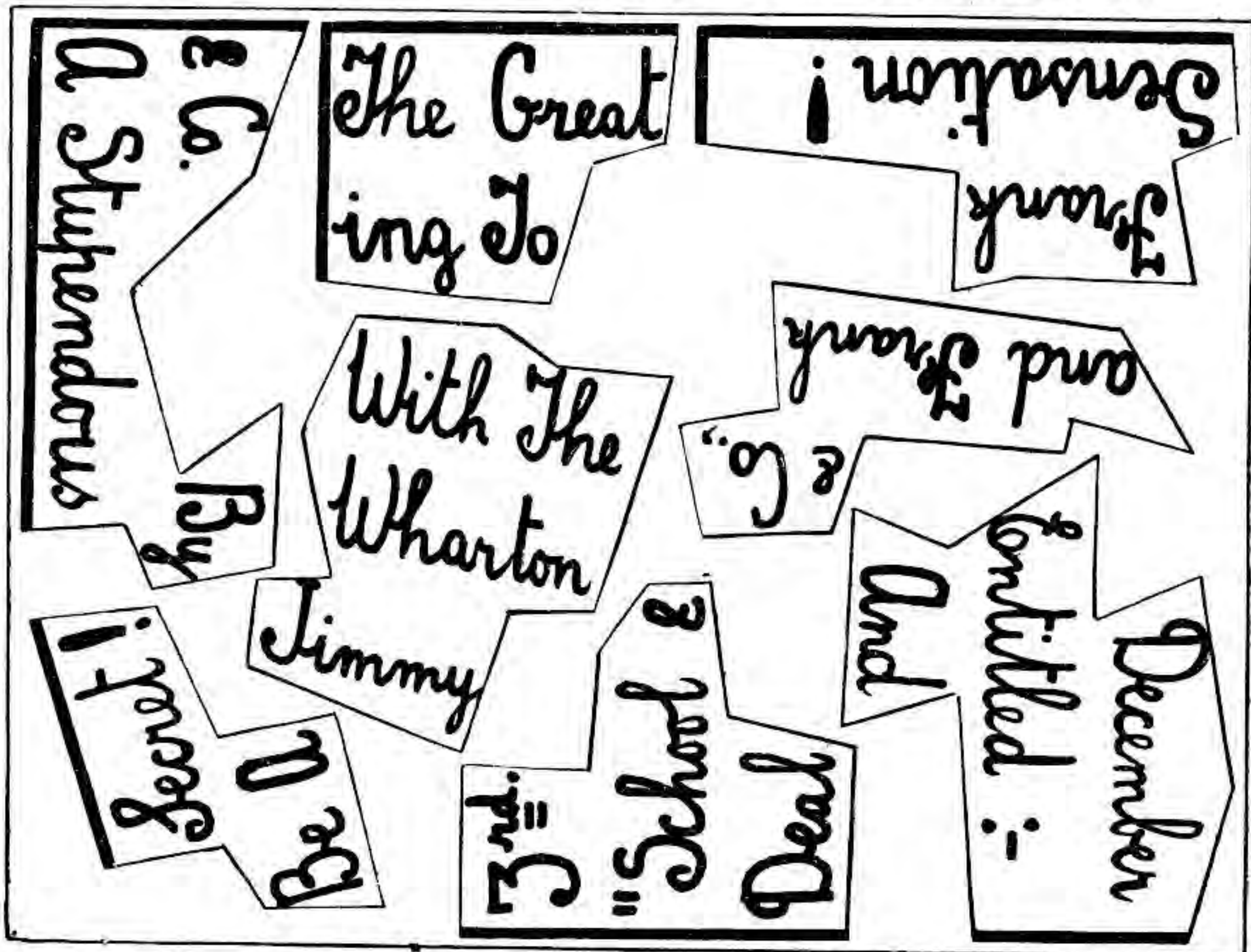
"What on earth does it mean?" Dexter was sitting up now, and had almost forgotten the pain from his foot for the

(Continued on next page.)

OUR GREAT SECRET IS PARTIALLY REVEALED!

UNIQUE JIG-SAW PROBLEM FOR CLEVER READERS. - -

Magnetites must cut out very carefully the different portions printed below. Fuller particulars will be found in our Chat Page under the heading of "One Good Thing Follows Another! The Great Secret Out!"



moment. "How could it possibly have got there? This beats the band!"

"It does," Hood answered, but without any excitement in his voice. "It gave me a start at first when I saw it, and I couldn't imagine what it all meant. I don't think I really know now, but I'm trying to work it out."

"But, I mean, if there's a garage round the corner, and cars running up here," Dexter went on, "why on earth should we squat here?"

Hood shook his head regretfully.

"I'm afraid there's nothing in it for us," he said slowly—"unless the fact that we are really not far from a native village or something of the sort is of any use. But that car is for Zelling's use."

"But how has he got it? Where has the thing come from?" demanded Dexter. "He isn't a magician, and he can't get on the telephone, or send a wire, or do anything more wonderful than we can."

"That was my impression," Hood said, and there was now a tinge of bitterness in his voice. "But I think I understand how it has all come about."

"Then tell me, for I'm hanged if I can grasp the thing at all!" Dexter interrupted. "You're sure you really did see a car?"

Hood smiled a little at that.

"Ask Walters," he answered. "He saw it, too. We were hurrying back here, when young Burke cropped up, and the doubt about Darrell was more pressing than this phenomenon. Now I begin to think they are connected, or likely to be very shortly."

"Go on," Dexter urged, as Hood paused, and appeared to be considering the matter afresh.

"This is what I think has happened," Derwent Hood proceeded. "Zelling got up here on the Kielberg, and immediately tried to tell Diemster what he should do. One of the suggestions he made, I imagine, was that they should try and send a message through to the Governor of German South-West Africa."

"If I'm not mistaken, we are just about in that territory now. They're on Portuguese soil, and ought to regard themselves as prisoners; but, of course, it's no use trying to argue international law with a German in war-time."

"As you found out when you tried it on," said Dexter.

"Exactly. But to keep to the story. As I suggested some time back, Zelling probably thought it would be a good idea, apart from getting clear himself, to get all the Kielberg crowd down to Windhoek, the capital of their bit of South-West Africa."

"They would come in useful, because there's no doubt our lot will make an attack in due time. Zelling would know nothing about the country they would have to go through, and apparently what he did, even before Diemster was cleared out of the way, was to bribe someone to try and get to Windhoek with a message from Zelling to the governor."

"It's all supposition, of course. But we'll assume that Zelling himself hadn't much faith really in the thing coming off; or, at all events, not in time for it to be of any personal service to him. He just sends his message, and hopes it will get through, and that the governor will be able to do something in the way of transporting or directing the officers and crew how to get there."

"Zelling himself, I fancy, meant to get away by the motor-launch long before his messenger returned from Windhoek—instead of which, I should think, the messenger had some luck, and managed to cover the few hundred miles quite quickly."

"And the governor promptly orders out his best car, and sends it down here for Mr. Zelling?" asked Dexter.

"Something like that. You see, there are a fair number of towns between here and Windhoek. I dare say the roads are not wonderfully good, but quite passable, and the fact that there were natives hanging round the car suggests there are one or two villages hereabouts. That means there will be some sort of a road."

"But how would the car know the exact spot where Zelling would be?"

"The man who acted as his messenger was probably chosen for his job because of his bump of locality," Hood answered. "He's apparently returned with the car. For all we know, the man who's driven it may have been round this way before. The car looks as though it had been specially made for big tours."

"Then you think it's simply a wonderful stroke of luck for Zelling?" asked Dexter.

"Yes. I don't think he'd ever guess that they could send a high-powered car up here. He was relying on the motor-launch."

"And how does Darrell come in?"

"Well, of course, I'm theorising all the time," Hood explained. "The car turns up, and the driver and the messenger get down to the river and signal across. Zelling is presented with the governor's compliments, and will be come and have lunch—after a nice six-hundred-mile trip across the country."

"He decides to accept promptly; only he isn't going without Darrell, or, as he calls him, the Prince of Altenburg. So he comes over in the boat Burke saw, probably with a party of a dozen or more, ready to settle us all out of hand. Instead of that, Darrell practically is waiting for him."

"And they just collared Darrell and cleared off?"

"That's it!" Hood answered. "Zelling won't care two-pence about us now. He'll be off some time to-day, leaving instructions behind him as to what they are to do. The question is—can we foil him?"

Dexter's reply was to struggle to his feet, but it was not a success. The pain in the injured leg was almost unbearable, and he could do nothing but sink back on his rest again.

"Oh, hang it all!" he cried. "Just when the real big chance comes I'm an invalid—a horrible cripple of no use whatever!"

"No, you're not as bad as that, really," Hood said, trying to be as cheerful as he knew how. "That foot of yours will be all right presently. Meantime, I think Walters and I had better get to work as quickly as we can."

"What are you going to do?" Dexter asked quickly.

"I don't know myself quite. But we'll get back to that car, do something to prevent them from using it for a time, and have a fight for Darrell. Then—well, we shall have to talk of what happens after that. I'm not going to sit still while Zelling wanders comfortably back to civilisation—if you can call a German settlement civilised."

He went outside and called to Walters, who came to him at once.

"Are you game for anything, Walters?" he asked.

"Anything you like, sir," he answered cheerfully.

"Then come along! We're going to try and get the motor-car or bust it, or do something to interfere with its running to-day. If we can do it, and keep our skins whole, so much the better."

Walters picked up his rifle, which was stored in the shelter, while Hood examined his revolver. Then they were off.

"Good luck!" Dexter called.

When they had gone he gave the signal which he hoped would attract Burke, who had mounted guard again. Dexter felt there was little need of it now, and he wanted to talk. Moreover, Burke would be more useful here at present.

Meantime the two, Hood and Walters, were hurrying as fast as they could through the wood towards the place where they had seen the car.

They slackened speed and proceeded more cautiously as they came nearer. It would be foolishness to warn the guardians of the machine of their approach.

Hood rapidly decided on a plan in his mind, and as they went along told Walters the part he was to take.

"But don't show yourself if it can be avoided," he warned. "We must keep in hiding until the right moment."

The car was still there, but its engines were running now. They could hear them before they came in sight of the machine itself.

"Just in nice time, I fancy," Hood said. "We'll get behind that big tree over there."

They crept cautiously forward until they came to the tree indicated by Hood. From here they could observe everything that took place in the open.

But almost in the same moment that they arrived the car jerked forward.

Hood took in everything at a glance—the big car with only a framework top on which an awning and curtains had been fitted since he saw it before; and inside three passengers, in addition to the two blacks who sat with the driver at the front.

Zelling, with one of the officers, was there, and seated between them was a shorter figure. They were taking Jack Darrell with them!

As the car moved slowly forward Hood ran into the open. Then he saw Darrell suddenly stand up and turn round.

"Jump!" Hood yelled wildly. "Jump, Darrell!"

And again, as he grasped the fact that the other two were prepared to stop the youngster, Hood cried out again:

"Darrell—Darrell! Jump out! Quick!"

(Look out for next Monday's instalment of this exciting yarn. Order your "MAGNET" early!)

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For Next Monday:

"GOING THE PACE!"

By Frank Richards.

Those who assert that "Magnet" stories have no moral will be compelled to change their views after reading next Monday's grand, long, complete tale of the chums of Greyfriars. Fisher T. Fish, the go-ahead Yankee junior, who worships the almighty dollar, but who finds very little scope for his business enterprise in the Greyfriars Remove, starts off in a new line entirely, and develops into quite a "blade." Despite the fact that it is war-time, and that betting on horses is the action of an out-and-out cad, Fish becomes quite a "sporting" character, and a celebrated backer of "dead certs" and "sure snips." The chums of the Remove, in company with the elegant De Courcy of Highcliffe, take the errant American citizen in hand, and he is compelled to pay a heavy penalty for "painting the town red" and

"GOING THE PACE!"

THE RED-LETTER DAY!

"The Greyfriars Herald" Definitely Appears on November 15th.

At last I am at liberty to publish the glad news that "The Greyfriars Herald," Number One, Price One Halfpenny, will be on sale at every newsagent's throughout the kingdom on Monday, November 15th.

Now, boys and girls, let me emphasise once again the urgent necessity of backing up this brilliant schoolboy paper, the first number of which will be

THE BIGGEST SURPRISE PACKET OF THE SEASON!

Instead of giving my chums twenty-four small pages, as previously stated, I have made strenuous efforts to obtain something much better for them, and have succeeded. "The Greyfriars Herald" will consist of

TWENTY LARGE PAGES,

and the wonderful stories, serials, poems, and numerous other features will go to make up

THE MOST MARVELLOUS VALUE FOR A HALF-PENNY EVER OFFERED!

Rally round then, readers all, and make this great venture a stunning, uproarious success. You have given your Editor a loyal promise of support; see that, as boys and girls of honour, you fulfil it. Let there be a gigantic, enthusiastic, unwavering effort made by all true Magnetites, so that "The Greyfriars Herald" shall leap into instant popularity. And keep in your mind's eye the following important particulars:

**"THE GREYFRIARS HERALD,"
NUMBER ONE,
PRICE ONE HALFPENNY.
ON SALE, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 15TH!**

ONE GOOD THING FOLLOWS ANOTHER!

The Great Secret Out!

I shall probably be denounced as a cruel Editor for not setting out the nature of "The Great Secret" in bold, black type; but I considered it a good idea to put the cleverness of my chums to the test by getting them to solve the Jigsaw puzzle, part of which appears on page 27 of this issue. The other part will be found in "The Penny Popular," our famous companion paper, out on Friday of this week. By

piecing the two together you will discover exactly what this colossal secret—mention of which has been made on this page for some weeks—is all about.

Now, clever ones, see if you can solve the mystery!

MISCELLANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Private W. Sharpe, No. 37054, "C" Section, 58th F.A., R.A.M.C., 19th Division, British Expeditionary Force, France, would be extremely grateful if some kindly-disposed reader of the "Magnet" Library would send him an accordion to cheer him and his comrades while they are doing their bit.

Private Eaton, No. 3271, 11th Platoon, "C" Company 8th Middlesex Regt., British Expeditionary Force, would be delighted to receive spare copies of the companion papers from "Magnet" readers.

Alfred Cheesbrough, 251, Anlaby Road, Hull, is desirous of forming a "Magnet" readers' league in his town. Will intending members please write, enclosing stamped, addressed envelope for reply?

R. Stevenson Jones, 101, Hampden Road, Hornsey, London, N., wishes to form a "Magnet" league in his district. Those who wish to join are requested to write to Master Jones, enclosing a stamped, addressed envelope for his reply.

OUR GREAT STORY COMPETITION!

A Word With Would-be Competitors.

Judging from the numerous letters I have received on the subject, the 30,000-word Greyfriars Story Contest is going to prove a gigantic success. I am aware that I am setting my readers a colossal task, particularly those who have never yet essayed anything literary, and I much admire the pluck which is being displayed by enthusiastic boys and girls.

Now for a few queries. "Royal," a reader hailing from Hetton, wishes to know what actually constitutes a 30,000-word story. I may say that the stories sent in need not be exactly 30,000 words in length. A thousand words under or over the specified number will not militate against a competitor's chances of success. The best way to go to work is to write fifteen chapters, each two thousand words in length. As I said before, typewritten manuscripts are preferred, as they will save the Editor a great deal of valuable time; but hand-written entries are quite permissible.

"Bill Sykes," of Norton, is groping in darkness. He doesn't know what to do. Let me enlighten you, Billy. You are asked to write a 30,000-word complete tale of the chums of Greyfriars, introducing anybody or anything you like; but Harry Wharton & Co., of the Remove, are to be the principal characters. The manuscript, when completed, is to be enclosed in an envelope, and addressed to

**THE EDITOR,
The MAGNET Library,
The Fleetway House,
Farringdon Street, London, E.C.**

and the words "Story Competition" should appear on the top left-hand corner of the envelope. The closing date is November 30th, and the prize fifteen pounds in cash. Every single boy or girl who competes in this competition will receive a suitable gift from the Editor.

Lastly, L. W. B., of Kinver, wishes to know if he is allowed to introduce Bunter's ventriloquism into the story. As I have just remarked, competitors may introduce anything they like, so long as it has some bearing upon the Greyfriars characters.

Go ahead then, all you plucky young people who mean to tackle this task, and let us see how many juvenile Frank Richards are flourishing in our midst.

(Continued on page iv of cover.)

REPLIES IN BRIEF.

"A Loyal Sydney Chum."—You must remember that a character who is denounced by some boys is a hot favourite with others. I certainly see no reason why you should take exception to Wun Lang, who provides much harmless amusement. I gather from your letter that you are very keen on Bunter. But supposing I tell you that a large number of boys loathe him? With regard to your suggestion for a competition for Colonials, I do not think such a proceeding would prove satisfactory, owing to delays in the mails, etc.

"Arethusa" (Nottingham).—Some years ago I did have a correspondence exchange in connection with readers living in the British Isles; but a few eads took advantage of the scheme, with the result that the innocent now have to suffer for the guilty.

A. M. Thomas (St. John's Wood). The individual you name is 5ft. 9in. in height, so that you and your chum are both three inches out in your calculations. Better cry quits.

E. C. R. H. (co. Kerry).—It is a great pity that the "Dreadnought" didn't receive the same support elsewhere as in your part of the world. Personally, I considered that a boy could wish for nothing better than the early schooldays of Harry Wharton; but the poor old "Dreadnought" wasn't properly backed up, so I had no recourse but to amalgamate it with the "Boys' Friend." I am sorry to hear you can't take to the "Penny Popular," especially as there are such fine stories appearing in it just now. Get this Friday's issue—a really wonderful pennyworth—and give it another trial. Your surmise concerning Dr. Locke is incorrect.

"Corinthian" (London, E.C.).—I have never heard of the railway-junction you name. Thanks very much for your staunch support!

Philip G. (Huddersfield).—Thank you for your letter and verses! Although an ardent disciple of Jimmy R., you have a long way to go before attaining his standard of work.

John B. (Marylebone).—The nearest big town of any importance to Greyfriars is Ashford.

"X. Y. Z." (Glasgow).—I sympathise with you in your position, and although I never encourage anything in the nature of sneaking, I really think, in this case, that a word to your father would be justifiable.

C. L. O. (near Sydney).—See reply to "A Loyal Sydney Chum," printed in previous paragraph.

S. Huntley (Mounmouth).—I entirely disagree with you: The "Magnet" Library, so far from leading boys into doubtful

and perverse ways, has quite a contrary effect. Many and many a young fellow, guided by the influence of boys like Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry, has been taught the value of playing the game. As for you, sir, and all who belong to your precious School for Scandal, you can keep off the grass, or I shall send our Fighting Editor down to Mounmouth. Do try and be decent, for a change.

"Zam-buk" (Coventry).—Many thanks for your cheering remarks!

B. H. Tucker (Liverpool).—Glad to hear you are wholeheartedly in favour of the new cover. I am not acquainted with the individuals you mention.

"Tomboy" (Harringay).—I much appreciate your splendid letter. Hope your brother survives his Polar expedition. Can't you convert that obstinate brother of yours and make him become a loyal reader?

Charlie Collins.—A good second eleven for the Removewould be: Hazeldene; Morgan; Boisover; Ogilvy; Desmond; Treluce; Russell; Rake; Penfold; Wibley; and Trevor. The Christian names of Stott, Mauleverer, and Hazeldene are William, Herbert, and Peter respectively.

Robert F. (near Oldham).—Harry Wharton's home is in Hampshire. Bunter minor is a fixture in the Third Form.

E. Adams (Frome, Somerset).—Thank you very much for your nice letter. It is always the policy of the MAGNET Library to uphold the right and bar the wrong.

J. Stavely (Bridlington).—I do not know the Christian names of the gentlemen you mention. The captain of Highcliffe School is Langley.

Evelyn Jones (Croydon).—A thousand thanks for your splendid letter, Evelyn! You will never have cause to regret your loyalty to the old paper.

Violet G. (Croydon).—What a wealth of support I seem to be getting from your town! The Irishman's letter you were good enough to send me was most interesting and amusing. The proposition for a badge for MAGNET readers must really be considered shortly. Watch this page for developments.

Your Editor



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