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THE SCHOOLBOY BARBER!



A BIG SURPRISE FOR MR. QUELCH.

(An Amusing Scene in the Magnificent Long, Complete School Tale of the Grims of Greyfriars.) 27-9-19



The Schoolboy Barber!

by

Frank Richards

A Magnificent Long, Complete
School Story of Harry Wharton
& Co. at Greyfriars School.

THE FIRST CHAPTER. "Get Your Hair Cut!"

"TODD!" Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove Form at Greyfriars School, rapped out the name. But the owner of it did not reply, or even look up.

"Todd!" Harry Wharton looked round at Alonzo Todd in some alarm. Mr. Quelch was growing angry, and he had already taken a business-like grip on the pointer. Harry Wharton tried to catch Alonzo Todd's eye, but in vain.

Todd was apparently immersed in thought. That was nothing unusual for Alonzo Todd was a strange sort of fellow. In fact, on some subjects he was a genius. At all events, he said he was, and he had the information first-hand. Words of six or seven syllables, of which the other fellows did not even know the meaning, rattled off Alonzo Todd's tongue at lightning speed when he was fairly going. He could tell you the history, past present, and to come, of the potato, for instance. With excited face, and eyes gleaming down his long nose, he would hold forth for hours together on the subject of the potato, which was his favourite. But he would sometimes give the potato a rest in favour of some other subject.

When Alonzo Todd was on the trail, as Bob Cherry had put it, of a new and learned subject, he was lost to the world—dead to his surroundings. At such a time, what did Roman history matter?

But Mr. Horace Henry Samuel Quelch, who was master of the Remove Form, had no sympathy whatever with Alonzo Todd's ideas, and it was his duty to cram a certain quantity of Roman history into the heads of the Removites.

Hence the cloud that gathered on his brow, and his grip on the pointer, when Todd failed to answer to his name.

"Todd!" The name was rapped out for the third time.

Mr. Quelch's voice rose crescendo, but

still the deep thinker did not hear, or did not heed.

Alonzo Todd was sitting at the end of a form, and Harold Skinner was next to him. Skinner could have nudged him into wakefulness; but Skinner didn't. Skinner was a cad, and he preferred to sit tight and wait for the fun.

"Todd!"

"The ass!" muttered Harry Wharton. "He'll get a licking! The utter duffer! What bee has he got in his bonnet this time?"

Robert Ogily, the Scots junior, jerked a paper ball towards Todd to startle him.

"Ogily!"

"Yes, sir?"

"You will take fifty lines!"

"Oh!"

"Todd!" Mr. Quelch took two long strides towards Alonzo Todd, and gave him a rap on the knuckles that effectually startled him out of his deep reflections.

"Todd!"

"Og!"

"Boy! What do you mean by this conduct? I have spoken to you four or five times, and you have not answered!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Alonzo Todd blinked at him.

"I am sorry, sir; I did not hear you—or, perhaps it would be more correct to say that I did not heed. I was certainly conscious of someone speaking, but I tried to shut out the noise so that it would not interfere with the thread of my thoughts."

Mr. Quelch gasped, and the Removites gasped, too. They were used to curious things from Alonzo Todd, but this was strong, even for Alonzo.

"Todd! Dear me! Sometimes I am tempted to believe, Todd, that you are no more than an idiot!"

"Oh sir!"

"If I did not think that I should certainly call you out and cane you very severely indeed!"

"But—"

"Silence, boy!" roared Mr. Quelch. "I will not be interrupted in this way when I am talking. Your general appearance, Todd, convinces me that

you are neglecting not only your work, but are slack in the elementary duties every boy in the school is expected to attend to."

"I—"

"No wonder you cannot even hear your Form-master's voice," cried Mr. Quelch. "Your hair, Todd, is a disgrace to the school—it is all over your ears! When did you last have it cut?"

"About eight weeks ago, sir!" Mr. Quelch's gimlet-like eyes looked more steady than ever as he glared down on the head of the unfortunate Alonzo, and there was a general titter from the rest of the Removites.

"Old Quelch is on the war path!" murmured Bob Cherry to Frank Nugent, who was sitting next to him.

"Cherry!"

"Ye-e-es, sir!"

"You were talking to Nugent. You will take fifty lines!"

"Oh sir!"

"Don't answer me back, boy!" shouted Mr. Quelch. "And, Cherry!"

"Yes, sir?"

"You will take another fifty lines for appearing in class with a head of hair, sir, that looks like a woolly door-mat!"

Bob Cherry's face went crimson.

"A—a door-mat, sir?"

"Yes; your hair is a disgrace, and it does not appear to have been cut once this term!"

"May I speak, sir?" stammered Bob.

"What have you to say?"

"I—I haven't had my hair cut, sir, because it's not worth it, sir!" said Bob.

Mr. Quelch stared hard at Bob Cherry.

"What do you mean, boy?" he snapped.

"What do you mean by uttering such an absurd remark to your Form-master?"

"It's—it's the profiteers, sir! All the barbers in Friarale and Courtfield have—have stuck up their prices, and none of the shops will pay, sir!"

"Nonsense!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "You will get your hair cut to-day without fail!"

"Bunter!"

"Yes, Mr. Quelch!" replied Billy Bunter, the fat junior. Bunter was the

fattest and greediest boy at Greyfriars, and was known as the Owl of the Remove because of the enormous spectacles he wore, or sometimes he was referred to as the Porpoise because of his size. Anyway, Billy Bunter knew that he was being spoken to now, and he sat up sharply and blinked across the class-room in the direction of Mr. Quelch.

"Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, in acid tones, "you, too, will take fifty lines for having the audacity to appear in class with such a mop of hair. It is positively disgusting, and you will get it cut to-day!"

Billy Bunter ran his fat fingers through his hair, and blinked harder than ever. "All right, sir!" he said. "Can you lend me a bob—er—I mean, a shilling, sir?"

"Boy!" Mr. Quelch simply gasped out the word. He never knew what to make of Bunter, and the junior's unparalleled nerve in talking like this in the Form-room absolutely took his breath away.

"Yes, sir? I haven't any money on me at present. I'm expecting a postal-order to-night from one of my titled relations, so if you could oblige me by lending me, say, a couple of bob—er—I mean, two shillings, I—I could get my hair cut to-day, as you suggest, sir, in spite of the professors!"

The Remove giggled. "My only hat," murmured Tom Brown to Tom Redwing. "Bunter has the thickest head in class, and he's looking out for a thick ear to match, I suppose."

"Watch Quelch!" grinned Harry Wharton. "He's just beginning to boil."

"Bunter, I hardly know what to say to you. You are an—extraordinary boy! Stand out here, sir, and hold out your hand!"

"M-m-m-my hand, sir?" "Yes!" said Mr. Quelch. "I'm going to punish you for—your astounding impudence! Hold out your hand, sir."

Billy Bunter slowly left his place. "If you please, sir—"

"Not a word! Hold out your hand!" Billy Bunter held it out gingerly enough, and Mr. Quelch gave him a sharp rap across the palm, and the fat Remove gave a howl.

"Ow! Yow!" "Hold out the other hand, Bunter!" "If you please, sir—"

"The other hand instantly!" thundered the Form-master.

The other hand received another cut, and Billy Bunter squirmed.

"Now sit down!" said Mr. Quelch angrily. "And you will see that you appear in class to-morrow morning with your hair properly cut, Wharton!"

Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove, stood up in his seat.

"Wharton, it is astounding that you should appear in class with your hair that length. As captain of the Form you should make it your duty to see that your general appearance is an example to the rest of the boys."

"But I don't see why we should pay a shilling for a hair-cut, sir," said Harry Wharton. "The barbers in Friarale and Courtfield would do it for fourpence, and it is only profiteering to charge a shilling each, sir!"

"Nonsense, Wharton!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "I do not think any of you have taken the trouble to even look for a barber's shop."

"Oh sir!" "The whole class is a standing disgrace to Greyfriars," continued Mr. Quelch. "Nugent, Bolsover, Bulstrode, Dutton, Fish, Linley, Russell—why, goodness me,

on looking round I can see that every boy in the class has neglected to get his hair cut! There is one exception, and that boy is Mauleverer."

Herbert Mauleverer, the schoolboy earl, rose in his seat.

"I—I got my hair cut only yesterday, sir," he drawled. "Of course, I get it trimmed every week, and then I get it cut properly once a fortnight!"

"And what were you charged?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

The dandy of the Remove looked nonplussed.

"I—I'm afraid I couldn't tell you, sir! I think I gave the man a half-crown!"

"Then you are foolishly extravagant, Mauleverer! But that has nothing at all to do with the subject at present. Every boy will see that between now and tomorrow morning he has his hair properly cut! Otherwise he will be most severely punished. We will now proceed with the lesson. And if you show the least inattention again, Todd, I shall send you to the headmaster to be dealt with!"

The lesson was resumed, and the Removes were obliged to submit without further argument to Mr. Quelch's stern handling of what, for several weeks, had been a very sore point with the boys of Greyfriars.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Fishy's Idea!

LESSONS were over at last, and Mr. Quelch released the Removes, who were glad enough to get away. The Form-master was not often in this sort of mood, and it was very seldom indeed that he threatened the whole class with punishment if something or other was not done.

The Removes flocked up to the Remove passage, and went into their various studies.

"Old Quelch's fairly on the war-path," said Harry Wharton to Frank Nugent as the two juniors entered Study No. 1. Wharton and Nugent shared No. 1.

"Your hair is a bit lanky!" laughed Frank Nugent. "But it wouldn't have been noticed if it hadn't been for that duffer Todd!"

"Alonso's an ass!" "And then Bunter got Quelch's goat out, too!"

Bunter wants boiling!" Harry Wharton flung his books on to the bookcase shelf with a snort. Mr. Quelch's severe admonishing had not pleased the captain of the Remove, and he was feeling very short and snappy when the study door was flung open.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" cried Bob Cherry. "Can we come in?"

"Yes, come along, Bob!" replied Harry Wharton. "Let's talk this hair-cutting bizney over!"

"That's what I've come for. Marky and Inky are here, too!"

Mark Linley, the Lancashire scholarship boy, followed closely on Bob Cherry's heels, and behind him came Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the dandy Nabob of Bhanpur.

These three juniors, Hurree, the little Chinese junior, shared Study No. 13; but they were more often than not to be found in Study No. 1, chatting or feeding, as the case might be, with Wharton and Nugent.

The five juniors sat themselves down and made themselves quite at home.

"It really is a bit thick of old Quelch to get his rag out about our blessed hair!" growled Bob.

"But our esteemed and ludicrous sahib really meant we must get our hair done cutfully," said Hurree Singh, in his weird and wonderful English.

Harry Wharton grinned.

"Why should we pay those beastly profiteers a bob for it, though?"

"It's a rotten scandal!"

"I'm not going to get my hair cut until those beasts cut down the price," said Harry Wharton. "It's all very fine for Quelch to say we haven't tried; but we jolly well have!"

"I went to Rogers' yesterday evening. He's stuck his price up now with the rest!"

"And Wade's at Courtfield have, too."

"And so have Stanford's."

"It's nothing more nor less than low-down profiteering, and I vote we strike against it."

"It's no good striking unless we get everybody into it," said Bob Cherry. "Let's start a blessed union. These rotten barbers are Bolsheviks, and nothing else! Hallo! Who is this?"

There was a knock at the study door, and it flew open. Fisher Tarleton Fish, the American junior and general hostler of the Remove, came in, smiling cheerfully.

"Good!" said Fish. "I guess you galoots are at home?"

The thin, keen face of the American junior was unusually animated, and his eyes were gleaming with excitement. His thin, staccato voice silenced the general discussion going on amongst Harry Wharton & Co.

"I say, I guess you're at home?"

"Can't you see we are, you dummy?" snapped Harry Wharton. "Now you've seen we're at home you can hear out!"

"None," said Fish. "I guess I've got a proposition to place before you fellows!"

"Kh?"

"A proposition! It'll solve all this trouble with Quelch, and will defeat the object of these profiteers at the same time."

"Oh!"

"I guess you fellows have to come to me for ideas. This sleepy old island ain't bright enough for business stunts!"

"Don't you bring any of your rotten wheezes in here!" snapped Bob Cherry. "You'll get it in the neck if you do!"

"Not this time, Cherry!"

Bob Cherry backed up a large volume lying on the study table, and Fish moved towards the door in case the volume should come flying across the room.

"Where will you have it, Fishy?" said Bob Cherry politely.

"Now, I guess I want you guys to listen to me," replied the American junior. "Will you give me a minute or two to explain?"

"All right, Fishy," laughed Harry Wharton. "We will give you one minute exactly, and then Bob will fire the book."

Fisher Tarleton Fish seemed satisfied, and he came in and closed the study door.

"Buck up, you duffer!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, taking out his watch. "You've lost ten seconds up to now."

"It's the hair-cutting old Quelch talked about," said Fish. "Just you silly galoots listen here! I guess we all got it hot and strong in class this morning, and for once our old Form-master is right. You jays do want a hair-cut pretty badly."

"Well?"

"I guess I'm the guy who is going to cut it, too!"

"What?" shrieked the juniors.

"I'm your man," said Fish. "I guess I'm on the spot, and there ain't no profiteering prices about me. I cut hair for fourpence a time. No more and no less!"

"My hat!"

"I guess it's the idea of the century," continued the American junior. "And when once we start on these profiteers"

they can look out for whole streaks of trouble!"

Bob Cherry flung the heavy volume down on to the study table again.

"That's not a bad notion for once, Fishy," he said. "There isn't any reason why we shouldn't get our hair cut here when you come to think of it."

"Not a bad wheeze at all," agreed Harry Wharton. "I shall want to see Fishy experiment on somebody first, though."

"Rather!"

"I guess that's easy," said Fish. "Now, we'll just have Lanky as the model."

Pass me a pair of scissors, Wharton."

The dusky Nabob of Bhanipur leapt up in his chair.

"My esteemed and ludicrous chum will be attacked hangfully before he chops my hair cutfully!" he cried.

"Come on, you galoot!"

"Really, my esteemed idiot, I—"

"Sit down!" roared Fish. "How the Dickens do you think I can cut your bleeked hair if you stand up and jabber that rotten English at me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hurree Singh backed to the other side of the table, and smiled across at the American junior pleasantly.

"Come on, Inky," said Fish. "If those jays want to see an exhibition hair-cut I guess you'll oblige them!"

"But, my ludicrous chum, I object regretfully!"

Fisher T. Fish glared across at the smiling Nabob.

"I—I guess I'll only cut one side just to show these galoots. Come on, Inky, it won't hurt you, and I guess that black, curly noddle of yours won't take long to grow again."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My esteemed and ludicrous chum can make up his mind quickly that my honourable hair is not to be hacked cutfully," said Hurree Singh.

"I don't blame you, Inky," laughed Harry Wharton. "But I do think there is something in this wheeze of Fishy's; but it's Wednesday to-day, and I'm not jolly well going to waste a half-holiday having my hair cut here!"

"It won't take long," said Fish.

"Perhaps it won't; but we're going down to Courtfield this afternoon."

"What time?"

"About half-past three."

"Well, I guess that'll just suit me," said Fish. "I'll get the barber's shop ready, and then I want to go down to Moses, and hire a few things."

"What on earth for?"

"You guys don't know much about these things. You can't open a blessed shop without a stock, can you?"

"Why can't you? All you want is a brush and comb and a few scissors and an apron. You can borrow those things in 'A' school."

"Yep!"

"Well, what do you want to get from Moses' second-hand shop?"

"I guess I know what I want, and I'll come down to Courtfield with you when you go."

"All right, then."

"Now, I guess I must hustle around," said Fish, opening the study door. "It's no good opening a barber's shop unless the place is well stocked, and it ain't going to be easy to get scissors and combs and brushes and hair-oil out of these guys in the Remove."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't you let me catch you taking any of my things!" hooted Bob Cherry. "You just leave my blessed comb alone!"

"And mine, too!"

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"I guess you jays have got a poor idea of opening a saloon."

"Well, you'll call at Study No. 14 when you're ready?" said Fish. "By half-past three. I guess I shall have the shop going at full swing. But I guess I must see that guy Moses."

"All right, Fishy!" laughed Harry Wharton. "We'll come along later on and see how you are getting on. I'm jolly certain I'm not going to let you cut my hair until I've seen somebody take it on first."

"I guess that will be O.K.," said the American junior, slamming the study door to.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Fish Starts Borrowing.

THE Yankee schoolboy had American ideas, and when once he started to work he went ahead with great speed, and carried out his ambitions ruthlessly.

Mr. Queich's curt order to the juniors of the Remove Form that morning had instantly suggested a golden opportunity in Fish's mind. His schoolmates' objection to paying exorbitant prices for a mere hair-cut had at once shown the Yankee a possible chance of raking in the shekels. Fourpence for a hair-cut! He worked it out in his brain at lightning speed. There were nearly fifty boys in the Remove. At fourpence a time this would bring him in quite a decent sum of money, and so Fish had thrown himself heart and soul into the scheme.

Fish had an unlimited supply of ideas. Harry Wharton & Co. were sick to death even hearing about them, and never a week passed that the Yankee junior was not thrown out bodily through the doorway of Study No. 1. It seemed that Fish, as a general rule, had to suffer this penalty for "hawking" his wheezes round the Remove studies. And now that he had at last had a stunt more or less officially sanctioned by the captain of the Remove, Fish went ahead without wasting any more time.

He rushed down to the school notice-board, and scribbled out a notice on a piece of paper he tore off the bottom of an announcement already pinned up. Fish licked his pencil and frowned, and then scribbled away, and pinned his effort up on to the board.

He read it through hastily before hurrying on.

"NOTICE.

"The firm of Fish, Limited, is opening a hairdressing saloon in Study No. 14, Remove Passage, this afternoon (Wednesday).

"All kinds of hair will be cut at extremely low prices. Prefects and Sixth-Formers shaved at moderate prices. Shampoo extra. False hair supplied by arrangement. Hair lotions, etc., obtainable. No connection with any other firm."

"Walk up in your thousands!"

"Opening day, Wednesday afternoon. No Protesting! Fellows in the Remove are invited to roll up in their thousands and support home industries."

"Walk up! Walk up!"

"Cheap and good! Cash only taken! Anybody asking for credit will be ejected. This is the offer of the season!"

(Signed) FISHER-TABLETON FISH,

"Managing Director."

"I guess that fills the bill!" muttered Fish. "It'll fetch 'em all right. Now for stocking the saloon."

He hurried away from the board as he

caught sight of a group of Removeites coming along the passage, and he hurried upstairs again.

"Shaving is a new departure," he said. "That means I must have a razor. I'll try Coker of the Fifth, as he shaves sometimes."

Fish arrived at Coker's study, and tapped on the door. A voice from within shouted out for him to enter, and the American junior opened the door and poked his head into the study.

Horace Coker was there with his two cronies, Potter and Greene of the Fifth.

"What do you want, you young boulder?" snapped the great Coker.

"I guess I want to borrow something."

"What?"

Coker jumped up and seized the poker out of the fire-grate, and Fish prepared to make a run for it. The Removeites were never very welcome in Coker's study. The burly Fifth-Former had been ragged too often for him to appreciate a friendly visit from a kid of the Lower Fourth, as he was pleased to refer to the Remove.

"I guess you needn't get excited, Coker, you jay!" cried Fish. "I only want to borrow your safety-razor and your hair-lotion and your brush and your comb, and—"

Horace Coker and Potter and Greene exchanged glances. Fish's demand seemed too much for them. They stared at one another, and then stared at the Yankee junior. The great Fifth-Formers were not quite prepared for such cheek as this.

"I'll return them to you some time to-night," said Fish, after a pause. "I guess you guys needn't think that I shall eat them."

"You—you cheeky young rotter!" roared Coker.

"What's that?"

"You dare to come to me to borrow my tackle? Me? Coker? Why, I'll put this poker across your back if you aren't out of that door in a second!"

"I—"

"Get out!"

"You silly, lopsided jay, I—"

Crash!

The poker flew across the study, and met the panels of the door with a crash. Fish bobbed his head out just in time, and slammed the door to with a bang.

"You bowling guy!" he roared through the keyhole. "I guess if that poker had got me I should have been killed!"

Coker & Co., on the other side of the door, made a rush across the room, and Fish heard them coming. He made up his mind in a flash, and flew along the corridor out of harm's way.

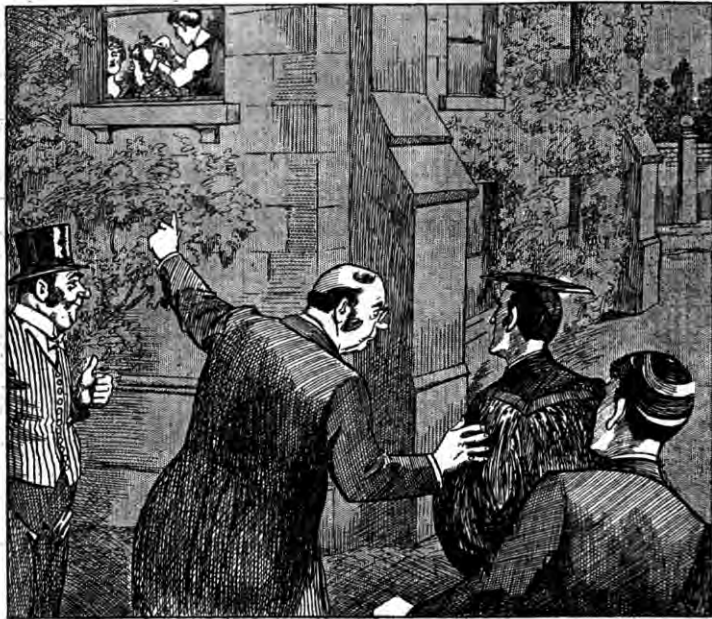
"My stars and stripes!" gasped Fish.

"It's no good going to those jays for anything. I guess this looks like having to borrow the things out of the dormitories."

The American junior climbed the stairs leading to the Fourth Form dormitory, and entered after cautiously ascertaining whether anyone was inside. However, the coast was clear, and it did not take Fish long to walk down the long room and borrow a few articles from the tidy row of dressing-tables.

"Gee-whiz!" he muttered. "Just the very things for the saloon! Hallo! I guess that's a good hair-brush. And I'll just borrow those combs and those scissors there. Hallo! What's this?"

Fish picked up a large bottle containing some highly-coloured liquid. He pulled out the cork and sniffed at the contents. A pleasant aroma satisfied Fish tremendously, and he replaced the cork and put the bottle into his trousers-pocket.



"Look, Quelch!" said the Fifth Form-master, pointing up to the window. "It's a most remarkable thing!" Mr. Quelch and Wingate followed the direction of Mr. Prout's outstretched arm, and the next moment they gave a cry of alarm. (See Chapter 9.)

"I guess that belongs to Coker," he muttered. "That'll do fine. I guess this saloon will want more scissors, though. I'll just go along to— My stars! There's some silly jay coming along!"

The sound of heavy footsteps on the stairs outside warned the Yankee junior that there was someone on their way up to the dormitory, and Fish looked around him with a scared expression.

Tramp, tramp, tramp!
"Oh, my stars!" gasped Fish. "I guess I'll have to get under a bed!"

The American junior went down on his hands and knees, and scrambled under one of the beds, and waited in breathless expectation. The footsteps outside stopped at the door an instant, and then the owner of them tramped in, and made for one of the dressing-tables.

Fish heard the intruder mutter something, and he peeped out from beneath the bed and watched.

"It's Blundell!" he murmured, as he recognised the back of the burly Fifth-Former, who was looking over his dressing-table.

Blundell grunted.
"Some blithering fathead's been borrowing my brushes!" he said. "And

my comb as well! If I catch the rotter I'll half scrag him!"

Fish quaked.

Blundell walked across to another dressing-table, and borrowed a pair of brushes to tidy his hair down. The operation took a minute or two, and Fish concluded that the Fifth-Former was going out, and was not intending to hang about in the dormitory. For once the Yankee's surmise was correct; for after setting his tie straight by the aid of the looking-glass, Blundell went stamping out of the dormitory, and closed the door behind him with a bang. Blundell was evidently feeling annoyed about the brushes.

Fisher Tarleton Fish scrambled out from beneath the bed, and after a brief hesitation replaced Blundell's brushes and borrowed somebody else's. At the same time he collected a few more bottles he found standing on the various tables.

"I guess I've just about got enough stock to open the saloon with," said the Yankee junior, taking a final look round. "I'll get down to the study now, and get the place in working order for the— Oh!"

One of the bottles Fish had borrowed slipped through his hands, and crashed

on to the dormitory floor, and flew into a dozen pieces. The bottle had contained some beautifully scented brillianine, and had been used to beautify and improve Tomlinson's hair. Now the oil trickled its way across the polished floor of the dormitory, and the atmosphere became scented with a sickly aroma.

"Oh, my stars and stripes!" gasped Fish. "That's fairly busted it, if you like! I guess I'd better leave that as it is, before any of those guys in the Fifth come up and catch me."

Fish stood staring at the result of the accident for a moment or two, and then turned towards the door.

"Stars and stripes!" he muttered. "I guess it's time I yamooosed this ranch. It won't be healthy for me if they find me and that rotten bottle in the same place."

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Johnny Bull Doesn't Like It.

FISHER T. FISH reached the Re-form passage safely, and he gave a gasp of relief as he bounded into the end study—No. 14. He flung the door open with a crash, expecting to find Johnny Bull and Field, THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 607.

his study-mates, inside. But the study was quite empty, and the Yankee junior placed the various articles he had raided from the Fifth-Formers, on the study table.

The end study was not a very large room. It was a good deal smaller than No. 1; and Fish surveyed the little apartment with a critical eye.

"I guess this is a poky saloon for a barber," he muttered; "but it can't be helped, and it'll have to do. These jays must know where to come to. I'll just write out a notice."

The American junior tore out a sheet of paper from Johnny Bull's exercise-book, and scribbled out a few words in a bold hand.

"FISH, LIMITED.

HAIRDRESSING SALOON.

ALL KINDS OF HAIR CUT, 4d. EACH.

SHAVING DONE HERE, 3d.

SHAMPOO, 2d.

WIGS MADE BY ARRANGEMENT.

NO PROFITEERING.

SUPPORT HOME INDUSTRIES!

ROLL UP!"

"That's the stuff to give them!" chuckled Fish, pinning the sheet of paper on to the outside of the study door, and standing back to regard the effort with great satisfaction. "Now, I guess there's to be a few changes made in this blessed study!"

Fish snatched off his Eton jacket, and flung it into a corner, and then set-to in earnest. The table was shoved against the wall, and a cracked mirror hung on the wall just over it, and then a chair was placed in front of this.

The enamelled tin basin used for washing up the tea-things was put on the table, quite handy, near the chair to be used by the customer.

The brushes and combs, and razors and bottles raided from the Fifth-Form dormitory were next set out in neat little rows along the table, and a dishcloth and an old towel, which had lay hidden for several terms in the bookcase cupboard, were dragged out and hung over the back of the customers' chair.

In a few minutes Study No. 14 was transformed. Johnny Bull and Field would hardly recognise it as their own pet study when they came along. But a little thing like that never entered the Yankee's head, and he paused at last in his efforts, and stood with his hands on his hips with his legs wide apart.

"I guess that completely fills the bill," he muttered. "When I've got the rest of the stuff from old Moses, those jays will show some surprise, I guess."

It remained to be proved that Fish was right in his surmise. There was quite a lot of trouble looming ahead for the ambitious Yankee.

Footsteps could be heard coming through the Remove passage, and Fisher T. Fish closed the door quietly, so that his notice could be seen to advantage by anybody passing.

"Here come two of the jays!" murmured Fish. "I guess that bill of mine on the notice-board will soon begin to draw them."

The footsteps outside stopped, and somebody in the passage uttered an ejaculation, and the study-door was flung open.

Johnny Bull and Field appeared, and they stared in astonishment.

"What the—?" began Field. "My giddy aunt!" gasped John Bull. Fisher T. Fish greeted them with a grin.

"I guess you're in time to open this show," he remarked. "Are you looking for a cheap hair-cut, Bull?"

"A—A—cheap hair-cut?"

"That's the notion. No profiteering. Everything cheap. Hair-cuts at fourpence a time; and shampoos only twopenny extra."

"B—B—"

"I guess you're surprised?" said Fish. "These stunts have to be worked at double-quick time. There ain't no cobwebs on me, I can tell you!"

"Look at that blessed table!" gasped Field. "Where the dickens did you get that lot from?"

"Borrowed!"

"And our blessed bowl!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "What's that for?"

"Shampoos, you jay!"

"And what the dickens do you think we're jolly well going to do now you've turned our blessed study upside-down?" howled Bull.

"I guess you'll have to lump it!"

"What?"

"You jays are all behind the times. Wharton's going to run this show, and I guess it's going to be the success of the century. Now then, are you looking for a cheap hair-cut?"

"No!" said Bull grimly. "I'm looking for a silly ass!"

"I guess—"

"And I've found him!" said Bull.

"Wade in, Field!"

"Hands off, you guys!" roared Fish. "Don't you try your tricks here. It's too late. Old Quelch is on the war-trail, and all you blessed guys have got to get your mops cut to-day, whether you like it or not!"

Johnny Bull leapt forward and gasped the edge of the study table. "The Yankee junior gave a cry of alarm."

"Here, look out! You'll upset my store, I guess!"

Johnny Bull chuckled.

"That's just what I am going to do!" he remarked.

"Oh! Hold on, you silly guy! Yow!"

"Crash!"

Over went the table, and the borrowed stock of the Fish hairdressing establishment was hurled hurtling on to the study carpet. Fisher T. Fish staggered back, amid a shower of scissors and bottles and safety-razors and brushes and combs.

"Yow! Yaroop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull grasped the American junior in his sturdy arms. He rolled him over on the carpet, and bumped him hard.

"There!" he gasped. "That's for turning my study into a barber's shop!"

"Yow!"

"Bump!"

"That's for your blessed cheek, trying to diddle the chaps in the Remove!"

"Yaroop!"

"Bump!"

"That's for playing the giddy ox!"

"Yarooroh!"

"Bump!"

"And that's an extra one for luck!"

"Yaroorow!"

Fisher T. Fish rolled on the carpet, roaring. He rolled on brushes and combs and oily-bottles, and they hurt him, and he roared again and again. Finally he sat up in the midst of the scattered goods and stared.

"You howling guy!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You frozen chump!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You burbling jabberwock!"

"Hi, ha, ha!" gasped Field. Fisher T. Fish staggered up. He was very dirty, and very breathless and very angry. He had ruined a great deal of his stock by rolling on it.

"You frabjous cuckoo!" he growled. "I've a jolly good mind to give you two jays the licking of your life, I guess!"

"Go it!" said Johnny Bull cheerfully.

"Nope! I guess I'll let you off," said Fish rather hastily. "You've mucked up my show, and interrupted my trade!"

"I'll interrupt it again, and bump you harder, if you try it on again!" growled Johnny Bull wrathfully. "Do you think I'm going to have my study turned into a swindling barber's saloon?"

"It ain't going to be a swindle!" said Fish heatedly. "I'm cutting hair at low prices. I'm doing the Remove a good turn by competing with these swindling profiteers!"

"You'd better take a shop in the village, then," said Johnny Bull drily. "You can't do it here!"

"I guess—"

"If you guess that you can use my study for a store, you guess wrong," said Bull. "Now, gather up all that rot and scoot!"

"I guess—"

"Are you going to make a start, you howling dunder!"

"But I tell you Wharton and Cherry and Nugent and Inky and Linley and all the other silly jays know all about it!" howled Fisher T. Fish. "They told me to go ahead, and in a few minutes half the silly guys in the Removes will be coming along here to get their hair cut."

"Oh!"

"Don't you know that Quelch has ordered everybody to get their mops cut to-day? I guess these galoots ain't paying a bob a time for it. I'm going to do it for fourpence!"

"But you don't know anything about it, you frabjous ass!"

"I guess I do."

Johnny Bull and Field exchanged glances.

"Are we going to put up with it?" said Field, after a pause.

"Well, if Wharton is going to get his hair cut here, I am!"

"Oh, my stars and stripes!" howled Fish. "Haven't I told you that he's coming along? They'll be here soon, and now you've wrecked my blessed shop! Look at that brilliantine running all over the rotten carpet!"

"You—you—"

"Oh, get out!" cried the Yankee junior. "I guess you've got cobwebs all over you, fish galoot!"

Fisher T. Fish groped about and gathered up the combs and brushes and safety-razors and bottles, and placed them on the table again, and Johnny Bull and Field gazed at him in silence.

"Here they come!" said Fish, as footsteps were heard in the passage outside. "You guys can clear off! You've done enough blessed damage in here."

"I'll jolly well go and see Wharton!" said Bull. "And if he doesn't know anything about it, I'll—I'll agra! you till you're blue, Fishy!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bad for Skinner.

"DON'T move!"

"Make room, there!"

"Order!"

"Rats!"

"Take it calmly," said Tom Redwing.

"There's room for all, you know."

"Oh, really, Redwing, that's all very well!" grumbled Billy Bunter.

"All very well for you long-legged bouncers!"

But what about me? I can't see over you!"

"Well, you watch me," said Tom Redwing, "and laugh when I do."

"Oh, really—"

"Ring off, you fat dummy!" snapped Redwing.

There was an excited crowd of Removites round the school notice-board. Fisher T. Fish's announcement had been spotted, and in less time than it takes to tell a wild rush had been made for the board in order to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest whatever the Yankee junior had penned up.

"If you duffers shut up," shouted Balstrode, "I'll read it out!"

"Go ahead!"

And the Remove looked and listened. The notice, which had been hastily drawn up by Fisher T. Fish, was surprising, to say the least. The Remove had not known quite what to expect; but they certainly had not expected this:

"NOTICE!"

"The firm of Fish, Limited, is opening a hairdressing saloon in Study No. 14, Remove passage, this afternoon (Wednesday)."

"All kinds of hair will be cut at extremely low prices. Prefects and Sixth-Formers shaved at moderate prices. Shampoos extra. False hair supplied by arrangement. Hair lotions, etc., obtainable. No connection with any other firm."

"Walk up in your thousands!"

"Opening day, Wednesday-afternoon. No profiteering! Fellows in the Remove are invited to roll up in their thousands, and support home industries."

"Walk up! Walk up!"

"Cheap and good. Cash only taken! Anybody asking for credit will be ejected!"

"This is the offer of the season!"

"(Signed) FISHER T. FISH, Managing Director."

The Removites listened and stared and commented. Their comments were not at all favourable to the firm of Fish, Limited.

"My only hat!" said Tom Redwing.

"The cheek!"

"Oh, Fish has got cheek enough for anything!" said Bolsover. "Of course, nobody will go to his blessed saloon!"

"The Head will come down on it," said Dick Rake.

"It will bust up before he hears of it, I expect," remarked Monty Newland.

"I don't know," said Alonzo Todd.

"If Fish is really going to cut hair cheaply it might be worth while."

"You'd only look a giddy scarecrow when he had finished with you!"

"Well, I think it might be tried. After all, Mr. Quelch was very angry about our appearances, and if Fish is really going to try to defeat those wretched profiteers I think we might give him a trial and see how it works."

"Something in that," said Tom Brown. "Blessed if I can afford a whole bob just for a hair-cut! Those barbers in Courtfield and Friardale are rotten thieves!"

"He'll make a profit somehow!" sported Bolsover. "Trust that blessed Yank! He'll try to sell us rubbish when he's cut our hair, and he'll make big profits in that way."

"Faith, and ye're right!" said Desmond.

"He'll probably shove something on to our nappers and give us blood-pouring!" growled Morgan.

For a long time there was a crowd before the board, reading and re-reading,

and discussing the notice put up by the Yankee junior.

In spite of themselves, the Removites could not help being impressed by the initiative and cool cheek of the American.

There was no doubt that Fisher T. Fish, in spite of his many little failings, was a businesslike and energetic youth, and the Remove began to veer round in opinion.

"After all, a bob's a bob in these times," said Harold Skinner. "When you come to think of it, why should these beastly profiteers take our money off us like that?"

"That's what I say, my dear Skinner," said Alonzo Todd. "I'm quite sure my Uncle Benjamin would wish us to encourage one of our own schoolfellows in any serious attempt to perform a good action."

"Good old Uncle Benoline!" laughed Wibley.

"I shall certainly patronise Fish, for one," continued Alonzo Todd. "Will you join me, Brown?"

"I'll—I'll come up with you."

"And so will I," said Skinner. "Will you come and get your hair cut, Dutton?"

The deaf junior of Greyfriars stared at Skinner.

"Do I know your Aunt Haricot?" he exclaimed. "Of course I don't! I do not know any of your relations."

"Oh, my giddy hat!" gasped Skinner.

"Just hark at this deaf lunatic!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I think it's most extraordinary of you to ask me such a question," continued the deaf junior. "How the dickens do you think I could have met your blessed aunt!"

"I didn't say anything of the sort."

"What's that? What has she brought?"

"Eh?"

"I wish you would speak up, Skinner," said Dutton. "I'm only a trifle hard of hearing, and you needn't shout; but don't mumble your speech so."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites.

"Are you coming up to Study No. 14 to get your hair cut?" bawled Skinner,

placing his mouth an inch off Dutton's ear.

Tom Dutton smiled.

"Yes, rather, Skinner! I've quite made up my mind to patronise Fish of this occasion."

"Well, come along, then, you frabjous lunatic!"

Harold Skinner broke away from the crowd of Removites, and Dutton and Brown and Alonzo Todd followed on his heels, and they made their way along to the end study in the Remove passage.

They met Johnny Bull and Field a few yards from No. 1, and the two members of that notorious study were looking very cross. They had just stamped out of the room after their angry interview with their study-mate, and they glared at Skinner and his party as they passed.

"Fish at home?" asked Skinner.

"Yes!" growled Field. "Hang him!"

Fisher T. Fish heard the remarks in the passage, and he poked his head round the door.

"Come along, you jays!" he cried. "The saloon is now open. Those silly guys have mucked things up a bit, but I'm ready to cut hair, shave, or shampoo!"

Skinner and Todd and Dutton and Tom Brown walked into Fish's saloon, and gazed about them in some surprise.

"Now," said the Yankee, smiling pleasantly, "what can I do for you, Skinner? A nice hair-cut, or perhaps you would like to try a shave?"

Tom Brown and Alonzo Todd tittered.

"A shave sometimes does the face a lot of good. It keeps down the bumps and all that sort of thing," continued the Yankee. "Come on, you jay, squat down here and try a shave!"

"You—you—"

"Then try a hair-cut!" Old Quelch got very stuffy about your hair this morning. I only charge fourpence a time, and I'll cut it in any style you wish."

"A hair-cut's a hair-cut, isn't it? What blessed style do you think I want? I'm not a blessed Chinaman! Anyway, I'm not going to be first. Try Brown, or Todd, or Dutton. I think Dutton had

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better go first. He can't hear a blessed word!"

"Right, sir!" said Fish. "This way, Dutton!"

"Who is jolly well awaying?" snapped Dutton.

"This way, please!" howled Fish. "I guess I didn't say anything about awaying. You'd better get your ears seen to. Try an ear specialist for a change!"

"What are you talking about, you rotter!"

The Yankee Removite stared hard at the deaf junior, for Dutton had suddenly adopted a pugilistic attitude, and he squared up to the Greyfriars barber in a very threatening manner.

"Now, then, you silly guy!" cried Fish. "I guess I don't want any nonsense in my saloon!"

"I'm a baboon now, am I?"

"My saloon!" howled the Yankee.

"You think so, do you?" cried Dutton.

"Then you can jolly well take that!"

Tom Dutton's left shot out, and caught Fisher T. Fish a sharp blow on his long nose, and he went down on the study carpet with a bump.

"Yow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Tom Dutton danced excitedly around the unfortunate director of Fish Limited, who was holding his swollen nose in both hands, and making enough noise to attract half the Removite to the spot if they had been in the passages.

"Ow! Yow! You silly galoot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites.

"That'll teach the rotter to call me a baboon!" exclaimed Tom Dutton.

"I've never heard such cheek! A blessed Yankee talking to me like that!"

"Oh, Dutton, you howling jackass!"

laughed Tom Brown. "Fish never said anything about it at all!"

"Eh?"

"Sit down, for goodness' sake, old chap!" shouted Skinner. "Come on, Fishy, you idiot! It's no good wasting time making that row. If nobody is going to have a hair-cut, I'll try a shampoo."

"You can't do any damage at that!"

"Oh, my stars and stripes!" howled Fish, clambering up. "I wish to goodness they would lock that dangerous lunatic up in a blessed asylum! He's not safe to be about without a keeper, the silly guy! Just look at my nose!"

"Oh crumba! It's about twice the size!"

"The silly jabberwock! I—I guess I'll deal with him later; Come this way, Skinner!"

The Yankee junior conducted Harold Skinner into the chair placed in front of the cracked mirror, and Skinner sat down.

"What's that dirty bowl for?"

"I guess you put your face over that," replied Fish, throwing the towel round Skinner's neck and shoulders. "This here saloon is absolutely up-to-date, and the beauty of it all is that there's no blessed profiteering. Let me see now, you said a shampoo, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"That'll be tuppence, I guess."

"What?"

"Tuppence, please. No credit here, and money in advance!"

"Yes—you silly fattedid!" cried Skinner. "I'll pay you the blessed money when you're finished the job. Have you ever heard of anybody paying a barber in advance?"

"Nope! But I guess this place is up-to-date!"

Harold Skinner scowled, and drew out two pennies from his trousers-pocket, and flung the coins on to the table in front of him.

"The Magnet Library.—No. 607.

"There you are, you beastly grabber!" he growled.

"Right, sir!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I'll go right ahead now. Sit down, Brown and Todd, and tell that lopsided jay Dutton he can do the same. I'm not making anything more with him."

The Yankee Removite took a bottle off the table. It was one of the many he had borrowed from the Fifth Form dormitory, and one of the few which had survived the attack made upon the table by the indignant study-owners.

Fish took the cork out of the neck, and pressed Skinner's head over the enamelled basin in front of him.

"Look out, you ass!" howled Skinner.

"I don't want you to dislocate my neck!"

"I guess that'll be all right if you keep quiet and close your eyes."

The bottle in Fish's hand was inverted, and a stream of liquid spurted out and flowed down Skinner's greasy hair. Fish rubbed his bony fingers into the middle of it, and the next instant there was a wild shriek from Skinner.

"Yarcooh! What is it?"

"Hi! Look out!" howled Fish, as the bottle slipped out of his hand and the contents went flowing down Skinner's neck.

"Ow!"

Harold Skinner leapt up from the chair, shrieking like a madman, and holding his head frantically in both hands.

"Yow! He's poisoned me!" he yelled.

"Police! Help! The rotter's burning me to death!"

Tom Brown jumped up in alarm.

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"What have you done, you idiot?" he roared, catching Fish by the arm, "What's that stuff? Phew! My hat! It's ammonia!"

Fisher T. Fish gasped.

"Yow! Help!" groaned Skinner, swaying about the study. "I'm dying! Yow!"

"I—I—I—I guess—"

"It's full-strength ammonia for the bath!" gasped Tom Brown, looking at the label on the bottle. "You—your head, jing dunnit, it'll half burn his head off!"

"Take him up to the bath-room, Teddy!" cried Tom Brown. "Buck up! Put his head under the cold tap!"

Alonso Todd and Tom Dutton sprang to action, and caught the howling Skinner by both arms and dashed him out of the study, shrieking for all he was worth.

"You silly rotter!" cried Tom Brown. "You jolly well ought to be locked up on a desert island, and then I don't believe you'd be safe!"

"I guess—"

"Brrrrrrrr!"

"I guess—Hullo! Come right in Bolverover! No waiting! That silly guy Skinner lost his head, and—"

"Oh, you idiot!" roared Tom Brown. "I should think he jolly nearly did lose his head! I'm hanged if I'm going to risk anything here! Bolverover can do so if he likes!"

And Tom Brown, full of indignation, brushed past Percy Bolverover as the bully of the Remove entered the little study.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bolverover Takes the Plunge!

PERCY BOLSOVER came in, and scowled at Fisher T. Fish as the Yankee junior tied up the table containing the goods and chattels of his hairdressing saloon.

"What's up with that ass Skinner?" growled Bolverover.

"I guess—"

"What's he making all that row for? Can't you answer a straight question without all that rotten guessing?"

"Skinner's a silly guy!" replied Fish.

"The lopsided jay said he wanted a shampoo, and when I gave him one he made enough fuss to raise this blessed school to the ground!"

"Oh!"

"What can I do for you? I guess business is a bit quiet. Those galoots don't know a good thing when it's before them. They don't want to pay a bob for a hair-cut, and when I offer to cut their hair for fourpence a time they shy at that. They're a rotten, stingy lot!"

"What do you know about hair-cutting?" snapped Bolverover.

"Whole piles, I guess!"

"Where did you learn to cut hair?"

"I—I—I—I—"

"You don't know a blessed thing about it!" snapped the bully of the Remove. "And yet you have the cheek to ask the chaps to brass up fourpence a time whilst you learn the job on their nappers!"

Fisher T. Fish frowned.

"If you don't like it, I guess you can pay a bob and get it cut in the village! Queelch will be down on you like a load of bricks in the morning. And I guess he's right every time. Your hair hasn't been touched for months!"

"You—your cheeky Yank! Don't you talk to me like that, or I'll jolly well bump you! Will you cut my hair for tuppence?"

"Nope!"

"For threepence?"

"Nothing doing!"

Percy Bolverover scowled at the American junior wrathfully.

"Well, then, will you cut it properly



Bolsover held the unfortunate Yankee's head in chancery, and Fisher T. Fish yelled for help. "Look at me!" roared Bolsover, facing Harry Wharton & Co., who were thoroughly enjoying the scene. "Look at my hair!" (See Chapter 7.)

"If I pay you fourpence, you thieving rotter!"

"Yep! Of course I will! Money down in advance!"

The bully of the Remove pulled out a handful of coins and counted out four pennies, and threw the money on to the table.

"Right, sir," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I'll go ahead! Just take a chair right here, will you?"

Bolsover threw himself into the chair lately vacated by the shrieking Skinner, and Fish tucked the towel round the bully's collar.

"Any particular style?" remarked Fish, eyeing the bully's shaggy head with quite a professional air.

"Cut it properly!" snapped Bolsover. "That's all I want you to do, and that's what I've paid my money for!"

"Right, sir. We'll try one side first, and see how you like it!"

Fisher T. Fish ran his fingers through Bolsover's hair and then picked up a pair of scissors and a comb from the table.

"Go carefully with those blessed scissors!" snapped Bolsover.

"You keep quiet, and you won't know I'm at work, I guess!"

The comb was run through the hair, and then Fish made a cut at a tangled mass of hair, and Bolsover's locks commenced to fall to the floor of the study.

Bolsover was not a very pleasant-looking individual. He had a sort of fixed scowl on his features, and his hair was a strange, mousey colour, and taking it all round he was not a very prepossessing member of the Remove Form at Greyfriars. But that didn't matter to Fisher T. Fish. All was grist that came to the mill as far as he was concerned, and he set to work now in real earnest.

Bolsover could catch a glimpse now and again of his head in the little cracked mirror hung up opposite him, and he watched his flowing locks being chopped off in a very heroic manner indeed.

"Ow!" he cried suddenly. "What do you want to jab those beastly scissors into my head for?"

"That's all right, sir, I guess!"

Bolsover scowled harder than ever; but he did not pursue the matter, and so Fish plodded away on the right-hand side of his customer's shaggy head.

"I guess your hair is full of scurf, Bolsover!"

"Shut up!"

"And your hair is as dry as a tinder!"

"Get on with that beastly cutting! Ow! Look out!"

"Right, sir!"

Clip, clip, clip!

Hair fell down over the towel on Bolsover's shoulder in a steady stream, and Fish was beginning to get thoroughly warmed to his work, when Vernon-Smith strolled into the study, and stared with great interest at the operation.

"Hallo!" he cried. "How's the bizney getting on, Fishy?"

"I guess it's going strong," replied the Yankee junior, blowing a gust of wind down Bolsover's neck, and bringing forth a howl from the bully in consequence. Bolsover did not seem to appreciate this

hair, you don't come back into this study again whilst I'm at Greyfriars!"

"I guess it's my own study!" yelled Fisher T. Fish.

"You won't come back, all the same, till you promise to finish cutting my hair!" said Bolsover.

"I guess—"
"Oh rats!"

"Look here, Wharton, you jay! I guess I'm coming down to Courtfield with you guys! Just hold that galoot whilst I put these things back!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"
Fisher T. Fish started to pick up the scattered goods on the floor of the passage.

"He's not coming in here!" roared Bolsover. "Not until he's promised to finish the other half of my hair-cut!"

"I guess I'll do that when I come back!"

"I'll smash up this blessed study if you don't finish it now!" roared Bolsover. "I don't care a hang for you, Wharton! If you lay a hand on me I'll knock you down! Now, you rotten Yank, are you going to finish my hair-cut?"

"Nope! I guess I'm not!"

"Then I'll smash up the happy home!"

"You'll get outside, you dummy!" cried Harry Wharton. "This study belongs to Johnny Bull and Squiffy Field as well as Fish!"

"I don't care a hang!"

"Come on, you fellows!" cried Harry Wharton. "Let's chuck the boulder out before he does any more harm!"

The Removites responded with a will, and in a moment they had the bully of the Form squirming and roaring on the study carpet.

Fisher T. Fish seized the golden opportunity offered him, and he picked up his scattered goods with feverish haste, and dashed into the study and threw them on to the table again.

"Leggo!" roared Bolsover.

"Rats!"

"Ow! Let me get at that rotten Yankee! I'll—I'll serag him till he's blue! Hi! Look out!"

Bolsover was raised high in the air by the stalwart Removites, and the next moment he went whirling through the doorway, and met the passage floor with a crash.

Bump!
"Yaroop!"

"Come on, Fishy, you boulder!" cried Harry Wharton. "Lock the blessed door and make a run for it!"

Fisher T. Fish was ready, and the door of the end study was slammed to with a bang, and the key was turned and jerked out.

"Come on!" cried Bob Cherry, as Bolsover sat up, gasping. "Make a run for it!"

And Harry Wharton & Co. and the American junior disappeared down the passage before Bolsover had time to take the situation in.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Disappointing for Bunter.

GROAN!
"Hallo! I guess that's Bunter in some sort of trouble."

Fisher T. Fish had just returned from his visit to Courtfield, and he had entered the gates of Greyfriars, and heard a groan. And he stopped in astonishment. Fish had two enormous parcels wrapped up in brown paper, and a parcel was tucked under each of his arms.

Groan!

"Bunter, what's the matter?"

Groan!

The American junior, somewhat alarmed, hurried in the direction of the sound. Billy Bunter was leaning up against the trunk of one of the old elms, with his fat features twisted up into an expression of anguish. He blinked through his big spectacles at Fisher T. Fish as he approached. The Yankee Removite was surprised. Billy Bunter was a champion malingeringer, and few fellows ever believed in any of his statements, and if he had anything the matter, he exaggerated it so much that the most sympathetic fellow in the Remove was tired of sympathising with him. But the groans he was giving now sounded so realistic that Fish feared for the moment that there was something really the matter.

"What's the matter, Bunter?"

Groan!

"Bunter, you jay, I guess—"

A deeper groan!

"Are you ill?" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish.

"Not exactly ill!" gasped Bunter.

"I'm in trouble."

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"What's the trouble?"

"I—I can hardly explain. I've got something on my mind. I hope you'd be a little sympathetic, Fish, old chap. I'm in trouble, and I want bucking up."

The sharp American junior thought he understood.

"Oh, I guess you say you want bucking up, eh?"

"Ye-es."

"I suppose what you need is a feed—a jolly good feed!"

Bunter's face brightened up wonderfully, and he blinked very knowingly at the two great parcels Fisher T. Fish had tucked away under his arms.

"Yes, that's it!" he said eagerly. "A jolly good feed, you know. When a chap's down in the dumps there's nothing like a good feed to buck him up, in there, Fish, old man! I've heard you say that yourself before now."

"I guess I may have done."

"That's just how I am now—awfully down, and I need a good feed to buck me up," said Billy Bunter. "I'm sure you'll do the right thing, Fish, especially as you've just come back from Court-

field with those two whacking big parcels of grub."

Fisher T. Fish grinned.

"Surely I will!" he replied.

"Thank you!" moaned Bunter. "A really good feed is what I want. I should feel all right then. Oh, oh! I haven't a sou in the wide world at present, and I shall catch it hot and strong from old Quelchly in the morning!"

"Oh!"

"I can't raise a bob for a blessed hair-cut, you know; and on top of all this I've had bad news!"

"Bad news from home!" asked Fish suspiciously.

"Well, from one of my titled friends," said Bunter. "And I want cheering up. And a jolly good feed is the best way to cheer a fellow up, you know."

"I guess you're right!"

"I—I'm ready!" said Bunter. "I—I think I've got strength enough to walk to the tuck-shop."

"I guess you could raise enough strength for that. What would you fancy to eat, Bunter? Rabbit-pie, I guess, to begin with?"

"Yes, yes!"

"And then some pork chops?"

"Oh, ripping!"

"After that, I guess, a cake?"

"That would be splendid!"

"Then some jam-tarts—luppenny ones, and some cream-puffs?" Fisher T. Fish suggested.

Bunter's mouth watered.

"I say, Fish, old man, that's ripping of you!" he said.

"Not at all. You haven't got 'em yet. I guess you think that if you had all those things you'd be all right?"

"I'm sure of it!"

"Good! Then I guess I hope you'll get 'em!" said Fisher T. Fish sharply.

"I'm off, you guy! Jever get left!"

"Eh?"

"You silly jabberwock; you'd better raise a bob from some jay and go and get your hair cut in Courtfield. I guess old Quelchly will be down on you like a ton of bricks to-morrow morning if you haven't had it done. If you had any sense in your fat head you'd only spend fourpence, and let me do it for you!"

And Fisher T. Fish tucked the parcels more securely under his arms and strolled away. Billy Bunter blinked after him in amazement at first, and then in fury. He found strength to leave the tree he was leaning upon, and dashed after the Yankee junior as fast as his fat little legs could carry him.

"I say, you beastly Yank—" he bawled.

"Oh, scat, Bunter!"

"Look here, you rotten Yankee swindler—"

"Buzz off!" roared Fish.

"But what about that feed?"

"What feed?"

"The feed you've got in those two parcels, and that you're going to stand me in—"

Fisher T. Fish looked astonished.

"I guess I ain't standing you any feed, you jay!" he replied. "What put that idea into your head?"

"Why, you—you—you said—"

"Oh, my stars and stripes! You've got cobwebs on your imagination!"

"You said jam-tarts and cream-puffs and pork chops!" yelled Bunter.

"I guess I was asking you what you'd like!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Look here, you rotter!" shrieked Bunter. "Don't you try any of your beastly American ideas on me. It won't wash! You—you're jolly well going to stand me a feed now, or I'll know the reason why!"

Fisher T. Fish stopped, and a curious

expression came over his sharp face as a brilliant idea evidently struck him.

"Look here, Bunter, you guy! If you really want a feed I guess I'm your man!"

"Eh?"

"Come along up to the end study, and I guess we'll talk the matter over. You can understand from the word 'Go' that you don't get grub for nix. I ain't that sort of guy!"

"Why, what do you mean?"

"You'll have to jolly well earn it! Follow me, you jay!"

Billy Bunter followed on the heels of the American junior as Fisher T. Fish stepped off at a brisk pace in the direction of the school building.

"Shall I help you to carry one of those parcels, Fishy?"

"Nope!"

"I'll take one if you like, old man. I'm feeling stronger now."

"I guess you'll break it, you jay!"

"Oh, no, I won't!" replied Billy Bunter. "I'm always jolly careful when I carry parcels of tuck, you know. It sounds as though you've got plenty of jam-puffs there, if you're so jolly afraid they'll get broken."

"Ring off, and follow me!"

The two entered the school building, and hurried along to the Remove passage. Fish stopped outside Study No. 14.

"I guess that door's locked," he remarked. "Just you take these parcels whilst I get the key out of my pocket."

Billy Bunter obliged with alacrity, and he handled the parcels with tremendous care as the American junior transferred them over to his charge.

"I've got 'em, Fish, old chap! Go ahead!"

"Don't you drop them, you galoot!"

"No fear, Fishy! My hat, what a ripping lot of grub there is! You must have had a top-hole remittance, old man!"

Fisher T. Fish grinned as he turned the key in the lock, and flung the study door open.

Billy Bunter rolled in, and Fish swept

aside the remains of his borrowed toilet accessories, and which now littered the table in a very jumbled condition after Bolsover's recent attack on them.

"Look out how you put that thing down, you jay!" cried Fish. "It'll break as easy as water rolls off a duck's back. Hi! Look out, you jay! You'll break her nose off!"

Billy Bunter gasped in amazement at Fish's remark.

"A—no!"

"Yep!" snapped Fish. "And you'll have her ears off as well if you ain't jolly careful!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter. "H-h-have you—you been murdering somebody?"

"You silly jay!"

Billy Bunter's face had gone quite white, and he stepped back from the two mysterious brown-paper parcels as though the wrappings concealed some horrible secret.

"Oh, crumbs! I'm off!" gurgled the fat Removeite. "I always did think you'd end up by doing something like that!"

"You burbling jabberwock!" cried Fish. "What's the matter with you? I guess I thought you said you wanted something to eat?"

"So I do, you rotter, and I thought you had the grub in these parcels. I believe you're trying to conceal some horrible crime, you Yankee rotter!"

"I guess you're right off the map, Bunter."

"Well, why don't you open the beastly things, then? I can tell you I'm not jolly well going to waste my time up here if there isn't any grub attached to it!"

"I'll stand you a feed, I guess, if you'll undertake to help me, Bunter, you guy!"

"Are you trying to conceal the crime?"

whispered Bunter hoarsely. "You won't bribe me with that, you bounder! People get hanged for that!"

Fisher T. Fish untied the string, and tore the brown paper from one of the parcels, and Billy Bunter gave a cry of surprise as the contents stood revealed.

"My hat!" he gasped. "A blessed wax model of a woman's head!"

"Ain't that simply ripping?" said Fish. "I guess I've hired this for my hair-dressing saloon."

"You—your rotten swindler!" howled Bunter, as Fish untied the other parcel, and a bundle of old wigs tumbled out on to the study table. "You jolly well told me that you were going to stand me a feed. Do you think I'm going to eat your blessed wigs?"

"Nope! I guess I'll give you a feed, Bunter, you jay, if you'll help me now. And I might even allocate you a percentage of the profits in this saloon."

"What have I got to do?"

"There's plenty of grub in the cupboard," explained Fish. "I guess I only want you to eat it."

Billy Bunter's eyes glistened, and a smile spread over his fat features as Fish explained things. The Owl of the Remove had visions now of a feed, and this was always certain to make Bunter attentive.

"Shall we shove the stuff on to the table, Fish, old chap?"

"Yep! I guess those jays, Bull and Field, won't mind very much; but you ain't going to get it for nix, mind you."

"Well, what have I got to do, you idiot?" cried Bunter. "Why don't you buck up and say!"

"I guess you've only got to put one of these wigs on whilst I learn how to make up a lady's coiffure from this wax model."

Billy Bunter blinked.

"Is that all you want me to do?"

"Yep! I guess that's all, and you can eat away whilst I get moving on the wig. Just shove this one on for a start, Bunter. It's nice and long, and I guess I can make it up all right. I've got plenty of hairpins."

"What's the good of learning this sort of work, you idiot? There aren't any ladies in the school who are likely to come to you to get their hairs done."

"Nope! I guess you're right, Bunter. But a barber has to learn the trade from A to Z. At least, that's what it means in the States. Here you are, you jay, shove this old wig on."

Billy Bunter took the golden-haired wig from the Yankee junior, and he drew it over his fat skull, and the flowing locks fell about his shoulders and down his back as far as his fat waist—or, rather, the spot where Bunter's waist should have been.

"Gee-whiz!" exclaimed the Yankee Removeite. "That's fine, Bunter! I guess it suits your style of beauty!"

"But what about the grub?"

"Come on, you guy, the grub's in this cupboard. I'll help you to put it out on to the table."

Fisher T. Fish opened the study cupboard and commenced to hand the things out to the Owl of the Remove.

"Half a steak-and-kidney pie," said Fish. "The gravy is first-class."

"Good!"

"Bread and marg, and a pot of jam."

"Ripping!"

"Cake."

"Oh, my hat!" said Bunter, throwing the things on to the table as fast as Fish handed them out.

"Tin of sardines, opened last week," continued Fish. "I guess those galoots said they're rotten; but they're only a bit high."

Billy Bunter sniffed at the tin.

"Oh, my hat!" he gasped. "These have some life, Fishy! Shove 'em back, old man!"

"Right! Here's some potted meat and some biscuits and a bottle of pop."

"Good!"

"That's the lot," said Fishy, "except—"

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ing for a bit of pork-pie. I guess that's been here nearly all the term. I shouldn't have that, Bunter."

The fat junior shook his head.

"Not me, you idiot," he remarked. "I'm not jolly well going to poison myself. Hang this beastly wig; it's all over the place!"

"Keep the ends out of the jam, you guy!"

"Right-ho, Fishy!" said Bunter, drawing up a chair for himself. "I'll go ahead with this grub. I feel beastly faint, and you can work on my wig whilst I'm eating, can't you?"

"I guess that's all right," replied Fish, standing the wax model of the head and shoulders of the beautiful lady on the corner of the table. "I'm going to do your hair like this one. Ain't she pretty?"

"Mmmmmmm!" went Billy Bunter, opening the attack on the food in real earnest. He munched away, and gazed at the head and shoulders of the lovely lady standing on the study table. The lady's cheeks were a gorgeous rosy tinge, and her waxen nose was a beautiful shape, and her big black eyelashes made her eyes look wondrous indeed. Fish gazed at the model, and then at the wig on Bunter's fat skull, whilst the fat junior champed merrily away:

"I guess I'll make a start," said Fish, gathering the golden locks of Bunter's wig up in his long fingers.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Mr. Prout's Discovery!

"DON'T wag your head about like that, you jay!"

Munch, munch, munch!
Billy Bunter munched away at the pie in great style, and quite ignored the schoolboy barber as he toiled away on the flaxen wig. Large masses of the golden locks were rolled up and unrolled, and Fish found it very hard to imitate the artistic finish of the hair adorning the beautiful waxen model standing on the study table.

"I guess that's really beautiful, Bunter," said Fish. "And I can see it's not going to be a simple matter to copy it."

"Don't be all night over it!"

"You keep quiet, Bunter. I guess you've got enough grub there to keep you busy for some time."

"This blessed wig makes me hot!"

"Keep still, you silly guy! How the stars and stripes do you think I can do the hair properly if you talk so much? I guess—"

Thump!

There was a loud knock on the study door, and the handle turned, and Harry Wharton & Co. burst into the room.

The Removites stopped and gazed at the amazing sight in astonishment.

"My only Aunt Semelina!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Get outside, you jaye!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" cried Bob Cherry. "What's the blessed Yank up to now? My hat! Look at Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You bouncers can get out!" growled Bunter, pausing between his mouthfuls for a moment. "Fish is going to make me a partner in this hairdressing stunt of his, and we don't want you bouncers in here."

"I guess Moses let me have these things on hire all right, Wharton," said Fish. "The silly galoot wouldn't do it for a long time; but I talked him round at last, and he let me have that model and some wigs."

"What on earth do you want that blessed lady for? I thought you were going to cut our hairs for us at fourpence a time!"

"So I am," replied the Yankee junior. "I guess there'll be a good rush here this evening. Old Quelchey will be fairly on the war-path to-morrow."

"We've just been round to all the barbers, and they're all charging a bob a time," said Wharton.

"Well, I guess it's cheap at fourpence a time," remarked Fish, commencing to work again on the golden locks adorning Bunter's head. "Now, then, keep your noodle still, Bunter, you galoot!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites.

Bunter certainly did look most extraordinary. The enormous golden wig on his head made him look a ludicrous picture, and what added to the absurdity of the spectacle was the fact that the fat junior looked so remarkably serious as he attacked the pile of tuck in front of him.

"I guess the light's getting a bit bad for good work," said Fish. "You'll have to come over to the window, Bunter, and I'll fix the model there. I shall be able to see what I'm doing there."

"Ha, ha, ha! I think we'll leave these dummies to it!" laughed Harry Wharton. "Good-bye, Bunter!"

But Billy Bunter only glared.

"Good-bye, Fishy, old bean! We'll come back when you've resumed hair-cutting. Ladies' golden wigs don't attract us, do they, chaps?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the Removites, as they trooped out of the little study.

"Come on, Bunter!" said Fish, locking the door. "Drag the blessed table over to the window, and then I can see what I'm doing."

Billy Bunter rolled out of his chair, and whatever curls Fish had fixed up came uncurled, and the golden hair fell about the fat Removite's fat shoulders in great masses. Fisher T. Fish gave the table a push, and nearly sent the beautiful model flying. Bunter grabbed it in the nick of time, and the table was pushed against the big open window, and the model was replaced close to Bunter's plate as soon as the fat Removite had sat down again.

"I guess that's better!" said Fish.

"Now I can get on with it."

"I wish you'd buck up!" mumbled Bunter, opening a fresh attack on Johnny Bull's currant cake. "There's a beastly draught blowing down my neck from this blessed window!"

Now, just about the time the American junior dragged the table across the study, and seated Bunter at it right up against the open window, Mr. Paul Pontifex Prout, the portly Form-master of the Fifth, left his study in order to take a stroll round the quad.

Mr. Prout had made a practice of this little exercise for many years at Greyfriars School, and just before dusk at eventide one could absolutely reckon upon seeing Mr. Prout's portly form adorning the grounds round the old school. He appeared as regularly as clockwork, and if any junior desired to avoid the Fifth Form-master that junior always kept clear of the quadrangle at this hour.

The Fifth Form-master was ambling gently along the path under the elms, his hands held behind his back, and a thoughtful expression on his face.

In his young days Mr. Prout had hunted the festive grizzly bear in his native lair in the Rockies. In those days the Fifth Form-master had been a deadly shot with the rifle—so Mr. Prout loved to relate to anybody who was kind enough to listen to his old anecdotes.

The thoughts of those glorious old days made Mr. Prout happy and contented, and he loved to dwell upon them when he took his evening constitutional in the quadrangle of the old school.

Those glorious days became even more glorious as the years rolled by, for as time went by Mr. Prout's great hunting expeditions grew more heroic and startling as his old exploits were seen through the mist of time.

And in those old days Mr. Prout had not entirely confined himself to duels with the grizzly bears. He had had his little romances with beautiful heroines; and at this moment the Fifth Form-master's mind was dwelling upon the lovely face he had once upon a time looked upon and had instantly lost his heart.

Mr. Prout sighed as he majestically paced up and down the shadowy path between rows of dark trees, and he had reached a very poetical stage in his reflections when he chanced to look up at the grey old towers of the school he loved.

The next moment the Fifth Form-master uttered a gasp, and he stopped in his stride with a sudden jerk.

"Good heavens! What—on—earth—does—that—mean?"

Mr. Prout stared up at an open window belonging to that portion of the school allotted to the junior Forms, and what he saw completely flabbergasted him.

"Why, bless my soul! There—there's a boy up there combing a lady's hair!"

Mr. Prout could not believe his eyes. He took his gold-rimmed pince-nez from his nose and wiped the glasses with his silk handkerchief, and then he put the glasses on again, and stared at the amazing sight again.

"Why, goodness me!" gasped Mr. Prout. "There appear to be two ladies there!"

The Fifth Form-master looked about him wildly, and suddenly caught a glimpse of Gosling, the school porter, sending his way across the quadrangle in the direction of the woodshed.

Mr. Prout didn't know what to do. Such a scene had never been known in the whole history of Greyfriars. For a junior boy to have two ladies in his study at this hour—why, it was beyond his comprehension! Mr. Prout lost his head completely. He must get somebody else to look and find out whether his eyes had deceived him!

"Gosling!"

The old porter stopped, and looked round in the dusk of the evening.

"O's that?" he said sourly.

"Gosling! Come here at once, Gosling, if you please!"

Mr. Prout was firm but polite, and the old porter walked towards the trees, and saw the Fifth Form-master beckoning to him in a very excited manner.

"Gosling! Come here, please!"

"Wot's all the 'urry for, Mr. Prout?"

"Gosling, I want you to see something. It is a most extraordinary thing, and I cannot properly understand it."

Gosling blinked up at Mr. Prout in a very knowing manner. The old school porter concluded that the Fifth Form-master had been drinking something much too strong for him. Gosling had often done the same. In fact, Gosling was very familiar with the results to be obtained when insufficient water had been mixed with the gin, and Gosling thought he understood the situation now. It puzzled him greatly, nevertheless, for Mr. Prout was known to be a very abstemious man indeed. In fact, Gosling had always understood Mr. Prout to be a total abstainer.

"Orl right, Mister Prout!" said Gosling considerably. "Don't get hexcited! Wot you oughter do was to put your 'ead under the cold-water tap for a few minutes."

"Gosling! What do you mean to infer, you scoundrel?"

"Let me 'old yer arm, Mister Prout, and we'll 'ave a quiet little walk round the grounds together!"

Prout stared at the school porter, and then up at the window. The remarkable scene was still to be observed, and the Fifth Form-master grasped Gosling by the arm, and pointed his hand out excitedly in the direction of the open window.

"Look!" cried Mr. Prout. "Look at that! A boy with two ladies in his study, and that boy attending to the toilet of one of—of those women!"

Gosling looked, and uttered a gasp.

"My 'at! Wot's it mean?"

"Can't you see, man? A boy breaking the strictest rule in the school management! A woman in his study, and having her hair done by—one of the boys!"

"My here!"

"Look—look! He's combing it out now!"

"Praps 'e's gorn mad!" gasped Gosling.

"Good heavens! What shall we do? These are extraordinary times we live in, Gosling. Look, there's Mr. Quelch and Wingate just coming in! Run, Gosling! Fetch them here at once! We must get more witnesses in this very remarkable case!"

"Right, Mister Prout!"

Gosling set off towards Mr. Quelch and Wingate, the captain of the school. They had evidently just returned from a walk, and they stopped and turned as Gosling ambled up to them.

"Mister Quelch, sir!" said Gosling excitedly. "Mister Prout 'e wants yer quickly, sir. My word, wot I see is this 'ere. I've never 'eard the likes of it!"

"What's that?"

"Quick, this way—you won't come to no harm!"

"What's up, Gosling?" said Wingate sharply. "Don't talk that sort of rot to Mr. Quelch. Here, where on earth are you off to?"

"Come along 'ere!" cried Gosling, ambled towards the row of elms where he had left Mr. Prout.

"We'd better go," muttered Mr. Quelch. "It seems to me that Gosling has been drinking again. Hallo! That's Mr. Prout's voice calling us!"

Mr. Quelch and Wingate hastened towards Mr. Prout, who was calling out to them to hurry. They reached the Fifth Form-master's side, puffing and blowing.

"What on earth is the matter, my dear Prout?" said Mr. Quelch.

"Look, Quelch!" replied the Fifth Form-master, pointing up to the window again. "Look, my dear fellow! It's a most remarkable thing!"

Mr. Quelch and Wingate followed the direction of Mr. Prout's outstretched arm, and the next moment they gave a cry of alarm.

"Goodness me!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Great Scott!" gasped Wingate.

"A couple of ladies in a boy's study!" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "What do you think of that, my dear Quelch?"

"Why—why, bless me, he appears to be doing the hair of one of the—the women!"

"Exactly!"

"The young hump must 'ave lost 'is reason, 'is should dare to suggest!" said Gosling. "The 'Ead will hepel him for that, and no hexcuses, neither!"

"Look! He's doing it up in rolls!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"My hat!" said Wingate excitedly. "Shall I go up to the study, sir? That's one of the rooms in the Remove Form passage, by the look of it."

"Bless me!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "A

study belonging to a boy in my Form! Goodness me! My dear Prout, tell me what you advise? Quickly, my dear Prout!"

"We must go up at once," replied Mr. Prout solemnly. "We—we must deal with the ladies first, and see that they are escorted away from Greyfriars immediately; and then—then we will deal with the young rascal who has had the audacity to invite them into his study!"

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Last of the Schoolboy Barber!

"SHALL I come, Mr. Quelch?"

"Yes, Wingate, you must come by all means. As captain of the school, I think that it is essential for you to be present. What do you think, my dear Prout?"

"Yes, Wingate must come, and also Gosling."

"Yes, Mr. Prout."

"You will bring up the rear, Gosling," said Mr. Prout, just as though he was in command of a battalion, and a regular hand-to-hand fight was to take place at any moment.

"Is it 'eavy, sir?"

Mr. Prout stared at Gosling in surprise.

"I don't understand you, man! What do you mean by asking me whether it is heavy?"

"You're to follow up behind us, Gosling," explained Wingate, as a puzzled expression settled down on the old porter's countenance. "Come on, sir! We're all ready. Lead on!"

"Very well, Wingate," said Mr. Prout.

"Follow me; and you must understand, all of you, that this is a situation which demands a great deal of tact. I remember on one occasion, whilst hunting the grizzly bear—a particularly ferocious specimen—in the Rockies, I—"

"Yes, yes, my dear Prout!" said Mr. Quelch, with a cough. "I think that it would be advisable to defer your anecdote for later on. I hardly think the present occasion warrants any delay. You must understand my agitation, considering that dreadful scene is being enacted in one of the studies belonging to a boy in my Form. The Remove Form, sir!"

"Very well, my dear Quelch, I will finish that story later on. Follow me, all of you! I merely wished to emphasize the importance of tact when dealing with ladies!"

"Ahem!" added Mr. Quelch.

And the party hurried across the quad. It was beginning to get quite dark now; but the little party attracted attention, and by the time it arrived outside the door of the end study it had been added to considerably. Gerald Loder of the Sixth had joined up, and enticed Wingate to explain the party's mission. Horace Coker and George Potter of the Fifth were there, and Temple, Dabney, and Fry of the Upper Fourth followed at a respectable distance behind, and then again behind them Harry Wharton & Co. of the Remove looked on with great interest. They did not know what there was doing; but the fact of Mr. Quelch, the Form-master, and Mr. Prout, of the Fifth, being present, and looking very severe into the bargain, portended an event of some considerable importance.

"Hush!" said Mr. Prout, very mysteriously, as he tried the door of Study No. 14 and found it locked. "This is the

one. Keep quite quiet, if you please. I am going to knock."

Tap!

Mr. Prout rapped loudly, and Fisher T. Fish's voice was heard quite plainly from the interior of the study.

"Hallo! I guess you can't come in!"

Tap, tap!

"Sheer off, you silly galoot! If you want your blessed hair cut you'll have to wait, I guess!"

Mr. Prout gave a violent start, and he exchanged a glance with Mr. Quelch.

"Try again, my dear Prout," said the Remove Form-master.

Tap, tap, tap!

"You silly, lop-sided jay, will you shut up making that blessed noise! I'm busy just now! I guess I'll cut your hair later on!"

"Hi said the boy 'ad gorn mad!" gasped Gosling, going quite white. "And so 'e 'as! 'E thinks we want our 'airs cut. Oh, my heye!"

"You must keep cool, Gosling!" snapped Mr. Prout. "There is nothing to fear whilst I am here! I will try again!"

Tap, tap, tap, tap!

The Fifth Form-master rapped his knuckles violently on the study door, and the noise could be heard all the way down the Remove Form passage.

"Clear off!" shouted Fish from within.

"I guess you're a silly, lop-sided galoot if you jolly well can't understand plain English!"

"It's Fish!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Fish!" cried Mr. Prout.

"Oh, my stars and stripes!" exclaimed the Yankee junior. "I guess I'm sorry, Mr. Prout. Is that you, sir?"

"It is!" replied Mr. Prout sternly.

"And I might tell you that I have seen everything!"

"Eh?"

"I have seen everything, and you will be dealt with most severely, Fish. I intend to show the proper respect due to ladies, however, and the—two ladies need fear nothing."

"What, sir?" cried Fish. The tone of his voice clearly showed he was exceedingly puzzled by the Fifth Form-master's remarks.

"They need fear nothing whatever, my boy," replied Mr. Prout. "They will, however, be instantly escorted from the precincts of the school buildings. Otherwise nothing whatever will be said to them, excepting, perhaps, a few remarks pointing out to them that ladies are not permitted in the studies!"

"Is that really you, Mr. Prout, or is it some jay playing a trick?" cried Fisher T. Fish.

There was a titter from the little group standing round the study door, and Mr. Prout glared angrily.

"Fish!"

"Yep, sir!"

"Whom have you in there, boy?"

"Bunter, sir, I guess!"

"Fish, you are prevaricating! I distinctly saw two ladies at your study window. You will open this door instantly!"

"Surely, sir!"

Fish could be heard stepping across the study, and the next moment the key was turned in the lock and the door was flung open.

Mr. Prout and Mr. Quelch peered in, and the group of boys behind them craned their necks forward in order to get a better view. Billy Bunter rose from the chair, and blinked across at the two Form-masters standing in the doorway.

"Dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Prout.

"Fish! Bunter! Why, what on earth are you wearing, Bunter? And what is that strange thing on the table?"

"I guess that's my model, sir," replied Fish. "We ain't going to have any tricks with the profs, Mr. Prout. This is the Fisher T. Fish Hairdressing Salon. Hair-cuts and shaves at fair prices!"

"Goodness me!"

"I guess I'm going to make wigs when I've had some practice. What do you think of Bunter, sir?" And Fish pointed across the study at the fat Removite. Bunter shifted on his feet uneasily. He was still wearing the enormous golden wig on which the Yankee junior had been working for a considerable time. Fish had endeavoured to copy the glorious effect on the hair adorning the wax model, but had failed miserably, and Bunter felt quite conscious of his appalling appearance as the two masters stood gazing at him.

Mr. Quelch's face suddenly became wreathed in smiles. Smiles which he made every effort to subdue, but which refused to disperse, and broadened and broadened until he gradually shook with concealed mirth.

Mr. Prout looked at him, and from him to Fish, and from Fish to Bunter, and then to the wax model; and then Mr. Prout thawed, and he gave a spluttering, hearty laugh, which rang along the Remove passage, and filled the end study with its peals.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What's the joke, sir?" cried Fish.

"Ho, ho, ho!"

"I guess you've got me thinking, Mr. Prout!"

"Dear me! Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the crowd of seniors and juniors.

"This ain't a joke!" cried Fish. "If we don't get our hairs cut we've been threatened with punishment, I guess!"

"Ha, ha!" laughed Mr. Quelch.

"Fish, I think I can see through it all now, my boy!"

"Ho, ho, ho!" roared Mr. Prout, shaking all over.

"It's all right, Fish, we've been labouring under a misapprehension. We were under the mistaken impression that Bunter and your model were two very live young ladies, and we—we owe you an apology."

"I guess—"

"I can see everything now," continued Mr. Quelch. "You—you were endeavouring to perform a very laudable action, I can see that perfectly well! You were going to cut your Form-fellows' hairs to save them becoming victims of the profs! It was very noble of you, Fish, and this afternoon I took the trouble to go round to all the local hairdressers, and I find that they are indeed charging one shilling for a hair-cut. It is indeed a scandal, and it is profiteering with a vengeance. Any punishments I happened to inflict in class this morning are cancelled forthwith, and I intend to arrange for a man to come to the school to cut hair in future. Dr. Locke will see to that. It will defeat these profs."

"Hurrah!" roared Harry Wharton & Co., who had squeezed their way forward, and had heard their Form-master's very generous apology.

"Where on earth did you get all that paraphernalia from, Fish?" asked Mr. Quelch, pointing to the pile of brushes and combs and razors, and bottles the American junior had borrowed from the Fifth Form dormitory.

"I think I know where they came from, sir," said Wingate. "Half the Fifth Form have been complaining to me this afternoon that somebody has raided their dormitory!"

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Well, well," he said, after a pause. "Just gather the things up now, Wingate, and see that they are returned to their proper owners. I think the matter might rest there. It seems that we are all liable to make mistakes. Come along, Mr. Prout, we will retire from the scene!"

The Fifth Form-master wiped his streaming eyes with his silk handkerchief, and then followed Mr. Quelch as he strode away.

The Sixth-Formers and Fifth-Formers, and the members of the Upper Fourth gradually dispersed. It was beneath their dignity to be seen taking an interest in scenes in the Remove Form passage. Gossiping, the school porter, went away bumbling; and Harry Wharton & Co. crowded into the end study until there was hardly room to turn round.

"Jolly good, Fishy!" cried Harry

Wharton. "You're a rotten hairdresser; but you got us off our punishment, anyway!"

"Hear, hear!" roared the Removites. "Three cheers for Fishy!" cried Harry Wharton. "Hip, hip—"

"Hurrah!"

"Hip, hip—"

"Hurrah!"

"Hip, hip—"

"Hurrah!"

And Fisher Tarleton Fish bloomed crimson with satisfaction. His stunts seldom "came off," but it seemed that at last he had scored a winner as The Schoolboy Barber!

THE END.

(Don't miss "THE SECRET OF THE WIRES!" — next Monday's Grand Long Complete Story of Greyfriars School — by FRANK RICHARDS.)

The Editor's Chat.

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is the book to which I refer, and it will have a very special appeal to readers of the Companion Papers. That is why I am asking you to take particular notice. There is certain to be a very great demand for the Annual directly it appears in the bookshops—which will be on October 15th—and I earnestly recommend you to place an order immediately if you want to make sure of your copy.

THE CONTENTS.

Well, when I think of attempting to give you a full description of the contents of this wonderful book, I am faced with an almost impossible task; in fact, it is impossible in the limited space at my disposal.

If I had about half the *MOUSE* in which to give you an account of all the splendid things in the Annual, I should not mind making an attempt at it. As it is, I will just mention the most outstanding features. First and foremost, as far as readers of the Companion Papers are concerned, are

FOUR GRAND LONG SCHOOL STORIES!

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THE "GREYFRIARS' HERALD"

is another great production that will shortly be obtainable. It makes its reappearance on October 20th, and No. 1 will create a new record in the way of school journals for boys and girls.

But again I must press upon you the necessity for ordering early. The "Greyfriars Herald" is being talked of everywhere, and there is going to be an unusually heavy demand for it. Therefore, give your messenger definite instructions to save a copy for you on October 20th.

TUCK HAMPER.

are going to be given away again as prizes in a splendid competition, of which particulars are given in the first number. In the old days this was the most popular feature that had ever been included in a school journal, and judging by the letters I have received on the subject, it is going to be no again.

DON'T FORGET THE DATE—
OCTOBER 20th.

GOGGS, THE GRAMMARIAN.

OUR MAGNIFICENT SERIAL STORY.

By RICHARD RANDOLPH.

SYNOPSIS.

Johnny Goggs comes to Ryecliffe Grammar School from Frankingham with his chums Trickett, Blount, and Waters.

Goggs is a jolly-lark expert, and a clever impersonator, and the organizer of brilliant larks. He leads an expedition of Grammarians to St. Jim's, and accomplishes one of the most daring night raids ever perpetrated.

Gerald Cutts of St. Jim's falls foul of Bingle, the hunchback, and after a struggle, in which Cutts is wounded, Bingle picks a quarrel with Goggs.

Bingle is completely defeated, and Cutts loses a big bet. Goggs accepts Bingle's challenge to a return fight.

Sulge, Larking, and Cutts kidnap Goggs during the night before the day of the fight. Consequently, he fails to appear at the appointed place in the wood. At the last minute Blount is handed a letter in Goggs' handwriting, saying that he is not coming. Bingle fights bravely, and defeats him. Goggs' three chums and a party of St. Jim's juniors remain behind afterwards to discuss the disappearance of Goggs, which Levison describes as "jolly lark."

(Now read on.)

A Plan.

"I KNOW the hotel he'd have gone to," said Trickett. "We can have there."

"On the whole," drawled Cardew, "it appears to be taken for granted that the letter was faked. Who's got the thing? An has anyone a sample of Goggs' authentic hand? We might make something out of those two things. But I'm pretty sure that 'Non est inventus' will be the answer from the hotel, and as there isn't any maiden aunt we can't well get an answer from her."

The letter was produced, and Bags found one written to him by Goggs during the last holidays, which had somehow been kept in his pocket-book.

They were handed over to Levison. He gave a wry grin as he took them, for he could not help recalling the time when he had used his talent for forgery—to put it bluntly—to wrongfoot rascals. But he began at once to give them critical examination.

"But who could have done it?" asked Gordon Gay.

"Sulge," snapped Wagtail.

"I say, you know," said Cutts, "you can't possibly—"

"I can, then? I know Sulge, and you don't. He's been hanging round Goggles lately. Didn't I say that he would do Johnny down if Johnny didn't watch out, you fellows?"

"Yes, I do remember something like that," admitted Bags.

"But if Sulge wrote that letter, what's become of Goggles?" asked Harry Woodton.

"And why did Sulge write it?" said his brother.

"That's what we've got to find out," Bags said.

"Sulge and Larking weren't at the fight," said Frank Monk.

"Carpenter was, though," Trickett said.

"Oh, Carpenter was, wouldn't it be with them for a heavenly dodge like this?" Gordon Gay said.

"He might know something about it, though," remarked Grundy, speaking as if his mouth were full of plums. "It was awfully inside from the impact of Bingle's fists and his own teeth."

Levison looked up.

"It's a clever forgery, but it's a forgery," he said slowly. "I don't say I could have done it better myself, but then are points in it that give it away."

"If that letter was forged, our Johnny's been kidnapped, and I'll bet he isn't far from here!" said Bags, in excitement. "I'm not going home till he's found."

"Not I," said Trickett.

"Not likely," chimed in Wagtail.

"We're all in this, I think," Clifton Dore said. "We'd better arrange what's to be done about quarters and so on. It may be a long time before we can find him."

"My hat! I've got it!" cried Gordon Gay. "Let's all camp out together on the moor or in the woods. There are plenty of tents at our school, and there won't be any difficulty about lagging them. Two or three of us can go to the post-office and send off the wires, and the rest can start to get things under way. Once we've made a start, most of us can go off searching, can't we?"

"It was quite a good scheme, and all approved. Bags and Wagtail went to the village, and the rest dispersed to meet a little later at the Grammar School."

Starting on it!

IN the quad at the Grammar School Gordon Gay and Frank Monk ran across Carpenter.

Very few fellows were left about the place now, and they were surprised to see him. He had not been at the fight.

"Hallo, Carpenter," said Gay. "Aren't you going home these holidays?"

"Yes, of course I am!" answered Carpenter moodily. "I'm going by the next train; but, I say, have you fellows seen Larking?"

"Now that I come to think of it, neither Larking nor Sulge was at the fight," said Monk.

"Oh, the fight rascals off, then? Did Goggs turn up after all?" asked Carpenter eagerly.

"No, Goggs didn't turn up. Grundy found Bingle, and was licked, of course, replied Gay, watching Carpenter's face narrowly.

"I say, though, does anybody know where Goggs is?" faltered Larking's claim.

"Nobody. There was a letter which said that he had gone by an early train to the house of a maiden aunt, but—"

"Well, if he says he went I suppose he did?" broke in Carpenter.

As it happens, he hasn't a maiden aunt, and we don't believe that the letter was written by him at all, said Monk deliberately.

Just then, however, a group up, his friend snatching the momentary lull to follow.

"You aren't coming, are you, Carpenter?" said Trickett, looking at him with a keen, keen look, with your hand about your hand, he said.

"You're lying!" snapped Carpenter. "Those two haven't been so sickling before for days past."

"Oh, I'm lying, am I?" retorted Carter, with an ugly grin. "Well, all I'm going to tell you is that I've seen Lark and Sulge with their hands very close together several times lately. It's always been when you were safely out of the way, though—he, he, he, looks as if Lark was playing some deep game with you—be, be."

Carpenter made a furious dash at him. But Gay seized Carpenter.

"He isn't worth it," Gordon Gay said. "Kick him, Frank!"

But before Frank Monk could use his hand Carter had bolted.

"Let me go!" panted Carpenter.

"I'll let you go now," replied Gay, "after Carter twenty yards short when there's a good thing for his blood and he's pretty safe. Not that I should object to your handling him, dear boy. But he really isn't worth it."

"Look here, you fellow, know something?" Carpenter said. "What did you mean about Goggs?"

"Tell us first what your anxiety about Larking is?" suggested Monk.

"Think I'm going to look for a chum!" snapped Carpenter.

All this was best in his spoke in those words. Weak as water in most respects, Carpenter was strong in loyalty.

Gay and Monk saw that, and they took measures accordingly. Ayton, who had only known those two in their ordinary mood could hardly have recognized them now.

"Carpenter," said Gay, in his gravest tones, "I rather fancy you're going to a place where you're going to be chosen for all whether you're going to be chosen or not stand in with Larking. It may mean a bit better for you, but you and he are two very different chums. But that's the way of it."

"I don't understand what you mean," replied Carpenter dully.

Then Frank Monk spoke.

"I don't know why you want to see Larking so particularly," he said. "But you and he and Sulge all belong to the same dormitory as Goggs; and we're jolly sure that something has happened to Goggs. We can't credit his keeping away from the fight of his own free will."

Carpenter trembled, and his face went white as the words came.

"I—"

"But what about that letter?" he said.

"Goggs didn't write it; we are certain of that," Gay replied.

"Larking didn't—I swear he didn't! He would never have done a thing like that!"

"Sulge did. That's what we believe, but Larking must surely have known of it," Monk said.

Carpenter passed a wavering hand over his forehead, on which stood great beads of perspiration.

"Larking gave me his word of honour that he wasn't out with Sulge that night," he said. "They were both out, but they weren't out together."

(There will be another splendid long instalment of this grand school story in next Monday's issue of the MAGNET. Order your copy in advance.)



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