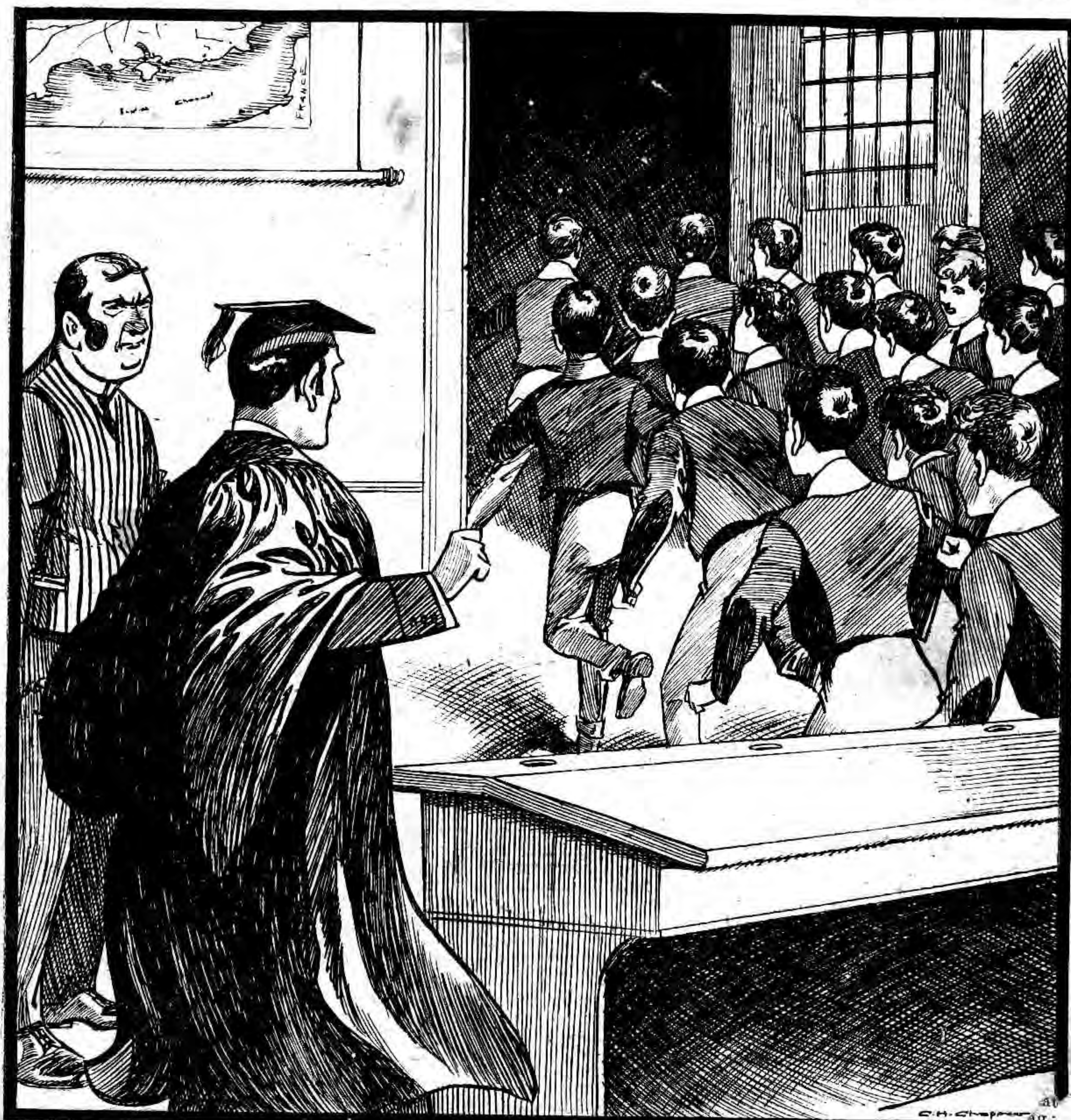
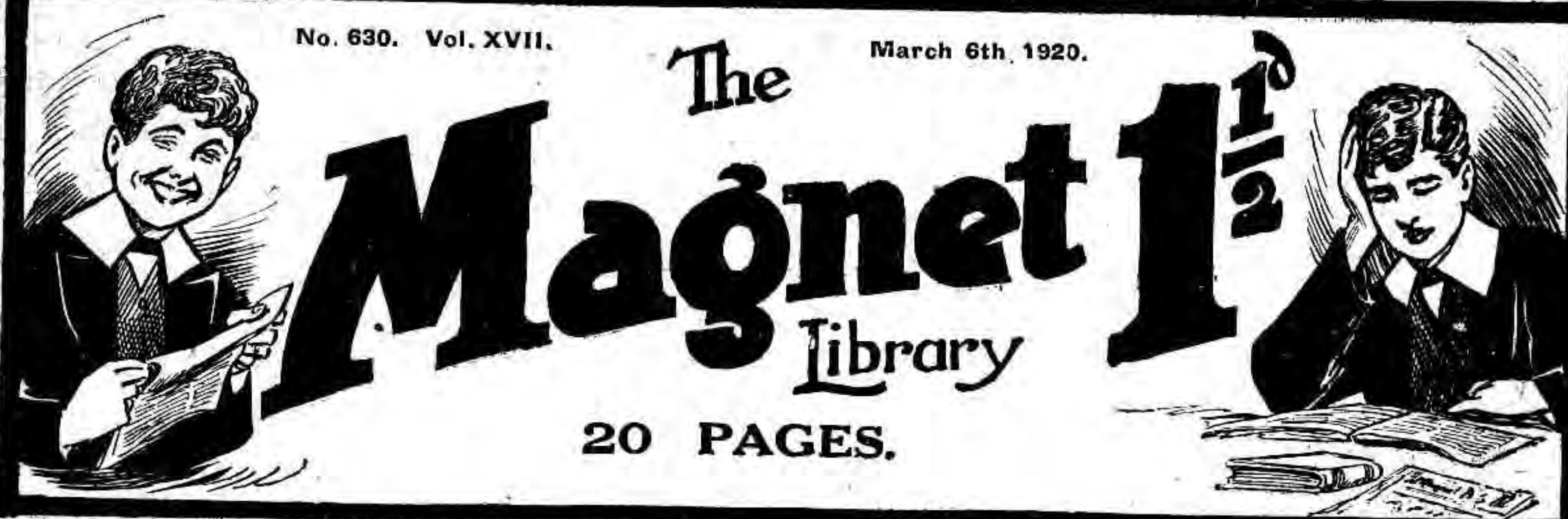


YOU CAN START READING OUR GRAND NEW SERIAL NOW!
(See Page 17.)

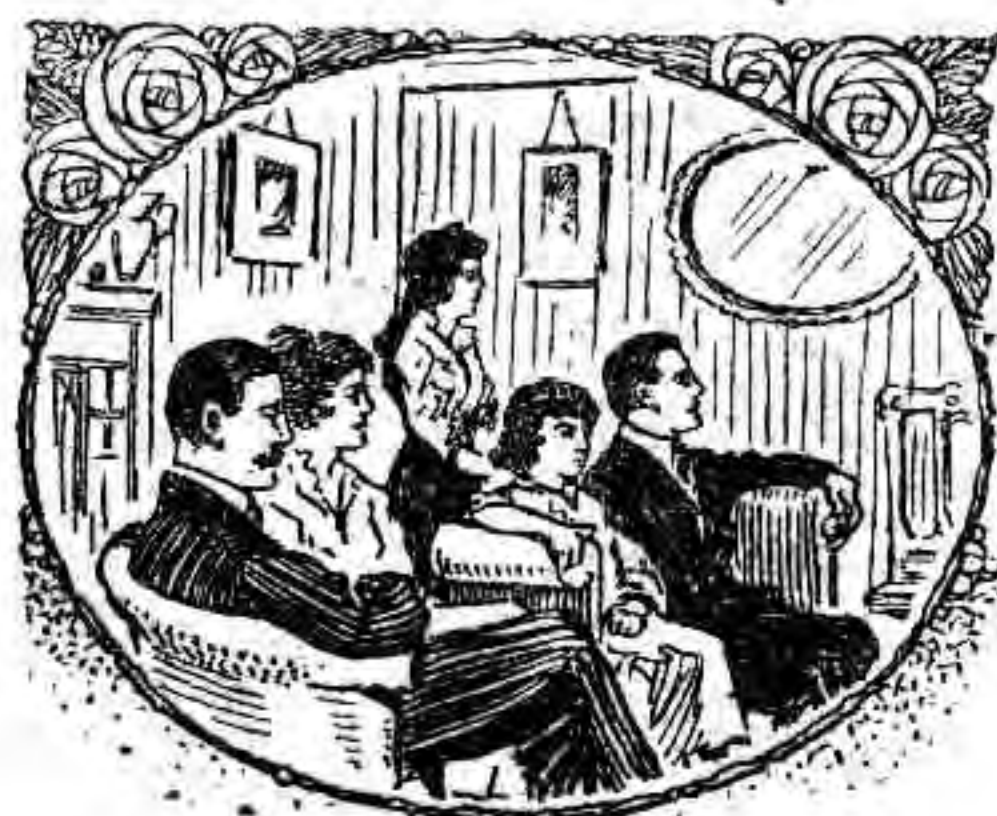
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THE REMOVE FORM START ON THEIR MAN-HUN
(An Exciting Incident in the Magnificent Long Complete School Tale of the Chums of Greyfriar)



SAFE SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS.

AMUSING TRICKS WITH SIMPLE APPARATUS.



JOINED BY AIR.

The picture below is not taken from a prospectus advertising cement for joining glass and porcelain, but is simply used to show how atmospheric pressure may be utilised for joining glasses and plates.

In order to accomplish this it is necessary to form a vacuum; but as an air-pump is not at the disposal of every boy, a partial vacuum must suffice.

To obtain this partial vacuum, suspend a glass from the ceiling, or any other suitable place, by means of a string, and under it burn a piece of paper. This will cause the air it contains to expand. Im-

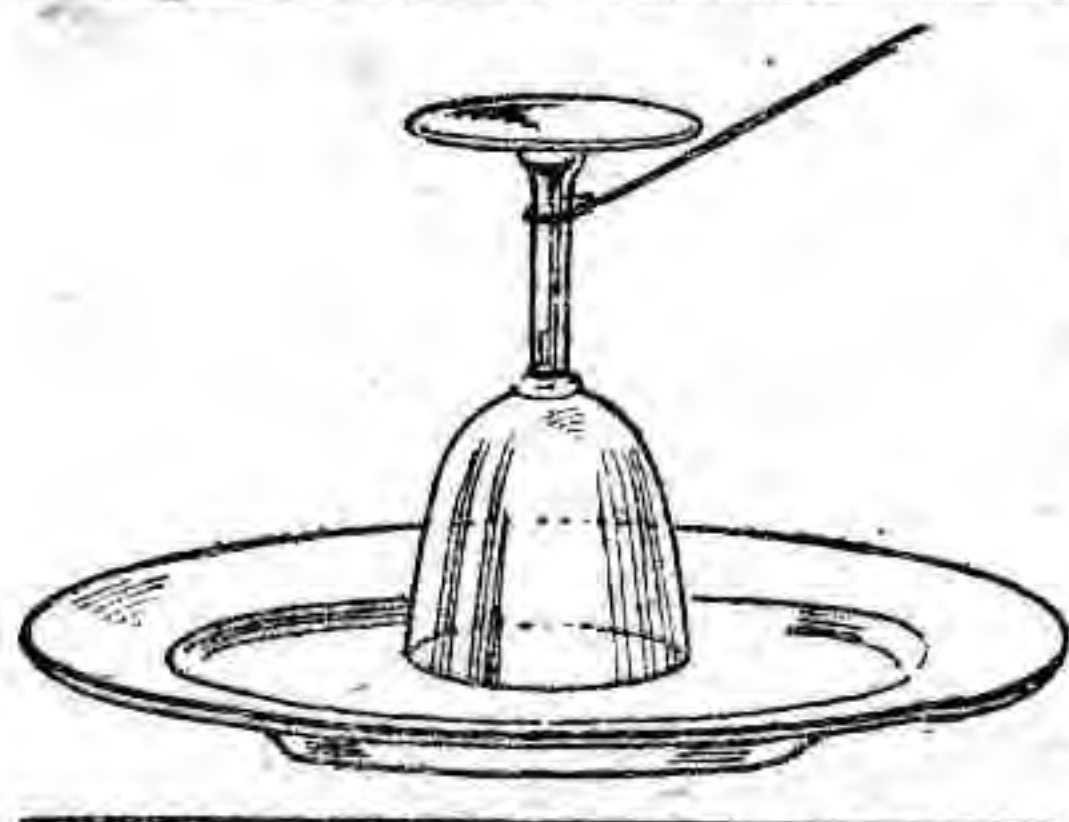


Fig. 1.—Joined by Air.

mediately afterwards place the plate over the mouth of the glass, and it will adhere quite firmly.

In order to prevent the entrance of any external air, and thus destroy the vacuum, the edges of the glass may be smeared with tallow.

Now, how is it that the glass and plate are so easily fixed? Well, directly the hot air contained in the glass comes in contact with the cold surface of the plate the air contracts, and as the plate prevents the entrance of any more air, a partial vacuum is formed within the glass.

As the atmospheric pressure is much greater than the pressure from within, the plate remains firmly fixed to the glass. (Fig. 1).

GLASS-RAISING EXTRAORDINARY.

This experiment, similar in principle to the last, is quite as striking in its effect.

It consists of raising in air a glass filled with water by causing it to adhere to the hand when the latter is held quite open.

With the last experiment fresh in our minds it is not difficult to guess that this phenomenon is due to the existence of a partial vacuum under the hand, but it is not so easy to know how to obtain this

partial vacuum. The means of carrying out the experiment are as follows:

Put the glass filled with water on the table, and over the top place the palm of the hand, taking care that the four

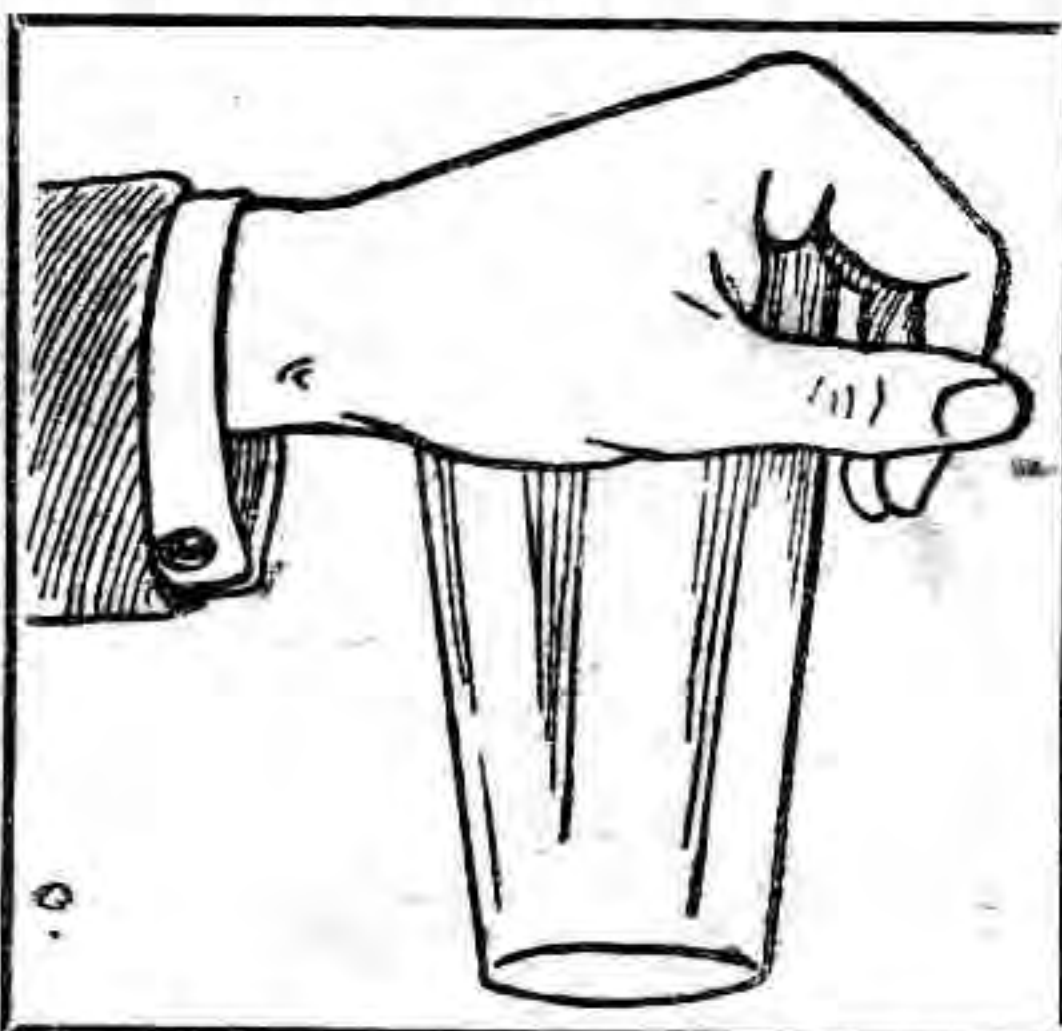


Fig. 2.—Position of Hand upon the Glass.

fingers are bent almost at right angles, as shown in the first of the accompanying figures (Fig. 2).

If, continuing to press the palm of the hand on the edge of the glass, you raise the four fingers quickly, thus having the palm stretched out, you will force out most of the air which is between your palm and the surface of the water, and



Fig. 3.—Glass-raising Extraordinary.

in this way you will produce under your hand a partial vacuum. This vacuum will be sufficient to allow the atmospheric pressure to overcome the weight of the glass and its contents; thus a sucker is formed which allows the glass to remain attached to the hand. (Fig. 3).

A NOVEL GLASS-EMPTIER.

If you are given a glass filled with water, and a bottle equally full, and then asked to empty the glass by means of the bottle, and that without emptying the bottle itself, you will imagine you have been set a very difficult task indeed.

You will soon see, however, that the solution to this seemingly difficult task is quite simple.

First take a cork, and in it pierce two holes. Through these gently push two straws, one being as long as the glass, the other considerably longer (Fig. 4).

By means of a pellet of bread or wax close the opening of the shorter straw, and push the cork into the bottle until the water gushes out of the longer straw.

In order to empty the glass it is now only necessary to turn the bottle upside down in such manner that the little straw touches the bottom of the glass.

Then, taking a pair of scissors, cut this straw very near the end which is sealed.

Immediately the water in the glass will flow out by the long straw until the

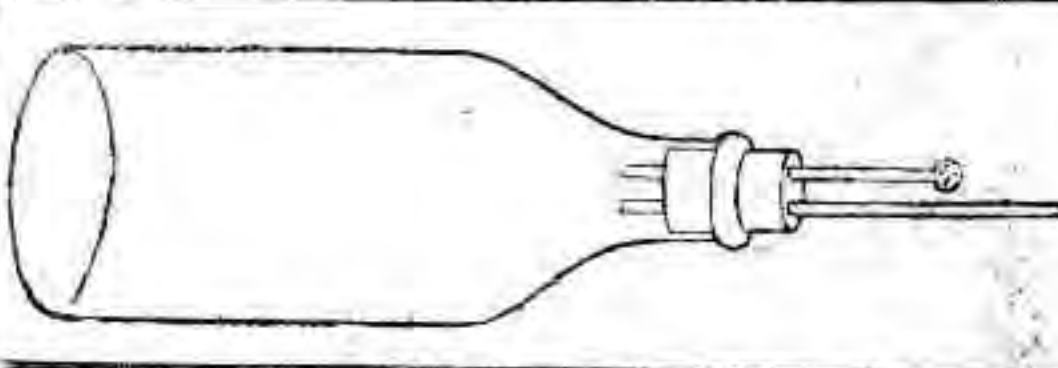


Fig. 4.—The Glass-emptying Bottle.

glass is quite empty, despite the fact that the bottle has remained full all the time. (Fig. 5).

Now for a few words of explanation in order to make clear the reason for this unexpected action.

The two straws form the two arms of a siphon, and as they are full of water it is not necessary to remove any air from them.

As the liquid flows out of the long straw it tends to produce in the bottle a

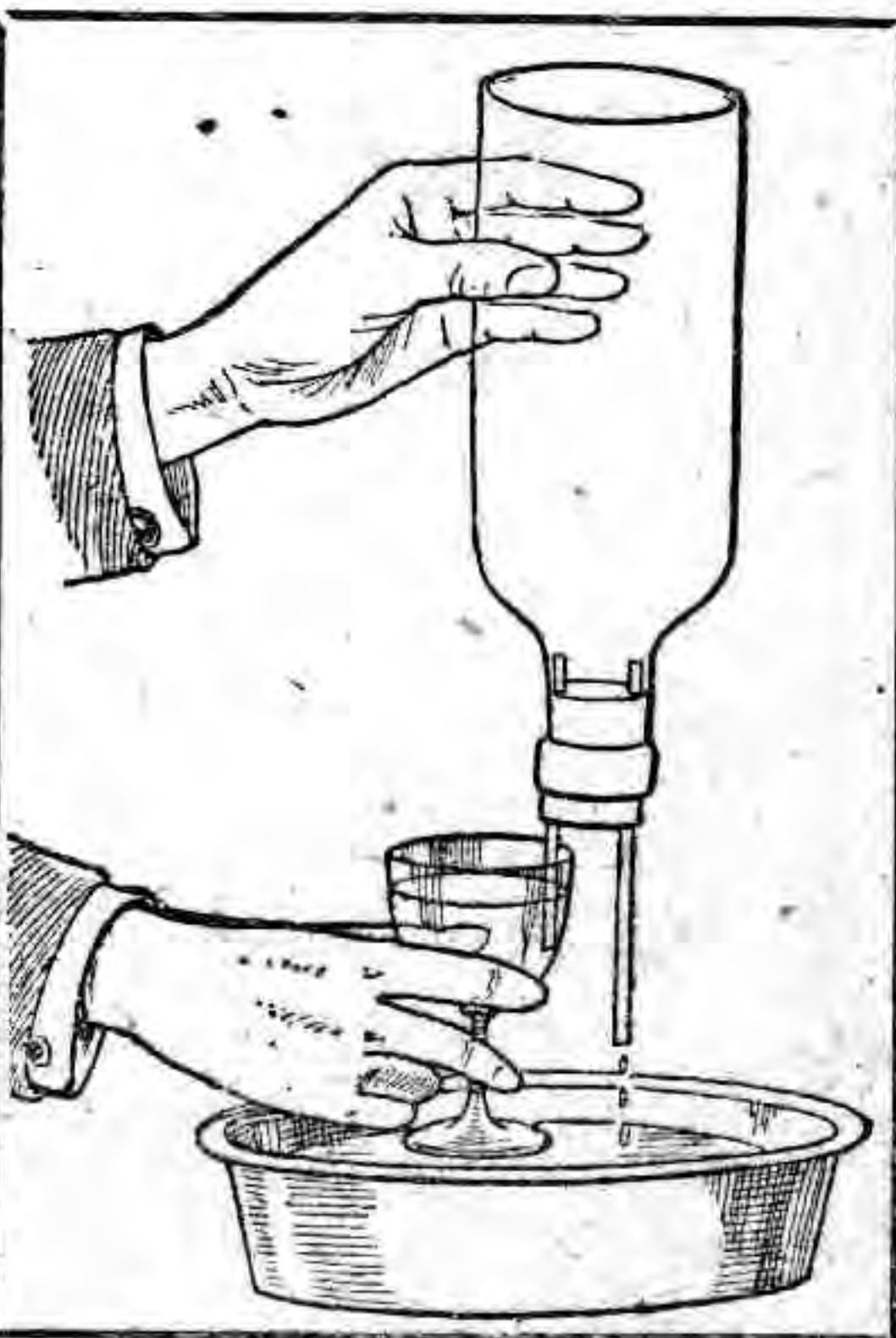
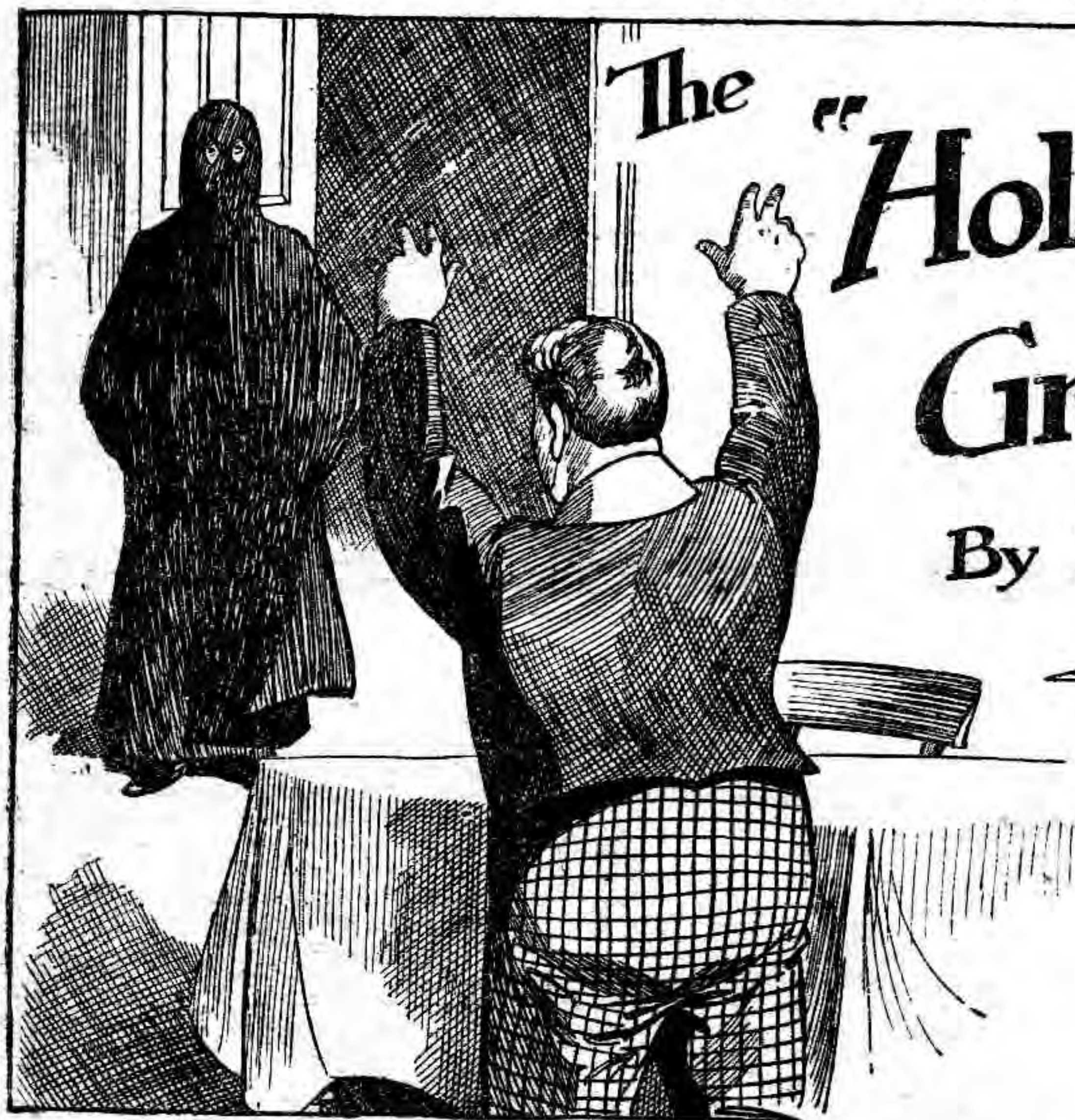


Fig. 5.—A Novel Glass-Emptyer.

vacuum. As a vacuum is contrary to Nature, it is immediately destroyed by the entrance of an equal quantity of water from the little straw, for the atmospheric pressure exerted on the water in the glass keeps this little straw continually full. In this way all the water is drawn from the glass by the bottle filled with water.



The "Hold Up" at Greyfriars!

By Frank Richards

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

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Gosling : Startling News.

"I WONDER where he is?"

It was Harry Wharton, of the Greyfriars Remove, who spoke. The captain of the Remove seemed quite worried.

"Quelch isn't often late like this!"

"More than ten minutes over time, by Jove!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "I wonder what's up?"

The Remove—the Lower Fourth Form at Greyfriars—were in their class-room, ready for the first morning lesson. They had been there now for more than ten minutes, and Mr. Quelch—their Form-master—had not put in an appearance.

There was a regular hubbub going on in the class-room. The Removites were taking a natural advantage of the absence of the Form-master. Most of the juniors were talking, some of them were singing, and a few of them were indulging in a battle-royal, with paper pellets as ammunition.

The Removites were rather enjoying their unexpected liberty; but the row in the class-room was beginning to get on Harry Wharton's nerves. If it got much worse, and Mr. Quelch arrived suddenly on the scene, he knew there would be trouble—perhaps detention for the whole of the Remove.

Mr. Quelch was usually punctuality itself. Harry Wharton could hardly remember a single occasion when he had been even a minute late.

"I wonder where the dickens he's got to?" he said.

"I don't see that it matters a hang!" grunted Billy Bunter, blinking through his enormous spectacles. "It's jolly nice when a Form-master comes in late. I'm blessed if I can see what there is to worry about!"

And Bunter extracted a big chunk of toffee from a paper bag and pushed it into his mouth.

Billy Bunter was the fattest and greediest junior at Greyfriars, and a Form-room without a Form-master in it struck him as being a much more comfy place than it might be otherwise.

"I like toffee, you fat porpoise!" said Frank Nugent. "Haud over a piece!"

Billy Bunter blinked and grunted.

"Sorry, Nugent, old man," he said; "but I've only got a few more bits—just enough to last through the hour until break."

"You greedy gormandiser!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"The greedfulness of the honourable Bunter is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, the Indian junior, in the excellent English he had not learned at Greyfriars. "It is almost impossible to stand his esteemed greedfulness!"

"Whilst Bunter lives we shall have to stand it, though," said Bob Cherry, with a grin. "In a—"

"Hallo! Here's Quelch!"

The doors of the class-room opened, and the master of the Remove came in. The chattering and the singing and the battle-royal ceased like magic.

There were many occasions when the Remove Form was riotous, but they were never riotous in the presence of their own master, Mr. Quelch. He was a man to inspire respect, and he was, moreover, a dangerous customer to "rag."

"I am sorry I am late, my boys," he said. "I have been detained over a little matter. We will now proceed with first lesson."

There was a movement of attention from the juniors.

"Bunter!"

"Y-yes, sir?" piped Billy Bunter, blinking nervously through his big spectacles. "Did you say anything, sir?"

"How dare you come into the class-room with your mouth crammed with food!"

Billy Bunter turned red. He had not

come into the class-room like that. He had not had sufficient time to get rid of a large piece of toffee he had put into his mouth just before Mr. Quelch arrived on the scene.

"I—I—I'm sorry, sir——"

"What is making your pocket bulge out like that, Bunter?"

"N-n-nothing, sir!"

"Unbutton it, immediately!"

"I—I—I——"

"Unbutton your jacket at once, Bunter!" snapped Mr. Quelch; and the Form-master's eyes resembled gimlets more than ever as they pierced the Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter made a desperate effort to slide the bag of toffee from under his jacket to the desk. There was a thud on the floor as a couple of pieces of the toffee slipped out of the bag.

Mr. Quelch strode across the class-room towards Bunter's desk.

"Bunter!"

"Y-y-y-yes, sir?"

"You have brought these horrible pieces of sweetmeat into the class-room——"

"They're not horrible, sir!" said Billy Bunter stoutly. "It's jolly good toffee, sir—the best that Mrs. Mimble makes!"

"It's unhealthy food to eat at this hour of the day."

"I—I get so hungry, sir——"

"That is merely greed on your part, and it is greed which can be cured by an effort of will, Bunter. In any case, you will take that unwholesome stuff out of the class-room immediately, and throw it away."

"Throw it away!" gasped Bunter.

"Yes; and at once!"

Billy Bunter rose from his seat. He picked up the two pieces of toffee that had fallen, and returned them to the bag; then he rolled out of the class-room.

"Make haste, Bunter!"

"Yes, sir."

Billy Bunter was not gone three minutes. When he came in there was a very contented look about his fat face, and his mouth and lips looked very sticky. It was pretty clear to the Remove how he had disposed of the toffee.

Mr. Quelch waited until Bunter had regained his seat.

"We will now commence," he said. "You will start on chapter three, page — Good gracious! What is that?"

Thump, thump, thump!

There was a regular volley of crashes on the class-room door, and the next instant the door was flung open, and Gosling, the school porter, rushed in.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "What the dickens is up with Gossy?"

"Gosling!"

Mr. Quelch's voice rang out like a pistol-shot, as Gosling staggered against the closed door.

"Ho, my heye!" gasped Gosling. "My heye!"

There was a giggle from the class, and Mr. Quelch frowned angrily.

"Gosling!" he snapped. "Gosling, pull yourself together! How dare you enter this class-room in an inebriated condition!"

"Wot's that?" roared Gosling.

"Gosling, you are intoxicated! You will return to your lodge at once!"

The school porter's face went scarlet with anger.

"Don't you dare suggest that I'm drunk, Mr. Quelch!" he cried. "Wot's the matter with me is I'm shell-shocked!"

"Ha, ha ha!"

"Silence!" roared Mr. Quelch. "The next boy who laughs will be detained next half-holiday! Now, Gosling, are you going to leave this class-room, or do you want to be forcibly ejected?"

"I tell you, Mr. Quelch, I've 'ad a pistol put hup to my 'ead!"

"What!"

"A pistol!" cried Gosling. "A gun! A revolver!"

"Explain yourself, Gosling."

"All me keys 'ave gorn!" exclaimed Gosling. "Hevery key in the lodge. An' 'e wore a mask, too, the villain!"

"What on earth is the dummy talking about?" muttered Harry Wharton. "Has old Gossy gone off his head at last?"

"He doesn't look as though he's been at the gin-and-water," replied Bob Cherry. "Something's happened. He wouldn't have the nerve to bounce in on old Quelch like that unless there was something wrong."

"Gosling," snapped Mr. Quelch, "you will explain yourself at once. Why have you burst into this class-room in this manner?"

"Wouldn't you 'ave done the same, Mr. Quelch," cried Gosling, "if you 'ad a pistol held hup to your 'ead? Wouldn't you 'ave 'anded the keys over?"

"Has somebody been threatening you, man?"

"I should think they 'ad!" roared Gosling. "There was I, just sitting down houtside the lodge, when hup comes a big, burly man, with a mask round 'is 'ead!"

"A masked man!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Yes, sir, and a gun as well, 'e 'ad. Here was I, sittin' down houtside the lodge, and before I knows what's hup, 'e puts a firearm right hin my hear!"

"Good heavens, Gosling!"

"'Ands hup!" he roars. "And 'and over your money and keys! I thought my last days had come, I did, Mr. Quelch."

"Did you comply with the villain's request, Gosling?"

"Not 'arf, I didn't!" replied Gosling

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warmly. And there was a roar of laughter from the Remove.

"You gave the man your money and the school keys?"

"Not 'arf I didn't!" repeated Gosling. "Wot's going to 'appen now I don't dare think. At first I thought it was one of the boys 'aving a lark; but 'e was a man, 'e was, and 'e 'ad murder in 'is eyes, too!"

"I have never heard such a story!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Where did the villain go?"

"'E drove me into the lodge, and said 'e would shoot if I came hout, and then 'e slammed the door."

"Did you open it, then?"

"Not 'arf I didn't!" replied Gosling warmly. "I don't want to 'ave no shootin' at me!"

"The villain must be connected with those gangs who are holding up post-offices and such places," said Mr. Quelch. "The matter must be reported to the police at once."

"The police?" roared Gosling, with a sniff of contempt. "Are you going to wait until they think they will move?"

"The police force is a very able one, Gosling."

"But the villain will be 'arf-way to Friardale now!" cried Gosling excitedly. "Can't you let the boys after 'im? They'll find 'im. 'E was wearing a blue suit and a soft 'at!"

"I'll go!" cried Harry Wharton. "Come on, chaps!"

The captain of the Remove fairly leapt from his desk, and before Mr. Quelch could open his mouth half the Remove were at Harry Wharton's heels.

"Wharton, come back!"

But Harry Wharton had flung the door open, and in the general uproar he did not hear.

"Cherry! Nugent! Bull!"

"I'll help Wharton, sir!" gasped Bob Cherry. "He may want help, sir!"

Mr. Quelch was dumbfounded. In less than thirty seconds the whole of the Remove had gained the passage, and Gosling and Mr. Quelch were left alone in the Form-room.

"Come with me at once, Gosling!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Dr. Locke, the headmaster, must be notified of the outrage immediately, so that he can take steps to have the villain arrested."

"Very well, sir," replied Gosling sourly. "Wot I ses is this 'ere. Nobody ain't safe these days, that's 'ow it seems to strike me!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Wrong Trail!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. dashed along the Remove passage, and the rest of the juniors followed closely.

"Follow your uncle!" cried Harry Wharton. "The villain's certain to have made for Friardale first!"

"Rather!"

The Removites clattered down the steps and out into the drive leading down to Gosling's lodge.

"Buck up, Remove!" cried Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah!"

The juniors doubled down to the gates, and Harry Wharton led the way out into the road.

Mr. Charpentier, the French master, was just entering the precincts of the school as the Removites rushed out.

"Mon Dieu!" gasped the little Frenchman. "What is ze matter, Wharton?"

The captain of the Remove pulled up in order to explain.

"It's all right, monsieur!" he panted. "We're in a man-hunt! Gosling has been held up by a masked man, and we're on his tracks!"

"But ze lessons, Wharton!" exclaimed Monsieur Charpentier. "What of ze lessons?"

Some of the juniors grinned.

"That's all right," said Harry Wharton. "Mr. Quelch knows we're out. You see, Gosling rushed into the class-room with the news directly he escaped."

"Mon Dieu!"

"The bounder took all the school keys, besides Gosling's money."

"Ze scoundrel!"

"We'd better go, monsieur. Every minute is precious. The villain has made for Friardale."

"I go with you, Ciel! I fight ze man!"

"That's all right, sir!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We shall be able to manage him."

"Rather!" chorused the Removites.

"I zinks zat you vas right, Wharton. I vill see ze headmaster first."

"All right, monsieur. Come along, you fellows, put on a spurt!"

The Removites set off once more, and went dashing along the country lane in the direction of Friardale, the little village almost two miles from Greyfriars.

"Keep your eyes open!" panted Harry Wharton. "The bounder was wearing a blue suit."

"And a soft hat," added Bob Cherry. "Come along, Mauly, keep it up!"

"All right, my dear fellow!" puffed Lord Mauleverer. "It's an awful fag, though!"

"Don't be a slacker!" laughed Bob Cherry. "This sort of thing helps to keep the fat down."

Billy Bunter came rolling along with the rest, and his face was red and streaming from his exertions.

"I—I say, you fellows," he gasped, "I've got an idea!"

"Dry up, Bunter!"

"Really, Nugent, it's—it's a tip-top idea!"

"What is?"

"When we get to Friardale—"

"Stick it, porpoise!" laughed Bob Cherry. "We shall be there in a few minutes now. Keep it up!"

"I—I'm getting puffed!" panted Billy Bunter. "Let's have a rest for a bit."

"Rats!"

"And—and then we can talk over my idea. I've got a good scheme for capturing the rotter!"

"Oh, dry up, Bunter!" cried Harry Wharton.

Billy Bunter gave a howl.

"Ow!" he roared. "I've—I've sprained my ankle!"

"That's all right, Billy!" laughed Bob Cherry heartlessly. "You can finish the last half-mile hopping!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! I think I've put the other knee out of joint now!" howled Billy Bunter.

"Half a tick, you chaps!"

"Rats!"

"Help a wounded man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh crumbs! I think I'm going to faint or do something funny!"

"That'll be a change, you fat dummy!"

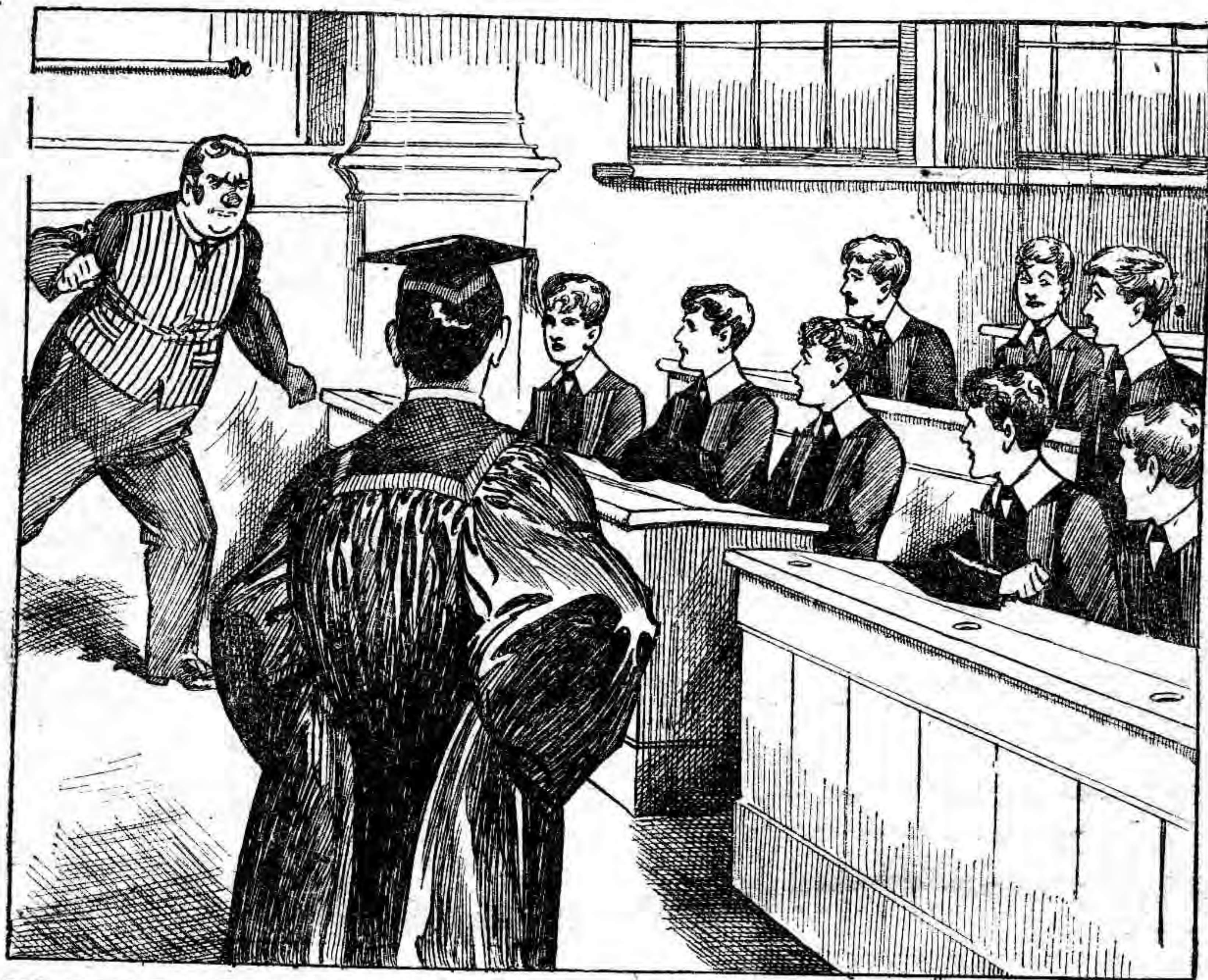
"Really, Cherry, I think you chaps might help a fellow!"

"Catch hold of his other arm, Franky," laughed Bob Cherry, taking a firm hold of the fat junior.

Frank Nugent laughingly obliged, and, with Billy Bunter between them, they trundled along the dusty lane.

"Here we are!" panted Harry Wharton. "Keep your eyes open, you fellows."

The Removites went clattering down the quaint High Street of the old village, and passers-by stood and gaped at the quaint procession in amazement.



There was a volley of crashes on the class-room door, and the next instant it was flung open, and Gosling, the school porter, rushed in. "My heye!" he gasped. "I've 'ad a pistol put hup to my 'ead!" (See Chapter I.)

Harry Wharton suddenly held up his arm.

"Stop!" he shouted.

The Removites came to a halt about two hundred yards from the village church.

"Look!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "Standing by the wall over there! It's the man!"

"My hat!"

"He's wearing a blue suit!" muttered Bulstrode.

"And a soft hat!"

"It's jolly suspicious!" said Mark Linley, the Lancashire lad. "But we ought to be a bit careful, you know. He might not be the man, and if we run him in there would be an awful row!"

Harry Wharton frowned.

"That's right," he muttered. "He might not be the right man."

"Of course he is," said Bolsover major. "He's wearing a blue suit, isn't he?"

"And a soft hat," added Field.

"I guess he's our man, you galoots!" said Fisher T. Fish, the American junior. "You leave it to me. I guess I'll creep up to him and do the trick."

"Oh, dry up, Fishy!" laughed Harry Wharton.

"Look!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "He's off!"

The man had been standing watching the crowd of Removites, and now he

suddenly turned about and walked hurriedly towards the church.

"After him!" roared Bolsover.

"Come along, you fellows!"

"Rather!"

The Removites rushed down the street, and in less than half a minute Bolsover, who was leading now, had pounced into the back of the stranger.

"Hurrah!"

"Oh!"

The man went down with a crash, and uttered a cry of astonishment. The next moment half a dozen of the juniors were on top of him, and there was a wild melee.

"Back up, School!" roared Bob Cherry.

The man struggled violently. He landed out with both fists, and lashed out with his legs at the same time.

Billy Bunter caught a heavy boot in his waistcoat, and he went flying into the road with a howl.

"Ow! I'm stabbed!" he roared.

"Ow!"

Bulstrode had the misfortune to run his chin into the struggling man's clenched fist, and he staggered back with a whoop of anger.

"You young villains!" roared the man. "Let me go!"

"Rather not!" cried Harry Wharton. "Sit on him, you fellows!"

The prisoner did not stand the ghost of a chance. Billy Bunter came trundling forward again, and threw his full weight into the struggling mass, and one by one the juniors perched themselves into sitting positions on various parts of their quarry.

"That'll teach you to hold-up Gossy!" panted Harry Wharton. "The best thing you can do is to keep quiet now, whilst we fetch a policeman!"

"Here's one!" cried Bob Cherry.

The village policeman came striding along in the direction of the struggling mass. His portly form looked very important, and the Removites watched him as he drew out his pocket-book.

"Come on!" cried Dick Penfold. "We've got him!"

"Wot's all this disturbance about?" demanded the man of law and order, as he reached the scene.

"Run these boys in, Charlie!" gasped the prisoner. "Run them in for assault and battery. They've nearly murdered me!"

"Wot! Is that you, George?"

Harry Wharton & Co. stared at the constable in amazement.

"This chap has been doing the highway robbery trick up at the school," said Harry Wharton. "He held up Gosling"

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with a pistol, and made him hand over all his money and all the school keys!"

"Wot!"

"You'd better run him in, and ring up the Head," said Bob Cherry. "We've captured him all right!"

"Rather!" chorused the Removites.

"Let that man go at once!" roared the constable angrily. "This will mean imprisonment for you young rips!"

"What!"

"Let him hup!"

"But—"

"Come on—horf you come!" cried the policeman, catching hold of Fisher T. Fish by the collar and jerking him to his feet.

"Hi! Leggo, you galoot!" exclaimed the American junior. "I guess you're in hand with this hyer hold-up gang!"

"Horf you come!" commanded the constable angrily. "I knows you boys, and hauntying you ses now will be used as hevidence against you!"

"Bat we've caught this scoundrel!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Don't you understand plain English?"

"Now, then, no himperence!"

"Oh, ring off!" growled the captain of the Remove. "This man was up at the school an hour ago, and he held up Gosling, the porter, with a pistol, and made him hand over all his money, and the whole of the school's keys!"

"Haw, haw! D'yer hear that, George?"

The Removites had relinquished their hold of the man now, and he scrambled to his feet with an angry expression on his face.

"You'll have to run them in, Charlie!" he grunted, dusting himself down, and setting his tie straight.

"You'll find yourself in Queer Street if you do!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "And if you let this scoundrel off, constable, there will be the very dickens to pay!"

"Ho!"

"Just hark at him!" said the Removites' victim. "So I was up at your school an hour ago, was I?"

"Yes."

"And I was holding up your porter, was I?"

"Ye-yes!"

"Well, Charlie, we'd better let them know where I was an hour ago, hadn't we? It seems that they've got some information to give us about the man we're after."

Harry Wharton & Co. were beginning to feel rather confused.

"Look here!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "If—if we've made a mistake, we're sorry about it! But a man in a blue suit and a soft hat paid a visit to Greyfriars School this morning and held up the porter outside his lodge."

"Oh!"

"We set off at once, and as you're—you're wearing a blue suit and a soft hat we went for you!"

The Removites' late victim gave a grin.

"I know that," he said.

"Well, if we've made a mistake, we're sorry."

"Ahem!"

"Very sorry, sir!" added Bob Cherry, as there was a pause in the conversation.

"Well, if that's the case," said the man, "I don't mind overlooking it for once—especially as I am after the man."

"What!"

"I came down from London this morning. I came down with Inspector Wilton, of Scotland Yard. The post-office at Courtfield was raided last night by a man, and we've come down to investigate. And hour ago I was with Inspector Wilton at the police-station, as we suspect the man we want is in the vicinity of Friardale."

"My hat!"

The Removites looked at one another very sheepishly.

"The best thing you boys can do is to go back to your school now. I will overlook this affair, and if anyone catches this scoundrel you can rest assured that Inspector Wilton will. He's the smartest man in the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard."

"Good!"

"We know all about this man, you boys. We know his name, and all about him, and it won't be long before he is in gaol, I can tell you!"

Harry Wharton stepped forward.

"It's awfully decent of you to be so jolly good about it," he said. "And—and I'm very sorry we gave you such a rough time, and so are all these fellows."

"Rather!" chorused the Removites.

The juniors' late victim grinned, and held out his hand, and Harry Wharton shook it warmly.

"That's all right, kid!" said the man. "You trot back now, and you'll hear no more about it."

And Harry Wharton & Co. gave a cheer as they trooped away from the scene of the attack.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Raided Tuckshop!

"WELL, we do look a lot of dummies!" said Bolsover major. "I don't think that says much for Wharton's leadership!"

"Oh, dry up!"

"Fancy going for the wrong chap!" continued Bolsover. "If the School hears of this we shall be the laughing-stock of the place for the rest of the term!"

Harry Wharton & Co. tramped along the dusty lane looking very angry, and the rest of the Removites discussed the affair freely.

Bolsover major was a bully, and not at all popular with Harry Wharton & Co.; but this was one of the few occasions when the chums of the Remove felt small, and Bolsover was not slow in taking advantage of their embarrassment.

"It's time we had a change in the captaincy, don't you think so, Fishy, old man?" cried Bolsover, in loud tones.

"Waal, I guess I'm the galoot ready for the job," replied the American junior.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We shall be ragged stiff over this!" said Bolsover.

"Oh, dry up!" snapped Harry Wharton. "You're the very one who started on the chap!"

"That doesn't count for anything. You were leading the party."

"Well, it was a mistake, and that's all that can be said for it!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It was Gossy's fault, if anybody's!"

"I think Wharton's going stale!" persisted Bolsover. "What we want is a captain who can lead!"

"Hear, hear!" grunted Billy Bunter. "Now, I'm the very chap for the job!"

"Oh, shut up, porpoise!"

"Really, Cherry! I—"

"If you don't dry up we'll bump you, and Bolsover as well!"

"I bet Quelchy'll have something to say about this when we get back, anyway!"

"Wait and see!" laughed Johnny Bull. "I bet the Head will be jolly keen on raising a hue and cry. It's pretty serious to think that some rotter has got all the keys of the school!"

"We sha'n't be safe in our beds!" grunted Billy Bunter.

"But Inspector Wilton will get him all right!" said Harry Wharton. "They've evidently got plenty of clues from that raid on the Courtfield post-office."

"Rather!"

The Removites were nearing the school gates now, and they could see a cluster of fellows standing out in the roadway looking anxiously down the lane.

"Hallo, they've got scouts out looking for us!" laughed Harry Wharton.

"Looking for the raiders, I suppose! There's those bounders in the Upper Fourth!"

Temple, Dabney, & Co. of the Upper Fourth strolled down the road to meet the Removites.

"Found him?" cried Temple.

"No!"

"Blessed if we thought you kids would!" said Dabney. "You would have got him if you had used a grain of sense!"

"What do you mean?"

"Why didn't you look round the school grounds first?"

"Eh?"

"Mrs. Mible has been held-up whilst you've been away!"

"What?"

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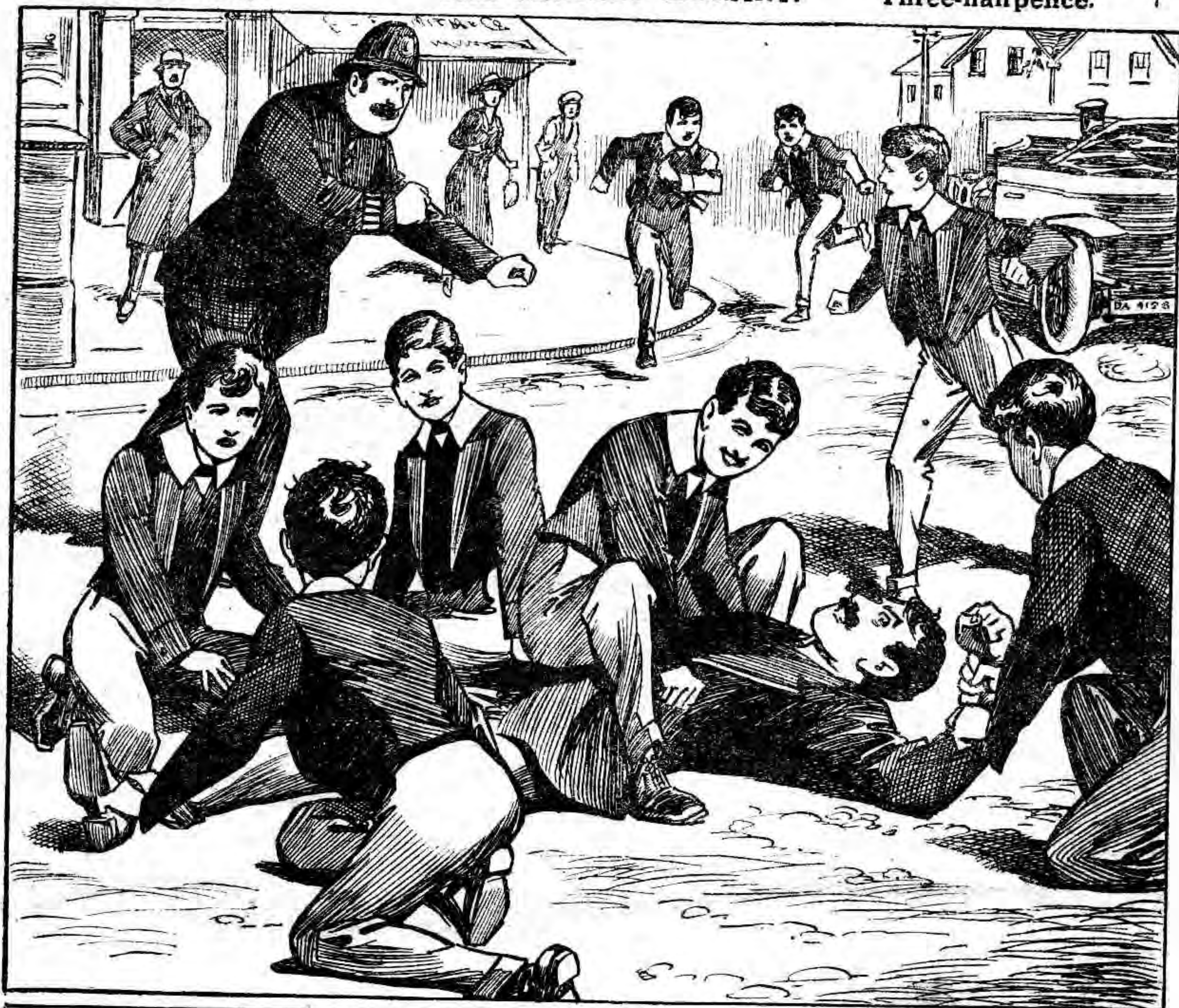
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The village policeman came striding along in the direction of the struggling mass. "Wot's all this disturbance about?" he demanded. "Run these boys in, Charlie!" gasped the prisoner. (See Chapter 2.)

"She's been raided by the same rotter that went for Gossy!"

Harry Wharton & Co. gasped.

"My hat!" exclaimed Wharton. "Do you mean that, Temple?"

"Of course I do, you ass! He got away with nearly twelve pounds and a bag full of tommy."

"Phew!"

"Mrs. Mimble fainted with fright. She says the chap who did the trick was wearing a mask."

"Must have been the same one," said Frank Nugent. "What's Dr. Locke doing about it?"

"The Head's dismissed all classes, and the masters have gone out with the prefects to search. Mr. Quelch sent me down to the gate to tell you that you've all got to go to your studies and await orders."

"Right-ho!"

"If you had caught the man, I was to go and tell the search-party. Goodness knows where they've got to by now!"

Harry Wharton & Co. trooped into the school, and melted away into their various studies in the Remove Form passage.

Study No. 1 was shared by Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent; but Bob Cherry, Lord Mauleverer, Hurree Singh, and Johnny Bull packed themselves in now at Wharton's invitation.

"Make yourselves comfy!" cried Frank Nugent. "Something's got to be did about this!"

"Rather!"

"Looks to me as though we shall have to do a little detective work and solve the problem scientifically," said Johnny Bull.

"The bounder seems a slippery sort of customer, and jolly daring to do this sort of thing in broad daylight! Fancy going for old Mrs. Mimble! These rotters always go for old women!"

And Frank Nugent gave a snort of anger.

"Anyway, he's been for two old women here!" said Bob Cherry.

"One, you mean."

"No; two," said Bob, with a grin. "There's Mrs. Mimble and Gossy. That's two old women, isn't it?"

"You dummy!" laughed Harry Wharton, as there came a knock at the door of the study.

"Hallo! Who's that?" said Frank Nugent.

Rap!

"Come in!" called out Harry Wharton.

The door opened, and Bolsover major walked in, followed by Fisher T. Fish, Skinner, Snoop, and Stott of the Remove.

"Hallo!" said Harry Wharton.

"You've made a mistake. This isn't the Zoo!"

"That's enough of that!" said Bolsover. "We want to speak to you."

"How many of you?"

"All of us!"

"Sorry!" said Harry Wharton politely.

"I've only got two ears, and I can't listen to you all at once! Two of you had better go it at a time!"

"Look here, Wharton—"

"We're all looking," interrupted Bob Cherry. "But we can't keep it up for long, you know. A face like yours, Bolsover, gives a chap a pain!"

"You can dry up, Cherry! It's no good trying to be funny! We've come to talk business!"

"That's all right, Bob!" said Harry Wharton. "Let 'em go ahead!"

"We're a deputation—"

"A what?" inquired Harry Wharton. "A deputation representing the Remove."

Harry Wharton flung himself into an armchair.

"Proceed, deputation of the Remove!" he said, with a wave of the hand.

Bolsover nearly choked with wrath at Wharton's flippant manner.

"Look here, Wharton, we're not going to stand—"

"I'm afraid you'll have to, Bolsover, old bean! We've only got enough chairs for our guests, as it is. You see, we don't receive deputations every day in the week."

"I didn't mean that; I meant—"

"There's an old tuck-box and the window-sill; you can sit on that, if you like."

"I didn't want—"

"Of course, there's the floor. It's quite

a comfy floor, if you can make up your mind to it, and I can thoroughly recommend it!"

The rest of the Remove chums grinned joyously. Harry Wharton was in good form. It was obvious to them that Bolsover & Co. had come to the study with hostile intentions, and Harry's ridicule was beginning to have its effect. Bolsover major gritted his teeth.

"We're a deputation of the Remove. We've been talking the matter over about your leadership, and we thought we had better come along to you and tell you that we're fed up!"

"Good!" said Harry Wharton. "I'm glad you've come to tell us you're fed up, because we haven't a scrap of Tommy in the place, and now that Mrs. Mimble has been raided we couldn't possibly feed you up any more!"

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

Bolsover gasped with rage. He made a step towards Harry Wharton.

"I tell you we are fed up with your leadership!" he bawled. "And for two pins I'd—I'd—"

"I guess it's no good losing your goat, Bolsover!" shouted Fisher T. Fish. "These galoots will listen to reason if the matter's put to them properly, I guess!"

"Oh, shut up!" snapped Bolsover ungraciously.

"I guess I'll vamoose this hyer deputation for one, if you're going to shout big all the time!"

Bolsover calmed himself with a tremendous effort. Harry Wharton & Co. continued talking to themselves as though the deputation never existed.

"Look hyer, Wharton!" said Fisher T. Fish. "It's about the leadership!"

"I believe Bolsover said something about that before," remarked Harry Wharton. "Still, no harm in your saying it again. You can say it a third time if you like!"

The Yankee junior snapped his teeth, and the rest of the deputation grinned.

"I guess this ain't any good to me!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish. "I say, this is a mug's game, Bolsover, and you're a silly galoot to drag us along here! I'm off!"

"You aren't!" shouted Bolsover. "You said you'd support me, and you're jolly well not going to back out of it now!"

"I guess—"

Bolsover major caught the Yankee junior by the collar as he made for the door, and Fish was whisked back.

This was a little too much even for the American junior. He jumped at Bolsover, and brought his bony fist down on the bully's nose like the rap of a hammer.

"I guess you can take that, you galoot, and—"

Bolsover gave a yelp, and went for Fish like a wild-cat. Harry Wharton's ridicule had made him furious, and now he felt that he didn't care whom he hit, so long as he hit somebody. The two members of the deputation closed, and began to struggle.

"Go it!" shouted Bob Cherry. "Two to one on the merry Yank! Go it, kids!"

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott stood against the study wall as the two combatants swayed wildly in one another's grasp.

"Ow!" roared Bolsover. "The beastly cad's got his teeth into my arm!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash!

By a superhuman effort Bolsover twisted Fish off his feet, and the two crashed to the study floor, and shook the whole room.

"Here, that's enough!" cried Skinner. "Come on, Snoopey, catch hold!"

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Skinner, Snoop and Stott caught hold of the struggling pair, and at last managed to separate them.

"Come on, Fish!" snapped Skinner, hauling the panting junior to his feet. "You're a jolly good specimen of a deputation!"

"I guess—"

Skinner gave the Yankee junior a push, and sent him flying through the doorway into the passage, and Snoop and Stott dragged Bolsover after him.

There was a yell of laughter from Harry Wharton & Co. as the door closed on the deputation.

"My only aunt!" gasped Bob Cherry. "What a topping show! I wish they'd do that every day! We would start a regular panto!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I don't expect we shall be troubled with that deputation again for a good time!" laughed Harry Wharton.

And he was right; they never were.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Temple, Dabney, & Co.'s Little Scheme!

AS soon as Temple of the Upper Fourth had delivered Mr. Quelch's message to Harry Wharton at the school gates the four nuts made their way to their own study.

"Of course, if we had taken up the pursuit at once," said Temple loftily, "we should have had that scoundrel under lock and key by now!"

"Rather!" said Dabney, Fry, and Phipps.

"It's just like those kids in the Remove to go off on a wild-goose chase like that. Fancy not having a look round the school first of all!"

"Just fancy!"

"There's the crypt, for instance. I shouldn't be a bit surprised if that dashed villain isn't taking shelter there!"

"By Jove!"

"The place is a regular honeycomb, and anybody could hide there for days and days without being found."

"Shall we go and look?" suggested Dabney.

The great Temple frowned thoughtfully.

"We shall only be jumped on by the Head if we were found out of the school building," he muttered. "There would be the dickens to pay!"

"Yes, rather!"

Temple threw himself into an armchair and looked pensive.

"Of course, it's all rot, confining us to our studies like this!" he said, after a pause. "It's treating us like a lot of kids in the Remove or Second Form!"

Fry grinned, and winked across the study to Dabney. Temple loved to imagine himself a regular nut at Greyfriars. There was very little difference between the ages of the boys in the Remove Form and those of the Upper Fourth. It was practically one and the same thing, but Temple did not like to think so.

There was much keen rivalry between the two factions, and the Remove invariably scored in any contest that took place, whether it was on the playing-fields or just an ordinary "rag" between one Form and another.

But Temple had staunch followers in Dabney, Fry, and Phipps. In fact, they were regular cronies, and he could always rely upon their assistance in any manœuvre he might suggest.

"We had better do something," suggested Phipps. "There's no classes this morning, because of this 'hold-up'; but we don't want to kill time by just

squatting about in this blessed study do we?"

"Let's go and raid somebody!" said Dabney.

"My hat!" exclaimed Temple suddenly. "I've got it!"

"Got what?"

"The idea. It'll put the wind up some of those kids in the Remove!"

"Eh?"

"By Jove!" said Temple enthusiastically, jumping up from his chair. "This is something like, you chaps!"

"What's the idea?" growled Dabney.

"Out with it, old man!"

"Let's hold up one of the studies in the Remove passage!"

"Eh?"

"Hold up, you fathead!" shouted Temple. "It's quite easy!"

"Of course it's quite easy, and it's quite easy to get it in the neck as well! What's the chance of four against the whole blessed Remove?"

"I only mean one study, you idiot!"

"I know that; but you've only got to shout for help, haven't they, and then we shall have the whole blessed swarm round us!"

"Ass!"

"I've had some, thanks! I jolly well know what it means to be nabbed by those young rotters in the Remove!"

"But they won't shout!" cried Temple.

"They'll jolly well have the wind up too much for that!"

"What do you mean? You aren't so terrifying as all that, you know, old man!" sniffed Phipps.

"But I shall be masked."

"Oh!"

"I'll try it on Study No. 7 first of all. There's only that fat rotter, Bunter, in there; Dutton, who's as deaf as a post; and then there's the two Todds."

"Peter Todd is a dangerous item."

"I'll chance that!" laughed Temple.

"Perhaps he'll be in someone else's study. Even if he isn't, it won't matter."

"I bet Bunter quakes all over!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Just trot up to the box-room, old man. There's a whole crowd of stuff used for theatrical things. Anything in the black cloak line will do."

"Right-ho!"

Fry left the study, and by the time Temple had explained his scheme in detail he had returned with a large bundle under his arm.

"This is the very thing," said Temple, unrolling a large black cape, and throwing it over his head and shoulders.

"The eye-slits are there already," laughed Dabney. "That's ripping, Temple, old man!"

The leader of the Upper Fourth took the cape off, and there was a pronounced grin on his face.

"I may as well go along," he said. "I'll shove the cape on when I get outside the door."

"Good egg!"

"Keep your ears open!" said Temple. "If it's a rough house, I shall yell for help. I shall expect you fellows to come to the rescue!"

"Will—will you, old man?"

"Of course I shall!" sniffed Temple.

"There'll be a jolly good reckoning if you don't! You can bet your boots on that!"

"Right-ho, old man!" said Dabney.

And as Temple set off on his mission, the worthy Dabney closed the study door and winked at his Form-fellows.

"Of course, we might not hear Temple yell for help, might we, you chaps?"

And Fry and Phipps gave broad grins.

Meanwhile, the leader of the Upper Fourth was wending his way towards the Remove Form passage. All the juniors

were evidently complying strictly with Mr. Quelch's command, and there was not a single Removite wandering about the corridors.

Temple stopped outside Study No. 7, and hastily threw the cloak over himself.

He gave a loud rap on the study door, and without waiting for any response, he turned the handle and glided into the room.

There was a loud gasp of surprise from the direction of the study table.

"Hands up!"

Billy Bunter was the sole occupant of the room, and he blinked with horror through his big spectacles at the apparition standing with his back to the door.

"Hands up!"

The gruff voice of the stranger rang out a second time, and Billy Bunter staggered to his feet. He stood and quaked as the cloaked figure stared at him through the slits in the black hood.

"Hands up, you young villain!" shouted the visitor.

Billy Bunter dragged his fat arms over his head.

"All right, sir!" he stuttered. "I'll—I'll put them up!"

"It'll be a bad thing for you if you don't! Now, then, answer these questions. What's your name?"

"B-Bunter, sir!"

"Grunter, is it? Well, Grunter, I'm collecting things to-day. I dare say you've heard of me—hey?"

"Oh, no, sir!—I mean, y-yes. I've often read about you in the newspapers."

There was a slight snigger from the cloaked figure.

"Won't you sit down, sir?" continued Billy Bunter. "Perhaps you'd like to meet some of my friends. I'll go and fetch them, if you like."

"Silence!" roared the visitor. "Another word, and it will be your last. Sit down!"

Billy Bunter collapsed into his chair with a gasp, and the cloaked figure walked slowly into the centre of the study.

"Now then," he said, "tell me where your study-mates are? How is it they are not here?"

"T-they've gone along to Brown's study, sir. S-shall I fetch them for you?"

"No! Now then, where do you keep your food in this study? I believe you call it tuck."

"We've—we've only got a little left, sir," faltered Bunter. "S-shall I get it? It's in the cupboard there."

"Place it on the table."

Billy Bunter rolled across to the cupboard, and gently placed a sardine-tin on to the table.

"It—it's rather old, sir," said Bunter. "We've had that for some weeks now. There's still two or three sardines left."

"Phew!"

"They are a bit high, sir," said Billy Bunter, blinking into the sardine-tin through his big spectacles.

"You insult me!" roared the cloaked figure. "Put that rotten tin back in the cupboard! Is that all you've got?"

"I'm afraid it is, sir. You see, I'm expecting a postal-order from one of my titled relations. When that comes I shall be able to lay in a fresh stock."

"So you've got titled relations, have you, Grunter?"

"Please, sir, my name's Bunter—not Grunter!"

"Oh, Bunter, is it? Well, if you've got titled relations, you must have plenty of money. Let me see what you've got!"

"I haven't got any, sir!"

"What?"

"I'm stony, sir!"

The pair of shiny eyes behind the

hooded cloak fairly glittered at Billy Bunter, and the Owl of the Remove trembled all over.

"How do you think I can live without money?" roared the visitor. "Do you think I can exist in the crypt without food and money—eh? When can you bring some along to me?"

"I—I—I'll try to get you some this afternoon, sir. Perhaps you could trust me with a quid, then I could buy you something at Mrs. Mumble's—you know her, don't you, sir?"

"What?"

"I—I—er—of course you've never met Mrs. Mumble," faltered Billy Bunter. "I forgot that. She keeps the school tuck-shop. I could buy you some food there, and bring it along to you in the crypt. I dare say I could find you all right."

No. 53.—RICHARD RUSSELL.



A prominent member of the Remove, and a real good sort. At one time suspected of cowardice, but proved himself later, and developed unusual skill as a boxer. There is a slight strain of weakness in him, but his comradeship with Robert Donald Ogilvy has stiffened his backbone, and he has shown that he can go his own way for a friend's sake in defiance of everyone. Study No. 3.

"You might give me away to the police!"

"Oh no, sir!"

"Can I trust you? You know what it would mean if you played me false, I suppose?"

"Y-yes, sir!"

"Very well, you will swear not to play me false?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Then get a piece of paper and a pen, and put your vow into writing. Nothing less than that will satisfy me. There you are. Paper and pen in front of you. Write!"

Billy Bunter groped about for the pen, and drew the sheet of paper in front of him.

"What shall I write, sir?" he stammered. "It isn't a bit necessary, I can promise you. If you'll give me a quid—or, say, ten shillings—I can go down to Mrs. Mumble's at once, and buy the stuff for you. She's got some ripping jam-puffs. They're fresh in every day."

"Write!" roared the cloaked figure.

"Do not dare to bandy words with me. I give you one minute to put your vow into writing!"

Billy Bunter dipped the pen into the ink-well, and with the cloaked man standing over him, he scribbled away. It was a good thing Bunter did not look up, or he might have seen his strange visitor cramming his hand over his mouth in an effort to suppress a roar of laughter. It was as much as Temple could do to refrain from yelling with amusement at Bunter's strange composition.

At last the Owl of the Remove finished his work, and he blotted the sheet of paper and tremblingly handed it up to the cloaked figure.

"Read it out, with one hand over your heart!" snapped the man. "Woe betide you if you break your vow. There are others besides me in the Society. Go on!"

Billy Bunter cleared his throat.

"Wearas I, William George Bunter, of Study No. 7, Remove Form, Greyfriars Skool, hearby promis to supplie you with sum food to-day in the cript, and I promis not to give you away to enyboby, becos you are a desent chap."

"(Sined) W. G. BUNTER."

"Right!" snapped the stranger. "Now hand it over, and stand in that corner, and don't move for five minutes. If you do, it may be your last move. D'you undersand?"

"Y-yes, sir!"

Billy Bunter rolled across to the corner and stood there quaking like a jelly-fish. He heard a movement at the door, but dare not look round.

The disguised Temple opened the study door cautiously, and, hearing no one, glided into the passage. In a flash he had removed the cloak, and tucking it firmly under his arm, he flew along the Remove Form passage, and gained his own study without meeting a soul.

He flung himself into the room, and Dabney, Fry, and Phipps leapt up from their seats with a cry of surprise.

"Are they after you?" exclaimed Dabney.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Temple threw the cloak on to the floor and himself into an armchair, and peal upon peal of laughter rang out in the Upper Fourth study.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Billy Bunter's Bombshell!

HERE was silence in Study No. 1 in the Remove Passage—silence broken only by the faint scratching of a couple of pens.

Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent, and their four visitors were still there, and each of them was busy in his own way. Bolsover's deputation was practically forgotten, and now the chums of the Remove were killing time in various ways.

Nugent and Hurree Singh were writing lines against future punishments. Bob Cherry was mending a cricket-bat. Harry Wharton was sitting in an easy-chair, his legs stretched out, and his hands in his trousers pockets, his brow knitted with an expression of deep thought. Lord Mauleverer was standing near the fireplace, with his eyes fixed upon Wharton.

Maul's look was very peculiar. His expression was deeply earnest, his forehead corrugated with thoughtful lines, and his gaze was fixed unwaveringly upon Harry Wharton's face as if he were trying to penetrate Harry's thoughts by the sheer power of gazing.

The silence had lasted for some time.

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Harry Wharton, immersed in reflection, did not notice the schoolboy earl's peculiar occupation. Frank Nugent and Inky were too busy with their lines to have any attention to bestow upon Mauly. It was Johnny Bull who first observed that something was "on."

Johnny Bull had been reading a book on the Navy, and he shut the book up with a snap that sounded like a pistol-shot in the quiet study, and looked up with a yawn.

"That's finished!" he remarked. "I wonder whether they've caught that masked rotter yet?"

No one replied. Bob Cherry gave a faint grunt in acknowledgment of the fact that a remark had been made, but that was all. Johnny Bull looked round the study.

"Seem jolly busy, all of you," he remarked. "Hallo! What's up with you, Mauly?"

Lord Mauleverer did not reply.

His gaze remained fixed upon Harry Wharton, and he apparently did not hear Bull's remarks.

Bull stared at the schoolboy earl in amazement.

"Mauly, you duffer! What's the matter?"

Mauleverer was still silent. Harry Wharton glanced up, and looked round at Johnny Bull.

"Wherefore that thoughtful brow, old bean?" asked Johnny Bull. "Are you doing a sum in mental arithmetic, or are you wondering why we didn't catch that masked scoundrel this morning?"

Harry Wharton grinned.

"Neither."

"Do you know what's the matter with Mauly, then? He's suddenly become deaf as well as blind and silly."

"Really, my dear fellow—"

"Well, I spoke to you twice, and you didn't trouble to answer."

"I'm afraid you've spoiled it now!" exclaimed Lord Mauleverer, in a tone of annoyance. "It's a pity you couldn't keep quiet for a few moments longer, my dear fellow."

Johnny Bull stared at him.

"Spoiled all what?"

"Well, not exactly spoiled, but interrupted. I was reading Wharton's thoughts."

"You were whatting Wharton's what?"

"Reading his thoughts, my dear fellow. I have been looking through a paper by Sir Oliver Lodge and Conan Doyle on the subject of thought-reading, and all that sort of thing. It's very interesting. I was reading Wharton's thoughts when you interrupted me."

"Don't be an ass, Mauly!"

"Really, my dear fellow—"

"Well, if you've been reading Wharton's thoughts, let's hear what they are. He's been sitting in that chair as solemn as an owl ever since Bolsover and his asinine deputation cleared off. Wharton's cogitations ought to be valuable. What was he thinking about?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, I don't know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton flushed a little.

"I think Mauly would find it jolly difficult to tell you all what I was thinking about."

"Oh!"

"For the simple reason that I wasn't thinking about anything; and, anyhow, if I— My hat! What's that?"

Thump, thump, thump!

There was a regular volley of kicks and thumps on the study door, and Johnny Bull leapt across the room and turned the key.

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The next instant Billy Bunter rolled into the study, and collapsed on the floor.

"Hallo! What's up?"

"Oh-h-h!" groaned Bunter.

The chums of the Remove crowded round the fat junior anxiously.

"What's the matter, Billy?" exclaimed

"The—the masked man!" hissed the Harry Wharton. "Are you ill?"

Owl of the Remove. "He's—he's here! Quick! Shut the door! Lock it! Bolt it! Barricade it!"

"What?"

"Don't ask questions!" roared Bunter. "Barricade yourselves in! We shall be murdered in our beds if you don't!"

"But we aren't in bed, you idiot!"

Billy Bunter crawled up from the floor and sat down in an armchair which Johnny Bull dragged forward for the purpose.

"We're in deadly danger!" hissed Billy Bunter. "The masked man has been in Study No. 7!"

"What?"

"He held a pistol to my head!"

"Good heavens!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Are you telling the truth, Bunter, or are you romancing?"

"It's Gospel truth!" grunted Billy Bunter. "As sure as I'm standing here!"

"But you're sitting here, you fat dummy!" growled Bob Cherry. "Come on, let's have the story! It's no good getting excited now! You're quite safe here, whatever may have happened."

"I—I was sitting in my study all alone, when the masked man sprang in."

"Go on!"

"Hands up!" he said. "Your money or your life!"

"Sure it wasn't 'Your money or your wife?'" said the facetious Bob.

"Dry up, Cherry!" growled Harry Wharton. "Don't rag Bunter now. He's evidently had a fright. Go on, Billy! Let's have the whole yarn!"

"Hands up!" he shouted. "And shell out all your food and money!"

"Well?"

"Then he clapped a pistol to my head, and what could I do but comply with his demands? I was in exactly the same predicament as Gossy and Mrs. Mimble."

"But they had some money," said Frank Nugent. "What did he do when he found you hadn't any?"

Billy Bunter blinked at the chums of the Remove.

"But I did have some!" he grunted. "I had to hand over all the postal-orders I've received just lately."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, you fellows, there's nothing to laugh at. I swear on my honour as a Bunter the masked man has been in my study, and has gone only a minute or so."

"Why didn't you follow him or raise the alarm?"

"He said if I moved away from the corner for five minutes he would shoot. How was I to know that he wasn't waiting in the passage for me?"

"H'm!"

"Fortunately, there wasn't any food in the place. I offered him—er—I mean, he had a look at an old tin of sardines, but he wouldn't touch that."

"What sort of chap was he?"

Billy Bunter paused to think.

"Well, surely you must know what sort of man he was. Was he tall?"

"Yes, very."

"Did he have a blue suit on and a soft hat?"

"He—he might have done."

"Well, couldn't you see, you fat dummy?"

"He had a sort of cloak on, but I think he had a blue suit on."

"Oh, my hat, this information isn't much good! Quelch must be told about it at once. Just scoot down to see whether he is about, Bob, old man!"

"Right-ho!"

Bob Cherry flew out of the study, and the chums waited anxiously for his return.

"Oh, this has made me feel so faint!" gasped Billy Bunter. "Can you give me a tart or a piece of cake—something to go on with?"

"All right, you fat toad!" laughed Harry Wharton. "We've got a cake in the cupboard. Just hand it out, Franky!"

Frank Nugent placed a big plum-cake on to the table, and Billy Bunter drew his chair up and set to. The cake rapidly disappeared, but before he could consume the last slice Bob Cherry bounced into the study with Mr. Quelch at his heels.

"What is all this about?" asked the Form-master. "Bunter, I understand that the masked man has paid a visit to you in Study No. 7. Is that right?"

"Yes, sir. He came into the study whilst I was there by myself, and he held a pistol up to my head and took all my money from me."

"Good heavens, boy! What a dreadful experience for you to go through. Apart from threatening you, did he do anything else?"

"N-no, sir; but it's jolly bad luck on me to have all my money taken from me. I only received the postal-order this morning. It was from one of my titled relations."

There was a snigger from the juniors present. They knew all about Bunter's postal-order. It had whiskers on it many terms ago. Billy Bunter was always expecting a postal-order, but it never turned up.

"How much was the postal-order for, Bunter?" said Mr. Quelch somewhat sharply. He, too, knew all about that postal-order.

"I think it was for five pounds, sir."

"A five-pound postal-order!" said Mr. Quelch. "Nonsense, Bunter. I have never even heard of a postal-order for five pounds. Do you mean five shillings?"

"I—I forgot to look, sir. I only just glanced at it; but as I was expecting a postal-order for five pounds from one of my titled relations, I thought that that was the one."

"Don't talk such rubbish, Bunter! Tell me, now, how long ago was it since the masked man was in Study No. 7?"

"It is more than ten minutes now, sir," said Harry Wharton. "Bunter says the man made him stand in the corner of the study for five minutes whilst he got clear. Directly the five minutes was up Bunter dashed in here."

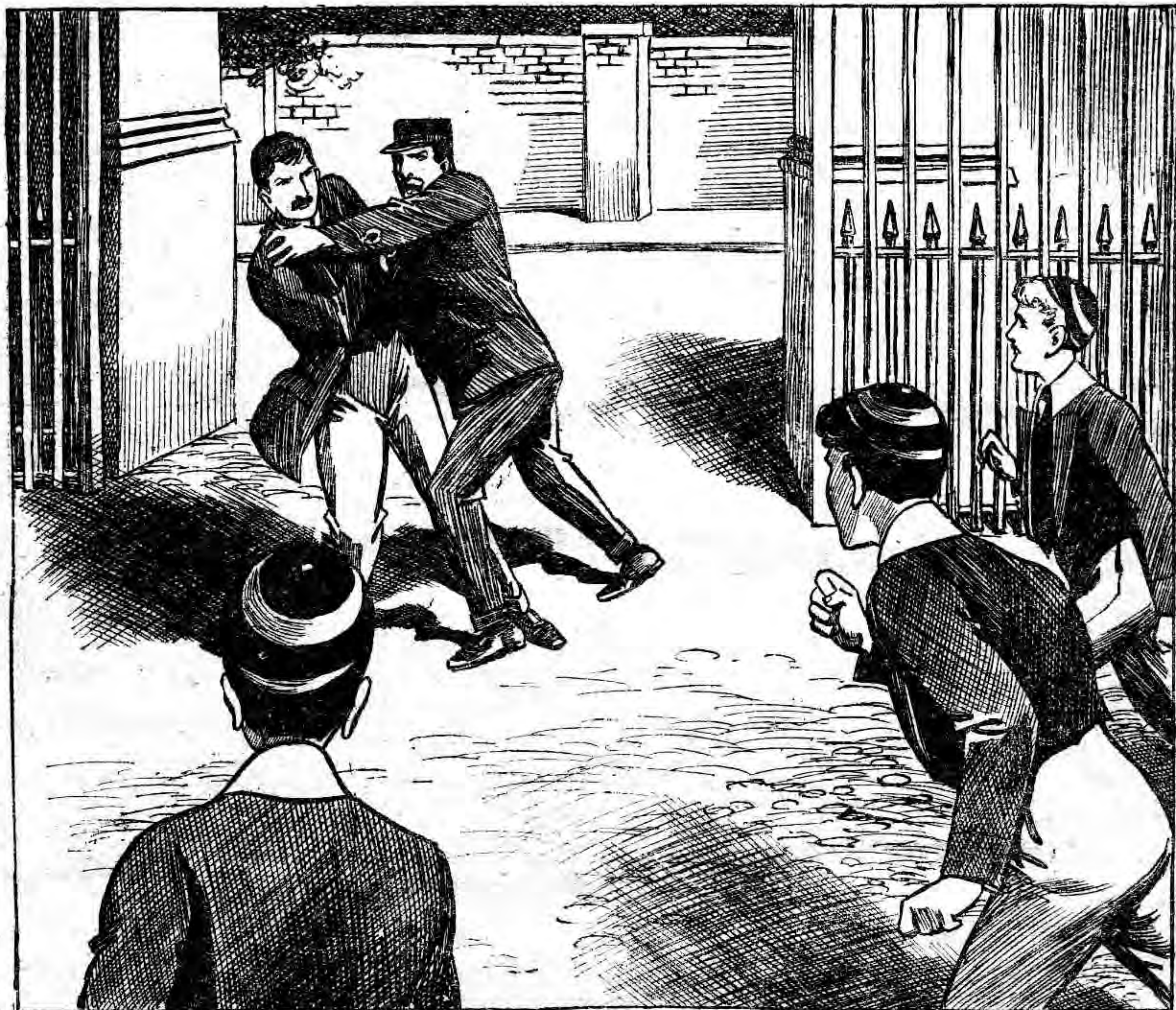
"Ten minutes!" muttered Mr. Quelch. "Ten precious minutes have been wasted. The scoundrel must still be in the school buildings, as we have the entrance-doors guarded by prefects. There is also a police-inspector from Scotland Yard in the school grounds. The man cannot get away!"

"Good, sir!"

"You boys are not to run any absurd risks. If the villain threatens anyone with firearms he is to surrender himself immediately. Dr. Locke will have no tragedy enacted at Greyfriars by foolish ardour on the part of the pupils."

"But if we all tackle him, sir?"

"Not even then," said Mr. Quelch firmly. "The man cannot possibly escape now. The whole school is surrounded by masters and prefects, and



Two men were struggling fiercely in one another's arms, and one of the combatants was a police inspector! "Come along!" cried Harry Wharton. "Back up, Remove!" The juniors dashed down the drive in the direction of the struggle. (See Chapter 7.)

Mr. Prout is stationed on the road with his scatter-gun."

"My hat!"

"Now, Bunter, my boy, have you any further information which I can convey to Inspector Wilton of Scotland Yard?"

"Yes, sir; the man said that he was living in the crypt, and I am to take him some food this afternoon."

"That sounds like a blind," murmured Mr. Quelch. "It is not likely the villain would volunteer such vital information if it were true. He would be certain that a search would be made at once."

"Rather, sir!" said Harry Wharton.

"Now, Wharton, you can notify all the members of the Remove that they may leave their studies in order to search the school building. They are on no account to leave the building itself. If anyone disobeys that order he will be very severely punished."

"Right, sir!"

"As for you, Bunter, you had better rest in your own study. You have been through a very trying time, and now you must have complete rest."

"All right, sir," said Billy Bunter. "May I go down to Mrs. Mimble's for a snack?"

"Certainly not, Bunter! Anyway, the school shop is closed for the present whilst Mrs. Mimble is recovering from her very unpleasant experience."

And Mr. Quelch left the study and closed the door behind him.

"My hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "This is a funny sort of morning. Blessed if it ain't!"

"Well, get ready, you fellows. We had better arm ourselves with cricket-stumps. Get them out, Franky, whilst I go and warn the rest of the studies."

"Right-ho, Harry! Go ahead!"

And Harry Wharton hurried along the Remove-Form passage.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Found Out!

MR. QUELCH stood and watched the scene as the Remove Form fellows streamed out of their studies into the passage.

Harry Wharton had hurried along from one study to another and briefly told the juniors that Bunter had been held up in Study No. 7, and it was believed the masked man was still in the school building.

"Turn out!" cried the captain of the Remove. "Mr. Quelch says the place is to be searched."

Most of the juniors were beginning to get fed up with the morning's inactivity. They did not quite approve of being

confined to their studies. It didn't seem good enough.

"Why can't Quelch let us join in the man-hunt outside?" growled Wibley. "What's the use of leaving it to a crowd of masters and prefects?"

"Simply offering the masked man his freedom!" grunted Dick Rake in response.

And so when Harry Wharton arrived with the exciting news, his announcement was received with cheers and much jubilation.

"Not so much noise!" shouted Mr. Quelch from the end of the passage. "Will you keep quiet, Redying? Your shouting may be heard by the man we are searching for, and he may escape in consequence!"

The shouting and hubbub subsided somewhat at this, but Harry Wharton was bombarded with questions.

"Now, then!" shouted Mr. Quelch. "Silence everywhere! A masked man is believed to be in the school buildings. A general search will be made by the members of the Remove. In the event of any boy coming across this villain no foolhardy action must be taken. The man is believed to be in possession of firearms, so if he is found an alarm is at once to be raised. The man is not likely to fire on a whole group."

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Some of the more nervous members of the Remove trembled a little at Mr. Quelch's words. There were certainly a few boys not anxious to come face to face with the masked man.

"Why don't they call out the troops?" said Stott.

"Or the police?" added Snoop. "Why should we be expected to do their dirty work for them? My people don't pay my fees for that sort of thing!"

"Nor mine!" growled Stott. "Blessed scandal, I call it!"

"Now, every second of time is valuable!" cried Mr. Quelch. "Many precious minutes have already been lost, and the man may have been able to make good his escape!"

"We're all ready, sir!" said Harry Wharton.

"Very well, then, my boys, you may start. You must explore the whole building."

"Hurrah!"

The Removites dashed away in every direction. Harry Wharton & Co. kept together, and made for the corridor above them.

They started at the end study, and Bob Cherry flung open the door and looked in. Two Fifth-Formers were seated inside, and they looked up from the books they were reading with surprise on their faces.

"What do you want?" snapped Hilton.

"Got any strangers in with you?" cried Bob Cherry. "Mr. Quelch wants to know."

"No, you young idiot!" growled Hilton. "Get outside!"

Bob Cherry grinned and slammed the door to.

"Nothing doing!" he laughed. "I'll try the next. Perhaps the great Horace Coker's at home!"

"Don't rattle the dummy!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "He always gets very touchy when he's called on!"

"Trust your Uncle Robert!" said Bob Cherry, giving Coker's study door a terrific kick, and then turning the handle before the occupant could possibly answer the summons. "Hallo, Coker!"

"What the dickens do you want, you cheeky young swab?" roared Coker.

The worthy Bob Cherry gave a pleasant grin at the great Fifth-Former.

"Don't get waxy, Coker, old sport!" he said. "We're only asking for information."

"Eh? What do you want?"

"Have you got a visitor in your study?"

"No, you idiot, I haven't. He's just gone a few minutes ago!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Here we are, you fellows! Right on the scent at the first kick-off!"

The Removites crowded into Horace Coker's study.

"Have you been held up, Coker?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Of course I haven't, you young fat-heads! Who said that I had been held up?"

"Well, you said you'd had a visitor."

"So I have, and he told me how you kids in the Remove had been spoofed!"

"Eh?"

"Temple's told me all about it," explained Coker. "You kids in the Remove have got to sing small at last. You must give points to Temple over this."

"What?"

"I should have liked to have seen that fat pig of yours being held up by a spoof masked man. Ha, ha, ha! It was a jolly good wheeze of Temple's!"

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Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances.

"My giddy aunt!" gurgled Bob Cherry. "Bunter's yarn is all tommy rot!"

"Spoofed!" spluttered Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the great Horace Coker. "It must have been jolly funny, and I think you fellows ought to go and hide somewhere and not come inviting yourselves into other fellows' studies. You've been properly done by Temple, and now you can clear out!"

"Are you rotting, Coker?" asked Harry Wharton. "Are you sure Temple told you all that?"

"Of course I am!" snorted Coker. "I thought, by what Temple said, all you kids in the Remove knew perfectly well that you had been spoofed."

There was a roar of anguish from Harry Wharton & Co.

"Temple!" cried Bob Cherry. "Those rotters in the Upper Fourth!"

"Let's go and scrag them!"

The Removites dashed out of Coker's study, and tore along to the Upper Fourth passage.

"Steady!" cried Harry Wharton, when they arrived outside Temple, Dabney, & Co.'s study. "We've got to rag them if Coker's yarn's right; but after all Coker may have been yarning."

"Listen!" muttered Bob Cherry.

A roar of laughter was heard on the other side of the study door, and Harry Wharton held up a warning hand.

"This is one up against those Remove kids!" cried Temple's voice.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the other occupants of the study.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked at one another with flushed faces.

"That's proof enough!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "After them!"

Harry Wharton turned the handle, and the Removites poured into the study in a body.

"Hallo!" cried Temple. "What the dickens do you kids want?"

"You!"

"Another specimen of the Remove manners, I suppose!" remarked Fry. "You rotters never have the decency to knock before entering, I notice!"

"Rats to that!" spluttered Bob Cherry. "We've come for a reckoning!"

"Eh?"

"You've been spoofing Billy Bunter," said Harry Wharton, "and Quelch has swallowed the fat idiot's yarn. He thinks the masked man is in the school."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Scrag them!" cried Bob Cherry.

"Oh, hear us smile!" said Temple.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the members of the Upper Fourth.

"You silly asses!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We're going to have our own back now!"

"Hands off!"

"I don't think!" said Frank Nugent.

"If you bounders think we're going to allow our worthy Form-master to be taken in by that sort of tommy rot, you're making a precious mistake!"

"Hear, hear!" cried the Removites.

"Come on!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Tackle 'em!"

The captain of the Remove darted towards the leader of the Upper Fourth and clutched him affectionately round the neck.

"Get away!" roared the great Temple.

"Rescue, chaps! Buck up!"

"Come on, Remove!"

Bob Cherry made a dash for Phipps, and Lord Mauleverer lent him a hand, and the three went down with a crash. Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull tackled Fry, and as Dabney caught hold of

Harry Wharton by the legs, Hurree Singh went to his leader's rescue.

In a moment the study was in an uproar. The three parties went crashing about in all directions. Phipps gained a momentary advantage, and he sent the worthy Lord Mauleverer flying into the grate.

"By gad!" exclaimed the schoolboy earl, with a howl.

"Come on, Mauly!" cried Bob. "I've got him!"

Mauleverer picked himself up from amongst the tongs and poker and shovel, and once more threw himself into the fray.

"Groogh!" went Phipps, as he found himself lying on his back on the study carpet, and the two victorious Removites sitting on him.

"Rescue!" roared Temple, twisting himself out of Wharton's grasp for a moment.

"I don't think, my worthy and esteemed chump!" exclaimed Hurree Singh, in his weird English. And the dusky nabob threw himself at the panting Temple once more.

Temple sat down with a crash.

"Oh, well tackled, Inky!" cried Bob Cherry. "Ha, ha, ha!"

Temple gave a roar of anguish as his head came in contact with the leg of the table.

"Ow!"

"I apologise to my esteemed and worthy Temple," said Hurree Singh. "I didn't mean to hit your ludicrous head bumpfully."

"Ow, you black rotter!"

"Sit on him, Inky!" laughed Harry Wharton. "We've got 'em beat to a frazzle now!"

All the fight seemed to have left Temple, Dabney, & Co. suddenly, and the spoofers were lying on their backs, panting and puffing, with the laughing Removites sitting on them.

"Now, then!" cried Harry Wharton.

"Do you give us best?"

"No!"

"Do you— Hallo! Who is this?"

The study door opened slowly, and Billy Bunter rolled in, and stood blinking at the scene.

"Here's our fat porpoise!" cried Bob Cherry. "You've just arrived in time to see these bounders get it in the neck for spoofing you, Bunter!"

"Spoofing me?"

"Yes, you silly fat dummy! Your masked friend was the worthy Temple, and your yarn doesn't count now!"

Billy Bunter gave a cough.

"You can get all those postal-orders back now," laughed Bob Cherry. "You'll be able to stand us a feed on the strength of it—I don't think!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Really, Cherry," grunted Billy Bunter, "that's very good of you! Was—was it really Temple?"

"Of course it was, you fat owl! It is only a dummy like you who could be taken in like that!"

Billy Bunter blinked angrily through his big spectacles.

"You rotter, Temple!" he said. "You beastly bounder! You'd better hand over all those postal-orders you took! Come on! No hanky-panky! Hand 'em over!"

"What?"

"It was nearly ten pounds, I believe," said Bunter. "As a matter of fact, I hadn't counted them up. Anyhow, we'll call it ten pounds. Hand it over!"

Temple gave a roar.

"You fibbing fat toad!" he exclaimed.

"Do you mean to say I took any money off you?"

"Of course you did. Come on; hand it over!"

"Is this true, Temple?" said Harry Wharton. "Did you make Bunter hand anything over?"

"Of course I didn't!" howled Temple angrily. "As though I would steal his rotten money, even if he had any, and that's not likely. The only thing I got out of him was a piece of paper showing the Remove had been properly dished, diddled, and done!"

"Eh?"

"And so you were!" roared Temple, resuming the struggle. "It was one up for us, and now you kids can clear off!"

"Make him hand over the money!" cried Billy Bunter. "I can tell you pretty plainly, Wharton, that I can't afford to lose ten pounds like that. Besides that, it may have been more than a tenner!"

"I don't believe a word of that, you fat rotter!" growled Harry Wharton.

"Really, Wharton, I—"

"But I do believe you'd write down anything these bounders would dictate to you. That's a dangerous sort of document for our friend Temple to have."

"Rather!" cried the Removites.

"Are you going to hand it over quietly, Temple?" said Harry Wharton.

"No, you rotter!"

"Then we shall have to take it! Where is it?"

"Where you won't find it in a hurry!" roared Temple. "Leggo!"

"Perhaps," laughed Harry Wharton.

"Can you hold the bounder, Inky?"

"Yes, my worthy chum," replied the nabob. "I can manage the esteemed and ludicrous Temple."

Harry Wharton leapt to his feet, and took a bottle of ink from the shelf. Temple watched the proceedings, and his face flushed with anger as he realised the captain of the Remove's intentions.

"Look here, Wharton!" spluttered Billy Bunter. "This isn't quite good enough, you know. I tell you I've come here to get my money back!"

"Rats, Bunter! We don't believe that yarn, so you can get outside."

Harry Wharton drew the cork from the neck of the ink-bottle.

"Really, Wharton—"

"Get outside, porpoise, or I shall pour this ink down your neck instead of Temple's!"

"I—"

"Are you going?" exclaimed Harry Wharton, holding the ink-bottle up. "Or will you have a dose of this?"

Billy Bunter backed towards the study door.

"Look here, Wharton!" he spluttered. "I'm not jolly well going to put up with your beastly bullying! If—"

"I'll count three," interrupted Harry Wharton, "and if you aren't in the passage by then you'll get this lot! One—"

"I'm—"

"Two—"

Billy Bunter glowered at the grim expression in Wharton's face, and then suddenly made up his mind. He rolled across to the door, and the next second he was outside.

"Yah! Cad!" he yelled through the keyhole, and there was a roar of laughter from the rest of the Removites.

"Now then, Temple," laughed Harry Wharton, "where will you have it?"

"Don't you dare!" roared Temple, struggling fiercely in Hurree Singh's firm embrace.

"Hand the paper over!" demanded Wharton. "I think I'll count three with you as well. It seems efficacious. Now

then, where's that rotten document you got out of that fat fraud?"

"I sha'n't tell you!"

"Right-ho, old bean! One—"

"Let me get up!" shrieked Temple.

"Two—"

"I won't tell! I will! I won't—er—I mean, I will!"

"Good!" laughed the captain of the Remove. "Hand it over! Let his hand free, Inky!"

Hurree Singh gave Temple enough freedom to allow him to extract a piece of tattered paper from his jacket-pocket.

"Here you are, you cads!" growled the unhappy Temple.

Harry Wharton took the sheet from him, and opened it out.

"What is it?" cried Bob Cherry. "Sing it out, Harry, old man!"

No. 54.—SIDNEY JAMES SNOOP



At one time one of the worst fellows in the Remove, but now reformed. Has a good chance of becoming one of the popular members of the Form, but is, of course, despised by Skinner and Stott, the two cads with whom he used to be so thick. He has a splendid example before him in the character of Harry Wharton, and may turn out a good fellow in the end. Study No. 11.

The captain of the Remove gave a grin as he glanced at it, and then cleared his throat to read aloud:

"Wearas I, William George Bunter, of Greyfriars Skool, hearby promis to supplie you—'Hallo! What's that?'"

A shrill, piercing whistle sounded through the open study window.

Pheep, pheep, pheep, pheep, pheep!

"A police-whistle!" cried Bob Cherry.

"My hat! It's an alarm!"

The Removites and Upper Fourth-Formers leapt up. Their differences were forgotten in a flash.

"Come on!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"It's outside! Someone wants help!"

The study was empty in a second, and the rival factions were dashing down the stone staircase, with excitement flushing their faces.

Harry Wharton was leading at the bottom of the stairs, and he made for the front hall at full speed.

Pheep, pheep, pheep!

The police-whistle was going full blast, and its shrill call could be heard in all directions. Wharton arrived at the top of the front steps panting for breath, and he gave a cry of surprise at the strange scene being enacted at the end of the drive leading to the school gates.

Two men were struggling fiercely in one another's arms, and one of the combatants was a police-inspector!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Caught at Last!

PHEEP, pheep, pheep!

The inspector was blowing the police-whistle as hard as he could, and the man was making desperate efforts to gain his freedom.

"Come along!" cried Harry Wharton.

"Buck up, Remove!"

"Hurrah!"

The juniors dashed down the drive in the direction of the struggle. They were all feeling a little puffed from the exertion of the disturbance in Temple, Dabney, & Co.'s study, but they still felt ready for a further effort, and, nothing daunted, they dashed in to the rescue of the police-inspector.

The whistle had been dropped by now, and as Harry Wharton arrived the inspector turned round excitedly.

"Come, boy, I'm—I'm—"

The inspector was evidently winded or thoroughly exhausted from the struggle, for he suddenly seemed to crumple up, and collapse to the ground. His assailant appeared bewildered by his good fortune for a moment, but the sudden arrival of Harry Wharton & Co. brought him to his senses.

He looked round wildly.

"Stand back!" he cried.

"Rats!" roared Harry Wharton.

"Come on, Remove! Look out! Catch him!"

Harry Wharton made a grab at the man as he dashed through the group of juniors, but the effort was in vain.

"Don't let him go!" cried the inspector, trying to regain his feet. "After him, my lads!"

The fugitive set off towards the elm trees, and Harry Wharton & Co. gave a whoop as they started in pursuit.

"There he goes!" panted Bob Cherry.

"The scoundrel is making for the old crypt!"

"Keep him in sight!" cried Harry Wharton.

For a moment the man was lost to sight as he ran through the avenue of big elm-trees, then suddenly he was sighted again, and a hue and cry was raised by the pursuers.

"My hat!" roared Frank Nugent.

"There's Gossy! He'll be able to intercept him!"

Gosling, the old school porter, could be seen in the direct path the fugitive was taking. If Gossy only kept his head, and showed a little courage, the man was bound to find himself headed off. But, unfortunately, Gossy's nerves had not recovered from his morning's adventure outside his lodge. In fact, Gossy was not feeling at all courageous, and as he heard the boys' shouts, and looked up to see a desperate-looking man dashing straight towards him, Gosling gave a yell, and took to his heels.

"Elp! 'Elp!" he shouted. "Keep the villain horf!"

"Stop him, Gossy!" yelled Harry Wharton. "Stop him!"

But Gosling wasn't having any. He disappeared in a cloud of dust, and it was

left to the juniors to continue the pursuit of the fugitive.

"He knows the crypt by the look of it!" panted Bob Cherry. "There he goes, the scoundrel!"

The man could be seen twisting and dodging between the piles of ruined stones, and then suddenly he disappeared.

Harry Wharton & Co. continued the pursuit, and by the time they had reached the old ruins they could hear the shouting and clattering footsteps of others who had now joined in the pursuit.

"This was about the spot!" panted Harry Wharton.

"Look, there's an old cellar there! He's gone down there, I bet!" cried Bob Cherry.

The chums of the Remove peered down into the gloom of a deep hole in the ground. There were some broken steps leading down.

"This isn't the deepest cave," said Frank Nugent. "I know this one."

"Hallo, here they come!" cried Bob Cherry.

The police-inspector came panting up, and Wingate and Mr. Quelch arrived next. Then came about half a dozen of the prefects who had been out all the morning searching in vain for the masked man.

"Wharton!" cried Mr. Quelch. "Where is he?"

"We think he's dodged down into this sort of cellar, sir!"

The crowd of prefects peered down.

"Shall I go in and yank him out, sir?" said Wingate, the captain of the school fearlessly.

"No, certainly not, Wingate!" said Mr. Quelch sharply. "I will have no risks run. According to Inspector Wilton here, the man is a very desperate character. Hallo, here is Mr. Prout!"

The Fifth Form master joined the party standing amongst the old ruins of Greyfriars. Mr. Prout was puffing and blowing from his effort of trying to keep up with the pursuers. He had a large sporting gun under his arm, and he looked very ferocious as he came up.

Mr. Prout, in his younger days, had been a fearless hunter of big game in such places as the Rockies, and he was never happier than when he had a gun in his hands. His exploits in those bygone days were wonderful affairs—according to the romantic description of Mr. Prout himself; but there was not a single master or boy at Greyfriars who felt safe when the Fifth Form master was near with a gun in his possession.

"Where is he?" gasped Mr. Prout. "Where is he? Stand aside everybody! I will wing him!"

Mr. Quelch turned in alarm.

"You must take great care, Mr. Prout!" he exclaimed. "The fact that there are so many people around you makes it very unsafe to use your gun."

"Nonsense, my dear Quelch!" replied Mr. Prout. "Where is the man? I will keep him covered!"

"He went down there, sir!" laughed Harry Wharton.

The captain of the Remove had seen Mr. Prout do some extraordinary things with his gun, and he realised that nobody was safe within range.

"Huh!" puffed Mr. Prout. "He's down there, is he? Very well, I will fire a charge and see whether that brings him out."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You mustn't shoot, sir," said the police-inspector, firmly but politely. "We want the man alive. It is illegal to shoot, and I cannot allow it!"

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Mr. Prout blinked angrily through his pince-nez.

"Nonsense, my good man!" he said. "I will bring the dangerous ruffian down. It is time he was accounted for!"

There was a giggle from the juniors standing around, and some of the more nervous backed away slowly.

Mr. Quelch gave a cough.

"I think the inspector's remarks must be properly respected," he said. "It will be a very serious matter if the man is fatally wounded. In fact, it would be a tragedy which must be avoided at all costs. I cannot think for one moment that you will openly disregard his statement. Such a course would not only be illegal, but it is inhuman. The fugitive appears to be cornered now."

"I think it is all nonsense!" rapped out Mr. Prout excitedly, raising his gun to his shoulder. "I will fire one barrel into the cellar. Stand clear!"

"Mr. Prout, I forbid you!"

"Mr. Quelch, I must ask you to stand aside. I am going to fire! Now, then, please—"

"Stop! For Heaven's sake don't fire, mister!"

A hoarse voice rang out from the darkness of the cellar beneath them, and the party stared in amazement. The next moment the scared face of the fugitive peered up at them.

"Hands up!" roared Mr. Prout.

"All right, mister!" whined the man.

"Put them up!" repeated Mr. Prout.

"Another step, and I will not be responsible for what happens!"

The man's hands went up like a flash.

"All right, sir!" cried the inspector.

"I will put the bracelets on him!"

"Very good. I will keep him covered while you do it!" said Mr. Prout fiercely.

"Go along!"

Inspector Wilton clambered down the broken steps, and a moment later the handcuffs were fastened round the man's wrists with a click.

There was a gasp of relief from Mr. Quelch.

"Thank Heaven!" he said fervently.

"Thank Heaven that has been done without bloodshed! Now, Mr. Prout, I must ask you most earnestly to unload that gun. I consider it dangerous."

"Very good, my dear Quelch," replied the Fifth Form master. "I will soon unload it. I consider I was quite justified in shooting. I feel very earnest about it. I say I feel quite justified."

Mr. Prout undid the safety-catch, and unhinged the barrel of the gun from the stock. The next moment he gave a grunt of surprise.

"Good gracious!" he gasped.

"What is it, Prout?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Is there anything wrong?"

"Wrong!" cried Mr. Prout. "Wrong! Why, I should say there is! My gun was not loaded! I cannot account for it. It is inexplicable!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a roar of laughter from the crowd. Even Mr. Quelch joined in, and Mr. Prout's face was a study.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peal upon peal of laughter went up, and even Mr. Prout had to smile at last when he realised what good cause the gathering had for its merriment.

The prisoner in Inspector Wilton's hands gave a shake of annoyance.

"If I'd known that, mister," he said fiercely, turning to his captor, "I'd have made a dash for it, blowed if I wouldn't!"

"Too late, my friend," replied the inspector. "You're wanted for a good many things, I can assure you. Are you

going to tell me where you've put the stolen stuff?"

"No, I ain't! If you want it, you can find it!"

The laughter died away, and Inspector Wilton pushed the man towards Mr. Quelch.

"Can I take the man along to the headmaster's study, sir?" he said. "I'd like to telephone from there for a cab. This man will be lodged at Courtfield police-station for to-night."

"Yes, I would have suggested that," replied Mr. Quelch. "I dare say Dr. Locke would like to see him. And there is the question of the keys and Mrs. Mimble's cashbox. Perhaps if the man can be persuaded to hand the stolen property over, any punishment eventually meted out to him may be lessened if the stuff is returned."

"I can't vouch for that," said Inspector Wilton. "But I don't think the man's willing to reveal the hiding-place of the property. He probably thinks of returning for it after his release. Lead the way, please, sir."

And Mr. Quelch led the procession back to the school building.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Recovered Property.

"AREN'T you coming, Harry?"

Bob Cherry turned to the captain of the Remove, as the procession fell in behind Mr. Quelch and the inspector and his captive.

"Half a second," muttered Harry Wharton. "I've got an idea. Don't clear off yet."

"What's the game?"

The chums of the Remove gathered round Harry Wharton. Most of them were anxious to see the prisoner taken into the Head's presence. After all, they had been to a large degree responsible for his capture, and Frank Nugent, for one, felt conscious that they were likely to lose a certain amount of kudos by not being on the spot when Dr. Locke had the particulars of the capture made known to him.

"We'd better fall in," said Frank.

"Come along, Harry, old scout!"

"Half a minute! I've got an idea!"

"So have I," replied Frank Nugent.

"I've got an idea that we might get a half-holiday given us by the Head when he hears that we captured the scoundrel."

"We should stand a much better chance if we gave Dr. Locke the keys stolen from Gossy, shouldn't we?" said Harry Wharton.

"But we haven't got them, you dummy!"

Harry Wharton grinned.

"No; and nor has that ruffian we've just captured."

"Well?"

"Well, I should say it's a ten-to-one chance on that the bounder has hidden the stolen stuff somewhere in the crypt—wouldn't you?"

"My hat!"

There was a cry of approval from the rest of the Removites at Harry Wharton's suggestion.

"You see," continued the captain of the Remove, "the man knew that he was cornered, so what would be the first thing he would do?"

"Why, hide the stolen spondulicks!" said Bob Cherry.

"That's what I think, for one," continued Harry Wharton. "And I think we should be a howling lot of duffers if we didn't make a search round here before anybody else thinks of it."

"Good egg!"

"So come on, you fellows!" laughed Harry Wharton. "I've got some matches."

"So have I!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "We'd better split up. We shall stand more chance."

The matches were rationed out between them, and one by one the Removites disappeared into the various cavities dotted about the ruins of the old crypt of Greyfriars.

Greyfriars had once been a monastery, and the monks of olden times had elaborated a wonderful scheme of underground passages and cellars. Some of these had fallen in now, and a number of the passages were completely choked up by fallen masonry; but there was still plenty of room left for a desperate man to hide anything he desired.

Harry Wharton ran down the steps leading to the cellar the hunted man had gone to earth in. He struck a match and peered into the gloom of the vault.

"Work round quickly, Franky!" he cried. "Keep your eyes open for loose bricks or stones!"

"Right-ho! Hallo, who is that?"

A ringing cheer was heard from above ground, and the two chums waited expectantly. A few seconds later and Bob Cherry's cheery voice was heard.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Are you down there, Harry, old scout?"

"Here we are!" cried Harry Wharton. "What's up?"

"We've got a find!" laughed Bob Cherry. "We've found Gossy's rotten keys lying in the grass."

"Good man!" cried Harry Wharton. "I thought there was something in the idea. Carry on, there's a good chap!"

Bob Cherry went away whistling

merrily, and Frank Nugent struck another match and walked slowly round the vault. He gave a muttered exclamation at last.

"Hallo!" he cried. "Come and look here, Harry, old man!"

"Found it, Franky?"

Harry Wharton stumbled across the rough floor of the cellar and joined his chum, who was pulling at a big, solid-looking stone wedged into the wall.

"This looks as though it has been interfered with recently," he said. "What do you think?"

Harry Wharton struck a second match and peered up at the stone.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed. "There's no doubt about it. Look! You can see somebody's been hitting it with another stone to wedge it in harder."

"My hat, so they have!"

The two Removites dug their fingernails frantically into the crevice round the stone, and very slowly the thing began to give.

"Stick it, Harry!"

"Right-ho! She's giving now!"

The massive stone suddenly gave, and there was a shout of warning from the two juniors as it crashed down on to the floor of the cellar. There was a clattering noise as it rolled over and over, and for a moment the boys were in darkness, as the cloud of dust that arose put out the matches.

"All right, Franky!" cried Harry Wharton. "I'll light a match!"

There was a shout from Frank Nugent. "Hurrah!" he yelled. "It's here! We don't want a light, old scout!"

"What do you mean?"

"I've my hand in the hole!" laughed Frank. "Hurrah! This feels like a bundle of money!"

"It must be the Courtfield post-office money."

"My hat, yes!"

Harry Wharton struck a match at last, and the light revealed the stolen property safely tucked away in the cavity in the wall. Frank Nugent stuffed the money into his pockets, and handed Harry Wharton a large tin box.

"It's Mrs. Mumble's cashbox!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "My, but this is a scoop for the Remove! Come along!"

The two juniors dashed out into the open again, and shouted loudly for the remainder of the party. The juniors popped up their heads from various holes in the ground.

"Come on!" yelled Frank Nugent.

"We've got it!"

There was a cry of surprise from the juniors as they rushed up.

"My hat!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "That's jolly good if you like! The whole blessed lot in one place, and hardly any trouble. Hurrah!"

"Fall in, you fellows!" laughed Harry Wharton. "This is where we call on the Head!"

"Not half!"

The excited juniors dusted themselves down, and set off without any further delay. They met small knots of Greyfriars fellows standing about waiting to see the Courtfield cab arrive in order to take away the masked man, and to these



This is a small line drawing of the Plate to be Given Free. Actual size of Plate with engraving is 7½ inches by 10 inches. The title of the picture is "Boy, 1st Class, JOHN TRAVERS CORNWELL, V.C. The Battle of Jutland, May 31st—June 1st, 1916. From the Picture by F. O. Salisbury, painted for the Admiralty on board H.M.S. Chester." The closing date of this offer will be published in this paper in a week or so. No application will be accepted after that date.

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the Removites imparted the information of their find.

News of their scoop spread like wild-fire, and by the time the little party found themselves standing outside Dr. Locke's study practically everybody in the school had heard the astounding news.

"Now, then," laughed Harry Wharton, "everybody ready?"

"What-ho!" said the worthy Bob Cherry. "Push in!"

The captain of the Remove gave a sharp rap at the door, and Dr. Locke's voice rang out for them to enter.

The juniors crowded in with flushed faces.

"Wharton," cried Dr. Locke, "what does this mean? Can't you see that I'm engaged? There is Inspector Wilton here with his prisoner. Whatever you have to say can wait. Leave this room at once! Now, then, my man, you say you refuse to tell us where the stolen keys are?"

"Yes!" replied the prisoner sullenly.

Bob Cherry had Gosling's massive bunch of keys in his hand, and he grinned as he gave them a loud chink.

Their rattling rang through the crowded room, and Dr. Locke turned towards the juniors angrily.

"Wharton," he cried, "I told you to leave this room at once! How dare you disobey my command!"

"I'm sorry, sir," said Harry Wharton. "But we've some good news for you. We've found the keys."

"What?"

"Here they are, sir! Cherry found them in the grass quite close to where the prisoner was captured. Hold 'em up, Bob!"

Bob Cherry held the keys up, and as the prisoner saw them he gave a muttered oath.

"That's not all, sir," continued Harry Wharton, before the Head could speak. "We've found Mrs. Mible's cashbox and—"

"What's that?" roared the prisoner, leaping to his feet. "You young hounds have—"

"Sit down!" snapped Inspector Wilton, pushing the man back into the chair.

"And we've found the money stolen from Courtfield post-office," continued Harry Wharton. "The man hid the things behind a big stone in one of the cellars of the crypt. The place we caught him in first."

Inspector Wilton gave a gasp of astonishment, as the recovered articles were laid out on Dr. Locke's desk.

The headmaster coughed.

"I hardly know what to say, Wharton," he said. "It seems that you have all been most astoundingly astute in all

your actions to-day. The inspector has described to me how you went to rescue him at the school gates, and how well you ran the scoundrel to earth. He would never have been taken if you had not have kept him in view. You have all proved yourselves a very great credit to the school—"

"Hear, hear!" said Inspector Wilton.

"And I thank you from the bottom of my heart."

There were a few silent moments in the study, and the prisoner broke it by suddenly shaking the chains on his handcuffs. The noise his action made sounded horrid in the ears of the juniors, and they looked at the captive in sorrow.

Next Monday.

THE . . SILENT STRIKE!

By

Frank Richards.

Order Early!

"You must go now, my boys," said the Head at last. "I shall have something to say about this later on."

"Thank you, sir!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Come on, you fellows!"

Harry Wharton & Co. trooped out of the Head's study and went along to No. 1 in the Remove Form passage, where they had to relate to visitor after visitor all the Head had said to them.

The hold-up at Greyfriars School had been a very sudden affair, but there had been plenty of excitement whilst it lasted, and the excitement had certainly not done the chums of the Remove any harm!

THE END.

(Another grand long story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled "The Silent Strike!" Order your copy of the MAGNET early.)

THE EDITOR'S CHAT.

For Next Monday!

"THE SILENT STRIKE!"

By Frank Richards.

In this grand, long complete tale of the chums of Greyfriars, we find that Dr. Locke and Mr. Quelch are summoned to London on business of an educational nature, and Mr. Hacker is left in charge of Greyfriars. For a long time past, Mr. Hacker has considered that Greyfriars was being controlled in quite the wrong manner, and as soon as the reins of headmaster are handed over, he endeavours to bring in his own pet schemes. Harry Wharton & Co., in common with the rest of the Remove, strongly resent the situation created by the temporary Head, and in

"THE SILENT STRIKE!"

the whole of Greyfriars demonstrates their dislike of the new routine.

HOLIDAYS.

It may seem early days to begin talking of holidays, but you know how time flies. No sooner is Christmas over than comes the thought of Easter. There is a good little group of days at Easter, and if the weather is fine the country is the place to spend them.

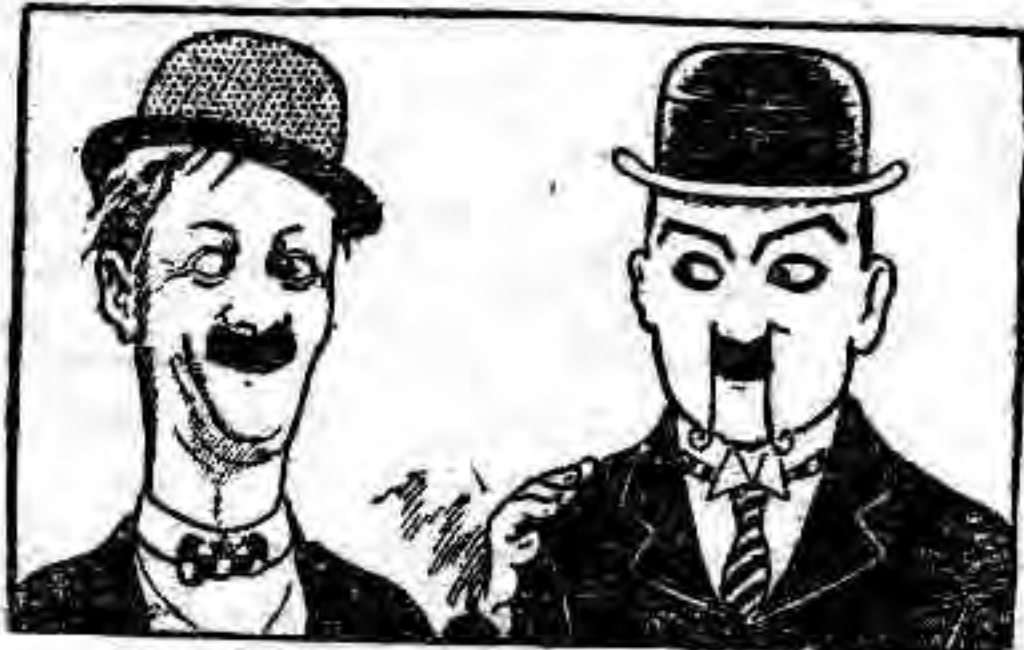
If the weather is fine. Pity, perhaps, Easter is not more certain. Fine holidays mean double holidays. But there are occasions when the first holiday of the year turns out all right, with bright sunshine and blue skies. If this is the way of things this season, I suppose many of my Liverpool chums will be making their way to New Brighton or Blackpool.

If you live in Birmingham, you bike down to Stratford-on-Avon, and look round the Shakespeare country. It is wonderful how pretty Shuttery, and that part, can look in springtime; and then, whatever quarter you live, the spring somehow gives a new charm to the scene, as we all know. It is like beginning again. It is the same everywhere—up north in Glasgow, down south in sleepy Sussex, where the hops grow, and the woods are as fine as anywhere in the old country.

Your Editor

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THE SECRET OF THE SILENT CITY.

Our Grand New Serial.

By DAGNEY HAYWARD.



There came another violent pull at the rope which jerked the chimpanzee to the very brink of the water. Dick gave a cry and leapt forward. Then he made a desperate cut at the hemp with his knife. (See page 20.)

THE FIRST CHAPTERS.

Mr. Sherwell, producer of the Southern Film Company, accompanied by his staff, set out in search of the Silent City, which is situated in the wilds of South America.

The staff includes Tom Rackett, the operator; Tubby Bouncer, a comedian; Dick Grainger, Mike Rafferty, and Larry, three boy chums; two servants, Tung Wu, a Chinaman, and Quambo, a nigger; also three animals, Augustus, an elephant, Wonga, a chimpanzee, and Boris, a boarhound.

Mr. Sherwell's chart is incomplete, and he has only a vague idea as to the position of the Silent City.

Augustus, the elephant, becomes troublesome, and causes a quarrel between Tubby Bouncer and Tung Wu.

(Now read on.)

A Startling Discovery.

THE path had become very steep by now, and the forest undergrowth was so thick that it was impossible to see more than a yard or two on either side. Mr. Sherwell kept his eyes constantly on the compass, for the rough native path was growing more and more indistinct with every step they took.

He had just called a halt to take their bearings more accurately when, with a crash of broken twigs and branches, Augustus arrived at the head of the expedition.

"Hi, hi! Stop!" shouted all the boys, for the great elephant was ploughing on as though to show the way himself. "Stop him, Quambo!"

But there was no need for Quambo to do anything. Augustus heard the shouts, and stopped of his own accord. Indeed, he pulled up so suddenly that Tubby Bouncer, who had been taking his ease

on the great beast's head, received the jolt of his life, shot forward, and before he could save himself was sliding down Augustus' trunk.

"Hi! Help! Yarroo!" he shouted. "Save me, you chaps!"

A shout of laughter went up from everyone. As Tubby often remarked, a fat man gets little sympathy.

Even Augustus was amused. As Tubby neared the end of his trunk, the elephant gave it the merest flick in the world, but it was enough to send the stout comedian spinning like a ball into a great mass of undergrowth a few yards ahead.

"Well done, Augustus!" laughed Larry. "That'll teach him to make a switchback of your trunk!"

"Faith, and I'm thinking it is a switch forward he got!" said Mike. "But where has the haythen got to?"

A mysterious silence had followed the crash with which Tubby had fallen into the bushes. Everyone expected to hear loud complaints and groans—but there was not a sound. Was he hurt? Had the joke been too rough a one?

Dick jumped forward and ran to the scene of Tubby's crash. The next moment he gave a loud shout.

"Hi, come here! Tubby's gone—there's a big hole in the ground!"

Everyone rushed to the place. It was as Dick said. The undergrowth at this spot simply covered a hole in the ground some six feet across, and how deep they could not tell, for the bottom was lost in black and mysterious gloom.

"Give him a shout, Dick!" said Mr. Sherwell. "Maybe he is hurt, but he will know we are going to help him."

"Hi! Are you there, Tubby?"

There was no answer.

"Try again!" said the producer.

This time it was Mike who shouted.

"Hi, Tubby, you spalpeen!" he yelled.

"Are ye quite dead? If ye are, say so, and we'll fetch your corpse and make ye well again!"

As though in answer to this encouragement, far away in the darkness they heard a sort of groaning reply.

"He's alive!" cried Mr. Sherwell. "Thank goodness for that, anyway! The thing is we must get down to him at once!"

Before anyone could make a suggestion, Wonga, the clever chimpanzee, had taken the matter in hand. Passing the end of his long rope round a stout tree-trunk, he flung the remainder into the hole, and in a second was out of sight.

"One of you lads had better follow him," said Mr. Sherwell. "Tubby may be badly hurt, and Wonga is none too gentle when he gets excited."

"Let me go, sir!" cried Larry. "I've got a torch here, and I'll shout up if we want any help."

"All right, my boy! Down with you!"

Flashing the torch as he descended, Larry found that about ten feet from the ground the hole turned to the right, something like a chimney, and, floored with sand, descended at a gentle slope for another fifteen or twenty feet. At the bottom sat Tubby, who had rolled down, and was far more scared than hurt. By him stood Wonga, chattering and grimacing, evidently telling the fat man, in chimpanzee talk to pull himself together, as no harm was done.

"Cheer up, Tubby! It's all right! We'll get you aloft in no time!" said Larry.

"I've broken every bone in my body! I'm dead sure of that!" grumbled Tubby Bouncer. "My father always said I was a fool, and I do believe he was right, or I should never have come on this silly excursion!"

"What is that sparkling behind?" interrupted Larry suddenly. "My eye! It's Aladdin's cave we have tumbled into! Just look at that, Tubby!"

Larry flashed his powerful torch around, and even Wonga gasped in wonder.

It seemed as though the whole place was sparkling with myriads of diamonds!

They were in a huge cavern, so huge that the end was lost in obscurity; but from the walls, from the roof, from the floor itself, the torch glare lit up ten thousand jewels, which glittered and sparkled with every colour of the rainbow.

It was a wonderful sight! Tubby forgot his woes, and Wonga stared about him with great, wondering eyes. Only Larry had the presence of mind to shout to the others to come down.

In a few minutes Mr. Sherwell, Dick and Mike, together with Tom Rackett and his camera, were all in the mysterious cavern, and gazing at the marvellous sight before them.

"Shure, and our fortunes are made!" gasped Mike at last. "There's enough diamonds here to buy up ould Oireland ten times over!"

"I'm sorry to disappoint you, Mike," said Mr. Sherwell, "but I am afraid this is all more beautiful than valuable! This is a crystal cave, boys—certainly the finest I have ever seen, but there is nothing valuable in it."

"I guess it is worth a picture, sir," said Tom Rackett.

"Rather! Can you manage it with that new flashlight of yours?"

"Yes," said Tom. "I'll set up the jigger, and you'll see how well it works!"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 630.

Whilst the boys went rambling about the cavern and looking at the wonderful crystals which clustered from every point, Tom Rackett set up the stand for his camera.

Needless to say, it was a machine of the very latest pattern, and fitted with various new devices and appliances which had been invented either by Tom or by Mr. Sherwell. Chief amongst these was the new "Lightning" flash-lamp—a wonderful contrivance which, casting a light of immense power, allowed perfect photos to be taken in the darkest places. Here was a splendid opportunity of testing its virtues.

"Look out, you fellows!" shouted Tom, as soon as he was ready. "I am going to show a glare!"

"Come along, boys!" answered Mike. "Sure and could Tom will be blinding us so that we can't see our own eyes."

"Ready—go!"

Tom turned on the switch, and instantly the whole cavern was lit up with a terrific white light, which seemed to enter every nook and cranny. The million facets of the crystals reflected it in dazzling brilliance. Everyone in the cave shut their eyes involuntarily—everyone, that is, but Tom, who stood by the clicking camera, shading his eyes with his hand. Suddenly he gave a shout, which made them all jump.

"Guv'nor, look! By gum! What a picture?"

Instantly all eyes were opened, and indeed it was a picture before them—a picture such as no human eye had ever seen before.

From behind great crystal boulders, from crevices in the walls, from unsuspected holes and corners, strange forms were crawling towards them, fascinated and stunned by the sudden, searching light.

Hideous, toad-like creatures with bloated cheeks and scintillating eyes; loathsome centipedes as large as rats; disgusting, crab-shaped reptiles with waving tentacles and atrocious jaws; foul things which had lived since the making of the world in noisome darkness—all were crawling towards the dazzling light, the like of which they had never seen before. Many were blind, yet this piercing light seemed to penetrate their senses like magic, and force them to approach.

"For goodness' sake let us get away!" gasped Mr. Sherwell. "Tom—Tom, come away at once; never mind the pictures!"

"Half a mo, sir!" answered Tom imperturbably. "There never was such a picture taken before, and I am not going to miss it just for the sake of a few creepy-crawlies!"

"Look—look at the water!" cried Larry. "It is alive—look at it, sir!"

At the far end of the cavern, unseen until the bright light of the lightning flare shone upon it, was a large pool, the farther bank of which was lost in the darkness.

Even as Larry was speaking they saw the surface of this pool lashed into a foam. Then, slowly arising from its depths a dreadful head appeared, a head with moving tentacles and two strange eyes, at the ends of stalks like those of a snail.

Slowly but steadily this head advanced towards the land, and as the camera continued clicking the gruesome, prehistoric reptile drew itself to land, and, like the rest of the dreadful inhabitants of the cave, approached the light.

"What is it?" said Dick to Mr. Sherwell.

"Some prehistoric beast," murmured the producer. "I am afraid of it—it means mischief!"

Indeed, the reptile looked as if it did. The two eyes at the end of the waving stalks roamed hither and thither, comprehending the whole party in their baleful glare, and apparently undisturbed by the fierce beams of the lightning flash-lamp. With a short, waddling stride it half-crawled, half-walked towards them, lashing its dreadful, scaly tail furiously against the stones on the cavern floor.

Suddenly it gave a huge and terrible roar.

Even Tom Rackett could stand it no longer. Switching off the light and whipping the camera under his arm, he followed the others in a mad dash for the opening, and lighted by the flash of the torches, they were soon clambering up the rope which Wonga had originally let down from the surface.

"My hat! That was a near shave!" said Dick. "I shouldn't like to meet that gentleman again!"

"Even Tubby, he runnee!" grinned Tung Wu, who had not ventured down. "Me laughee to see Tubby runnee!"

"Not so much of it!" growled the fat man. "You'd have been laughing on the other side of your face if you had been down there, you Chink!"

"Anyhow, it is the first film ever taken of a prehistoric creature!" said Mr. Sherwell. "Why, if we went home to-morrow we should have got the best photo ever taken! Tom, you are a hero!"

"Yes; it was worth it," said Tom, with a glow of satisfaction. "I bet that'll lick some of the American startlers, Mr. Sherwell."

"Bejabers, what's that?" cried Mike, as a strange form came ambling towards them from the jungle. "Well, bedad, if it's not Wonga, all dressed up and nowhere to go!"

Indeed it was Wonga, very full of smiles, and very proud of a new Stetson hat which he was wearing at a rakish tilt. He was also brandishing a fine silk handkerchief, and obviously felt himself quite the chimpanzee gentleman.

"Whose is it?" asked Sherwell. "Let me have a look!"

Wonga, who understood pretty well everything which was said to him, stepped forward and handed over his new hat with a flourish.

Mr. Sherwell's face grew grave as he looked inside it.

"Walker, Chicago," he read. "Who has an American hat? No one, have they? Is it yours, by any chance, Rackett?"

"No, sir; I don't like either American films or hats," said Tom.

"Where did you find it, Wonga?" asked Dick, who was Wonga's chief friend.

For reply, the chimpanzee led the way to a little clearing a few yards farther up the path. Suddenly Tom Rackett leaped forward with an exclamation of surprise, and pounced on a large wooden box. Tearing it open, he gave one glance inside, and turned to Mr. Sherwell.

"Films, sir! A reel of American films!"

"That means there must be another filming company somewhere about here!" said the producer.

"Yes, sir. Look! These are torn films they have thrown away as useless!"

"And this is a hat belonging to one of the party," said Larry, as he fingered Wonga's treasure. "What does it all mean?"

"It means that we have the job of our lives before us! Boys—all you men who are here to help me—this means that an American film party are after the trail of the Silent City. It means that we have got to be the first, we have got to beat them, we have got to secure the films of the Silent City for the Southern Film Company. Are you all ready to help me, and go through with it to the end?"

"Rather!" was the answering shout. "We'll show 'em what we can do!"

A Terrible Disaster!

THE news that they were up against a rival party quickly spread among everyone. There was not a man in the expedition who was not determined to beat the Americans and get to the Silent City first.

Mr. Sherwell resolved to push on with all speed, and before long the cavalcade was well on the move towards the outer fringe of the jungle. Once clear of the thick undergrowth and bigger trees, they began an upward ascent.

Augustus was in front, ready for any emergency, should one arise, and near him were Dick, Mike, Larry, and Wonga, who preferred to walk a little rather than ride. The chimpanzee had linked arms with Dick, who was walking next to Mr. Sherwell.

"Well, boys," asked their leader, "what do you think of your first film expedition?"

"It's just stunning!" replied Larry.

"Bedad," cried Mike, "I'm glad I came, or I shouldn't be here!"

"Spiffing, I call it!" put in Dick. "I wouldn't have missed seeing those beastly prehistoric things in that cavern for worlds! And it will be jolly good sport beating the other party, Mr. Sherwell! I bet we shall be first at the Silent City!"

"There's certainly an element of sport in it," returned Mr. Sherwell; "but, personally, I'd much rather we had no rivals in this game. But it can't be helped. We're up against it, and we'll have to oust the other company somehow."

"We're with you to the last ounce of food and the last cartridge!" cried Larry.

"I should think so!" echoed Dick.

"Begorrah!" said Mike. "If there's no other way of being first, I'll walk in a dead man!"

Now that they were in more open country the party could see the rolling plains on one side, whilst beyond towered great mountains. On their left it was becoming rocky, and the ascent was getting steeper.

The boys caught the hoarse cries of the native guides and mule-drivers, and heard the sharp crack, crack! of the whips as the stubborn mules were urged up the tortuous track.

Presently a deep, reverberating roar broke upon their ears as they toiled up and up.

"What's that?" asked Larry of Mr. Sherwell.

"Some mighty river far below us and hidden from our view," replied the leader. "A pretty big volume of water, too, judging from the noise. When we're a bit higher up, by that clump of trees ahead of us," and he pointed to a dark cluster of growth some yards ahead,

"we'll camp for the night. We've done a good day's march, and we must pitch our tents before nightfall."

The prospect of rest and their first camp in the wilds appealed to the boys tremendously, and they were full of excited interest as to what the night might bring.

When the trees were reached, Mr. Sherwell gave the signal to halt and to prepare camp. Then came a scene of busy activity.

Augustus handled the tent that was to serve the whites as a sleeping-room with tender care. He carried it in his trunk to the spot selected, and then Quambo, with the help of Tung Wu, Tubby Bouncer, Tom Rackett, the boys, and Wonga, tautened the ropes, and very quickly the tent was erected.

Then Wonga made himself useful by unpacking some of the utensils, whilst the boys helped him lay all the places required.

Tung Wu, being an excellent cook, looked after the tuck, whilst the native drivers and guides prepared their own meals. Very soon a happy and merry party were sitting round the camp-fire, talking over the events of the day, and vowing vengeance on the rival film company.

Night had suddenly swooped down on them. A silence, broken only by the surging roar of the torrent far below, fell on everyone. The boys realised they were indeed in the heart of the wilds. Each wondered what the morrow would bring forth.

It was arranged that Tubby Bouncer, Rackett, and Tung Wu should sleep first, and that after six hours the three boys and Mr. Sherwell should turn in.

Dick, Larry, and Mike sat close together, looking into the camp-fire, whilst Mr. Sherwell, a yard or two off, was dozing. Wonga sat cuddled up close to Dick, with his coil of rope wound round his shoulders.

Suddenly Larry bent forward and looked keenly into the darkness beyond the faint light of the fire. Instantly his hand sought his revolver. The others saw his action, and immediately whipped out their weapons.

Dick had seen several small points of gleaming yellow light—wicked little glints that were stationary for a few seconds, then flickered here and there.

"Jaguars!" whispered Dick.

Almost simultaneously with those words he fired right in front of him.

There was an angry snarl, and another flash and report.

"They're on us!" yelled Larry and Mike, springing up.

Then there followed a scene of confusion. Mr. Sherwell, waking from his doze, at once realised the danger, and sang out orders. But the boys had no ears. They were keen with excitement, and meant to kill a jaguar.

"Look out!" shouted Larry to Mike, as a big jaguar loomed out from the blackness and seemed about to spring.

Larry leapt out into the darkness, firing as he sprang. Mike followed close on his heels. Together both boys dashed madly in pursuit of the beast, rushing on without a thought of danger towards the edge of the precipice.

"Begorra!" cried Mike suddenly. "Begorra, Larry, me boy! Look out for the precipice!"

But Larry rushed on, crying out that the wounded jaguar was in front, and must be slain.

Then both boys ran on, firing somewhat at random as they went. Far below they heard the thundering roar of the mighty torrent. But the warning noise fell on deaf ears.

Suddenly Larry stumbled and fell.

Mike made a desperate effort to steady him, but failed.

The next instant, with a cry of terror and despair, Larry toppled over the edge of the abyss!

The Rescue of Larry.

"HELP! Help!" shouted Mike, rushing frantically to the edge of the precipice. "Come here quickly, all of you! Larry has fallen over!"

Aroused by his cries, Mr. Sherwell and Tom Rackett rushed up, followed closely by Dick. In a few words Mike told the others what had happened.

Dick threw himself on the ground and peered over the edge of the precipice into the darkness. Not a sound was to be heard, save the wind howling through the canyon and the rushing of the waters far below.

"Larry!" he shouted. "Hi! Are you there, Larry?"

No answer.

Mr. Sherwell shook his head and turned to Tom Rackett.

"I am afraid it is hopeless," he said. "One can't see in this darkness, but I should say there is a fall of a hundred feet or more."

Just at this moment Quambo arrived on the scene, with Wonga riding on his back.

"Poor Massa Larry!" wailed Quambo. "Him killed quite dead! I lub him so!"

"Don't make that noise," said Mr. Sherwell. "We sha'n't hear him if he should call up after all. Hallo, Wonga! What are you up to?"

But Wonga was too busy to make even his usual chattering reply. He had slipped from Quambo's back, and in a moment had lashed the end of his rope to a jutting piece of rock. Then, with the confidence born of his native jungle, he lowered himself over the precipice and disappeared into the darkness below.

"He has found something," muttered Mike after a while. "Did ye see the rope jerk? Bejabers, I'd give my eyes to see young Larry safe again!"

The rope strained and jerked once again, and presently the chimpanzee's head appeared over the edge. He was chattering with excitement, and began to dance with glee as soon as he had set foot on top.

"He's found him!" cried Mr. Sherwell. "Look! What has he got on his back?"

It was Larry's bandolier—the bandolier which he had hurriedly slipped on at the chance of shooting a jaguar.

Wonga was trying as hard as he could to talk. His wrinkled face was wreathed in smiles, and he was so full of joy that no one could doubt but that Larry was alive.

"Me know what Wonga say!" grinned Quambo. "He say Massa Larry all right. Me go down and fetch him up!"

"Good old Quambo!" cried Mr. Sherwell. "Here's Tom Rackett with some more rope. Take it down with you and tie it to Larry. We will hold the other end and pull him up."

The negro lowered himself over the edge. Wonga leaped on his shoulders, and the couple descended on their errand of rescue.

"Wait a minute!" shouted Dick. "If Larry is alive and well, give the rope three jerks. If you want any help, give four. See?"

"Me savvy!" answered Quambo.

"Me no fool!"

"One!" cried Mike suddenly, as the rope was suddenly pulled violently.

"Two! Three!"

Everyone stood breathless. The rope remained slack.

"Hurrah!" yelled Dick and Mike. "Larry is safe!"

Suddenly there was a long, steady pull. "He is ready for us to haul," said Dick. "Now then, all of you! Come on, Tubby, throw some of your fat into it!"

Eager hands pulled Larry into safety, and Mr. Sherwell gave him a drink of hot tea from his thermos flask.

"Good lad!" he said. "Thank goodness you are safe and sound!"

The rest of the night passed in quiet.

Mr. Sherwell was the first to rise next morning.

"Now, lads," he exclaimed, "let us get down to the water! We must reach the bottom of the canyon before the day is out. Strike camp!"

Adventures of the Trail.

ONCE more the long cavalcade was on the move, making slow but sure progress to the ravine below.

Augustus showed delight as they approached the water, for he felt more at home when passing through the jungle than he did in the heights and plains.

Larry, Dick, and Mike were in front with Mr. Sherwell and Wonga, whilst Tubby Bouncer, perspiring freely, lagged a little behind with the Chinaman.

Tom Rackett was busy as usual with his camera, keeping an ever watchful eye for filming scenes and incidents.

As the party progressed the river changed gradually from a raging torrent, broken by many a rapid and fall, to deep but still waters.

"Mind how you go, boys!" shouted Mr. Sherwell, as Dick and Larry began to get ahead. "Whatever you do, don't fall into the river."

Just as the leader spoke Dick, who for a moment had been standing perilously near the edge of the bank, suddenly gave a cry and sprang aside, while Wonga leapt into the air and, with extraordinary agility, swung himself on to a low tree-branch.

This activity was enforced by a quick and unexpected lash of a dark, scaly tail that had flashed from the water and only just missed Dick and Wonga by a hair's breadth.

"Crocodiles!" gasped Larry. "Look, look!" he shouted. "The river is swarming with them!"

"Keep away from the edge of the stream, boys!" shouted Mr. Sherwell. "If one of those tails caught any of us we shouldn't have time even to say our prayers!"

Boris had begun to bark loudly and protestingly. It was evident that he didn't like crocodiles. Wonga, by way of protest, was chattering and grimacing and shaking one of his fists towards the river, while with his other hand he still held on to his branch.

"I guess I could get a fine film of these crocodiles," put in Tom Rackett, who was itching to be at his "movies." "I think I shall make a short reel of it. Nothing's going to escape my camera if I can help it."

Just at that moment Wonga all unexpectedly leapt from his branch, and as he sprang through mid-air struck Tubby Bouncer, who was nearest to him, full in the face.

"You chimping chimpanzee!" yelled Bouncer, whilst all the others laughed in chorus. "My hat!" he continued, pointing to Wonga, who had now landed on the river's edge. "What ever is the heathen doing?"

Like lightning Wonga uncoiled the rope which was wound round his neck,

and the next instant, with extraordinary accuracy and cunning, he had thrown the looped end towards a huge black snout of a crocodile lying motionless near the bank with open mouth. It was a perfect throw, and the noose encircled the reptile's jaws.

Suddenly the crocodile lashed round and dived. The rope tightened with a

jerk, and Wonga was thrown violently forward, still clinging tightly to the rope.

"By gum!" cried Dick. "What is the little ass doing? He'll be in the river!"

Wonga was chattering and grimacing, immensely pleased with himself, and was hauling away at the rope, which had slackened again, when there came another

violent pull which jerked the chimpanzee to the very brink of the water.

Dick gave a cry and leapt forward. Then he made a desperate cut at the hemp with his knife. The severed end disappeared into the water.

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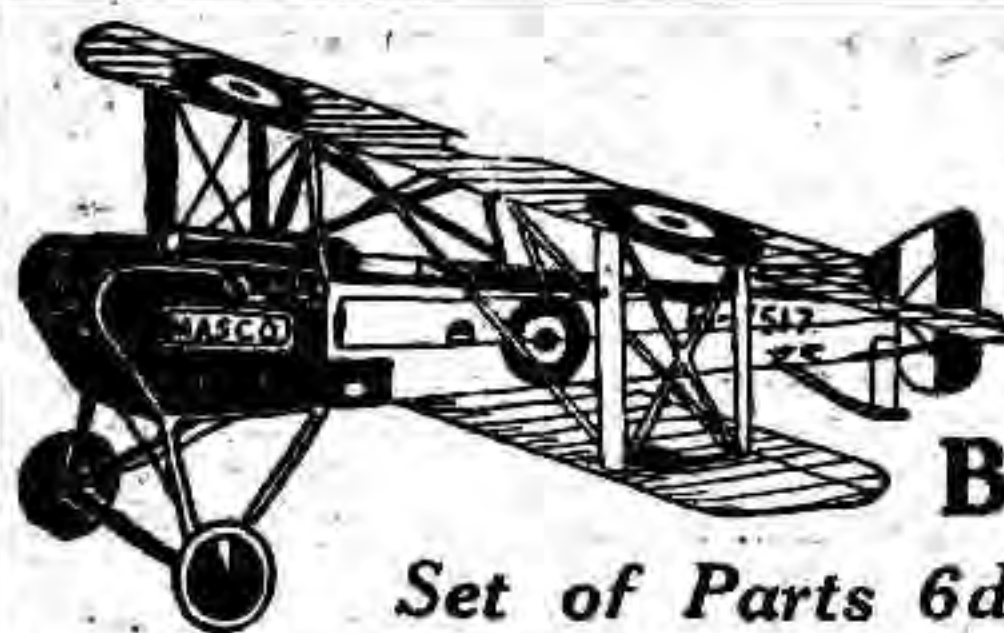
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