



GRAND CAMPING-OUT NUMBER!

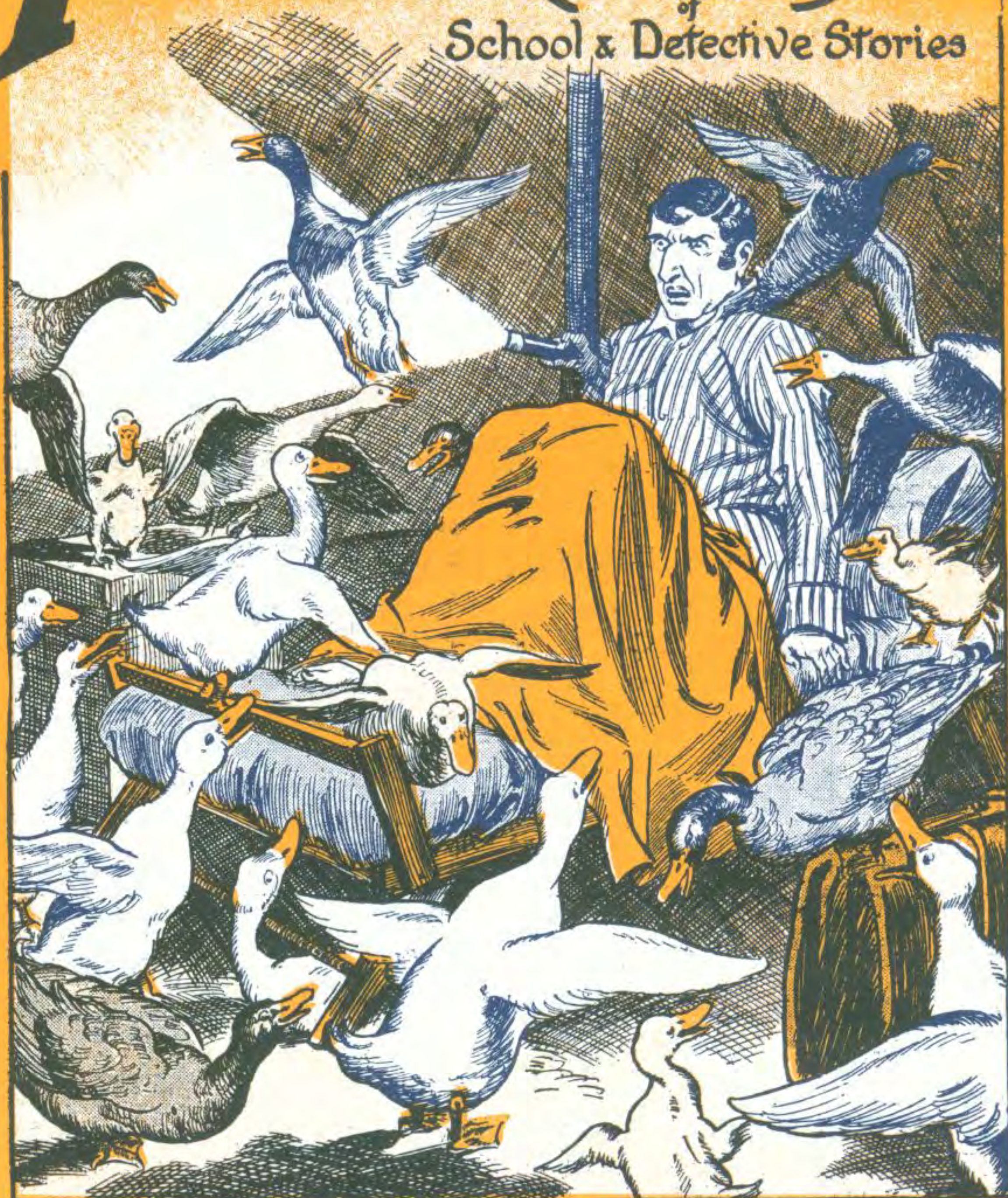
No. 800. Vol. XXIII.

Week ending June 9th, 1923.

The Magnet 2^d

Library

School & Detective Stories



MIDNIGHT VISITORS FOR MR. QUELCH!

(A diverting incident from this week's breezy story of the Greyfriars Remove under canvas.)

Published by Howard Baker Press Ltd, 27a Arterberry Road, Wimbledon, London, S. W. 20.





"THE GREYFRIARS DAY-BOARDER!"

By Frank Richards.

NEXT Monday's long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co., of Greyfriars, introduces a new boy at the school, who loses no time in showing his entire sympathy with Skinner & Co. and their shady ways. The new boy possesses a pretty sister, who, under somewhat peculiar circumstances, does Harry Wharton and Nugent a good turn. The captain of the Remove more than wipes out the obligation, if it can be called such, for he later rescues the young girl from a decidedly perilous situation. Then Wibley—whose admirable impersonations of all and sundry are a by-word amongst the Remove—comes into the limelight. Helped by the Famous Five, he succeeds in pointing out to the new boy the error of his "doggy" ways, and the scheme he employs to attain this object makes very interesting reading. A fine story this, my chums, in Mr. Frank Richards' own inimitable style.

"THE BLACK BULL OF BAREDA!"

By Owen Conquest.

Ferrers Locke and his redoubtable young assistant, Jack Drake, decide to

take a holiday in Spain; but hardly do they set foot upon Spanish soil, when an adventure of a very thrilling kind comes across their path. Mr. Owen Conquest gives us a glimpse into the pageant of the bull-ring, and introduces a likeable character in Bombetto, the bull-fighter.

A dark and shady plot is afoot to injure the old toreador, but the eminent detective proves the right man in the right place. He turns the tables upon the villain of the piece, thereby earning the everlasting gratitude and devotion of Bombetto, the bull-fighter.

PETS!

Harry Wharton and his merry men have hit upon the right subject in their next supplement, and some of the contributions will send you into roars of merriment. Billy Bunter's article on "Cruelty to Animals" is certain to make a big hit. Don't miss the coming supplement—it's the real goods!

COMPETITIONS!

I am pleased to see that Magnetites are devoting their energies to the two

simple competitions appearing in their favourite paper. That's the stuff to give 'em! The foregoing remark issued from the mouth of my enthusiastic office-boy, and thinking that it hit the right nail on the head, I suffered it to enter my Chat. But returning to the subject. The handsome cash prizes awarded in our Grand Cricket Competition and in our Simple and Entertaining Limerick Competition are really worth trying for. Stick to it, my chums! Your name may be amongst the lucky ones in next Monday's bumper programme.

A WAGER!

I would deem it a great favour if my loyal chums would hand this copy of the MAGNET to a non-reader when they have finished with it. Think of the good turn you would be doing the next fellow! There is no need to explain at great length the value to be found in your favourite story-paper. All you need do is to point out the number on the cover—i.e., 800. If that doesn't prove to the uninitiated the popularity—and popularity is never attained in the fiction world without real good value—of the good old MAGNET, which, incidentally, is always new, then I'll eat my hat—and I don't fancy that kind of meal, I can tell you!

BIG CASH PRIZES

FOR WIRELESS ENTHUSIASTS!

Those of you who are interested in Wireless would do well to turn to page 23 of this issue, where you might read of something to your advantage.

Your Editor.

THE "MAGNET" LIMERICK COMPETITION!

NO ENTRANCE FEE REQUIRED.

First Prize - - - £1 1s. 0d.

and

CONSOLATION PRIZES OF 2/6 FOR ALL EFFORTS PUBLISHED.

In order to win one of the above prizes all you have to do is to supply the last line of the verse given below, taking care to see that your effort bears some apt relation to the theme.

RULES GOVERNING THE "MAGNET" LIMERICK COMPETITION.

1.—The First Prize will be awarded to the sender of what, in the opinion of the Editor and a competent staff of adjudicators, is the best Last Line received.

2.—Consolation prizes of 2s. 6d. will be awarded from week to week to those competitors whose efforts show merit.

3.—The coupon below entitling you to enter for this competition must be either pasted on to a postcard, in which case your Last Line must be written IN INK directly beneath it, or enclosed separately in an envelope with your Last Line effort attached.

4.—Competitor's name and full postal address must accompany every effort sent in.

5.—Entries must reach us not later than June 14th, 1923, and MUST NOT be enclosed with entrance forms for any other competition. They must be addressed "MAGNET Limerick No. 9," Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.

6.—Your Editor undertakes that every effort sent in will receive careful consideration, but he will not hold himself responsible for coupons lost or mislaid, or delayed in the post. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery.

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7.—This competition is open to All Readers of the Companion Papers, but the result each week will appear only in the MAGNET.

8.—It is a distinct condition of entry that your Editor's decision must be accepted as binding in all matters. Acceptance of these rules is an express condition of entry.

Employees of the proprietors of this journal are not eligible to compete.

"MAGNET" LIMERICK COMPETITION.

No. 9.

"You've not had a bath for a year!"
Said Gatty to Tubb, with a sneer.
Then he picked up a hose,
And shouted, "Here goes!"

THIS EXAMPLE WILL HELP YOU.

"A 'dry' joke!" chuckled Tubb, springing clear.

OUT HERE



By
**Frank
Richards.**

A bright and breezy story of Harry Wharton & Co., of the Greyfriars Remove, under canvas, with an intriguing mystery plot which will hold your interest at a high pitch. Told as only your favourite author can tell a school story.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Many Complaints!

"LESSONS will now commence," said Mr. Quelch.

But they didn't.

Scarcely had the Remove master spoken, when a large lump of plaster descended from the ceiling of the Form-room, alighting with a thud on Mr. Quelch's mortar-board.

Mr. Quelch gave a jump.

"Bless my soul!" he ejaculated. "Is it possible that some boy has had the audacity to hurl a missile at me?"

"It wasn't one of us, sir," said Harry Wharton. "A lump of plaster came down from the ceiling."

"Oh!"

Mr. Quelch gazed up at the ceiling. There were cracks and small holes in its surface, and it looked as if more plaster would be coming down shortly. Mr. Quelch wisely decided to move his desk out of the line of fire, so to speak. It would not be pleasant to have lumps of plaster descending upon him from above.

He beckoned to Bolsover major, who sat in the front row.

"Pray assist me to move my desk, Bolsover."

"Certainly, sir!"

Bolsover delighted in showing off his ability as a weight-lifter. He took hold of the desk at one end, and heaved it clear of the floor without apparent effort. Mr. Quelch, on the other hand, was panting and puffing and straining.

Between them, master and junior moved the desk a matter of two yards. And then Mr. Quelch repeated his remark: "Lessons will now commence!"

But the ceiling of the Remove Form-room was in a perverse mood. It seemed determined to delay the start of morning lessons.

The patch of ceiling immediately above Mr. Quelch's head looked quite innocent. There was a faint crack, it is true, to which Mr. Quelch attached no importance. But, suddenly, the faint crack began to widen, and—Swish! Swoosh! A further consignment of plaster came rushing down. It

scattered itself over the Form master's gown, and the class tittered.

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch, with a frown. "The fact that the ceiling is breaking up is not a matter for merriment. It is in a shocking state of disrepair, and will have to be seen to. The floor-boards, too, are very loose."

They certainly were. The juniors had played many merry games of leap-frog upon them, and Billy Bunter had been bumped upon them many a time and oft; and no floor-boards could withstand such treatment.

"I guess this one-eyed show is going to rack and ruin," muttered Fisher T. Fish.

Mr. Quelch looked up sharply.

"What did you say, Fish?"

The transatlantic junior repeated his remark.

"It's just the same in our study, sir," he added. "The ceiling is always shedding plaster, and the floor-boards are fearfully wobbly!"

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch. "Is that the case in any other studies?"

Instantly there was a chorus of complaints.

Harry Wharton said that Study No. 1 was becoming a perilous place to live in, owing to the state of the walls and flooring. Bob Cherry declared that things were just as bad in Study No. 13. Tom Brown said that the walls of No. 2 were beginning to cave in. And Billy Bunter, who was not to be out-done, declared that a huge lump of plaster had fallen on his head in No. 7, and nearly brained him. At which, Mr. Quelch observed, somewhat dryly, that it would be quite impossible to brain a youth who was brainless.

Practically everybody had complaints to make concerning the state of their studies, with the exception of Lord Mauleverer. Mauleverer's study was the most modern and up-to-date in the Remove. Ceiling and floor and walls were in perfect condition.

Mr. Quelch listened to all the complaints, and he looked very thoughtful.

"My inquiry has revealed a shocking state of affairs," he said, at length.

"It is quite obvious that the Remove

quarters are in need of repair and renovation. I will mention the matter to Dr. Locke."

At this stage, the Head himself came into the Form-room. He was greeted by a large lump of plaster, which alighted on his mortar-board and tilted it to a rakish angle.

"Bless my soul!" murmured the Head, stepping back in alarm. "The ceiling of this room appears to be breaking up."

"That is so, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "From inquiries I have just made, I find that the Remove quarters are in a bad state of disrepair. I'm afraid, sir, something will have to be done, and that speedily."

"We must have the workmen in," said the Head. "I knew the place was in need of repair, but I was hoping to defer it until the Summer Vacation, when the boys would be away."

"The matter is urgent, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "The repairs should be executed at once, or we shall be having serious mishaps!"

Dr. Locke nodded.

"I quite agree with you, Mr. Quelch," he said. "Hum! If you will come along to my study after lessons, we will talk the matter over."

"Very good, sir!"

And the majestic figure of the Head rustled out of the Form-room, leaving a buzz of conversation behind him. The disturbance, however, soon became quelled as the gimlet eyes of Mr. Quelch swept over his class.

Lessons commenced and proceeded without any further mishap. As soon as Monsieur Charpentier came into the Form-room to take the Remove in French, Mr. Quelch made his way to the Head's study.

"Ah, sit down, Mr. Quelch," said Dr. Locke, as the Form master entered his study, "and let us talk over this matter of repairs to the Remove quarters. A perusal of the advertisement column in this morning's paper offers, I think, a solution, which, if a little out

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of the beaten track, overcomes the difficulty of the Remove continuing lessons whilst the workmen are in."

Mr. Quelch looked interested.

"It appears," continued the Head, "that there is a complete open-air camp for hire—for a fortnight—somewhere on the coast at Pinehaven which, as you are aware, is not a great distance from here. According to an advertisement in the newspaper here, it transpires that a troop of Boy Scouts chartered the camp complete from a large firm of contractors and are now, owing to unforeseen circumstances, unable to complete their side of the contract. The camp, complete with tents erected, is now for hire—"

"And you propose, sir," broke in Mr. Quelch "that the boys in my Form go under canvas for a fortnight?"

"That seems to be the only way out of the difficulty, if the Remove quarters are to be repaired at once," said the Head slowly. "What do you think of the scheme, Mr. Quelch?"

It did not take the Remove master long to arrive at a decision. A fortnight under canvas appealed to him as much as it would to his pupils.

"An excellent idea, sir!" he remarked.

"Very well, Mr. Quelch," said Dr. Locke, "I will make the necessary arrangements with all speed."

The Head did not allow the grass to grow under his feet. All the morning he was busy sending telegrams, and ringing up various people on the telephone; and, by the afternoon, the arrangements were complete.

At the conclusion of afternoon lessons, Mr. Quelch addressed his class.

"My boys," he began, "Dr. Locke has decided that on Monday next you are to go into camp at Pinehaven, a small village situated on the coast a few miles from here—"

"My hat!"

"Loud cheers!"

"Oh, good!"

It was as much as the Remove could do to refrain from an outburst of cheering. The news came as a bombshell—so utterly unexpected was it. The juniors hung on the Form master's next words. Every face was radiant; every eye gleamed happily.

"I shall accompany you, of course," continued Mr. Quelch. "There will also be two prefects, for disciplinary purposes—Loder and Walker have been selected."

This was not so good. And the juniors looked glum for a moment.

Some of them had been optimistic enough to suppose they would be on their own in the camp, and that they would be able to do as they liked, and come and go as they chose. The presence in camp of Mr. Quelch, Loder, and Walker would rather take the gilt off the gingerbread.

"I do not want you to imagine," went on Mr. Quelch, "that you are going to camp with the sole object of enjoying yourselves. Lessons will proceed as usual, in the open air."

Bob Cherry groaned.

"I knew there was a catch in it somewhere!" he murmured.

"You will, of course, have Wednesday afternoons and week-ends free," said Mr. Quelch, noting the disappointment on the faces of his pupils. "And you will find open-air lessons quite pleasant. Two motor-charabancs have been engaged to call at the school on Monday morning. You will have all your belongings in readiness by breakfast-time. The class is now dismissed!"

Great was the excitement as the juniors trooped out into the passage.

Bob Cherry embraced Harry Wharton, and started to waltz him up and down.

"A whole giddy fortnight in camp!" chortled Bob. "Isn't it great?"

"Hellap!" gasped Wharton, as he found himself swept fairly off his feet. "Leggo, you ass!"

Bob Cherry released his chum, and leap-frogged gaily over Billy Bunter, who was stooping to tie his bootlace. The suddenness of Bob's action caused the fat junior to overbalance, and he crashed to the floor. As falls the giant oak, so fell Bunter.

"Yaroooooh!" roared the Owl of the Remove. "Cherry, you rotter, I've a jolly good mind to lick you!"

"Don't!" pleaded Bob. "Consider my frail and delicate constitution!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was joy in the Remove that evening, and for several evenings to come.

The juniors were only too eager to bid good-bye to the stuffy Form-room, and to take their lessons in the open air, with the breeze from the sea fanning their faces. They would have preferred to take no lessons at all; but that would have been expecting too much.

The Head paid a flying visit to the camp at Pinehaven on Sunday afternoon, and reported, on his return, that everything was in readiness.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Camp by the Sea!

MONDAY morning dawned bright and clear.

The charabancs arrived at Greyfriars after breakfast, and the Removes boarded them with their belongings. Mr. Quelch hurried to and fro, directing operations, and he was assisted by Loder and Walker.

As the charabancs rumbled away through the Close, they were followed by the envious glances of those who remained behind.

"Lucky beggars!" growled Coker of the Fifth. "The Remove get all the plums!"

Bob Cherry waved his hand to Coker. "Good-bye, Bluebell!" he sang out. "Mind you behave yourself while we're away!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker made a reply, but it was not audible. The charabancs were swallowed up in a cloud of dust.

It was a pleasant journey to Pinehaven, and the juniors experienced a thrill when they caught sight of their camp. It was pitched in a wide, green meadow, which stood high above sea-level.

There were about a dozen bell-tents and a marquee. There was an open-air kitchen, in which two members of the Greyfriars domestic staff were already working. They had come over to Pinehaven in advance.

"What a glorious spot!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, gazing with sparkling eyes at the little encampment.

"Jolly bracing up here, too!" said Vernon-Smith. "The air's like champagne!"

"I'm not so sure about that, not having tasted champagne," said Tom Brown. "Suppose we say that the air's like Mrs. Mumble's ginger-pop?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The charabancs approached as near to the camp as possible. Then they halted, and the juniors clambered out with their baggage. Mr. Quelch addressed a happy throng:

"This being the first day in camp, my boys, there will be no lessons."

"Hurrah!"

"You will need a day in which to settle down," Mr. Quelch went on. "Now, there are to be four boys in each tent, and I will allow you to make your own arrangements. But there must be no squabbling."

There was an instant stampede into the meadow.

The tents were in two rows, and they were numbered.

Harry Wharton took possession of No. 1, and Frank Nugent, Bob Cherry, and Johnny Bull joined him there.

"Pity there isn't room for Inky," said Nugent. "He'll have to fix up somewhere else."

"Do not worry on that score, my esteemed chum," said Hurree Singh. "I am going into No. 2 with the worthy Linley, the noble Mauleverer, and the ludicrous Wun Lung."

The juniors had no difficulty in sorting themselves into fours. Most of them managed to get with their chums, and it was amusing to see how the birds of a feather flocked together. Skinner, for example, shared a tent with Snoop and Stott and Trevor. Russell and Ogilvy were in the same tent; and so were Tom Redwing and Vernon-Smith.

The tents soon filled up, and there was

"Magnet" Limerick Competition (No. 3).

In this competition the prize of £1 1s. for the best line sent in has been awarded to:

MAUD BROOKS, 16, Nichols Square, E. 2, whose last line was:
Never mind—"Hopping's" common in Kent.

Four consolation prizes of 2s. 6d. each for the next best sent in have been awarded to the following:

LESLIE WALLIS, 14, Egerton Road, Bishopston, Bristol.

J. KENNEY, 11, Portland Street, Leamington Spa.

LESLIE G. WEBB, 108, Bruin Street, Leicester.

H. STEPHENS, Barnsley Road, Norton, Bromsgrove, Worcs.

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one fellow left over. That was Billy Bunter.

There were ten tents available for the Remove, and there were forty-one fellows. Forty were already suited, and the forty-first was Bunter.

Nobody was keen on the fat junior's company. He had tried to fight his way into Peter Todd's tent, but Toddy had kept him at arm's-length. The occupants of the other tents did the same.

Billy Bunter thrust his head into the opening of No. 1, and pleaded with Harry Wharton & Co.

"I say, you fellows, I'm in an awful fix. I can go nowhere!"

"Well, hurry up and go there, then!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, you might do the decent thing, and take me in!"

"You've taken us in often enough," said Nugent; "but we're not eager to return the compliment!"

Billy Bunter glared at the grinning juniors.

"Look here, I've got to go somewhere!" he exclaimed.

"But you said just now that you could go nowhere," said Johnny Bull. "So buck up and go!"

"I meant, I couldn't go anywhere!" howled Bunter.

"Well, whether you go anywhere, somewhere, or nowhere, you're not coming in here!" said Harry Wharton. "Dash it all, you'd take up every square inch of room! You'll have to sleep in the marquee, or else in Quelch's tent!"

"I can't!" said Bunter.

"Well, perhaps Quelch wouldn't object to your keeping him company," said Bob Cherry. "If you ask him nicely, he might let you dig in with him."

But Billy Bunter was not anxious to share the Form master's sleeping quarters. He saw quite enough of Mr. Quelch by day.

"What about the marquee?" said Nugent.

"I can't sleep there," said Bunter. "That's the refreshment-marquee."

"An ideal place for you to sleep in, I should have thought," said Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I shouldn't object to sleeping there," said Bunter, "but I expect Quelch would! I say, you fellows, don't be hard-hearted beasts! I've got nowhere to lay my head!"

"Try sleeping in the open," suggested Bob Cherry. "They say it makes you fit."

"Groo!"

Billy Bunter saw that it was quite useless to clamour for admission to No. 1 tent. It was equally useless to apply to No. 2, or No. 3, or any tent, for that matter. Nobody loved him; nobody wanted him.

Bunter rolled away, blinking wrathfully at the occupied rows of tents. He felt fed up and far from home. Like Achilles of old, he would have sat sulkily in his tent—if only he could have found a tent to sulk in.

Standing apart from the Remove tents was one which was occupied by Loder and Walker of the Sixth.

The idea of sharing a tent with two prefects did not appeal to Bunter. Still, the situation was desperate, and something had to be done.

The fat junior was carrying a suitcase, into which he had stuffed his belongings before leaving Greyfriars that morning. Dragging the heavy case along, and per-



Billy Bunter fell back from the tent entrance and sat down violently. Loder picked up the fat junior's suitcase, and heaved it out after him. Crash! "Don't you dare come poking your nose in here," roared Loder. (See Chapter 2.)

spiring profusely, he rolled away towards the prefects' tent.

Loder and Walker were within, unpacking their traps. They were kneeling upon the tent-boards, thus engaged, when suddenly a suitcase was thrust through the tent entrance.

"What the thump—" began Loder, in astonishment.

The suitcase was dumped into the tent, and then a fat face appeared in the aperture.

"Room for a little one in here, isn't there?" said Bunter pleasantly.

And he was about to scramble into the tent, when the expression on Loder's face made him pause.

"You—you cheeky young rascal!" hooted Loder. "What do you mean by barging in here like this?"

"I've come here to sleep," explained Bunter. "It will be company for you, you know."

Walker gave a snarl. A hairbrush came sailing through the air, and it smote Billy Bunter in the chest.

"Yaroooooh!"

"Now clear off!" growled Walker. "When we want your company, we'll let you know!"

Billy Bunter fell back from the tent entrance, and sat down violently in the grass. Loder picked up the fat junior's suitcase, and heaved it out after him.

Crash!

"Don't you dare to come poking your nose in here again!" shouted Loder.

Billy Bunter sat in the grass, and roared. His spectacles had fallen off, and his suitcase had burst open, shedding

the contents over the ground. It was a scene in which an amateur photographer would have gloried. As a matter of fact, Squiff was already taking a snapshot of the amusing spectacle from his tent.

"Boy! Bunter! What are you doing in this semi-recumbent attitude?"

It was the voice of Mr. Quelch, who had come striding on the scene.

Billy Bunter tottered to his feet.

"I've been chucked out of tent after tent, sir," he wailed. "Nobody will have me. I can't find anywhere to sleep."

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"Restore your belongings to your suitcase, while I look into this matter, Bunter," he said.

The Remove master walked away, and made a tour of the tents. He glanced into every one, and saw that it contained four juniors.

"Bless my soul! I appear to have made a miscalculation," he murmured. "There are forty-one boys, and only ten tents. I shall have to have another tent erected, for the benefit of Bunter."

This was soon done, and Billy Bunter, to his joy and relief, found himself in a tent of his own. But when the silent watches of the night came, he would probably wish that he had company.

Dinner was served in the refreshment marquee, and a surprisingly good meal had been prepared. The hungry juniors did full justice to it.

They spent the afternoon in exploring the outskirts of the camp.

Pinehaven was a wild and lonely spot.

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The scenery was glorious, but the railways did not serve that part of the coast, so that holiday-makers seldom penetrated to Pinehaven.

The Remove camp could not have been pitched in a better place, for there were facilities for sport of every description—fishing, swimming, boating, cricket, and so forth. Pinehaven was also a happy hunting-ground for the explorer.

The day passed pleasantly enough, and the juniors were fagged out when dusk came. When supper was over, they were glad to turn in.

"No larks to-night," said Bob Cherry, with a yawn. "We'll curl up in our blankets and sleep the sleep of the just. Good-night, all!"

"Good-night, Bob! Pleasant dreams!"

The drone of voices in the Remove tents died gradually away. Darkness descended like a pall over land and sea, and the schoolboy campers were soon in the arms of Morpheus.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Mystery of the Night!

PINEHAVEN Camp lay still and silent under a starless sky.

A distant church clock chimed the hour of midnight.

Everybody in camp was asleep—even Walker and Loder, who had sat up fairly late, playing cards by candle-light in their tent. It has to be recorded to their credit that they were not playing for money.

Mr. Quelch, in his tent, was asleep on a camp bed. He was breathing deeply, and there was a placid expression on his face.

Presently the silence of the encampment was rudely disturbed. There was no sound of revelry by night; but there was certainly a sound. It was the noisy babel of quacking ducks.

The entrance to Mr. Quelch's tent was opened by invisible hands. And then an army of ducks took the tent by storm. The leader of the tribe, quacking loudly, waddled in first, closely followed by his feathered brethren.

Quack-quack! Quack-quack! Quack-quack!

The tent was in an uproar.

Sound sleeper though he was, it would have been impossible for Mr. Quelch to have slept through that din. The noise was sufficient to awaken the celebrated Seven Sleepers of Ephesus.

The Remove master sat up in bed with a start. All was confusion, and commotion, and pandemonium. And the intense darkness only made matters worse.

"G-g-good gracious!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "What ever is happening?"

He groped for his electric torch, and switched it on.

The scene that met Mr. Quelch's gaze fairly staggered him. There were ducks to right of him, ducks to left of him, ducks before him and behind him!

The tent entrance had been closed again by unseen hands, and the ducks were prisoners. They flapped and fluttered round and round the tent, trying to find an exit. And the noise they made was truly appalling.

"Bless my soul! How did these birds gain access to my quarters?" muttered Mr. Quelch. "There must be at least a score of them! It appears that some misguided boy has been playing a trick on me."

The ducks continued to career round and round. Mr. Quelch got out of bed, with the object of letting them out. To remain all night in a tent, with

quacking ducks for company, would be impossible.

Mr. Quelch's movements threw the ducks into a greater flutter than ever. Their quacking grew louder and louder, and Mr. Quelch was obliged to stop his ears.

The Form master stepped to the tent entrance, and opened the flap, and drove the ducks forth into the night. Evidently they belonged to the farm near by. But they could not have got into Mr. Quelch's tent of their own accord. The Form master was certain of that. Somebody in the Remove, he reflected, had played a practical joke at his expense, and he was very angry.

The ducks disappeared in the darkness, and Mr. Quelch went back to bed. He did not intend to investigate at that late hour.

"I will hold an inquiry in the morning," he murmured, before he dropped off to sleep.

When the morning came, Mr. Quelch was very much on the warpath. His frown was as fierce and forbidding as that of Jove of old.

There was going to be trouble for somebody. The juniors gathered that from the Form master's manner.

The Remove had been awakened sharp at seven o'clock by a bugle. Johnny Bull was the bugler. He had volunteered his services for the fortnight, and he played the reveille very well.

When they had washed and dressed, the juniors were assembled by Loder and Walker, in accordance with instructions from Mr. Quelch.

"There's a storm brewing," said Bob Cherry, "but I'm dashed if I can guess what it's all about!"

"Quelchy looks awfully waxy," murmured Nugent. "Somebody must have made him an apple-pie bed, or something of the sort."

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "I have called you together, my boys, because I have been the victim of a practical joke, which was perpetrated at midnight."

"My hat!"

There was a buzz of amazement in the Remove ranks.

"I was awakened at the hour in question," went on Mr. Quelch, "to find that my tent had been invaded by a horde of quacking ducks. Do not dare to snigger, Cherry! This is no laughing matter, as the perpetrator of the outrage will shortly discover!"

Bob Cherry repressed his smile with a great effort.

"Those ducks," continued Mr. Quelch, "could not have effected an entry to my tent of their own accord. Somebody must have opened the entrance, let the ducks in, and then closed it again. The boy who played this trick on his Form master will stand forward!"

Everybody looked at his neighbour, but nobody left the ranks.

Mr. Quelch pursed up his lips. His eyes, which had often been compared to gimlets, on account of their penetrative powers, were more steely and searching than ever.

"I call upon the culprit to come forward and confess!" said Mr. Quelch. No one stirred.

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch, after a long pause. "Since the perpetrator of the offence will not admit his guilt, is there anyone here who can throw any light on this matter?"

"If you please, sir—" began Harry Wharton

"Do you know anything of this, Wharton?"

"No, sir. I was about to say that I don't think it could have been anybody in the Remove, sir. You see, we were all dead beat last night when we turned in. We simply couldn't keep our eyes open. Not one of us would have been fresh enough to wait up till midnight and then play a jape on you, sir."

The captain of the Remove spoke sincerely enough, and Mr. Quelch could not doubt the truth of his remarks. But he was very puzzled.

"But if it was not a boy in the Remove, who could it have been?" he exclaimed.

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"It's a mystery, sir," he said.

"Not much mystery about it," growled Loder of the Sixth. "It must have been one of these young rascals, sir, who played that trick on you."

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"I have yet to find Wharton out in a lie, Loder," he said. "I believe him when he says that everyone was too tired last night to think of playing such a trick. Moreover, I must ask you not to refer to the boys in my Form as young rascals, Loder!"

The prefect scowled, and said no more.

"I can only conclude," Mr. Quelch went on, "that this outrage—for it certainly was an outrage—was perpetrated by someone outside the camp. Wharton has satisfied me that it was not the work of a member of my Form. You will now dismiss, and adjourn to the refreshment marquee for breakfast."

The Remove dispersed willingly enough. And there was a great deal of conjecture as to who had been responsible for the midnight jape.

"Must have been a farm labourer with a sense of humour," said Bob Cherry. And Bob's opinion was shared by many.

"I say, you fellows," piped Billy Bunter. "I believe it was a spook that played that jape on Quelchy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, you can cackle," said the fat junior, "but I'm pretty certain I'm right."

"Spook be blowed!" said Johnny Bull, in his blunt way. "There are no such things."

"Aren't there, though? I saw one with my own eyes last night. It peeped into my tent about midnight. I happened to wake up, and I saw a grinning face peering in at me. I'm not a nervous fellow, as you know, but I jolly nearly screamed. It was so uncanny."

"My dear old porpoise," said Peter Todd, "it's a clear case of nightmare. You ate too much supper overnight."

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Did the spook come into your tent?" asked Nugent, with a grin.

"No. The face just hovered in the opening for a minute, and then disappeared. If it had come into the tent I should have grappled with it in mortal combat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The idea of Billy Bunter grappling with a ghost was too much for the juniors. They fairly roared.

"Bunter's talking bosh—as usual," said Tom Brown. "He's been seeing visions and dreaming dreams. Ha, ha! The pleasant aroma of eggs and bacon greets my nostrils. Who says brekker?"

And a score of voices chanted in unison:

"Brekker!"

Keep your eyes open for next Monday's magnificent school—

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Plot Thickens!

BREAKFAST was a merry meal. The bracing air of Pinehaven had given the juniors good appetites. And Billy Bunter's appetite, despite the scare he was supposed to have had in the night, was as healthy as ever. After breakfast, Johnny Bull was requested to blow the bugle for morning lessons.

It was a glorious morning, and nobody relished the prospect of lessons. There was a holiday spirit in the air. Fortunately, Mr. Quelch became imbued with it, and he let the juniors down lightly.

There were no desks, and the Remove-ites sat on the dry grass. They were ranged in a circle, in the middle of which stood Mr. Quelch. The Remove master had not forgotten to bring his cane to camp with him, but he had no occasion to use it that morning. The Remove were as good as gold.

History books were served out, and then Latin primers. And both lessons were got through satisfactorily.

At half-past eleven—half-an-hour earlier than usual—Mr. Quelch dismissed the class.

"If you always behave as well as you have done this morning, my boys," said the Remove master, "the fortnight in camp will pass very pleasantly."

Harry Wharton & Co. went for a dip in the sea before dinner, and thoroughly enjoyed it. The sea was as smooth as a millpond, and the sunlight danced on the water. The juniors came back to the camp looking as brown as berries; and their appetites were almost Bunterian.

The cooks had prepared steak-and-kidney pie for dinner, followed by apple dumplings. It was a delightful repast, and it fortified the juniors for afternoon lessons.

These, however, were of short duration. At four o'clock the juniors were free for the rest of the day to do exactly as they chose, so long as they were all in camp by eight o'clock.

"I vote we go and explore the old smugglers' caves," said Frank Nugent. "We might come across an old oak chest full of doubloons and pieces of eight."

"Not much chance of that, I'm afraid," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "Still, it's a happy wheeze of yours, Franky. Follow your leader!"

And the Famous Five set out on their expedition.

The old caves on that rockbound coast were full of interest. No treasures were discovered, but for all that, the juniors thoroughly enjoyed themselves. They trooped back to camp in the twilight, tired, but serenely happy.

Supper was served at eight; there was a roll-call at half-past; and at nine o'clock Johnny Bull sounded the Last Post.

Once again the little camp lay silent under a starless sky.

Whilst the Famous Five had been exploring their schoolfellows had been playing cricket. And all were dog tired.

Mr. Quelch went from tent to tent, to see that everything was all right, and to bid the juniors good-night.

The Remove-master was the last to retire. He went into his tent and found everything in order.

"I do not think I shall be disturbed tonight," he murmured.

And he stretched himself out between the cool sheets, and was soon fast asleep.

But Mr. Quelch was not destined to enjoy a night of tranquil repose. He awoke about midnight, with the curious feeling that he was not alone in the tent.

Sitting up in bed, the Remove-master blinked around him in the darkness. But he could distinguish nothing. Yet he seemed to hear a slight rustling sound close at hand.

Mr. Quelch was in the act of groping for his electric torch, when swift and sudden calamity befell him.

It seemed as if an earthquake was happening.

The centre-pole of the tent was uprooted, and the whole structure came crashing down on to the Remove master.

Mr. Quelch found himself struggling under a heap of canvas. The tent had come down on top of him, and he fought fiercely to free himself.

The more he struggled, the more entangled he became.

"Help! Help!"

The cry of the unhappy Form master, although muffled, came to the ears of Harry Wharton and Co., whose tent happened to be nearest to that of Mr. Quelch's.

Bob Cherry sat up in bed with a start.

"Listen, you fellows!" he ejaculated.

The others were awake, and they sat up, listening intently.

"Help!"

"That's Quelch's voice!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Sounds as if he's being strangled!" muttered Nugent. "Come on! Let's see what's happening."

The juniors threw on their dressing-gowns over their pyjamas, and hurried out of the tent.

Harry Wharton led the way with a lighted bicycle-lamp.

"Great Scott!" he shouted. "Quelch's tent is down!"

In the rays of the bicycle lamp the wrecked tent could be seen with something struggling beneath it.

The juniors rushed to Mr. Quelch's assistance, and hauled him clear of the wreckage.

Mr. Quelch tottered to his feet. He was panting for breath.

"Thank you, my boys, for coming to my assistance!" he said, as soon as he was able to find his voice. "I have had a most unpleasant experience. This is the second night in succession that a trick has been played on me. But for your timely aid I should never have managed to extricate myself."

"It mightn't have been a trick, sir," ventured Harry Wharton. "The tent may have blown down."

"Impossible!" said Mr. Quelch. "It is a perfectly calm night. There is scarcely a breath of wind. I am convinced that I have been the victim of a trick or 'jape,' as you would call it. Besides, I thought I heard someone moving about just before the tent was wrecked."

"It wasn't one of our fellows, sir," said Bob Cherry. "If a jape had been planned we should have known all about it."

"An outsider must have broken into



The apparition seemed to glide across the grass in the direction of the prefects' tent. Bulstrode stayed where he was, and watched. The cricket-stump had fallen from his nerveless grasp. (See Chapter 5.)

—story, entitled "The Greyfriars Day Boarder!" It's ripping!

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the camp," said Nugent. "Would you like us to look round, sir?"

"Yes, yes," said Mr. Quelch. "By all means. I am only too anxious that the offender should be brought to book."

Mr. Quelch looked a ludicrous figure in his pyjamas, and the juniors found it difficult not to smile. Fortunately, it was a warm night, so Mr. Quelch did not suffer such inconvenience as he might have done.

Harry Wharton & Co. spread themselves out, and scoured the camp. But there was no sign of an intruder. If someone had indeed broken in, as Frank Nugent suggested, he must have made good his escape.

After a diligent but fruitless search the juniors returned to Mr. Quelch.

"There's no sign of anybody, sir," said Wharton.

"Not so much as a shadow," said Johnny Bull.

"This is most extraordinary!" said Mr. Quelch. "Would you be good enough to help me reconstruct my tent, my boys?"

"Certainly, sir!"

Many hands made light work, and the tent was soon erected.

Mr. Quelch thanked the juniors, and they returned to their tent, discussing the mysterious affair.

The Remove master went back to bed, but not to sleep. At least, if he did sleep it was with one eye open, so to speak.

Mr. Quelch hoped that the practical joker would come again, so that he might catch him in the act. But the remainder of the night passed peacefully without further disturbance.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Scare for Bulstrode!

IT was a very tired and sleepy-eyed Form master who conducted open-air lessons next morning.

The day was Wednesday, and the juniors were free to do as they liked after midday.

"I've arranged for Highcliff to bring a team over on Saturday," said Harry Wharton, "so we'll put in some cricket practice this afternoon."

The cricket nets had been brought to the camp and erected in the adjoining meadow, which made an excellent cricket-ground when the grass had been rolled.

Harry Wharton & Co. were at the nets all the afternoon, and they came in to tea with healthy appetites. Their faces were tanned by wind and sun, and they looked wonderfully fit and cheery.

Mr. Quelch presided in the refreshment marquee, where tea was served. The Remove master had been dozing in a deck-chair all the afternoon, to make up for his lack of sleep on the previous night.

After tea Mr. Quelch had an announcement to make.

"I am determined to put an end to these practical jokes which are played in the night," he said. "The first night we were here my tent was invaded by a horde of noisy ducks. Last night it was wrecked. I am satisfied that these outrages were not committed by anybody in my Form. Somebody outside the camp is responsible."

"I don't agree—" began Loder of the Sixth.

"I am not asking you for your opinion of the matter, Loder," said Mr. Quelch testily. "Now, in order to prevent a

Hallo, hallo, hallo!

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recurrence of these outrages, I have decided to adopt the plan of having night sentries to guard the camp."

"My hat!"

"We shall be losing our beauty sleep over this business!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"I have drawn up a list of sentries," Mr. Quelch went on. "Two boys will be appointed to keep watch each night, and those two boys will be excused lessons on the following day."

The Form master consulted a list in his hand.

"To-night's sentries will be Bulstrode and Mauleverer," he said. "They will patrol the camp, one on each side of the meadow, from sunset till reveille."

"Help!" groaned Bulstrode. And Lord Mauleverer, the slacker of the Remove, looked decidedly glum. If there was one thing that Mauly disliked it was missing his sleep.

"Of course," said Mr. Quelch, "the sentries need not make a hardship of it. I do not expect them to keep on the move the whole night through. They may rest at intervals, but they are not to go to sleep at their posts. They may refresh themselves from time to time with cake and coffee, which they will find in the refreshment marquee."

Billy Bunter jumped to his feet. "Please, sir, may I do sentry duty to-night?" he asked eagerly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"I fear that if I allowed you to take sentry duty, Bunter, you would spend the whole night in the refreshment marquee," he said.

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Do you clearly understand what is expected of you, Bulstrode and Mauleverer?" asked Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir."

LOOK!

Another £10 in Cash Prizes!

Result of Blackpool Picture-Puzzle Competition!

In this competition one competitor sent in a correct solution of the picture. The First Prize of £5 has therefore been awarded to:

T. TOPPING,

62, Ivor Road,

Sparkhill,

Birmingham.

The Second Prize of £2 10s. has been divided among the following nine competitors, whose solutions contained one error each:

H. Monk, Top Hill Cottages, Olney, Hitchin, Herts; A. Williams, 93, Westminster Street, Crewe; H. J. Harris, Hindhayes, Street, Somerset; Mrs. E. Clapp, 2, Charlotte Street, Tidal Basin, E. 16; Ed. D. Jones, 24, Montpelier Terrace, Swansea; W. G. Cullum, Witnesham, Ipswich; E. Marshall, Sunnyside, Elm Grove, Thorpe Bay, Essex; Maud Brooks, 16, Nichols Square, Hackney Road, E. 2; Ernest Brain, 47, Dove Street, Kingsdown, Bristol.

Fifty-nine competitors, with two errors each, divide the ten prizes of 5s. each. The names and addresses of these prizewinners can be obtained on application at this office.

SOLUTION.

Blackpool's record has been a prolonged struggle with financial misfortunes. The town's summer population is enormous, but when the football season begins, Blackpool is comparatively deserted. The Club has had some grand players, but has been unable to retain them.

"Yaas, begad!"

"Very well. Should any untoward incident occur during your vigil you will immediately give the alarm."

The afternoon merged into evening, and the Remove retired to their tents, as usual, with the exception of Bulstrode and Lord Mauleverer.

Bulstrode wasn't a bit keen on the idea of patrolling the camp in the darkness. Not that he was afraid, but he didn't like the idea of sacrificing a night's rest.

"Just like Quelch to hit upon a hare-brained stunt of this sort!" growled Bulstrode.

Lord Mauleverer yawned.

"It's going to be a beastly fog, walk-in' up an' down all night," he said. "I notice you're carryin' a cricket-stump, dear boy. What's that for?"

"In case of emergency, of course. I sha'n't hesitate to use it if I see anybody break into the camp."

Bulstrode spoke grimly. Much as he disliked the idea of keeping guard, he meant to do the job thoroughly.

"Which side of the meadow would you like to patrol, dear boy?" asked Lord Mauleverer.

"The side nearest the sea will suit me," said Bulstrode. "You take the other side. And don't forget to sing out if you see anything suspicious."

The two juniors parted company.

A drone of voices from the tents showed that the Remove were not yet asleep. Gradually, however, the droning died away, and the little encampment became silent and still.

It was a dark night. There were a few stars shimmering overhead, but they did little to lighten the darkness. There was scarcely any breeze, and the air was sultry.

Bulstrode, tramping to and fro in the gloom, became drowsy. But he fought against the feeling, and kept going.

Not so Lord Mauleverer. His lordship, having paced the length of the meadow once, threw his raincoat—which he had thoughtfully brought with him—on to the grass, and curled himself up on top of it.

"I'm not goin' to sleep, of course," he murmured. "I'll merely rest my limbs for a bit."

But the warm night was conducive to slumber, and Lord Mauleverer was soon in the arms of Morpheus. Had an intruder broken into the camp on that side of the meadow he would have had nothing to fear from Mauly.

On the other side of the camp Bulstrode continued to pace up and down. He imagined that his fellow-sentry was doing likewise; but he imagined a vain thing. For Lord Mauleverer, curled up like a doormouse, was now fast asleep.

The hours dragged slowly by.

It seemed that an eternity had passed before a distant clock chimed the midnight hour.

Bulstrode stopped short in his stride, and listened, and peered around him.

For a moment he could hear nothing—and he could see nothing.

And then Bulstrode received the shock of his life.

Through a gap in the tall hedge, not a dozen yards away, emerged a weird figure all in white.

Bulstrode's heart pounded against his ribs. He stood stock still, unable to move or cry out.

Bulstrode didn't believe in ghosts, but his teeth were chattering now, and he would have given a term's pocket-money to have been safe and sound in bed.

Having crawled through the gap in

Are you one of the prizewinners mentioned above?

the hedge, the nocturnal visitor stood upright. He was draped in a long white cloak, and his face was hooded. For a moment the figure stood still, as if taking stock of its surroundings. Then it uttered a sort of ghostly cackle which made Bulstrode's flesh creep.

There was nothing human about the sound of that laughter. It was most uncanny.

Bulstrode was too startled to do anything but stand and stare. To put it in vulgar parlance, he had the wind up—and badly.

Presently the apparition moved—not towards Bulstrode, but away from him. Swiftly it seemed to glide across the grass in the direction of the tent which was occupied by Loder and Walker of the Sixth.

Bulstrode stayed where he was and watched. The cricket-stump had fallen from his nerveless grasp.

He could see that the apparition had designs on the prefects' tent, and he knew that he ought to interfere, but he felt utterly powerless to do so.

"It's a spook—I'm jolly certain of that!" muttered Bulstrode, with a shiver. "A playful spook, I expect; but a spook, for all that! And it's going to wreck that tent!"

Scarcely were the words out of Bulstrode's mouth when there was a sudden upheaval.

The mysterious intruder had loosened all the tent-ropes, and the next moment the tent came crashing down upon its unsuspecting occupants.

Muffled yells came to Bulstrode's ears. Straining his eyes through the gloom, he could distinguish a heap of canvas on the ground, with a couple of struggling forms beneath it.

As for the "spook" who had wrought this appalling havoc, it did not wait to see the result of its handiwork. It was already speeding away across the meadow. But instead of crawling through the gap, it cleared the hedge with a flying leap.

Bulstrode gasped.

"Oh, my hat!" he muttered. "What a jump!"

The hedge was well over five feet high, and that amazing leap had almost taken the junior's breath away.

"It couldn't have been human!" murmured Bulstrode. "I'm jolly certain it was a spook!"

"Help! Help!"

The muffled shouts of Loder and Walker served to remind Bulstrode of the plight they were in, and he hurried to their assistance. He stooped down and heaved the mass of canvas clear of the struggling figures.

Loder and Walker staggered to their feet. They were breathing threatenings and slaughter, and they were much too furious to think of thanking Bulstrode for his assistance.

Loder pointed to the wreckage.

"Who did this?" he demanded fiercely. "Was it you?"

"Me?" echoed Bulstrode, forgetting his grammar in his indignation. "No, it wasn't!"

"Did you see who did it?" shouted Walker, grasping the junior by the collar.

"Yes."

"Then give us the fellow's name at once!"

"It wasn't a fellow," said Bulstrode. "It—it was a spook! An awful apparition in white!"

"Spook! Apparition! What are you babbling about?" growled Loder. "It was one of the young rascals in the



Horace Binns crashed into his tutor, who was already in full flight from the Removites, and the two rolled over on the ground, the little man shouting and protesting volubly. "Good riddance!" growled Bob Cherry. (See Chapter 8.)

Remove. You know it, and are trying to shield him! I'll jolly soon get to the bottom of this business!"

So saying, Loder groped amongst the wreckage of the tent until he found his dressing-gown and an electric torch. He hurriedly donned the former, and, taking the latter in his hand, started off on a tour of inspection.

Loder flashed a light into every tent and took stock of the occupants. He found that every tent had its full complement of juniors, with the exception of those to which the two night sentries belonged.

The prefect was puzzled. He felt convinced that the prank had been played by a Removite. Yet all the juniors were slumbering soundly.

Loder went farther afield, and explored the outskirts of the meadow. Here he came upon a recumbent form—that of Lord Mauleverer.

Loder prodded the junior in the ribs with a stockinged foot.

"Wake up, you young rascal!" he roared. "Is this what you call keeping guard? Asleep at your post, by Jove! If there was a war on, you'd be shot for this!"

"Ow-ow-ow!" groaned Mauly, getting to his feet. "What's the trouble, Loder?"

"Trouble enough!" growled the prefect. "Somebody's broken into the camp and wrecked my tent!"

"Oh, begad!"

"If you had been wide awake you might have spotted him," said Loder. "A fat lot of use you are as a night

sentry! And Bulstrode's worse! He declares it was a spook that did the mischief. I shall ask Mr. Quelch to choose a couple of reliable sentries to-morrow night. How can the camp be properly guarded when one sentry's fast asleep, and the other's wandering in his mind?"

Lord Mauleverer yawned long and deeply.

"Can I go to bed now, Loder?" he requested.

"No, you can't! You'll stay at your post till reveille, and if you go to sleep again there will be serious trouble!"

So saying, Loder strode away.

The prefects' tent was re-erected, and Bulstrode, looking very white and shaken, returned to his sentry-go. He had had a scare that night from which he would not soon recover. Loder and Walker had pooh-poohed the idea of the intruder being an apparition; but Bulstrode was convinced that he had seen a ghost that night for the first time in his career.

He could not be quite certain whether ghosts were in the habit of crawling through gaps in hedges, or wrecking tents, or trying to lower the record for the high jump. He could only conclude that the spook which had visited Pinehaven Camp that night was one of the playful sort of which he had read in the newspapers—the same kind of spook that threw furniture about in farmhouses, and made mysterious rappings at doors and windows.

"The fellows will laugh at me when I tell them what I've seen," muttered Bulstrode. "Nothing will convince me

Look out for some topping treats, chums! There are bumper programmes ahead!

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that the thing was human! Hope it doesn't turn up again to-night, that's all!"

Bulstrode's hopes were realised. The remainder of the night passed without incident.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Terror by Night!

"HALLO! Hallo! Hallo!"

Bob Cherry unfastened the flap of No. 1 tent and stepped out into the glory of the morning.

Bob's boisterous greeting was intended for Bulstrode. That junior, his vigil over, was going to his tent, with a view to turning in.

Bulstrode halted as Bob Cherry hailed him.

"Watchman, what of the night?" said Bob. "Was it peaceful and serene, or have there been any more ructions?"

"Loder's tent was wrecked in the middle of the night," said Bulstrode.

"My hat! Who was the merry wrecker? Not one of the fellows, was it?"

"No," said Bulstrode, flushing a little. "It was a ghost!"

"What!"

Bob Cherry's shout of astonishment was echoed by Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, and Johnny Bull.

"Are you trying to pull our legs, Bulstrode?" asked the captain of the Remove.

"Not at all. I'm not telling you what I fancied I saw; I'm telling you what I actually did see. It came into the camp while I was keeping watch, and I thought my heart would stop beating!"

"Did it have clanking chains, and utter blood-curdling screams?" asked Bob Cherry, with a grin.

"No, it didn't have chains. But it was all in white, and hooded, and it gave a queer sort of cackle, that fairly made my flesh creep."

The juniors laughed outright.

"My dear chap," said Nugent, "you went to sleep at your post, and had nightmare."

"Nothing of the sort!" declared Bulstrode indignantly. "I've been wide-awake all night."

"And you saw this spook wreck the prefects' tent?" said Harry Wharton incredulously.

"Yes."

"Well, there may be some gullible asses who might believe you, but we don't!"

Bulstrode clenched his hands.

"If you say I'm a liar—" he began wrathfully.

"No, I'm not saying that. What I think is that some outsider broke into the camp, and he was got up like a ghost."

"One of the lads of the village, playing a midnight prank," said Bob Cherry. "Exactly!"

Bulstrode shook his head.

"You see that hedge over there?" he said. "Well, the spook took a flying leap, and cleared it. That wants a bit of doing!"

"Well, it's certainly a bit steep—like your story!" chuckled Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bulstrode clearly saw that he would never be able to convince Harry Wharton & Co. that he had seen a ghost. So he turned his back on the juniors, and went along to his own tent. After his long night's vigil, he was glad to get some sleep.

Mr. Quelch was informed by Loder of what had happened in the night.

The Remove master, like everyone else, scouted the idea of a ghost.

"It strikes me very forcibly, Loder," he said, "that one of the villagers is responsible for these outrages. Doubtless he donned some ghostly garb, in order to scare the sentries. I will detail two reliable boys to keep guard to-night—boys whom I can confidently trust."

"That's the idea, sir," said Loder. "Bulstrode and Mauleverer were useless. One went to sleep, and the other was scared out of his wits for no reason at all."

The task of guarding the camp the next night was allotted to Tom Brown and Dick Penfold. Both could be relied upon to keep awake, and not to lose their nerve in an emergency.

It was just such a night as the previous one—very dark, with only a few stars glimmering in the sky.

Tom Brown patrolled that side of the meadow which Bulstrode had patrolled previously. The New Zealand junior was very much on the alert. He was armed with a cricket-stump, which he meant to use on any intruder, whether human or supernatural. Tom Brown had a sort of half-belief in ghosts, but he was not afraid of them.

Midnight arrived, and there had been no disturbance—no sign of an intruder.

Tom Brown gave a shrill "Coo-ee!" and a moment later he was joined by Dick Penfold.

"All quiet on your side, Pen?" he asked.

"Yes. Not a mouse stirring."

"Then I vote we go along to the refreshment marquee, and make ourselves a brew of coffee," said Tom Brown. "It's beginning to get chilly."

The sentries retired to the marquee, and by the light of bicycle lamps they prepared a pleasant snack.

"Not likely to be anything doing to-night," said Dick Penfold, sipping his coffee.

"Doesn't seem like it," agreed Tom Brown. "Still, we'll keep our peepers open. It would be awful if we were caught napping."

Having finished their snack, the two juniors extinguished the bicycle lamps, and stepped out of the marquee together.

Suddenly Tom Brown gave a shout.

"Look!"

Dick Penfold had already caught sight of the object which had attracted his companion's attention.

Through a gap in the hedge, on that side of the meadow which Tom Brown had been patrolling, emerged a white figure. It stood out in clear relief against the dark background.

There could be no doubt that this was the same apparition which George Bulstrode had seen the previous night. It was clad in white, and the face was hooded. It stood peering around in the darkness, as if trying to get its bearings.

Tom Brown's grip on his cricket-stump tightened instinctively. And Dick Penfold, who had been badly startled at first, pulled himself together.

The two juniors had the advantage of Bulstrode. They were together, and had the companionship of each other. Bulstrode had been alone. They could well understand why he had been nervous, as they stood and gazed at that weird figure.

Presently a shrill laugh echoed across the camp. It might have been a human laugh, but it didn't sound like one. It was the same sort of uncanny cackle

which had given Bulstrode such a scare.

"What a hideous row!" muttered Tom Brown.

Dick Penfold caught his companion's arm.

"What are we going to do?" he whispered.

"Follow your leader!" was the reply. "We'll jolly soon see whether it's a spook or not! If it turns out to be one of the villagers, we'll give him such a lamming that he won't come within a mile of the camp again!"

Tom Brown raced away across the dewy grass, with Dick Penfold hard at his heels.

The apparition—if indeed it was an apparition—saw the juniors coming, brandishing their cricket-stumps as they ran. Instantly it turned and fled.

The juniors felt more confident when they saw that the intruder was afraid of them.

"Come on, Pen!" panted Tom Brown. "Put the pace on!"

Suddenly the white-clad figure leapt high in the air, clearing the tall hedge with a magnificent leap.

The juniors halted in sheer amazement. They knew that they themselves could not have cleared an obstacle of that height.

But there was a gap in the hedge, and Tom Brown darted towards it.

"We'll collar him," he panted, "if we have to chase him five miles!"

They wormed their way through the gap, and when they emerged into the adjoining meadow they saw that their quarry was already half-way across it, and running like the wind.

A stern chase followed.

Both Brown and Penfold were splendid sprinters, and they went all out.

Fast as they ran, however, the figure in white ran faster. Whether man or ghost, human or supernatural, the flying figure in front was certainly a wonderful athlete.

The juniors found that the distance between them and their prey was widening. They were not able to clear hedges and jump ditches in such a nimble manner as their quarry. Moreover, the darkness hampered their progress.

Suddenly there was a splash, and Dick Penfold found himself wallowing in a deep and miry ditch. Tom Brown had perforce to stop and fish him out—an operation which lasted a couple of minutes.

"Groo!" gasped the unfortunate Penfold. "I'm covered from head to foot in beastly slime!"

"No use going on," said Tom Brown. "The beggar's out of sight now. Jove, how he ran!"

"The question is," said Dick Penfold, as the juniors retraced their steps to the camp, "have we been pursuing a giddy phantom, or a thing of flesh and blood?"

Tom Brown looked very thoughtful.

"It's hard to say," he remarked. "Several things point to it being human, and yet there was certainly something ghostly about it. That awful laugh, for instance. It was more like a screech than anything else. Then, again, look how easily it outpaced us. We pelted along at top speed, but we couldn't gain a yard."

"Shall we wake Quelch, and tell him what we've seen?"

"No, we won't spoil the old bird's beauty sleep. We'll tell him all about it in the morning."

"There's been no practical joke to-night," said Penfold.

"No. We nipped it in the bud. I don't think the merry joker will come

Let me have your opinion of this special camping story!

again to-night, but I shall keep my weather eye open."

"Same here."

The sentries kept strict watch and ward for the remainder of the night, but nothing happened. And when reveille rang out on the clear morning air, Tom Brown and Dick Penfold made their way to Mr. Quelch's tent, to report their adventure.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Match with Highcliffe!

"GOOD-MORNING, my boys!" said Mr. Quelch. "I trust there was no untoward incident during the night?"

"We saw the ghost, sir, and chased it, but it was too nippy for us," said Tom Brown.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"What nonsense is this, Brown? Do you suppose I am gullible enough to believe that it is a ghost who is responsible for these nightly outrages?"

"Well, sir, it was a figure in white, anyway," said Tom Brown. "If it wasn't actually a ghost, it was the nearest approach to one that I've ever seen. Penfold will bear me out."

"Brown's quite right, sir," chimed in Dick Penfold. "I saw it as well, and helped to give chase. The thing wore a long white cloak, and its face was hooded. It gave an unearthly sort of cackle, too."

"What time did you see this fearsome apparition?" said Mr. Quelch, with crushing sarcasm.

"About midnight, sir!" said Tom Brown.

The Remove master's stern countenance thawed into a smile.

"Our nerves are not at their best at midnight," he said. "We are inclined to imagine all sorts of things. I do not doubt that you saw a white figure. What I say is—and I say it most emphatically—it was not a ghost that you saw. I am convinced that one of the natives of Pinehaven has been making a series of midnight visitations, for the purpose of playing practical jokes. It is a great pity that you allowed the person to get away."

"We chased it as hard as we could, sir," said Dick Penfold.

"Do not refer to the intruder as 'it,' Penfold?" said Mr. Quelch sharply.

Dick corrected himself.

"We chased him over several fields, sir," he said, "but he seemed to be a wonderful athlete. He jumped hedges and cleared ditches with the greatest of ease."

Mr. Quelch gave a kind of snort.

"Why did you not wake the prefects? They would have caught him easily enough."

"I'm sorry to disagree with you, sir," said Tom Brown, "but the prefects wouldn't have stood an earthly."

"Well, well," said Mr. Quelch. "I will not enter into an unseemly argument with a junior. I have no doubt we shall lay the intruder by the heels on some future occasion. You had better go to bed now. You both look very tired."

Tom Brown and Dick Penfold went to their tents. Both slept badly—partly because they were not accustomed to sleeping in the daytime, and partly because their weird experience had unnerved them a little. They saw the white-cloaked figure in their dreams, and kept waking with a start. Harry Wharton & Co. had heard the story, and

they laughed the whole thing to scorn.

"I thought Brown and Penfold had nerves of cast-iron," said Bob Cherry.

"I didn't think they were fanciful fellows, who imagined they saw ghosts."

"They'll be saying that the camp is haunted next!" said Nugent.

"Well, it certainly seems rather weird," said Harry Wharton. "I'm looking forward to a turn at sentry-go myself!"

"You don't believe this silly yarn of a ghost, surely?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"No; but I'm anxious to get to the bottom of the business. It's clean upset Bulstrode's nerves, and Brown and Penfold seem a bit upset by it, too. They say they weren't scared at the time, but it affected them afterwards."

"So long as it doesn't affect their cricket, I sha'n't mind," said Bob Cherry. "Highcliffe are coming over to-morrow, and it's up to us to lick them, yea, even to a frazzle!"

That night, the two sentries were Peter Todd and Mark Linley. Both reported next morning that they had seen the mysterious intruder, and both seemed badly shaken up.

Even Harry Wharton & Co., doubting Thomases though they were, began to realise that there must be something in it. A cool, matter-of-fact fellow like Peter Todd would not allow his nerves to be upset over nothing. Neither would Mark Linley.

Billy Bunter declared that it was a ghost all right, and that he was the only fellow in the Remove who wasn't

afraid of ghosts. Bunter pleaded with Mr. Quelch to let him take a turn at sentry-go; but the master of the Remove was not having any. He knew Bunter. The fat junior would have buried himself in the refreshment marquee, and stayed there all night.

After dinner that day, the Highcliffe eleven arrived. They had cycled over to Pinehaven Camp, and they dismounted with cheery smiles.

All the old familiar faces were there. Frank Courtenay, and his chum De Courcy—commonly called the Caterpillar—and Benson major and minor, and Smithson, and the others. The old Highcliffe eleven, under the captaincy of Cecil Ponsonby, had been done away with, and it was a keen and clean set of players that now represented the school. They were sure to give the Remove a good game.

"Welcome, little strangers!" said Bob Cherry, going forward to greet the Highcliffians. "Are you ready for the fray?"

"Ready, aye, ready!" answered Frank Courtenay, with a grin. "I say, what a ripping little camp this is!"

"You fellows are in clover, an' no mistake!" drawled the Caterpillar. "Wish they'd suddenly discover that our quarters at Highcliffe needed repairin' an' pack us off to a jolly little camp by the sea. Some fellows get all the luck."

"This camp's all right in the daytime, but it's no catch in the night," said Peter Todd. "The blessed place seems to be haunted!"



Suddenly the canvas parted at the entrance. Billy Bunter sat and stared at the apparition as if mesmerised. A hand was thrust through the aperture, and at the same time a terrifying voice exclaimed, "Ha, ha! I am the ghost of Pinehaven Camp!" (See Chapter 9.)

The Highcliffe fellows stared at the speaker in wonder.

"You mean to say there's a spook here?" ejaculated Frank Courtenay.

"Yes. It breaks into the camp every night."

"My hat!"

Peter Todd described his uncanny experiences, and so did the other fellows who had seen the nocturnal visitor.

"In my opinion," said the Caterpillar, when he had heard the story, "you fellows are being japed by one of the natives."

"That's what Quelch thinks," said Harry Wharton. "Anyway, we hope to lay the ghost by the heels soon. The rotten part of it is, it seems to have upset the nerves of several of our fellows."

"It would have upset yours, too!" said Tom Brown grimly. "You can thank your lucky stars you weren't on sentry-go the night Pen and I saw it."

"Oh, bother the ghost!" growled Johnny Bull. "Let's get on with the cricket!"

A special marquee had been erected, to serve as a pavilion. The cricketers wended their way towards it.

Everybody in camp had turned out to see the match. Mr. Quelch reclined in a deck-chair, gazing dreamily across the green meadow. The fellows who were not playing disported themselves on the cool grass.

Loder and Walker were the umpires, and there was an ironical cheer as they strolled on to the pitch in their white coats. Neither of the prefects was popular. They had refused to umpire at first, but Mr. Quelch had reproached them for their unsportsmanlike conduct, so they felt bound to take on the job.

Frank Courtenay won the toss. It was a good wicket, and he wisely decided to make the most of it.

"We'll bat!" he said.

And a moment later he and the Caterpillar walked out to the wickets together.

Harry Wharton allotted his men to the various positions. Wharton was looking rather worried. Peter Todd and Mark Linley seemed half asleep, which was hardly surprising, seeing that they had been up all night. Bulstrode and Tom Brown and Penfold seemed off-colour, as well. Their experiences were still preying on their nerves.

"Pull yourselves together, you fellows!" said Wharton. "We shall have to be at our best to win, you know."

Hurree Singh and Vernon-Smith were put on to bowl. And runs came slowly enough at first.

The dusky nabob sent down some deadly deliveries, and the batsmen took no risk. Vernon-Smith was dead on the mark, too.

The batsmen took nearly half an hour to collect ten runs. And the onlookers grew restive.

"Buck up, there!"

"Put some ginger into it!"

The Caterpillar grinned at his partner. "We'll take 'em at their word, Franky!" he said. "Lay on the willow good an' hard, old sport!"

Frank Courtenay obliged. He sent the next ball clean out of the meadow—a mighty hit for six.

"Bravo!" boomed the voice of Benson major, of Highcliffe.

After this matters became very lively. Frank Courtenay and the Caterpillar opened their shoulders to the bowling and flogged it to all parts of the field. They took risks, sometimes running

nearly half the length of the pitch to meet the ball.

The spectators began to wish they had sat tight and said nothing. They had not bargained for such a hurricane display of hitting.

With the score at 35, the Caterpillar clean missed a swerving ball from Hurree Singh, and Bulstrode, behind the sticks, smartly stumped him.

"How's that?"

The answer was obvious, for the Caterpillar was yards out of his crease. Had it been a closer thing, Loder would have given a verdict of "Not out." But he could not dispute that.

The Caterpillar was loudly cheered as he retired. He had made 20.

Benson major followed on, and there was a further bout of lively hitting.

Benson's batting was of the rustic order. He hit hard and high. When permitted to do so, he hit often. On this occasion he was badly missed in the slips by Peter Todd before he had scored. After this he was missed again by Tom Brown, usually a sure catch. And Benson stayed to make 15 before he was eventually bowled by Vernon-Smith.

"I don't like the look of this at all!" said Bob Cherry. "Sixty for two wickets, by Jove! We shall have to gird up our loins or pull up our socks, or something!"

"Toddy and Brown deserve to be bumped for missing those sitters!" growled Wharton.

"It was a case of nerves, I expect," said Nugent. "They were thinking of what they'd seen in the night."

"Well, I wish to goodness they'd forget it!"

After Benson major's departure matters took a brighter turn for the Remove.

Of the remaining Highcliffe batsmen, only Smithson gave any trouble. And the side was eventually dismissed for 89.

"Well, if we can't make ninety runs," said Vernon-Smith, "we ought to be jolly well pulverised! What's that gong going for?"

"Tea, of course!" said Bob Cherry. "And I can just about do with it! I don't know which is worse, my thirst or my appetite!"

A plump figure could already be seen scuttling towards the refreshment-marquee. It was Billy Bunter. And the cricketers, flushed from their exertions, followed in his wake.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Close Finish!

"**B**ROWN and Bulstrode will go in first," announced Harry Wharton.

The captain of the Remove was adopting the wise policy of keeping the good wine till last.

The Highcliffe fieldsmen had taken their places. They were on tiptoe in their eagerness to capture wickets.

Several outsiders had strolled into the meadow to watch the match. Among them was a tall, fair-haired youth, whose face bore a striking resemblance to that of Coker of the Fifth. In other words, it was utterly unintelligent!

"That chap looks soft!" was Bob Cherry's comment.

"A regular loony!" agreed Nugent. "Who's that meek-and-mild little man with him, I wonder?"

"His keeper, I expect!" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter rolled up to the couple and got into conversation with them. He was seen talking earnestly to the soft-looking fellow—apparently trying to raise a loan on the strength of an imaginary postal-order he was expecting. But the fair-haired youth, although he might have looked soft, was not soft enough to be taken in by Bunter's guile.

The fat junior rolled away at last, looking very disgusted.

"Mean skinflints!" he muttered.

"Who are those people, Bunter?" inquired Harry Wharton.

"Fellow called Horace Binns and his private tutor," growled Bunter. "And they're as mean as they make 'em! I explained to them that I was stony, pending the arrival of my postal-order."

"The one that has been coming ever since the Flood?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—I pointed out that I was short of funds, and I said that a loan of five bob would be very acceptable. The tutor said he was in the same boat as myself—broke to the wide—and that his pupil had all the money. So I asked Binns to advance me five bob, and he said that if I didn't buzz off he'd advance me a thick ear instead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's nothing to cackle at!" said Bunter wrathfully. "Stingy beasts!" he added, glaring across at Master Horace Binns and his private tutor.

Suddenly there was a shout from Johnny Bull.

"Hallo! Bulstrode's out!"

Bulstrode's wicket had been captured by the very first ball sent down. The batsman was caught in two minds. First he made as if to play forward at the ball; then he jumped back, but too late to save his wicket. The stumps were spreadeagled.

Harry Wharton groaned.

"A brilliant start, I must say!" he said. "You're next, Penfold. Keep your end up, for goodness' sake!"

Dick Penfold could usually be relied upon to collect a few runs. But he failed badly now. He scraped miserably at his first ball and scooped it in the air. The wicket-keeper ran forward, but just failed to hold the catch.

It was a lucky let-off for Penfold. But he did not survive long. He called his partner for an impossible run, and was run out.

Two wickets down and not a run scored!

Harry Wharton & Co. had good cause to look glum. And the behaviour of Horace Binns at this juncture did not have the effect of cheering them up.

Binns made a megaphone of his hands, and shouted at the retiring batsman: "Yah! Call yourself a cricketer?"

Dick Penfold looked daggers at the tall youth who thus hailed him. It was bad enough to be run out, without having insulting epithets hurled at him by a stranger.

"Play up, Highcliffe!" roared Horace Binns. "You've got 'em hopelessly licked!"

Harry Wharton frowned.

"For two pins I'd wipe up the ground with that fellow!" he growled. "I don't mind him sticking up for Highcliffe, but I wish he'd show better manners!"

Peter Todd was the next man in. Peter went to the wicket as if he were sleepwalking. He was fagged out after being up all night. True, he had

(Continued on page 17.)

Next Monday's school yarn introduces a new character at Greyfriars!



HARRY WHARTON



FRANK NUGENT



BOB CHERRY

THE GREYFRIARS HERALD

Supplement No. 128.

HARRY WHARTON
EDITOR



MARK LINLEY



HURREE SINGH



PETER TODD

Week ending June 9th, 1923.

SPORTS DAY IN CAMP!



By H. VERNON-SMITH.

IN the spacious meadow which adjoins the Remove Camp at Pinehaven-on-Sea, we enjoyed a capital day's sport. Mr. Quelch was master of the ceremonies, and he not only presented the prizes, but provided them, which was jolly noble of him. They were splendid prizes, too, and included vest-pocket cameras, penknives, fountain-pens, and wrist-watches.

There was an enormous entry for the 100 yards' race, and it had to be run off in heats. Wharton, Cherry, Nugent, Hurree Singh, and myself reached the final heat, and a splendid struggle was witnessed. Hurree Singh won by inches. His time was eleven seconds dead. By this I don't mean that Inky was dead, though he was certainly pretty puffed!

Mark Linley won the mile. He has a habit of doing this sort of thing. None of us could get near him. The Lancashire lad streaked along in great style, and finished a dozen yards in front of Wharton, who came in second. Bravo, Linley!

The three-legged race provoked roars of merriment. We had to run in pairs, with handkerchiefs tied round our ankles. There were a good many spills, but Russell and Ogilvy ran together with a perfect understanding, and won fairly easily. Cherry and Linley were second. Bunter and Fish were disqualified for tying their handkerchief so that it would come undone, and allow them the free use of their legs. The artful dodgers!

Bolsover major proved a genius at throwing the cricket-ball, and he won this event with a mighty throw which none of us could approach. When it came to Billy Bunter's turn to throw the ball, he threw it backwards instead of forward, and the sphere struck Loder of the Sixth on the nose! The clumsy Owl of the Remove would have been massacred, had not Mr. Quelch been present. Loder is now going about with a nose like a toy balloon!

Frank Nugent then caused a sensation by winning three events off the reel—the high jump, the long jump, and the obstacle race. Nugent is very nimble on his feet. He seems to be on springs. Besides being a good athlete, he ought to make a very fine dancer.

Bob Cherry won the quarter-mile, and Harry Wharton and Mark Linley fought a desperate duel in the Marathon. Both were exhausted at the finish, but they struggled on gamely, and the captain of the Remove just managed to breast the tape first. He was given a great ovation. Before presenting the prizes, Mr. Quelch made a happy little speech, and the sports were brought to a fitting conclusion by a sumptuous banquet in the refreshment marquee. Billy Bunter had lost every race, but he hadn't lost his appetite!

BRIEF REPLIES.

R. H. B. (Windsor).—"I have been pining for weeks for a Special Camping-Out Number."—Pine no longer. It's here!

"Curious" (Chelmsford).—"How many doughnuts could Billy Bunter consume at one sitting?"—We shouldn't care to finance such an experiment in order to find out. Our week's pocket-money would vanish, as well as the doughnuts!

E. J. H. (Wrexham).—"Is it better to be healthy or wealthy?"—A combination of both—good health and plenty of dollars—is the ideal.

R. H. V. (Walthamstow).—"How do you pronounce the name Ponsonby? My pal and I have had an argument about it."—The name is pronounced Ponsonby. Similarly, Monson is pronounced Munson.

"Merry Japer" (Wandsworth).—"We don't hear much of Skinner these days."—Personally, the less we hear of Skinner the better we like it.

K. L. (Liverpool).—"What is the watchword of Bob Cherry, your Fighting Editor?"—"If you have fists, prepare to use them now!"

"Little Tich" (Bath).—"Dear wharton, I am only 8 years old but I can read the 'greyfriars herald' right threw and understand all the big words."—Bravo, little 'un!

EDITORIAL!



By HARRY WHARTON.

ISN'T it curious how great events sometimes spring from mere trifles? If a lump of plaster hadn't fallen on Mr. Quelch's head in the Remove Form-room, we should not now be enjoying ourselves under canvas at Pinehaven-on-Sea.

We are having a glorious time in camp, but a rather uncanny one as well. We described our experiences to Mr. Frank Richards, who has placed them on record in this issue of the MAGNET Library.

I think it was Scott who said "One crowded hour of glorious life is worth an age without a name." We are having a good many crowded hours down here, crammed with sport and adventure. The uncanny part of the business only makes it all the more adventurous.

Lots of you who are chained to classrooms, or fettered to office stools, will sigh wistfully when you read this Camping-Out Number, and will long for your summer holidays to come, so that you can enjoy the pleasures of camping-out for yourselves. To my mind, there is nothing so jolly as a fortnight under canvas. There are drawbacks, we know. When it pelts with rain, for instance, or when the wind blows your tent down on top of you. But every fellow who is worth his salt will greet these little misadventures with a cheery smile.

The "Greyfriars Herald" has this week been prepared in camp, a special tent having been allotted to us for an editorial sanctum. The conditions are not quite so comfortable as in Study No. 1 at Greyfriars, but it is all very novel and delightful.

Hurrah for the joys of camping! And a hearty vote of thanks to that lump of plaster which produced this happy result!

HARRY WHARTON.

"Croolty to Animals!"—Billy Bunter's contribution—next week!



THE CAMP BUGLER!

By JOHNNY BULL.

AS soon as Mr. Quelch heard that I was supposed to be a genius at blowing a bugle he summoned me to his tent.

"I wonder if you would care to take up the duties of camp bugler, my boy?" he said.

I told him I would be charmed. Whereupon Quelch handed me a battered instrument, which I expect he had picked up at a secondhand shop.

"Now, I wish you to sound the Reveille each morning at seven o'clock," he said, "and the Last Post each evening at nine."

"Very good, sir."

"You will also sound the bugle-calls for meals. Breakfast will be at eight, dinner at one, tea at five, and supper at seven-thirty."

"Do you want me to sound 'Come to the Cookhouse Door, Boys!' sir?" I inquired.

"Yes, I think that is what the tune is called," said Quelch.

"I'm a bit out of practice, sir," I confessed. "You mustn't mind if I make rather a mess of it at the start. I shall soon get into the way of it."

I marched off to No. 1 tent with the bugle, and started putting in some practice.

At first the only sounds I could produce were deep and mournful grunts, like those of a person in pain.

Wharton and Cherry and Nugent were in the tent, and they stopped their cars.

"Whoa, Johnny!"

"Chuck that row, for goodness' sake!"

"But I'm the camp bugler!" I protested. "I've been specially appointed by Quelch. And I've got to get my hand in."

"Well, I wish you'd go and practise in some lonely meadow about a mile from the camp!" growled Wharton. "We can't stick this appalling din!"

I persisted with my practising, with painful results. My comrades fell upon me as one man, and bundled me out of the tent without ceremony.

I crawled away to a corner of the camp in order to practise. Presently I heard howls of wrath, and a volley of missiles came whizzing in my direction. Lumps of turf and eggs which were long past the flower of their youth, were hurled at me, and I was obliged to desist.

I began to realise that the life of a camp bugler was not a bed of roses. I became very unpopular with my school-fellows, who hooted me and pelted me whenever I tried to put in some practice.

Finally I had to take Wharton's advice and seek out a secluded meadow far from the madding crowd. Here I was able to practise without interruption, until I sounded all the calls successfully.

That evening I played the Last Post. I thoroughly enjoyed it, but nobody else did. Instead of patting me on the back after my performance, as I hoped he would, Quelch informed me that there

was lots of room for improvement in my playing. And when I got back to my tent I was the subject of a hostile demonstration.

I was still more unpopular next morning, when I turned out at seven to sound the Reveille.

The fellows were tired, and they didn't see the fun of getting up in the middle of the night, as they called it. But there was no more sleep for them after the bugle had gone. The din I made would have awakened the Seven Sleepers.

But I leapt into popularity again shortly afterwards, when I sounded "Come to the Cookhouse Door, Boys!" There was no cookhouse door to come to, because breakfast was held in the refreshment marquee. But the fellows were hungry, and the call was very inviting.

I got on very well that day until it came to the evening. I was in the act of sounding the supper call when the bull in the next meadow took exception to the music. The animal became very restive, and when I was half-way through the call it came charging through the hedge and into the camp.

The bull was snorting furiously, and I verily believe it would have sent me spinning into space, bugle and all, if I had given it half a chance. But I promptly took to my heels, and the wrathful beast chased me round and round the camp.

The fellows all turned out of their tents to witness the scene.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's Bull being chased by his namesake!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

It was no laughing matter so far as I was concerned. Panting and almost breathless, I stumbled between the two rows of tents, with the bull hard at my heels.

It was Loder of the Sixth who saved me from a terrible fate. Loder was standing just outside his tent, wearing a red blazer. The sight of that brilliant garment made the bull temporarily



I promptly took to my heels and ran!

forget me, and he turned his attention to Loder.

With a yell of alarm the prefect sprang to one side, and the bull went charging full into his tent.

Down came the whole box of tricks, and a scene of the wildest panic prevailed.

As soon as the bull had sorted itself out from the wreckage a number of fellows sprang towards it and pluckily secured it by its rope. It calmed down a bit then, and they were able to lead it back to the adjoining meadow.

A further misadventure befell me next morning. When I went to sound the Reveille I found that some practical joker had stuffed the bugle with paper, so that I shouldn't be able to blow it! I tried to remove the obstruction, but in vain—and the fellows enjoyed an extra half-hour in bed.

I am still "carrying on" under difficulties, and I shall stick it out, whatever happens. But the next time we go away to camp Mr. Quelch will have to find another bugler!

THE WANDERING PORPOISE!

By BILLY BUNTER.

I know not where to lay my head.

The outlook's dark and drear;

"This tent is full," Bob Cherry said.

"No room for you in here."

You're such an awful size, old chap;
You'd simply push us off the map!"

To Toddy's tent I made my way,

And poked my nose inside;

I felt fagged out, and far from gay—

In pleading tones I cried:

"Room for a little one in here?"

But Toddy promptly shouted: "Clear!"

And then I had a fearful tiff

With Bulstrode, Field, and Brown;

"By sleeping in this tent," said Squiff,

"You'd bring the whole thing down.

Clear off and find another tent

That can be borrowed, hired, or lent."

"Oh, Skinner, take me in!" I wailed.

"I don't know where to sleep."

And then I fairly quaked and quailed

As Skinner gave a leap.

And smote me with a cricket-stump.

(My cranium bears an awful bump!)

I went to Quelch in despair.

With shoulders stooped and bent;

"Sir," I exclaimed, "it isn't fair,

I cannot find a tent.

I've asked the fellows, one by one,

They all replied, 'It can't be done!'"

So Quelch had a special tent

Prepared for me alone;

And to that snug retreat I went

At dusk, without a groan.

At last I've found a happy home.

No longer need I hunt and roam!

It's next!

Don't miss our special "Pets" number!

[Supplement ii.]



ALONZO'S DARING DEED!

By TOM BROWN.

THE Greyfriars Remove were in camp at Pinehaven-on-Sea.

It was a cool, calm evening, and the sun was sinking over the western hills.

There were no scowling faces in camp, except one. And that was the face of Skinner.

The cad of the Remove came out of Mr. Quelch's tent, squeezing his hands tightly together, and looking far from happy.

"Ow-ow-ow!" moaned Skinner.

A group of juniors near by glanced curiously at their schoolfellow.

"What's wrong, Skinney?" inquired Bolsover major.

"Licked!" muttered Skinner, who seemed to be trying to fold himself up like a pocket-knife. "Fancy old Quelch bringing his cane to camp with him! The old tyrant! He laid it on good and hard, too!"

"What was it for?" asked Snoop.

"Oh, nothing much. I happened to be jawing to some fellows, and I referred to Quelch as an old buffer. He came up behind me unawares and overheard me. 'What did you call me, Skinner?' he asked in that sharp way of his. 'A kind-hearted old gentleman, sir,' I said. 'That is a lie!' barked Quelch. 'I distinctly heard you allude to me—your former master—as an old buffer!'"

"And then the old buffer made you suffer?" said Dick Penfold, the poet of the Remove.

Skinner was still squeezing his hands together when Alonzo Todd happened to drift towards the group.

Alonzo arrived on the scene just in time to hear Skinner say:

"Quelch wants taking down a few pegs!"

Alonzo halted, and looked curiously at Skinner.

"Does he really, Skinner?" he asked in his meek and mild way.

"Yes," said Skinner savagely. "The sooner somebody takes Quelch down a few pegs the better!"

Alonzo passed on, looking very thoughtful. He was ever on the look-out to do somebody a good turn, and here, it seemed, was an excellent opportunity.

"If Mr. Quelch really wants a few pegs taken down—presumably from his tent—I shall be delighted to oblige him!" murmured the guileless Alonzo.

The Duffer of the Remove had completely misunderstood the meaning of Skinner's remarks. Alonzo always took everything literally. If you told him to go and eat coke, he would promptly go to the coal-cellar in search of some. If you told him to go and chop chips he would start looking around for an axe and some wood. I don't suppose he would go to the extent of frying his face if requested to do so. He would draw the line at that. But it seemed perfectly reasonable

that Mr. Quelch should want somebody to take him down a few pegs.

Alonzo was pondering on the matter when his cousin Peter hailed him.

"What do you say to a game of chess, Lonzy?"

"A capital idea, my dear Peter!" said Alonzo.

And the two cousins adjourned to their tent and played chess until the light became so bad that they could not see what they were doing.

In the excitement of the game Alonzo had clean forgotten his resolve to do Mr. Quelch a good turn. It quite slipped his memory, and he went to bed and thought no more about it.

In the silent watches of the night, however, Alonzo awoke. And he remembered in a flash what Skinner had said. Somebody ought to take Mr. Quelch down a few pegs.

"I will do it now, while it is fresh in my mind," murmured Alonzo.



"Todd! Are you responsible for this scene of devastation?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

He got out of bed and slipped into some clothes, taking care not to disturb his tent-mates. Then he undid the flap of the tent, and stepped out into the darkness.

All was peaceful and serene. The Greyfriars camp was wrapped in slumber. The white tents showed up like ghostly sentinels against the blackness.

Alonzo groped his way in the direction of the tent which was occupied by Mr. Quelch.

Progress was difficult owing to the darkness, and Alonzo stumbled once or twice, getting his feet entangled in guy-ropes. But he persevered, and at last he had the satisfaction of reaching his destination.

The pegs of the tent had been hammered firmly into the soil, and Alonzo found that he could not shift them. For a moment he was dismayed. And then he remembered that there was a mallet in the spare tent close at hand.

Alonzo fetched the mallet, and started to attack one of the pegs. He knocked it this way and that way, until it was quite loose. Then he pulled it up with his hand.

"I fear I am making rather a noise," he murmured. "I hope it does not wake Mr. Quelch. I should not like him to see me doing him a good turn. I prefer to do good by stealth."

Alonzo passed from peg to peg, uprooting each of them in turn. It did not seem to occur to him that he was taking away the supports of the tent, and that the latter was in danger of coming down.

Having removed half a dozen pegs, Alonzo desisted from his labours.

"I think that will be sufficient," he mused. "Why— Good gracious! What is happening?"

The tent began to cave in on all sides. And then, with a fluttering of canvas, it fell.

There was a muffled yell from within. Mr. Quelch had been sleeping peacefully, but he was wide awake now! And he wondered if an earthquake was happening.

"Dear me!" murmured Alonzo, surveying the wreckage. "This is most alarming!"

A pyjama-clad figure came crawling out from the chaos. It was Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master staggered to his feet. Peering through the gloom, he caught sight of Alonzo Todd.

"Todd! Boy! Are you responsible for this scene of devastation?" he thundered.

"I—I—" faltered Alonzo.

"What are you doing with that mallet?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"I—I've taken you down a few pegs, sir," stammered Alonzo.

"What!"

"I heard Skinner say that somebody ought to take you down a few pegs, sir, so I obliged."

Mr. Quelch glared speechlessly at Alonzo for a moment. Then he broke forth in tones of thunder:

"You utterly stupid boy! Did you not realise that Skinner's remark was merely a figure of speech? I can see that you acted from a mistaken sense of kindness, and therefore I shall not punish you. Pray help me to reconstruct my tent. As for Skinner, I will deal with him in the morning for having made such an impertinent remark!"

With his brain in a whirl, Alonzo assisted Mr. Quelch to put up the tent. After which he returned to his own tent a sadder and wiser youth.

Next morning Harold Skinner received a further swishing from Mr. Quelch. And the cad of the Remove began to wish more fervently than ever that Mr. Quelch had not brought his cane to camp!

THE END.

"Fishy and the Donkey!"—a screamingly funny story by Tom Brown—next Monday!

Supplement iii.]

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CAMPING NOTES!



By Bob Cherry.

BILLY BUNTER complains that when he came into our tent—No. 1—with a view to taking up his quarters there, he was very much “put out”! And one stormy night, when he was sleeping in his own tent, he was “considerably upset”! Poor old Bunter! Camp life doesn’t agree with porpoises.

OPEN-AIR lessons in camp provide rare fun. Mr. Quelch omitted to bring a blackboard and easel to camp with him. But he didn’t forget to bring his cane! Rather a shame, don’t you think, considering we had already been “tanned” by the wind and sun!

THE grub we are getting in camp is top-hole. The cooks have worked like niggers, and when the camp breaks up we intend to have a whip-round on their behalf. They certainly deserve a good fat tip as a reward for their labours. There have been no complaints—not even from Billy Bunter!

THE Remove Camp will always be famous for its ducks. Five members of the eleven made “ducks” in the match with Highcliffe; and Mr. Quelch’s tent was invaded by ducks—of the feathered variety—in the middle of the night. Quelch had to get out of bed and chase the intruders away, and it was quite a wild-geese chase—or, rather, a wild-duck chase!

FRANK NUGENT, our tame artist, was painting a picture of the Remove Camp the other day, when a bull came charging up and bowled Franky over, knocking his canvas on top of him. A case of being “under canvas,” with a vengeance!

BOLSOVER MAJOR appears to be so serenely happy down here that he has not once been heard to remark that he would “like to fight somebody.” I verily believe that if his biggest enemy gave him a punch on the jaw, he would turn the other cheek.

THE open air seems to imbue Dick Penfold with a desire to spout poems from morn till night. He sits and admires the sunset, pencil and paper in hand, gaining inspiration from the beauties of nature. These poet merchants get it bad under canvas, take it from me. His tent-mates have awakened on more than one occasion to hear Penfold reeling off verses of poetry in his sleep—but that’s better than waking to hear Bunter’s snores!

ALONZO TODD has put in a considerable amount of his spare time at butterfly-catching—quite an exhilarating pastime for the gentle Alonzo. His Uncle Benjamin has been the daily recipient of an umpteen-page epistle describing the weird and wonderful antics of these insects, and Alonzo, in turn, has received a letter by the first post every morning in which his avuncular relative repeatedly expresses the advice that Alonzo should be careful not to catch cold, and not to sleep next to the damp ground, etcetera.

THE JOYS OF CAMPING!

By DICK PENFOLD.

When the camp begins to rally at the sound of the reveille,
And the lark is gaily singing overhead;
When the prospect’s bright and sunny, and you’re flushed with health—and money,
And you kneel upon the boards and roll your bed;
When the day goes swift and cheery, and you’re never stale nor weary,
And there’s nothing that’s depressing, dull, or damping;
When you’re happy as a sandboy, full of music as a bandboy,
You will never fail to bless the joys of camping.

When you scent the fresh sea breezes, and when every prospect pleases,
As you romp and leap and revel in the sun;
When you toddle to the wicket, and indulge in thrilling cricket,
With a frenzied crowd to cheer you as you run;
When you’re bathing in the briny, in the waters clear and shiny,
Or along the pleasant by-ways briskly tramping,
You will hum a merry ditty, and consider it a pity
That you cannot taste for aye the joys of camping.

When the sunset’s rays are streaming, and you’re lying down a-dreaming
Of the jolly and the joyous things of life;
When you’re far from din and bustle, and the never-ending hustle
Of the big and busy city’s whirl and strife;
When your comrades, having found you, come and spread themselves around you,
And when no one is a-raving or a-ramping,
But when all is bright and jolly, not a tinge of melancholy,
You will taste the deep and dear delights of camping.

If you want a good, long laugh, look out for our next supplement!

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MY HAPPIEST DAY IN CAMP!



By Various Contributors.

BOB CHERRY:

Every day has been gloriously happy so far, and I can’t honestly say that one day has been better than another. Any fellow who doesn’t feel happy in camp is an incurable pessimist!

FRANK NUGENT:

My happiest day in camp was the day on which we played Highcliffe at cricket, and I had the good fortune to make the winning hit. I thoroughly enjoyed every minute of that amazing match; but I can’t say I enjoyed the ovation I received afterwards. In their excitement, my comrades nearly tore me limb from limb, and I felt inclined to agree with the chap who wrote: “Save me from my friends!”

BILLY BUNTER:

I feel jolly mizzerable in camp, so there! Don’t talk to me of happy days! The grub is glorious, but I can’t get enough of it, and I’d rather have quantity than quality, any day! Another thing that makes me mizzerable is that I have to sleep in a tent all on my lonesome. It is not good for man to be alone, the ancient profit tells us; and it certainly isn’t good for a prize porpoise to be alone. The sooner this camp breaks up, and we go back to Greyfriars, the better I shall like it.

LORD MAULEVERER:

Afraid I haven’t had a happy day in camp yet. There’s too much hard work knocking around! I have to get up every morning with the lark, and scrub the tent-boards, and make my bed, and wash in icy cold water, and lots of other unpleasant things. “Anything for a quiet life” is my motto, and you don’t get a quiet life in camp, not by any means! All this physical exertion is wearing me away to a shadow, begad!

HARRY WHARTON:

My happiest day was the day of the Camp Sports, when I managed to beat Mark Linley in the Marathon Race, after a struggle which I shall remember till I’m an old beaver of eighty!

MR. QUELCH:

Every new day in camp brings its quota of happiness. It makes me feel quite young again to live in the open air. I have brought my typewriter to camp with me, in order that I may continue my History of Greyfriars. I have also brought my golf clubs, with a view to challenging all the local sportsmen. And I did not omit to bring my cane—much to the dismay of my pupils.

[Supplement iv.]

THE HAUNTED CAMP!

(Continued from page 12.)

snatched a couple of hours' sleep that morning, but he was not fit for cricket.

The Highcliffe fellows, having captured two wickets, were bent on adding more scalps to their collection.

The Caterpillar was bowling, and he was putting plenty of vim into it. The Caterpillar was a tired mortal, as a rule, but he always woke up when there was a cricket match on.

Peter Todd pulled a ball round to leg rather luckily, and the batsmen crossed twice. The Remove cheered, and so did the objectionable Horace Binns—only, his cheer happened to be ironical.

With the next ball Peter Todd tried to repeat his performance. But the ball somehow eluded the bat and thudded against his pad.

"How's that?"

"Out!" said Loder promptly.

And Peter Todd retired, saying nasty things under his breath about the l.b.w. rule.

Tom Brown was still batting, but he had not scored yet. He and Mark Linley became associated, and they managed to take the total to ten. Then Tom Brown, playing back to a fast ball from the Caterpillar, knocked down his wicket.

There was a yell of laughter from Horace Binns.

"Ho, ho, ho! Of all the silly duffers! Fancy knocking down his own wicket!"

Bob Cherry clenched his hands.

"I feel like committing assault and battery on that fellow," he said. "What right has he got to criticise our players, I should like to know?"

All the spectators were glaring at the tall, fair-headed youth by this time. And Mr. Quelch sat up in his deck-chair and glared too.

"If that person continues to make uncomplimentary remarks I shall have him ejected from the ground!" muttered the master of the Remove.

When Mark Linley's wicket fell, with no addition to the score, Horace Binns gave a further shout of derision.

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet and advanced grimly towards the disturber of the peace.

"I must ask you to keep quiet," he said sternly. "Otherwise I shall order your removal from the ground."

Horace Binns merely threw back his head and laughed. It was the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind.

"Ho, ho, ho! Remove me, would you? I should like to see you try it on!"

"Pray be silent, Horace!" said the meek-and-mild little man who stood at the youth's side. Then he turned to Mr. Quelch.

"I trust you will overlook Master Binns' conduct, sir," he said. "He is—er—not quite responsible for his actions."

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Am I to understand that he is mentally deficient?"

"Hush!" said the tutor warningly. "Do not say such things in his hearing, or he will become violent."

Mr. Quelch stepped back a pace. He looked quite alarmed.

"I am Master Binns' tutor," explained the meek-and-mild little man. "I am doing my best to keep him in order, but with scant success, I am afraid. How-

ever, I will entreat him not to transgress again."

"If he does," said Mr. Quelch, "I shall ask some of my boys to eject him. I am allowing visitors to come in and see the match as a special concession, and I expect them to behave themselves."

So saying, Mr. Quelch went back to his deck-chair.

The game was proceeding merrily—merrily, at any rate, for the Highcliffians.

Five Remove wickets were down, with only ten runs signalled on the board. It looked as if Highcliffe would have a walk-over.

Harry Wharton and Vernon-Smith were now together, and they offered a sturdy resistance to the bowling. Five men had been skittled out like rabbits. But Harry Wharton and his partner were made of sterner stuff. They were neither tired nor nervy, as the other batsmen had been.

Runs came at a steady pace. Harry Wharton drove with great power, and Vernon-Smith displayed a delightful variety of strokes.

Between them they carried the score to 40. And matters looked more healthy for the Remove now.

Wharton was out to a glorious catch at deep square-leg. Smithson had to leap high in the air to get at the ball, which was travelling at express speed. His fingers closed over the leather, and he toppled backwards with his right arm upraised.

"Oh, well held, sir!"

"Rats! Any fool could have caught that!"

It was Horace Binns again with his bellowing roar.

Mr. Quelch frowned, and made a sign to some of the juniors who reclined on the grass at his feet.

"I must ask you to eject that rude person from the ground," said the Form master.

Instantly Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull and Frank Nugent sprang to their feet. This was what they had been waiting for. The derisive shouts of Horace Binns had got on their nerves. The half-witted youth had slanged the Greyfriars cricketers, but the Remove were not going to sit idly by and hear him abuse one of their guests. Smithson's catch

had been a real beauty, and it was rank bad form of Horace Binns to deprecate it.

"Hi! What's the little game?" shouted Horace Binns as the trio of juniors advanced grimly towards him.

"This is where you go out on your neck!" growled Johnny Bull. "We're fed-up with you and your blessed interruptions!"

With the odds at three to one it seemed an easy matter to eject Binns. But it was one of those things which are easy enough in theory, but difficult in practice.

Horace Binns showed fight. He clenched his big fists, and felled Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull with a couple of powerful drives. They were bowled over like ninepins.

Bob Cherry closed with Binns, and a hammer-and-tongs battle ensued. Bob hit hard, as he always did; but Binns hit harder. The fellow seemed to make up in muscular power what he lacked in intelligence.

Biff! Thud! Biff! Thud!

To and fro the combatants swayed, and Bob Cherry was gradually yielding ground. But Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull regained their feet and rushed to the assistance of their chum.

Slowly but surely Horace Binns was hustled towards the exit. And suddenly he received a shove which sent him sprawling. He crashed into his tutor, who was already in full flight, and the two rolled over on the ground together, the little man shouting and protesting volubly.

After rolling in the lane for some moments, with their bodies interlocked, the couple sorted themselves out and staggered to their feet.

Horace Binns looked as if he meant to re-enter the meadow where the match was being played. But his tutor pleaded earnestly with him, and at last the big fellow turned and slouched away, with the little man following at his heels like a faithful lap-dog.

"Good riddance!" growled Bob Cherry, mopping at his nose with a handkerchief. "The fellow's an absolute imbecile. He knows how to hit, though!"

"The dickens he does!" groaned Johnny Bull, caressing his jaw.

"Man in!" sang out somebody. "Bob Cherry's next!"

Bob searched for his favourite bat, and found it, and went to join Vernon-Smith at the wickets. He felt a bit shaky after his gruelling fight with Horace Binns, and he left the hitting to his partner.

Vernon-Smith was playing sound, forceful cricket. The score rose from 40 to 50, and from 50 to 60. And the hopes of the Remove rose with the score.

Bob Cherry fell a prey to an innocent-looking googly which the Caterpillar sent down. That was the worst of the Caterpillar's bowling. You never knew what sort of ball he would send down next. First a leg-break, and then a deadly straight one, and then a googly.

But the Remove only needed 30 runs now, and Nugent and Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh had to go in. Moreover, Vernon-Smith was well set, and complete master of the attack.

"Play up, Franky!" said Bob Cherry as Nugent passed him on his way to the wicket. "The bowling's fairly easy. All the sting's gone out of it. You'll have to keep an eye on the Caterpillar, though. He sends down some funny stuff."

Frank Nugent was a graceful batsman, and his neat strokes won him heaps of applause. He kept the ball on the carpet,

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never giving the semblance of a chance. All the Caterpillar's wiles were wasted upon Nugent.

Vernon-Smith continued to hit, but with 10 runs added his glorious innings came to an end. He was caught on the boundary line. Frank Courtenay had to run like a hare in order to get the ball, but he got to it and hugged it to his chest, and there was a roar:

"Well caught, sir!"

Vernon-Smith came in for a great ovation. He had made 44. The fieldsmen clapped him as he walked out, and the Greyfriars fellows cheered him to the echo.

"Twenty wanted!" said Harry Wharton. "It's going to be a close thing."

Johnny Bull buckled on his pads and went to join Nugent. He hit his first ball clean out of the field, and there was a sensation. But Johnny was too venturesome. He hit out rather wildly at the next ball, and failed to get the full face of the bat to it. The ball shot off the edge of the bat into the waiting hands of short-slip.

"Fourteen wanted, and Inky to bat!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Win this match for us, Inky, and half my kingdom is thine!"

"I will do my bestful best," promised Huree Singh.

"Well, that's better than your worstful worst, anyway," said Bob. "Go forth and prosper!"

Huree Singh walked to the wicket amid a profound silence. Fortunately the Nabob of Bhanipur was not a nervy person. His was a big responsibility, but he was quite equal to it.

One more ball remained to complete the over. Huree Singh stopped it dead.

Now came Nugent's turn. And he made the most of it.

The first ball was sent to the boundary. So was the second. And the silence was broken by loud and prolonged cheers.

"Six wanted!" chortled Bob Cherry. "And we shall get 'em! I feel it in my bones. Franky's playing the game of his life!"

The next three balls were very good ones, and Frank Nugent had to be content with blocking them.

The last ball of the over, however, happened to be a half-volley. The batsman smiled as he went forward to meet it.

Crack!

There was a sound of bat meeting ball, and the latter went soaring away, high over the heads of the fieldsmen—onward and upward, finally to drop on the far side of the hedge which skirted the meadow—a lost ball!

It was the winning hit. In spite of their disastrous start the Remove had pulled the game round and won on the post.

It had been a splendid match, and Highcliffe, though defeated, were not disgraced.

Frank Nugent was carried shoulder-high from the playing-pitch by his exuberant chums. And thus the curtain went down upon one of the greatest games in the annals of Greyfriars cricket.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Return of the Ghost I

BILLY BUNTER was hungry. It would have been surprising if he wasn't. Bunter was always in a state of semi-starvation, according to his own account.

The Remove had turned in for the night. Billy Bunter lay wide awake in his tent, with his thoughts centred on one topic—grub.

Supper had been a frugal affair, consisting of biscuits and cheese.

All right for some fellows, reflected Bunter, but not a bit of use to a fellow who had the appetite of a boa-constrictor.

The fat junior was conscious of an aching void in his interior, and he began to wonder how he could fill it.

"There's plenty of grub in the refreshment marquee," murmured Bunter. "A big supply of cakes and pastries came in to-day for to-morrow's tea. Wonder if the sentries would spot me if I went on a raiding expedition?"

The two sentries that night happened to be Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing. Both were wide-awake fellows, and Bunter would have to tread warily. But he was so ravenous that he meant to take the risk.

It did not occur to the fat junior that to raid a refreshment marquee was the equivalent to stealing. Bunter was far too rbtuse to take that view of the matter. He argued that the food in the marquee was the common property of the Remove, and that he was entitled to his share, also that his share ought to be at least three times that of anybody else, owing to the fact that he had three times as big an appetite.

The more Bunter thought about the scheme the stronger it appealed to him. He would wait until he heard the distant church clock strike midnight, and then steal forth on his expedition.

It seemed an age before midnight came. More than once Billy Bunter fell into a half-doze; but when at last the clock chimed he was wide awake.

"Now for it!" he muttered.

Cautiously he stepped out of his tent. It was a pitch-black night, well suited to Bunter's purpose.

The fat junior could hear the measured tread of the sentries as they paced to and fro on each side of the meadow. But he could not see them. It was too dark for that. The charm of it was that they could not see him.

Bunter had to grope his way towards the refreshment marquee. Once he tripped over a tent-peg, and went sprawling. With difficulty he repressed a yell, knowing that it would have been heard by the sentries.

Picking himself up, Bunter continued to grope his way through the blackness.

Presently the white outline of the refreshment marquee greeted his gaze.

Bunter stealthily crept into the marquee, and started to explore its dark interior.

A sort of sixth sense enabled Billy Bunter to find out where the grub was. The fat junior's hand closed over a dish which contained doughnuts and cream-buns. Then he discovered another dish, on which were assorted pastries.

"Good!" murmured Bunter. "This will be enough to go on with, I think."

He carried the spoils back to his tent. It was a slow and difficult journey, despite the fact that Bunter's tent was situated fairly close to the refreshment marquee.

Faintly from the distance came the tramp-tramp of the sentries.

"They can't see me and they can't hear me," chuckled Bunter softly. "That's a blessing."

He halted at last outside his tent,

balancing the dishes one in each hand. The entrance was unfastened, and the fat junior wormed his way in, and set the dishes down on the tent-boards. He fancied he heard footsteps outside, and for a moment his heart beat wildly. But the sound did not recur, and Bunter breathed easily again.

"Now for a jolly good tuck-in!" he murmured. "It's dark in here, but I can just manage to see what I'm doing. I can feel, anyway!" he added, as his fingers closed over the sugary surface of a doughnut.

Bunter sat up in bed and dug his teeth into the doughnut. He was just beginning to enjoy himself when again he heard footsteps outside.

It was not fancy this time; it was fact. The footsteps halted outside Bunter's tent.

Bunter gave a gasp of alarm. Had someone seen him raid the refreshment marquee, and followed him back to his tent? Was one of the sentries outside, or was it a prefect, or Mr. Quelch?

Suddenly the canvas parted at the entrance, and a hooded face was thrust into the tent.

Dark though it was, Billy Bunter could distinguish the apparition. He would have yelled with fright, but his tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of his mouth.

There were slits in the hood, and behind those slits gleamed a pair of eyes.

Then a hand was thrust through the aperture, and at the same time a terrifying voice exclaimed:

"Ha, ha! I am the ghost of Pinc-haven Camp!"

Billy Bunter sat and stared at the hooded face as if mesmerised. He wanted to yell for the sentries, but he was in such a state of panic that he was tongue-tied.

"Verily, 'tis a hungry ghost I am!" continued the voice. "Thou hast food in here, plump knave! I will trouble thee to hand it over!"

Billy Bunter had never heard of a ghost being hungry. He had always imagined that ghosts lived on air. But this particular spook seemed to be possessed of a Bunterian appetite.

Bunter was in a state of mortal terror lest his uncanny visitor should come right into the tent. Anything to keep him at bay, Bunter reflected. And he picked up the dish of assorted pastries and passed it with a trembling hand to the intruder.

The hooded face withdrew, and there was a champing of jaws. The ghost appeared to be not only hungry, but ravenous. Having demolished all the pastries on the dish he came back for more.

"Thou hast further supplies in here, varlet! Prithce hand them over!"

It nearly broke Billy Bunter's heart to have to part with the doughnuts and cream-buns. But he dared not defy his midnight visitor. Hastily he snatched up the other dish and passed it to the ghost.

There was a further sound of champing jaws, and then the ghost gave a grunt of satisfaction which sounded almost human.

"I—I say," faltered Bunter. "I hope you'll go away now that I've fed you."

The hooded face appeared again, and the two empty dishes were passed back into the tent. Then the ghost spoke.

"I thank thee for appeasing my ghostly appetite! I will now leave thee."

Harry Wharton distinguishes himself in our coming school story—

"Thank goodness!" muttered Bunter, with a deep breath of relief.

"Sleep in peace, thou plump porpoise. Farewell!"

"Groogh!"

The hooded face withdrew.

Billy Bunter was not likely to sleep in peace after what he had seen. His teeth were chattering, and his hair stood almost on end. He hoped he would never have such a weird experience again.

Shortly after the ghost withdrew a challenge rang out.

"Who goes there?"

It was Vernon-Smith's voice. He happened to be passing Bunter's tent, and his attention was arrested by the white-clad figure.

A mocking laugh followed Vernon-Smith's challenge, and the apparition sped swiftly away across the meadow.

Vernon-Smith gave a shrill whistle, and in an instant Tom Redwing was at his side.

"Anything wrong, Smithy?" he panted.

"Yes! Follow me—quickly!"

Vernon-Smith set off in pursuit of the white-clad figure, and Tom Redwing followed hard at his heels.

But they were outwitted, just as Tom Brown and Dick Penfold had been outwitted on a previous occasion.

The ghost cleared the tall hedge which bounded the camp, and sped away over the meadows, picking his way with unerring skill in the darkness.

Tom Redwing came to grief in a ditch, and his companion sprawled on top of him. By the time they had sorted themselves out, the ghost was not in sight.

"No go!" grumbled Vernon-Smith. "He was too nippy for us!"

"It wasn't a ghost, of course?" said Redwing, but there was a strange lack of conviction in his tone.

Vernon-Smith laughed grimly.

"No, it wasn't!" he said. "When he was running, his white cloak was caught up by the wind, and I distinctly spotted a pair of trousers. Nobody's going to tell me that ghosts wear bags!"

"So you think it was one of the villagers, Smithy?"

"I'd wager a term's pocket-money on it! The pity of it all is, he was too fast for us. He knows the ground better than we do—all the pitfalls, and that sort of thing, whereas we go and take a header into the first ditch we come to. Ugh! I'm covered with slime! We'd better go and change our togs. I don't suppose our friend will come back to-night."

And he didn't.

Next morning Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing described their experiences.

Billy Bunter had a harrowing tale to tell, too. He declared that a ghost had come into his tent at midnight, and that he had grappled with it in deadly combat. The fight lasted over an hour, according to Bunter; and at the end of that time the ghost crawled away, shedding a trail of gore behind it. Which showed that it must have been a very human ghost. Needless to state, nobody believed Bunter's fairy-tale.

The two sentries were believed, though. It was quite clear that the mysterious joker had paid yet another visit to the camp. And when certain supplies of food were found to be missing from the refreshment-marquee, the midnight invader was held responsible. Which was extremely fortunate for William George Bunter!



Russell grabbed at one of the flying legs, and the big fellow came down heavily, and sprawled in the grass. Instantly Russell and Ogilvy plumped themselves on top of him. "Got him!" shouted the former triumphantly. (See Chapter 10.)

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Laid by the Heels!

"T O-NIGHT'S the night!"

Bob Cherry's eyes gleamed with excitement as he spoke.

It was a glorious night. The sky was spangled with stars, and a crescent moon floated shyly across the heavens.

The occupants of Pinehaven Camp, with exceptions, were asleep. The four members of No. 1 tent were wideawake, as also were the two sentries—Dick Russell and Donald Ogilvy.

Harry Wharton had proposed a midnight dip in the sea, and the idea had caught on.

The night was warm, and there was something alluring and romantic in the suggestion of a midnight swim.

"It's getting on for twelve," remarked Nugent, glancing at the luminous watch on his wrist. "We'd better be on the move. Have you told the sentries what we're up to, Harry? We don't want them to start belaying us with cricket-stumps!"

"I've put them wise," said Wharton. "Come on!"

Armed with towels and bathing-costumes, the juniors quitted the tent one by one.

Noiselessly they passed between the white rows of tents, till they reached the camp exit.

Dick Russell saw them go.

"Wish I could join you," he said.

"But I must stick to my post, I suppose."

Hope you have an enjoyable dip, you fellows. Don't go getting cramp, or butting your nappers on rocks, or anything silly like that!"

"Oh, we can take care of ourselves all right!" said Bob Cherry, laughing. "So-long, Russell!"

It was not a far cry to the shore. The juniors undressed in a sandy cave, and donned their costumes. Then they linked arms, and ran down to the water.

Although the night was warm, the water was icy. But the hardy juniors did not mind that. They plunged in all together, and struck out strongly.

"This is ripping!" panted Bob Cherry. "I feel like swimming the giddy Channel!"

Swimming abreast, with strong, vigorous strokes, the juniors went far out to sea. It was not until the shore was almost invisible that they thought of turning back.

They had to battle their way against the tide on the return journey, and their progress was not so swift.

Frank Nugent was the first to tire, but he stuck it out gamely, and reached the shore at the same time as the others.

"That was glorious!" said Johnay Bull, as he towelled himself vigorously in the shelter of the cave. "I'd like to do a stunt like this every night!"

"I'm afraid we should be spotted, if we did it too often," said Harry Wharton. "Russell and Ogilvy are decent fellows, and they won't give the game away. But some fellows would blab—Skinner, for instance."

—and a certain young lady is saved from a perilous situation!

Having dried and dressed themselves, the juniors sprinted back to the camp. And they were soon glowing from head to foot with the exertion.

As they neared the camp Bob Cherry gave a shout:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's all this?"

The juniors halted.

Coming towards them, running at top speed, was a white-clad figure. And a couple of juniors, armed with cricket-stumps, were in hot pursuit.

"Why, it's the merry ghost!" ejaculated Frank Nugent. "Now's our chance!"

The midnight marauder had once again visited the camp. But he would find it difficult to avoid capture this time. He was between two fires, so to speak. Russell and Ogilvy pursued him from the rear, and Harry Wharton & Co. were waiting for him in front.

The ghostly figure uttered a cry of alarm. He changed his course, and shot off at a tangent. But Harry Wharton & Co. were after him in a flash. It was a long and desperate chase. The white-clad figure seemed to be possessed of wings, so fast did it fly. But Harry Wharton & Co. were splendid runners, and they gradually gained on their quarry.

Presently the figure in front came to a five-barred gate. He promptly vaulted it, but in doing so he caught his foot against the top rail, and came down heavily on the other side.

This gave the pursuers the chance they wanted. They covered the intervening distance in a twinkling, and hurled themselves upon the white form as it was in the act of rising.

They soon discovered that it was no ghost that they grappled with, but a human being, and a very powerful human being at that.

The fellow seemed to be possessed of prodigious strength. He shook the juniors from him as if they were flies, and started to run on again.

But Russell and Ogilvy had reached the spot by this time. Russell grabbed at one of the flying legs, and the big fellow came down with a crash, and sprawled in the grass.

Instantly Russell and Ogilvy plumped themselves on top of him.

"Got him!" shouted Russell triumphantly.

The fellow in the white cloak struggled desperately. He would have unseated Russell and Ogilvy had not the rest of the juniors come to their assistance.

At last the giant was overpowered, and he lay panting and helpless in the grass.

"Cut off and get a rope, one of you," said Harry Wharton, "and we'll tie his arms behind his back. Then he won't give us any more trouble."

Frank Nugent sprinted off in the direction of the camp, returning shortly afterwards with a length of rope.

The victim roared to be released, but the juniors paid no heed to his angry shouts.

"Take off his cloak and hood, and let's have a look at him," said Bob Cherry. "I seem to know his voice."

The cloak and hood were promptly

removed, revealing the face and form of Horace Binns—the fellow who had made himself so objectionable at the cricket match!

"So it's you?" said Harry Wharton. "You're the merchant who has been playing pranks every night since we came to the camp?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Let me go!"

"No jolly fear!" said Dick Russell. "You're our prisoner, and we're going to take you back to the camp. You'll appear before the magistrate in the morning—the magistrate being Mr. Quelch."

Horace Binns made a last desperate bid for freedom. But his arms were promptly secured behind his back, and he was helpless.

The burly Binns was marched back to the camp.

"What are we going to do with him?" inquired Nugent.

"Better shove him in our tent for the remainder of the night, and keep guard over him by turn," said Harry Wharton.

Horace Binns was bundled into No. 1 tent without ceremony. And he was given no loophole of escape.

When morning came, there was quite a sensation in the camp.

Mr. Quelch was very pleased to learn that the practical joker had been laid by the heels at last.

"I suspected all along that it was someone from the village who was responsible for these outrages," said Mr. Quelch; "but I little dreamed that it was this half-witted youth. So it was you, Binns, who imported a tribe of ducks into my tent?"

"Yes, it was," said Binns sullenly.

"And it was you who wrecked my tent on the following night?"

"Right again!"

"I have a very good mind to hand you over to the police as a trespasser," said Mr. Quelch sternly.

Horace Binns changed his tone to one of pleading.

"No, don't do that, sir! My pater would be furious. He's already threatened to send me to a mental home, and I believe he'd do it if he got to hear of this business."

"Does your father live in the district?"

"Yes. He lives in that big house down by the beach. Oh, crumbs!"

Binns broke off with an ejaculation of dismay.

A tall, powerfully-built man came striding across the meadow. He was armed with a hunting-crop.

"That's my pater!" said Binns, with a groan. "Don't give me away, sir!" he added, turning to Mr. Quelch.

"I shall certainly inform your father of your outrageous conduct!" said Mr. Quelch.

The man with the hunting-crop came striding up to Tent No. 1. He addressed the master of the Remove.

"I am looking for my son, sir! He has absented himself from home all night. I have reason to believe that he is here, in this camp."

"He is in this tent, sir," said Mr. Quelch.

On catching sight of his stern parent, Horace Binns had slunk back into the tent as far as he could go.

"Come out, sir!" thundered Mr. Binns. "It is useless to skulk in there. Come out and receive the thrashing you deserve!"

"I suppose you know, sir," queried Mr. Quelch, "what your son has done?"

"Eh? I know that he has been absent from home all night."

"The matter is more serious than that. Your son has visited this encampment every night, attired as a ghost, and he has played a number of wanton practical jokes upon myself and others."

The Remove master proceeded to describe the nature of the practical jokes, and Mr. Binns grew more and more wrathful as he listened to the recital.

"I must apologise to you, sir," he said, when Mr. Quelch had finished, "for my son's behaviour. The fact is, there are times when he scarcely seems responsible for his actions. He has a positive mania for playing practical jokes on people—particularly on campers. A number of Boy Scouts camped in this meadow last summer, and my son victimised them in the same way. I will punish him here and now, for his abominable behaviour. Come out, Horace!"

Binns refused to budge. Whereupon Harry Wharton & Co. were instructed to bring him forth to the slaughter.

The juniors untied the rope which bound the burly youth's arms, and then they hustled him out of the tent.

Crack, crack!

The hunting-crop came into play, and Horace Binns danced and roared as it fell about his shoulders.

The onlookers had no sympathy for Master Horace. His rudeness at the cricket match still rankled in their minds.

"He's getting it in the neck good and proper," muttered Bob Cherry. "And I must say it serves him right."

"Hear, hear!"

Mr. Binns wielded the hunting-crop until his arm ached. And the victim was moaning and groaning, and making weird contortions.

"Let that be a lesson to you!" panted the irate parent. "If you get up to any more mischief, I shall seriously consider the advisability of having you sent to a place where you will be kept under strict supervision."

"Ow-ow-ow!" wailed Binns.

"I wish you a good-morning, sir!" said Mr. Binns, turning to Mr. Quelch. "You may sleep soundly in your bed in future. Come, wretched boy!"

And Mr. Binns marched his erring son out of the camp.

The mystery of the midnight outrages was a mystery no longer. The identity of the "ghost" had been established, and the little encampment at Pinchaven, where the Greyfriars Remove were spending such a jolly fortnight, would no longer be known as the Haunted Camp!





SOME PERSONAL HINTS BY "OLD HAND" ON A PASTIME WHICH IS FAST BECOMING THE VOGUE

"Who hath smelt wood-smoke by twilight?
Who hath heard the birch-log burning?
Who is quick to read the noises of the night?
Let him follow with the others, for the young men's feet are turning
To the camps of proved desire and known delight."

J. H.

CAMPING-OUT as a sport is becoming the vogue all over the globe, yet it is a sport which is only in its infancy, with a tremendous future before it. Fellows are beginning to realise that there is more in camping than meets the eye, and when they begin to realise this fact, then one can look out for questions. Thus is sown the seed of the "camping fever," for when a little is found out about it, desire to acquire more advanced knowledge follows, and—well, you can guess the rest.

Has it ever struck you in this way? Have you ever experienced that keen desire to pack a rucksack and tent and get out into the Great Outdoors? Has not the magnetic influence of the camp-fire drawn you into its comforting orange circle?

If you have never packed a little grub, rolled a tent into a haversack, slung a couple of blankets over your shoulder, and made tracks for the open road, listen to what I have to say. Put on your think-cap and take counsel with me, for I am going to tell you something which will open your eyes wide. I'm going to lend you the helping hand—"tip you the wink," as they say on the road.

When the spring comes round it is a warning for me to pack my old rucksack and hit the trail. I feel restless. I have that must-get-out-and-do-something feeling in my bones. That is the camp fever coming on. And it has got a mighty tight grip, too. So off I go back to the open every week-end, and every other holiday which comes my way. Maybe you chaps feel like that sometimes, and you would like to do the same, but you are not quite sure of your feet? Well, that is where I come in, isn't it?

How to Make a Start!

A good start is half the thing accomplished, they say. You will want to make a great success of your first camp, of course. Every camper wants to. You want to become a good backwoodsman from the very first day, in which case you must take careful heed to follow what is written down here. And don't, whatever you do, skimp over anything. Do it thoroughly. That is a good camper's motto.

I propose that you start with a week-end camp, and do not go too far from

home. Take a glance over the map, and find out where the open spaces are—commons, heaths, woods, and moors—and make a mental note for future reference.

The first item on the outfit list is the tent, and perhaps the most important thing to consider is: "What kind of tent shall I use?" That question is easily answered. You will want a small one-man tent, after the pattern of the one illustrated in the heading. This is called an "A" tent, and is the most convenient tent to carry about. It is light, easy to pack away in any odd corner of the rucksack, and quick to pitch. Next you must have a ground-sheet to sleep on. It is dangerous to lie on the bare ground—very dangerous. So remember to add this item to your camping outfit.

Then the following will also be required:

Two blankets, a cooking-pot or billy-can—this latter can be bought at any sports outfitters for one shilling—knife, fork, and spoon, a bottle of matches, toothbrush, comb, towel, soap, pyjamas, a good stout ash-staff, notebook and pencil, map, and, last, but not least, food.

All these go into your haversack if packed carefully, and the blankets are rolled in the ground-sheet and worn over the shoulder bandolier fashion. That completes the outfit. Now we come to the actual pitching of the camp.

In the Camp!

We have decided on the week-end camp. Start out as soon as possible, and do not waste time in getting to the ground. Never camp on private land without permission. If you do you are asking for trouble, and also spoiling other fellows' chances of camping there if they have the forethought to inquire for permission.

When you arrive at the pitch, select the spot where the tent is to be put up. Pay close attention to this. Never pitch under trees, but a few yards away from them, and the door of the tent should face the south or south-east. Note which way the wind is blowing. In this country the prevailing wind is generally west south-west. Next dig the latrine about fifty yards from the camp, sheltered by the trees.

The fire should be lit—not too close to the trees—so that the wind does not blow the smoke into the doorway of the tent. A very important thing, this fire question. It is one of the arts in the great sport of camping. As I have not room in this article to tell you all about fire-lighting and fires generally, I can only give you one or two hints. Just remember this:

Cut out a piece of turf about twelve inches square and two inches in depth,

and carefully keep the turf to replace when you strike the camp. Tear up some paper into fairly small pieces and place in the centre of the square fireplace. Round the heap of paper pile up a handful of small dry twigs in the form of a cone. Then apply a match to the paper, and when the wood has started to burn, place larger sticks round the blaze in the same way as you did the smaller ones. When the fire is burning brightly, add small logs about one inch in thickness, and break up a pile to keep near at hand to feed the fire every now and again.

Whilst the fire is "getting up steam," as they say, you can finish unpacking. Place your ground-sheet, rubber surface downwards, inside the tent, and lay the blankets, folded in two, on it. Do not throw them anywhere. Having done this, dig a small trench all round the outside of the tent to act as a drainage in case of rain.

By this time you will be feeling a little peckish. In fact, you will find that the open air will have put a very keen edge to your appetite. Get out your grub, and put on a pot of water to boil.

Now, as regards the food question, for a week-end camp I suggest you take with you:

One tin of cocoa-milk powder, one little bag of tea, one bag of sugar, one tin of condensed milk, two tins of bully-beef, a little salt, half a pound of butter or margarine, half a pound of rashers of bacon, one large loaf of bread, two or three bars of plain chocolate, a little pot of jam, and a tin of some kind of fruit. If you are camping near a farm you will probably be able to obtain fresh eggs and milk.

Do not eat for the sake of eating. That is a good point to study. Satisfy your appetite, of course, but do not overdo it. Have one good midday meal, and the others need not be very large. If possible, make all your food purchases at a village near the camp.

If you leave the camp to take a stroll to the village, or into the woods at the back of the camp, I advise you to lace up the tent first. Not to prevent anyone running away with it, but as a precaution against dogs or cats. These animals have a nasty habit sometimes of strolling into an unfastened tent door and sampling the grub.

As the evening draws near and the sun sinks in a golden ball into the west, and the deep shadows of the trees lengthen across the meadow, then is the time to stir up the red embers of the fire and pile on a few logs. To sit round a crackling pine-log fire in the twilight, with the stars twinkling above, is the camper's one great joy. There is nothing so comforting and soothing as a log fire, with its mystic influence.

Take to your bed fairly early, and sleep with a thickness of blanket under you as well as over. Most first-nighters will find the ground somewhat hard at first, but if you dig a hip-hole with your jack-knife you will find this very much better. There is one thing I almost forgot to tell you to do. Slacken all guy-ropes before turning in. Otherwise it is quite likely that you will have the tent down on top of you in the night.

When you strike camp, leave it as clean and tidy as when you came. A tidy camper is a good camper. Replace the turf you removed for the fireplace, and then trek on over the broad highway back to your home.

THE END.

Look out for Wibley's remarkable impersonation—next week!



By
Owen
Conquest.

An enthralling mystery story, showing how, by following up an apparently insignificant clue, Ferrers Locke hands over to justice two criminals who had baffled the cutest of Scotland Yard officials.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Find in the Tunnel!

FERRERS LOCKE hung up the telephone-receiver and rose to his feet as a good-looking, well-built lad stepped briskly into his consulting-room.

"Drake, my boy," said the detective, "I want you to take a journey with me. We will catch the six-eighteen train to Burley Junction."

"Very good, sir!"

"We've plenty of time. Our old friend, Inspector Pycroft of Scotland Yard, has run up against a brick wall. He's just rung me up to request my assistance with the case he's now engaged upon."

"The Duckworth mystery, sir?"

"That's right. You remember I read a newspaper account of the affair to you at the breakfast-table this morning. But let us get ready. We can take a bus to the station; that's so much pleasanter than riding in a taxi."

Neither Locke nor Drake took more than ten minutes to prepare themselves for their impending journey. Each dropped an automatic pistol in his pocket. There were other things without which they never embarked on an adventure. Among these were a jack-knife, some string, an electric torch, and a whistle. In addition, Locke himself took a powerful magnifying-glass and a small but very excellent camera.

According to the arrangement Locke had made over the telephone with Pycroft, they caught the six-eighteen train, and arrived at Burley Junction, some forty miles to the south of London, by a quarter to eight. A mile before reaching Burley, the sleuth called Drake's attention to the tunnels, in one of which had been found the lifeless body of William Duckworth.

The burly Scotland Yard inspector was at the junction to meet them.

"It is mighty good of you to come, Mr. Locke," he said, after the usual greetings. "I've got to admit that the official force is slap up against it for once."

"For once?" murmured Locke, a smile flickering at the corners of his lips.

"It isn't often we get into an absolute blind alley," said Pycroft, puffing his cheeks out. "But we've struck a cul-de-sac in this Duckworth case. I thought you wouldn't mind just having a look over the ground. Working on a different method from ours, it's just possible you might bump across something which might be of some help to us."

"I'm delighted to be of assistance, my dear Pycroft. Is the body of Duckworth in the mortuary here?"

"Yes, I'll take you along to view it. The mortuary is only a couple of minutes' walk from the station. Er—I ought to tell you," added Pycroft, "that since phoning to you, my superior, intendent at the Yard has sent me a message to return to town for a consultation with him. I've three-quarters of an hour at my disposal before I need catch the train. Then I'm afraid I shall have to leave you to it."

"Right-ho, Pycroft!" said Locke cheerfully. "You may rest assured that Drake and I will do our best for you. Is there anything you can tell me about the case which has not appeared in the papers?"

"There's practically nothing to tell more than that," replied the inspector ruefully. "As you know, the body of Duckworth was found by platelayers in the main line tunnel, a mile to the north of this place. Duckworth was lying close to the wall with a fractured skull, and was quite dead."

"Duckworth was a prominent land-owner in these parts?" murmured Locke.

"Yes, he owned several thousand acres to the north-east of Burley. Some of them are laid out in farms and market gardens. He also owned all the cottages in the village of Denhurst."

"The papers stated he was well known and well liked," said Ferrers Locke. "Is that true, Pycroft?"

"H'm! Well, not exactly," replied the inspector. "Duckworth

was a rather queer kind of cove, it seems. He was generous in some ways, and almost incredibly mean in others. He was a confirmed bachelor, and lived quietly in a small house near Denhurst. I've chatted to his house-keeper, a motherly old soul named Mrs. Menzies. She was greatly upset at the tragic end of the old man. But some of his tenants were not. It was general knowledge, you know, that Duckworth had made a will leaving a number of tenants portions of his estates."

"I see," said Locke thoughtfully. "Then here we have a possible motive for the crime. By the death of Duckworth quite a number of people would find themselves better off."

"Of course, Scotland Yard has considered that aspect of the case. Mr. Locke," returned the inspector. "We have made inquiries, and there is not the slightest reason for thinking that any one of the tenants of Duckworth went to London yesterday. What actually happened, so far as I can make out, was this: William Duckworth went to London in the morning on business. That we have definitely established through his bankers in Cornhill. He had intended returning home that night, for he took no bag with him, and—"

"Mrs. Menzies expected him home, eh?" interrupted Locke.

"She did. She knew he was going to town, of course. But on previous occasions Duckworth has altered his intentions afterwards. Apparently, while in London yesterday, he conceived the idea of catching the nine twenty-three train to Dover, where lives a married sister of his."

"Ah! He's done that before?"

"That's so. Duckworth was a man of moods. When he felt lonely he would go off to Dover to see this sister, of whom he was very fond. So yesterday, as I figure it, he caught the nine twenty-three fast train to Dover, and found himself in a carriage with one, or possibly two, other travellers. He was attacked, robbed, and thrown out of the train on reaching this tunnel a mile from here."

Ferrers Locke figures prominently in a well-known—

"That seems the obvious conclusion to draw," assented Ferrers Locke. "It stated in the papers that his pockets had been stripped of their contents."

"Yes; his money, his watch, and his private papers had been taken from him. So we must presume the motive for the crime was robbery. But here is the mortuary."

Locke and Drake followed the inspector into the sombre brick building, and the great private detective examined the body of the slain man. It was clear to Locke, as it had been to the doctors before him, that Duckworth had received two distinct blows. One was at the side of the head—apparently made by some blunt weapon. The other was at the back of the head, where the fracture of the skull was, and which had proved the fatal blow.

Before leaving this grim building, Ferrers Locke took a series of fingerprints of the deceased. These prints on a specially prepared type of thin paper he carefully placed in his pocket-book.

"Now, my dear Pycroft," he said, when they were outside again, "can you show us the spot where this crime was committed? If necessary, I can have a chat with Mrs. Menzies later."

The inspector nodded.

"Yes; I shall just have time to take you to the tunnel," he said. "There's a garage near here, and we can hire a taxi which will run us near the spot. Then I shall have to fly back to catch my train to town."

Pycroft soon arranged for the hire of the taxi. Then the three drove out to the scene of the crime.

The driver of the cab, instructed by the inspector, stopped near a railway bridge a couple of hundred yards distant from the tunnels. Pycroft dismounted, and, followed by Locke and Drake, scaled a wooden fence and made his way down the railway embankment.

"You will notice," remarked Pycroft, "that there are two distinct tunnels. The main line from London to Dover runs through the one to our right. The so-called 'local' line from London to Burley and other country places in Kent runs through the left-hand tunnel."

"How long are these tunnels, Pycroft?"

"About a hundred yards. The small hill they cut through is called the Sheen's Back."

Stepping briskly along by the side of the railway line, Inspector Pycroft entered the gloomy main line tunnel. From his pocket he took an electric torch to light the way.

After proceeding for a distance of about thirty yards he stopped suddenly.

"Ah, here we are!" he said. "This is the spot where the platelayers found the body of Duckworth. If you won't be more than a few minutes in examining the place, Mr. Locke, I'll wait for you."

"No, don't you trouble, my dear Pycroft," replied the sleuth. "You nip off back to Burley and catch your train. We sha'n't want the taxi. Drake and I will examine this place at our leisure and walk back."

"Right you are, Mr. Locke. It's mighty good of you to have a look round for an old pal. I expect I shall return to Burley Junction to-morrow. If anything transpires in the meantime you can put through a trunk telephone call to Scotland Yard. Good-bye!"

Ferrers Locke switched on his own electric torch as the burly inspector wended his way out of the tunnel.

"Now, Drake, my boy," said Ferrers

Locke in a business-like tone, "let us make a thorough examination of this place."

By the aid of their electric torches both Locke and his young assistant carefully looked over the ground and the walls of the tunnel.

It was a grim, grimy place. The up and down main lines showed like four bands of gleaming silver. But the ground between the ties and the walls of the tunnels was of dirty gravel, and the brick walls were thick with soot and dank with mildew and moisture.

"As I suspected," said Locke, "it's utterly impossible to pick up any clue from what footmarks there are to be seen. The gravel doesn't show the marks well, and a number of people have been in here since the body was discovered."

"It's a queer thing, sir," said Drake thoughtfully, "that Pycroft wasn't able to show us where Duckworth struck his head when he was thrown from the train. The inspector gave me the impression as we were coming along in the taxi that he believed the fracture of the skull was caused by the old man striking his head against the wall of the tunnel."

"That is what the doctors thought, too, my boy," returned Ferrers Locke. "Duckworth couldn't, in my opinion, be hurled out of an express train without there being some marks on the walls of the tunnel. The body was found at this spot. That means to say he was hurled out on the side near to the tunnel wall. Otherwise he would have been cut to pieces by another train had he been pitched out on to the up line."

For fully half an hour the sleuth and Drake endeavoured to discover some clue upon the begrimed tunnel wall. Then Drake's torch grew dim and went out. He fitted in a refill, but was unable to renew the light.

"This refill must be a dud," he said ruefully. "What a beastly nuisance!"

"Never mind, my boy," said Ferrers Locke. "I don't think it is any use staying here longer. Let's get out into the fresh air."

The detective went ahead with the light while Drake followed at his heels.

Suddenly Ferrers Locke stopped and swung round.

"What is it, sir?" asked Drake. "A train?"

"No; an idea! By Jove! Supposing they're all mistaken!"

Jack Drake looked at his chief with wide eyes.

"Supposing who are all mistaken, sir?"

"Why, Pycroft and the police



JACK DRAKE,
Ferrers Locke's young assistant.

generally. There's not the slightest trace in that main line tunnel that a heavy body struck the wall. Supposing that Duckworth was not killed in that tunnel at all!"

"But he was found there, sir," Drake reminded him. "It was known he was up in London, and he must have travelled down by train. Therefore, it's reasonable to suppose he was thrown out, seeing that the express passed through the tunnel, and Duckworth was found by the line."

"It is the obvious thing to suppose," said Ferrers Locke. "There may be more behind the death of Duckworth than appears at first sight. There is the possibility that the old man was killed elsewhere, and his body carried into the main line tunnel."

"Carried there!"

"Yes; to throw the police completely off the scent. Just consider. There seems no particular reason why Duckworth should have suddenly conceived the notion of going to Dover yesterday. He was in town, but the railway officials did not see him leave the London station as far as the police could discover. Robbery may have been the motive for the crime, but I am not so sure now. Anyway, come with me and I'll put my new theory to the test."

Leaving the main line tunnel the sleuth and his assistant turned sharp to the right and entered the "local" tunnel.

Hardly had they done so than there was a slight rustling noise among some bushes above the railway embankment. Then a broad-shouldered countryman, with a scrubby beard, emerged and wriggled his way down by the tunnels.

He was out of sight of the road and of the signal-box, and he moved through the deepening dusk with the stealth of a hunter on the track of his prey. And his evil eyes glinted with hatred, mingled with a deadly, soul-consuming fear!

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Clue of the Chaff!

AFTER entering the "local" tunnel, Ferrers Locke and Drake kept along the wall to the right-hand side.

"I overheard someone on Burley Station say when we arrived, Drake," remarked the sleuth, "that trains from London usually stop or slow down in this tunnel. If last night's eight-fifteen train from London slowed down here it would have been possible for the crime to have been committed on that train."

"You think, sir, that Mr. Duckworth may have caught the eight-fifteen train from town to return home to Burley?"

"There is the chance," said Locke. "The times of the slow and fast trains is an important matter. The slow 'local' train leaves London at eight-fifteen and arrives at Burley Junction at ten-thirteen. That means that it passes through this tunnel at about ten minutes past ten. The fast train leaves London for Dover at nine twenty-three. Thus this express train would pass through the main line tunnel at about ten-twenty."

"My aunt! Then you think, sir, that Duckworth was attacked on the slow train in this tunnel? Then, having been hurled out, his attackers got out of the train in the tunnel and carried him round into the main-line tunnel?"

"That is my theory. But it would have been necessary for last night's train to have slowed up considerably in

—Spanish bull-ring next week! Keep your eyes on him!

this tunnel. That is a fact we can establish later. But while we are here we will have a look for any clues which might lend confirmation to my idea."

As he walked along in the fetid tunnel the detective shone his electric torch on to the black wall. Both he and Drake searched keenly for any untoward marks.

Then of a sudden Locke halted and gave an exclamation.

"By Jove, look at this!" he said. "Do you see that jutting brick, my boy? It is stained crimson!"

"Blood!" muttered Drake. "It looks, sir, as though your theory were the correct one!"

Locke made no reply. He had taken out his powerful magnifying-glass, and was examining the brick and the tunnel wall below it. Then he carefully examined the gravel between the railway-line and the wall.

Stooping down, he picked up something and held it in the palm of his hand. All that Drake saw were some tiny, dirty pieces of what he took to be gravel.

"What is it, sir?" he asked.

"Hold my torch, my boy," said the sleuth.

Drake took the light and shone it on to the pieces which Locke held in the palm of his hand. The sleuth, through his magnifying-glass, inspected them as though studying some strange insects.

After a couple of minutes' silence he spoke.

"This may prove to be an important clue, my boy," he said. "These dirty bits in my hand are chaff—the husks of grain, you know. There are quite a few lying about here, where Duckworth's body must have fallen."

He put the bits of chaff in an envelope, which he stowed in his breast-pocket. Again he returned to an examination of the tunnel wall.

There were a number of marks on the grimy wall, but one clearly defined set of finger-prints particularly attracted his attention. He compared the finger-prints he had taken of the deceased man with them, but the prints on the tunnel wall had not been made by William Duckworth. That much was clear.

Taking out his camera, Ferrers Locke took a close-up flashlight photograph of the prints. Then he turned to his young assistant.

"We will get back to Burley, Drake," he said. "The discovery we have made has put an entirely different complexion on the Duckworth mystery. I must now go and have a chat with Mrs. Menzies, the housekeeper of the old man. Come!"

He started to walk along towards the exit of the tunnel, when Jack Drake clutched him by the sleeve.

"Look, sir!" whispered the boy. "There's something moving beyond the far line just down the tunnel!"

Locke swung his torch across the metals. For one instant he caught a glimpse of a cringing form against the black wall of the tunnel. Then there was a flash of flame and a deafening report. Locke felt his right hand jerked back as though kicked by a mule, and the glass bulb of his electric torch shattered into a thousand fragments.

Locke hurled himself face downwards. A bullet fired from the revolver of the unknown man in the tunnel had smashed his torch and plunged the place in darkness. But Locke's manoeuvre was not a fraction of a second too soon. Again there was a spurt of flame, and a bullet

flattened itself against the wall above the sleuth's head.

Locke and Drake leaped forward. To their right front they could hear the sound of running feet.

"The murderous fiend!" grunted the sleuth. "We must catch the fellow at all costs, my boy!"

But hardly had he spoken when a wild shriek echoed throughout the black tunnel.

"Crumps!" gulped Drake. "A train!"

With a rattle and roar a down train was coming through the tunnel. The boy tried to leap back against the wall; but his foot struck against a sleeper, and he went sprawling full length between the rails.

Locke turned and dashed to the side of his young assistant. Then, stooping down, he caught the boy round the body and threw him clear of the metals towards the up line, and staggered clear himself just as the shrieking engine of the train flashed past.

Directly the train had gone by, Drake rose to his feet and sought his chief's hand.

"Thanks, sir," he said quietly.

"You've twisted your ankle, my boy," said Locke. "That is awkward. Anyway, it is now hopeless trying to catch up with that fellow we were after."

"You go ahead, sir," said Drake. "I'll keep along by this wall, in case of any other train passing on this line."

"Very well, my boy. Wait at the spot where Pycroft stopped the car. I'll try not to be long."

He left Drake to limp along by the wall, for Locke knew well enough that every second's delay now made the likelihood of tracing the rogue who had fired the shots more difficult.

Leaving the tunnel, he found that dusk had given place to darkness. A crescent moon hung low in the sky. Looking about him, he tried to decide on the most likely path which the man would have taken. He decided to strike off in the direction of the village of Denhurst and try to pick up the trail.

But it soon became apparent to the sleuth that he was on a wild-goose chase. Not a soul did he see of whom he could make inquiries. He was too late. The man had got a good start, and the chances of picking up his tracks were remote.

Not having a light now, Locke was unable to examine the railway-banking for footmarks, and so he went back swiftly to the place where he had arranged to meet Drake.

He was glad to find that the boy's foot was not troubling him greatly. But Locke insisted on giving his young assistant a pick-a-back to Burley.

"Now, listen to me, my boy," said the detective, when they arrived there. "I'm going to the local chief constable, and get him and his men to try to get on the track of the rascal who pumped lead at us in the tunnel. It is possible that the police can pick up the trail on the grassy railway-bank, and at least find the direction the man took after making his get-away from the tunnel."

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I am going along to interview Mrs. Menzies."

"And what about me, sir?"

"You must take things easy, my boy. If you like you can toddle down to the station and make a few inquiries. Ask the stationmaster and the porters for the names of any local folk who travelled on the line yesterday. That information might possibly prove of some use to us."

"You don't know what time you'll return, sir?"

"No. If Mrs. Menzies provides me with any further clue which I can follow up, I may not return for some time. However, when you've done your job, go and book rooms for yourself and me in the Badger Hotel, close by the station."

"Right-ho, sir!"

Drake hobbled cheerfully away. Locke thereupon made inquiries as to the quickest way of reaching the house in which Duckworth had lived. Learning that it was only a quarter of a mile to the north of Burley, he strode out to the place, and was glad to see that a light gleamed in an upper window.

He gave a sharp rat-tat on the door. A pause ensued, and then he heard shuffling footsteps descending the stairs. The door was opened a couple of inches, and the face of a stout woman peered out.

"Are you Mrs. Menzies, madam?" inquired the detective politely.

"Ay, that's me!" replied the woman coldly. "What do you want coming here just as a honest body's going to bed? You're one o' these bothering plain-clothes policemen, maybe?"

"I am a private detective, madam. My name is Ferrers Locke."

The woman's eyes opened to their fullest extent, and she drew the door wider.

"Bless my soul!" she said. "Then you're the man what sent my first husband to the scaffold eight years since! Jem Sanderson his name was. Maybe you mind him?"

Ferrers Locke stroked his chin. The situation was an awkward one. He remembered Jem Sanderson well, a scoundrel who well deserved his fate. But it looked as though it were going to complicate this present case, finding that Jem's widow and Mrs. Menzies were one and the same person.

"I—I'm very sorry if Jem was your husband, madam," began the sleuth; "but—"

"No more sorry than I was," retorted the lady sharply. "But you needn't apologise. Jem was no good, anyway. The folk round here don't know nothing about it, and I'll beg you'll be good enough not to say anything, Mr. Locke."

"Trust me, madam."

Mrs. Menzies stood aside to allow the detective entrance to the house.

"No," she murmured, as she did so. "I've allus told everybody that Jem fell off a scaffold and broke his neck. That was true. But people have got the idea he was a house-painter. But what is it you want with me this time o' night?"

"Just a little information about the tenants of the late Mr. Duckworth," replied the sleuth. "Were any of them at enmity with the old man, do you know?"

The woman dabbed her eyes with a handkerchief.

"The mention o' poor Mr. Duckworth allus makes me weep, sir," she said. "I can't think o' the sufferings of a fly without crying. It's having a

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sympathetic heart. My mother used to say when I was a girl—"

Ferrers Locke gently repeated his question, and at last Mrs. Menzies was constrained to answer.

"Enemies, sir? I haven't never heard any o' the tenants actually threaten Mr. Duckworth, so to speak. But some may have done, you know."

Locke's next question was a rather curious one.

"Are there any millers among the tenants on Mr. Duckworth's estates, Mrs. Menzies?"

"Ay, two! There's James Reid and Joe Porlock, who've got the water-mill half a mile from here on the stream they call the River Edan. A precious pair they are, too! I don't like 'em. Rogues I call 'em!"

"You never heard either of them threaten Mr. Duckworth?"

"Er—no," said the woman; "though they never got on well with him. Sorry I am that the old mill will go to them now! Mr. Duckworth was a good-hearted man, and I've heard him say openly that Reid and Porlock, as well as a lot more o' the tenants, would own his property after he was gone."

"How interesting!" murmured Ferrers Locke. "I suppose you don't know what Reid and Porlock were doing yesterday? Working—eh?"

"Not they!" said Mrs. Menzies, who prided herself on knowing everybody else's business. "They're a pair of lazy, good-for-nothings. I allus told Mr. Duckworth so. They went to Teneham Fair yesterday."

Ferrers Locke did not betray the satisfaction he felt. Teneham was the next but one station north to Burley Junction. The slow train on which he believed Mr. Duckworth had travelled from London stopped there.

After thanking Mrs. Menzies for her information, he mentioned that he was going to make a few further inquiries among the tenants of the estates. Incidentally he discovered the exact situation of the house and mill rented by James Reid and Joseph Porlock.

Bidding Mrs. Menzies good-night, he left the house and set off along the darkened road towards the water-mill, a keen, eager expression on his strong face.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Peril of the Mill!

WALKING briskly along, Ferrers Locke ruminated upon the evening's discoveries. The more he thought about the Duckworth case the more he was convinced that the theory he had conceived was likely to prove the correct solution to the mystery.

By this time the wind had sprung up considerably. But the crescent moon still shed an eerie light upon the countryside, although at times it was obscured by racing black clouds.

With the gaunt form of the old water-mill in sight, Ferrers Locke proceeded more cautiously. Leaving the road, he crept along behind hedges, until he came to the house which he knew to be the one occupied by the millers—Reid and Porlock. There was no light visible on any side of the place, and he came to the conclusion that either the men had turned in or that they were not in the house.

Then, suddenly turning in the direction of the mill again, he discerned a momentary gleam of yellow. It was but a glimpse that he obtained before the

old mill was in darkness again. But it was sufficient to give the sleuth a hint as to the whereabouts of the millers.

"That was a light or I'll eat my boots!" he muttered to himself. "If Reid and his partner are in the mill, what the dickens are they doing there at this time of night? They can't be so busy as to have to work till eleven o'clock."

Making his way down to the bank of the stream, he went forward to the mill in the deep shadows of the weeping willows. Ahead of him was the picturesque old water-mill, with its wheel revolving to the accompaniment of the steady creak-creak of its axle and the swishing of water. The swirling stream below appeared like a torrent beneath the pale moonlight.

The door of the mill was open.

Locke crept up to it and waited, listening. Hearing no sound, he peered in cautiously. The place was lighted by a lantern slung from a rafter, and contained only an array of sacks filled with flour.

The sleuth removed his boots and put them behind a large boulder near the outer wall of the mill. That done, he stepped inside the place. A few startled rats scurried to their holes.

Stopping to listen again, Locke heard the sound of gruff voices from somewhere higher up in the old building. Without hesitation he made for the stairs.

In his stockinged feet he hardly made a sound. If a board creaked on the



As Porlock thrust himself forward and put a keen-bladed knife to the rope Ferrers Locke hurled himself headlong through the air. He struck the racing river with a resounding splash below the mill-wheel, and the waters closed over his head. (See Chapter 3.)

rickety stairway it was not likely to occasion any alarm to whoever might be in the mill. For the strong wind which was blowing provided some eerie creaks and groans in the old structure.

Half-way up the stairs Ferrers Locke stopped and remained perfectly still. From this point of vantage he could distinctly make out the conversation of the gruff voices.

"It's half an hour's work, I tell you," came one of the voices in a peevish tone. "Besides, I don't see why we couldn't make something on the stuff."

"Oh, you make me tired!" was the response. "Left to yourself you'd upset everything for the sake of a few quid. Let's shift some of those sacks of flour below and take up the stones. Pick up the stuff and come on down."

There was a movement of feet above, and Locke cautiously descended the stairs. He had hoped to hear some conversation which would definitely establish the guilt of Reid and Porlock of the tunnel crime. But he had gathered no further evidence which could be used against the millers.



However, he had heard just sufficient to further arouse his suspicions. The men were about to descend to the ground floor of the mill where the flour sacks were arrayed. He presumed they were going to take up the cobble-stones with which the place was paved. What for? And what was the "stuff" to which the men had referred? These were questions to which Locke was determined to find an answer by watching the men.

Reaching the ground floor he looked about him. He dared not get behind

—and he makes a life-long friend in Bombetto, the bull-fighter!

any of the sacks lest they were the ones the men wished to remove. He feared it would be useless to go outside as the men would close the door probably. There seemed no other place of concealment.

And then, just as footsteps sounded at the top of the stairs, Locke noticed a heavy, wide shelf on which were set a few vegetables.

Now the footsteps were descending the stairs. The detective decided to take a risk. Stepping across the sacks, he drew himself up on the shelf. Rolling back across the vegetables he snuggled as close to the wall as he could and where he could not possibly be seen by anyone below. Hardly had he got into his place than two men entered the room.

"Shut the door, Jim," said one of them. "The wind's mighty powerful, and I'll bang it to in a minute."

The other chuckled.

"You're right, Joe. And we don't exactly want no one looking in." He shut the door and swung round with a start. "What was that creaking sound?"

"Oh, rats!"

"Same to you!" retorted the first man, in a surly tone.

"I said it was rats, you dolt," replied Joe. "But let's get on with the job!"

Ferrers Locke, lying on the shelf, could not see the men, nor did he try to obtain a glimpse of them. He knew perfectly well who they were—Jim Reid and Joe Porlock, the millers. To be ready for any emergency, however, he decided to take his automatic from his pocket.

He twisted slightly and reached for his jacket pocket. As he did so there was another creak, and a loud crack as one of the wooden supports of the shelf snapped. Next instant, Ferrers Locke came hurtling off the broken shelf in a shower of old vegetables!

"Snakes!"

Joe Porlock uttered that exclamation in a tone of alarm, and whipped out a spanner from his pocket. The detective, sprawled on the sacks, tried to get at his gun. But, reaching over, the miller gave him a savage blow with the spanner on the side of the head. Without a word Ferrers Locke fell back and lay inert upon the flour sacks.

When about ten minutes later he opened his eyes again on his first return to consciousness, he found himself in another room. His wrists and ankles were tied with cords; a gag made of sacking was fixed between his teeth and held in position with a strip of canvas. A candle stood on the floor, affording the only illumination of the room. The floor itself was strewn with husks of grain.

It was the sight of this chaff on the floor that brought Locke's thoughts back with a jerk to the case he had been engaged upon.

Standing close to him were the two millers, James Reid and Joseph Porlock. The former held the detective's automatic pistol in his hand. Reid was a rather slight man with a drooping moustache and shifty eyes. His companion, Porlock, wore a scrubby beard and was broad of build.

"Hullo, you've come to, have you, Mr. Ferrers Locke?" said Joe Porlock, with an evil grin. "We heard that the Scotland Yard 'tec was fetching you down. I watched you when you went into that first tunnel, but I didn't get

the wind up until you started nosing about the other tunnel."

Locke glared defiance, being unable to retort owing to the presence of the gag between his teeth. So this was the scoundrel who had tried to shoot himself and Drake! Not a doubt remained in his mind now that here before him were the two scoundrels who had killed William Duckworth.

"Well, you were mighty cute, Mr. Locke," went on Porlock. "But in case that young cub o' yours—Drake, isn't his name?—knows where you've come to-night, we're going to put you out of the way. He won't find you when we've done with you."

"No chance!" said Reid, with an uneasy laugh. "There's a secret well beneath the cobbles on the ground floor of this water-mill. You're going down it, together with some personal belongings of our late-lamented landlord. Come, Joe, blow the candle out, and let's set to work. The sooner the job's done, the safer I'll feel. We'll come back and fetch this mark when we've shifted the sacks and taken up the stones."

Porlock stopped and blew out the light, leaving the helpless detective in total darkness. Then the two rogues lumbered out of the room, shut the door and turned a rusty key in the lock.

But even before his captors had reached the bottom of the rickety stairs, the sleuth had wriggled to his feet. Inch by inch he worked his way to the small open window and looked out. With a feeling akin to blank dismay he saw that this room he was in was on the second floor of the old building. Far below glistened the rushing waters of the stream. The mill-wheel was revolving directly beneath him.

Never had the sleuth been in so desperate a predicament. He had twenty minutes—possibly half an hour of life before him. At the expiration of that time he would be relentlessly lowered into that secret well beneath the mill floor—the well which the men were even then engaged in uncovering.

At first he wondered why Reid or Porlock had not settled his hash by a knock on the head before leaving him. But he did not wonder after a few minutes of groping about the room. Beyond a piece of old rope there was nothing in the place. His bonds were too securely tied for him to work them loose. He tried rubbing the cords against the wooden window-sash but could not make the slightest impression on them. He only rubbed his wrist raw.

Turning, he tried to pierce the darkness as he heard a scampering across the floor. A shiver went through him, though he realised that it was only a rat bent on a nibble at the tallow candle.

But the thought brought another to his mind. Lying down, he squirmed his way until he found the candle. Get-

ting it firmly between his feet, he held it fast while he bent forward and vigorously rubbed the cords which bound his wrists on to the tallow. That done, he rolled over upon the candle and lay as still as an image.

Soon he heard the scampering sound again. One after another, rats began running about the floor. He could not see them, but at last he felt one nibble at the tallow-covered bonds on his wrists. Controlling his inclination to draw his hands away from the vermin, he kept still, scarcely daring to breathe. His life depended on the success of his plan.

Speedily he felt another tug at the cords, and then another. Once he almost cried out as a set of razor-like teeth gripped his wrist.

But he did not shrink, and soon the work of the rat was done. With a sudden jerk Locke tugged his hands apart, and the half-eaten cords snapped, the rats scampering back to their holes.

Feverishly the sleuth set to work to untie the bonds which bound his feet. This he accomplished without much difficulty. His most dangerous task was still ahead of him.

Unarmed as he was, he had not a ghost of a chance of resisting Reid and Porlock when they returned to the room. As he removed his gag he thought of shouting from the window. But even if anyone heard him it would be too late to save his life. The most likely thing was that he would merely attract the attention of the millers by this means. There was but one thing to do.

Groping quietly about the room, Ferrers Locke found the length of old rope, and made one end fast to a rusty staple near the window. The other end of the rope he tossed out of the window. If the rope would not bear his weight he would be dashed to instant death on the revolving mill-wheel below.

Getting out of the window, Locke gradually put his weight on to the rope. Then he descended hand over hand. When his feet had reached the full length of the rope he was still some ten feet above the mill-wheel.

Placing his toe against the wall, the sleuth began to swing the rope. Perspiration broke out on his brow. The strain was great on his arms, but he feared every moment that the rope would break, then all his work would have been for nought. He must throw himself below the mill-wheel. If he fell either on to it or in front of it he would most probably be battered to death or drowned.

Like a great pendulum the rope swung out more and more. The leap Locke proposed to take was one requiring the nicest judgment. Then suddenly he heard the creak of a lock and voices in the room he had left. Locke sent the rope swaying more vigorously. A few more swings and he could make his leap for life!

Glancing upward, he saw the gleam of a lantern and heard a hoarse exclamation of dismay. Next moment the head of the man Reid appeared at the window. He looked down, took in the situation, and raised the automatic pistol. Instantly he was hurled aside by Porlock.

"Don't fire! I've got a knife!"

But as Porlock thrust himself forward and put a keen-bladed knife to the rope Ferrers Locke hurled himself headlong through the air. He struck the racing river with a resounding splash below the mill-wheel, and the waters closed over his head.

Instead of coming to the surface, he swam under water for about twenty yards. Then he came up and struggled

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to the bank and dragged himself out of the stream by the roots of a willow-tree. A shot rang out, but Locke merely gave a low chuckle as the bullet missed him by yards. Slithering up the bank, he crawled into the shelter of some bushes, and, rising, set off at a steady trot back to Burley.

It was one o'clock on the afternoon following Locke's adventure in the old water-mill. At a table in the Badger Hotel at Burley sat the great detective and Jack Drake. They had just begun their luncheon when Inspector Pycroft, of Scotland Yard, was announced.

The inspector's red face wore a beaming smile as he heartily shook Locke and Drake by the hand.

"We've got 'em!" he said. "We've got 'em—thanks to you fellows! James Reid and Joseph Porlock were taken by the police in Teneham less than an hour ago."

"Have some lunch, Pycroft," said Ferrers Locke, smiling, as he resumed his seat at the table. "I thought, after sending wires and telephone messages all over the country, the police would nail 'em all right."

"But it's a fair knock-out to me," admitted the inspector, after he had ordered a plate of soup from the waiter. "How did you light on the truth of the matter?"

"It was simple, Pycroft," replied Locke. "The fact that there was no mark at all to indicate that a body had been thrown from a train in the main line tunnel struck me as peculiar. It seemed

more likely that Duckworth would have travelled on the slow train back to Burley instead of going to Dover as you imagined. In the local tunnel Drake and I found a blood-stained stone. Moreover, we lit upon two important clues.

"One of these clues took the form of bits of chaff. The other was a set of finger-prints, which I photographed. As I figure it, what happened was this. Duckworth caught the eight-fifteen slow train from London. This train stopped at Teneham. Here Reid and Porlock got into his carriage. Before reaching the tunnel they laid him out with a spanner or some other instrument. That was the injury to the side of his head. Then they hurled him out of the train as it passed slowly through the tunnel, killing him outright."

"Then they must have got out themselves," suggested Pycroft.

"Of course. The train was proceeding slowly. The tunnel is nearer their home than Burley, so they seized the opportunity of decamping."

"D'you think they intended to shift the body, Mr. Locke?"

"Possibly, though they might have thought of that afterwards. It was quite a brain-wave. It was night-time, remember, and no one would be about. By taking the body into the main line tunnel it looked as though it had been thrown from the express. Reid and Porlock determined to remove every trace of suspicion from themselves. It was known that they had gone to Teneham. Therefore they could not possibly have travelled on the nine twenty-three train

from London. Further to detract suspicion from themselves, they cleared out their victim's pockets. Thus the crime took on the appearance of having been committed to secure the old man's personal belongings."

"Instead of any property after his death," commented Pycroft. "That, of course, was the real motive of the rogues. They knew after Duckworth had gone that they would secure the freehold of the water-mill, their house, and the land about the place. But how d'you reckon that chaff got in the tunnel?"

"One of the millers wore his working suit. Some husks of grain were in the pockets. Possibly he pulled out a handkerchief or something of the sort in the tunnel, and the bits of chaff fell from it. The police found some of Duckworth's property down a freshly opened well at the water-mill this morning. And we shall probably find that the finger-prints which are revealed in the photograph I have in my pocket correspond either with those of Reid or Porlock. Anyway, we've already got enough evidence to send both of the scoundrels to the gallows."

Subsequently, the finger-prints were found to correspond with those of Porlock. And, as Locke had surmised, the evidence against the millers was ample to send both the scoundrels to the fate they so richly deserved!

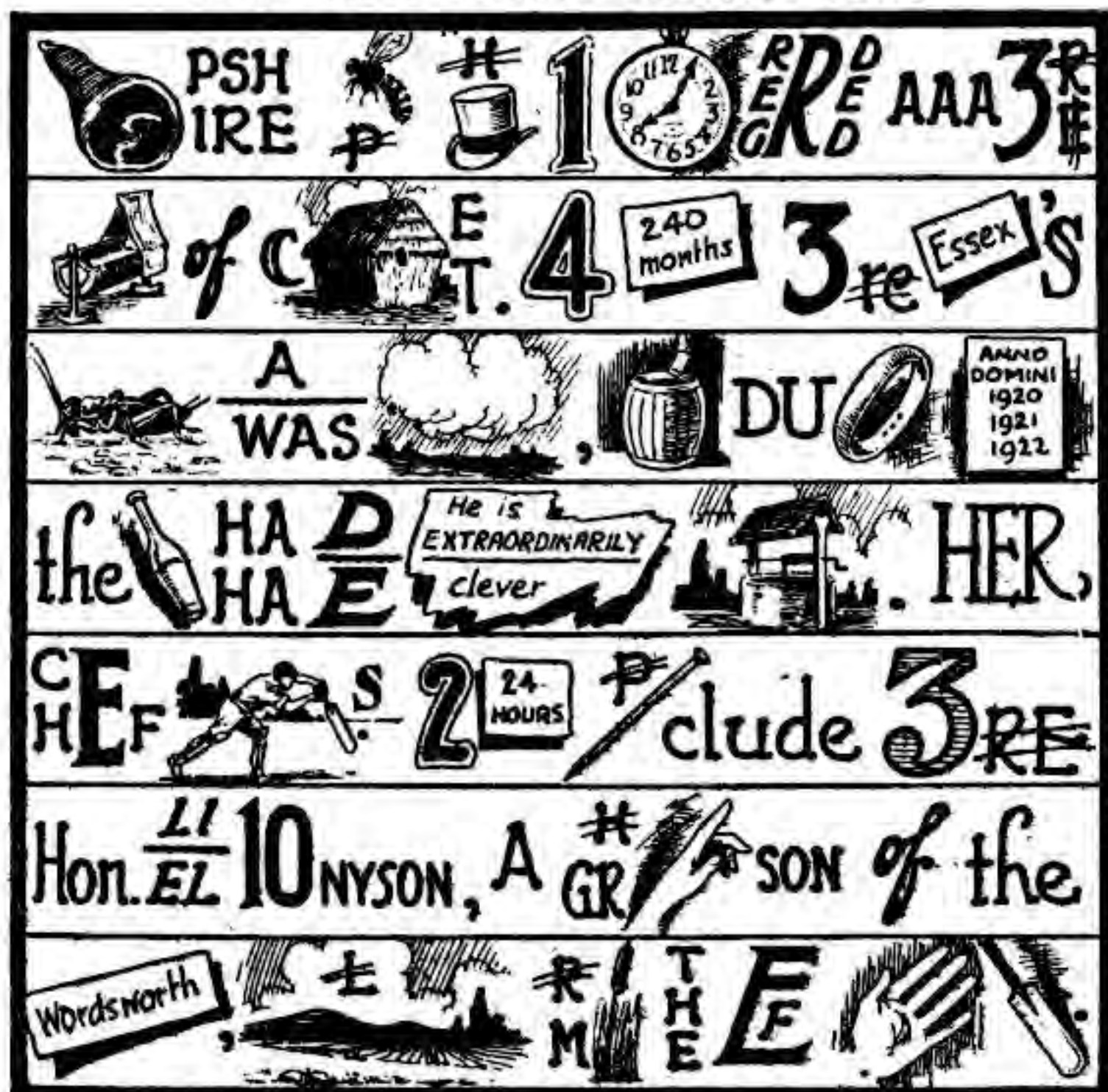
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