

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE WHITE HEATHER!

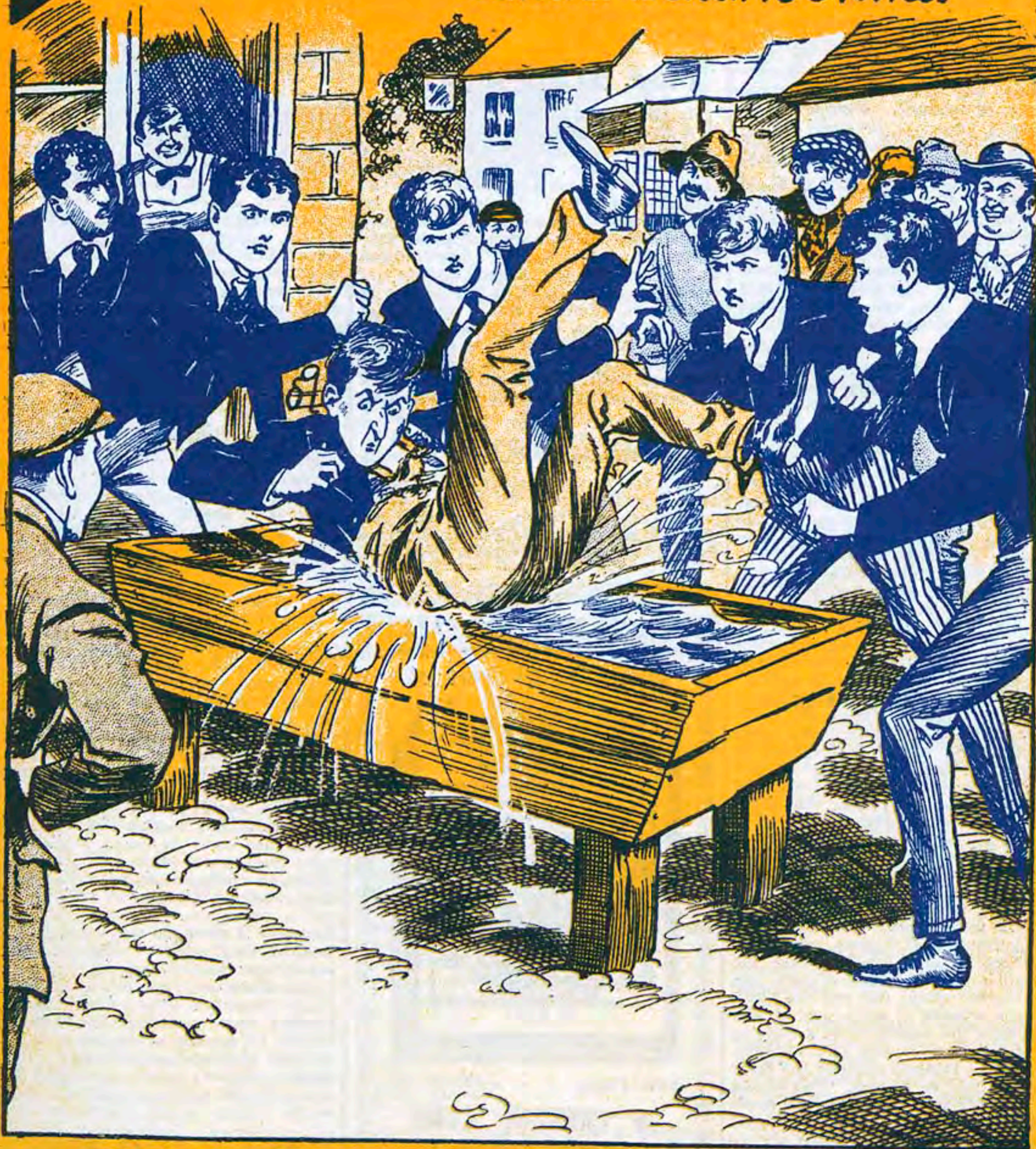
An Amazing Story, featuring **FERRERS LOCKE**, the world-famous detective.

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Week ending September 22nd, 1923.

The Magnet 2^d

Library EVERY MONDAY
of
School & Detective Stories.



FISHER T. FISH REAPS THE REWARD OF HIS LATEST STUNT!

A stormy scene from **FISH'S FRIENDLY SOCIETY**—this week's breezy story of Greyfriars, introducing the American junior's original methods of business!



"AN ISLAND MYSTERY!"

By Frank Richards.

A THOROUGHLY rousing mystery story is always welcome, and next Monday's grand yarn of Greyfriars in the MAGNET will come up to every expectation. There is just the right atmosphere about this yarn, for the weird stories circulating about Black Rock have stirred up enormous curiosity. There is plenty of excitement, but you will also find an abundance of humour. You all know that Coker's ideas are generally funny, but whatever Messrs. Potter & Greene may think in private about the pugnacity and headstrong tactics of their chief, at least it can be admitted that Coker has the courage of his convictions. If the burly fellow does not really assist much in the elucidation of the problem, he certainly adds to the spirit of a remarkably strong story. The actions of Harry Wharton & Co. are well in accordance with the fine traditions of Greyfriars.

"THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE WHITE HEATHER!"

By "X."

Perhaps it is not called for to say much concerning the tense and vivid chapters carrying on this great narrative next week. We glimpse the tragic happenings in the North, with the red ruin and the breaking up of law. Landmarks are swept away, and those brave spirits who have dared to oppose the crimson sway of ruthless anarchy are enmeshed in the network of the conspiracy to destroy the country. You will read next Monday of the doings of Red Mask with tremendous interest, and the raid on the church, where a meeting is being held, is wonderfully described. So is the superb audacity of those who stand between the overwhelming tide of destruction and some of the ill-starred victims. It cannot be gainsaid that each instalment of this marvellous romance is a real live drama in itself. You reach a climax, but there is more to come; and through it all is the ring of appealing actuality.

"THE KING'S RIDER!"

You will find in next week's magnificent "Galloping Dick" story just one of those prime notions which always get home to one. It is a record of duty, and of that higher duty, the call to which comes to everybody at some time in life. We get here the character of a dashing officer of the King, a man of the Army, and as brave a representative of the great Service as could be wished. This young soldier with his necessarily martinet-made rules of what he has to do, and what leave alone, is rendered a signal service by the knight of the road. Galloping Dick comes upon the officer of the King in a very ticklish situation, and it is

thanks to the pluck and resource of the highwayman that the victim of mischance gets clear. And then the tables are turned. It is put by Fate in the power of the officer to make good. But the man he can serve is a highwayman! That's the point. The way this business is handled by the author does more than command respect. It will evoke unstinted admiration.

A NEW ZEALAND MAGNETITE.

My chum, Harry Miller, of Lawrence, New Zealand, sends me a splendid album of views of his country—the moonlit lakes and rivers, the beautiful cities, the geysers, and mountain peaks. But he does not stop there! "It is strange," he writes, "that while the MAGNET still shines with all its old glory, or with greater glory than before, I have noticed that other books, issued weekly or monthly, are falling off in the quality of their yarns. Perhaps this is merely that they are thrown into the shade by the MAGNET, but, anyway, it is grand that Mr. Richards' stories are as good as ever, or better." It is generous testimony of this sort that is appreciated to the full.

BUNTER FOR EVER!

I receive a vast number of letters referring to Bunter. W. Jenkins writes from Tarporley to the effect that the MAGNET has too much Bunter, but in a footnote he says the Porpoise makes him

laugh, so what's the odds? Actually, I feel that we cannot really have an overdose of anything that produces mirth, for its laughter the world wants. A laugh drives away most evils and clears the air. It is just the lack of a sense of humour which spoils the lives of some folks. They get indigestion. Now Bunter seldom suffers this way. If in trouble he laughs it off. See the Owl in the new volume of the "Holiday Annual," likewise in the MAGNET week by week. He is a tonic—a perfectly priceless personage. Good luck to him.

A FOOTBALL SUPPLEMENT!

Harry Wharton & Co. might be considered to have a big task to do honour in novel fashion to the opening of a new football season. The years roll along faster and faster, and it may not always be a fresh and easy affair to deal lightly and with crisp novelty with the subjects which crop up when the leather gets spinning again. But one can say this for the conductors of that smart and ever lively weekly, the "Greyfriars Herald"—they are never at a loss for sparkling originality. Where they get this quality from is a deep mystery; nothing sinister about it, but just a good, all-round mystery. That does not signify. They may have a key to some secret depot where bright ideas are in bond in unlimited quantity, but whatever is the explanation, H. W. & Co. are all there. Read the new Supplement, and you will agree with me that there has been no more invigorating treatment of the good old autumn, when goals are to the fore, than is to be found in the coming "Greyfriars Herald." It is jaunty, informative, and well ahead of the times.

"THE PEN."

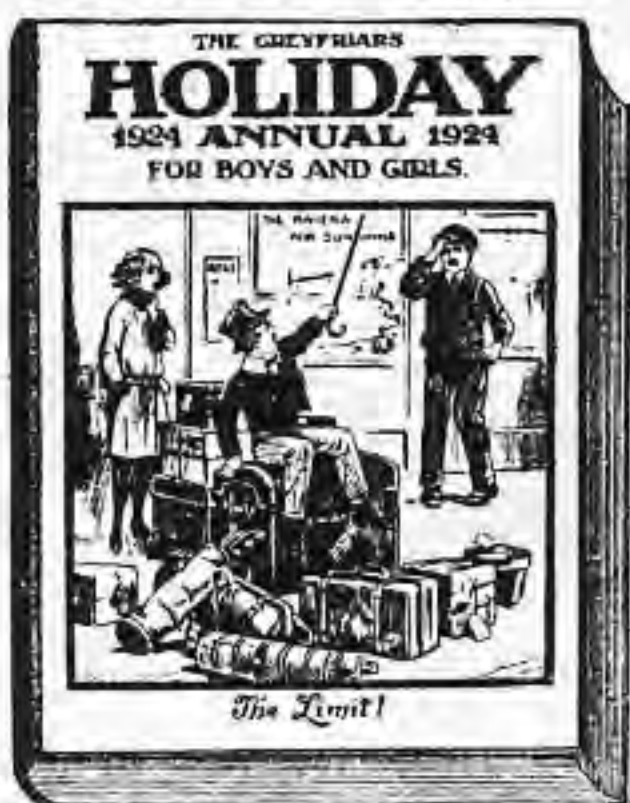
Mr. Ernest C. Ford, 176, Essex Road, London, N. 1, sends me the first issue of his bright little magazine bearing this title. You should see it! His Nature story is right on the spot. Good luck to "The Pen"!

STAMP COLLECTING.

Of late I have received a great many extremely interesting letters from stamp collectors, and I should like to deal with this famous hobby in the MAGNET. The enthusiastic philatelist—that is the Sunday, go-to-meeting name for the hard-working stamp collector—has a bigger opportunity than ever these days to make his collection really interesting. New States have sprung into being all over the world; fresh designs of all kinds have been made; and the modern stamp has come to mean a great deal more than ever before. A good stamp collection really amounts to a section of the history of the world. It is a record and a reminder. If your tastes run that way I strongly recommend an immediate beginning. The new Irish issues are worth studying; those of Czecho-Slovakia provide a lesson in good drawing. But there are any number more. Stamps are worth collecting. You will never get a complete set, but the smallest collection is worth having. It puts you in immediate touch with what is passing outside in the big world.

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Your Editor.

A Friendly Society, if carried out on orthodox lines, is a very fine thing. Fisher T. Fish thinks it a ripping idea to form one for the benefit of his fellow Remorites, and, strangely enough, they agree. Later, however, the cute American junior introduces some original business "stunts," with the result that the Friendly Society hardly lives up to its name.



Fish's Friendly Society!

A delightful story of Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, with Fisher T. Fish—the cute American junior—as the central figure. Told by

FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

No Luck for Fishy!

"I GUESS I want to talk to you galoots!"

Fisher T. Fish made that announcement as he looked in at Study No. 1 in the Remove passage at Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry, Frank Nugent, Hurree Singh, and Johnny Bull—known to posterity as the Famous Five—were at home. The "galoots" glared at Fisher T. Fish in a most unwelcome manner. They had not been looking best pleased with themselves when Fishy had poked his hatchet features in at the doorway. The looks they gave Fisher T. Fish would have scared a more sensitive youth away. But Fisher T. Fish, the youth from the Yew-nited States, was not a bit sensitive, except as far as his pocket was concerned. He smiled cheerfully, and walked in.

"Sheer off, Fishy!" growled Bob Cherry.

"Buzz off!" said Frank Nugent, reaching for the study poker.

"Hyer, I say, you jays can cut out the rough stuff!" said Fisher T. Fish hastily. "I guess I've come to say a friendly mouthful—"

"Say it outside, Fishy!" cut in Harry Wharton, frowning. "There's the door!"

Fisher T. Fish sighed.

"Oh, let up, you jays!" he said. "The fact is, I've come to interest you in a little proposition—"

"Go and bury it, Fishy!" snapped Wharton irritably. "You can't interest us in anything—unless you can tell us who has raided our grub-cupboard and burgled all the tuck we laid in for tea!"

Fisher T. Fish's keen eyes glanced towards the open cupboard of Study No. 1. That cupboard, like Mother Hubbard's, was bare. Fishy then realised the why and the wherefore of the Famous Five's dismal looks.

"Guess some rustler's cleaned out the whole shebang, eh?" he chuckled. "I guess that's hard lines. But never mind the tuck—"

"Never mind the tuck!" howled Bob

Cherry. "Why, you burbling-idiot, we—we're as hungry as hunters. You—you—"

Bob Cherry, in his indignation, could find no words sufficient to express his feelings.

Fisher T. Fish waved his bony hand soothingly.

"I kinder reckon I know how you galoots feel," he said. "But don't let it get your goat. Now, listen to me—"

"We're not going to listen to you!" snorted Johnny Bull. "Get out, Fishy!"

"Look hyer, my new proposition—"

"Ring off!"

"I tell you it's the stunt of the century!" bawled Fishy indignantly. "I'll tell the world it's a regular top-notch, high-rolling, gilt-edged scheme!"

"Br-r-r-r!"

The Famous Five were not a bit impressed. They were used to Fisher T. Fish's "gilt-edged," "top-notch" schemes. Fisher Tarleton Fish, of New York, U.S.A., was a great business man, and was always staggering humanity with some new wheeze. Many a little scheme for money-making had he foisted upon his schoolfellows at Greyfriars. He had blossomed forth as a moneylender, a pawnbroker, an insurance agent, and a vendor of cheap "lines" in jewellery and sports goods. All of his schemes, however, had ended in disaster, and Greyfriars had come to regard any fresh proposition of Fish's with suspicion.

"I kinder reckon, guess, and cal-kewlate that you galoots will sit up and take notice when I've propounded my proposition!" went on Fisher T. Fish. "It's a new idea altogether—"

"A new swindle, you mean!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Tain't a swindle this time—I—I mean, there isn't any swindle at all!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fishy glared.

"You—you silly mugwumps!" he snorted. "Can't you give a galoot a hearing? When you know what I propose to do—"

"We know who you propose to do, Fishy, and that's little us!" said Bob

Cherry blandly. "But you won't do us this time, old son! We're too fly!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I'm not going to swindle you!" howled Fish. "Look hyer, I'm going to do you all a good turn! I guess I'm going all out to become a public benefactor! Listen hyer, you jays! There's no catch in this—nope, sirs; I guess not! When I've got you wise to the R.F.F.S.—"

"The whatter?"

"The which?"

"The R.F.F.S.—"

"That must mean Raving Fatheads Fishy Swindles!" said Squiff thoughtfully.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You burbling jay!" howled Fishy.

"It doesn't mean anything of the sort, I guess—"

"Rotten Feeds on Fourpenny Sausages! How's that?" said Bob Cherry.

Fisher T. Fish gave an emphatic snort.

"Oh, you all-fired mugwumps make me tired!" he moaned. "I guess I might as well talk to a lot of lunatics! If brains were tombstones, I guess you wouldn't be able to raise a hatful of marble chips between you—nope, I guess not!"

"Buzz off, Fish!" said Harry Wharton irritably. "It's no use your trying to interest us in any more swindling wheezes. We've had some! You can skedaddle!"

"This gilt-edged proposition of mine—"

"Do you prefer to walk out or be thrown out?" inquired Bob Cherry pleasantly. "We don't mind what it is, Fishy!"

"Oh, Jehosophat! What's the use of talking sence to this sleepy outfit?" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "You jays have got about as much noose as a bunch of rummies on a batchigaloup."

"Great pip!"

"A brace of wops in a shebang could show more savvy than you all-fired mugwumps!" snorted Fish. "Blessed if a real, red-hot business man isn't wasted!"

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at this hyer school. I— Hyer, wharrer you at?"

Fish gave a roar as the Famous Five, looking grim and earnest, advanced upon him. He found himself grasped in many hands, and he was whirled over violently.

"Yarooooogh! Yah! Wow! Let up, you jays! Hands off! Oooooop!" Bump!

The lanky form of Fisher T. Fish went flying through the open doorway of Study No. 1, to land on the linoleum outside with a terrific bump.

Slam!

The door of Study No. 1 shut forcibly. Fisher T. Fish moaned, picked himself up, and limped away, gasping.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Fish Gets Busy!

"I GUESS I must do something!" Thus soliloquised Fisher T. Fish as he walked up the back stairs as Greyfriars.

The American Removite had been going the rounds of the Remove studies, trying to interest his Form-fellows in his latest wheeze. But Fishy had been rebuffed everywhere. Nobody had given him a chance to explain his idea. The Removites knew their Fish, and turned deaf ears, as it were, to his entreaties for a hearing. Some of them, when Fish became persistent, had resorted to violence, like Harry Wharton & Co.

The Transatlantic junior walked disconsolately along the rear corridor, puzzling his brain as to the best means of getting the Doubting Thomases interested in his new wheeze.

He halted and looked out of a side window dismally, still thinking.

A few minutes passed, then suddenly stealthy footsteps sounded on the back stairs. Fisher T. Fish pricked up his ears.

The footsteps came nearer, and Fish, peering along the corridor in the semi-darkness, saw a plump figure come into view bearing two large parcels.

"Bunter!" breathed Fisher T. Fish in a soft voice. "It's Bunter, by gum! I wonder what the fat clam's up to?"

Billy Bunter stood stock still and blinked in alarm at Fisher T. Fish when that youth calmly walked out of the window alcove and confronted him.

"I—I— Oh, really Nugent—" spluttered the Owl of the Remove.

"'Tain't Nugent; it's me, Fish!" said the American junior. "Look hyer, Bunter, what's the lay? You've stolen those parcels, I guess. What's in 'em—eats?"

"Eats!" gasped Billy Bunter.

"Grub, then, if you can't understand good English!" said Fish. "I kinder reckon, guess and calculate, Bunter, you've got stolen grub in those parcels."

"Oh, really, Fishy!" said Billy Bunter feebly. "I— Ow! Leggo! Hands off, you rotter!"

Fisher T. Fish seized the parcels suddenly and ripped open one of them. A grand assortment of tuck was disclosed.

"I guess my opine was correct, sir!" chuckled Fish. "You didn't come by this honestly, Bunter. You're a regular young hard grafter. I guess I'm going to confiscate this hyer provender!"

"Why, you—you thieving rotter!" spluttered Billy Bunter wrathfully. "Gimme that tuck, Fishy, or I'll tell Mr. Quelch."

"Tell away!" chuckled Fish. "I

guess Quelch will want to know where you got it from. You can't pull the wool over the eyes of a galoot from the U.S.A.; nope, sir, I guess not! You may have had a little trouble in getting this tuck, Bunter, so I reckon you're entitled to something by way of compensation, Hyer you are!"

Fish extracted a sixpence from his pocket and generously gave it to Billy Bunter.

Bunter blinked as Fishy walked away with the two parcels of tuck.

Fisher T. Fish was quite right in his surmise that Billy Bunter had stolen the tuck contained in those parcels. William George Bunter was an everlastingly hungry youth, and was an adept in the art of filching other fellows' tuck. He had been on his way to the upper box-room to enjoy a great feed on his own when, unfortunately, encountered by Fish.

"You—you rotter, Fishy!" howled Billy Bunter wrathfully. "Gimme my tuck!"

"It's not your tuck, Bunter!" said Fish over his shoulder.

"I—I— Oh, really, Fishy!" spluttered the luckless Owl. "I say, old chap, we'll go halves!"

"Nope, sir, I guess you've been compensated!" was Fisher T. Fish's parting rejoinder, and he disappeared down the stairs.

"The—the beast!" gasped Billy Bunter, clenching his fat fists. "The thieving rotter! Pinching a chap's tuck under his very nose and calmly giving him sixpence! Beast! After all my trouble in raiding that tuck from Wharton's study, too! For two pins I'd go after that mean American beast and mop up the floor with him!"

But William George Bunter thought better of it, and rolled downstairs disconsolately. He went over to the tuckshop and sought small consolation in spending the solitary sixpence kindly bestowed upon him by Fisher T. Fish.

Fisher T. Fish came into the tuckshop a short while afterwards. Billy Bunter was seated on an upturned ginger-beer crate, endeavouring to persuade Mrs. Mumble to allow him "tick" on a few tarts. But the good dame of the Greyfriars tuckshop folded her arms and steadfastly refused.

She gave Fishy a glare, too, when he came in. Fisher T. Fish was not a good customer at the tuckshop. He was extremely "tight" with his money, and did not often spend it at the school tuckshop.

To the surprise of Mrs. Mumble, and the utter amazement of Billy Bunter, Fisher T. Fish planked down a ten-shilling note on the counter.

"I guess I want the equivalent of that in tuck, ma'am," said Fishy. "I reckon you can put in a bit extra on a bulk order like this, eh?"

"I'll see, Master Fish," said the astonished Mrs. Mumble.

Billy Bunter rolled off the crate and blinked at Fish.

"I say, Fishy, old chap, what's the idea?" he asked inquisitively. "Are you going to stand a feed?"

"Wait and see!" snapped Fish.

"Look here, Fishy, that tanner you gave me didn't go far," said Bunter peevishly. "You might gimme a few tarts and a glass of pop. I'm famished. I think I'll try one of those doughnuts."

"Hyer, hands off those doughnuts, Bunter!" roared Fish, as Bunter extended a fat hand towards a bag of doughnuts Mrs. Mumble had just put out

on the counter. "I guess I'm not standing treat, you greedy clam! You're not getting anything out of me; not a crumb, sir! You can vamoose the ranch, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Fishy—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Fishy's buying up the tuckshop!" said Bob Cherry breezily, coming into the tuckshop just then with Harry Wharton and the rest of the Famous Five. "What's the wheeze, Fishy?"

"I guess you galoots will soon know," said Fisher T. Fish with a wise look. "I kinder reckon, guess and calculate you'll be sorry for the rough way you treated me a little while ago. I'm not a guy to bear malice; nope, sirs. A business man always expects to hit the hard rocks sometimes in this sleepy, one-horse island. You galoots have run out of grub for tea, I believe? Well, don't worry. I'm standing you a feed to-day."

"Wh-a-a-a-at!"

"Hold me up, Franky!" gasped Bob Cherry, collapsing limply in Nugent's arms. "Do I hear aright? Say it again, Fishy!"

"I guess you jays needn't try to pull my leg," said Fishy. "If you don't believe me, go into the Hall and take a slant at the notice-board."

"Take a what?" gasped Harry Wharton.

"A slant—a look!" said Fishy. "Blessed if it isn't time they began to teach the English language at this hyer school!"

The Famous Five staggered away and went indoors. They found a crowd gathered round the notice-board. They blinked at the solitary paper displayed thereon, and the inscription in the long, spidery scrawl of Fisher T. Fish. It ran:

"NOTICE!

R.F.F.S.!

This Concerns Chaps of the Remove Only!

REMOVITES, TAKE NOTICE!

A GRAND INAUGURAL MEETING AND FEED WILL BE HELD IN THE RAG THIS EVENING, AT 6 O'CLOCK SHARP!

R.F.F.S.!!

FEED COMMENCES 6 O'CLOCK! DON'T FORGET! ROLL UP, REMOVITES! YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO MISS THIS!

YOU WILL BE SORRY IF YOU DO! R.F.F.S.!!!

None Except Removites Admitted to the Feed.

R.F.F.S.!!!!

Plenty of Grub! No Charge for Admission! Roll Up!!!!

(Signed) **FISHER T. FISH,**
President, R.F.F.S."

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at the amazing notice and gasped.

"My only hat!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "So Fishy's standing a feed—to the whole Form! What's the matter with him? He must be off his rocker to break out like that in his old age! And what the merry dickens can R.F.F.S. mean?"

"That's what Fishy was gassing about in our study a little while ago," said Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "Chaps, it isn't often anybody stands a Form feed. We've got no tuck, and funds are pretty low, so this offer comes like corn in Egypt. We'll go."

"Rather!"

This was the decision arrived at by all the Removites who saw the notice.

Everyone loves a mystery, so "An Island Mystery!"—

And at six o'clock sharp the Rag was crowded with eager Removites. Three large trestle-tables had been erected in the room, and there were enough chairs to accommodate all.

The tables were laid neatly, and there was an assortment of tuck that made the eyes of the Removites glisten.

Fisher T. Fish was standing at the head of the middle table, rubbing his bony hands and smiling benevolently.

When all the Removites had arrived he locked the Rag door and returned to his place at the head of the middle table. Then he raised a bony hand aloft.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Great Wheeze!

"GENTLEMEN—"
"Hurrah!"

"Gentlemen, I guess I'm glad you've responded so nobly to my invitation!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I reckon we're all ready for the feed—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Passed unanimously!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then, gents, pile in!" said Fishy.

"There's plenty of everything, I reckon. I guess you can go ahead."

The Removites needed no second bidding. They went ahead, Fisher T. Fish had thoughtfully seen to everything. The tea was a little weak, and there was rather a scarcity of sugar, but the Removites did not worry over that. Frank Nugent said he thought the butter was a trifle "niffy," and Bolsover major mentioned the obvious fact that the jam had been watered to make it go further. But it was Fishy's feed, and the Removites wired in cheerfully.

Fisher T. Fish sat at the head of the table and partook sparingly of the viands. There was a glint of satisfaction in his narrow eyes, and several times he rubbed his bony hands together under the table.

Cheerfulness and good humour reigned supreme. Fishy's feed, unlike most of the other "stunts" in which he invited his Form-fellows to participate, was proving a great success.

Harry Wharton & Co. might not have felt so friendly disposed towards Fisher T. Fish had they known that their own tuck formed a goodly part of the feed. Billy Bunter guessed that this was the case, but he dared not denounce the wily Fish for the sake of his own skin. The Owl of the Remove consoled himself by making the best of the feed while it lasted. It gave Fisher T. Fish a pain to watch Billy Bunter shifting the tuck at his usual express speed, and he heartily wished that he had somehow debarred the fat Removite from coming.

But everyone else seemed satisfied, and Billy Bunter had to call a halt at last, when the last morsel was gone.

"Well, that was prime!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully, laying down knife and fork.

"Rather!" said Tom Brown.

"The primefulness was terrific!" murmured Hurree Singh, in his weird and wonderful English. "The honoured and worthy Fish has repeated of his dishful ways. As the proverb puts it, it is never too late to do a stitch in time!"

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

Fisher T. Fish arose from the table and stood upon a chair.

"Gentlemen, I guess we are all gathered here in a spirit of friendliness," he said impressively. "I reckon it's up!



The farmer and his men, attracted by the smoke, dashed up to put out the conflagration. They fairly swamped the inside of the barn, and Skinner, Snoop and Stott were given a thorough drenching. "Yaroooh! Help!" howled Skinner. (See Chapter 4.)

to us all, as members of the same Form, to maintain that spirit of friendliness as far as we can."

"My hat!" said Harry Wharton, looking hard at the benevolent-faced Fishy. "What's bitten him?"

Fisher T. Fish waved his right arm. "I guess you chaps have been wondering why I invited you hyer to this feed?" he said.

"Yes, we have! It's so unlike you, Fishy, to be so liberal," said Johnny Bull in his direct, blunt manner. "Have you suddenly come into a fortune and turned philanthropist?"

"Nope, sir—I guess I've come into no fortune," said Fish. "But, gents, I've come into the most corkin' idea you ever dreamed of! I kinder reckon, guess and cal-kew-late that when you've been put wise, you'll be plumb tickled to death about it!"

"Oh!" said Frank Nugent. "That's why you invited us to the feed, Fishy—to tell us about your latest wheeze?"

"I guess you've hit it, sir," said Fishy with a benign smile. "That feed, gents, is part of the wheeze. The whole wheeze is one in which the Remove Form, and the Remove only, will participate."

"Well, Fishy, if the rest of the wheeze is like the first part, we'll join in heartily," said Bob Cherry with a grin.

"Hear, hear!"

Fisher T. Fish's hatchet features creased into a pleasant smile.

"I guess you'll be pleased when you hear about it," he said. "It's the best wheeze of the year. I—"

"Oh, it's bound to be another

swindle!" growled Bolsover major. "Fish's schemes always are. I vote we clear off and do our prep."

"Hyee, you stay and hark out to what I'm goin' to say!" exclaimed Fisher T. Fish. "Chaps who have the grace to attend a feed can find grace enough to attend a meeting afterwards, I guess."

"Go ahead, Fishy—we'll give you a hearing," said Harry Wharton, with a good-natured laugh. "What is this wheeze of yours?"

"R.F.F.S.," said Fish impressively.

"Great pip! That beastly thing again!" said Squiff. "What is it, Fishy—a new American drink?"

"Nope, sir: I guess nix," said Fish. "The R.F.F.S. stands for the Remove Form Friendly Society."

"Oh!"

The Remove juniors looked at Fishy, and looked at each other. There was silence for a few minutes. Fisher T. Fish stood on the chair and rubbed his hands, and waited for the great news to sink in.

"Remove Form Friendly Society!" gasped Harry Wharton.

Fish nodded.

"Yep! I guess that's the size of it, gentlemen. This hyor is the grand inaugural meeting of the R.F.F.S. I guess it was quite a fitting thing for it to start with a feed, to show that we're all friendly."

"Great Scott!"

The Removites stared at Fisher T. Fish. The American Removite calmly took a paper from his pocket and unfolded it.

—next week's Greyfriars yarn—will go like "hot cakes"!

"Gentlemen, these hyer are the rules and articles of association of the R.F.F.S.," he said impressively. "The Remove Form Friendly Society is hereby inaugurated—"

"Who said so?" demanded Bulstrode pertinently.

"I guess we're all on terms of friendship—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We have all taken part in the grand inaugural feed, I guess—"

"Go hon!"

"Look hyer, you galoots might give a chap a hearing!" sported Fishy.

"I guess the R.F.F.S. is the greatest stunt I've thought of so far, and I've thought of some good wheezes in my time—yep, sirs—just a few!"

"You have, Fishy—thou hast!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"But this hyer licks the whole lot to a frazzle! It eclipses the whole constellation, I guess!" said Fish enthusiastically.

"The Remove Form Friendly Society is a thing the Form has been in need of for some time. It's a thing the Form is in real need of. The R.F.F.S. will take the school by storm, I guess. I kinder reckon, guess, and calculate that when the others hear about it, they'll all be jealous. They'll want to form friendly societies of their own. But the Remove will be first in the field. With a keen, level-headed, business man to lead the way, the Remove will go ahead and be the envy of other Forms. Gentlemen, this wheeze is a real, gilt-edged top-notch!"

"Well, carry me home to die, somebody!" gasped Frank Nugent. "Whoever heard of a friendly society at a school?"

"That hyer is just it! This lurch of mine is novel, gents—just a few!" said Fisher T. Fish eagerly. "Why shouldn't the Remove Form get together and form a friendly society? I guess it would unite us in an everlasting spirit of friendship, mutual help, and co-operation. Gentlemen, I haven't put you wise to the real beauties of the scheme yet. As time's short I reckon I'll explain briefly. Each member of the R.F.F.S. puts sixpence a week into the society funds as his subscription—"

"There you are! I thought money was connected with it somewhere!" said Peter Todd triumphantly.

"He's after our money again!" said Morgan. "That's Fishy's main wheeze, isn't it, whatever?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fish snorted.

"I wish you jays wouldn't interrupt!" he said. "I guess I'm entitled to a hearing, and then if you don't like the idea, you can turn it down. I reckon that's fair enough. As I was saying, each member contributes sixpence a week to the society funds. At the end of the term there will be a share-out, in which every member will get back what he has paid in, plus the interest on loans, and less his share of the expenses which have been incurred for the good and proper conduct of the society. Furthermore—"

"Is this the part where you make your little bit, Fishy?" inquired Tom Russell sweetly.

"Nope! I'm makin' nothing!" snapped Fishy. "This hyer idea is for the good of the Form, I guess. I don't figure on makin' durocks for myself—not a Continental brass cent, sir!"

"Bow-wow!" said Bulstrode unbelievably.

"Members of the R.F.F.S. will all share and share alike! That's the under-

lying principle of a friendly society, you galoots!" said Fishy, with some heat. "Furthermore, as I was saying, members of the society whose subscriptions are paid up to date are entitled to borrow cash from the society's available funds up to seventy-five per cent of the total amount of their subscriptions already paid. That's another principle of a friendly society—to assist members in difficulty."

"H'm! That's not a bad idea!" said Bob Cherry. "A chap very often gets into financial difficulties. That's when a cash loan would help him. There may be something in Fishy's idea, after all, chaps. What about the repayments, Fishy?"

"Loans are repayable by instalments, or in bulk, the rate of five per cent interest being charged, this interest going to the credit of the society funds and being included in the share-out," said Fish.

The Remove juniors looked impressed.

"Everything is done on a purely co-operative basis, and in a friendly way, the aim of the R.F.F.S. being to encourage thrift, unanimity, and a share-and-share-alike spirit in the Form," said Fisher T. Fish. "Moreover, there is another good feature of the scheme. When a chap gets into difficulties through no fault of his own, the R.F.F.S. helps him. For instance, suppose a chap runs his bike into a fence belonging to a village resident, and damages the fence, and the owner of the fence demands payment. If the chap is a member of the R.F.F.S., a special levy is made on the society funds to help him out of his difficulty."

"Great Scott!"

"Stand together and help one another—that's the motto of the R.F.F.S.," said Fisher T. Fish impressively. "If the whole Form co-operates, we'll make a good thing of it. I guess it's the niftiest wheeze I've ever struck! What do you say, gentlemen?"

There was a buzz of conversation in the Rag.

Harry Wharton & Co. and most of the Remove were greatly taken up by Fisher T. Fish's scheme. It was somewhat out of the usual run of the ideas which were conceived by the alert Transatlantic junior with the dominant motive of "lining his own pocket."

This one, however, seemed to be different, and it was certainly novel. It appealed to the Removites strongly. Fisher T. Fish seemed to be in earnest this time. Had he not stood the Form a feed to demonstrate to them the principles of the friendly society?

"Waal, gents, I reckon you're all agreed that my wheeze is a real high-roller!" said Fisher T. Fish, getting down from his chair and clearing a corner of the table. "Now, I guess I'll enrol you all in the R.F.F.S. You first, Wharton? As captain of the Form, I guess it's up to you to take the lead."

"Right-ho, Fishy; put me down!" said Harry Wharton with a laugh.

Fisher T. Fish scrawled Wharton's name in the register before him, and then he extended a large, bony palm.

"Sixpence, please!" he said.

Harry Wharton handed Fishy sixpence, which the American junior pocketed with a grin of satisfaction. Then he looked round on the others.

"Roll up, gents!" he said. "I guess you'll all have to join. You'll be out of all the benefits if you don't. Your sixpence, please, Cherry."

"There's two bob—that will square for

Inky, Johnny, Nugent, and myself," said Bob Cherry, planking down a florin.

Fisher T. Fish seized it in his bony palm and wrote down the four names.

Peter Todd, Vernon-Smith, Dick Penfold, Tom Russell, and Dick Rake were the next to pay their sixpences. Half the rest of the Removites good-humouredly came into line and enrolled in the R.F.F.S.

"We'll see how the thing pans out," said Harry Wharton, as he and his chums left the Rag. "Fishy may make a good thing out of it—with supervision. A friendly society for Remove chaps is not a bad idea, provided it's run properly. Of course, it may fizzle out in a week, but it's only cost us sixpence each so far—and the feed was worth that."

"Ha, ha! Rather!"

Meanwhile, seated at the table in the Rag, Fisher Tarleton Fish was kept busy enrolling his Form fellows as members of the R.F.F.S. He raked in the sixpences and scrawled down the names with a willing and never-tiring hand.

Business was so brisk, indeed, that when Billy Bunter asked for his subscription to be held over until a postal-order arrived from one of his titled relations, Fishy magnanimously agreed.

At last all the Remove were enrolled, and Fishy, left alone in the Rag, rubbed his bony hands and chuckled.

He closed the register, and brought out the subscriptions and a little private cashbook.

He counted the money carefully.

"Thirteen and six—and sixpence Bunter owes me, that makes fourteen bob!" chuckled the business man of the Remove to himself. "Gee whizz! I guess that's not so bad for a start! I guess I shall have to charge up inaugural feed expenses. The galoots had their feed, and I guess it's only fair to make 'em pay for it, although I didn't mention it. Lemme see! We'll put the feed expenses down at seventeen and six—that's letting 'em off lightly. That leaves a debit balance to me so far of three and six. I guess I can wait for that till next week's subscriptions roll in. Fourteen bob a week! Gee whizz! The galoots will have their friendly society all right, but I kinder reckon, guess, and cal-kew-late that I'm the guy who'll attend to the financial part of the affair—yep, sir! Fourteen bob a week! I guess I've made two bob hard cash already, and the society owes me three and six. I guess that's good for a start. This R.F.F.S. business is goin' to be a real good thing, or my name's not F. T. Fish!"

Thus ruminating, the American junior snapped his cashbook together, put the "takings" back into his pocket, and proceeded to tidy up after the feed.

If everything panned out according to his shrewd calculations, the R.F.F.S. was going to be a good thing—for Fisher Tarleton Fish.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Skinner & Co.'s Benefit!

ALL Greyfriars was soon talking about the Remove Form Friendly Society. Everybody agreed that it was a good idea. The Removites were quite enthusiastic.

Fisher T. Fish, ever a business man, borrowed Mr. Quelch's typewriter, and made out a little book of rules, which he afterwards hectographed, and distributed one each to every member of

The Famous Five are the central figures on the stage next week—

the R.F.F.S. The juniors received the book cheerfully, little thinking that, in the privacy of Study No. 14, Fisher T. Fish entered 3d. against each account for "administration and printing expenses, etc."

Fishy pocketed twenty-eight three-pences—plus the three-and-six the society "owed" him—out of the second week's subscriptions. Ten-and-sixpence out of fourteen shillings did not leave much to the balance of the society, but, as Fishy told himself, the thing was as yet in its infancy, and every society newly formed has various preliminary expenses.

The members of the R.F.F.S. would have to admit that, he guessed, if there was any trouble at the share-out at the end of the term.

But the time for the share-out was still far distant, and Fishy's main concern was the weekly income of fourteen shillings that he, as president of the society, would be able to dabble with.

Fish went out one afternoon with a very thoughtful expression on his face. It was evident, from the look of the Transatlantic junior, that some new scheme was being evolved in his alert brain.

Fish walked out of the school gates and turned into the wood from Friardale Lane.

Passing into the village from the other side of the wood, Fish saw three juniors wearing the Greyfriars school caps creep stealthily into a barn.

He recognised the trio as Skinner, Snoop, and Stott, the three dingy young rascals of the Remove.

Fish guessed their object in stealing into the barn, but shrugged his lean shoulders and walked on.

What Skinner & Co. were up to was no "bizney" of Fisher T. Fish's. He had business of his own to see to, and stalked over the little bridge crossing the Sark, and went into Friardale.

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott, meanwhile, had settled themselves comfortably in the straw in the barn, and cigarettes and a pack of playing-cards were produced.

The gay dogs of the Remove lit cigarettes, and proceeded to while away the time in a little game of nap.

Smoking and gambling were pursuits strictly vetoed at Greyfriars. Had Skinner & Co.'s partiality for them become known to the Head or the prefects, serious trouble for them would have resulted. But Harold Skinner and his cronies were too crafty to let news of their surreptitious "flutters" get to the ears of Dr. Locko, although their shady ways were well known in the Remove. Harry Wharton & Co., and all the decent fellows were down on the rotters' brigade, and Skinner & Co., when caught smoking and gambling at Greyfriars, were ragged unmercifully.

But, in the quiet seclusion of the barn, Skinner and Co. felt safe from all interference.

They smoked and gambled till the air in the barn was one thick haze of tobacco-smoke.

"Play up!" grinned Skinner, who was winning. "Have another gasper, Snoop?"

"Thank!"

Skinner lit himself another cigarette with great bravado, and carelessly threw away the match. He did not notice that the match, still burning, had fallen into a pile of dry straw.

The three young rascals of the Remove proceeded with their little game of nap, quite oblivious of the fact that the straw had begun to smoulder!

"Whew! The air in here is getting frightfully stuffy!" gasped Skinner suddenly. "I—oh! Oooogh! Groogh! What the dickens—"

"The straw's on fire!" howled Stott, leaping up.

"Help! Ow-ow! We'll be burned!" moaned Snoop.

The three young rascals dashed to the door of the barn. The straw was by now well alight, and smoke was coming from it in vast black clouds.

As Skinner, Snoop, and Stott reached the barn-door and opened it, a torrent of water came through and burst upon them, bowling them over like ninepins.

Swoooooosh!

"Yarooooogh!"

"Gerrugh!"

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott collapsed on the barn floor, and squirmed and yelled.

The water came from a hose held by the farmer and two of his men, who, attracted by the smoke issuing from the barn, had dashed up to put out the conflagration.

They fairly swamped the inside of the barn, and the three luckless juniors on the floor were given a thorough drenching.

When at last the fire had been extinguished, the farmer and his men ran into the barn, grasped Skinner & Co., and yanked them forth.

"Now, you little warmint!" roared the angry farmer, shaking Skinner till that youth's teeth rattled. "You coom on my land and set foir to my barn! The whole place might have been burned down! I'll make you pay for it, by goom! I'll—"

"Yarooooogh! Leggo! Help!" howled Skinner. "We didn't mean—"

Whack, whack, whack!

The farmer and his men did not waste time in words. They took Skinner & Co. across their knees, and commenced to belabour them heartily with the sticks they carried.

The howls of Skinner, Snoop, and Stott rang out shrilly across the fields.

Fisher T. Fish, returning from the village, stopped short and blinked at the scene of woe.

"Waal, I swow!" he gasped. "Those galoots are gettin' it hot, I guess!"

Fisher T. Fish stood by and watched the chastisement of Skinner and Co. with great interest.

The farmer and his men did not stop whacking them until their arms ached.

"There, you little whelps!" gasped the farmer, getting up but retaining a strong grip on Skinner's coat-collar.

"I'll make you pay for the damage, too. I'll apply to your 'eadmaster for payment!"

"Yow-ow-ow! Dud-don't do that, sir!" moaned Skinner. "There's no—yow-ow!—need to bring the Head into this. Groogh! How much is the damage?"

"Fifteen bob!" roared the farmer. "Not a farthing less! Pay up, or I'll report you!"

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott miserably turned out their pockets.

They raised eleven shilling and three-pence between them.

"I want another three-and-nine!" roared the irate farmer. "I'll see I get it, too! I'll—"



A perfect fusillade of missiles burst upon Fisher T. Fish. "Yah! Yaroooh! Let up, you jays!" howled Fishy. "I guess—yowp!" He lost his balance on the chair and crashed to the floor. "Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Removites. (See Chapter 5.)

—and the exciting adventures they meet with will thrill you!

"We haven't got it!" gasped Skinner. "Can't you wait till— Oh, there's Fish! I say, Fishy!"

Fisher T. Fish walked over. There was a cunning glint in his eyes.

"Hyer I am," he said. "I guess you jays have been makin' some shemozzle—just a few!"

"Lend us three-and-nine, Fishy!" beseeched Skinner. "We've got to pay for the damage we've done, and—"

"We're members of the friendly society, so we're entitled to help!" said Snoop desperately.

Skinner & Co. looked at Fisher T. Fish.

They did not expect Fishy to agree with Snoop.

But, to their utter surprise, Fisher T. Fish gave a brisk nod.

"I guess that's so, Snoop!" he said. "As members of the R.F.F.S. you are entitled to the help accorded by the society. Members in difficulty are given assistance so far as the means of the society permit. You require the sum of three-and-nine to get you out of your difficulty. Waal, hyer you are!"

Fish thrust a bony hand into his trousers pocket and withdrew the sum of three shillings and ninepence, which he handed over to the wondering farmer.

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott gasped.

"I—I say, that's awfully decent of you, Fish!" said Skinner, looking narrowly at his Form-fellow, as he limped away with Snoop and Stott. "You got us out of a nasty scrape then. If the farmer had reported us to the Head, and it got out that we were in the barn smoking and playing cards—"

"I guess you'd have got it in the neck, sir!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Look hyer, Skinner, I'm no philanthropist, and by rights you are not entitled to compensation from the friendly society, as the trouble was brought upon yourself by your own wilful misdeeds—I guess you'll read that in the book of rules."

"Well?" said Skinner, with a quick look at Fishy. "You've helped us. We'll pay you back."

Fisher T. Fish waved a bony hand aloft.

"I guess I'm not worryin' about the payin' back," he said. "All I want, I guess, is a receipt for three dollars—fifteen bob in your played-out English money."

"Fifteen bob!" gasped Skinner. "You only stumped up three-and-nine, Fishy!"

"You paid the farmer fifteen bob, didn't you?" said Fish meaningly. "I guess it cost you fifteen bob to get out of your difficulty. Waal, the R.F.F.S. has got to get the credit for that, or I kinder reckon, guess, and cal-kew-late you jays won't get off so dead easy as you think."

"What do you mean, Fishy?" gasped Skinner.

"I guess I shall have to lay the matter before the society at our meeting to-night, and tell 'em exactly how the fire in the barn started, and press for the repayment of that three-and-nine!" said Fish calmly.

"You—you spoofer!" exclaimed Skinner. "You want a receipt for fifteen bob from us, so that you'll get credit for having paid the lot!"

"That's about the size of it," said Fish, nodding. "A matter of propaganda for the R.F.F.S., you know. That's business."

"Business!" spluttered Skinner. "It's a swindle! We shall have to repay the fifteen bob to the society—"

"You've got till the end of the term to pay," said Fish with a grin. "Ain't it worth it, to get out of a scrape like

that? Suppose the farmer guy had gone to the Head and put him wise to your goin's on? The old galoot had properly got his mad up, and he'd have kept his word if I hadn't stepped in. I guess you chaps had better toe the line and do as I say. It's all for the good of the R.F.F.S., you know."

"Br-r-r-r!"

Skinner, Snoop, and Stott limped onward. The wily Fish had got them out of a scrape, but required a favour in return.

Skinner & Co. did not have any qualms of conscience about giving Fishy a misleading receipt, but they did not relish having to pay fifteen shillings into the society funds after having already paid out eleven-and-threepence to the farmer.

But, as Skinner afterwards remarked, they had plenty of time to pay, and the damage in the barn might have been worse. They might have burned the barn down, and they turned pale at the thoughts of what would have ensued then.

So, after all, they felt that the best thing to do was to grin and bear it!

And Fisher T. Fish, when he returned to Greyfriars, took eleven-and-threepence out of the society funds and transferred it to his own pocket, entering an item of fifteen shillings in the book, to be raised by special levy on the members of the R.F.F.S.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

A Stormy Meeting!

"SIXPENCE-HA'PENNY, please!"

Fisher T. Fish came up to Harry Wharton & Co., who were chatting in the Common-room after tea, and made that demand.

The Removites looked at Fish in considerable astonishment.

"What did you say, Fishy?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Sixpence-ha'penny, please!" said Fish, holding out a horny palm. "I guess that's the size of the special levy on each member of the R.F.F.S."

"Oh!" gasped Harry Wharton. "So you've raised a special levy, Fishy! What's the levy for?"

"To pay the fifteen bob loaned to Skinner, Snoop, and Stott this afternoon to help them out of a difficulty, I guess," said Fish breezily. "Skinner, the silly mugwump, happened to chuck a lighted match into a barn and set light to some straw that was in there. The farmer stung him and the others fifteen bob between 'em to pay for the damage, under threat of reporting 'em to the Head. I happened to be there, and I paid up out of the society funds, those three being accredited members of the R.F.F.S."

"The loan will be met by a special levy, according to the society rules. There are twenty-eight members. Each will have to cash out sixpence-ha'penny to raise the fifteen bob. When the loan is repaid the durocks will go back into the society funds, and will be included in the share-out at the end of the term. So I guess you galoots will see your money back. Bein' members of the R.F.F.S. you can't go back on its principles, and I reckon it's up to you to meet the levy. Sixpence-ha'penny, please!"

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Of course, we don't mind paying the levy if it's a case that genuinely comes under the rules of our friendly society. But I think the matter ought to be gone

into first. Other friendly societies do not grant assistance to members unless a committee previously investigates the case and proves it genuine."

Fisher T. Fish looked a little blank at this.

"Look hyer, you galoot, this society hasn't got a committee, and I guess it doesn't need one," he said. "I calculate you can rely on me, as president of the R.F.F.S., to handle the funds in a proper and businesslike manner."

"Oh, bow-wow!" said Bob Cherry. "Your business methods are too jolly cute for us, Fishy! Chaps, I vote we hold a meeting of the R.F.F.S. immediately, for the purpose of investigating the funds and forming a managing committee."

"Hear, hear!" cried the Removites enthusiastically.

"Oh, Jehoshaphat!" gasped Fisher T. Fish in dismay. "Look hyer, if you jays don't think I can run this society—"

"We think we ought to have a committee, instead of leaving everything in the hands of the president!" said Harry Wharton sharply. "We were silly asses not to have thought of that before. Gather in the other chaps, and we'll hold a meeting."

Fishy protested wildly, but the minds of Harry Wharton & Co. were made up. While Bob Cherry and Nugent and several others went to call in the members of the R.F.F.S., Johnny Bull, Dick Penfold, and Peter Todd rushed Fishy away to his study and made him fetch out the books of the society.

When Fish came in with the books the Common-room was crowded with members of the friendly society.

The Remove had turned up in full force for the meeting. A roar greeted the appearance of the president, who was led in by Johnny Bull and Peter Todd, with Penfold bringing up the rear, carrying the books.

"Here's Fishy!"

"Shove him on the chair and let him give an account of the society affairs."

"How many quids have we got to our account so far?"

Fisher T. Fish was dumped on the chair and the books placed before him. He grasped them and stood up. He pulled his necktie and collar straight and glared round upon the assembled Removites.

"Yow! I guess you're a set of all-fired, slab-sided mugwumps!" he gasped. "This hyer meeting wasn't called by me, but I reckon that if a spirit of friendship is maintained throughout the proceedings—"

"Cut the cackle and get on to the hosses!" shouted Bob Cherry. "I call on the president to render an account of the progress of the R.F.F.S."

"Hear, hear!"

Fisher T. Fish shrugged his lean shoulders and opened the cash book.

"Gentlemen, hyer we have the cash account," he said. "Three weeks' subscriptions have been paid by all members, with the exception of W. G. Bunter, who is two weeks in arrears—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Good old Bunter!"

"He's still waiting for the proverbial postal-order!"

"Gentlemen, the total cash subscribed so far is two pounds one shilling—"

"Hurrah!"

"Out of which have been made the following deductions," said Fish, with a covert look at his Form-fellows. "Seventeen-and-six for the inaugural feed—"

Even William George Bunter comes out strong in "An Island Mystery!"—

"Great pip!" ejaculated Frank Nugent. "You stood that feed yourself, Fishy!"

"I guess I invited you all hyer to a feed to inaugurate the R.F.F.S.!" said Fisher T. Fish. "It was a risk on my part, as I had to stand axes for the feed. If the idea of forming the Friendly Society had fallen through, I guess I'd have been left. But as you chaps agreed to form into a friendly society, I reckon it's only fair and business-like that you should contribute to the inaugural feed."

"The artful spoofer!" shouted Bulstrode. "I thought it was unlike Fishy to stand a Form feed on his own!"

"You didn't tell us we'd have to pay the piper!" exclaimed Frank Nugent. "The committee ought to disallow that claim!"

"I guess that's business!" roared Fish desperately. "You're not told

threepence. Those hyer books of rules were issued at threepence a time. I guess that ain't expensive."

"I guess it's a downright fraud!" exclaimed Harry Wharton hotly. "You gave no intimation to the members of the society, you boulder, that the books of rules would be charged up for!"

"Does a business-man tell his clients everything?" demanded Fish wearily. "I guess it's a hard job trying to knock sense into you slab-sided jays! You don't expect to have things for nothing, do you? I— Wow! Yah! What was that?"

"That" was a pea that had been aimed at him from a peashooter owned by Micky Desmond. The pea struck Fishy on the tip of his prominent nose, and he roared.

Next minute a perfect fusillade of peas, bad eggs, tomatoes, and other

misled by our president on the floor!" cried the Remove captain in a loud voice. "As a friendly society, we'll refrain from kicking him out and spiffing him as he deserves—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But we'll form a committee to manage the affairs of the R.F.F.S. from now on!"

"Hear, hear!"

Harry Wharton picked up the cash-book and looked at Fish's scrawl.

"Gentlemen, according to this book, the balance to our credit, after deducting the seven bob, is sixteen and sixpence!" he said.

"Shame!"

"And, deducting the fifteen shillings lent to Skinner, that leaves a grand total of one-and-six!" continued Harry Wharton.

"Oh, Jeminy!"



By means of Temple & Co.'s simple device the Common-room was soon thick with smoke. "Gerrugh!" gurgled Harry Wharton. "Let's get out of this, chaps!" Coughing and sneezing, the Removites scrambled through the window to the quad below. (See Chapter 6.)

everything in business! I guess that wouldn't do! This hyer is a business proposition! Seventeen-and-six is what the feed cost, and I reckon it's got to stand!"

"All right, let it stand!" said Harry Wharton patiently. "We'll see you don't have a chance to mislead us again, Fishy! We have, then, one pound three-and-six to our credit?"

"Nope, you haven't, sir!" said Fish briskly. "There's an item of seven shillings for administration and printing expenses."

"Wha-a-at?"

"How do you make that out, Fishy?"

Fisher T. Fish gave a tired look.

"I guess all you galoots had a book of rules issued to you?" he said. "Where do you think the money came from to compile and print 'em? I guess the society funds had to stand the expense. The charge on each member was only

edibles of doubtful quality, burst upon him, and he became aware that quite a large number of the friendly society members had come prepared with plenty of ammunition to the meeting.

Whiz! Whiz! Whiz!

"Yarooogh! Yah! Wow! Let up, you jays! Ow-wow!" howled Fish, dancing on the chair under the rain of stinging missiles. "I guess if I get my mad up, I'll make potato scrapings of the whole outfit! Oooooo! I— Wow-wow! I'm not going to stand—"

Fishy didn't, for at that precise moment he lost his balance on the chair and came crashing over to the floor, which he struck with a fearful thud.

"Yarooooooooooogh! Oh, Jehoshophat! Wooooooooooooooooogh!"

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

Harry Wharton jumped on the chair and faced the Form.

"Gentlemen, we have been grossly

"One-and-a-tanner!"

"Fishy, you awful spoofer—"

"We'll have a committee!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Fish's New Wheeze!

HARRY WHARTON, Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, Nugent, Peter Todd, and Bulstrode, were being nominated for the committee when the Common-room door burst open, and Cecil Reginald Temple, the leader of the Upper Fourth, and a crowd of his Form-fellows, appeared.

"My hat! These Remove kids have bagged the Common-room for a silly meeting!" exclaimed Temple. "I say, Wharton, you and your crew can clear out! We want this room!"

The Removites glared at Temple, Dabney & Co.

—whilst Coker & Co. play no small part at the climax!

"Well, of all the fearful nerve!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Are you looking for a thick ear, Temple?"

"Or a pair of black eyes?" said Johnny Bull grimly.

Temple, swiftly noting that the odds were not in his favour, made a hasty signal to his followers, and the Upper Fourth-Formers withdrew.

"The fearful nerve of these Upper Fourth bounders!" exclaimed Harry Wharton, when Temple & Co. had disappeared. "Now, kids, let's get on with forming the committee."

The business of the R.F.F.S. proceeded apace. Some time passed, and then, all of a sudden, several of the juniors began to cough.

"Groooogh! Something's burning!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Where's all this smoke coming from? I— Oh, my hat! Groooogh! It's coming through the keyhole!"

The startled Removites turned and saw a streak of thick, pungent smoke issuing into the Common-room through the keyhole in the door. Already there was a haze of nauseating smoke in the room. As the smoke continued to pour in through the keyhole, the atmosphere became worse.

The juniors sneezed and coughed and gargled and spluttered wildly.

"Yerrugh! This is awful! Open the groooogh—door!" gasped Harry Wharton.

But although several fellows wrenched at it, the door would not budge.

A shout of laughter came from the passage outside.

"Ha, ha, ha! How are you enjoying yourselves in there, old beans?" came Cecil Reginald Temple's voice. "Do you like the smoke?"

"Ooooh! You horrid rotter—"

"Those Upper Fourth blighters are burning smoke-powder, and—gerrugh!—sending it in here through a tube stuck in the keyhole!" gurgled Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Temple, Dabney & Co. outside.

Theirs was quite a simple apparatus, really. It consisted of an old kettle and a length of rubber tubing. Inside the kettle, the lid of which was sealed down, a quantity of smoke-powder was burning, giving off dense masses of fumes. And those fumes were being conveyed into the Common-room by means of the rubber tube, one end of which was fixed over the spout of the kettle, and the other end inserted in the keyhole of the Common-room door.

Soon, it was almost impossible for the Removites to see each other in the room, so thick was the smoke.

"Gerrugh! Ooogh-ahhh! Oh, Jehoshophat! I guess we'll have to vamoose the ranch!" gurgled Fisher T. Fish, making a dive for the window. "Yerrugh!"

Fish was followed through the window by a crowd of his sneezing, coughing Form-fellows. It was beyond the means of human endurance to tarry any longer in the smoke-filled Common-room.

Even the Famous Five, who were trying to batter down the door, had to give up at last and seek refuge in the open air by climbing out of the window.

When they had gone the door opened, and Temple, Dabney & Co. burst in.

They rushed to the window and let the smoke pour harmlessly into the open air. They looked down and smiled sweetly at the luckless Removites, who were mopping at their streaming eyes and blowing their noses violently in the quadrangle below.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Temple. "How

do you feel, dear boys? Like smoked haddocks, I suppose?"

"You—you—you—"

"We've got the Common-room now, and we're keeping it for the rest of the evening!" chuckled the leader of the Upper Fourth. "You Remove kids can run away and play marbles!"

"You awful rotters—"

"Hear us smile!" chortled Temple.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney. "Just hear us!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The "smile" of Temple, Dabney & Co. was heard all over Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton & Co. shook their fists at their victorious rivals and went away.

"Hyer, I say, you galoots, don't disperse yet!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Now we're all still together, I've got another proposition to put up—a real top-notch idea, in fact!"

"Go and eat coke, Fishy!" growled Bob Cherry.

"This hyer smoke business put it into my head!" said the American junior eagerly. "I kinder reckon, guess, and calculate, that if the Remove got a Common-room to itself, it would put one over the Upper Fourth—what?"

"How on earth could the Remove ever get a Common-room to itself?" said Harry Wharton crossly. "You're talking out of the back of your neck, Fishy!"

"Nope, sir, I'm not!" said the business man of the Remove. "Hark out, gents, for the finest stunt of the term. In connection with the R.F.F.S., why shouldn't the society have a clubhouse, like other friendly societies?"

"Great pip!"

"What the Remove wants is a clubhouse, away from the rest of the school, where chaps of the Remove can gather and pass the time away pleasantly," said Fish, warming to his subject. "The Remove Friendly Society, with a clubhouse of its own, would then be independent of the school Common-room. The premises would be private—for the exclusive use of members of the R.F.F.S. That, I guess, would turn those other jays green with envy."

The Removites looked at Fishy and at each other.

"Of course, a clubhouse for the R.F.F.S. is a good idea," said Harry Wharton; "but how on earth is it to be managed? If your scheme were carried out, Fishy, it would mean a building job."

"Why not?" demanded Fishy. "I guess the local team of Boy Scouts have got a headquarters hut of their own. It didn't cost 'em much. Why shouldn't the R.F.F.S. manage the same sort of thing at Greyfriars? There's a bit of waste ground behind the ruined chapel. The Head would give us permission to erect a clubhouse there, I guess."

"Great Scott! It's a fine idea!" said Bob Cherry with glistening eyes. "If only we could build a clubhouse, Harry! Wouldn't it be grand? Wouldn't the other Forms be envious? As Fishy says, it could be done—"

"Yes, it could be done if we had the money!" said Harry Wharton dubiously.

Fisher T. Fish waved a bony hand in the air.

"Leave it to me, gents," he said. "I guess you can bank on F. T. Fish of Noo York to see the thing through! I kinder reckon, guess and cal-kew-late that before very long the Remove will have a clubhouse of its own; yep, sirs, you wait and see, as one of your politician galoots used to say."

Fisher T. Fish gave the Removites a cute smile and walked away.

He went to his study and indited a letter to his pater's agents in London. It was a request for money—as an investment. When Fish junior wrote for money it was a sure sign that he had a scheme afoot whereby he intended multiplying that money two or threefold—more, if possible.

Fish posted his letter, and returned to his study for prep.

And Johnny Bull, who had the doubtful pleasure of sharing Study No. 14 with the American junior, wondered why Fishy kept chuckling and rubbing his hands over his prep.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Getting Ready for Business!

THREE days later Fisher T. Fish walked out of the post-office in Friardale with a grin of satisfaction on his hatchet face. His wallet was bulging with pound-notes. He had just been in to cash the money-order he had received that morning.

Fish walked lightly up the old High Street, and turned down a small street that led to the river. At the very end of the street, next to the river, was a small shed and a yard.

He halted at the gate of the yard, pulled out a bunch of keys, inserted one in the padlock and opened it. He swung the gate open and walked in, whistling cheerfully.

He unlocked the shed door and entered. On a box inside the dingy shed was a bundle of clothing and a parcel containing a pair of plain glass spectacles, a wig, and a false moustache.

Fisher T. Fish proceeded to change into man's attire. When this was done, by the aid of a small mirror, he put on the wig, affixed the false moustache to his upper lip, and placed the spectacles on his nose.

The American junior surveyed himself in the glass with great satisfaction.

"Gee whizz!" he chuckled gleefully. "I guess nobody would recognise this galoot as F. T. Fish, of Noo York City! Nope, I guess not! Now, I wonder whether those notice-boards are ready? I guess I'll go and find out."

Thus disguised, Fisher T. Fish walked out of the shed, locked it, and left the yard door open. He called in at a little signwriter's shop in the same street, and came out bearing two boards, a hammer and some nails.

Fishy took them into the yard, and then, fetching a pair of steps out of the shed, he climbed up them and proceeded to nail the largest of the boards over the yard entrance.

The board, in bold, black-painted letters, bore the following:

"FRIARDALE BUILDING COMPANY.

Houses erected at Shortest Notice.
Repairs, Etc."

Having affixed this to his liking, Fish got down, took the steps over to the shed door and fixed up the other board. This read:

"OFFICE."

"Good!" chuckled the business man of the Remove, getting down and surveying the two notices. "I guess that will do. That ought to convince 'em! I reckon I got this place cheap at five bob a week,

What is the secret of Black Rock Island?—

It takes a real, red-hot business man to strike a bargain. Now, I wonder when that dollar's worth of old wood is coming? Ah, hyer it is!"

A cart drew up outside the premises of the "Friardale Building Co." It was laden with old planks of wood, broken doorframes and miscellaneous rubbish that the astute Fish had purchased from the village timber-yard.

When the wood had been deposited in the yard and the cart had departed, Fisher T. Fish stood in his "office" and rubbed his hands.

"Gee whizz! The place is beginning to look like a builder's-yard, I guess!" he chuckled. "I'll get some books and papers and things from Greyfriars for the office. Then I reckon everything will be O.K. I guess I'll lock up and get along to that Army Disposal dump. I never let things dilly-dally; nope, I guess not! I'm a business man, straight from the word go!"

The disguised junior locked up and walked into Friardale High Street.

He passed Horace Coker, of the Fifth, and his chums Potter and Greene by the lunshop. They did not recognise Fishy. Further along the High Street, Dicky Nugent & Co., of the Second, were wrangling with a fishmonger over some kippers they wanted for tea. They saw Fishy coming, but failed to pierce his disguise.

Fishy at last came to a large yard adjoining a motor-car works on the main road to Courtfield. There was a notice up proclaiming it to be an Army disposal stores.

Fisher T. Fish walked into the office and nodded agreeably to the manager.

"I've come concerning that old Army sectional hut I wrote to you about a few days ago," he said briskly. "I am the proprietor of the Friardale Building Co. I guess you can quote me your lowest price for that hyer hut."

"Oh, yes, you're the gentleman who wrote about that old hut we have for disposal," said the manager to the disguised Fish. "Well, sir, I'm afraid the hut has seen its best days. Personally, I shouldn't advise erecting it. As a matter of fact, we were considering selling it for firewood."

"Then I guess I'll buy it at firewood price," said Fisher T. Fish eagerly. "The condition of the hut cuts no ice with me. I'll give two pound ten for it."

"It's a deal, sir," said the manager. "We'll deliver it for you at once."

Fisher T. Fish handed over the money, pocketed his receipt, and rubbed his bony hands with glee. He went into the yard and supervised the loading of the ancient Army sectional hut on to the lorry.

Fish had already had a good look over the hut, which was in pieces, ready for erection. He had made sure that all the pieces were there. The condition of the woodwork was certainly very bad, but not too bad for the junior's purpose.

The sections were loaded on the lorry, which drove away, with Fish on board, for Friardale.

The premises of the Friardale Building Co. were reached, and the ancient hut dumped in the yard with the other miscellaneous collection of rubbish the astute Fishy had purchased.

The driver of the lorry snorted at the solitary sixpence generously bestowed upon him by the proprietor of the Friardale Building Co., and drove away.

"Good!" chuckled Fish. "So far everything's O.K. The next thing to do is to get that hyer hut faked up to look respectable. That old wood will come in useful for that, I guess. Paint and



The Removites went along to their studies and turned out quite a good assortment of furniture. Several chairs, mats and carpets, a bookcase, a table, and pictures galore were taken down to the clubhouse. (See Chapter 9.)

varnish won't cost much. I calculate the whole business will run me into less than a fiver. Gee, this will be the best paying proposition I've ever struck!"

Fisher T. Fish locked up his premises, having first divested himself of his disguise, and sauntered blithely back to Greyfriars.

Fishy spent most of his spare time that day in rummaging the school stores for tools, paint, varnish and other things he required for "reconditioning" the ancient Army hut he had purchased. What things he could not "scrounge" he had to purchase in the village.

Everything was secretly dumped in the "office" of Fish's Friardale premises.

The cute business junior kept his Form-fellows' interest keen concerning the proposed clubhouse for the R.F.F.S. Everybody agreed that it was a fine idea; but they did not expect the project to materialise, despite Fish's assurance that he would "see the thing through."

But while Harry Wharton & Co. discussed the clubhouse, Fisher T. Fish devoted all his leisure hours and the following two half-holidays on the ancient hut at his yard in Friardale. With hammer and nails, strips of metal and bits of wood, putty and plaster, varnish and paint, he worked hard at each section, until gradually the hut took on quite a new and substantial look.

Fishy had some notepaper printed, headed "The Friardale Building Company." And late one Wednesday afternoon he arrived at Greyfriars tired and paint-smudged, but cheerful. His plans were nearing their completion now. He

crept into Mr. Quelch's study and secretly used that gentleman's typewriter to write a letter on his headed notepaper.

Then shortly afterwards a notice appeared on the board, calling a special meeting of the R.F.F.S. in the Rag after tea, duly signed by the President.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Bait Bitten!

"WHAT'S in the wind, I wonder?" said Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five were making their way to the meeting.

"Fishy's got another stunt on, I suppose?" growled Johnny Bull. "If he has, we'll bump the ass for wasting our time."

"He's not going to touch any more of the Friendly Society's money, I'll see to that!" said Harry Wharton. "Things have been going fine since we relieved Fishy of his financial responsibilities."

"Ha, ha! Rather!"

The Rag was crowded. Most of the Removites had turned up to hear what Fisher T. Fish had to say.

Fish himself was standing on a chair. There was an ingratiating smile on his hatchet face. He rubbed his hands several times.

"Gentlemen," he began. "I guess I've called this meeting for the purpose of discussing business. About the R.F.F.S. clubhouse."

"What's the use of talking about that yet, Fishy?" asked Harry Wharton.

—Let Frank Richards tell you in his own style—next Monday!

"We couldn't raise enough money to build a clubhouse. We're all paying our subscriptions regularly, and that is sure to mount up to a good bit in time. When we've enough cash in hand we'll think about it. But till then—"

"I guess you can have your clubhouse within a week if you listen to me!" said Fish eagerly. "I have been negotiating on behalf of the R.F.F.S. with a local firm of builders about the clubhouse."

"My hat!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Yep. You see I have the interests of the R.F.F.S. at heart," said Fish in his most impressive tones. "The outcome of my negotiations is contained in this hyer letter I want you to get your glims on, Wharton."

"Get my glims on!" gasped the Remove captain.

"Read, you galoot!" explained Fish. "Don't you know your English language? Take a slant at this letter, Wharton. Read it out!"

Fish took a letter from his pocket and handed it to Harry Wharton.

The Removites crowded round the captain of the Remove as he proceeded to read it.

The letter was headed "The Friardale Building Company," and the address was "49A, River Street, Friardale." It was neatly typed and imposing looking. It ran:

"To F. T. Fish, Esq.,
"Pres., Remove Friendly Society,
"Greyfriars School,
"Friardale.

"Dear Sir,—We are obliged by your inquiry re proposed erection of small clubhouse for your society at Greyfriars, and we have gone into the matter thoroughly. We are prepared to erect same immediately on first payment of £5, the balance of £10 to be payable at the rate of £1 per week. We are most anxious to oblige local clients, and thank you in anticipation of your esteemed order. Assuring you of our best attention and service,

"We are,

"Yours faithfully,

"THE FRIARDALE BUILDING CO."

The Removites gave gasps of joy and amazement.

"My only hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Then—then we can have our clubhouse put up at once, and all it will cost us at first will be five quid?"

"Yep, sirs! It says so in the letter!" said Fisher T. Fish, rubbing his hands.

"Balance at a quid a week, that makes fifteen quid for the whole building," said Harry Wharton. "My word, that's jolly reasonable!"

"Rather!"

"I guess no other firm would give you such favourable terms," said Fish impressively. "Being a local firm, of course, and knowing Greyfriars, they trust us. I put the matter to them, I guess, and you galoots have got me to thank for those terms."

"Well, Fishy, this is certainly jolly good," said Wharton, looking again at the letter. "Of course they can trust us. This Friardale Building Company seems to be a very decent firm. They write nicely, too, don't they?"

"I guess you couldn't do business with a better firm," said Fisher T. Fish promptly. "What other firm would erect a building for a schoolboys' club on weekly terms like that? All you have to do is to raise five quid among you and plank it down. The firm gives you a receipt and starts building straight away. With twenty-eight members in the

society it ought to be an easy matter to raise a quid a week."

"Rather!" said Bob Cherry enthusiastically. "We'll raise the subscription to a bob each—that will leave us with a bit in hand."

"Hear, hear!"

"Waal, gents, what do you think of the proposition?" demanded Fisher T. Fish. "Don't you think it's a real, top-notch, gilt-edged opportunity?"

"Yes. It seems quite all right," said Harry Wharton. "We shall have to get the Head's permission first—about the waste ground behind the ruined chapel."

"That's so!"

Harry Wharton lost no time in seeking the Head's permission before deciding to accept the generous offer of the Friardale Building Company. And to the joy of all the Remove Dr. Locke consented.

The Remove Friendly Society had a whip round, and the required five pounds were easily forthcoming, thanks, mainly, to the generosity of Lord Mauleverer, the Bounder, and Inky. The money was dispatched with a very nice letter, in an envelope addressed to the Friardale Building Co., 49A, River Street, Friardale, and posted that evening.

Fisher T. Fish went to his "office" next morning after lessons, and put the five pounds into his pocket. That represented more than his entire outlay on the hut. The remainder of the money to be paid by the Remove Friendly Society would be clear profit to Fisher T. Fish, with the exception of the few expenses necessary to put up the hut at Greyfriars.

"Gee whizz!" chuckled the business man of the Remove, as he wrote out a receipt for the five pounds, and addressed an envelope to Harry Wharton at Greyfriars. "This is good business, I guess. I reckon it won't take long to erect that hyer hut. The jays will keep up the weekly payments, and they'll never smell a rat. I've got my money back, and I now get a quid a week for ten weeks. Gee! I kinder reckon, guess, and cal-kew-late it takes a real live wire from the Yew-nited States to put over a deal like that. Some!"

And feeling immensely satisfied with himself, Fisher T. Fish strolled back to Greyfriars.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Clubhouse I

"THE builders have come!" cried Bob Cherry enthusiastically.

"Hurrah!"

Removites gathered from far and near and went down to the gates, where a cart, laden with sections of a hut, was waiting for admittance.

Morning lessons had not yet commenced. Harry Wharton had received a note from the Friardale Building Co. that they were commencing that morning upon the clubhouse.

Two workmen came with the wagon. Fisher T. Fish had engaged them at a low price to erect the hut.

"This way!" said Harry Wharton eagerly. "We'll show you the site. How long will it take to put up the hut?"

"We'll have it finished this morning, sir," replied one of the men.

"Oh, good egg!"

The Removites took the "builders" to the waste ground behind the ruined chapel. They would have stayed to watch the building operations, but the bell for lessons rang just then, and they had to go away.

While the Remove were at lessons the two men engaged by Fisher T. Fish worked hard on the hut, and quickly put up the sections.

It was a very simple affair, and by the time morning lessons were over at Greyfriars the hut was erected.

Harry Wharton & Co. trooped out of the Form-room, and rushed out of doors to see how the "builders" were getting on.

"My hat! It's up!" chortled Bob Cherry gleefully, as they reached the ground behind the ruined chapel.

"How ripping!"

The hut, newly varnished and painted, looked really presentable.

The Removites gazed at their new clubhouse in pride and admiration.

"My word! That's first-rate!" breathed Nugent. "So we've got our clubhouse at last. It looks fine, doesn't it? Here come Temple & Co. and Coker, and a lot of others. Won't they be envious?"

"Ha, ha! Rather!"

A crowd gathered to inspect the Remove Friendly Society's clubhouse.

Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Upper Fourth, and Coker & Co. of the Fifth were interested and envious spectators. The Removites chuckled with glee, and went inside the hut.

The air smelt strongly of paint and varnish, but, as Bob Cherry remarked, "the niff would soon go off."

Fisher T. Fish chuckled to himself.

Harry Wharton & Co. were pleased with their clubhouse. They were as proud of it as though it had been a palatial building of marble.

The Removites went along to their studies and turned out quite a good assortment of furniture between them. A table, several chairs, Mauly's armchair, and a wicker armchair contributed by the Bounder, a desk, a bookcase, some mats and carpets and pictures galore were taken down to the clubhouse.

Harry Wharton & Co. took a great pride in furnishing the clubhouse.

It soon took on a homely, snug appearance inside.

When the furnishing was completed the heroes of the Remove assembled in the clubhouse, and looked round with pride and satisfaction.

"Tophole, isn't it?" said Bob Cherry enthusiastically.

"Yes, rather!" cried the heroes of the Remove.

"Chaps—or Brothers of the Remove Friendly Society, I should say!" cried Harry Wharton, jumping on a chair. "Our clubhouse is now open—"

"Hurrah!"

"We are proud to have a place we can call our own—a place where we can be independent of others!" said the captain of the Remove impressively. "Here, we shall be a law unto ourselves, and nobody can interfere! To celebrate the opening of our clubhouse, I propose we hold a feed here this evening!"

"Jolly good wheeze, Wharton!"

"Hear, hear!"

The Removites were all agreeable. A whip-round was made. The money collected was sufficient to provide a feed for the Remove on such a scale as they had never enjoyed before!

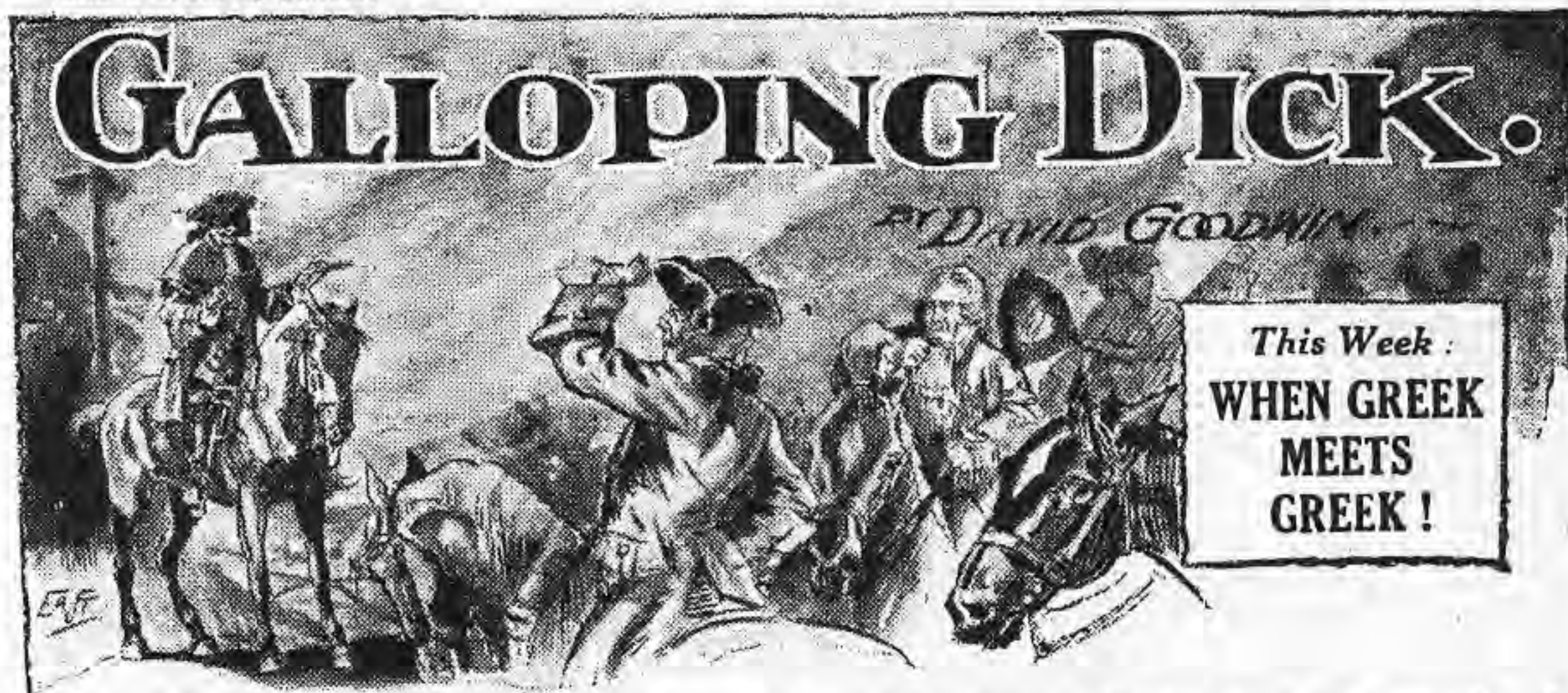
"Good egg!" said Harry Wharton. "We'll get the tuck during the afternoon. The grand opening feed is arranged, then, for six o'clock sharp!"

"Hurrah!"

(Continued on page 17.)

Keep your peepers open for some splendid treats to come, boys!

With his heart full of bitterness against Sir Mostyn Frayne, gamester and rogue, who, in one stroke, has robbed him of a brother and the house and lands which had been the property of the Langleys for generations past, Dick Langley turns highwayman. With a price on his head he roams the countryside, seeking his livelihood behind a mask and a brace of pistols.



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Man Who Would Wager!

"ODD'S life!" said Galloping Dick to himself, looking ahead over Black Kitty's ears, as he rode along the Wootton highway in the golden light of the summer afternoon. "But what have we yonder? A rakish-looking blade as ever I saw, and riding a good horse. But what a crowd of dogs at his heels!"

He touched the mare, and she trotted noiselessly over the turf by the roadside till Dick was abreast of the traveller. The man started and looked round.

"Good-even!" said Dick. "You are a lover of dogs, sir, I see."

The stranger looked Dick and his mare from top to toe, twitching the straw between his teeth meanwhile.

"Ay!" he said. "I am a lover of anything that can show sport. That's a likely-looking mare you ride. She might beat my bay at a level burst over grass, but I'll wager mine could take a higher leap."

"It would not be a very safe wager for you, sir," said Dick, "for the mare has leaped a turnpike gate before now, and could do it again."

"Gadzooks!" said the man. "Has she, i' faith? Well, I'm ready to back my beast with my own guineas. See, there is a hedge yonder that lacks nothing of five feet, and two smooth grass tracks leading up to it. If you will take the farther one, and I the nearer, I will wager ten guineas that I clear it and you don't!"

"Agreed!" said Dick, somewhat nettled to think the cocksure stranger should suppose that his heavy-shouldered mare was a match for Black Kitty. "But why should we take the two tracks? Let us both ride at the same place."

"Nay, for the one that went over first would give the other a lead, and that's unfair," said the horsy traveller. "Side by side, with a few yards between us, is fair play. Come, sir, if you trust your mare, let's have at it."

Both turned their steeds on to a rushy common through which the road ran. A high hedge, a little way ahead, abutted on to the road at right angles, and through the brambles and reeds which covered that part of the common two grassy slopes led towards the hedge. The

stranger turned his horse at the nearer of these, and Dick took the farther one.

"Are you ready?" cried the stranger, giving spurs to his horse. "Go!"

The thunder of hoofs followed, as both steeds dashed for the hedge. The stranger put his bay at it with tremendous energy, and just cleared it. Dick set Kitty forward at an easy canter, confident of the leap, but he soon found he was in a very bad place.

The take-off at the point where the stranger had jumped was firm and good, but the end of Dick's path was soft and boggy. Like a flash it occurred to the highwayman that his companion knew this well when he proposed the wager. Kitty's hoofs sank deeply at the take-off, and any other beast would have been hopelessly beaten. The jump seemed impossible. But the beautiful mare made a gallant effort.

"Hoi-up, Kitty!" cried Dick.

The strain was tremendous, but Black Kitty did not fail. She skimmed over the hedge, and a few moments later was pacing along the road again beside the stranger, who looked very black.

"A very sporting leap," said Dick. "And now, if convenient to you, sir, I will take those ten guineas."

"With all my heart," said the other, swallowing his annoyance. "But I have not a brass penny with me. If you will honour me with a visit at Brantley Manor to-morrow—John Trafford is my name—I will pay up."

Now Dick, when the horsy stranger leaped the hedge, had distinctly heard the jingle of coin. He whipped out a horse-pistol and held it to the fellow's ear.

"Mr. John Trafford, of Brantley," he said grimly, "I am but ill-pleased with you. In the first place, you put me on a bad track and yourself on a good one for the leap. In the second, you lied in your throat when you said you had no gold about you."

John Trafford glowered at the muzzle of the pistol.

"Who, in the fiend's name, are you?" he cried.

"Galloping Dick, the highwayman," replied Dick. "And though I have a price on my head, I do not love a knave. Come, sir, out with your purse! And as you grudged your just debt, you shall lose the whole."

Choking down an imprecation, the stranger dragged out a fat purse, for he dared not refuse, and handed it to Dick.

"You have the whip-hand of me now," he snarled, "but my turn will come. No man has ever beaten me yet. You asked me if I loved a wager. I do, and I wager two hundred guineas that I will have you by the hip, dead or alive, within three days!"

"A very debonair offer," said Dick with a grim smile. "I have that sum about me, and if you will hand a like amount to old Farmer Horsley, of Holt House, a man of substance and a good sportsman, I will do the same. But I will not deposit my stake till I know he has yours, Mr. Blackleg."

"So be it," snarled the other. "He shall have the gold to-night, and I will gather your two hundred, as well as the reward on your head, and come to see you dance on nothing upon Blackwold Heath into the bargain."

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Dick Makes Friends!

IT was the afternoon of the next day when Dick rode up to Holt House, a fine old gabled dwelling, half manor house, half farm. He dismounted from Kitty, and rapped on the oaken door.

The owner, Richard Horsley, a fine-looking man of the freeholding yeoman breed, whose forebears had farmed their acres at Holt for five centuries past, came to the door.

"Well, Mr. Langley," he said cheerily. "I thought you would not lag behind in such a case. My neighbour, Squire Trafford, has told me of the wager, and I have his two hundred guineas."

"So the fellow means business," said Dick. "So much the better. I feared it was mere brag. I have my stake with me."

"Come in and let us settle the matter," said Horsley. "You see, Mr. Langley, I—"

"Galloping Dick," corrected the young highwayman. "I am Langley of Langley's no longer, until I win the old place back and the name, or end upon the gibbet."

"Pray that may never be!" said Horsley. "Odd's life, there are better gentlemen on the road than some that

"The King's Rider!"—the title of our next Galloping Dick story!

hold their manors, and this John Trafford— But let that rest. The full two hundred are here, Galloping Dick, and I will lock them away with the squire's stake."

With a cheery adieu to the stout old yeoman Dick went on his way. An hour later he reached the wayside hostelry of the Three Feathers, just as night was falling.

While sitting in the parlour he heard the sound of someone arriving, and the deep-voiced baying of large hounds. Then came the innkeeper's voice, in alarmed tones:

"For mercy's sake, man, chain them up securely! Heaven help if the brutes get loose! I shall be glad to see you and them off my premises."

"All right, landlord! The sooner you get my ale the better, then," said a rather thick voice.

"Hallo!" thought Dick. "What have we in the yard?"

He strolled out into the stable-yard, and there saw two huge, half-bred hounds, looking like some foreign breed of mastiff, and black as coal. They had strong leather muzzles on, and their chains were hitched to a post.

With hoarse growls and slavering, yellow-toothed jaws, they tugged at their chains. A man was in charge of them—an evil-looking fellow—in stableman's livery.

"Odd's fish!" remarked Dick, "a pretty pair of beasts, truly! It would go hard with anyone they got their teeth into. Where are you taking them, good man?"

"They're for Mr. Trafford, of Brantley, sir," he said, "an' I'm managin' them for him. They're to lay by the heels a young highwayman as goes by the name o' Galloping Dick; an' they're safe to do it, too, you take it from me! My master, he's goin' to catch him, an' it's a bit o' money in both our pockets when we do."

"Ha!" said Dick. "Indeed!"

He walked quietly up to the tugging, growling brutes.

Dick was one of those whom all animals take to and trust at first sight. Without a trace of fear he went to the great hounds and patted them. They stopped dead still, as if in amazement, sniffing at him. Then gently and slowly their tails began to wag in a friendly manner. One of them licked Dick's hand.

"Good dogs!" he said. "Good boys, then! We're friends, after all, you see. I don't know what you'll be with your muzzles off, but I've the beginning of

an idea in my head that Mr. John Trafford may find he has made a mistake."

With a final friendly pat on the dogs' heads—for the beasts were now fawning upon him—Dick walked away, and stood for some time at the yard gates in a brown study.

Then, mounting the black mare, he rode away down the road, a grim smile growing at the corners of his mouth.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Wager Won!

"WELCOME, Galloping Dick! How goes the wager?"

Richard Horsley, laughing cheerfully, came to his door as Dick knocked upon it next day.

"Why, Master Horsley, it goes well, to my way of thinking. It's about that that I've come to you. By to-night at ten, after moonrise, I shall have won the gallows or two hundred guineas. You are fond of a hunt, sir. Would you like to be in at the death?"

"Ay, that I should!" said Horsley. "But I trust 'tis you who will get the brush, Dick."

"That's to be proved," said Dick. "But be by the Dane's Oak in the woods, or thereabouts, by eleven, and you will see some sport one way or another. Bring the stakes with you for the winner."

Dick rode away with a cheery nod, and the old yeoman promised heartily to be there. The highwayman rode slowly and pensively, as if weighing matters in his mind.

"I think I have hit the nail aright," he said to himself. "Trafford's purse is the only thing of his I have about me, but it should serve!"

It would have puzzled a stranger to know what Dick intended, or what plan he held in his head, for moonrise that night found him standing quietly in the woods, well shielded from view by the thick holly bushes, close to where the road entered the coverts from Brantley Manor.

Presently Kitty pricked up her ears. Footsteps were heard coming down the road, and soon two figures were seen approaching. And one of them, holding a stout slip-chain, was restraining two great hounds that loomed black as ink in the moonlight. The other man led a horse.

"Wait till I have ridden ahead some way, or they may outrun me, and I wish

to see them pull the knave down!" said Trafford.

He spurred away down the ride and disappeared. Dick watched quietly, while the dog-keeper, holding the hounds in, let them quarter the ground to strike Dick's trail.

"All's gone well, Kitty!" muttered Dick gleefully. "Now's my time!"

He darted out from the bushes, and, with a yell, the ruffianly hound-keeper found himself knocked flat with a buffet that drove the senses out of him, while Dick snatched at the slip-chain that held the hounds.

"Good dogs!" laughed Dick. And he pulled out Trafford's purse and shook it before their black muzzles: "Scent him, and find him, boys—scent him, and find him!"

The hounds sniffed busily at the purse, and threw up their heads fiercely.

"At him, boys! Thrice forrard!" cried Dick, casting off the chain.

One fierce bay, and the hounds dashed forward.

Dick sprang on Kitty's back, and galloped along behind them. It was but a few minutes before the hunting party swept out into the open with a thunder of hoofs, and saw Trafford on his bay horse not far ahead.

"Ride!" shouted Dick, with a wild laugh. "Ride for your life, you knave, and we'll see who gets the brush!"

With a yell of terror, Trafford clapped spurs to his horse, and galloped like the wind, the hounds after him, and Dick thundering along behind.

Over moonlit sward, between the woodlands, raced hunters and hunted, waking the night with their shouts and bayings. The hounds gained rapidly, drawing nearer and nearer, till at last, in mortal fear of his life, Trafford gave a wild shriek, and pulled up his horse. Flinging himself off, he rushed to a tree and scrambled up it with monkey-like



Galloping Dick and the hounds were drawing rapidly nearer. Trafford, uttering a wild shriek, pulled up his horse and flung himself from the saddle. Then, with monkey-like agility, he scrambled up a tree, just escaping the yellow fangs of the hounds as they leaped at him. (See Chapter 3.)

Dick Langley befriends an officer of the king—



The tall casement windows opening on the lawn flew apart with a crash, and the commanding figure of Galloping Dick appeared between them, a horse-pistol in each hand. "So, Master Bowles," he said quietly, "your little plot has miscarried. Bid your men cut loose the bonds of my friend Jack Neville, whom you have bound. Swiftly, unless you want a bullet in your carcass!" (See Chapter 5.)

agility, just escaping the yellow fangs of the hounds as they leaped and bounded with fierce bayings below him.

"Ho, ho!" roared a gusty voice, as Farmer Horsley came cantering up. "So you've run your fox to his lair, Dick!"

"Call the dogs off! Shoot them!" shrieked Trafford, nearly slipping off his branch. "Oh, curse the day I ever saw them! Spare me, Dick! Pay him the money, farmer, for Heaven's sake, and let me go in peace!"

"Hold your noise, you knave!" cried Horsley, as Dick slipped the chain to its place and coupled the dogs once more. "Here, Dick, take the four hundred guineas!"

"The creature's half dead with fright!" laughed Dick. "Come down, Squire Trafford, from yonder perch!"

The man scrambled down, scared and sullen.

"Now," said Dick, "mount your horse, and go home to your bed, for you're little fit to match a knight of the road, still less to hunt him. When next you lose a wager of ten guineas, pay it honestly; lest you lose two hundred. Go!"

Dick watched the rascal out of sight, and then, patting Kitty's neck affectionately, he rode slowly down the road to an inn where he knew he could safely pull up for refreshment.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Fat Maltster of Milton.

"A STRANGER!" muttered Dick some few hours later, leaning over Kitty's ears and peering down the dark path between the cedar-trees. "And yet he is not in travelling-dress. Richly clothed, too, and riding a good horse. Who can it be?"

It was too dark for Dick, sitting on Kitty's back, a little way back from the bridle-path, to see the approaching rider's face at all clearly. He was not

on the high-road, and no stranger would be likely to pass that way if bound for the town. Yet the approaching rider was not a local man, who might know the short cut.

"Ecod!" murmured Dick, a light breaking in upon him. "New I know. It's Timothy Bowles, the wealthy maltster of Milton, who's just bought Sir Barnard Brook's place, and wants to set up as a country gentleman. Kitty, lass, we're in luck to-night!"

The approaching rider came on at a trot, glancing rather nervously to right and left. He was dressed fashionably, but his clothes hung on him uneasily, and he rode very like a sack of flour.

Dick touched Kitty with his heel, and with one bound she leapt out upon the path, and the young highwayman's pistol stared the wayfarer in the face.

"Zounds!" screamed Master Bowles, for it was indeed the wealthy maltster, reining in his horse hurriedly. "Yes, yes, sir; I surrender—I deliver! Anything you please, only pray point that dreadful weapon the other way!"

"By all means!" said Dick, laughing.

"Is—is it possible that I have the honour of surrendering my purse to the famous Galloping Dick?" stammered the maltster.

"The same," replied Dick, smiling.

He tried to get a better view of the speaker's face, but the gloom was too great.

"I am quite reconciled to my small loss, then," said the maltster, with more self-possession. "As you have had some small profit out of me, will you return the favour by honouring me with your company at dinner, say on Tuesday? I have lately bought Snellaby Hall, Sir Barnard Brook's place," he added, "and I can promise you a good repast and fine wines."

Dick grinned—a little contemptuously, perhaps—but it was too dark for Timothy Bowles to see.

"It is too good of you," he said. "I am sorry to decline so hospitable an

offer; but at present my position, you see, is a little insecure, and I only dine with a few of my old friends."

"I should be charmed if you would count me among them," persisted the maltster. "I have often wished to know you. If you would honour my board, I—"

"Some other time, perhaps," said Dick. "A thousand thanks, Master Bowles, and good-night!"

He turned Kitty round and galloped away down the path, making his way to his favourite inn, where, after a comfortable meal, the thought of the invitation recurred to him.

"The fellow was mighty persistent," he thought, chuckling. "What can the reason be? I think I'll go just for curiosity's sake, after all!"

With that resolve, Dick dispatched an ostler to Bowles, accepting the invitation. Then the young highwayman strode out, mounted Kitty, and rode away down the road.

He slept soundly in a nook of his in the woods, and did not sally out till noon next day, when, passing along the Milton Road, he saw a friend of his—a young fellow of about his own age, the wild son of a hard-riding but poverty-stricken squire in the adjoining county.

"Why, Jack Neville!" said Dick. "What brings you down this way?"

"I go wherever the wind blows me, Dick," said the other. "You are not going to draw your barkers on me—eh? Ecod, you'd find my purse as light as a puff of air."

"As bad as that, lad?" said Dick. "Here, I've plenty of guineas about me, let me divide 'em with you! They came off Timothy Bowles last night!"

"No, no, Dick!" said the other. "I'm not going to sponge on you! If I saw a way of making a few guineas I'd do it, but not by borrowing from a friend. I wish I'd lifted the fat maltster's purse myself. And, by the way, Dick, he's swearing he's going to catch you!"

"What?" said Dick.

"So he said a week or two back. I

—and lives to see the kindness repaid in full measure!

should look out, Dick; he's a cleverer rogue than you may think, and he's wealthy, too. Do you know why he wants to grab you? Sir Simon Barnaby, the deputy-lieutenant, has promised to make him a sheriff of the county if he can catch you. He got the promise out of Sir Simon, who owes him money."

"What does it mean?" exclaimed Dick. "He asked me to dine with him on Tuesday, and now I've said 'I'd go.'"

"Tuesday!" exclaimed Jack Neville, who always knew everything that was going on. "Why, Sir Barnaby is dining with him that night, and several others."

Dick whistled.

"I see the game!" he said. "The rogue thinks to make a big hit by having me arrested at his own dinner-table before the deputy-lieutenant. Ah, we shall see!"

"It looks like it," said Jack.

Dick's brow grew black. Treachery was the one thing he never forgave. He thought rapidly, and then glanced keenly at his companion.

"Jack," he said, "would you like to earn fifty guineas, and earn it well?"

"Try me," said Jack.

"Does Sir Simon Barnaby know you, or does Bowles?"

"Neither of them know me by sight, though they know my dad, of course; nor do the other guests. Why?"

"They don't know me either," said Dick. "Snellaby Hall is a long way from Langleys, and I don't know the folk on that side. It was dark when I stopped Bowles; he does not know my face."

"Odd's blood!" exclaimed Jack. "Do you mean—?"

"I mean that you shall go to that dinner as Galloping Dick, and the fifty guineas are yours. You don't fear, do you, Jack? They'll bind you fast, but when it's done they'll have to reckon with me!"

"Fear?" cried Jack. "I'll do it like a bird! Tell me how?"

"Listen," said Dick. "And make no mistake, or you'll rue it!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Unexpected Guest.

THERE was a thundering rat-tat on the great oak door of Snellaby Hall, a peal of the bell that echoed through the house, and the guests in the drawing-room started a little nervously at the sound.

"That's him!" said Timothy Bowles, whose grammar still smacked of the maltyard, looking through the window. "Gentleman, the famous knight of the road has arrived!"

"Blood!" said Sir Simon Barnaby, a tall, thin man, clearing his throat somewhat nervously. "The fellow rings as though he owns the country, instead of it bearing a price on his neck! I hope your arrangements are carefully made, Master Bowles!"

"No fear for that," replied the maltster, who looked a trifle pale, for all that.

"What, is it truly the famous Galloping Dick?" asked Jim Strachey, a bluff, cheery-looking squire. "I've never met him on the road. They say he's rare company!"

"For my part," put in Sir Harry Nugent, a third guest, "I shall be right glad to meet him and dine with him. He's a brave youngster, by all accounts, and if he takes a purse or two 'tis no more than we do ourselves over the card-table, save that he wagers his neck, while we only wager our guineas."

"Say nothing to Sir Strachey or



Has your friend met Galloping Dick?

Harry about it," whispered Bowles to Sir Simon. "They have not been told of my little arrangement."

Sir Simon nodded, and at that moment the door was swung open by a couple of footmen, and a good-looking young fellow, in remarkably handsome clothes, entered with a free, bold stride.

"Welcome!" said the maltster, coming forward with an obsequious bow.

"We meet this time under pleasanter auspices. Let me present you to Sir Simon Barnaby, our deputy-lieutenant, and Sir Harry Nugent, of Enscombe."

Master Bowles introduced him with great relish to the guests, a dozen in all.

"Galloping Dick, at your service!" said the stranger, with a courtly bow. "Pleased to meet you, gentlemen!"

"Egad, the honour is ours!" replied Sir Simon, with a slightly sneering smile.

Some of the company looked a little scared at finding themselves with the famous young highwayman, but Nugent and Strachey welcomed him with great good-fellowship. The company went in to dinner.

"I faith, this young knight of the road is a most sprightly companion!" whispered the guests to each other, shortly after commencing.

And, in faith, the honoured visitor was the life of the party. He laughed merrily, and kept jest after jest rolling round the board, with as light an air as



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though he were the safest man in England, instead of a hunted outlaw, with the shadow of the gallows over him. Nor did he seem to notice that three of the powerful, burly looking footmen were edging their way behind his chair towards the close of the repast.

"A glass of wine with you, Sir Knight of the Road!" said Timothy Bowles, who had been drinking hastily and heavily.

The young guest raised his bumper with a merry laugh, and the maltster did the same.

It was the signal. In an instant the three big footmen had leaped on the young fellow and dragged him from his chair.

Struggle as he might, they overpowered him, and on producing a stout rope, bound him securely.

"At last!" cried Timothy Bowles, springing up with a flushed face. "Sir Simon, behold my prisoner, Dick Langley, the highwayman! The sheriff's staff is mine!"

"You have earned it!" cried Sir Simon. "The affair was well managed, Mr. Sheriff Bowles!"

"Shame!" cried Sir Harry Nugent, starting from his chair. "What, trap a man at your own board! This is dishonourable, Master Bowles!"

"I fear, sir," said Squire Strachey to the prisoner, "you have paid the penalty for dining at the table of a low-born rascal!" He threw a glance of hot contempt at the maltster. "Plink me, but say the word, sir, and I'll take your quarrel on me and run him through!"

"I will do as I choose in my own house!" cried Timothy Bowles thickly.

Then he broke off suddenly, with a cry of fear. The tall casement windows opening on to the lawn flew apart with a crash, and the commanding figure of Galloping Dick appeared between them, a horse-pistol in each hand.

"So, Master Bowles," he said quietly, "your little plot has miscarried. Bid your men cut loose the bonds of my friend Jack Neville, whom you have bound. Swiftly, unless you wish a bullet in your fat carcass!"

The maltster, white as paper, gave the order in a trembling voice, and Jack Neville stepped out free.

The rest of the company sat silent and amazed, cowered by the turn events had taken.

"That is better!" said Dick. "Now, let every man who values his life put forth his purse on the table, save only Squire Strachey and Sir Harry Nugent!"

The purses were produced with alacrity, no one daring to say a word except Nugent and Strachey, who laughed heartily.

Dick covered one of the big footmen, and bade him collect the purses and bring them forward, while Kitty stamped and neighed on the gravel-path behind.

"Here's the fifty guineas, Jack!" said Dick to his friend, who was roaring with laughter at the discomfiture of the diners. "As for you, Master Bowles, you have much to learn before you are fit to carry a sheriff's staff of office, and my advice to you is to sell Snellaby Hall and go back to your malting-yard. Good-night, gentlemen, all!"

And, vaulting on to Kitty's back, and taking Neville up behind him, Dick and his comrade cantered off across the flower-beds, laughing hugely.

THE END.

Don't miss our next thrilling story of the high-road!

FISH'S FRIENDLY SOCIETY!

(Continued from page 12.)

The Remove Friendly Society dispersed for dinner, Harry Wharton locking the door of the clubhouse behind him.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Success!

"RAIN!" said Bob Cherry dolefully.

The Famous Five and a number of Removites were standing at the Hall door that afternoon. It was a quarter to six. The Remove was looking forward to the

what?" said Bob Cherry. "My hat! He's been at the tarts!"

"Oh, really, you know—" expostulated Billy Bunter.

"There's the jam on his chivvy; it tells its own tale!" said Harry Wharton. "Bunter, you fat pilferer, you deserve a bumping!"

"Make him get on with the cooking!" said Johnny Bull. "Bunter's got one saving grace—he can cook! We'll get the tables ready!"

"Right-ho!"

Harry Wharton & Co. busied themselves with laying the tables they had borrowed for the occasion.

They piled up all the good things in an appetising array. Billy Bunter, supervised by Bob Cherry and Peter Todd, proceeded with the cooking. The sausages were soon done to a turn. The chips were beautifully browned, the

hat, though, hark at the rain! It's falling down!"

Bob was right. The rain was coming down in torrents, making a great noise on the roof and windows of the clubhouse. The Removites did not care about the rain, however. They wired into the feed, and were happy.

Suddenly Frank Nugent gave a jump. "Yow! Who's pouring water down my back? Yarooooogh!"

He gave that latter yell as the cup he was holding overturned, shooting out the hot tea all over his trousers.

Harry Wharton, who was sitting next to him, looked up and gave a start.

"Great pip! The roof's leaking!" he exclaimed.

A stream of water was pouring down from the roof. It was that which Nugent had felt trickling down his back.



Bolsover major jumped up from the table under a watery deluge that swept down from the roof. "Gerrugh!" he gurgled. "Oh, jeminy!" gasped Bob Cherry. "The blessed roof's leaking!" The juniors left their seats with alacrity. (See Chapter 10.)

grand opening feed in the new clubhouse.

"The rain it raineth every day!" quoted Nugent in a glum voice.

"Never mind!" said Harry Wharton brightly. "It won't interfere with our feed in the clubhouse. Let's go over and see how Bunter's getting on with the cooking."

The Removites crossed the rain-soaked quad, and went into the Remove clubhouse. An appetising smell of frying bacon and sausages and eggs and toast greeted their nostrils.

Squatting before a stove was the plump form of William George Bunter, who had been given charge of the cooking.

He turned a red, jammy face upwards as Harry Wharton & Co. came up.

"Getting on famously, Bunter—"

bacon crisp and succulent. Everything was ready by six o'clock for the grand opening feed.

The Removites arrived en masse. They came into the clubhouse in their macintoshes, for, to use Dick Rake's expression, it was "raining cats and dogs" outside.

Everybody was cheerful.

"Pile in, chaps!" said Harry Wharton. "There's plenty for everybody! Don't stint yourselves!"

The Removites needed no second bidding. They piled in. Billy Bunter proceeded to display his marvellous eating powers, plying knife and fork with drastic effect on the viands he kept piling on his plate. Even his Form-fellows, who knew Bunter of old, marvelled at his gargantuan appetite.

"This is prime!" said Bob Cherry, who was tackling a rabbit-pie. "My

"Oh dear! Yow! Groooogh!" gasped Nugent, mopping at his trousers and shifting his chair away from the stream of water.

"Look out, Bolsover!" cried Peter Todd. "There comes another stream! It's going into your cup!"

But Peter's warning came too late. As Bolsover major was raising his half-empty cup to his lips, a stream of water poured down suddenly from the roof, and splashed right into his cup, mixing with the tea. Bolsover took a long gulp and gave a splutter.

"Gerrugh! Ugh! What the—"

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

Harry Wharton did not laugh. He was looking up anxiously at the roof. He did not like the look of it a bit!

Bolsover major jumped up from the table under a watery deluge that swept

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down from the roof. Dick Russell and Hazeldene, who were on either side of him, also got wet, and left their seats with alacrity.

"Oh, jeminy! This is awful!" gasped Bob Cherry. "That's a second leak, and— Yooooop! Yah! What the dickens— Ooooooogh!"

Bob gave a roar and a jump as a torrent of rain-water surged down from above, swamping his head and shoulders. Several other leaks broke out in the roof. A watery stream played merrily into a dish of cakes, whilst another came down upon the hot stove, causing a fearful hissing noise, and filling the air with clouds of steam.

Sizz-zzz-zzz!

The roof was leaking all over now, water pouring down from it as through the nozzle of a watering-can.

The Removites left their seats, and hopped and jumped about to dodge the spluttering streams of water.

"Oh dear! Groooooogh! This is terrible!" gasped Harry Wharton. "We might as well be outside in the open air. Ooooooogh! The roof is leaking like a sieve! We'll see the Friardale Building Company about this to-morrow! Chaps, the feed has turned out to be a fiasco! All the grub is done in! We shall all catch our death of cold if we stay here any longer. The only thing to do is to give up and get indoors!"

The Removites, shivering and gasping, crowded out of the clubhouse, and dashed through the rain across to the School House.

Temple, Dabney & Co. met them in the Hall.

The Upper Fourth-Formers gazed in great astonishment at the drenched, bedraggled Removites.

"My hat!" gasped Temple. "You kids look as though you've been diving in the Sark!"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"Has the clubhouse roof fallen in?" asked Fry sweetly.

"Find out!" snapped Bob Cherry irritably. "Come on, chaps!"

The luckless Removites dashed upstairs to the bath-rooms to rub themselves down and procure a change of clothing.

Temple, Dabney & Co. soon found out what had happened. They chortled loud and long.

Harry Wharton & Co. writhed at the laughter of their schoolfellows, and the things they said concerning the Friardale Building Co. curdled the blood of Fisher T. Fish when he heard them.

The Removites decided to pay the company a visit in the morning, and demand that their roof be repaired and made watertight.

And Fisher T. Fish began to realise that his little plan for making money out of the friendly society wasn't going to run so smoothly as he had gleefully anticipated!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Great Collapse!

FISHER T. FISH left Greyfriars directly after morning lessons next day. He hurried to his office in Friardale, and hastily donned his disguise.

He appeared to be very busily absorbed in his books when Harry Wharton & Co. and a deputation of wrathful Removites arrived.

"We want to see the manager of the company!" said Harry Wharton, leading

his Form-fellows into the yard and looking at the "office" door.

"The manager—ahem!—is away with the men on an important job, sir," replied the disguised Fish. "Can I do anything for you?"

In wrathful accents Harry Wharton & Co. told him of the fiasco in the clubhouse the previous evening.

Fisher T. Fish feigned great surprise and concern.

"I'm awfully sorry, young gents!" he said. "The roof shall be seen to as soon as our men come back. I think I can safely promise to send a man to-morrow afternoon. Will that do?"

"It's a half-holiday to-morrow afternoon, and it will suit us splendidly!" said Harry Wharton, a little mollified. "We can't use the clubhouse in its present condition, and we have decided to suspend our weekly payments until it's put right!"

Fisher T. Fish gave a low groan.

"All right, young gents," he said.

"We'll see to it to-morrow afternoon!"

Harry Wharton & Co. departed, and Fisher T. Fish made a weary gesture.

"I guess I'm not goin' to pay a man to see to that roof!" he muttered. "I reckon I shall have to do the repair myself. If it hadn't been for the blessed rain, everything would have been all right. Still, I reckon I can botch up that hyer roof to make it last the ten weeks till their payments fall due. When all the money's in, I kinder guess this firm will die out—some! Then whatever happens to the clubhouse they can do themselves. Br-r-r-r!"

Wednesday afternoon came, and Harry Wharton & Co. waited at the gates of Greyfriars for the man who was coming to see to their clubhouse roof.

The rain had kept off, but a strong wind was blowing up from the Channel. Footer was out of the question for that afternoon.

After waiting at the gates some time, Harry Wharton & Co. saw the "workman" come into sight along the Friardale Lane, carrying an imposing bag of tools.

"Afternoon, young gents!" said Fisher T. Fish, in a gruff voice. "I've come to see to the 'ut roof!"

"This way!" said Harry Wharton.

The Removites piloted their disguised Form-fellow round to the back of the ruined chapel where the clubhouse stood.

By dint of much labour, Harry Wharton & Co. had cleaned up the interior of the hut, and made it quite homely and comfortable again.

Several fellows were in there. Bulstrode and Hazeldene were playing chess. Russell, Ogilvy, Micky Desmond, and Dick Rake looked on and imparted their advice to the players at intervals—advice that was not always appreciated by either Bulstrode or Hazeldene.

"The workman's come!" said Bob Cherry, grinning in at the door. "Nugent's gone to borrow Gosling's ladder. There's no need for you chaps to move!"

The ladder was fetched, and Fisher T. Fish clambered up on to the roof of the clubhouse. He opened his bag of tools and set to work.

Harry Wharton & Co. went inside the clubhouse. Other Removites looked in and stayed for a "jaw."

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The "workman" on the roof was getting busy.

"Sounds as though he's knocking more holes in the giddy roof," said Tom Brown, looking up dubiously.

"Oh, he knows what he's up to, I expect," said Bob Cherry.

Half an hour passed. Bulstrode and Hazeldene persevered with their game of chess. Harry Wharton & Co. held a discussion at the other end of the room concerning their forthcoming footer matches.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Fisher T. Fish had been hard at it.

The incessant hammering had worried the juniors inside the clubhouse at first, but they gradually got used to it.

Suddenly there was a rending sound from above, and a piece of the roof came off. It whizzed down and landed in the middle of the table where Bulstrode and Hazeldene were playing chess.

Crash!

The table went over, the chessboard flew in one direction, and the chessmen scattered in all directions.

Bulstrode and Hazeldene jumped up wrathfully.

"Hi! You up there, you clumsy idiot!" howled Bulstrode, glaring up. "You've upset our board! Just as I was about to take Hazeldene's bishop—"

"Rats!" snorted Hazeldene. "Another few minutes, and I should have— Yarooooooogh!"

Another piece came off the roof. It struck Hazeldene on the nose, and he fell back with a yelp.

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

Harry Wharton did not laugh. He glared up at the roof. The "workman" could be seen through the hole he had made in it.

"What the dickens do you think you're up to?" demanded the Remove captain angrily. "You don't mend a roof by knocking bits out of it!"

Fisher T. Fish gave a moan. His workmanship on the roof had gradually made matters worse instead of better.

"Sorry, sir!" he gasped. "I couldn't help— Oh, Jehosaphat! Yarooooooogh!"

A great gust of wind caused him to lose his footing, and he came over on the roof with a crash. The whole structure trembled, and Fish made a great jagged hole in the roof where he had fallen. He sailed through the hole, but managed to grab one of the supporting struts.

There he dangled, high over the heads of the startled Removites.

Half of the roof now lay on the floor of the clubhouse. Several of the juniors were rubbing bumps and bruises caused by the falling timber hitting them.

"Groooooogh!" moaned Fish. "Yowp! Help!"

"Drag him down!" roared Johnny Bull truculently. "When we lay hands on the idiot we'll rag him for this! Look at the mess he's made of the roof! The hut will want a new one! Grab him!"

Harry Wharton & Co. rushed forward and commenced to climb up on tables and chairs in order to reach the squirming "workman." Fisher T. Fish gave a loud howl of fear when he saw his angry Form-fellows grabbing at him. He performed weird acrobatic evolutions on the strut in a desperate effort to get out again on the roof.

"Yooooooop!" he roared, as Bob Cherry and Nugent grabbed one of his legs and Bolsover major grabbed the other. "Leggo! Yah! Ow-wow!"

Crash!

It happened all of a sudden with startling swiftness. Nobody quite realised how it did happen. The amazed juniors saw the roof sag downwards and the

Special "Football" number of the "Herald" next, chums!

walls of the hut cave in. Then all was chaos and confusion.

With a great rumbling roar and a crash, the Remove Friendly Society's Clubhouse collapsed like a pack of cards, burying its luckless occupants beneath it.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Un-Friendly Society!

"YOOOOOOOGH!"

"Gerrugh! Ow-wow-wow!"

"Gerroff my chest!"

"Wow-wow-wow!"

Those were some of the weird moans and gurgles that issued from underneath the garish heap of ruins.

The Removites struggled wildly, and arose one by one from the debris.

Those who got up first assisted their less fortunate Form-fellows in rising. Loud bellows of anguish came from beneath a heap of woodwork.

"Yow-ow-wow! Hellup! Murder! Yah! Ow! I say, you fellows, my back's broken, my spine is splintered in five places, and my right shoulder is dislocated! Grooogh! Help!"

It was Billy Bunter.

Harry Wharton and Johnny Bull grabbed the Owl of the Remove and hauled him up. Billy Bunter's face was as black as a nigger's, the soot from the stove having shot all over him. There was a bump on his head, and his snub nose was swollen. Otherwise he appeared unhurt.

The Removites had numerous bumps and bruises between them, but none were seriously hurt. Some of them looked wrecks, however. Bolsover major had his jacket ripped up the back. Peter Todd had lost the bottom half of the leg of one of his trousers. Torn clothes and burst collars were to be seen everywhere.

"Yow-wow! Yah! My head!" moaned Bob Cherry, tenderly rubbing his cranium. "Oh dear! Look at our clubhouse!"

The Removites looked at it—at least, they looked at the heap of splintered wood and ironwork that had once represented their beloved clubhouse. Alas! As a clubhouse it was no more, and never would be again!

They gazed at it and almost wept.

"Well, that's done it!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Look at our furniture—that's ruined, too! I—"

"Gerrup! Yah! Wow! Oh, Jehoshophat!"

A well-known voice came to their ears. It proceeded from the midst of the ruin. A portion of the debris was thrust aside, and a sorry figure appeared.

"It's that lonic of a workman!" ejaculated Nugent. "He—"

"It isn't a workman at all!" howled Bob Cherry suddenly. "It's Fish! Look at him!"

"My hat!"

The Removites blinked at the "workman." Much of his disguise had come off in the recent disaster, and the face and form of Fisher T. Fish could easily be distinguished.

"Fish!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Then it was Fish who came to mend the roof! He—he came disguised as a workman! What the dickens—"

"He's been spoofing us, chaps!" roared Peter Todd. "I can see it all now! He's in the swim with the Friardale Building Co. to swindle us! The clubhouse is a jerry affair! It was no good except for firewood! Fishy knew it, yet he hoodwinked us into buying it—"

"Great pip!"

"You're right, Toddy!"

"Grab him!"

"Slaughter the rotten spoofer!"

Fisher T. Fish gave a wild leap out of the debris when he saw the infuriated juniors coming towards him.

No longer were they a friendly society. On the contrary, they were distinctly unfriendly! It was apparent that things would go hard with Fisher T. Fish when the Removites caught him.

Fish realised this, and he ran like a hare towards the school gates, and out into Friardale Lane. Harry Wharton & Co., brandishing bits of the clubhouse as weapons, dashed after him.

"Stop him!" roared Bolsover major.

But Fisher T. Fish was running as he had never run before, fear lending him

was in the shed he piled up against the door to serve as a barricade.

Crash! Thump! Bang! Wallop!

The angry Removites outside threatened to reduce Fish's shed to the same state as their ill-fated clubhouse.

"Let up, you slab-sided mugwumps!" roared Fish through the window. "I guess you'll have to pay up if you do any damage—some! This hyer isn't my property; I only rent it!"

"He rents it?" roared Bob Cherry. "What does Fish want with a place like this to rent? Unless—unless he's the Friardale Building Company!"

"Oh, Jehosophat!" moaned Fisher T. Fish, realising that he had let the cat out of the bag. "Look hyer, you galoots—"



"Yarooop!" roared Fish, as the juniors grabbed at his legs. "Leggo! Yah!" Crash! With a rumbling roar the Remove Friendly Society's Clubhouse collapsed like a pack of cards, burying its luckless occupants beneath it. (See Chapter 11.)

wings. He looked a strange sight, and people on the highway who saw him stopped to blink. Fishy kept on. He tore down the High Street of Friardale, and did not stop until he had locked himself in his "office."

He leaned back against the desk for a breather.

"Grooogh! Oh, jumping Jerusalem crickets! Wow!" he groaned. "I guess this is where I get left! Yowp! Hyer come the jays!"

Harry Wharton & Co. burst into the yard like a cyclone. They pounded at the shed door with their weapons.

"Fish, you rotter!"

"Come out, you scallywag!"

Fisher T. Fish had no intention of "coming out." What furniture there

"Hallo, hallo! What's all this about?" broke in a stern voice.

Wheeling round, Harry Wharton & Co. beheld Mr. Jonas Gunter, the Friardale land agent. Mr. Gunter was the agent for that property.

"I say, Mr. Gunter, did you let this place to Fish?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes, Master Wharton, I let it to Master Fish for five shillings a week as a workshop," replied Mr. Gunter.

"My hat! Then this doesn't belong to the Friardale Building Co.?"

"There isn't such a firm as the Friardale Building Co., young gents," said Mr. Gunter grimly. "Master Fish, I know, has put a board up with that name on it; that's what I came round to see about. He's not a building company, and never will be. Besides, there's

Don't miss "If I Were Skipper!"—by Billy Bunter—next Monday!

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a clause in the lease of this property that says it mustn't be used for business purposes."

The Removites looked at Mr. Gunter, and at Fisher T. Fish, and then at each other.

"Well, I'm jiggered!" gasped Johnny Bull. "Then Fish has spoofed us all along the line! There's no such firm as the Friardale Building Company. Fish himself is the company! He worked this stunt in order to palm off that junk on us as a clubhouse! Oh, my hat! Let's get at him!"

"Break down the shed!"

The Removites surged forward in an angry mass.

Fisher T. Fish, trapped like a rat inside the shed, trembled.

"I—I say, let up, you jays!" he shouted through the window. "I—I guess I'll capitulate. I reckon this is my funeral, and I'll put you wise. It was a business deal—a pure business deal, sirs, straight from the word go!"

"It was a swindle!" cried Harry Wharton. "You got hold of that old hut cheap, and did it up purposely to sell to us at a large profit. We can see it all now, Fishy! We're going to make you fork out that five the Friendly Society paid you!"

"Oh, come off it!" said Fish in alarm. "I guess you galoots don't understand business—"

"We don't understand your methods of business, Fishy!" rapped the Remove captain. "They're too jolly sharp! But, business or no business, we're going to have our money back! Burst the door open, chaps!"

A plank of wood was grabbed, and many willing hands brought it to bear forcibly against the shed door. Mr. Gunter yelled to the juniors to stop, but they paid no heed.

Crash! Crash!

The door gave in at last.

Fisher T. Fish gave a howl and dived through the window as Harry Wharton & Co. broke in over the barricade. But Fish was promptly grabbed by the other juniors outside and held firmly.

"Got him!" chortled Bob Cherry.

"Yarooooogh! Yah! Wooogh! Oh, Jehoshophat! Let up, you jays! Yow-wow-wow!" howled Fish.

"Turn his pockets out!" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"What-ho!"

Fish, despite his struggles, was turned upside down. The contents of his pockets were examined. The Removites discovered the receipt for two pounds ten that Fish had paid for the hut in the first place.

"The artful rotter!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "So he got more than his money back with the first payment we made to him. The quid a week would have been profit!"

"Yowp! Ain't that business, you mugwump!" moaned Fish. "I guess that's a business deal."

"It's a horrid, mean swindle—like all the rest of your schemes have been, Fish!" exclaimed Wharton angrily. "Chaps, here's six pounds odd in money I've taken from this rotter's pockets. We'll appropriate that. Now we'll teach him a lesson. Bump him!"

Bump! Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Yarooooogh! Yah! Wow! Yooooooop!" howled Fish.

The angry Removites bumped him severely. Then they whirled Fish out of the yard, up to the High Street, and hurled him bodily into the horse-trough.

Splash!

"Yerrrugh!"

Fish went under with a gurgling yell. The crowd of villagers and Greyfriars fellows that had gathered yelled with laughter at the American junior's plight.

"There," said Harry Wharton grimly, "that will remind Fishy that he'd better not try any more business propositions on us! Come on, you fellows, we'll settle with Mr. Gunter."

The land agent told Harry Wharton & Co. that if they gave him the remains of the hut he would call the matter square. This was a highly satisfactory arrangement to the Removites, and they agreed.

Mr. Gunter sent a wagon along to Greyfriars, and the ill-fated clubhouse was removed, amid the exasperated remarks of the Removites and the laughter of the rest of Greyfriars.

Harry Wharton called a meeting of the Friendly Society.

"Chaps, I move that the Friendly Society be wound up," said the Remove

captain. "It's turned out rather a fiasco—thanks to Fish. It was his idea. His motive was to make money out of it. We'll share out what cash we've got, and let things go at that!"

"Hear, hear!"

Harry Wharton shared out the money fairly, the fellows who had contributed most money to the society receiving a larger proportion. Everybody was satisfied—that is, with the exception of Fisher T. Fish—and the rest of Greyfriars highly amused.

Thus the Remove Friendly Society was liquidated.

And whilst the process of liquidation was being carried out, Fisher T. Fish was left in miserable solitude to muse upon the slow and unbusinesslike qualities of the English nation in general, and of the Remove Form at Greyfriars in particular.

THE END.

(There is another ripping yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. next Monday, entitled "AN ISLAND MYSTERY!" Be sure and read it, chums!)

Readers' Notices!

Wm. E. Anders, 45, Moorgate Street, Edge Hill, Liverpool, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere; ages 15-16.

Robert Stewart, 7, Thomson Street, Dundee, N.B., is starting a magazine called the "Eclipse," and would be glad to hear from readers.

Pte. Peter Mitchell, 7257453, C Coy., R.A.M.C., Crookham Camp, Fleet, Hants, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere.

Donald J. Sinclair, 26, Opoho Road, N.E. Valley, Dunedin, New Zealand, wishes to correspond with readers, especially those interested in stamp collecting.

Trevor Haines, Dalley Street, Mullumbimby, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to correspond with readers. All letters answered.

J. D. Eales, Berry House, Duckenfield, Morpeth, N.S.W., Australia, wishes to correspond with Navy readers.

Miss Leah Fine, Box 33, Volksrust, Transvaal, South Africa, wishes to correspond with readers interested in postcard views; all letters answered; ages 16-20.

Leslie S. Hope, Sheffield, Tasmania, Australia, wishes to correspond with readers anywhere; Sheffield, England, especially asked.

A. J. Dee, 7, Montague Road, Sale, Cheshire, wishes to correspond with readers overseas; interested in photography.

L. Stebbings, 2, Boutflower Road, Clapham Junction, S.W. 11, requires readers and contributors for his magazine, the "Herald," hectographed in colours.

Fred Macfarlane and Anthony Rhodes, care of G.P.O., Quetta, N.W.P., India, wishes to correspond with readers.

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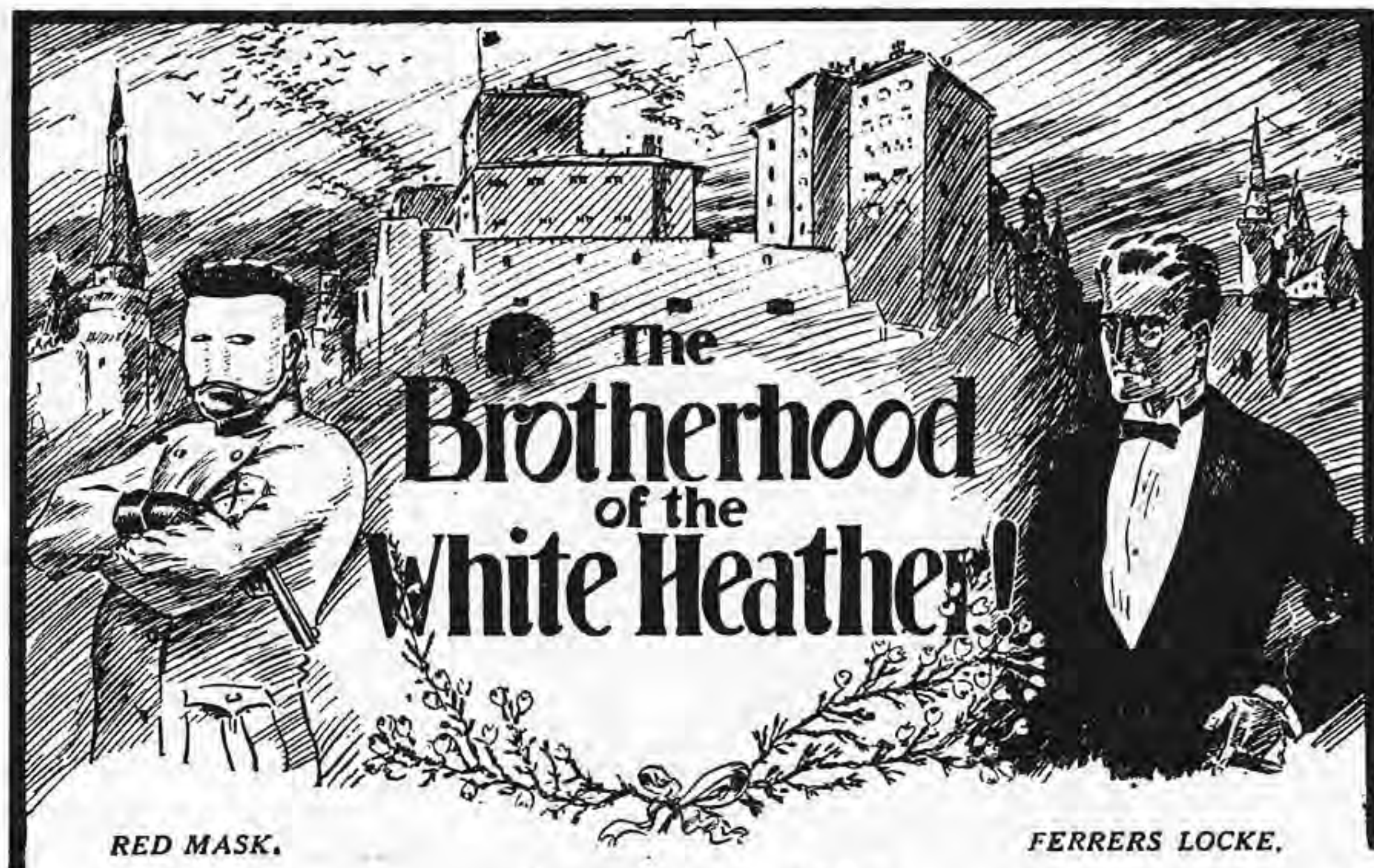
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RED MASK.

FERRERS LOCKE.

Related by "X."

The Signal of Success!

DRIPPING into a dry ditch, Ferrers Locke crept along it, following its winding course until he gained the lower end of the valley. The white light was still piercing the darkness behind him, as he emerged out on the road, and he looked back at it for a long moment, while a quiet smile crossed his grimed face.

A feeling of grim exaltation came to him, now this first challenge to the mysterious Red Mask had been successful. The brotherhood of the White Heather had made their first move, and the invincible Red Mask had been cheated of a victim.

Half an hour later Ferrers Locke, trudging quietly down the road towards Moscow, heard the drumming of a car engine, and he hid swiftly behind a clump of bushes. A few minutes later a powerful two-seater passed him, moving like the wind. He had only just time to glimpse the figure of the solitary occupant at the wheel—a massive shape, leaning forward, and watching the white roadway.

Flakes of wet mud sprayed on to the bushes, and Locke arose, watching the car glide out of sight down the slope.

"The wires will be working overtime very soon," he muttered to himself. "But it will simply be a waste of time. You'll receive a message presently, Red Mask; but it will not be the one you expect."

It was long after midnight when a shabby figure slouched along the broad pavement of the dark streets, to turn into a quiet doorway, and vanish. Ten minutes later another figure came out of that doorway, but it was dressed in immaculate evening clothes. It sauntered down the better-lighted portion of the thoroughfare, and, on reaching the corner of the street where two uniformed

figures were standing, one of the men saluted it. Ferrers Locke—for he it was—returned the salute, passed them, and entered the wide doorway of the huge residential chambers. He climbed up to his suite of rooms on the third floor. Passing across the narrow hall, he entered a room on the left, switching on the light.

Someone arose from the deep armchair and came towards him—a little, shrivelled man, with grey beard, and haggard, weary eyes.

"Well—"

Locke crossed to the sideboard, and

THE CURTAIN RINGS UP ON

RED MASK, a powerful and sinister individual, whose identity is at present unknown, holding sway over the fortunes of distressed Moscow. Englishmen, in particular, have been made to feel the weight of his tyrannical power.

FERRERS LOCKE, England's premier detective, who forms a society known as the Brotherhood of the White Heather. Its object is to rescue the innocent victims of Red Mask.

JACK DRAKE, the detective's clever young assistant.

PRINCE IVAN, BORIS SAROV, FATHER PETRO, and **MR. MALTBY**, members of the society.

INA CARTWRIGHT, the latest victim of Red Mask's tyranny. Found guilty on a charge of treason of which she is entirely innocent, the young English girl is about to be sent to the fortress of Butirka.

Disguised as a peasant, Ferrers Locke visits the fortress and rescues her. He has barely placed her in the care of Jack Drake, who is in charge of the motor-car which is to take the girl across the frontier, when a sentry gives the alarm. Commanding Drake to drive off at once, Locke himself stays behind and grapples with the sentry. Then, seizing an opportune moment, the sleuth breaks away and dashes across the open country, the powerful rays of a searchlight endeavouring to single him out.

(Now read on.)

helped himself to a cigar, lighting it before he turned.

Yes. All well, your Highness," he said to Prince Ivan.

The old nobleman caught his breath. "You—you mean that you have saved that wretched, loyal child?"

Ferrers Locke nodded his head.

"If you'll sit there for a few moments longer, I may be able to satisfy you," he said.

The chair was against one of the huge windows, and when the elderly nobleman had seated himself, Locke crossed the room and switched off the electric light again, plunging the room into darkness. Then he turned and paced across to the window.

They were looking out over the straggling city, with its long vistas, and church towers and steeples. The lighted streets stretched to right and left, but away beyond them lay the blue dusk of the night.

A silver-toned clock in the room chimed twice, and Locke moved slightly.

"We ought not to have to wait long now, Prince Ivan, if all is well. Ah! There!"

Eastward there climbed into the air a thin, white light, that broke and dissolved into a myriad of golden stars.

"That is the signal from the railway," said Ferrers Locke. "Another passenger has safely reached the midnight express. Miss Cartwright is saved."

The armchair creaked, and the old fellow arose, and caught the detective by the hand.

"You—you have accomplished the seemingly impossible," he said. "No one has ever yet escaped from Red Mask. Here, in Moscow, we know him and fear him—fear him all the more because his real identity is unknown."

A quiet laugh sounded.

"I am here to crush the power of Red Mask," Locke returned quietly. "He

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broods over the city here like a plague; his name stands for all that is evil and vile, but his power—whatever it is—will be taken away from him, and the day will come when I shall unmask him before you all."

He reached out and drew the blinds of the window. Then, crossing the room again, he switched on the light.

"There is no need for any further caution," he went on. "You can go home now, Prince Ivan. I suppose I shall see you at the carnival to-morrow night? All Moscow will be flocking there, and it is not wise to refuse the invitations of the rulers—eh?"

Prince Ivan tugged at his thin beard for a moment.

"I will have to go," he said at last. "It would mean trouble for me if I kept away, but I hate these ceremonies, for I know that I walk amongst spies—men who watch, and listen, and pry."

"Quite so, your Highness! But those are the very men whom I desire most to meet. Besides, I shall have definite news of Miss Cartwright then, and I will let you have it."

A quarter of an hour later saw the old nobleman enter the dingy carriage that had been waiting for him, and drive off to his home.

Ferrers Locke halted to light another cigar, and his keen eyes travelled up and down the wide thoroughfare before turning to enter the building again. He was searching for the belated motor-van, but another hour passed before he heard the rumble of wheels. Crossing to his window, he saw the hooded vehicle pass swiftly down the thoroughfare, to vanish into one of the side turnings.

Ten minutes later a faint whirring from the cabinet on the left of the room brought Locke across to it, and he opened the door, disclosing a tiny telephone set.

"That you, Locke?" hummed across the wires.

"Yes."

"This is Boris Sarov speaking. Jack Drake is here. Shall we come round?"

"Yes. But don't forget—come into the building by the back entrance."

There are two inquisitive friends watching outside."

A laugh sounded across the wires.

"Let them watch!" Boris Sarov returned. "We've struck a heavy blow to-night, Locke, and there's more to follow."

Count Heinrich Draws a Blank!

IN a lofty room in a great, white marble palace, that stood on the banks of the river, a man in a quiet morning suit was seated at breakfast. Behind his chair stood a tall bearded servant, who waited on the seated figure with swift, noiseless skill.

Count Heinrich von Goltz was one of the leaders of that curious, fashionable society that had grown up amidst the ruins of the old Empire, there in Moscow.

President of a big banking establishment, no one seemed to know just where he drew his interest from, but that he was a power in the city was undoubted. In his stiff-necked, heavy way he moved among the handful of better-class people. His punctilious politeness, and apparent desire to be friendly, masked the real character of the man. There was no mistaking his nationality. His heavy face and sallow-lined features, bristling moustache, shaggy brows over close-set eyes, and small, bullet-shaped head stamped him a one-time leader of the Germans—a Prussian of the Prussians.

That a man of that hated race should mingle with the poverty-stricken but proud families of Moscow was, in itself, a mystery, but an apparently limitless wealth, and the vastness of his entertainments, assured him a host of followers. And behind his hospitality was some powerful Government backing, that made the swarm of officials in the old city pretend they did not feel the tension.

There were many vague rumours concerning Count Heinrich. He had bought that white marble palace, and kept a huge staff of servants. He spent lavishly, extravagantly, and his wealth seemed inexhaustible; but no one was able to say where his riches came from.

As he sat at his breakfast-table now, his brows were drawn in a moody frown, and he seemed to be suffering from some thwarted passion. Suddenly he thrust his chair away, and arose, barking out a command to the burly figure behind him. "I'm expecting Prince Ivan," he snapped. "When he comes, bring him to me at once."

The man bowed, and Count Heinrich, striding across the chamber, entered a smaller one, the galleries of which looked out over the walled-off garden that ran down to the river. He seated himself at his desk for a moment, and began to open a small pile of envelopes, but half-way through that task he rose to his feet again, and commenced to pace up and down the beautifully furnished chamber—his large hands clasped behind his back, and his shaggy brows drawn together in a frown.

Presently he halted in front of a mirror, and leaned forward to peer at himself. On the right of his jaw, showing clearly under the dull blue shade of the shaven skin, was a black bruise. He fingered it tenderly, and his small eyes hardened.

The whirr of a distant bell brought him round, and a few moments later the great doors were swung open, and a servant appeared, bowing low.

"His Highness, Prince Ivan Staliski," the man announced.

The feeble figure of the old nobleman shuffled quietly into the room, while his great broad-shouldered host came hurrying forward, with one large hand outstretched.

"A thousand thanks for coming to see me, your Highness," he said.

They shook hands, and the old nobleman watched Count Heinrich closely, while the latter drew a chair forward, and begged his visitor to be seated.

"What do you want with me, Count Heinrich?" the Prince began.



As Dimitri made his first blind rush at Jack the youngster grabbed hold of a broken cart-shaft and aimed a terrific swing at the Russian's head. With a howl of pain Dimitri staggered back against the pony, grabbing at it to steady himself. Followed a quick whinnying, and next moment the animal whipped round and lashed out with its iron-shod hoofs. (See page 27.)

Don't miss a word of "The Brotherhood of the White Heather!"—

"I wish to talk to you over that unfortunate Englishwoman—your wife's companion."

Heinrich's voice was suave and oily as he leaned towards his visitor.

"I was deeply distressed when I heard of her fate. They told me yesterday that she had been sent to the fortress."

His eyes narrowed as he looked at the prince.

"It must have been a blow to you, your Highness," he went on. "And I hope for your sake the committee will relent their purpose concerning her."

There was something of the look of a tiger in the small, close-set eyes now, but Prince Ivan glanced placidly at his host.

"The committee has taken her, and we must abide by its decision."

A frown crossed the Prussian's heavy-jowled face for a moment.

"It seems a pity that she should have to serve such a long sentence there in the fortress, Prince Ivan," he said.

The old nobleman's voice hardened.

"She was a victim, Count Heinrich," he said. "And loyalty proved her downfall. It was unwise of her to speak of what happened at my home when Red Mask led his raiders into it. I begged her not to speak, but—well, she's English, and they're a high-spirited race."

He took out a watch and glanced at it.

"I am grateful for the trouble you have taken over that unfortunate servant of mine, Count Heinrich," he went on. "But I'm afraid we can do nothing. Now I shall have to go. There is a friend of mine waiting below."

"Who is it?"

"Merely an English tourist. I think you have met him—Ferrers Locke!"

Heinrich laughed.

"Yes. I have met him. He is indeed a typical Britisher—but a little more wooden-headed than usual—if you'll pardon my saying so, your Highness."

Count Heinrich thought he saw a quick gleam come into the faded eyes, but it was gone like a flash, and the prince bowed.

"I often wonder what keeps this Britisher here in Moscow for so long," Count Heinrich went on. "His curio mania has not tired yet."

He crossed the room and pressed a bell.

"Ask Mr. Locke to come up," he said. "And bring wine."

The supple, upright figure in an immaculately fitting suit, came into the study on the heels of the tall servant, and was greeted by the broad-shouldered owner of the palace with a hand-shake. Count Heinrich spoke in English.

"I am sorry to have kept you waiting, Mr. Locke," he remarked. "I did not know you were with our mutual friend, Prince Ivan."

"Oh, I spent the time profitably, Count Heinrich," Ferrers Locke returned. "Those tapestries in your hall are magnificent."

The servant re-entered with the wine, and Heinrich poured out three glasses, but Ferrers Locke shook his head.

"Your wines are heady stuff, Count Heinrich," he said. "I prefer water!"

Count Heinrich signed to the servant, and swallowed his wine at a single gulp.

"We were discussing a country-woman of yours, Mr. Locke," he said.

AN UNEXPECTED MANŒUVRE!



Without hesitation Jack Drake made a quick dive between the fellow's legs, sending him sprawling. (See page 21.)

"The unfortunate Miss Cartwright. You have heard of her case of course?"

"The foolish woman who has fallen foul of the authorities?" Locke drawled slowly. "What has happened to her, Count Heinrich?"

His expressionless face turned towards the heavy one opposite.

"She has been taken to the fortress," said Count Heinrich. "She is likely to serve her sentence there."

"Poor girl! Still, I suppose it was her own fault. Foreigners should never interfere in the affairs of a country they are visiting."

Secretly Ferrers Locke was enjoying that grim ordeal. He knew that his host was trying to pump him, and he caught the harassed look on Prince Ivan's face, and inwardly smiled.

"You are rather surprising, Mr. Locke," Count Heinrich said at last. "One would think that as a Britisher you would be more interested in her."

Again that blank, calm scrutiny met his own.

"I have found it wiser not to interfere at all, Count Heinrich," drawled Locke. "Miss Cartwright was foolish—and the greatest punishment is for fools—she will have to pay."

He leaned forward and pretended to knock a speck of dust from his immaculate sleeve.

"You will be at the carnival tomorrow night, Count Heinrich?" he went on. "His Excellency, the governor, has been good enough to send me an invitation, and I, too, shall be there."

He rose to his feet, and Prince Ivan followed his lead. Count Heinrich accompanied his guests to the top of the great staircase, and watched them descend. The mask had slipped from his face now, and it was revealed in all its doubts and suspicion.

"Prince Ivan knows, but is afraid to speak," he muttered to himself.

He turned to pace back into the smaller chamber.

"But this other man—this dog of a Britisher. Who is he and what is he?"

To and fro across the chamber the massive man strode, muttering to himself as he went.

"His face was the face of a brainless fool—or the mask of a clever man."

Slowly the thoughts formed in Count Heinrich's brain. The few questions he had put had had a shrewd object behind them. He had hoped to trap Prince Ivan and Locke into admitting that they knew Ina Cartwright had escaped—a knowledge that would have convicted them at once.

"A fool or an actor—which?"

That blank expression of face that Ferrers Locke had worn had been proof against all Count Heinrich's keen power of character-reading, yet he sensed inwardly that latent force with which he had come in contact.

Halting in front of the window he threw his massive arms above his head, clenching his fists. He could see the town shimmering under the morning sun, and his face grew black. It was the first time in long years he had received a set-back—a check to his ruthless career. An unfortunate victim had been snatched out of his grasp at the very moment when he had thought to wield his power.

As he stood there frowning, Count Heinrich Goltz felt the first grim foreboding come to him. He knew that he was master of that great city, lying there under the sun; those governors and commandants were mere puppets whom a word from him would banish. He was the real ruler of Moscow, and had secured his position by a grim

—the most amazing serial story of modern times!

bond that linked him with one of the three rulers of that great, troubled country.

"She must be found—she shall be found!" the count muttered to himself. "She shall be brought back here, and I will force her to name her friends."

A vision arose in front of him—a vision of a ragged, grimed shape that had leaped out suddenly into the light of the prison chamber. It was a mere shadowy form, vague and unreal, but the black bruise on his jaw, and the memory of revival from unconsciousness, told Count Heinrich that behind that shadow there lurked the presence of a grim, redoubtable man.

"They will find her," he snarled. "And then I shall know whom it was—and Heaven help him when I do!"

Jack Drake's Lone Hand!

IN Ferrers Locke's comfortable suite of rooms, Jack Drake was lounging luxuriously on one of the deep couches. Boris Sarov, puffing contentedly at a cigarette, was grinning across the room at the youngster.

"You certainly know how to drive a motor-van, Jack," Boris said. "And I can tell you that our Russian roads require some driving over."

It had been a nerve-racking experience that Jack had gone through, after he had plunged away into the night, with the bullets whistling about his ears. He had driven on blindly down the rough roads, for a long five miles, until he had seen the roadway forking in front of him, and he had clapped on the brakes when a group of figures had darted out from the darkness. He had recognised the figure of Boris. No word had been spoken, but Boris had leaped into the front of the vehicle, and been driven on.

The tall, black-haired Russian had given directions now and again, until at last Jack found himself driving into a quiet goods yard, with the rails shimmering beyond it.

Out of the van had stepped the slim shape of the woman who had been hiding there, and she had been hurried across the metals to where a train stood in the semi-darkness. Drake had flung open the door of the end compartment, and hands were thrust out to help the girl into it.

It had all happened like the steady progress of a dream, and no word was spoken until the train moved off, and Boris and Jack returned to the van.

"Yes. You've had your baptism of fire, Jack," Boris said now. "And the Brotherhood of the White Heather is proud of you."

"What happened to the governor?" Drake asked presently. "Where's he gone?"

"There's no telling where your governor goes to, Jack," Boris returned. "He left very early this morning, and I understood he was going to see Prince Ivan."

He rose to his feet, and crossed the room.

"I must leave you now," he went on. "It will not do for me to be here too long. I have a brother and an uncle in Moscow, and I must go back to them. You will remember that from now on you are no longer Alexis Sarov, but Michael. You have been employed by Mr. Locke as his valet."

"It seems to me I'm a new blessed character every day," Jack Drake

muttered to himself when Boris had gone.

"Goodness knows what it is that the governor's got himself mixed up in, but, my hat, it seems pretty exciting, and if last night's show was a sample of it, I'm going to have something to talk about when I get back to London."

He had been warned by Boris not to leave the suite of rooms until Ferrers Locke returned, but after spending another lonely hour mooning about the compartment, Jack Drake found himself standing at the window, gazing longingly into the crowded street below.

"Hang it! Why shouldn't I have a walk out? Nobody's likely to bite me," he decided at last.

He went into the little chamber that Ferrers Locke had set aside for him, and found a quiet servant's uniform laid ready for his use. It consisted of a long black blouse, and the usual wide, dark trousers, with a round fur cap.

Jack Drake donned these garments, and had a good look at himself in the mirror. Then, satisfied with his appearance, he marched boldly down the stairs, and strode out into the street. The shops fascinated him, and he went on and on, strolling past one huge building after the other, until a savoury aroma of coffee tempted him into a large cafe.

The days he had spent with Boris had not been wasted; for the tall Russian had given him some instruction in the language, and he could speak a few simple words. Jack ordered a coffee and a roll of black bread and butter. Then, seated at a quiet table, he began to enjoy his meal. The place was crowded, every table occupied by a circle of men. Jack studied the various faces, and began to think that he had entered a human zoo.

There were all sorts and conditions of men in the cafe, from yellow-faced Chinese to frizzy-haired, thick-lipped men of negroid type. A clamour of harsh voices made an incessant din, and the waitresses were kept running to and fro attending to the wants of their clients.

Presently one of the tables near Jack was cleared, and, a few moments later, three men entered the cafe and seated themselves at the vacant table. One of the men was dressed in a kind of uniform, and the other two were wearing ordinary European clothes. They were a hard-faced lot, and Jack suddenly picked up his ears as he heard his own tongue, although it was spoken in a harsh and guttural accent.

"Let us speak English; it is not likely that anyone here will understand it."

It was the man in uniform who spoke, and Jack, pretending to be busy with his coffee, leaned forward.

"What are these new orders, Dimitri?" the other man asked. "You were to set out to-day for Perm. You told us that your patrol was waiting you there."

The uniformed man shrugged his shoulders.

"Had you been at the fortress that night, you would not have to ask why I did not start."

"Why? What happened at the fortress?"

The man addressed as Dimitri laughed. "Only that white bird escaped from Red Mask, right through his fingers," he returned. "I was there ready to take her away at Red Mask's orders."

"And what happened? What happened?"

"I do not know; but I know that Red Mask was dangerous to approach afterwards. He told me to wait. He is going

to capture his white bird again. Then I go to Perm; and then, the long, long journey, my friends."

The other two men looked at the speaker for a moment.

"This will be the third time that you have done the long, long journey, Dimitri."

The uniformed figure shrugged its shoulders.

"That is so; and I'm the only one that ever comes back."

A hoarse guffaw went round the trio, and Jack Drake felt a shiver run through him.

"And you never fail to find your way, Dimitri, even after you leave the river?"

By way of reply, Dimitri slipped a hand into his loose-fitting tunic, and drew out a crinkling square of tracing-paper, which he proceeded to unfold and flatten out on the table.

"Here is the line—clear as my eyesight—stage by stage, my friends. How should I miss my way?"

His savage face hardened as he glanced down at the traced map.

"Now and again my cattle stray, and I let them go. They never return, and they're never heard of again. But I always come back—I, Dimitri, whom Red Mask trusts!"

He folded the map again, and tapped it with one broad finger.

"There are men here in Moscow who would give much gold to have this."

He slipped it into his uniform again, and tugged down the lapel of his coat.

A sudden, fierce desire assailed Jack Drake—one of those mad notions that occasionally came into his head for no apparent rhyme or reason.

"I'm going to get that blessed map, or I'm a Dutchman!" he vowed.

And so, ten minutes later, when Dimitri and his two associates came swaggering out of the cafe, a slim figure in servant's livery followed them. At the corner of one broad thoroughfare Dimitri said good-bye to the other two, and went on his way alone.

Dimitri had played the spy often enough, but he had no idea that he was being spied upon then, and the slim figure following him sauntered on so casually that it would have taken a keener brain than Dimitri not to have been deceived.

He turned at last into a grimmer portion of the great city, and entered the huge stableyard of a rambling old inn. Jack Drake saw him vanish into one of the narrow stables, and passing the door a few moments later, he saw Dimitri stretched out on a heap of dried fodder in one corner of the stall. A shaggy-looking Russian pony was feeding in the other corner of the stall, and outside the stable was a light, two-wheeled vehicle. The harness was near at hand, seeming to indicate that Dimitri was waiting there for a summons.

Going on past the door, Jack saw that there was a ladder propped up against the side of the stable that gave access to the door of the loft above.

After a glance around, Jack shinned up the ladder and stepped quietly on to the creaking boards. There was a gap in the centre of the floor, and, reaching it, Jack peered cautiously down into the stable below. Dimitri was sprawled out on the fodder, and his head was resting on his arm. Listening intently, Jack heard the man's steady breathing.

A series of hand-grips ran down the side of the stable from the gap. Jack, swinging on to the topmost rung,

(Continued on page 27.)

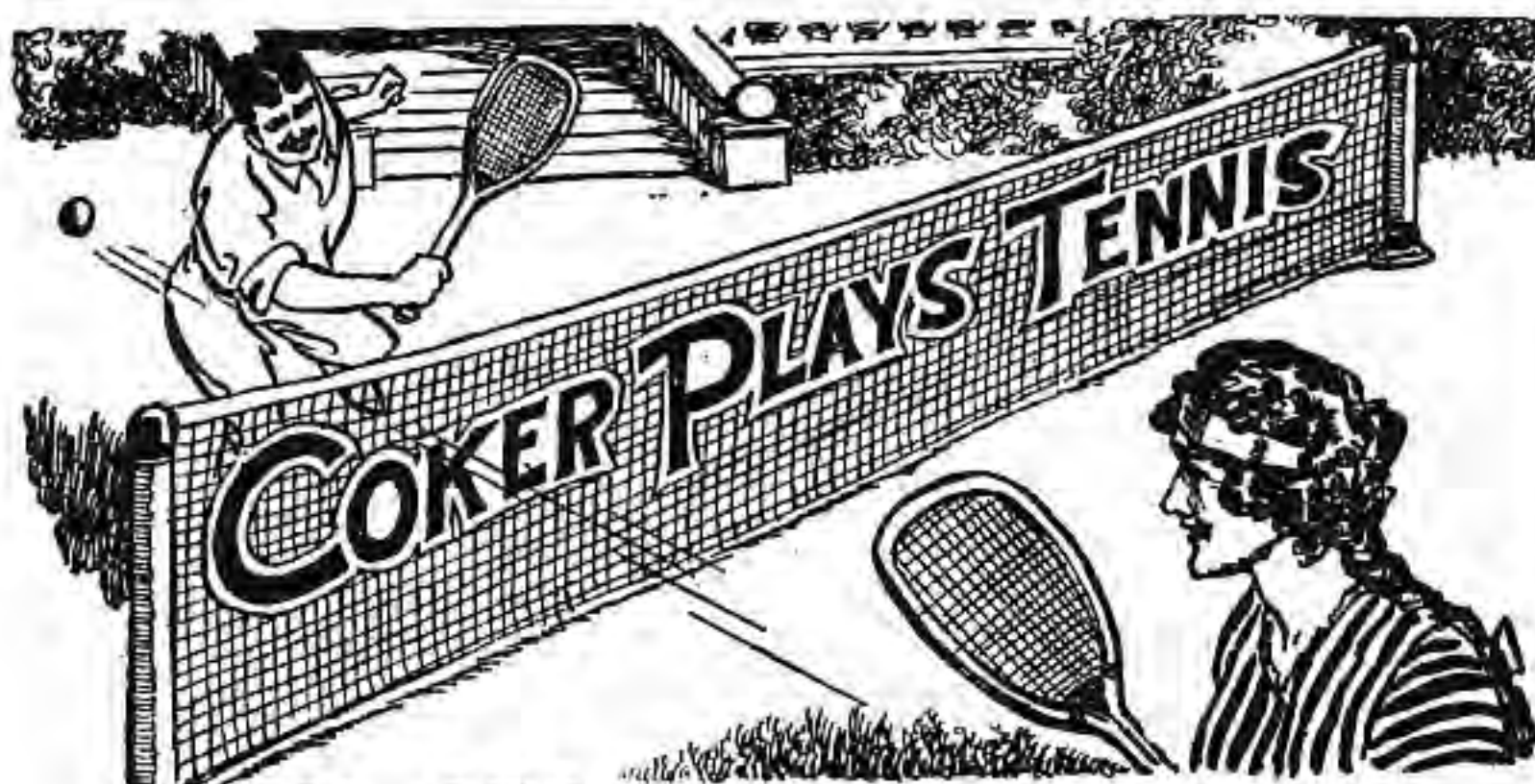
What about YOUR copy of "THE HOLIDAY ANNUAL"?



Supplement No. 143.

HARRY WHARTON
EDITOR

Week ending September 22nd, 1923.



BY GEORGE BLUNDELL.

"TENNIS," said Coker of the Fifth, "is the softest game under the sun! Why, there's nothing in it! You simply pat a ball over a net, and your opponent pats it back to you. You keep on doing this until you get fed-up, and then the umpire shouts out 'Six to love,' or some tummy-ach-like that, and you pack up and go home!"

That was Coker's view. And he expected Potter and Greene to agree with him. But they didn't.

"There's more in tennis than meets the eye," said Potter. "You've got to have the eye of a hawk, and you've got to be nimble on your pins—"

"And you've got to know how to serve and drive, and all that sort of thing," chimed in Greene.

Coker snorted.

"You'll be saying that tennis is a game of skill next!" he said. "As I say, there's nothing in it. I'd undertake to lick any of these so-called champions of either sex!"

"Well, you'll have a chance to-morrow," said Potter. "There's a tennis tournament over at Cliff House. Why not go over and challenge some of the girls? You might be able to lick Bessie Bunter, at a pinch, but I'll wager you won't beat Phyllis Howell."

"What!" shouted Coker. "Not lick a mere girl at a game of pat-ball? Look here, George Potter, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll challenge Phyllis Howell to a game, and if I don't win every single set I'll stand you two fellows the finest feed you've ever had!"

"Done!" said Potter and Greene together.

On the following afternoon, therefore, Coker donned his flannels, and borrowed a tennis-racket, and made tracks for Cliff House, with Potter and Greene in attendance.

The tennis-courts were crowded. Phyllis Howell was there, and Coker promptly approached her.

"I say, Miss Phyllis, I should like to challenge you to a game," he said. Phyllis smiled.

"I'll accept your challenge with pleasure," she said. "But I shall have to keep you waiting till four o'clock. I've got to meet Marjorie Hazeldene in the semi-final of our tournament."

"All serene," said Coker. "I'll wait."

In the meantime he watched the girls

EDITORIAL!

BY HARRY WHARTON.

TWO years ago I remember a fellow with a mania for making prophecies—always a very dangerous mania, by the way!—saying to me, "In two years' time cricket will be dead and defunct. Lawn-tennis will have crowded it out."

Well, the two years have passed, and cricket is still going strong. I won't deny that tennis has grown tremendously in popularity, but it hasn't killed cricket, and I don't think it ever will.

Tennis, when properly played, is one of the finest sports we have. But when it becomes mere "pat-ball," it is one of the tamest affairs you could imagine.

We play tennis at Greyfriars—not to the extent we play cricket; still, we are glad of an occasional game on the splendid courts which adjoin the cricket-ground.

Little or nothing has been written about our activities on the tennis-courts, so this number will come as a refreshing surprise. I hope you will all enjoy it.

HARRY WHARTON.

at play, and he began to feel rather uneasy.

It was not pat-ball that they were playing. It was Tennis, with a capital "T." They dashed to and fro with amazing energy, and their volleying was a sight to see and wonder at. Some of their lightning returns made Coker gasp.

But the great Horace had a big enough opinion of himself to believe that he could beat Phyllis Howell. Of course, these girls could play very well against members of their own sex; but when it came to meeting a giant like Coker—well, there could be only one possible result.

At four o'clock the courts were clear, and everybody crowded round to see Phyllis Howell do battle with Coker.

Poor old Horace! Directly the game started, it seemed to him as if an earthquake was happening. He served the ball, and it was returned to him in a flash. He hooked it back over the net—more by accident than design—and back it came again, red-hot from Phyllis Howell's racket. Coker made a blind rush for the ball, but he was hopelessly beaten.

And so the merry game went on. Phyllis Howell, playing close up to the net, proceeded to tie Coker up in knots. She drove with wonderful power, and her hurricane returns were unplayable.

Coker was rushed off his feet as if by a mighty whirlwind. He was panting and perspiring, and striving vainly to stop those deadly volleys.

"Oh dear!" he gasped. "I—I'm not quite up to form this afternoon! I can't seem to do anything right!"

"Perhaps the pace is too hot for you?" suggested Clara Trevelyn demurely.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The long and short of it was that Coker lost every single set. He was baffled, bewildered, boxed up, and hopelessly beaten!

It was with a crimson countenance that Coker limped out of the court.

Potter and Greene were waiting for him. They were grinning broadly.

"Tennis," murmured Potter, "is the softest game under the sun!"

"Why, there's nothing in it!" chuckled Greene.

"Who couldn't lick a mere girl at a game of pat-ball?" gurgled Potter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker raised his racket above his shoulder in a menacing manner, and Potter and Greene promptly dodged out of the danger-zone.

That evening there was a bumper repast in Coker's study.

True to his word—for he is quite a good sportsman at heart—Coker treated his study-mates to a really handsome spread. And Potter and Greene enjoyed themselves up to the hilt, and agreed that Horace Coker was a jolly good sport, though he couldn't play tennis for toffee!

Laugh and grow fat! Read our supplements!



COLLECTED BY FRANK NUGENT.

BOB CHERRY.

I've always had a warm place in my heart for tennis, whether played on an open-air court or on a table. Some people think that tennis is a fop's game, but the fact is that a strenuous game of tennis calls for plenty of stamina and staying-power. It keeps one "on the go" more than any game I know—even more than football, because you frequently get a brief rest in "footer," when the ball doesn't happen to be anywhere near you. And so, at the risk of being called a traitor to cricket, I hereby put up both hands for tennis, and plump for it as being the grandest game ever!

BILLY BUNTER:

Tennis might be all right for skinny people, but when you're a bit inclined to "om-bong-pong," in other words, rotundity, you find it a bit fateeging. The inspiration courses down my cheeks in streams when I play tennis. To be kwite kandid, I don't like the game at all. It may be all right for scraggy skellingtons like Peter Todd and Nugent, who are nimble on their pins; but it's no game for a Bunter. Of corse,

if the occasion demanded it, I could win a tennis championship with ease. Bekawse I don't happen to like a certain game, it duzzent follow that I'm not an eggspert at it!

H. VERNON-SMITH:

Tennis is a fine game; but I am not one of the worshippers at the shrine of this summer sport. A better game than tennis would have to be invented to make me desert cricket. There is not the thrill in winning a set at tennis that there is in making a century at cricket. It's all a matter of taste and temperament, of course. In my own case, I like an occasional game of tennis, but I can't go into raptures over it.

DICKY NUGENT:

I like tennis awfully, but I don't get a chance to play it bekawse there are no fags' tennis-courts, which I think is a jolly shame, and the sooner they lay out some special courts for fags the better it will be. Why should the fellows in the other forms get all the privvileges? Why should the fags be left out in the cold every time? Why, why, why? Ekko answers, "dashed if I know!"

MONTY NEWLAND (Champion Tennis Player of the Remove):

I love tennis. It's meat and drink to me. I could play for hours on end, and never become "fed up." To the casual observer, there doesn't seem to be much in tennis, and yet it's a game that calls for plenty of skill and stamina. I've nothing to say against cricket and other summer sports; but tennis is my first love—and the first love is the best love!

MR. PROUT:

I have been impudently requested to "put up my hands for tennis." I refuse to do anything of the sort. There is only one outdoor sport worthy of the name. I refer to game-shooting, whether the "game" be lions or tigers, or pheasants or partridges. I am more at home with a rifle than with a tennis-racket, and I have made many wonderful "bags" in my time—although I am not a tailor! It may interest the readers of the "Greyfriars Herald" to know that when I was in the Rockies in 1889—(The remainder of Mr. Prout's remarks have been reserved for a Special Reminiscences Number.—Ed.)

ALONZO TODD:

Tennis is a nice game, when played slowly. The main idea should always be to pat the ball back very gently to your opponent. I do not believe in "hot returns" and "smashing drives." Neither do I approve of players twisting themselves into absurd contortions. I appeal to you, my dear fellows, to play your tennis gently, slowly, and with becoming dignity. Do not get flustered and excited, and never strike the ball viciously. If played in this manner, tennis is certainly a nice, refined game. If played in any other style, it comes under the heading of hooliganism.

THE HEAD:

I have always considered lawn-tennis an excellent game, and I shall do my utmost to increase its popularity at Greyfriars. Personally, I am too old to play tennis, but I think some of the younger masters might with advantage take up this splendid summer sport.

NOT A CHAMPION!

By DICK PENFOLD.

I met a chap who came from Venice,
And he proposed a game of tennis.
I thought myself a sort of Norton;
At least, I'd beaten Bull and Wharton!

"Your challenge is accepted, sir,
I'll play at once, if you prefer!"
These were the words I spake with pride
To the Venetian at my side.

We toddled gaily to the courts
To play the best of summer sports.
Then my opponent seized his racket,
Picked up the ball—began to whack it!

His service was so fierce and fast,
I simply staggered back, aghast.
He volleyed with terrific vigour.

He lunged and leapt, he cut and drove,
He was a masterpiece, by Jove!
I gasped, I panted, I perspired,
And rushed around till I was tired.

He won the first game, and the second.
Then it was time to quit, I reckoned.
I crawled away on hands and knees,
Like a limp rag, sir, if you please!

That tragic afternoon, alack!
Was the most tragic of the Vac.
That chap had played with so much vim
That I was stiff in every limb!

Although I've licked both Bull and
Wharton,
Emphatically I'm not a Norton.
It was the last straw—the completion,
When I was trounced by that Venetian!

TENNIS TERMS EXPLAINED.

BY TOM BROWN.

A "good service" is what we always have on Sunday, in spite of the fact that tennis is prohibited on that day!

A "set" is what Dicky Nugent, the cigarette-card collector, hopes to complete very shortly!

A "racket" is what you always hear in Study 2, when I've got my gramophone going.

A "volley" is something which is fired by the Remove Pea-shooting Corps.

A "back-hand stroke" is what Quelch is very fond of when he wields the cane!

An "overhead shot" is what Mr. Prout makes when he runs amok with his Winchester repeater!

THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE WHITE HEATHER!

(Continued from page 24.)

dropped swiftly into the space below. The shaggy pony halted for a moment to look at him, then went on calmly with its meal.

Avoiding the heap of fodder, Jack crept forward and reached the side of the heavily breathing sleeper. The map had been placed on the left side of the loose-fitting tunic, and, bending forward, Jack began the most ticklish part of his task.

His fingers found the gap in the uniform, and holding his breath, the cool youngster ran his hand along the loose material. A paper rustled under his fingers, and a moment later they closed on the smooth sheet of paper. Quick as a flash Jack withdrew it, and was just straightening up, when, on stepping back a pace, his foot rattled against a loose board leaning against the wall, and it toppled over with a crash.

Dimitri sat up sharply and leaped to his feet, an angry exclamation breaking from his lips. Propped up against the side of the stall was a thick, broken cart-shaft, and as Dimitri made his first blind rush at Jack, the youngster grabbed at this, and aimed a mighty swing at the Russian's head with its shock of unkempt hair.

The crack of the hard wood against that thick skull sounded like a pistol-shot, and Dimitri, with a howl of pain, staggered back against the pony, grabbing at it to steady himself. There was a quick whinnying, and next moment the animal whipped round and lashed out with its iron-shod hoofs.

Jack, darting for the door, heard that thud, and looked over his shoulder. Dimitri was sprawling on the floor of the stable, while the shaggy pony, dancing and whinnying, rained kick after kick on him.

As Jack sprinted off across the grimed stableyard he could hear the yells and shouts of Dimitri, and the thudding of the pony's heels against the crumbling walls of the stable.

A lanky man came lumbering out from the shadows of the gateway and shouted something at Jack, at the same time making a leap forward to try and intercept the youngster.

There was only one thing to be done, and Jack Drake did it. The fellow had halted, with his lanky legs astraddle, and Jack made a quick dive between the long limbs. Next moment the man was thrown forward, and his yelp of pain went up as Jack, clearing the gateway, pelted off as hard as he could up the lane.

A few moments later he was pacing quietly along the dingy thoroughfare, with his hands in his pockets, and a cheery smile on his grimed face.

"Don't know what Mr. Locke will say to me," Jack thought. "But I've got that blessed map—and maybe it will do him a bit of good!"

Jack had performed an even greater service than he thought. In the near future that map was to prove its value, and was to play no small part in the great battle which Ferrers Locke had launched against Red Mask.

It was the night of the carnival, and the governor's palace was ablaze with light, while all Moscow seemed to have gathered outside the huge gates to watch the guests as they arrived.

A car halted at the foot of the carpeted pavement, and three figures in black velvet costumes came out and entered the wide porch. One of them was a slim, sturdy-looking youngster, who grinned under his mask as he followed the other two. Ferrers Locke was pacing ahead with Mr. Maltby, and Jack was quite content to follow in their wake. He had only been warned to attend that carnival a few hours before, for Ferrers Locke had been absent all day, and the fact that Locke had slipped his handy automatic into his pocket before he left the room was, in itself, a significant move.

They entered the wide ball-room, and, after bowing to the stout, rather wooden-headed-looking person who was their host, they went on to join the throng around the chamber.

Presently a man in a long, red robe came up to where Maltby and Locke were standing against a tall pillar. So far as Jack could see, no conversation was exchanged between them. The man took out his watch—a hunter—and opened it, as though to glance at the time. Jack saw that in the inside of the gold case was a small sign—a sprig of white heather.

When the man in the red robe had moved on, Ferrers Locke crossed to Jack.

"Quick, young 'un! Follow that man in the red. You'll get a message from him. Bring it back to me!"

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