

"FISHY'S DEBT-COLLECTING AGENCY!"

This week's rollicking school story.

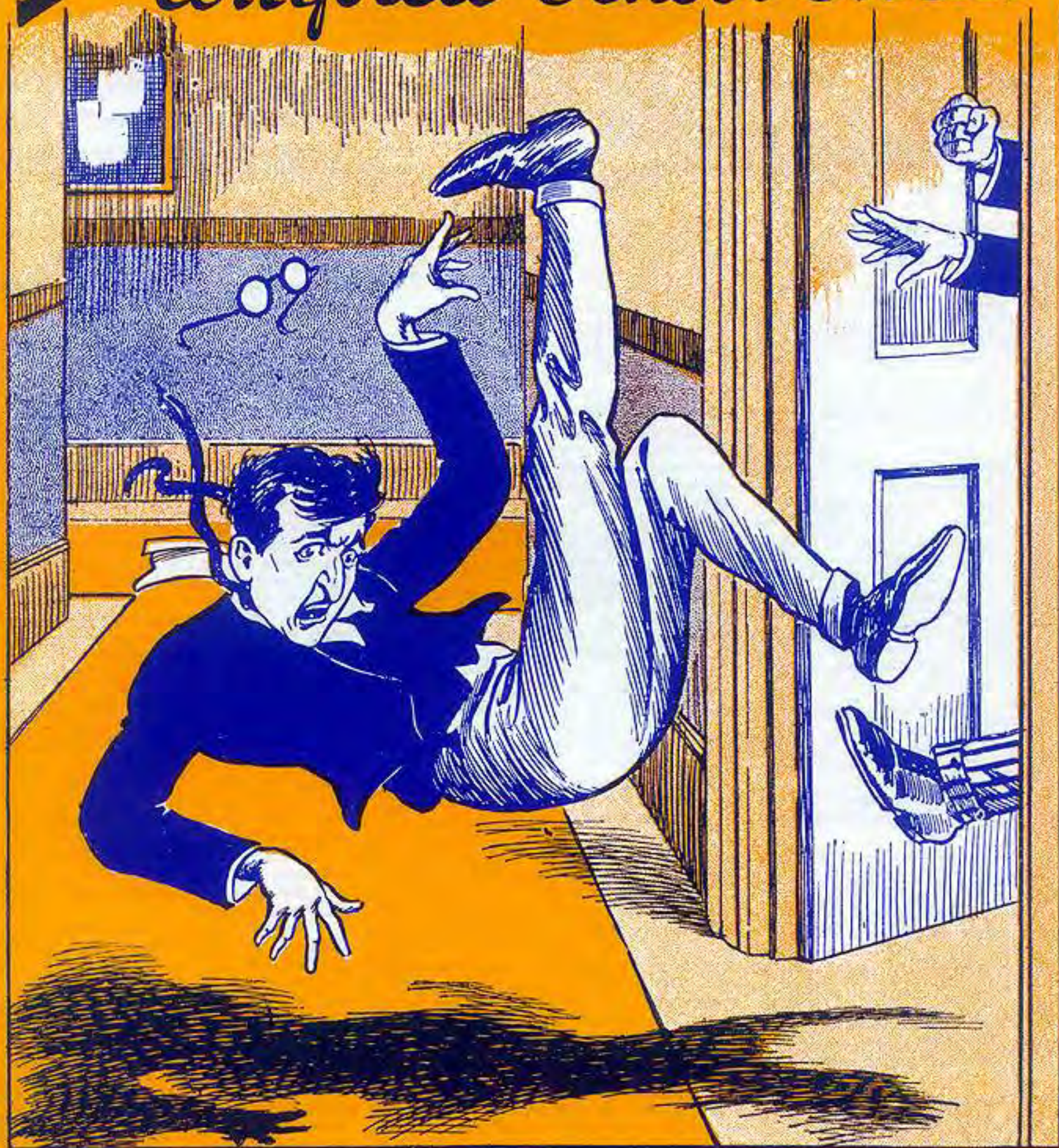
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The Magnet 2^d

EVERY MONDAY.

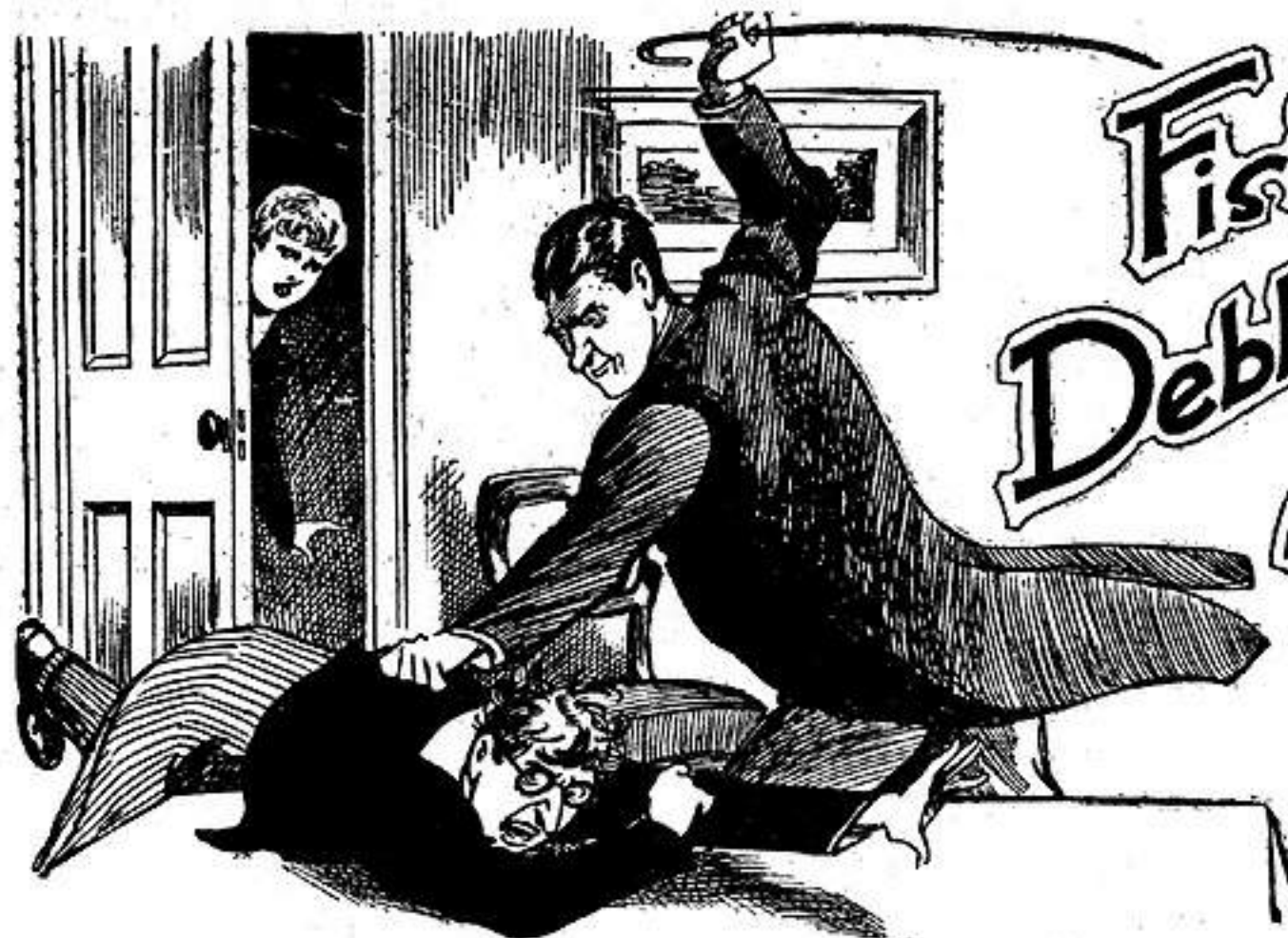
Library of Complete School Stories



HARDLY WHAT FISHER T. FISH EXPECTED TO "COLLECT"!

The American junior at Greyfriars tries to "hit the high spots" with a new business wheeze, but the incident above shows him hitting the "low" spots!

CONTRA ACCOUNT! Fisher T. Fish, the hustling son of a New York financier, starts in business on his own. He sets out to collect bad debts; but little comes his way in the shape of hard cash, although Fishy does a brisk business indeed in hard knocks!



Fishy's Debt-Collecting Agency!

A mirth-provoking yarn
of the Chums of Greyfriars,
featuring Fisher T. Fish's
latest "business" stunt.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Typewriter Wanted!

"I GUESS I've come to the right joint, then!"

Fisher T. Fish made that remark as he looked into Study No. 1 on the Remove passage at Greyfriars.

There were six juniors in the study, but not one of them even troubled to look up at the American junior's crisp remark.

Harry Wharton & Co. were much too busy. And they looked it.

They were seated at the study table—a crush for six of them—which was covered with scattered sheets of paper, some of them written and some of them typed. There were one or two bottles of ink on the table, and there was ink on the tablecloth itself, and ink on the fingers and features and collars of the juniors. Harry Wharton, Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh, and Vernon-Smith were scribbling away for dear life, while Bob Cherry, with rather a desperate expression on his rugged features, was tapping away grimly at the rusty keys of an antiquated typewriter.

All the juniors wore expressions of deep thought and tense concentration on their youthful brows.

It was an inspiring spectacle—Busy Bees not being in it, so to speak.

If Fisher T. Fish was looking for a picture of animated activity, then he certainly had come to the "right joint," as he expressed it in his illuminating American language. For it was press day on "Harry Wharton's Football Supplement," and the editor and sub-editors of that important schoolboy production were working against time to get their popular little journal ready for press.

At such a time of trial and stress they were not keen to be worried by anyone, much less by Fisher Tarleton Fish, of New York.

But Fishy was, apparently, determined to worry them. He came farther into the study, his sharp eyes fixed with some satisfaction on the typewriter Bob Cherry was wrestling with.

"I guess—" he began again.

"Cut!"

With that terse remark Harry Wharton pointed behind him to the door, and then resumed his literary labours.

Fishy grinned.

"I guess you guys—"

"Blow out, blow you!" snorted Harry Wharton. "Hook it! Vamoose!"

"I guess I want to spill a few words with you guys first," grinned Fishy. "Now look hyer, Cherry—"

"Get out!" roared Bob Cherry, struggling desperately with the carriage of his typewriter which appeared to have stuck. "Can't you see we're busy? Gerrou!"

"Yes; hook it, you streak of chewing-gum!" growled Johnny Bull, looking up crossly. "There's a thumping notice on the door; read it!"

"Yep! I guess this guy's read it," grinned Fishy. "It says, 'No admittance except on urgent business.' Waal, I kinder reckon I'm on business."

"Rats!"

"I guess I am—jest a few. I guess I heard jest now from Bunter that you guys had bought a typewriter. I see you have. I guess I've come to the right joint, pards!"

"If you don't clear out," hissed Bob Cherry, "I'll—I'll heave this dashed apology for a typewriter at you!"

"Hyer—hold on!" said Fishy. "I guess you'll about bust it if you do; and I want it, you silly galoot!"

"You whatter—"

"I guess I want it," said Fishy, eyeing the typewriter critically. "It ain't much of a bus, but I reckon it will suit my purpose—yep! I guess that's jest why I'm hyer. You can chuck spoiling good paper, Cherry. I'm going to hire that old bus from you for an hour."

"S-sp-spoiling good paper, am I?" gasped Cherry.

"Yep! I guess so," said Fisher T. Fish disdainfully. "Wasting time and good paper, I reckon. I guess that sleepy, one-eyed, dead and worthless rag of yours ain't worth the paper it's written on. Yep! But I guess I ain't come hyer to talk about that publication. I've come to talk business. Now jest hand over that typewriter, Cherry."

"You—you—"

"Oh, come off it!" said Fishy. "No need to get excited, Cherry. I guess I want to hire, not borrow. Now what do you guys say to threepence an hour?"

said Fisher T. Fish generously. "Durr-r-r-r down, if I can have the old bus right hyer, of course! I reckon I've got the dandiest, gilt-edged business scheme—"

"You cheeky rotter!"

"Oh, let up!" said Fishy impatiently. "I want that old bus to get some real, dandy leaflets out. Get me? Now what about that old bus, Cherry? Hyer's the threepence!"

And Fisher T. Fish planked down three pennies on the study table briskly.

Bob Cherry looked at the rest of the editorial staff, and they looked at him. Then, as Bob Cherry rose to his feet, the rest of the staff rose also—grimly.

"Bus!" breathed Bob Cherry. "I'll bust you, you American freak! Spoiling good paper, am I? Why, you cheeky—"

Bob Cherry dropped words for actions just then. Fishy seemed to realise quite suddenly why the juniors had risen to their feet so grimly, and he made a backward leap for the doorway.

He was too late. Bob Cherry grabbed him, and Wharton and Nugent jumped to the door. Fisher T. Fish had called their popular journal a sleepy, one-eyed, dead and worthless rag that was not worth the paper it was written on; and, naturally enough, the editorial staff did not like it.

There was no escape for the Transatlantic junior.

"Bump, the cheeky rotter!" snorted Harry Wharton.

"Hyer! Let up!" roared Fishy. "Haven't I come hyer to talk business? I guess—Yooooop!"

Bump!

"Now again!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Spoiling good paper, eh! Down with the rotter!"

"Ow! Oh, Jerusalem!"

Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Let up!" howled Fish. "Oh, great snakes! Ow! I guess I'll make potato-scrappings of you guys! Yarroop! I guess—"

Bump!

"Where's his giddy threepence?" gasped Bob.

He snatched the three pennies from the table, and crammed them down the back of the American junior's collar.

Fisher T. Fish roared with anguish.

"There, you spoofer!" snorted Harry Wharton. "That'll teach you not to

come bothering us when we're busy another time! That'll teach you not to come here with your thumping cheek, blow you! Now, out with him, and let's get on!"

"Yes, rather!"

"I guess I'll smash you!" howled Fishy as half a dozen hands grasped him and yanked him to his feet. "I guess I'll scalp you, you pesky guys! I calculate I'll Hyer! Yoop! Let up! I guess—Yooop!"

What else Fishy guessed was lost in a series of fiendish yells as half a dozen boots smote his anatomy. The business man of the Remove shot through the doorway.

Slam!

Crash!

The door slammed, and Fisher T. Fish dropped like a sack of coals on the floor of the passage. The Transatlantic junior sat up gasping for breath, and started to double himself up in a frantic effort to reach the three pennies that had been stuffed down his back. He was not likely to leave those pennies there long. Whatever his business programme had been, his efforts to hire Bob Cherry's typewriter at threepence an hour had certainly failed.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Bunter Helps!

"H E, he, he!"

A fat figure, wearing a fat grin and a pair of huge spectacles, rolled up and looked down at Fisher T. Fish. It was Billy Bunter, and he seemed highly entertained at the sight of the grovelling Fishy.

"He, he, he!" he grinned. "I told you so, Fishy, you chump! I told you they wouldn't lend you that typewriter. Bob Cherry gave fifteen bob for it, I believe, but he wishes he hadn't now. I say, you were an awful ass to go in just now. He, he, he!"

"Aw! Let up, you pesky lard-barrel!" groaned Fishy. "Ow! Oh, Jerusalem crickets! I guess I'll pulverise those pesky mugwumps for this! Threepence an hour I offered the galoots! Fancy turning down an offer like that! I guess I'll have to borrow old Quelch's typewriter, after all, darn it!"

"Yes, do!" grinned Billy Bunter. "Go and ask him now, Fishy. Better put some exercise-books in your bags first, though."

"Aw! Let up!" snarled Fishy. "Cut out the chinwag, Bunter, or I'll bust you, you fat jay!"

He scrambled up, having fished the last of the three coppers from down his collar. Bunter gave a fat chuckle.

"I say, Fishy," he grinned, "what'll you give me if I work the wheeze for you, old chap?"

"You pesky fat——"

"I mean it," said Bunter, winking. "It's no good trying old Quelch—you know that, Fishy. He'll lick you just for looking at his blessed old typewriter. But I fancy I can get Bob Cherry's old bus for you, Fishy."

Fisher T. Fish stopped rubbing himself, and looked sharply at Bunter.

"You gotter wheeze to get that typewriter for me, Bunter?" he echoed eagerly.

Bunter nodded and chuckled.

"At a price, Fishy," he grinned. "A labourer's worthy of his giddy hire, you know. Two bob and I'll wangle it for you, Fishy."

"Look hyer, Bunter," said Fisher T. Fish, "is that the straight goods, you galoot?"

"Hand over the two bob and you'll see!"

"I reckon I should want that typewriter for keeps for two silver shillings," said Fishy disdainfully. "Look hyer, Bunter, I'll give you threepence to get me that old bus for an hour."

"Make it a bob and it's a go," said Bunter firmly. "I'm not risking a walloping for less, Fishy."

"I guess I ain't paying no bob to you, you fat clam!" snorted Fishy. "Look hyer, I'll give you sixpence to do it, Bunter. There!"

Billy Bunter turned up his fat little nose, and started to roll away. Fisher T. Fish called him back.

"Hyer, hold on, Bunter," he said hastily. "I guess I'll pay you the bob, you durned Shylock! What's the stunt, first, though?"

Bunter grinned and came back.

"Quelch's out, isn't he?" he remarked. "He's gone to the village."

"I guess that's so. But if you think I'm going to risk a licking by pinching his typewriter——"

"It's nothing of the kind," grinned Bunter. "He, he, he! My idea is to get Wharton and his pals to go to Quelch's study and wait there until Quelch comes back. I happen to know he won't be back until nine or thereabouts. See?"

Fishy gave a snort.

"I guess that stunt cuts no ice with me, Bunter. How are you going to wangle it?"

"Hand me sixpence, and I'll show you, Fishy," said Bunter. "I'll get those chaps there and keep 'em there until you've finished with that rotten typewriter. That's fair enough—sixpence now and sixpence when the job's done."

Fisher T. Fish groaned. Parting with sixpence was no joke to the business man of the Remove. But he was desperately keen to get the use of a typewriter for an hour, and he handed over six pennies to Bunter, after a struggle within him.

"There you are, you pesky mugwump!" he grunted. "I guess you'll spout the stunt right hyer, Bunter."

Bunter chuckled, and then he whispered to the Transatlantic junior for a few moments. Fishy brightened up as he listened.

"Gee!" he grinned. "I guess that's a real top-notch, Bunter, old pard! And you reckon you can deliver the goods?"

"You leave it to me, Fishy," grinned Bunter. "You just keep out of sight for a bit and watch me."

Fisher T. Fish nodded, and, retreating along the passage, he took up his stand just inside the doorway of his own study. Bunter hurried away, but he was soon back with something hidden under his jacket. It proved to be a gown—Mr. Quelch's gown.

After a hurried glance up and down the passage Bunter took his stand by the door of Study No. 1. Then, draping the gown over one shoulder and arm, the crafty junior opened the door slightly, allowing his draped arm to show through. To his satisfaction, he found that he could not see the inmates of the study, nor could they see him—excepting his arm.

"Wharton!" he called sharply.

Even Fisher T. Fish, though he had been expecting it, and though he knew Bunter's wonderful powers as a ventriloquist and mimic, jumped. It was a remarkably lifelike imitation of the Remove master's sharp voice.

It quite deceived the inmates of Study No. 1, at all events. There sounded a subdued gasp, and the pens ceased to scratch. Then came Wharton's voice.

"Yes, sir?"

"Ah—never mind the door, boys, I will not stop to come inside," said Bunter. "You and all the boys with

you will kindly go to my study and await me there, Wharton. You understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"Oh, yes, sir!"

There was a chorus within the study—a not very cheerful chorus of assent. The editorial staff did not like being interrupted even by Mr. Quelch!

Bunter did not stop to say more—he had already said quite enough. He closed the door and rolled away as quickly as his fat little legs would carry him in the direction of Mr. Quelch's study. The room was lit only by the firelight, and it was empty—a fact Bunter had been well aware of.

Bundling up the gown, he hastily put it where he had found it. Then he scuttled out of the study, hiding a little higher up the passage to await developments.

There sounded the tramp of feet along the passage, and six rather annoyed-looking juniors tramped up to the Remove master's study. They knocked and entered. As the last one filed in, Bunter crept up to the door swiftly, and turned the key in the lock—having placed it in readiness beforehand.

Then, with a soft chuckle, Bunter rolled back cheerfully to Study No. 1. He found Fisher T. Fish awaiting him, a grin on his lean features.

"I guess you take the goldarned wheat-cake, Bunter," he said admiringly. "I reckon it's all serene now!"

"Right as rain!" grinned Bunter. He liked flattery, and he felt he deserved it. "I fancy I worked that rather well—what? Trot in and collar the old bus, Fishy. Those fellows will be safe enough until old Quelch comes to let 'em out. He, he, he! I expect he'll lick 'em!"

"I guess I hope he does, some," grinned Fish, rubbing himself ruefully. "Hyer goes, Bunter! I reckon this is where we smile."

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "What about the other sixpence?"

Fisher T. Fish made a wry grimace, but he handed over the sixpence. Then he walked into the study. He picked up Bob Cherry's precious typewriter and walked out with it in the direction of Study No. 14. Most of the fellows were busy at prep, and he met nobody on the way.

He vanished inside his study. Meanwhile Billy Bunter pocketed the sixpence Fishy had reluctantly handed over, and rolled into Study No. 1, closing the door. Then, with a fat chuckle of satisfaction, Billy Bunter opened the cupboard door, and glanced inside.

There was a nice big cake on the lower shelf, also plenty of jam, and sardines, and biscuits, and quite a lot of stuff left over from tea. It had been quite a decent spread that day in Study No. 1.

Bunter felt thankful that Wharton & Co. had left so much of it, and the next moment he was as busy at work as the Famous Five had been some moments ago—though it was not work for Bunter. And the scratching of pens and the tapping of a typewriter had given place to the busy munching and clamping of hungry jaws.

In the meantime, Harry Wharton & Co. were filling the air in Mr. Quelch's cosy study with growls of disgust. None of them had, as yet, noticed the closing of the door, nor had the soft click of the key in the lock been heard.

"What rotten luck!" groaned Harry Wharton. "This will about put the tin hat on getting that stuff off to-night."

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chaps. What the thump does Quelchy want us for?"

"And where is he?" demanded Johnny Bull, a trifle suspiciously. "I understood Quelchy was spending the evening with old Lambe, the vicar, or somebody. Blow it, anyway!"

"Must have come back early," said Harry. "Had we better turn on the light, I wonder?"

"Hallo, who's closed the dashed door?" asked Vernon-Smith, with growing suspicion. "I came through last, and I didn't—My hat! The dashed door's locked, chaps!"

"Wha-a-at?"

"It's locked!" snapped the Bounder, twisting angrily at the door-knob. "Great pip! What blind fools we were. It's a rotten trick!"

"A—a—a trick?"

"Yes, of course," gritted the Bounder. "Can't you see? Some rotter must have imitated Quelchy's voice and tricked us into coming here for some reason or other. I felt it was queer from the first."

"So did I," grunted Johnny Bull savagely. "But—"

"But I saw Quelchy's sleeve through the crack of the door!" said Harry Wharton blankly.

"That could easily be worked," said Smithy. "Why didn't Quelchy show himself? It's clear enough. I bet it was that spoofing rotter, Bunter."

"Phew! That's it!"

All the juniors understood as they remembered Billy Bunter. Billy Bunter was a clever mimic as well as a ventriloquist, and he had imitated Quelchy's voice successfully more than once. And Harry Wharton & Co. had been taken in in the same manner more than once by Bunter's skill in that direction. They felt they wanted to kick themselves for having been taken in so easily now. The locked door was proof enough for the juniors that they had been tricked.

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Well, my hat!" he gasped. "That fat worm is the limit! We'll boil him in oil for this, chaps. We can't very well kick up a shindy in a Form master's study, can we?"

"I'm going to make a row, anyway!" snorted the Bounder.

And he started thumping on the door.

The rest of the juniors waited, all of them in a towering rage. They did not have to wait long, as it happened. There was a footstep in the passage, and then came Wingate's voice.

"Who's that in there?"

As he called the question, Wingate tried the door-knob. Then, finding the key still in the lock, Wingate turned it and flung the door open.

He stared as he saw the furious faces of the juniors.

"Hallo, what's this game mean, Wharton?" he snapped. "How came you to be locked in Mr. Quelch's room?"

"We—we were locked in," stammered Wharton.

It was not a very illuminating remark. But the Co. could scarcely give Bunter away—supposing it was Bunter.

But Wingate had been a junior himself once, and it was obvious that the juniors could not have locked themselves in. Moreover, it was useless to ask for details—Wingate knew that also.

"Cut!" he said briefly. "You're jolly lucky not to have been caught here by Mr. Quelch, kids. Cut!"

Harry Wharton & Co., and Vernon-Smith, "cut" quickly enough. They had a vague and growing suspicion as

to what would be taking place in Study No. 1 during their absence.

The moment they got round the corner of the passage they raced for Study No. 1 with wrath on their faces. They fully expected to find the door locked; but to their surprise it was not locked.

As a matter of fact, Billy Bunter had blundered as he usually did when he tackled a "wheeze" of this nature. He had fully intended to take the key of Mr. Quelch's room away with him, but in his eagerness to get his hands on the good things in the cupboard, he had quite overlooked this amiable intention. And being blissfully unaware of his error, he had deemed it quite unnecessary to lock the door of Study No. 1.

He realised his mistake when the Co. dashed into the room.

With a jam-tart in one hand, and a chunk of cake in another fat fist, he blinked in utter dismay at the wrathful faces of the avengers.

"Oh—oh, dear!" he mumbled, his mouth full of cake. "I—I say, you fellows—"

"You—you fat burglar!"

"You spoofing rotter!"

"You fat poacher!"

"Scrag him!" roared Bob Cherry.

There was a combined rush, and Bunter howled.

"Here, keep off! I—I say, you fellows, it's all right! It wasn't me. I know nothing about it. It was Fishy, you—Yaroooooh!"

Bunter roared with anguish as Bob reached him first and rammed the chunk of cake down the front of his collar. The jam-tart Bob plastered over the fat features of the Owl.

"You fat worm!" hissed Bob. "Play your rotten tricks on us, would you? You—you—"

"Pulverise the fat sweep!" roared Johnny Bull. "Over with him!"

"What-ho!"

Bump!

"Yoooooop!"

Billy Bunter descended on to the carpet with a bump that fairly made his spectacles dance on his fat little nose. He howled fiendishly.

"Yooooop! Leggo! I tell you it wasn't me!" he roared. "Ow—ow! Oh crumbs! It was Fishy suggested it—he practically made me do it. As if I'd treat you fellows like that just for a bob—a measly bob! Yarooooop! I say, you fellows, it was Fishy, I tell you. He's pinched your—yow-wow—typewriter, Cherry."

"What?"

Bob Cherry gave a roar as he saw that his precious typewriter—for which he had given the sum of fifteen shillings only that day—was missing. It was undoubtedly gone!

"My typewriter!" he gasped, scarcely able to believe his own ears and eyes. "That skinny worm pinched my typewriter? Is that true, Bunter?"

"Ow! Yes," gasped Bunter. "So you see it was nothing at all to do with me locking you in Quelch's room. In fact, I didn't even know you were locked in. It was all Fishy's fault. He gave me a bob to—to—I mean he didn't give me a bob to imitate Quelch's voice."

"You—you—"

"Nothing of the kind," said Bunter, blinking hopefully at the junior's faces. "I say, I think I'll go now, you fellows."

"Will you?" breathed Harry Wharton. "Not yet, my pippin! A dozen with a fives-bat for Bunter, you chaps. Then we'll go and interview friend Fishy."

"Oh dear! I say, you fellows, I'd rather you reserved your energies for walloping that skinny beast Fishy, you

know. I've explained that it wasn't me, haven't I? And—Yoop! Leggo, Cherry, you beast! Oh crumbs! Leggo you—"

There was no escape for Bunter, however, despite the fact that he had explained that it wasn't him. He was whirled over a chair, and the next moment a fives-bat was brought into play across his tight trousers. Harry Wharton gave him a dozen, and then Bob Cherry, with a parting kick "for luck," sent Bunter whirling out into the passage.

Bunter sat down on the passage floor with a bump, but he was up again like a flash of lightning as the Famous Five and Vernon-Smith trooped out after him, and he took to his heels.

"Now for friend Fishy," said Harry Wharton grimly. "It's worth risking missing the thumping post to deal with that crafty scheme. We—we'll bust him for this."

"Yes, rather!"

They hurried along to Study No. 14 without further ado. Much as they wanted to get back to their labours, and urgent as the matter was, they felt they could not postpone dealing with the crafty Transatlantic junior. Moreover, Bob Cherry wanted his typewriter back. Most of the keys of the machine were loose, and some of the letters were missing, and the carriage was accustomed to jamming every now and again. But it was a typewriter, and—in Bob Cherry's view, at all events—it was better than scribbling with a pen.

In any case, the juniors were savage at being held up, and more savage still at being tricked by the oversharper American junior from "Noo Yark."

As they approached the door they heard the angry voice of Sampson Quincey Ifley Field, who had the misfortune to share that study with Fisher T. Fish—a misfortune he shared with Johnny Bull.

"Out you go," he was snorting, "and take that rusty box of tricks with you. Think I can do my prep with that thumping row going on? Out it goes, you burbling freak! I suppose you want it for some of your rotten swindling dodges!"

"I guess I don't," came Fishy's nasal twang. "I guess that typewriter's staying right hyer—jest a few!"

"But prep—"

"Blow prep!" snorted Fishy. "I guess I've got a noo stunt, and I guess I'm going through with it. Now I've no time to waste in chin-wag, Squiff, you galoot. Hear me yaup? I'm going to start hustling now from the word go. There's the door. I guess you'd better vamoose the ranch. Yooooop!"

Fisher T. Fish ended his remarks with a kind of strangled yelp. The juniors guessed that Squiff, the Australian junior, had cut them short with a tap on Fishy's long, sharp nose.

They were quite right, as it happened. As they dashed in the next moment they saw Fishy standing hugging his nose, while Squiff faced him across the table, shaking a fist at him.

"Why, you rustling galoot, I'll make potato-scrappings of you for that!" Fishy was howling, when he stopped and his jaw dropped as he sighted Harry Wharton & Co.

"Oh, Jerusalem!" he gasped. "Oh, great jumping snakes!"

"Yes, you rotter!" hooped Bob Cherry, his eye on the typewriter on the table. "So Bunter was right, you—you spoofer!"

"I—I guess—"

"Collar him!" roared Johnny Bull.

There was a rush round both sides of the table. Squiff looked on with a cheerful grin as several pairs of hands grasped Fisher T. Fish and whirled him over the floor. The juniors were saving him the trouble of dealing with Fishy. But it was more than likely that Fisher T. Fish himself would have preferred Squiff to deal with him during the next few breathless moments.

Despite his yells and threats, Fisher T. Fish was soundly bumped for the second time that evening, and then cinders were rubbed into his lank hair together with a mixture of gum, most of which ran down his thin features in streaks, and much of which got into his mouth whenever he opened it to yell.

The avengers finished at last; and Fisher T. Fish was a sight when they had finished with him. He sat on the carpet and gasped and gasped as if for a wager.

"Ow! Ow - wow! Garrough! Mum - mum - mum!" he spluttered. "Oh, Jerusalem crickets! Yow-wow! I guess I'll - grooooh! - make potato - peelings and chewing-gum of you! Ow-wow! I guess I'll scalp you, you-yow! - pesky jays! Oh Jerusalem!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry gathered up his typewriter—which had obviously not been used yet—and followed by his laughing fellow-journalists, he vacated the study. The Co. left Fisher T. Fish making use of the most extraordinary Transatlantic expressions, among which "pesky galoots" and "gol-darned mugwumps" were numerous and familiar. Then they trooped off to finish their literary labours—in peace this time.

Fisher T. Fish did not get his leaflets done that evening—nor did he bother further about borrowing or hiring a typewriter. He spent most of the evening in the bath-room, scrubbing and rubbing at his mop of inky and gummy and cindery hair.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Fishy's Scheme!

HARRY WHARTON saw nothing further of Fisher T. Fish until bedtime that evening. And they smiled as they saw him. Having got their "stuff" for the next issue of the football supplement off just in the nick of time to the printers, the editorial staff of that valuable periodical



With a jam-tart in one hand and a chunk of cake in another fat fist Billy Bunter blinked in utter dismay at the wrathful faces of Harry Wharton & Co. "Oh—oh dear!" he mumbled, his mouth full of cake. "I—I say, you fellows—" "You fat burglar!" "You spoofing rotter!" "You fat poacher!" "Scrag him!" There was a combined rush, and Bunter howled. (See Chapter 2.)

were feeling more like smiling than they were earlier on that evening.

Moreover, Fisher T. Fish was still something to smile at. All his scrubbing and rubbing had failed to remove all of the ink and gum and cinders. There were still traces left, and Fishy's face looked like a boiled beetroot, and his hair like a cleaning-mop.

But on Bob Cherry asking him how his latest "scheme" was progressing, and what it was, Fishy scowled and refused to enlighten him. Possibly that was because Fishy had not got the business fixed up yet.

In the morning, however, Fisher T. Fish looked much more cheerful, and quite his usual keen and brisk self. Harry Wharton & Co. were very curious to know what his latest business "stunt" was; but their questions were received with a wink and a grin by the Transatlantic junior.

"I guess you'll know soon enough," he said, rubbing his long nose. "I kinder guess and calculate that it's a real top-notch, a gilt-edged business scheme. I guess I'm going to show you

that an American business man can be a philanthropic galoot and make money, too. Yep. You galoots keep your optics on Fisher T. Fish!"

And with that Fisher T. Fish winked and walked away.

The Removites were very curious. They were always interested in Fishy's innumerable schemes for making money. They were always planned out to be of great profit to Fishy and great loss to the fellows innocent enough to "fall" for them. But somehow they never quite came "off." They usually ended in grief and sorrow for their keen, businesslike promoter.

But though he never seemed to make any money, and though, indeed, his plans usually ended in loss and sorrow for Fishy, the keen Transatlantic junior was never discouraged by failure. He was a stickler first and last, whatever his many other failings and qualities were.

Moreover, his wheezes usually provided plenty of entertainment for the Remove. Hence the great interest and curiosity now on the part of Harry

Wharton & Co. and the Remove in general.

That morning in the Form-room Mr. Quelch also seemed to be interested in Fisher T. Fish. More than once as the first lesson progressed he glanced sharply at Fishy. And at last, suddenly seeing Fish fall forward over his desk with his head in his hands, Mr. Quelch came round to him.

"Fish!" he said, in no little alarm. "What is the matter, my boy? I have noticed that your manner has been somewhat strange this morning. Are you ill?"

Fisher T. Fish gave a hollow groan, and looked up. His face was always more or less pasty and white, but it looked uncommonly pale now. Had Mr. Quelch looked closely at it he might have observed that chalk had been gently rubbed over it.

But Mr. Quelch—usually the keenest-eyed of masters—failed to note the old dodge on this occasion. Fishy—unlike Bunter—rarely tried to cut lessons by feigning illness. Mr. Quelch never even thought of suspecting such a thing of Fish at that moment.

"I guess I feel real bad, sir," groaned Fish. "I guess I've got a head on me like—like a gol-darned hive of bees. Yep!"

Mr. Quelch set his lips, but he overlooked Fishy's lapse into American slang—a little failing of Fisher T. Fish's which the Remove master abominated.

"You—you mean you have a headache, Fish?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Yep—I mean, yes, sir," groaned Fish. "I—I guess—I mean I think it was the bacon this morning, sir—or the porridge."

"Nonsense, Fish! It is more likely the need of more fresh air and exercise, my boy. I have noticed that you are reluctant to take part in healthy games, and that you are in the habit of staying indoors too much, Fish. However, if you are feeling unwell—and you certainly do not look well—you may go up to your dormitory and lie down for an hour."

"Yep—I mean, yes, sir," said Fish promptly. "I guess that will soon cure this hyer headache, sir."

Mr. Quelch nodded, and Fisher T. Fish rose from his seat and walked to the door. He was watched by many envious eyes—in fact, there was scarcely a fellow in the Remove who did not glare after him enviously. The Removites would not have minded possessing Fishy's headache, for the simple reason that they knew perfectly well that Fisher T. Fish had no headache.

"Well, the spoofing rotter!" breathed Harry Wharton.

"Spoofing, of course," agreed Frank Nugent. "My hat! I never thought he had it in him to risk it!"

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob Cherry. "My typewriter! That's what the fraud's after! How lucky I locked it up in the cupboard!"

"Silence!" said Mr. Quelch tartly. "Cherry, take fifty lines for speaking in class!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!"

Bob Cherry ceased to murmur or grin after that, and the lesson proceeded—without Fisher T. Fish.

That crafty junior's face lost its expression of dismal pain and woe the moment the door had closed upon him. For Harry Wharton had been right—and Bob Cherry had been right. Fisher T. Fish was spoofing, and his intention was to spend the hour Mr. Quelch had so kindly given him by purloining and

using Bob's typewriter for the purpose of typing out his leaflets.

"Gee! I guess that was a first-chop stunt!" he murmured gleefully, as he hurried along to the Remove studies. "Now for that typewriter! I guess that galoot, Cherry, was ignorant of the fact that this guy was raised in little old Noo Yark, and that he has his eye-teeth cut—yep!"

And Fishy chuckled, and entered Study No. 1, where he judged the typewriter would be, as that was the editorial sanctum as well as the study owned by Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent.

But his keen face fell as he searched the room to no avail. He tried the cupboard door, and then he groaned.

"Waal, the suspicious jay!" he mumbled in disgust. "I reckon I never counted on Cherry being so slick! He's locked it up in this hyer cupboard—that is, unless it's in his own study."

Still hopeful, Fisher T. Fish hurried along to the study Bob Cherry shared with Mark Linley, Hurrec Singh, and Wun Lung. But again he was disappointed; there was no sign of a typewriter in that apartment.

Fisher T. Fish turned away from the study in deep dismay.

"Dished, diddled, and done!" he groaned. "Waal, I swow! I reckon I'll have to write 'em out after all—though they'd look more businesslike and convincing typed—yep! Gee!"

Fishy T. Fish paused as a sudden startling idea occurred to him.

"Waal, I swow!" he murmured, rubbing his nasal organ reflectively. "Why not? I guess there ain't no risk worth a red cent! Gee! Old Quelch ain't likely to leave the Form, and I guess I'll soon tap 'em off! Gee! I'll do it! Blessed if I won't!"

Having come to that decision, Fisher T. Fish hurried along to Mr. Quelch's study. The door was slightly ajar, and, pushing it further open, Fish sneaked inside. He soon saw what he wanted—Mr. Quelch's typewriter.

It stood on a side table with a cover over it. With his heart thumping a trifle uneasily, Fisher T. Fish closed the door and stepped up to the machine.

Then he paused hesitatingly.

Should he take the typewriter to his own study, or should he use it here? After much indecision the Transatlantic junior decided upon the latter course. It was certainly risky. But it was extremely unlikely that Mr. Quelch would visit the study at that hour. While it was more than possible that Fish might blunder into someone while carting the heavy machine to his own study.

After all, it would not take him long to "tap 'em off."

With these reflections, and with many inward qualms, Fisher T. Fish seated himself at the table and took the cover off the machine. Then he grabbed a heap of Mr. Quelch's writing-paper and got to work—feverishly, as if he did not trust his own courage to carry on with his daring project.

Very soon the sharp clicking of the typewriter was heard in Mr. Quelch's sanctum. Fishy had extracted a piece of paper from his pocket—a draft of the leaflet he proposed to broadcast among his fellow Removites—and soon he was copying it out at top speed. The paper was thin, and with the help of Mr. Quelch's carbon-paper he reeled the leaflets off half a dozen at a time.

He very soon warmed up to his task, and he had almost forgotten where he

was when a firm rap sounded at the door.

Fisher T. Fish almost leaped out of his skin.

But he had sense enough to cram the bundle of leaflets he had done into his pocket, and he had scarcely done so when the door opened and someone looked in.

As he saw who that someone was Fisher T. Fish almost collapsed through sheer fright.

It was Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars!

"Oh, jumping snakes!" breathed Fishy.

His knees knocked together with sheer terror.

Dr. Locke raised his eyebrows as he sighted the American junior, and then he came into the room.

"Bless my soul!" he exclaimed, peering at the Removite over his spectacles. "What are you doing here, boy?"

Dr. Locke had happened to hear the clicking of that typewriter, and wishing to speak with Mr. Quelch, whom he had expected to find in his Form-room, he had come into the room. He certainly did not expect to find a junior boy here, however.

Fisher T. Fish said nothing—he couldn't. He was utterly "floored," as he would have expressed it himself. Dr. Locke's keen glance hardened. Guilt and dismay were only too plain on the hapless features of Fisher T. Fish.

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Locke. "Am I to understand from your silence that you are here without Mr. Quelch's permission, Fish?"

"Oh, dear! I—I— No. I mean yes, sir. That is, yes, sir. I guess I mean no—yes, sir!"

It was rather difficult even for the Head of Greyfriars to make much of that reply. But Fisher T. Fish's face was enough reply for Dr. Locke.

His face went grim.

"Wretched boy!" he said angrily. "Answer me truthfully at once! Does your Form-master know that you are here?"

"No, sir," groaned Fish.

"You are using Mr. Quelch's typewriter without his permission?" gasped the Head.

"Oh, crik—I mean yes, sir," groaned the hapless Fish.

"Bless my soul! This—this is unheard of! A boy—a junior boy—making use of his master's room and typewriter without his permission, and in class hours! I—I— Good gracious! So that is what you were typing! You utterly absurd boy!"

And Dr. Locke blinked in amazement at the sheet of paper still in the machine—a fact Fisher T. Fish had overlooked.

No wonder the Head of Greyfriars blinked at it. There was little on the sheet as yet, but what there was was certainly surprising. It read as follows:

"ATTENTION!

THE GREYFRIARS DEBT-COLLECTING AGENCY.

LOOK RIGHT HERE!

DOES ANYONE OWE YOU MONEY?

If so, go to:

Fisher T. Fish, Study No. 14, the Financial Adviser and Commercial—"

That was as far as Fishy had got with the leaflet he had in the machine.

The headmaster of Greyfriars blinked at the extraordinary epistle, and then he looked at Fisher T. Fish. It was a

look that almost made the "financial adviser" shrivel up.

"Fish!" thundered the Head. "How—what—what— Ah! I presume this is intended for an absurd joke, Fish?"

Fishy gasped like a stranded fish.

"Yep—I guess I mean—that is—oh, yes, sir. Just—just a joke, of course!" he groaned. "I—I did it to—to pass the time away, sir."

"The time you should be spending in your Form-room, I presume, Fish?" said Dr. Locke, in a terrible voice.

"Ow! Yep—I mean, no, sir!" gasped Fishy. "I guess I was sent—"

"Come with me at once," interrupted the Head.

He sailed to the door and went out, his gown rustling ominously. Fisher T. Fish stumbled after him, his sharp features the picture of woe. The door of the Remove Form-room was reached, and the Head sailed into the room. Fisher T. Fish followed.

Mr. Quelch looked round from the blackboard, and the Form stared at the sight of the Transatlantic junior behind the Head. There was a scraping of feet as the juniors stood up, but a curt gesture from Dr. Locke sent them into their seats again.

"Mr. Quelch!" exclaimed the Head grimly. "Were you aware that this boy was absent from the Form-room?"

"Yes, sir," said Mr. Quelch, looking astonished. "Fish complained of feeling unwell, and I sent him to lie down for an hour. You will note that he looks far from well."

At that moment Fisher T. Fish certainly did look far from well.

Dr. Locke pursed his lips.

"Possibly you have not had the opportunity of seeing the boy's features at close quarters, Mr. Quelch," he said grimly. "You will note on careful examination, however, that flour or chalk has been rubbed over his face—a very old trick, Mr. Quelch."

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"The boy was undoubtedly malingering in order to escape lessons, Mr. Quelch," said the Head. "Hearing the tapping of a typewriter proceeding from your study, I entered, believing I should find you there. Instead, I found this wretched boy. He was seated at your desk at work on your typewriter, Mr. Quelch."

"G-good gracious!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

The look he gave Fisher T. Fish made that business genius feel suddenly faint.

"You—you found Fish at work in my study using my typewriter, sir?" ejaculated the Remove master.

"Precisely, Mr. Quelch. Fish, you will read out to Mr. Quelch what you had already typed on that sheet of paper."

"Ow! Oh, yep—I mean, yes, sir."

With knees knocking together, Fish read out his notice as the Head handed it to him grimly.

There was a loud gasp from the Remove as he read it out. The Form had been very curious to know what Fishy's latest stunt was; they knew now. But they were far too scared to laugh.

"So that's it!" breathed Harry Wharton to Bob Cherry. "Phew! The awful ass! Now the chopper will come down!"

The august presence of the Head was enough to keep the Form from expressing their views of Fishy's scheme either in grins or laughter. They just stared at the shivering financier.

"Instead of obeying your order to lie down, Mr. Quelch," said the Head sternly, "the wretched boy has been

amusing himself by typing that farrago of nonsense on your machine. Such impudence and disregard for discipline I have never heard of. I will leave you to deal with him, Mr. Quelch, and I trust that you will not err on the side of leniency."

"I shall certainly deal severely with the impudent boy," said Mr. Quelch.

And he meant it—there could be no doubting that. As the Head left the room with dignified stride Mr. Quelch turned a baleful glare upon Fisher T. Fish that boded ill for that unfortunate business man.

That Fish had dared to disobey him was bad enough; that he also had dared to visit his room and handle his precious typewriter was far worse. Yet it was something else which made Mr. Quelch's eyes glint ferociously. It was the thought that Dr. Locke had observed what he had failed to observe—that Fisher T. Fish was malingering.

Mr. Quelch felt humiliated—and he felt justly annoyed at the cause of his humiliation.

"Fish!" he gasped. "Wretched boy! I—I am exceedingly angry with you! You have not only dared to disobey me, but you have dared to visit my room and use my typewriter without permission, in order to—to produce that absurd and ridiculous rubbish!"

Here Mr. Quelch almost snatched the leaflet from Fish's hand, and, tearing it to shreds, he flung the pieces into the waste-paper basket.

Apparently the Remove master shared the Head's view that the "Greyfriars Debt-Collecting Agency" was just an absurd joke—nonsense which Fish had typed just to amuse himself. It was exceedingly fortunate that the Head and Mr. Quelch did take that view—for Fishy.

Needless to say, the Remove did not share that view—far from it. They realised that this was Fish's latest stunt—made public at last. Fisher T. Fish loved publicity, and here he was getting it; his publicity agents being the Head and Mr. Quelch, as it were.

Yet Fish did not look pleased.

He groaned in deep bitterness of spirit as Mr. Quelch walked to his desk and took therefrom a cane.

"Touch your toes, Fish!" he said.

"Oh crumbs!"

Fisher T. Fish groaned and touched his toes. And the next moment Mr. Quelch's cane came into play. In his time the Transatlantic junior had received—and earned—a good many lickings, but he had never received such a licking as Mr. Quelch administered that morning.

It was a record licking, and it left Mr. Quelch gasping, and the hapless Fishy moaning and gurgling—having used all his breath up howling by that time—and wriggling and squirming in deep anguish.

"There!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Let that be a lasting lesson to you, Fish! I do not think you will ever dare to play



Fisher T. Fish made a rush at Bunter. But as he did so Bob Cherry—by accident or otherwise—placed a foot in the way, and the business genius took a header into the fireplace. Fisher T. Fish howled as one waving bony hand caught against the hot bars of the grate. "Yooop! I'm burnt," he roared. "Oh, Jerusalem! Grooooh!" (See Chapter 6.)

such impudent pranks again. Now go to your place, wretched boy!"

Fishy tottered to his place, groaning and panting. His expression of anguish was enough to move a heart of stone. Even the Remove could not help feeling sympathy for him, although they could not help grinning.

Through the rows of grinning faces Fisher T. Fish passed to his place. Whatever sort of debt-collector Fishy proved to be, he had certainly succeeded in collecting the debt Mr. Quelch owed him in full. And the fact that he had succeeded in borrowing a typewriter at last, and that in his pocket reposed a bundle of typed leaflets announcing his new business venture, did not afford him much comfort during the remainder of that distressful morning.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Nothing Doing!

"POOR old Fishy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a howl of laughter in the passage as the Remove came out of classes that morning. By that time Fishy's anguish had subsided somewhat, and with it had subsided what little sympathy the Remove felt for Fisher T. Fish. They were at liberty to laugh as much as they liked now, and they did laugh.

Fishy's schemes for making money out of his innocent schoolfellows were always weird and wonderful; but all agreed that his latest was the limit.

"Here he is!" bawled Billy Bunter. "He, he, he! What price the giddy debt-hunter? I say, Fishy, tell us all about it, old chap!"

Fisher T. Fish, who had just emerged from the Form-room, glowered round at the grinning faces of the Remove.

"Yes, let's hear details of the scheme, Fishy," asked Bob Cherry cheerily. "You've no need to tell us where the swindle comes in; we'll be able to spot that for ourselves when we know the details. The whole thing sounds fishy, anyhow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess there's nothing for you slab-sided mugwumps to hee-haw at!" groaned Fish. "I guess it's the real goods, and I guess it was jest bad luck that made the Head mosey along jest then. I guess it makes no difference to this galoot, anyhow. I guess you durned mugwumps will jest jump at my dandy scheme when you're put wise to it."

"I guess we shall be mugs if we do, whatever we are about the wumps!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, let up!" groaned Fishy, in disgust. "You guys in this worn-out, sleepy little old island make me tired. I guess I don't feel up to making you jays wise jest now, though. I guess I'll expound after dinner."

And, amidst a chorus of chuckles, Fisher T. Fish limped away, rubbing himself tenderly. Apparently he did not feel up to business just then.

"Well, my hat!" chuckled Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five walked away. "The Greysfriars Debt-Collecting Agency—eh? What a scream! As if any fellow would give Fishy any debt to collect!"

"Well, I don't know about that!" grinned Frank Nugent. "If there's any fellow who can wangle cash out of anybody, it's Fishy. He'll worry the life out of a chap until he does pay up."

"And then he'd keep it for himself,"

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and the creditor could whistle for his money!" grunted Johnny Bull. "I fancy I can guess what's behind it. The swindler's hoping to work this wheeze in conjunction with a money-lending game. It's a wheeze to get hold of cash to finance a loan business."

"Oh, my hat! I never thought of that!" said Harry Wharton.

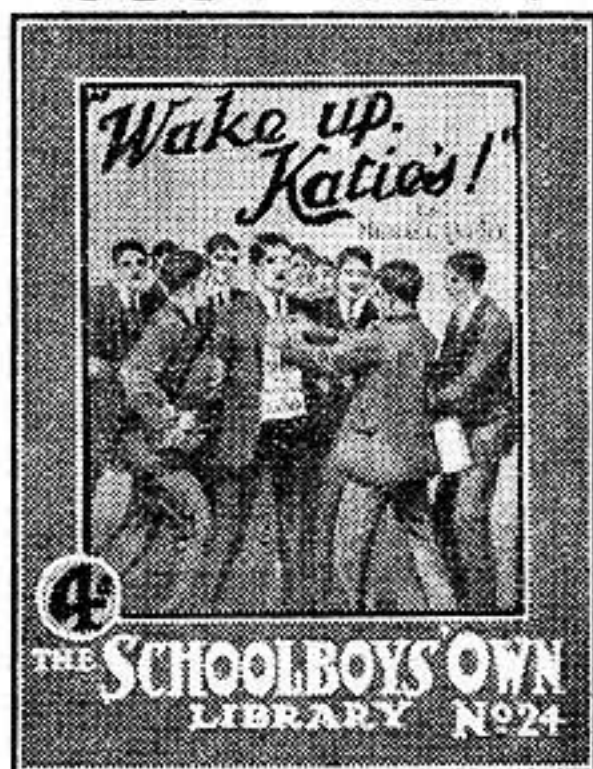
"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "That's it. He'll collect debts at so much per cent, and then he'll loan out the cash he's collected at something more per cent. Good old Fishy!"

"The rotten swindler!" growled Harry Wharton. "The debt collecting isn't so bad, but we'll soon put the kybosh on him if he starts any money-lending again; we've had enough of that from him."

"Yes, rather!"

At dinner Fisher T. Fish was an object of great attention in the Lower School. He seemed to be quite himself by this time, though it was noticeable that he seemed to find the form he was sitting

JUST OUT!



A Rousing School Story by an old favourite, MICHAEL POOLE, and well worth reading, boys!

on particularly uncomfortable. He was the first fellow out of the dinner-room, and the Famous Five understood why when they found a leaflet lying on their study table a few moments later. Evidently Fish was starting his business activities again in earnest.

The juniors read the notice with many chuckles. It ran as follows:

"ATTENTION!

THE GREYFRIARS DEBT-COLLECTING AGENCY!

LOOK RIGHT HERE!

DOES ANYONE OWE YOU MONEY?

If so, go to:

Fisher T. Fish, Study No. 14, the Financial Adviser and Commercial Accountant,
And Give Him Your

BAD DEBTS TO COLLECT.

PROMPTNESS — SPEED — LOW COMMISSION.

ROLL UP!

THE GREYFRIARS DEBT-COLLECTING AGENCY!

Offices: Study No. 14, Remove Passage.
President: F. T. Fish.

WHY LOSE YOUR MONEY?

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "Good old Fishy! What hopes he's got!"

"He's certainly an optimist!" grinned Harry Wharton. "Blessed if I can see how he can make much money out of a wheeze like that, even supposing—Hullo, here he is!"

The door opened at that point, and the angular features of Fisher T. Fish looked in. He came into the room and closed the door briskly behind him.

There was a keen look on his face, and he had a notebook and pencil in his hands.

"I guess you galoots have read my notice, then?" he remarked, with satisfaction. "Good! Well, what about it? I guess I'm ready to do business hyer and now. Got any bad debts?"

"Oh, rats! Hook it, you money-grabbing rotter!"

"I guess you're only joking, Wharton," said Fish, wetting the end of his pencil. "Now this hyer's a real sound business proposition; debts collected speedily; no pressure used unless instructed by clients; utmost secrecy observed, if necessary; low commission. How's that?"

"What's the commission, Fishy?" asked Bob Cherry thoughtfully.

"All depends," said Fishy. "If it's an ordinary debt I charge ten per cent on all money collected. If it means collecting dust from a guy who's likely to commit assault on the collector, then I reckon I charge a stiffer commission. Get me? I guess that's fair enough."

"Well, that's so," agreed Bob. "Is collecting debts to be the sole work of the—ahem!—agency, Fishy?"

"Waal," said Fish, with rather a doubtful glance at Harry Wharton, "I reckon there's a little side-line to the business that ain't down on that there bill. I kinder reckon that if any galoot wants a little loan at any time from the agency, this guy won't object to lending a bit of dust. Nope, sir. Debt-collecting ain't all—not by a long chalk!"

Johnny Bull gave a grunt.

"I told you so!" he sniffed. "The swindling rotter's going to collect debts just to finance a thumping money-lending business!"

"I guess not!" snorted Fishy promptly, though he eyed the juniors rather uneasily. "I guess this hyer business is going to be run on sound lines of business. You let up, Bull. I guess this study won't be interested in that side-line, though. Nope. I'm hyer asking for debts to collect. I reckon I spotted you loaning Bolsover half-a-crown on Monday, Wharton?"

"That's so," said Harry, smiling.

"What about it?" said Fishy eagerly, his book and pencil ready. "I guess you've only got to say the word, and that debt's not going to be a debt for long, pard. Ten per cent for this guy."

He held the pencil ready to write.

"Well," smiled Harry, "if you can get half-a-crown from Bolsy, you can have twenty per cent of it, Fishy."

Fishy's eyes glistened.

"Is that the straight goods?"

"Certainly. I don't propose to bother Bolsover about it again," smiled

Harry. As he had already been paid that morning by Bolsover, it was unlikely Harry would bother him again. "You can have it all for that matter if you can get it, Fishy."

"Gee!" grinned Fisher T. Fish. It was the sort of business deal he liked. He scribbled the "debt" down in his book. Then he looked up. "I guess that half-a-crown's mine, Wharton. I reckon I'll rope it in all right. I'm going to publish a gazette every week giving the names of the debtors and the amounts they owe. I kinder reckon and calculate that the galoots won't like that!" he added, with a chuckle. "They'll pony up slick enough then, I reckon. Get me?"

The juniors did "get" him. They chuckled. If Fish was going to work on those methods he was booked for a very warm time from the debtors he proposed to pillory.

"Publicity will durned soon make 'em pony up!" grinned Fishy, winking. "But I reckon I've no time to waste discussing my dinky business methods. Nope, sirs! I guess I'm waiting for more business from you galoots."

"Well, I fancy we can put a bit more business in your way," said Bob Cherry thoughtfully. "There's a fellow who owes us all various sums of money—quite a considerable sum each, in fact. If—"

"Gee! That's the stuff to give 'em," said Fishy briskly. "Name of debtor, and what amount?"

"Bunter! Heaven knows what amount!" chuckled Bob.

Fish slammed his book shut and snorted.

"Oh, jumping crickets," he snorted in deep disgust, "cut that galoot out! I guess I've already got that pesky fat guy down from a dozen clients. I guess I ain't taking on any more. I calculate I'm going ter haunt the fat clam until he does pony up; but I reckon I'll be lucky to get enough to buy a pesky collar-stud. Nope, sirs! Getting dollars outter that pesky fat quitter is like chivvying gold-dust outter a durned clay brick! Yep! Now, gentlemen—"

Bob Cherry looked hesitatingly at Harry Wharton—winking with the eye farthest from Fish as he did so.

"What about Loder, Harry?" he muttered, with more hesitation. "Dare—dare we—"

"I don't see any harm in it," answered Harry. He didn't because he was ignorant of Bob's cheerful intention.

Fishy pricked up his ears and looked from Bob to Harry.

"Loder mightn't like its being made public," murmured Bob, shaking his head. "But—but we must have our money, Harry. Think it—it's safe to trust Fishy? Two quids, you know."

"Hyer," cut in Fishy, his eyes gleaming. "I guess I'm on to this, pards! I reckon yew ken trust Fisher T. Fish—jest a few! Two golden quids! Gee! Jest you—"

"Fishy might manage it perhaps," went on Bob, as if appealing to his chums. "It's no good our tackling the blighter—not a bit! We shall never get two quids out of Loder unless Fishy gets it for us. I vote we risk it."

"Right-ho!"

"The rightfulness is terrific!"

The Famous Five seemed quite ready to risk it.

"It's like this, Fishy," said Bob cheerfully. "Loder happened to be hard-up a few weeks ago."

"He always is hard-up, I guess!" grinned Fishy.

"That's so. Everybody knows it!"

"MAGNET" PORTRAIT GALLERY.

No. 27—"Micky" Desmond (of the Remove).



A happy-go-lucky son of the Emerald Isle, Michael—to give him his proper Christian name—can hardly be called a Greyfriars celebrity. Good-natured, not too strong-willed, for he is easily led astray by a more forcible personality, Micky seldom, if ever, figures as a leader. But he is a stout follower, while he lasts, and always ready to back up hot words with hard fists. Rather musically inclined; in fact, we might almost say that Micky is "Jack of all trades," but master of none. Although he is fairly popular with his school-fellows, Desmond is more often found in the company of his study-mates, Rake, Wibley, and Morgan—sharing Study No. 6—than amongst the other members of the Remove.

smiled Bob. "Well, if you can screw two quids out of Loder, Fishy, you can have twenty-five per cent out of it. That's a bargain!"

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Fisher T. Fish Gets to Work!

FISHER T. FISH chuckled and scribbled in his book. That Bob was pulling his Transatlantic leg he didn't suspect for a moment. It was true that Loder was always hard up, that shady prefect having a partiality for gee-gees and such like. It was also true that the Famous Five were generous youths, always ready to help a fellow in trouble—even a prefect who backed gee-gees.

Had it been Skinner, or any other fellows than the Famous Five, Fishy would have been suspicious—very suspicious. But, sharp as he was, Fishy was not suspicious in this instance. In his keen eagerness to get clients Fish quite failed to see that Bob had chosen his words carefully, and that he had not stated that Loder owed them two "quids."

He looked up at length with a gleeful grin.

"I guess you galoots were soft mug-wumps to lend that pesky rotter two

quids!" he grinned. "Yew ken leave it to this hyer guy, though. I kinder reckon I'll soon put paid to his account! I reckon he won't like it nosed about that he borrowed dollars from juniors. Nope, sirs! He'll pony up like a bird when I start my publicity stunt! Yep! Any more business, gents?"

"I think that's all," smiled Harry. "The allfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree-Singh.

"Waal," grinned Fish, closing his book. "I guess that's enough to be going on with, anyhow. I guess I'll get down to business right now, and interview Bolsover and that pesky guy Loder. I reckon I'll show the jays that this child was raised in little old Noo Yark, where they grow business guys!"

And with that Fisher T. Fish departed briskly. Apparently he proposed to drop touting for clients and devote a little time to debt-collecting—much more serious business.

The Famous Five roared as his brisk footsteps died away.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Not even Bob Cherry had expected the keen Transatlantic junior to swallow the bait. Yet he had, obviously, in his keen eagerness to do "business."

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"Bob, you rot!" roared Harry Wharton at last. "Loder's a—alp the silly chump! You shouldn't—"

"Rot!" said Bob cheerfully. "He's out to swindle all and sundry, and he deserves all he gets—and more. My hat! We simply must see what happens to him. Come on!"

Bob hurried out of the study, and his chums followed him quickly enough. There was no sign of Fishy then, but as they hurried along a study door flew open and a figure, seemingly all arms and legs, flew out, striking the passage wall opposite with a crash.

The study was Bolsover major's, and the figure was Fisher T. Fish. Bolsover—whose hefty boot had been the power that had propelled Fishy from the study—stood in the doorway and glowered down at him.

"Now, clear out, you skinny swindler!" he roared. "Come here again with your monkey tricks and I'll make mincemeat of you!"

Slam!

The door slammed, and Fishy, his hair almost on end, and his collar and tie twisted round his neck, sat up and panted.

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!" he gasped. "Why, I'll—I'll make potato-shavings of the pesky galoot! I'll—I'll make corned beef of the rustling jay! Oh crikey! Ow-wow!"

He scrambled to his feet; but he made no attempt to charge back into the study and carry out his terrific threats.

"Hard lines!" said Bob Cherry gravely. "Any luck, Fishy?"

Fishy glared at him.

"Nope!" he hissed, struggling with his tie. "I guess the rustler ain't finished with this guy, though. I guess I'll make him squirm when I start my publicity stunt! I guess I ain't letting that half-dollar nose off—not for a dozen boots. I guess I expected this. I guess it ain't going to stop me raking in the dollars, though."

Fisher T. Fish limped away—still guessing. The juniors waited a bit, and then they followed on his trail. They were expecting that after his last unfortunate failure, Fishy would hesitate before tackling Loder of the Sixth. But Fishy did not hesitate.

Fisher T. Fish was a sticker—when he was on the trail of "dollars."

On arriving outside Loder's study door the juniors found the door slightly open, and they heard Fishy's nasal twang from within.

"I guess that sort of yarn don't cut ice with this hyer infant, Loder," Fisher T. Fish was saying. "I guess I'm after that two quid—every time. I reckon Wharton and his pards have placed the debt in my hands to deal with. I mean cold business from the word 'Go!' Yep! Jest a few!"

"You—you cheeky little rat!" came from Loder in a strangled sort of gasp. "You—you—"

"Cut it out!" snapped Fishy. "Cut it right out! I guess you wouldn't like this hyer infant to publish the fact that you've borrowed dollars from juniors? Nope! I guess you'll squirm some if I let it out that you'd borrowed two quids to pay a durned gambler—Hyar! Jest you—Leggo, you quitter! Hyer—Yarooogh! Oh Jerusalem! I guess—Yoooop!"

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

From within the study came a sudden series of sharp slaps like a pillow being beaten with a stick. They were accompanied by fiendish yelps from Fisher T.

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Fish. Bob Cherry peeped inside the study and was vastly entertained by the sight of Fishy being held across the table, whilst Loder laid his cane across his nether garments.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

Apparently Fishy had banked on Loder not daring to be high-handed concerning the debt from fear of publicity. But as Loder did not owe the debt it was scarcely likely he would be afraid of publicity!

Nor was he. He laid into the squirming and howling Fisher T. Fish, and that sharp business genius discovered he had "banked" on a very feeble reed, so to speak. But Loder was tired at last, and, throwing the cane down he yanked Fish to the door and hurled him forth into the passage. Fisher T. Fish—for the second time that noon—canonned against the passage wall, and sat down with a hearty thump on the linoleum.

Not daring to laugh, the juniors gurgled with mirth as Loder's door slammed, and Fisher T. Fish sat up, groaning and gasping weirdly. The juniors had no sympathy whatever with the over-sharp business man of the Remove. Fishy's methods of doing business and his grasping greed did not appeal to Harry Wharton & Co.

"Hard lines, Fishy!" said Bob Cherry. "What's happened, old chap? What did Loder do that for?"

"Ow!" panted Fish. "Ow-wow! I guess I'm hurt! Ow! Oh, Jerusalem crickets! I guess I'll make that quitter squirm for this! I guess I never expected this! I reckon I expected the rotter would shy at a guy letting it out that he'd been borrowing dollars from juniors. Ow-wow!"

"Great pip! Has Loder been borrowing from juniors?" said Bob Cherry in surprise.

Fishy looked up and stopped rubbing himself abruptly.

"Eh? Look hyer, you guy, I guess you were the galoots who loaned him the dollars, and I guess you—"

"We loaned Loder money?" ejaculated Bob. "What rot! Loder owes us no money!"

Fishy gaped.

"You—you lent him two quid, didn't you?" he howled. "I guess—"

"What an idea!" said Bob cheerfully. "We never lent Loder a quid or two quids in our giddy lives, Fishy."

"But you said—" almost shrieked Fishy.

"I said that we should never get two quid from Loder unless you got it for us, and I said you could have twenty-five per cent if you did manage to screw two quid out of him. I didn't mention that he owed us two quid. Quite a mistake, Fishy, old dear! Loder doesn't owe us a giddy penny!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Waal, I swow!"

Fishy's lean face was a study. He glared and glared up at the laughing juniors. It dawned upon him now that his leg had been pulled.

"You—you—you—" he gasped.

"As for Bolsover's half-crown," went on Bob blandly, "that was another little mistake, Fishy. Wharton ought to have mentioned the fact that Bolsover paid it him back yesterday. I suppose that was why Bolsover was waxy—because he'd already paid it back!"

"You—you— Why, I'll—I'll—"

Words failed the business man of the Remove then, and he jumped up in towering wrath. He was no fighting man—far from it—but this was more than even Fisher T. Fish could stand. He gave a ferocious howl, and went for

the laughing juniors with a rush. The juniors scattered, howling with laughter. They did not want Fish to catch them; they felt that Fish had suffered enough for the time being.

Fisher T. Fish had undoubtedly. He gave up the chase, and his face was dismal as he limped back to his own study. His early experiences as a debt-collector had certainly not been a success, either financially or otherwise.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Fishy is Persistent!

THE story of Fish's debut as a debt-collector caused a great deal of amusement in the Remove—and in other Forms. But Fishy recked nothing of either scorn, anger, or ridicule on the part of his fellow juniors. His unfortunate experiences made no difference to his programme, either. By the end of afternoon classes—and before, for that matter—Fisher T. Fish was as keen as ever he had been on his new stunt.

The business man of the Remove was undoubtedly a sticker.

The Famous Five were discussing Fishy and his activities just before tea in Study No. 1 when Peter Todd looked in, a grin on his face.

"Heard the news, you fellows?" he exclaimed, in a tone of great excitement.

"Eh?" Harry Wharton looked round from the fireplace. "What news, Toddy? No. Anything wrong?"

From the excited tone adopted by Peter, anything might have happened—anything of great import, that is.

"You'll think so when you've heard the news," grinned Toddy. "Bunter's postal-order's come!"

"Wha-at?"

"It's a fact!" said Toddy. "I've seen it. It's just come by the afternoon post. Several fellows saw him pull it out of the envelope. It's a cold fact, you fellows. The age of miracles isn't past, after all!"

"Well, upon my word!" said Bob Cherry. "To think that mine aged eyes should see the day when Bunter's postal-order came!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"So Bunter's been speaking the truth all these terms when he's claimed to be expecting one, after all!" said Bob, in a tone of great astonishment. "And it's come—come at long last! Do you actually say you've seen it, Toddy?"

"Ha, ha! Yes."

"What sort of whiskers did it wear—ginger or pink, or beaver or mutton-chop? It's bound to have grown some sort after all these years."

"Nobody was lucky enough to get a real look at it—Bunter saw to that!" grinned Peter. "Or, rather, Fishy saw to it. I believe he's been haunting Bunter all day with his debt-hunting, and I believe he was last seen chasing Billy and his wonderful postal-order."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Toddy nodded and hurried off, possibly to spread the wonderful news high and low. And it was wonderful news. Billy Bunter's postal-order was quite a famous institution at Greyfriars. He had been expecting it for terms, and he had borrowed money from almost every fellow in the school at various times on the strength of that expectation. But the expected postal-order never came.

Yet now it had come—according to Peter Todd.

"Well, my hat!" laughed Harry Wharton. "Fancy a postal-order for Bunter at last! What price Fishy and

his list of Bunter's debts! I expect the postal-order will be for sixpence."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors were still laughing when the door flew open violently, and a fat figure dashed into the study.

It was Billy Bunter, and his fat face was red with wrath and exertion. In one fat hand he clutched a letter.

He closed the door swiftly after him, and turned an appealing but wrathful face to the juniors.

"I say, you fellows, lemme stay here for a bit!" he panted. "That awful beast Fishy's after me. The rotter's been fairly haunting me all day. Oh dear! He's after me now; he thinks I've got a postal-order. Of course, I haven't."

"Of course not," grinned Bob Cherry. "I think I'd better see what's in that envelope, though, for all that, Billy. You owe us a good bit, old chap, and we want our whack out of that postal-order before Fishy gets his greedy paws on it!"

Bunter jumped in great alarm, and shoved the envelope behind him.

"I say, you fellows, Toddy and Fishy and the rest of them were quite mistaken, you know!" he gasped. "It—it was only a bit of blue paper in the envelope. Besides, it was only for a bob."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's a fact, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "It wasn't a postal-order at all. In any case, what's the good of a bob to you fellows? I say, keep that rotter Fishy out if he comes— Oh crumbs! Here the beast is now!"

There was a hasty step outside the door, and then the door opened and Fisher T. Fish's sharp features showed in the doorway. His eyes glittered as he sighted Billy Bunter.

"So you're hyer, you galoot!" he roared. "I guess I'm on this; I guess I've got cold business with you, Bunter! You've owed me six bobs for terms, and I guess I've got clients on my books that you owe over five quid to altogether. I guess I'm having some of it out of that durned postal-order you've got, you pesky rustler! Yep! I calculate I'm having a squint at that order right hyer."

And Fisher T. Fish made a rush at Bunter. As he did so Bob Cherry—by accident or otherwise—placed his foot in the way, and the business genius took a header into the fireplace as he tripped over it.

Fisher T. Fish howled as one waving, bony hand caught against the hot bars of the grate.

"Yooooop! I'm durned-well burned!" he howled. "Oh Jerusalem! Grooooooh!"

"Great Scott! He's burned himself!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Quick—something cold! Ah!"

Bob snatched up the milk-jug, tea being laid on the table. He poured a stream of milk over Fish's hand. As Fishy was sucking his burnt knuckles at the moment, most of the milk went into Fish's face, and down his neck and clothes.

"Sorry!" murmured Bob. "You find that cooling, though, don't you, Fishy?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You pesky galoot!" roared Fish, spluttering wildly. "Oh, you slab-sided jay! Look at my durned clobber, blow you! I guess I'll knock you into a squashed omelet for that— Hyer!"

Fish leaped for the door in a desperate attempt to stop Bunter, who had seen his chance and made a bold bid for liberty.

The two collided full in the doorway, and struggled there, Fish, ignoring his damaged hand and milky face and clothes, making desperate snatches at



"Get out, you little rotter!" hissed Billy Bunter furiously. He rushed at his minor, and grasped him with the obvious intention of rushing him from the study. At that moment the door opened, and five juniors stood upon the threshold. They were the Famous Five, and they blinked at the sight of the Bunter brothers punching each other. "Ha, ha, ha!" they roared. (See Chapter 8.)

the envelope in Bunter's fat fist. Fishy never by any chance lost sight of the main chance.

As they struggled thus, Bob Cherry chuckled, and, as the yelling Bunter held the envelope out at arm's length away from Fishy, he snatched it from him.

Whether the envelope really held a postal-order or not, Bob did not know. But he was in a mischievous mood. At all events he got it, and there was a howl from Bunter and from Fishy.

They ceased to struggle and went after Bob with a rush. Bob dodged round the table, laughing, and, finding himself cornered between the two, he threw the envelope across to Harry Wharton, who was standing before the fireplace, grinning.

Harry clutched at it, but, unfortunately he missed it, and the envelope fell into the fire.

It flared up, and was charred, blackened dust in a flash.

There was a wail from Bunter, and a wrathful howl from Fish.

"Oh, my hat!" said Harry.

"Waal, you gol-darned mugwump!" howled Fishy. "You slab-sided, blundering jay! That's knocked the durned bottom out of the market, I guess!"

"My postal-order!" roared Bunter wrathfully. "You rotten beast, Cherry! You'll have to make that good, you beasts!"

"I thought there wasn't a postal-order in it," grinned Bob.

"And the one that wasn't there was only for a bob," added Frank Nugent, chuckling.

"You awful beasts!" wailed Bunter, his eyes glittering behind his spectacles with wrath and dismay. "Of course, there was—Toddy and a lot of chaps saw it. Oh, you awful beasts! You'll have to recommend me for it now."

"To—to whatter?"

"Recommend!" snorted Bunter furiously. "I shall insist upon recommendation, you beasts!"

"What the—?" gasped Harry.

"Ha, ha, ha! He means recompense!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Oh! Well, we'll do that," smiled Harry. "After all, it was our fault, and Toddy says he saw the postal-order. How much was it for, Bunter? You said a bob?"

"Oh, all right, if you'll pay up," grumbled Bunter. "Yes, it was—"

He paused.

A sudden idea had entered the mind of the fat youth.

After all, nobody had seen the postal-order—at least, not closely enough to see the figure value on it. And who could prove that it was for a bob or wasn't for a bob? He could say it was for any amount, and nobody could say it wasn't.

What a gorgeous chance! Bunter assumed a serious look. "Oh, all right," he repeated, blinking at Harry Wharton indignantly. "I shall ask no recommend—I mean recompense for the letter in that envelope—nothing! I'll overlook that, you fellows. After all, I suppose it was really an accident. But I must insist upon you fellows making good the value of the postal-order. It was for two quid."

"What!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Two quid," said Bunter calmly. "It was from Admiral Sir Harwood Bunter—one of my titled relations, you know. He always sends me postal-orders for two quids at a time. It's rather a curious habit of his to send postal-orders instead of cheques."

"You fat fibber!" roared Bob. Harry Wharton could not help laughing.

"You silly, burbling duffer!" he said. "Really, Wharton," said Bunter coolly. "You owe me two quid between you, you know."

And the Owl of the Remove held out a fat and not overclean hand expectantly. But if he expected two pounds to be placed into it he was doomed to be disappointed.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Very Fishy Indeed!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. blinked at Billy Bunter. They were used to Bunter's little ways, but this was the limit even for Bunter. They had not seen the postal-order, but they knew perfectly well that it was for a very small amount—from long experiences of Bunter's financial affairs, and from the fact that Bunter himself had mentioned a "bob."

"Well, you—you cheeky fat fraud!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You—you have the nerve to expect us to swallow that? You said yourself it was for a bob."

"Nothing of the kind," said Bunter. "It couldn't have been two quid, in any case!" shrieked Bob Cherry. "There would have to be two postal-orders to make that amount."

"Certainly," said Bunter calmly. "No need to get excited, Cherry. You see, there were two of them in that envelope you burned—two postal-orders for a pound each."

"Oh, my hat!" "Now do you understand?" asked Bunter. "You've already given me your word to make rec-recompense, Wharton. I trust you are not thinking of going back on it," added Bunter, with dignity. "I should hate to have to report the matter to the authorities. I insist upon recompense being done."

"You fat ass!" Bunter waved a fat hand loftily. "Enough!" he said. "I don't wish to be hard on you fellows. But I shall insist upon that two quid being paid back to me. If it suits you, I am perfectly willing to take it in instalments—say at five bob a time. How's that?"

The Famous Five blinked at Bunter. Harry Wharton suddenly burst into a laugh. Somehow it was difficult to feel angry with the fatuous Owl of the Remove. Plunging a hand into his pocket, Harry drew out some silver. He placed a shilling on the table.

"There you are, Bunter," he said grimly. "There's a bob. I don't believe that thumping postal-order—if there was one at all—was for more than a bob. If you can bring me proof that it was for more than a bob, or that there was more than one, I'm willing to make it right, my fat man. But I fancy

you won't prove it. Now get out, you fat fraud!"

Bunter pocketed the shilling promptly; and he was only just in time, for Fisher T. Fish stretched out a claw-like hand to grab it barely the next second after.

"That leaves one pound nineteen shillings, Wharton, owing to me," said Bunter.

"Does it?" grinned Harry Wharton. "I fancy we owe you something else for coming here delaying our tea like this—and Fishy, too. Let's give it them, chaps. Boot them out!"

"What-ho!" "I say, you fellows— Yoooop! Stop it, Cherry, you beast!"

"Hyer! What's this game— Yoooop! Let up, you pesky galoots! Yoooop! I guess—"

Bunter and Fisher T. Fish leaped frantically for the door as the Famous Five brought their boots into play. They clumped home on the persons of Fishy and Bunter, and the two shady schemers shot through the doorway like catapults.

Some yards farther along the passage they stopped breathless and wrathful. The door of Study No. 1 slammed.

"Oh Jerusalem!" gasped Fishy. "I guess I'm getting sore all over. I guess— Hyer! Hold on, Bunter, you mugwump! I guess I've a few words to spill on you. Yep!"

His bony hand closed on Bunter's fat shoulder. Bunter snorted.

"Leggo, Fishy, you beast!" he gasped. "I know what you're after—that bob, you beast! Leggo, or I'll shout and bring someone here."

"I guess I'm not after a measly bob," said Fish, his face breaking into an admiring grin. "Gee! But I reckon that was a real dandy scheme of yours, Bunter. Yep! I reckon you've got those galoots fixed jest where you want 'em. I guess it was a real business snip to tell those gol-darned critters that postal-order was for two quids like that. Gee! I'm on this."

"Leggo!" grunted Bunter. "It—it's not a scheme at all, you beast! It—it was a fact."

"Fact fiddlesticks!" grinned Fishy. "Now jest you look right hyer, Bunter. I reckon you aren't the guy to bring a scoop off like this. It needs me—a real dandy business man—every time. You place the debt in my hands, and we'll go fifty-fifty."

"Oh, really, Fishy—" Bunter paused.

After all, he had not really much hope of getting two pounds out of Wharton—far from it. It was an idea that had occurred to him on the spur of the moment, and he had carried it through so far for what it was worth. Certainly he had meant to try it on again. The postal-order had been for a shilling, as it happened; but what was a bob? If Fishy could manage to wangle more out of Wharton & Co.—

It was a chance. "Look here, Fishy," said Bunter, lowering his voice. "Make your commission twenty per cent, and I'm on."

"Nix! Cut it right out," said Fishy promptly. "Fifty-fifty, or not at all. I reckon I deserve that for running the risk of a ragging every durned time I tackle 'em. Fifty-fifty, or no business, Bunter."

"Oh, all right!" grunted Billy Bunter. "You are a skinny Shylock,

Fishy! I'm not trying the beasts again to-night, anyhow."

"You leave it to me," grinned Fishy, wiping the milk from his clothes with a dingy handkerchief. "I guess I'm going to mosey along to get a clean-up, and then I'm on this stunt from the word 'go.'"

With that Fisher T. Fish hurried away, his keen features still milky, but determined. When the business man of the Remove had one of his financial schemes on hand he lost sight of past tribulations, and he never looked ahead for future ones.

Bunter grinned after him, and then he rolled away to spend his shilling in the tuckshop before it closed.

Meanwhile, tea was proceeding in Study No. 1. It was a cheery meal enough, but more than once Harry Wharton frowned thoughtfully. He was thinking of Bunter's claim. He could not believe that the envelope had contained more than a shilling postal-order, yet how could they prove that if Bunter stuck to his claim, and reported the matter to Mr. Quelch. It had been their fault that the envelope was burned, and there was no knowing how the Remove master might take it. He might insist upon Bunter showing proof that it had contained two postal-orders for a pound each, or he might not.

It was rather worrying. Harry was just thinking of this when once again the door opened, and once again the visitor was Fisher T. Fish, the business genius of the Remove.

"Great pip!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Blessed if it isn't that silly ass again, chaps!"

The juniors stared at Fishy. Well as they knew how persistent Fisher T. Fish could be, they were staggered at his nerve in visiting them again after his previous experiences that day.

"Hallo! Here again, you silly burbling ass!" snorted Harry Wharton. "Outside!"

"I guess not," said Fishy stubbornly. "I guess I want you guys to glance over that."

As he spoke Fish planked a sheet of paper on the table. It was apparently a bill, stating that Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry owed William George Bunter, Esquire, two pounds less one shilling paid on account.

The juniors blinked at it. "I guess that places us on a business-like footing," said Fisher T. Fish briskly. "Bunter has placed the matter in my hands to deal with, and I guess he couldn't do better. I guess—"

"You—you—" "I guess I ain't standing for any rough stuff," warned Fishy grimly. "I guess you guys burned that envelope, and I guess Bunter holds the cards—yep! Just a few! I reckon you can't prove there weren't two quid in that envelope. And if you start a rough house again I shall advise my client to take the matter to Quelch. Get me?"

And Fisher T. Fish grinned triumphantly at the five juniors. Apparently Fisher T. Fish considered that threat would frighten them. He was mistaken for not the first time that day.

"You—you howling rotter!" gasped Harry Wharton, jumping up. "Why, I'll jolly well biff you on the boko if you—"

"Aw! Let up!" said Fish, snorting. "Cut that out. I guess I've come to collect two Fishers—two crisp Fishers—and I guess that you can have your durned shilling back."

"Chuck the silly fool out!" snorted Johnny Bull. "I'm fed up—"

"Hold on!" said Bob Cherry, getting to his feet also. "Fair play, chaps.

(Continued on page 17.)

ANSWERS
Every Saturday PRICE 2:



Harry Wharton's Football Supplement

No. 7 (New Series). Vol. 1.

March 13th, 1926.

I have managed to secure the services of some of the finest football experts in the country as contributors to our new Supplement. MAGNET readers who follow it regularly can be sure of getting the very latest and most exclusive news, interesting gossip, and information.—H. Wharton, Ed.

Flag-Kicks and Penalties

PARS ABOUT FOOTBALL MEN AND MATTERS.

By The Man in the Street.

THE famous amateur club, previously known as the Kingstonians, has decided to drop the final "s" from the name. If this becomes a habit we should be referring to Bolton Wanderer, Blackburn Rover, and the Ranger.

In two successive rounds of the Cup, Beecham, the Fulham goalkeeper, was carried off the field shoulder-high. He still says he prefers to walk, however.

Leeds United have not done at all well since they lost their Wains-coat.

South Shields have a winger whose real name is Thirlaway. But they call him "Tearaway"—and he does!

There is always a lot of argument as to the footballers who should play for their country. But if England, of Sunderland, plays, then we should certainly be able to say that England is pleased.

This is how the Cardiff City team was made up the other week—five Scots, three Englishmen, two Irishmen, and one Welshman. Just to complete the story, they were playing in the "English" Cup.

Swansea Town are all out for honours this season. Indeed, not so long ago it was stated that these "Swans" were "craning" their necks to reach the Cup and the Second Division championship.

No team likes to lose the toss on a windy day. Indeed, to do this may be described as a nasty blow.

I took my sister to see her first football match the other day. She was mightily interested in the remarks of the watchers and in the game, and I thought she was picking it up nicely until, in a dull moment, she asked: "How long has a half-back to play before he can become a full-back?"

The class had been set to write an essay on a football match. To one boy inspiration would not come. The minutes went by as he chewed his pen. But when the teacher called "Time's up!" the brain-wave came. "No play, owing to fog," he wrote, and handed up his paper.

There are many peculiar names among footballers, but surely the Blackburn Rovers side take the biscuit with Puddefoot and Healless.

According to Halliday, the Sunderland centre-forward, the vocal encouragement given to the footballers in Cupties helps them very much. I am glad to have this assurance from a player, as I have sometimes suspected otherwise.

Southampton have appeared in the Cup Semi-Finals five times and in the Final tie once, but have never won the trophy, which is enough to turn these "Saints" into "sinners."

Golf has become a favourite pastime of many of our leading footballers, but this does not account for such a large proportion having what they call "bogey" grounds.

When West Bromwich Albion won the championship in 1919-20, and scored over one hundred goals, all their five regular forwards got to double figures in the net-finding business. They were certainly chirpy "Throstles" in those days.

Soccer Rules that may Trip You Up!

IF THE CROSSBAR "BUSTS"!

IT isn't often that a big club's goalposts give up the ghost during a match, for there is usually sufficient cash in the coffers to ensure replacements really before they become necessary. With small clubs, however, such as those to which most boys belong, a broken crossbar is by no means unknown.

What, then, should be the referee's ruling if the ball is crashed into the net just as the crossbar breaks? Most local League refs would admit their ignorance unless they were quite familiar with the rules. But it is laid down definitely that play must cease immediately the bar breaks or is displaced, but that if, at the same time, the ball would have passed into the net had the bar not "crocked up," a goal may be allowed.

WHAT'S THE BALL WEIGH?

Players and spectators alike would stare at any referee who, just prior to a game, produced a pair of scales and a tape measure and proceeded to weigh and measure the ball! Yet he is quite entitled to do so.

And if he finds the ball not conforming to the rules, he may demand a fresh one to be obtained.

The circumference of the ball must not exceed twenty-eight inches, and must not be less than twenty-seven.

Its weight must be from thirteen to fifteen ounces—at the commencement of the game, that is, before wetness and mud do their best to make it feel like a lump of lead!

DON'T TOUCH THE FLAGS.

A player who takes a corner-kick is often tempted to move the corner-flag if the level of the ground isn't to his liking. The rules, however, forbid such a practice.

Corner-flags should be at least five feet in height, and it is recommended that they should not have pointed tops, in case a player runs into them.

A ball rebounding from a corner-flag—or the goalpost for that matter—is still in play; likewise, it is still in play if it rebounds from a referee or linesman, providing he is within the touchline.

GOALS THAT ARE—NEARLY.

There are frequently squabbles about referees' decisions when it is a question whether or no the ball passed completely over the goal-line.

It is generally thought that it is necessary only for the greater part of the ball to pass over the line to register a goal. But the rule says that the whole of the ball must go completely over before being out of play.

Amateur linesmen should remember that the same rule also applies in connection with the touchline.

"ARE MY BOOTS O.K., REF?"

A referee would probably smile if you asked him that question and offered him your footwear for his inspection. But, according to the rules, a player is entitled to do so, and the ref must answer him, too.

On the other hand, the ref may force the whole of the players to allow him to examine their boots!

This is because Law 11 states various restrictions in connection with boots.

For instance, all nails, if any, must have their heads driven in flush with the leather. Metal plates or projections on boots or shinguards are prohibited.

Bars or studs on the soles must not project more than half an inch, and their fastenings also must be driven in flush.

Studs must in no case be conical or pointed, but flat, round in plan, and not more than half an inch in diameter.

Bars likewise must be flat, not less than half an inch in width, and must be fastened across the boot, not lengthwise.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 944.

The WIZARDRY of WALKER!

A nutshell biography of the famous Villa forward.



By
"REFEREE."

SMALL need, methinks, to introduce you to William Walker. Walker, I grant you, is not an uncommon name, and neither, come to think of it, is William. In the world there must be hundreds of Walkers and thousands of Williams, but to the average footer fan there is only ONE William Walker.

This is the lad who wears the claret and blue of the famous Villa—the lad whom I have often mentioned in these notes as being among the first few wizards of modern footer. Here is an inside-left with an International reputation; a flying and a scheming craftsman, whose every move and every kick on the field has the workings of subtle Soccer brain behind it. Here is Walker whose left foot alone has won many a bright game for the Villa—Walker, the one and only, and first choice as England's inside-left.

Here is his history.

Walker is one of the fortunate few who is deemed to have been born with football in his blood. Whether that is true or not I cannot say, but I can testify to the fact that Walker certainly comes of footballing stock, for his father, George Walker, was a leading light in the Wolverhampton Wanderers team of days gone by.

It was when Walker senior was at the zenith of his fame that young William came into the world. That was on October 29th, 1898, in a little town called Wednesbury, which you will find, if you consult your map, lies equidistant between Walsall and Wolverhampton, and is only eight or so miles removed from the Villa ground. At a very early age young William showed an enthusiastic aptitude for the Soccer code, and there was no greater worshipper of George Walker than this, his destined-to-be-famous son.

Therefore, you fellows, it will come as no surprise to you to learn that a great deal of little William's spare time was spent at the Wolves' ground, and, if the stories I have heard in the neighbourhood of Wednesbury have any truth in them, a great deal of time that was not to spare.

In those early days one imagines William as having had two ambitions—one to shine as a footballer like his idolised dad; the other—closely linked, you will observe—to be a shining light in the ranks of Aston Villa F.C. For the Villa, you must know, was William's favourite team, just as, in the other sense, George Walker was his favourite player.

Lucky William! Not often does it fall to our lot to have ambition so early gratified. At an early age he was the heart and soul of the King's Hill School team. Leaving that and the scholastic establishment to which it belonged, he joined up in the ranks of Hednesford, for whom he played three games before throwing in his lot with Darlaston.

Then came the War, and as William was too young to join up he persevered with his favourite game. Presently then, we find him taking a step farther towards the goal of ambition in transferring his affection to a club nearer home in Wednesbury Old Park—a club, nevertheless, which was keenly watched by the bigger clubs round about. By his smartness on the field of play, by his really prodigious scoring powers, it was not long before some of these bigger fish began to visualise him in the colours of the clubs to which they belonged. Thus Birmingham was keen on him, but keener than they were the Villa.

Oh, yes! The Villa knew an International in the making when they saw one, and they

saw one, in all truth, in young Walker. Therefore the Villa, whose motto you might have remarked is "Prepared," began to think about post-War football, and decided that William would form a very useful unit of that team. They signed him as an amateur, and from then until the War was over William occasionally assisted them.

With the coming of peace William found one youthful ambition realised—that of being a fully fledged player on the books of his most idolised club. At the beginning of the season of 1919-20 he played either at inside-right or centre-forward for his new club, but, not being used to such big occasions, was not a brilliant success, and so was relegated to the reserves in order to gain experience. That was a wise move, as subsequent events showed; for in January of 1920 he was recalled to the first string, and given a chance to see what he could do in the Villa's First Round Cup tie against Queen's Park Rangers.

What did he do? He scored two goals, and later went on to help the Villa in winning the Cup by beating Huddersfield in the Final at Stamford Bridge. Thus, in his initial season of first-class football, did William achieve an honour and ambition that Steve Bloomer would have given almost anything to have won.

And not only that, indeed. Oh dear, no! Among his outstanding feats in that season he scored four goals in one match!

But the next season saw England's inside-left fairly launch upon his career, for in this season he had the tremendous honour of playing for his country and laying the foundation of that International career which is surely the triumph of post-War soccer. It was then that he earned his first cap against Ireland. What he has done since in the International and representative line is fully set out in the record here appended.

I think I have forgotten to mention that, though William as a youngster was so keen on a football career himself, his father, having "had some," had no such illusions; and when William left King's Hill School, so far from being encouraged to take up the game as a means of livelihood, he was peremptorily packed off to a nut-and-bolt works at Darlaston with a view to learning the ironworks trade. But William was not happy in this line. That football seems to have been uppermost in his mind is rather proved by the fact that he joined Hednesford Town.

Twice has he figured in Cup Finals—on the Villa's victorious occasion in 1920, and again when they lost to Newcastle United in 1924 at Wembley. In the latter case it may be said, however, that Walker was undoubtedly the finest forward on the field.

Here is his record:

INTERNATIONAL MATCHES.

1922-24-25.—For England v. Scotland.
1922-25.—For England v. Wales.
1921-22-25-26.—For England v. Ireland.
1923.—For England v. Sweden (2).
1925.—For England v. Belgium.
1925.—For England v. France.

INTERNATIONAL TRIAL MATCHES.

1925.—For North v. South.
1925.—For Professionals v. Amateurs.
1921-22-25-26.—For England v. The Rest.

INTER-LEAGUE MATCHES.

1922-26.—For the Football League v. Irish League.

THIS week I want to air a personal grievance against my friend—I am not sure that he still is my friend—Harry Wharton. He asked me to slip up to Highbury to see how the guns were firing, but he didn't give me any headache powders, and the result is that I have a headache I wouldn't sell for a fiver.

I certainly thought when I got to Highbury—which is where the Arsenal play—that the guns were firing good and plenty. I soon discovered, however, that the noise was not of guns at all, but of carpenters hard at work underneath the stand. They are busy building new recreation and drill-rooms for the players.

Having had a look round these new rooms under the stand—with my fingers in my ears—I have come to the conclusion that the Arsenal mean to be the "poshest"—or should it be most "posh"—club in the country. I don't suppose any of the players will speak to anybody else once they get properly settled in their new quarters, and it is quite certain that if some of the stalwarts of the old Plumstead days ever poke their noses into the new quarters they will wish they had been born twenty years or so later.

These new rooms which they are building at Highbury, however, stand to me as representing the new spirit of the club in general. Instead of ghosts of relegation stalking around the place there are rosy visions of championships, and to spike the Arsenal guns will take a bit of doing. By the way, the dictates of grammar will compel me, right through these notes, to



J. D. BUTLER.

refer to the club as the Arsenal. But the real name is "Arsenal," and I will tell you why the word "The" was dropped from the title. It was in order that the club should always be first in any alphabetical list of football clubs. Anyway, that is the story as it was told to me.

You will remember that when I was at Liverpool last week I noticed the absence of tobacco fumes, and told you that there were several players of the Liverpool club who don't smoke. At Highbury they go one better, for there is a rule to the effect that there must be no smoking "on the premises" by the players of the Arsenal club. George Hardy, the trainer, sees that this rule is carried out, and he practises what he preaches. Indeed, George told me that he only allows himself to smoke once a week, and that is a cigar on a Sunday afternoon. I am not going to tell you which player it was who said that the trainer doesn't even smoke on Sundays unless he has a cigar given to him, because I don't believe it.

One thing I do know, that Hardy, who served under "Billy" Williams, now the trainer of Sunderland, sees more with one eye than most of us see with two. Long ago, the Arsenal trainer lost the sight of his left eye while working at a circular saw. It was this accident which caused him to give up his carpenter's job.

I was rather lucky to catch the Arsenal players "at home," because two or three days a week they go off somewhere for golf. They are not all good golfers, but they all have to play, because in the view of Mr. Herbert Chapman, the new autocrat of the managerial chair, it is a very good way of training. But if the Arsenal men keep playing golf it is possible that sooner or later some of them will be able to beat Billy Blyth. They have a long way to go, though, to do this, for the half-back who has surprised everybody by his play this season is a wonder with the "pill" on the golf course.

"Billy" is the character of the team—the optimist whose sense of humour never fails him. What the other Arsenal players would do without "Billy" I haven't the faintest notion, for they are what I should call a

AT HOME
THE GU

By "PAUL"
(Our Travelling C



A. B. B.

LIGHTNING SKI
FOOTER CL



An impression of N. H.
Scottish International
County, by Jimmy

COME WITH GUNNERS

PAUL PRY."

(Selling Correspondent.)

personally, and made two good passes in the course of the game—both to myself!"

Good Charlie Buchan is also proud of a record which he has set up at Highbury—that of having played in this season with father and son as partners. I refer to the two Rutherford, of course—young Jock and old Jock. Buchan and Rutherford are a good wing, and there is always this to be said for the Arsenal—they never lack Brain in their attack. The big joke at Highbury, though, concerns Haden. He is ever such a tiny fellow, frail and suggesting on't that you could blow him over. But Haden's Christian name is Samson!

So much is known about Jock Rutherford that there is no old little necessity for me to add anything. He is not a player given to much talking, and once when a presentation was made to him he confessed that it was ever so much easier to score goals than string sentences together. Still there are talkers on the side, even though it is difficult to understand some of them. I give reserve goalkeeper Robson best, and so far as I am concerned he can go on chin-wagging with his successor from Scotland—Billy Harper—until the cows come home.

I have got the idea that Harper still thinks rather a lot about the old folks at home, for although he may have found that London's streets are paved with Treasury notes, the fact remains that it is not always easy to settle down such a long way from a native heather. But all in due time Harper will be a Londoner, and I told him something which made him cheer quite a lot. "Everybody comes to love London in time, and the reason why there are even million people in the Metropolis is because nobody ever leaves it."

Leaving the players for a minute, we can now put the tip of a nose into the manager's room. What a man he has—fit for a cabinet minister I should say, and incidentally Mr. Chapman is regarded as the Prime Minister among football managers. He pulled Huddersfield

SKETCHES OF CELEBRITIES.



N. Harris, the famous forward of Notts, my bed of the Spurs.

dour, determined lot—certainly not a set of comedians. But Billy keeps them alive. Some time ago the club lost to Newcastle United by seven goals to nothing. I expressed my sympathy for Billy and the club. "Oh, you needn't worry about that," said the half-back. "I did pretty well per-

sonally, and made two good passes in the course of the game—both to myself!"

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Town through with two successive First Division championships. When he starts talking you just have to listen, and I listened for so long that he actually made my headache worse than the carpenters down below had done.

One of the things which is said about Mr. Chapman by those who know him best is that he has an amazing habit of knowing exactly what he wants, and never rests a moment until he gets it. Possibly the people who say this of the Arsenal manager are alluding to the salary with which rumour associates him.

There are so many stories of how much the Arsenal manager gets that I am not going to repeat any of them so far as actual figures go, but I can say definitely that there is no manager in football to-day who gets as much as Mr. Chapman. Rumour further says that he will receive a nice little bonus if his club finishes in the first half-dozen places in the League table, and, believe me, the boys are all out to earn that bonus for their "boss."

That Mr. Chapman does get what he wants is shown by some of his captures this season—Harper, Scotland's goalkeeper, for instance. Take another case, too. On a certain Wednesday recently Rutherford had to go into hospital. On the Thursday morning Manager Chapman secured the transfer of Jack Hulme from Blackburn Rovers, and he appeared for the Arsenal on the following Saturday.



W. N. BLYTH.

PLAYING ALL OVER THE FIELD!



Should a good footballer be able to fill any position?

By JOHN MCINTYRE.

(The famous Blackburn Rovers player.)

JUST recently there has been a lot of discussion on the lines of good footballers being able to play in practically any position on the field. This season, perhaps more than any other in our day, has been a time of experiment, and there have been several of these experiments which have certainly come off "trumps." At Blackburn, for instance, we have seen Syd Puddefoot, coming to the club as a centre-forward, do remarkably well at inside-right, and there have also been other experiments in the Blackburn team. Again, I scarcely go anywhere in Lancashire in these days without hearing of the promise of John O'Donnell, the Everton man, as a forward.

FROM FULL-BACK TO FORWARD.

It may be remembered that a year or so ago O'Donnell was secured by Everton from Darlington as a full-back of much promise. Indeed, I think I am right in saying that the Evertonians paid a fairly substantial fee to secure his services. But now we find O'Donnell making a name, not as a full-back at all, but as an inside-left. Scores of similar cases could be quoted of men who have switched from one position to another and done as well, if not better, in their new position than they did in the old one. There are also the players who have established a reputation for being able to play in any department—full-back, half-back, and the various forward positions.

WHAT AM I?

I have done a little bit in the versatility business, as we might call it, myself—in fact, I might revise the following statement, and say that I have played in so many positions since I was at Fulham—that if you asked me now what I really am I should find it difficult to say exactly. I could tell you what I am not—a goalkeeper; but, then, the goalkeeper's job is so different, and there are so few of us who play in other positions who can make anything like a good show between the sticks. Possibly we don't want to do so, but that is a question which can well be left for goalkeepers themselves to discuss.

AN ASSET TO THE CLUB.

When we get these cases of players switching from one position to another and making a "good enough" show wherever they are played, we get people declaring from the house-tops that these are the real footballers—the men who are worthy of being put on a pedestal. It is added that the footballer who is really worthy of the name—who knows his job—should be able to put up a good show in any position. Although on the face of it this sounds reasonable argument, I am not so sure that we ought to accept this without question. I am quite prepared to admit that it must be very nice for a club to have two or three versatile players on the staff. If you have one man who can put up a good show anywhere, then it is comparatively safe to travel to away matches with twelve players only, for if any one falls out at the last minute through sudden indisposition, then the "able to play anywhere" footballer can fill the vacancy.

FINDING THE RIGHT PLACE.

Consider this switching business from one or two other points of view, however. In the first place, it does not necessarily follow that a footballer who is switched from one

place to another, and in the new place makes a success, can necessarily lay claim to extraordinary versatility. It may be that the change has given him an opportunity of shining in what really ought to have been his position all the time. We footballers fall into positions more or less haphazard. In our young days we go into a junior team, not with any deep-rooted convictions as to the position on the field to which our abilities are best suited, but with the prime object of getting a game of some sort. Thus we play, not necessarily in our best position, but in the position which happens to be vacant at the time.

THE CASE OF WADSWORTH.

Take the case of Sam Wadsworth as an example. For years he had been a forward, and not so long ago he told me that when he was at Nelson the officials there had the utmost difficulty in persuading him to have a shot at full-back in an emergency. He tried his luck there in the end, and, as we all know, Wadsworth has won fame as a full-back streets ahead of anything he ever achieved as a member of the attack. The case of Wadsworth—and others on similar lines which could be mentioned—seems to prove to me that there may be many footballers in the game to-day—just ordinary club men—who would become positively brilliant if they were changed to some other place, either by accident or design. There are some footballers, "two-footed" men, who are such good all-round players that they can be played anywhere almost without detriment to themselves or the side for which they play.

THE DAY OF THE SPECIALIST.

I certainly do not think, though, that we ought to lay it down as a maxim that the footballer ought to be able to put up a good show in any position. Rather do I incline to the view that this, particularly, is the day of the specialist, and that there are so many things to be learnt in connection with every position on the field that life is too short to learn everything about several positions. I repeat that the real footballer will probably put up a decent show in any position, but a decent show is not going quite far enough; you want a really good show.

"JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES."

While on this subject, let me make a candid confession. Looking back on my career as a footballer, I am sometimes more than a little bit sorry that I ever gained any sort of reputation as a fellow who could be put in practically any position in an emergency. Often in my career have I had the feeling that I was regarded as the jack-of-all-trades and a master of none. The player who has no fixed position on the field doesn't get International caps, though occasionally he may be chosen as reserve man. The compensation comes, of course, because, having a reputation for versatility, you sometimes get into a team in one position when there is no vacancy in another. So to the coming lads I would say—never mind all this talk about a good footballer being able to take on any job. Find your corner, the place which best suits you, and stick to it.

John McIntyre

The TRUTH ABOUT "SPECIAL" TRAINING

Nothing Like What Most People Think.

DURING the past few weeks there has been no end of talk about "special training." We have read about the players of this or that big football club, getting ready for an important Cup tie, being taken away to some seaside resort for a course of special preparation. Two or three years back it appeared as though this idea of taking players away from their usual haunts prior to a big match was dying out, but this season there have been unmistakable signs that it is becoming the "fashion" again. For this switch back there is a very real explanation. The new football which has come about consequent on the alteration of the off-side rule is faster than the football of other days. It also follows that, being faster, there are greater risks of the players getting that tired feeling, and of going stale.

This staleness may not be easy to explain, but it is very simple for any lad to understand, for we have all felt it at one time or another either in respect of lessons, work, or play. This staleness is really the root of the good old proverb—"All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." If you get too many lessons, too much home-work for the evenings, you lose your zest for lessons; your keenness and the work you do is not so good. Exactly the same rule applies to playing. Too much football turns footballers stale, and it is this staleness which has to be guarded against as far as possible in order that the footballers may remain keen and fresh for every match right through a long season of eight months.

It is to guard against this staleness that football players are so often taken away to the seaside in the later months of the season. And now, when I have stated the reason why they are taken away, you will then better be able to appreciate the disclosures which follow and which have been put under the title of "The Truth About Special Training."

Special training as applied to football players is a term which ought never to be used. It isn't special training at all in the generally accepted rendering of the phrase. I know there are plenty of people who, reading about this or that team going for special training, conjure up a vision of footballers doing about twice as much physical jerks as usual, of going for many more long walks, and of filling in every spare minute practising with a football the tactics which they hope to employ in the forthcoming big match. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead of talking about special training, we ought to talk about players being taken to the seaside for a rest and a change of air; for that is what it really amounts to.

When Huddersfield Town went to the Cup Final of 1923, they spent several weeks at Blackpool getting ready for the big game. But it is an absolute fact that they did not take with them a single football, and their special training did not consist of any ball practice at all.

Some people may think this is a mistake, but it may be taken for granted that the trainers of the big football

teams know their jobs, and included among the knowledge is the certainty that late in the football season the more football practice is given to footballers the greater the risk of players suffering from that stale feeling which I have already described.

It is the change of air which is expected to "buck up" the men who are taken away to the seaside, and the brine baths which are to be found at these seaside places are considered a most valuable help both in freshening up fellows who are getting tired and in keeping the limbs in a proper state of fitness. More and more is the game of golf being encouraged by the managers of the big clubs. This game does not take too much out of the players; it provides them with an interest in their training, and ensures them breathing good air as they take gentle exercise. In a sentence, golf-clubs are now considered far more important for special training purposes than a football.

There is one other feature about this so-called special training which should be mentioned. As the players of a club are all gathered together for their meals, proper care can be taken that they have the food which serves them best.

SCORING FROM "THE SPOT!"

Why penalty-kicks so often fail to produce goals.

ANY player who has football in him ought to be able to score a goal every time." That is an opinion pretty widely held in regard to penalty-kicks, and in theory it should be so. A good footballer certainly ought to be able to beat a goalkeeper when the latter has to stand on the line and the kicker has the ball dead on the twelve yards spot. In this business of scoring from the penalty-spot, as in many other phases of football and other things, theory and practice are rather different. It may surprise my readers to know that in the very highest class of football—that is, the big Leagues—the average of success with kicks from the penalty-spot is rather less than two out of every three. Some are saved by the goalkeeper, and some kicks are shot wide of the mark.

In a Second Division match against Chelsea a short time ago Barnsley had two penalty-kicks, but neither of them produced a goal. As Barnsley eventually lost that particular game by three goals to two, the importance of having a successful penalty-kicker on the side becomes obvious. Now, why are penalty-kicks so often missed?

In the first place, failure is very often due to what can only be described as nerves. When there are no people about, and nothing hangs on a successful shot, it is as easy as winking to beat the best of goalkeepers from the penalty-spot. But it is a different proposition when a player is called upon to take the kick in the presence of 40,000 spectators, and when he feels that the result of the match may depend on him making a successful shot. I remember "Billy" Smith, the outside-left of Huddersfield Town, telling me that he never felt so nervous in his life as when he was called upon to take a penalty-kick in the Cup Final of 1923. There are some quite well-known and seasoned players who absolutely refuse to take a penalty-kick.

In this connection it is a good principle, in all classes of football, to let a particular player of a team take the penalty-kicks until he misses one, and then to try somebody else. The man who has missed is apt to worry, and follow up his first miss with other failures.

Another reason why so many penalty-kicks are missed is because they are often taken, especially by young players, in the wrong way. It is a big mistake to try to break the net, and it is quite unnecessary. A low, well-placed shot from the twelve yards spot will beat any goalkeeper. The harder one tries to kick the ball the greater the risk of not hitting it true.

Does Footballing Pay?

£ s. d. of Football.

By "OLD 'UN."

EVERY year there must come to many lads this problem—will it pay me to become a professional footballer? As I have already pointed out in this Supplement, there is very little chance of a promising young footballer going for very long without an offer coming to him to sign as a professional. And when the offer comes there must inevitably be associated with it this question of whether it will be a good thing—will it pay?

Each lad to whom the offer comes must solve the problem for himself, according to his own individual ideas and ideals. But there are very few who really know what being a professional footballer really means; so I propose here to show the job exactly as it is, painting the picture faithfully, and showing you the two sides.

Of one thing we can be quite certain—that, although it may be possible to make an ordinary decent living out of football, it is not a sport out of which fortunes are made.

The utmost which it is permissible for any football club to pay even its very best players is eight pounds a week during the playing season and six pounds a week during what is called the close season. For the purposes of this maximum-wage rule the playing season is reckoned as thirty-nine weeks, and the close season comprises the other thirteen weeks. Being a bit hazy on arithmetic in these days, I am not sure that I ought to be dogmatic on the point; but, as I reckon it, the above weekly wage amounts to £312 during the playing season and £278 during the close season, or a total of £590 a year. On top of this there is the bonus for wins of two pounds per man and one pound a man for draws, which means that, on the average, every first-class footballer gets an additional one pound per match.

Then there is the benefit possibility. After serving five years with the same club as a first-team player a man may receive a benefit amounting to £650, or, in other words, an additional £180 per year. We can cut out the share of transfer fee, because, so far as English players are concerned, they are only allowed to receive, as part of their transfer fee, what is called accrued share of benefit. To make this clear, suppose a player has been with a club three years, and is then transferred, he is allowed to receive £390 as his share of the transfer fee.

The above figures will serve to show the possibilities of professional football as a money-earning job. Now there is the other side of the picture. The maximum wage, as aforementioned, can only be paid to the men who are recognised members of the first team, and a moment's thought will serve to show that there are more players outside the first teams of the big clubs than in those first teams. The reserve men probably get four to six pounds per week, according to the financial standing of the club with which they are engaged. Now, it is obvious that no lad turning pro can be sure that he is going to get and maintain a regular place in a first-class side. Even if his skill is sufficiently high, there is the risk of injury and the possibility that he will be kept out of the first team by some super-men playing in his particular position. Again, although, as we have seen, the wages of the "star" are not bad, it should never be forgotten that the average footballing life of the professional is not a long one. The rainy day when he is finished as a footballer soon comes.

So my advice to the young footballer who gets a chance to become a professional with a good side is this: Weigh up the matter carefully, look at it from every side, and if you have a job which does not take too much out of you physically, try to combine professional football with that job.

(There will be another topping four-page footer Supplement next week, chums. Meanwhile, drop me a card and let me know what you think of this latest addition to the MAGNET.)

"FISHY'S DEBT-COLLECTING AGENCY!"

(Continued from page 12.)

Right's right, after all. If Fishy wants two fishes, he can have them and welcome!"

"Gee! I guess now you're talking sense, Cherry," grinned Fisher T. Fish, who quite failed to note that Bob had said "fishes" and not "Fishers." "I guess it will save trouble if you toe the line, pards."

"He wants two fishes," said Bob, "and he shall have them. Here they are, old sport."

As he spoke Bob Cherry grabbed the half-emptied tin of sardines from the table. Then he leaped upon the business man of the Remove, and, ramming the startled junior's head forward, he tipped the contents of the tin down the back of the Transatlantic junior's neck.

Fishy roared as the slimy sardines and oil slid and trickled down his spine.

"There you are, Fishy!" grinned Bob. "There's two fishes with some more to keep them company, and some oil for the dinky fishes to swim in. I hope you're satisfied."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Famous Five howled as Fisher T. Fish ducked down and strove frantically to reach the unwanted fish from down his back. It was not an easy task.

He waltzed about the study, his features crimson with wrath and frantic exertion. But the sardines had gone too far down, and he gave it up at last.

"Ow-ow! Groooooogh!" he gasped. "Oh, jumping Christmas crackers! I guess I'll smash you galoots to a frazzle for this. I guess—"

"He isn't satisfied even now," said Bob. "Yet he asked for it!"

"I didn't, you burbling mugwumps!" hooted Fish. "I guess I asked for 'Fishers'—Treasury notes—you gold-darned rustler! I guess I asked for what you galoots in this sleepy old country used to call Bradburys. I guess you mistook me purposely, Cherry, you dangerous critter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's not satisfied yet," murmured Cherry regretfully. "I vote we give him some jam as well. There's some treacle, too, in the cupboard; he can have that. Sardines, jam, and treacle should mix well; and there's plenty of ink on the bookcase there, and plenty of cinders in the hearth. We must satisfy Fishy now so that he won't come again. Collar him!"

"What-ho!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

But Fisher T. Fish did not stay to be "collared." He was satisfied at last. As the juniors jumped up, he jumped for the door and tore it open and flew for his life. And tea proceeded uneventfully in Study No. 1 after that, without Fisher T. Fish or the sardines.

There was much hilarity in the Lower School at Greyfriars that evening. Not only was Fisher T. Fish the subject of much attention, but so were Billy Bunter and Harry Wharton & Co. The story of Bunter's postal-order—or postal-orders, as the case might be—caused roars of laughter, and Fisher T. Fish and Bunter were not the only ones to be chipped and chuckled at. Indeed, Skinner & Co., and fellows like those shady juniors, who

were always more or less "up against" the Famous Five, pretended to believe Bunter's version, and they were loud in their demands for Harry Wharton & Co. to pay Bunter his two quid. They tried to encourage Fishy to tackle them again, promising to back him up if he did.

But Fisher T. Fish had had quite enough for the present, though he had no intention of giving up his debt-collecting scheme.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

A Family Affair!

"BUNTER, you fat clam!"

Peter Todd looked rather fixedly at Billy Bunter as he rolled into Study No. 7 after prep that evening.

Bunter's fat face was still jammy after his visit to the tuckshop earlier on in the evening, and just now it wore an expression of satisfaction.

Billy Bunter, in fact, was feeling quite cheery. The spending of that shilling had given him some satisfaction, and his qualms regarding the burnt envelope containing—as Bunter alleged—the two pound postal-orders were quite at rest now. The fact that Skinner and several other fellows chose to believe his claim—or pretended to, which was just the same to Bunter—had eased his mind considerably. Indeed, so sympathetic and encouraging had Skinner & Co. been that Bunter was almost believing himself that the envelope had contained two postal-orders for a pound each, instead of one postal-order for a humble shilling.

And he was beginning to believe there was a good chance of getting two pounds out of Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry now. Bunter was far more of a fool than a rogue, and it scarcely occurred to him that there was anything at all questionable in his little scheme. His only regret was that he had promised Fisher half the proceeds if they did materialise; though if he once got his hands on the money himself, Billy Bunter hadn't the faintest intention of letting Fishy see a penny of it.

Fisher T. Fish also hadn't the faintest intention of handing a penny of the money over to Bunter if he got it, either. But Bunter did not know that.

He had just been discussing the matter with the sympathetic Skinner & Co., who had been trying, in their efforts to stir up trouble, to persuade him to report the matter to Mr. Quelch.

And, although Bunter had good reasons for not doing that, he was feeling very satisfied and hopeful when he rolled into his study just then.

His look of satisfaction faded a trifle as he met Peter Todd's grim look, however.

"So here you are, you podgy swindler!" said Peter. "What's this rot about Wharton and Cherry having burnt two quids of yours, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Toddy!" grumbled Bunter. "I don't see what business it is of yours! Go and eat coke!"

"My dear old fat barrel," said Peter pleasantly, "I'm making it my business to see you don't get yourself shoved in quod, or booted from Greyfriars. You aren't as bad as Fishy, perhaps, but that's because you're a bigger fool than Fishy."

"Oh, rats! You shut up, Toddy! It's like your cheek to shove your oar in! Yah! I think—"

"Chuck it, Bunter!" said Peter patiently. "If this gets to Quelch's ears there'll be an inquiry, and there'll be trouble for someone—and I fancy that someone will be you, Bunter. I saw

that postal-order, and I'm thumping sure it was for no more than a bob, just as I'm sure there was only one."

"You seem to know a lot about it!" sneered Bunter.

"I know a lot about you, my pippin!" grinned Toddy cheerfully. "That's why I'm going to talk to you like a giddy father now, Bunter. I'm advising you to chuck it, old top!"

"And I advise you to mind your own business, Toddy," said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity. "Why, a fellow might be trying to swindle Wharton by the way you talk. Check and impudence, I call it! That letter contained two postal-orders for a quid each; they were from a titled relative of mine—General Sir Lumsden Bunter. You can—"

Bunter was interrupted. The door suddenly opened, and a fat form, with a fat face like Billy Bunter's, and wearing spectacles almost as large and round as Billy Bunter's, entered the study.

It was young Sammy Bunter of the Second Form—Billy's young brother.

He stood and glowered at Billy, and Billy glowered back at him—rather uneasily, Toddy thought.

"Look here, Billy, you rotten thief," snorted Sammy, "what about my tanner?"

"Your—your tanner!" said Billy Bunter feebly. "I—I don't understand you, Sammy."

Sammy Bunter snorted.

"You rotten fibber!" he sniffed. "Of course you do! I had a letter from the mater to-night. She said she had written to you and enclosed a bob postal-order, and that half of it was for me. I want my tanner, Billy. You—you haven't spent it, have you, you awful rotter?" concluded Sammy, in sudden fear.

"Spent it!" echoed Billy Bunter, with an uneasy glance at Peter Todd. "I—I—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter Todd.

"If you've spent it I'll make you sit up, you greedy beast, Billy!" hooted Sammy.

"Look at his chivvy, and that'll tell you, Sammy!" chuckled Peter Todd.

"Oh, all right, Billy!" hissed Sammy, his eyes glittering behind his spectacles. "I'll make you sit up for that!"

"Look—look here, Sammy!" gasped Billy Bunter, with a still more uneasy glance at Toddy. "Just—just come outside a minute. I want to tell you something—something rather important."

"Rats!" sniffed Sammy. "I know jolly well what it is! I've heard how you're trying to swizz Wharton and Cherry over that burnt letter. You're trying to make 'em think there were two postal-orders in it for a quid each. I know all about it!"

"Shut up!" hissed Billy frantically. "Look here, Sammy—"

"I sha'n't shut up!" snorted Sammy. "Look here, Billy, make it halves if you get that two quid and I'll agree to keep my mouth shut. If you don't I'll split and tell everybody that letter was from the mater, and that there was only a bob in it. There! Is it a go?"

And Sammy waited expectantly and eagerly. He seemed quite unconscious of Peter Todd, and of the fact that he had given his brother hopelessly away.

But Billy was not unconscious of that fact. He glared at the chuckling Peter Todd, and then he glowered at his minor.

"Get out, you little rotter!" he hissed furiously.

"Sha'n't!"

"Won't you?" howled Billy Bunter.

He let himself go and rushed at his minor and grasped him, with the obvious intention of rushing him from the study. Sammy promptly hacked his major's shin, and his major howled.

That did it. The next moment major and minor were scrapping ferociously. There had never been any love lost between the Bunter brothers, and it was not the first time they had squabbled thus by a long way.

Five juniors who happened to be passing just then opened the door and looked in. They were the Famous Five, and they blinked at sight of the Bunter brothers punching and hacking each other's shins.

"Ha, ha, ha! Come in, you chaps!" roared Peter Todd. "I was just going to separate the beauties. Stop this, my tulips!"

He grabbed Billy Bunter and hauled him away; Harry Wharton grinned and held the warlike Sammy back.

"What's the trouble, Toddy?" he asked.

"The usual trouble, only more so!" grinned Peter. "The dear old Bunter's mater sent Billy a postal-order for a bob to be divided between the two of them. You chaps know what happened to it. Any old how, Sammy's heard that Billy's trying to wangle a couple of quid out of you chaps, and he's threatened to give the game away if Billy doesn't go halves."

"Oh!"

"Great pip!"

Bunter groaned.

"I say, you fellows," he gasped, "don't believe it! You know what an awful fibber my minor is! It isn't true—not a bit of it!"

"Yah! Of course it is, and I can prove it!" hooted Sammy Bunter. He knew now there was no hope of sharing any plunder, and, knowing Billy had spent the bob, he was determined to make his loving brother sit up. "Yah! I've got the mater's letter to prove it!"

"That's enough, Sammy!" said Harry Wharton, not knowing whether to laugh or be angry. "It's clear enough, and we don't need proof. If this fat spoofer refuses to own up and settle the matter we'll get Quelchy to settle it. I'm fed-up with being chipped about it."

"Hear, hear!"

"Oh dear!" groaned Billy Bunter. He knew the game was up now. "Oh dear! I sus-say, you fellows, it was only a joke. I never meant to take that two quid, of course!"

"Of course not!" said Bob Cherry sarcastically. "Well, I suggest a good sound bumping, chaps—just to teach Bunter not to play such jokes."

"Yes, rather!"

"Collar him!" said Bob.

"Oh, really! I say, you fellows, it was all Fishy's fault. Why not bump—Leggo! Ow! I say—Yooop!" Bump!

It was the first bump, but not the last for Billy Bunter. He descended again and again on the hard floor, and he howled each time. He was finding that the way of the transgressor was hard—like the floor. They let him go at last, and a couple of boots helped him to leave the room in a hurry. Then Bob Cherry led his minor Sammy out by the ear.

"Well, that's that!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Let's go down to the Rag now, chaps! I believe Skinner's got some wheeze on against Fishy. Skinner's wheezes are always entertaining to all but Skinner himself. Anyhow, this lets us out!"

"And loses poor old Fishy another client," grinned Frank Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And laughing at the thought, the juniors went downstairs to the Rag. From all accounts, Harold Skinner, the cad of the Remove, had a surprise in store for the business man of the Remove. Skinner was a great practical joker, and though his jokes rarely came off, they always provided entertainment for the onlookers—if not for Skinner himself.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Skinner's Wheeze!

"SISTER ANNE, Sister Anne! Do you see anyone coming?"

Skinner, Stott, and Snoop were standing at the corner of the passage a few yards farther along from the junior studies, when Skinner asked his chums the question. Really, Skinner had no need to ask the question, for he had as good a chance of seeing anyone coming along the passage as his chums had.

But Skinner was getting impatient. He held a folded note in his hand, and

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MARTIN CLIFFORD,

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he seemed to be rather anxious to get rid of it.

"Why doesn't the silly duffer come out?" he sniffed. "We promised to help him to dun Wharton for that two quid, if he'd come down to the Rag. Blow Fishy!"

"I expect the burbling ass is nursing his aches and pains," grinned Stott.

"Shall we—Hullo, here he is!"

"Come on!" hissed Skinner.

The door of Study No. 14 had opened, and Skinner & Co. did not trouble to see who would emerge—they knew only Fisher T. Fish happened to be in that study at the moment.

Without looking round, Skinner & Co. walked on.

"Here we are!" grinned Snoop, as they were passing Mr. Prout's study door. "Now's your chance, Skinner. Drop it."

Skinner looked swiftly behind him. He could hear Fish's footsteps behind them, but a turn in the passage hid the American junior from his sight.

He dropped the note he carried on the floor just outside Mr. Prout's door. Then he chuckled as he walked on with Stott and Snoop.

"Think he'll swallow it?" grinned Stott.

"Like a giddy bird!" smiled Skinner. "He's a nosey bounder, and he'll read that note and swallow it without water.

I'll do the rest. Let's make sure Wibley's in the Rag and then I'll slip along to his study and collar the togs."

"It—it's risky, Skinner."

"Rubbish!" sneered Skinner. "If Fishy sees through the game there's no harm done, and I'll watch nobody else spots me."

Harold Skinner chuckled again.

Meanwhile Fisher T. Fish's sharp eyes had spotted the folded note, and he picked it up at once. There was no name on the outside, and Fishy paused and opened it, being a very "nosey" youth, as Skinner had said.

Then he jumped at what he read thereon.

The note was brief, and to the point—very much to the point, and it apparently belonged to Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth.

"Dear Prout,—I regret very much to have to draw your attention once again to the matter of the ten pounds which has now been outstanding for two terms. Really, I feel I must ask you to be good enough to repay the loan without further delay, as I am, at the moment, in urgent need of the money.—Yours,

"ALGERNON JAMES CAPPER."

"Great jumping crackers!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Gee! Waal, I guess that beats the band! I reckon these hyer masters ain't all they crack up to be. Nope! Gee! Wouldn't I jest like the business of roping that hyer debt in—jest a few! Twenty per cent on ten pounds! Jerusalem! I guess I'd better—"

Fishy hesitated. The note had obviously dropped from Mr. Prout's pocket while that august personage had been entering or leaving his study. Fish's first thought was to shove it under the master's door and clear. But on second thoughts he put the note in his pocket, his eyes gleaming.

"Gee!" he murmured. "I guess there ought to be a chance to do good business if only I can work something slick and safe. I wonder—"

Fish was still wondering when he entered the Rag. There was an unusually big crowd of fellows there, and the appearance of Fisher T. Fish was the signal for a chorus of chuckles.

"Hullo, here's the giddy debt-collector," remarked Tom Brown. "Waal, how's business, pard?"

"Tried Loder again?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Or Bolsover?" queried Bulstrode.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess you galoots needn't laugh!" snorted Fishy. "I guess I ain't got into my stride yet. I guess I've got a big commission in view, you grinning galoots. You wait!"

Fishy took out his pocket-book—apparently to do business—and seated himself on the end of a form. There were four fellows seated on the form, and as Fishy sat on it they got up as if moved by the same spring.

The form tipped up abruptly, and Fisher T. Fish sat down with a bump on the floor.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fishy scrambled up in great wrath. Then he gave a wild howl as Bob Cherry took a running kick at his pocket-book. It flew through the air, and Vernon-Smith trapped it neatly, and sent it whizzing back across the room.

"On the ball!" bawled Bolsover.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

There was a rush to get a kick at Fishy's pocket-book, and Fishy joined the melee with a furious wail. He

wished he hadn't done so the next moment. A dozen boots which would doubtless have been aimed at the book were now aimed at Fishy. Fishy was no more popular than was his debt-collecting book, and the Removites were all as ready to kick him as his book.

"Yaroooooh!" roared Fishy. "Yoooooop! Let up, you galoots! I guess I'll smash you up to bits. I guess I'll— Yoooooop! Stoppit! I guess—"

Fishy vanished from sight in the merry scrimmage for possession of his precious notebook. But his voice, raised

Fisher T. Fish took out his pocket-book—apparently to do business—and seated himself on the end of the form. There were four fellows already seated on the form, and as Fishy sat on it they got up. The form tipped up abruptly, and the American junior sat down on the floor with a bump. (See Chapter 9.)



aloft in a wail of woe and wrath, was still heard. The book came out of the scrimmage at last, and as it fell at Tom Brown's feet that junior lifted it neatly into the air and shot for goal—the goal being the fire.

It was a goal. It shot into the fire, raising a shower of sparks, and that was the last of Fishy's notebook.

But Fisher T. Fish was still alive, though from his voice he was in a parlous condition.

The scrimmage broke asunder at last when it was discovered that the book was gone, and Fisher T. Fish became visible. He was a sight. His collar was loose, as was his tie, and he was smothered from head to foot with dust.

"Ow-wow!" he groaned. "I guess I'm half-killed, you pesky rustlers! Oh, great jumping snakes! Yow-wow! Oh, you durned mugwumps! I guess I'd make shavings of you one after the other if I wasn't a wreck! I reckon—"

"Ah, boys! Is Fish, of the Remove, here?"

It was a deep voice from the doorway. Stott and Snoop spluttered, but the rest of the juniors started and wheeled round towards the door. It was open, and in the doorway stood a figure in cap and gown.

It was the short, stocky figure of Mr. Capper, the master of the Upper Fourth.

Fish himself jumped as he recognised the master. Into his mind at once came the significant message in the note he had picked up.

"Gee!" he mumbled.

In a moment his troubles were forgotten, and he was the keen business man again.

"Ah, I see you are here, Fish!" exclaimed Mr. Capper. "I wish to speak to you in private, Fish, my boy. If you will come outside a moment—"

"I guess I will, sir, right now!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

Dusting himself down hastily, Fish hurried to the door, and as he did so Mr. Capper withdrew into the passage, which was rather dimly lit by the gas. It had, curiously enough, been quite bright a moment or two ago.

Mr. Capper drew the door almost to as Fishy came out and joined him in the passage.

"I wish to speak with you upon a private and strictly confidential matter, Fish," said Mr. Capper, in a hoarse whisper—a whisper that reached every fellow in the Rag, however. "I have long known you to be a boy of unusual business acumen, Fish."

"Yes, sir," said Fish, gaining confidence at such flattery. "I guess that's me, sir."

"I have known it a long time, Fish, and I have long thought of enlisting your aid in a very delicate matter of private business."

"I guess you couldn't come to a better joint, sir," said Fish, beaming.

"I am perfectly sure of that, Fish. It has recently come to my knowledge that you specialise in—a-ahem!—in debt-collecting, Fish?"

"I guess you've hit it, sir. I guess I'm working that business as a sideline right now, sir."

"It is vitally necessary that this matter be kept a close secret, of course, Fish? You understand that, my boy?"

"Yep! I understand that, sir. I'll be like a shut oyster, sir."

"Very well. I will proceed, Fish," said Mr. Capper, while Fishy grinned as he thought of the note in his pocket. He fancied he knew what was coming.

"There is a gentleman—a master at the school, Fish, who owes me a rather large sum of money—to wit, ten pounds. He has owed it me for two terms, and it is vitally necessary for me to get my money back. That—ahem!—gentleman is Mr. Prout, the Fifth Form master!"

"I guess I'm not surprised at that, sir."

"And I am not surprised to hear you say that, Fish. You are undoubtedly keen and unusually clever. However, you may possibly think it strange that I should entrust such a task to a junior boy. But I have a very good reason. It is this: All my efforts to get repayment of the loan have failed. Mr. Prout has ignored my notes of appeal to him. I must try more drastic measures. I must attempt to shame him into paying the debt. When he becomes aware that the truth is known, and that a junior boy has been entrusted with the matter, he will be humiliated, and he will very soon pay the money in order to prevent the unpleasant matter becoming public knowledge. You understand?"

"Yep, sir! I guess I understand," grinned Fish.

And he did understand. He had

been just a trifle dubious before that explanation. But he understood now.

"Very well, Fish," resumed Mr. Capper with what sounded like a deep sigh of relief. "Then I will leave the matter in your capable hands. But I would prefer you not to lose a moment's time. You need not fear punishment at Mr. Prout's hands. He will not wish for unpleasantness or scandal. You will find him like a—cooing dove. You must not forget the respect due to a master of this school, however. You must be tactful and respectful. But you must be firm!"

"I guess I understand, sir. I guess I'll get to work at once, sir."

"Thank you, my boy—thank you! I shall not forget, of course, your commission. You can report to me later."

And with a genial nod Mr. Capper rustled away.

"Gee!" gasped Fish. Even now he could scarcely believe it was true. Yet it must be true. "Waal, if that don't run off with the chewing-gum! I guess I'll get down to business right away."

With that the almost dumbfounded, but eager and excited Fishy fairly dashed away, heedless of his dishevelled appearance, to Mr. Prout's study. There was every likelihood of there

being much more excitement for Fisher T. Fish when he got there.

And, in the meantime, Mr. Capper, who had gone in the opposite direction, had met with an adventure. He was hurrying along, just as if he was fearful of meeting anyone, when he bumped into Mr. Quelch just emerging from the music-room.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Capper.

He started to push past heavily—and rather rudely—but Mr. Quelch, with rather a neat leap for his age, jumped after him, and a heavy hand closed on Mr. Capper's shoulder, whirling him round.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Mr. Capper.

Mr. Quelch, whose attention had been drawn, first by Mr. Capper's rudeness and then by the strange fact that the Upper Fourth master's pointed moustaches were at an angle of forty-five degrees instead of in their usual position, gave a start, and, raising his hand quickly, he took off Mr. Capper's moustaches altogether. Then he lifted off Mr. Capper's cap, and with it came off a mop of sleek hair.

It revealed the youthful features and head of Harold Skinner of the Remove.

"Ah!" said Mr. Quelch. "Very clever—very clever indeed, Skinner!"

Dusk had fallen, but he did not dare to turn on the light. He was in a state of fear and dread.

An hour passed. And then a powerful knock sounded on the door of the Head's study, and a powerful voice thundered:

"Isaac Birchmall, I have come to arrest you, in the name of the law, on a charge of masterslaughter!"

"Ow!" yelled the Head.

"Who killed Cock Robin—I mean, who shot poor old Lickham?" continued the voice.

"I done it!" groaned the Head, forgetting his grammar in his agitation. "But it was a pure axcident—"

"Tell that to the jury!" came the powerful voice mockingly. "You will swing for this, Birchmall!"

"Yaroooooh!"

Already, in antissipation, the Head could feel the noose round his skinny neck.

"Unlock the door, and come fourth!" roared the voice. "Get the handcuffs ready, constable!"

The Head glanced wildly round the study like a hunted animal at bay. Then, to his surprise, he heard a scuffling of retreating footsteps without.

Then other footsteps were heard approaching, and there was a further knock on the door. The handle was tried, and then a voice inquired:

"Are you there, sir?"

The Head nearly fell out of his chair in his astonishment and relief, for the voice was the voice of Mr. Lickham whom the Head had left for dead!

The door was unlocked, and the master of the Fourth entered. The Head, in his joy at seeing Mr. Lickham alive, flung his dignity to the winds and his arms round the Form-master's neck.

"My dear Lickham," he sobbed, "are you much hurt? Where did I hit you?"

"You didn't hit me at all, sir," said Mr. Lickham, smiling as he detached himself from the Head's embrace. "That was a dummy figger which you hit—a clockwork representation of myself which that young rascal, Jolly, was manipulating!"

"Bless my sole! But—but the police, my dear Lickham! They were here a moment ago clammering outside the door!"

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Lickham. "As I came along to your study I met Jolly and his friends rushing away from it. They have been pulling your leg, sir!"

The Head looked grim as he selected his most formidable birch-rod.

"Summon a General Assembly, Lickham!" he commanded. "That young rascal Jolly will feel far from Jolly by the time I have finished with him!"

And the sequel proved very painful indeed for the orther of "Jack Jolly's Jape!"

THE END.

JACK JOLLY'S JAPE!

A Breathless, Eggsitting, Hare-raising Story of St. Sam's, Contributed Specially by the Famous Orther

DICKY NUGENT.

DR. BIRCHEMALL, the venerated peddygog who ruled St. Sam's with a rod of iron, was looking very pompous and important. He was at all times a dignified and majestic personage, but never had his dignity and majesty been so strongly in evidence as now.

For it was a very special occasion!

St. Sam's had been presented with a new rifle-range, the gift of Colonel Crackshot, O.B.E., a very extinguished governor.

The gallant colonel had written to the Head, regretting that he would not be able to come down to the school to open the range, and rekwesting that the Head himself should perform this important funkshun by firing the first shot.

The Head had never handled a rifle in the whole course of his skollastic career, which extended over a period of ninety years. He was a trifle nervuss of the ordeal, and when the colonel's letter came he sent for Mr. Lickham.

"Lickham," he said, when the master of the Fourth appeared, "I have been asked to open the new rifle-range by loosing off the first bullet. To tell the trooth, I am iggnerent how to proceed in such matters. Can you enlighten me?"

"With plezzure, sir!" said Mr. Lickham. "It is simple enuff. All you have to do is to take a rifle, open the what's-a-name, put a shot in the what-you-may-call-it, close the what's-a-name again, and then press the thingummybob. Is that clear, sir?"

"Clear as mud!" snapped the Head. "I will trubble you to be more eggsplicit, Lickham."

The master of the Fourth described the process all over again, and the Head was no wiser when he had finished.

The time arrived for the new rifle-range to be opened.

All the St. Sam's fellows were assembled outside the range, and there was a breathless hush when the Head came stalking on the seen, attired in his robes of offis.

No roll-call was taken, or it would have been discovered that one fellow was absent.

Jack Jolly, the hero of the Fourth, was the absentee. He was not very far away, though. He was actually in the rifle-range at the far end where the targets were, but he was safely screened from view.

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"I will now proceed to fire the first shot," said the Head, "and declare the rifle-range open!"

He walked into the new building with a rather unsteady gate. He was nervuss and trembling. His bony knees were fairly knocking together.

Not having handled a rifle in his life, the Head was natcherally a bit funky. He had heard that some rifles had a habit of kicking; indeed, a friend of his had had his sholder dislokated in this way.

These things were very disquieting to a skollarily gentleman like Dr. Birchmall, but he did not falter. He picked up a rifle, which was loaded for the occasion, and, shutting his eyes and gritting his teeth, he pressed the trigger.

Crack!

There was a loud report as the bullet whizzed on its way.

The next instant the Head gave a squeak of alarm.

At the very second that the rifle had been fired a figger in gown and mortar-board had suddenly walked in front of the target!

"Lickham!" cried the Head in tones of wild horror. "My only Aunt Jane! I—I've shot him!"

The figger in gown and mortar-board had given a sudden lurch and fallen to the floor in a huddled heap.

For one awful moment the Head stood as if turned to stone. Then he turned, and rushed wildly out of the rifle-range, and charged his way through the solid ranks of St. Sam's fellows. Away he flew, with his gown flapping behind him. Like Charley's Aunt, he was still running when he disappeared from the gaze of the astonished school.

Straight for his study he headed, and, on reaching that apartment, he locked the door, and fastened the winder, and sank into a chair, gasping.

"Oh, what have I done?" he wailed, his face white with terror. "By a most garstly axcident, I have slain poor Lickham! Oh dear! I shall be persecuted for this in a police-court! It is what they call a capital offence—though it isn't at all capital from my point of view!"

The unhappy Head rocked to and fro in his chair. So grate was his greef that he became almost historical.



As "Mr. Capper" endeavoured to push past Mr. Quelch a heavy hand closed on his shoulder and whirled him round. "Oh crumbs!" he gasped. The Remove master gave a start, and, raising his hand quickly, he grabbed at "Mr. Capper's" moustaches. Then as he wrenched at his hat a mop of sleek hair came off with it, revealing the youthful features and head of Harold Skinner of the Remove! (See Chapter 9.)

But not quite clever enough! You did not apparently count upon an accidental collision. What does this masquerade mean, Skinner?"

Mr. Quelch spoke quite calmly, but there was rather a nasty sting in his voice that Skinner didn't like at all. He groaned in deep hollowness of spirit. But he did not reply. He couldn't.

"Come with me!" snapped Mr. Quelch.

Harold Skinner went with him—a truly dismal figure.

Skinner was an exceedingly clever youth. He was almost as good at impersonations as was Wibley of the Remove. But somehow he always seemed to be just a little too clever—just as his practical jokes always were just a little too ill-natured and sometimes cruel. Once again he had overreached himself. Whether or no the hapless and misguided Fisher T. Fish was booked for trouble, it was fairly certain that Harold Skinner was.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Trouble for Two!

"MUM-MY hat!"

"Well, upon my word!"

"Capper!"

"And—and Prouty!"

"And—and Fishy—fancy a master enlisting Fishy's aid!" gasped Harry Wharton unbelievably. "Well—well I'm—"

Words failed him. It had been impossible to fail to hear Mr. Capper's resounding "whisper" had the juniors tried. Indeed, it had almost seemed as if the master had tried to make the Rag hear. Yet Mr. Capper was not

known to be a spiteful man—even towards his fellow-masters.

It was amazing!

Prouty owed Mr. Capper ten quids!

And Mr. Capper had actually placed the debts into the grasping hands of Fisher T. Fish to deal with—to collect if he could. Fishy, of all people!

It was amazing; but it was soon made clear!

"He, he, he!" cackled Stott. "I say, come along and see the fun, you chaps. Great pip! You chaps were blind! Couldn't you see it was Skinner?"

"Skinner!"

It was a yell.

"Yes; it was Skinner, of course," grinned Snoop. "Come on. He's got himself up as Capper, of course, and he's bamboozled that fool Fishy into trailing old Prouty. He, he, he! Come and see the fun!"

And Stott and Snoop raced out. They were followed by the rest with a rush and a scamper of feet. Even Harry Wharton & Co., much as they disapproved of Skinner's daring joke, rushed out, anxious to see what would happen to Fishy.

"Well, the rotten cad!" gasped Harry Wharton. "Fancy letting that American rotter in for that! Why, he'll be absolutely slaughtered. It's awful!"

"Rotten cad be blowed!" snorted Bulstrode. "Hasn't Fishy been asking for it for terms, the blessed swindling cad? Doesn't he deserve all he's going to get? It'll perhaps teach him not to bring his rotten, swizzling games here."

"Here we are! Shush!"

The juniors came into the passage where Mr. Prout's study was, and then they stopped short and crept up to the door. It was slightly ajar, and through it they caught a glimpse of Fisher T. Fish. He was standing before Mr.

Prout's desk, and though his face was a trifle pale, it was determined and keen as mustard.

But Mr. Prout's face was a sight for men and little fishes. He was, at the moment, staring with goggling eyes at Fisher T. Fish, the business man of the Remove.

It was fairly clear that Fishy had already announced his business.

Mr. Prout seemed on the point of having an apoplectic fit, and a severe heart attack.

He spoke at last—or, rather, articulated.

"Fish!" he choked. "Wretched boy! Impudent, insolent, brazen-faced, idiotic dolt! How dare you—how dare you, I say? Have you—you taken leave of your senses? Are you losing your mental stability? Is this an unheard-of, rascally, reckless, pretence of a practical joke, or are you a bigger, more brainless fool than I had hitherto supposed?"

Mr. Prout would doubtless have gone on in that strain, but he had to pause for breath. Mr. Prout was a rather podgy gentleman, not in the best of condition, and such a flow of words left him gasping like a stranded fish.

"I guess I'm hyer on strict business, sir," said Fisher T. Fish briskly. "I guess I'm sane enough, and I guess this ain't a practical joke. Nope, sir! I guess Mr. Capper's been cute enough to place the matter in my hands, and I kinder reckon and calculate that I'm the guy to see it through. I guess—"

"You—you—you—"

"I don't mean to be disrespectful, sir," said Fishy. "But I guess it's no good getting het up; it cuts no ice with me, sir. I'm after the dollars, and I reckon, as I've already yarped, that you don't want publicity on this hyer private

bit of business. Mr. Capper has lent you ten quids—I mean pounds—and my job is to collect it."

"G-gug-good gracious! You—you dare to suggest that Mr. Capper, a colleague whom I respect, has sent you here, Fish? Nonsense! Rubbish! Bunkum! Balderdash! You depraved young rascal!" roared Mr. Prout, getting most of his breath back with a rush. "How dare you enter this room and make such absurd and utterly wicked statements? How dare you, I say? Why, I will—will—will—" Mr. Prout spluttered, and then his wind gave out again, and he dropped back into his chair.

"I'm real sorry you're taking it like this hyer, sir," said Fishy candidly. "I guess you'll have a crowd of galoots round this door soon like a swarm of wasps round a jam-pot! Yep! If you'd taken it calmly now, as Mr. Capper and me expected you to, we could have talked the matter over quietly and come to some business-like arrangement, I guess."

"Mr. Cap-Capper and you expected me to!" repeated Mr. Prout, in a bellow, his face red as a beetroot, and his voice shaking with passion. "You—you impudent young rascal! You dare to suggest that I owe Mr. Capper ten pounds! Never in my long career as a master have I been subjected to such an insult."

"I guess——"

"You—you——"

"I guess you'd better keep calm, Mr. Prout," suggested Fishy, glancing round on hearing a chuckle outside the slightly open door. "I reckon if this hyer matter gets public it won't be pleasant for you, sir. Nope! I guess it——"

He got no further. With a leap that did credit to his years and plump figure, Mr. Prout jumped for the corner of the room. There was a gun there, and a couple of golf-clubs. Luckily—for Fishy or anyone near—Mr. Prout left the gun alone and snatched up a golf-club.

Only then did the business man of the Remove scent danger. He had been "banking" once again on people's fear of publicity, and once again it failed him.

He made a wild leap for the door, but somebody held it from outside—it was Bolsover—and the next moment Mr. Prout's hand was on his shoulder, and Mr. Prout's golf-club was making a close and painful acquaintance with Fishy's wriggling anatomy.

Whack, whack, whack, whack!

It was a terrific licking, and the business genius of the Remove raised the echoes with the most fearful yells. Most of the juniors out in the passage were grinning gleefully—they were highly entertained. Harry Wharton did not know quite what to do.

It was certainly very hard lines on Fishy, but—but——

There was a "but." Fishy was a swindling spoofer. Again and again he had been bowled out in his sharp—exceedingly sharp—business schemes, and again and again he had started afresh regardless of past failures and their painful consequences. It struck Harry that it really was time Fisher T. Fish received a lasting lesson.

He was certainly getting a lesson now—whether it would prove to be lasting or not! Mr. Prout—gasping and panting hoarsely now—broke one of the golf-clubs, and, dragging the hapless Fishy after him, he reached for the second one. But just as he was starting to use it, and just as Fishy's howls were rising crescendo again, the group of grinning faces round the door vanished.

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abruptly, and next moment Mr. Quelch appeared in the doorway.

Behind Mr. Quelch was Harold Skinner, apprehensive and dismal. All the actors in the little drama—or, rather, tragedy—were on the spot now.

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch. "Mr. Prout! Prout! My dear sir, pray stay your hand! One moment, sir! That boy is the victim of an absurd trick, I am convinced. Mr. Prout!"

Mr. Quelch raised his voice almost to a shout. Mr. Prout heard him and saw him then, and he ceased his labours and threw the golf-club down. Then, panting and wheezing like a pair of old bellows, he dropped into his chair.

The hapless Fisher T. Fish collapsed on the floor.

"Ow-wow! Ow-wow-wow-wow!" he groaned, tears of woe rolling down his cheeks. "Ow! Groooooogh! Yow-wow-wow! Oh, Jerusalem! Oh, I guess I'm killed! I guess my spine's smashed and my ribs done in!"

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Mr. Prout, I beg of you to explain this—this amazing scene! I have a dim suspicion that this boy Skinner, of my Form, can throw light on this astounding affair."

"Ow-wow!" groaned Fish. Hearing Skinner's name, he looked up, and then, as he saw the grease-paint and make-up on Skinner's face, and the gown he was wearing, a great and clear light came down upon him, as it were. "Oh, great jumping-crackers!" he moaned. "I guess I've been done brown—done to a frazzle! Oh, you—you—you pesky, gol-darned galoot, Skinner!"

Even the presence of the masters did not prevent Fishy from making those remarks. And as he made them there came a sudden explosion from outside—an explosion of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "How dare you! Mr. Prout——"

He turned again to Mr. Prout, who had recovered himself somewhat by this time.

Mr. Prout gasped.

"Mr. Quelch," he began breathlessly, "never in all my scholastic experience have I been so insulted! When you hear my reason for chastising one of your pupils you will, I am sure,

understand, and add your righteous indignation and anger to mine."

And with numerous, baleful glares at the hapless Fisher T. Fish, Mr. Prout explained. Fisher T. Fish groaned as he proceeded, but he did not venture to interrupt.

"Ah!" said Mr. Quelch, his brow black as a thundercloud as Mr. Prout wheezed to an end. "So—so that was your purpose in impersonating Mr. Capper, Skinner? Very well—oh, very well! You shall suffer dearly for this, Skinner!"

Mr. Prout looked at Skinner in bewildered amazement; but Mr. Quelch very soon enlightened him. Mr. Quelch, to make matters still clearer, subjected Fisher T. Fish to a deadly cross-examination—to which Fish, weary in body and soul, made no effort to evade the issue. He told of his ambitious business programme, and he showed the note he had found outside Mr. Prout's door. And Mr. Prout almost fainted when he read it.

"I think there is no need whatever to bring Mr. Capper upon the scene," said Mr. Quelch. "Come, Skinner! You have already told me one story, which, according to Fish's account, is a tissue of falsehoods. I demand to know the truth here and now! You will find it much more profitable to explain here and now than to trouble Dr. Locke to drag the truth from you under cross-examination. Tell me exactly what your object was."

Skinner trembled and told him. The mention of the Head was enough.

"I swear I didn't realise what it meant!" he groaned, at the end. "I only thought it would get Fishy a licking from Mr. Prout. I—I never thought it would be—be insulting Mr. Prout at all. That never occurred to me, sir. It—it was just a joke!"

"A very heartless and cruel joke, Skinner," said Mr. Quelch. "However, I do not feel that, under the circumstances, we need worry Dr. Locke with this—this disgraceful affair. Do you agree with me, Mr. Prout?"

Mr. Prout grunted a reply in the affirmative, and Mr. Quelch nodded.

"Thank you, Mr. Prout! Fish, you may go. You have already received your punishment. Skinner, follow me!"

And Skinner, trembling at the knees, followed Mr. Quelch.

A few minutes later a loud swishing sound, punctuated by howls of woe, were floating from the Remove master's sanctum. Harold Skinner had had his little joke. He was now paying for it!

All Greyfriars roared over the story, and for days afterwards it gave no end of joy and hilarity to seniors and juniors—excepting, of course, to the juniors chiefly concerned in what to them had been a tragedy. Perhaps, out of the three—Skinner, Fish, and Bunter—the latter youth came off the best—certainly much better than he had deserved.

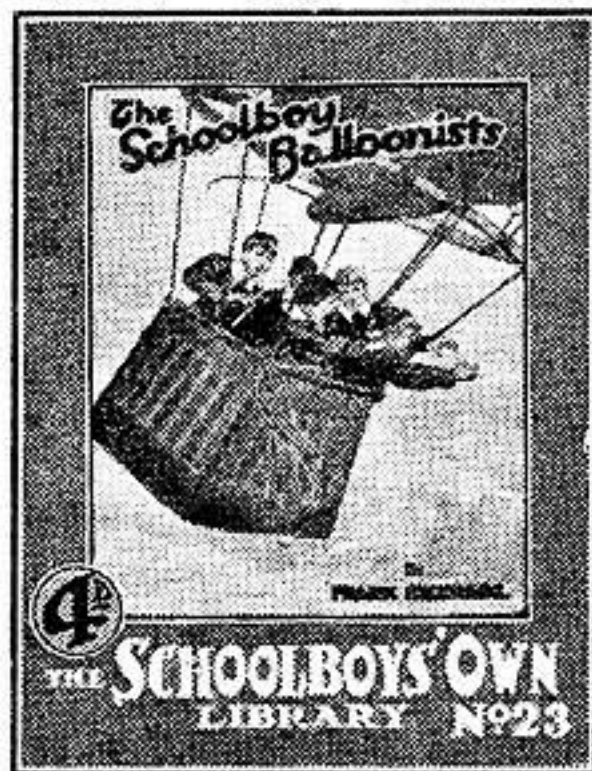
No more was heard from Fisher T. Fish regarding the Greyfriars Debt-Collecting Agency from that day on. The notebook—containing Bunter's debts, and no one else's—had been burnt, and Fisher T. Fish himself dimly and regretfully destroyed in like manner the leaflets.

The business man of the Remove had had enough, for the time being, at any rate!

THE END.

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The Arrest!

INSPECTOR TOWLEY noticed that start, and was to recall it at a later date. But Speedlow broke into his reflections abruptly.

"Good heavens, man!" he ejaculated. "There's over a thousand pounds in the club safe!"

It was Inspector Towley's turn to look surprised.

"Then you've said good-bye to it, sir," he remarked grimly. "And, if I might say so, it was asking for trouble to leave such a large amount lying about. But the safe's been cleaned out, you can take my word."

Speedlow's late animosity towards his cousin seemed to have evaporated entirely in the face of this calamity. He turned towards him.

"You hear that, cousin?" he said hoarsely. "What a fool I was to leave that money there! What shall I do?"

"Heaven alone knows!" said Curly, staggered at the amount of money that had been rifled from the safe. "There's Ferrers Locke—" he added, as a brilliant afterthought.

"Ah, Ferrers Locke!" muttered Speedlow, and his eyes glittered craftily. "But we mustn't forget Inspector Towley. If anyone can help me I'm sure it is he!"

"You are very good, sir," smiled the inspector, who had bristled at once at the mention of Ferrers Locke's name. "I think I shall be able to do all that is necessary without any interference from private detectives."

He laid stress on the word "private" for the especial benefit of Curly Taylor, and the youngster knew that he had fallen into the bad graces of the police official in his enthusiasm to suggest a likely course of action. Not that that worried him—at the time.

"I suggest, sir, that you proceed to examine the state of the premises without delay," said the inspector. "The robbery was only discovered by chance half an hour ago. One of my constables saw a light burning in one of the rooms, and he thought it strange. So he left his beat to investigate, and found that an entrance had been forced at the rear of the premises."

"I will come at once," said Speedlow, all anxiety, apparently, to hasten to the

scene of the outrage. "Perhaps you will come with me?" he added, turning to Curly.

"Like a shot!" came the response; for in face of this calamity young Taylor's personal feelings towards his cousin were submerged.

THE OPENING CHAPTERS.

After the death of MARCHANT TAYLOR, founder and managing-director of the Langsdale Wanderers, FERRERS LOCKE, the world-famous criminal investigator, is called in by the Home Secretary to sift the peculiar evidence relative to Marchant Taylor's end, which seems to indicate the mysterious affair as being the work of a secret society.

Locke arrives in Langsdale to find that, after a deal of legal argument, the entire fortune of Marchant Taylor has been left to LIONEL SPEEDLOW, his eldest nephew, while CURLY TAYLOR, Speedlow's eighteen-year-old cousin, is allowed ten pounds a week, on the understanding that he continues to play for the Langsdale Wanderers.

In his new role of managing-director, Speedlow makes a hash of things, for he knows next to nothing about football.

In a burst of spiteful rage Speedlow determines to hit at the Langsdale folk by ruining their favourite footer club. His nature is so perverse that he glories in this task of destruction, although it means a loss of thousands of pounds to him. Then, when the team has already been set on a downhill course, Speedlow intercepts a message intended for Curly, which states that another will—leaving the entire fortune of old Taylor to the younger nephew, Curly—will be found in a volume, entitled "Nicholas Nickleby." The message is thrown into the fire, but part of it is retrieved by Ferrers Locke, who has reason to be in the house.

Meantime, Speedlow commences a hurried search of the library. The book, however, is not to be found. With Curly and Jack Drake, Ferrers Locke succeeds in reconstructing the important message, but, despite all their efforts thereafter, the book alleged to contain the new will is not to be found. Speedlow begins to think the whole thing a hoax; all the same for that, he decides to get Curly put out of the way, and at once sets his cunning brain to work to achieve his rascally purpose. As a beginning, three cracksmen are imported into the Wanderers team. Some time later, after a heated altercation between the cousins, Inspector Towley, the local police-inspector, visits the Rookery. He bears startling news, for he declares that the offices of the Wanderers have been broken into, and that the safe has been rifled! This sudden news startles Curly.

(Now read on.)

In company with the inspector, the cousins left the Rookery and speeded towards the club's offices in Speedlow's car.

It was as the inspector had said. The safe was open—left in just the same state as the constable had first discovered it. On the floor before it was a scattered pile of papers, contracts, etc., of no intrinsic value. But of the thousand pounds there was no sign.

"Gone!" ejaculated Speedlow in dismay.

"You are certain that the money was there?" asked the inspector. "I mean, you haven't banked it and forgotten all about it?"

"It was there," broke in Curly Taylor. "I remember telling my cousin only yesterday that it was unwise to leave such a large amount lying about."

"That is so," admitted Speedlow ruefully. Then he forced a laugh. "Never mind, inspector. It's my own look-out. I sha'n't be guilty of such an indiscretion again. Let it go at that."

The inspector was about to make a reply, but at that moment a plain-clothes man who had been despatched into another room, beckoned his superior officer from the doorway.

Inspector Towley excused himself, and strode over to his subordinate.

A few muttered words passed between them, and something changed hands. When the inspector returned there was a peculiar glint in his eyes that Curly Taylor didn't fail to observe.

But Speedlow now seemed to have got over the shock of his loss, for, with a light laugh, he intimated that he was going to return to the Rookery.

"Ahem!" began the inspector, and his face reddened as he gazed at Curly Taylor. "One of my officers has picked up something from the floor of this room which might throw some light on the case!"

"It won't throw the thousand back, I'll be bound," laughed Speedlow.

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that it wouldn't do that," returned the officer, with a meaning there was no denying.

Speedlow and Curly were interested, the latter more so than his cousin.

"What is it?" he asked eagerly.

"For answer, Inspector Towley held

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up a key-ring, at sight of which Curly Taylor blushed to the roots of his hair.

"Why, that's mine!" he exclaimed. "Where—"

"Yours!" ejaculated Speedlow. "And —" He took a step nearer and glanced at a fairly large key on the bunch. "Why, that's the key of the safe!"

For quite two minutes the trio stared at each other in stupefied silence; or, rather, Speedlow and the inspector stared hard at Curly Taylor. As was natural in the circumstances, Curly began to crimson. His head was in a whirl. He recognised the key-ring as his own. There was no question about that. But how came it to be found in that room? And how was it that the key of the safe was attached to it? For Curly had never possessed the key!

"I'm afraid, Mr. Taylor, I shall have to do my duty," said the inspector bluntly.

"What do you mean?" flashed Curly, a sickening feeling gnawing at his heart.

"Simply this, that a robbery has occurred—that what little evidence we hold seems to implicate you. Therefore I must now warn you that anything you say may be taken down in evidence and used against you."

"But this is outrageous!" exclaimed Curly hotly. "Scandalous! You know as well as I do, inspector, that I am innocent!"

"I know innocence only when the magistrate and the jury declare it," replied the officer gruffly.

"But you, cousin Lionel—" began Curly, and he stopped as he saw the vengeful light in his cousin's eyes.

"You must not appeal to me," said Speedlow. "I'm sorry—deuced sorry! But this officer has his duty to do. I must say that appearances look pretty black—"

"You hound!" roared Curly, now beside himself with rage at the injustice of it all and his cousin's two-faced attitude. "I see it now. I see why you mentioned about this money a little while ago. You confounded hypocrite! You cunning worm! But I'm not proved guilty yet. Thank heavens, I've a friend in Ferrers Locke! He'll ferret this thing out to the bottom!"

"You will be allowed to communicate with your Ferrers Locke when the charge has been entered at the station," said the inspector dryly. "I must ask you to come along with me now."

"I'll come fast enough!" retorted Curly Taylor warmly.

In a silent body the trio moved doorwards. Speedlow's car again came into requisition, and within ten minutes they were in the charge-room of the local police-station.

The station-sergeant entered the charge. Particulars of Curly's age, residence, and sundry other seemingly unnecessary details were extracted from him. He asked for bail, but this Speedlow opposed, and Curly's request was over-ruled. Then, his face showing the strain this grave charge had made upon him, the young centre-forward of the Wanderers was taken below to the cells.

Meantime Speedlow and the inspector, accompanied by another plain-clothes man, made all haste to return to the Rookery to search Curly's belongings. His room was at the top of the house, and the inspector found the door locked.

"Does he usually lock his door?" he grunted.

"It was his habit," sneered Speedlow. "Perhaps he judged others by himself."

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The door was opened eventually by one of the keys found on the incriminating key-ring.

Once inside Curly's room the inspector and his colleagues began a thorough search for any sign of the missing money.

"I take it that it was done up in bags?" said the officer.

"Exactly," replied Speedlow from the doorway. "The silver was done up in five-pound bags, and coppers were done up in one-pound bags."

"Then our young friend would have needed a pantechnicon to take the loot away!" grunted Inspector Towley.

"I expect he did use a vehicle of some sort," was Speedlow's reply.

The search went on for another five minutes, and then Inspector Towley let out an ejaculation of triumph.

He had left the chimney till last, but its interior proved to contain on a ledge, set up at a height of about two and a half feet from the commencement of the chimney, three heavy bags. These the inspector, by dint of much stretching, managed to get a grip of.

The plain-clothes man took them from him.

"Ah!" exclaimed Speedlow, his eyes glinting. "Those are the bags all right. See they are marked—£5 worth of silver."

"We've got all the evidence we need, I fancy," remarked the inspector complacently.

"More than enough!" commented the plain-clothes man.

"This really is a shock to me," said Speedlow as the police-officers vacated the room, Towley locking the door after him. "I was only joking with cousin Richard this morning when he mentioned that some of my money would some day perhaps go to him."

"Oh, he said that, did he?" remarked the inspector, jotting down the statement in his notebook. "I suppose you have no one to witness that?"

"As a matter of fact, there were two witnesses beside myself," replied Speedlow thoughtfully. "Turville, the servant whom I sacked this morning, and Thompson, the man I've engaged in his place."

"Then the case is complete," muttered the police official, snapping his notebook shut with a gesture of satisfaction. "A good morning's work, sir."

You'll be present at the court to-morrow? I expect the case will be remanded for the next assizes."

"I shall be there," said Speedlow, with more finality than was necessary. "Good-day, inspector, and many thanks!"

He watched the police-officers stride down the drive, watched them until they were out of sight. Then he chuckled:

"So, cousin Richard, you've fallen into the net at last. I said a dose of prison would do you good. We'll see how you like it."

And, greatly smitten with his own cleverness, Lionel Speedlow poured himself out a generous measure of refreshment from the decanter in the dining-room, and drained it at a gulp. That he might be rejoicing too soon never occurred to him. Speedlow never could see very much beyond his nose, and the same could be said of the inspector who at that precise moment was also rejoicing in the fact that he had handled a very difficult case in a manner that reflected considerable credit upon himself.

There was a shock in store for both of them!

Drake Hits the Trail!

BAD news spreads like wildfire, and barely had it become known to the folk of Langsdale that Speedlow had bought out the other directors of the Wanderers F.C., when atop of it, bursting like a bomb-shell, leaked the news of Curly Taylor's arrest.

Langsdale was seething with excitement and anger.

In each calamity Lionel Speedlow, the wrecker of Langsdale football, as he had come to be known, had played some part.

The two topics of the day were the buying-out of the old directors and the arrest of the Wanderers' centre-forward.

But the former topic was submerged in the general interest and outcry the latter topic gave rise to. For not a man, woman, or child in the whole of the town—with the possible exceptions of Speedlow and his police friends—thought Curly Taylor guilty of the charge preferred against him.

Old Silas Chisholm forgot his own troubles when he learned of the plight his favourite was in, and hastened at once to the police-station. But someone was before him, and that was Ferrers Locke.

The great detective had been summoned by Curly Taylor without delay. Into Locke's ears the youngster had poured out his trouble.

"My dear fellow, don't worry," said the detective, when Curly had concluded. "There are so many weaknesses in the prosecution that I'll wager to make them sorry they ever brought the case. The case will be remanded to-morrow—if it gets as far as that—there's not the slightest doubt, but I undertake to promise you bail."

That was a relief to Curly. He hated his present environment, as what man wouldn't in the circumstances? He had hardly been able to keep a grip on himself, so helpless did his position seem with that unpleasant, dreary background of stone walls, clanking keys, and the regular, monotonous tread of the warder's feet outside the cell.

But now that Ferrers Locke was there confidence, hope, and faith in his own innocence had revived. He was allowed, too, to send out for decent food, which comforted him after a



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Inspector Towley held up a bunch of keys at sight of which Curly Taylor blushed a deep crimson. "Why, those are mine!" he exclaimed. "And that's the key of the safe!" said Speedlow ominously.

glimpse of the frugal lunch provided by the police authorities.

And the great detective, before he had departed, had assured Curly that he would see the thing through to the bitter end.

Far from being despondent now, Curly Taylor actually filled in the time with humming some popular dance music to himself—a circumstance that surprised the warder on duty outside in view of the prisoner's earlier demeanour.

Meantime, Ferrers Locke was busy. Briefly he outlined the case to Drake. That youth nearly jumped clear of the floor when he heard the facts of the matter.

"The scoundrel!" he exclaimed. "Speedlow's at the bottom of this, without a doubt."

"Well, I'm not in the habit of convicting a man in my own mind before I have sifted the evidence thoroughly," replied Ferrers Locke. "But in this case, my lad, I think you are right."

Thereupon he fell to, to making his plans, which necessitated Drake running for his cap and coat forthwith.

"Your job is easy to decide upon," remarked the sleuth, with a smile. "Apparently a thousand pounds was lifted from the club offices—"

"If it was gate money," broke in Drake quickly, "it would be in silver and copper."

"Exactly."

"Which means that a conveyance of some sort would be needed to cart the stuff away," continued Drake. "Why, there would be over a hundred bags of the stuff," he added.

"A regular moving job!" chuckled Locke grimly. "That's where our friend Speedlow has tumbled down. On the face of it, it is only reasonable to surmise that two or more men would be needed to lift a haul like that."

"That's what I think, guv'nor."

"Good; then get busy and see if you can find out how that stuff was shifted. Doubtless you will find wheel-tracks of some sort in the lane at the back of

the club's premises, for that's where our burglar friends worked from, I feel confident. Follow them, you understand; they might or they might not lead to something. It rained last night, so any tracks in that region would still be discernible."

"Right-ho, guv'nor!"

Drake was outside the hotel in a couple of minutes. In five more he was at the rear of the Wanderers' premises in Watcombe Lane. There, sure enough, he spotted deep tyre-tracks, that were, by reason of a patch that occurred at regular intervals in them, easily followed and easily distinguishable from the car-tracks left by Speedlow's two-seater.

But Drake's task was a long one if not a difficult one, and two hours later found him in the vicinity of Begelhamstead—a suburb of Langsdale two or three miles away. There the trail ended, for the tracks emerged on to a first-class road, where there was no mud to record their progress.

"This is a go!" muttered Drake, scratching his head. "I wonder—" He broke off as he sighted three figures coming towards him. He recognised them as the newcomers to Langsdale football, Messrs. Jagers, Spindle, and Bowsley.

They were in possession of some huge joke it seemed, for their remarks, or part of them, reached Drake's ears.

"Easy!" chuckled Spindle, taking no great notice of the lad at the side of the road. "Old Marlow is a clever nut to find us a crib like that. Key and all, mark you!"

Drake jumped as he heard those words.

For Ferrers Locke's assistant had an imaginative mind, and he was making capital of them the moment they passed into his head. It was the word "crib" that seemed to loom out from that remark, coupled with "key" and the name "Marlow." For, wracking his brains to discover where he had come across that name before, Drake immediately pictured a paragraph in his chief's

crime-book which stated that the biggest receiver in the metropolis was a gentleman rejoicing in the name of Marlow. It added, too, that he was always clever enough to elude the clutches of the police.

Another glimpse at the trio as they passed on down the road drew Drake's attention to the fact that their pockets were bulging in an extraordinary manner.

"Jove! This is getting warmer, with a vengeance!" muttered Drake. "It's a chance shot, but I'm going to try it. How do these people know anything about the key? That part of the evidence is known only to the police and a few intimates of young Curly. And why are they talking about the crib?"

Drake's youthful deductions were, perhaps, none too logical, but his instincts provided his logic as a rule. He decided to follow the happy trio. Taking up a position about a hundred yards to their rear, he began to trail them—an easy task in view of the open country. But after he had progressed in this fashion for half an hour, he saw the necessity of lessening the gap between him and his quarry, for there were now several lengthy twists in the road that hid them from view for too long a period at a stretch.

It was while he endeavoured to make up a little of this ground that he heard a sudden step behind him. He wheeled sharply, just in time to see a form hurtle from the hedge at the side of the road—just in time to see an upraised stick.

Instinctively Drake's arm came up to ward off the impending blow, but he was a split second too late.

Thud!

The stick crashed home with stunning force, and Drake collapsed like a felled ox, without even a moan. Over him stood Spindle, one of the newcomers to the Wanderers.

"I was right," he muttered. "I thought the young whelp was shadowing us. Strike me"—he knelt over the fallen youngster—"but it looks to me

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like that accursed puppy of an assistant who works for Ferrers Locke!"

The more Spindle looked at that white face, the stronger became his conviction, till at last, with a muttered imprecation, he took to his heels and rejoined his comrades, who were eighty yards or so farther along the lane. To them he explained his suspicions, and three faces at once became grave. More than that, they took on furtive expressions that ill-befitted the character of the professional footballer.

Next minute they were speeding towards Langsdale as fast as their legs could carry them.

How long Jack Drake lay in the roadway he had no idea, for on coming to he found himself in bed. Around him were several other beds, from which occasionally moved the figures of white-clad nurses.

"Good Lor!" muttered Drake, trying to sit up, and finding the effort too much for him. "This is a hospital! Where the deuce am I?"

A nurse moved over to his bedside and gently but firmly moved him back into a comfortable position.

"Take it easy, sonny," came a kindly voice. "You're in good hands. You were found lying unconscious in the roadway, and brought here by a motorist who all but ran over you."

"But—but," stuttered Drake wearily, for his head was throbbing, "where is this place—what's the name of it?"

"The Langsdale Cottage Hospital," was the reply.

"Langsdale—good!" muttered Drake. "I'll be getting up soon."

"You'll do nothing of the kind!" said the nurse firmly. "You are suffering from concussion. Come, come!" she added, as Drake was about to remonstrate. "I must ask you to make as little fuss as possible, for there is a very serious case in the next bed. That particular patient must have sleep. The poor man was in that terrible accident to the south-bound express from Birmingham. They've sent him here because the only word that he has uttered that might help to identify him is Langsdale."

"Poor devil!" muttered Drake, taking a peep at the bandaged figure in the bed adjoining his.

There seemed nothing at that moment to warrant anything of any importance connected with the case of the Langsdale Wanderers being sprung from that chance introduction to the man who had travelled from Birmingham. And yet there was a startling development in store, so startling that it was to make history the world would gossip over for many a day to come.

But of that, naturally, Drake had not a thought, as he turned in his bed and sought the sleep that claimed him.

Vengeance!

As the two-thirty train to London began to draw clear of the platform at Langsdale, there was a sudden commotion near the ticket-barrier. The official on duty there was suddenly pushed on one side as three stalwart men, each carrying a large suitcase, dashed past him and tried to board the moving train.

"Stand clear!"

The guard yelled the command at the top of his voice, but the late arrivals took no notice of him. The foremost of

the trio grabbed the door-handle of a compartment and scrambled in. After him piled his companions.

The train gathered speed, and within a minute had drawn clear of Langsdale East.

"Lor', that was a narrow shave!"

The tallest member of the three late arrivals mopped his forehead with a handkerchief and grinned at his colleagues.

"Another second and we should have missed it," he added.

The other two nodded.

The trio owned to the names of Spindle, Jagers, and Bowsley respectively—the three latest additions to the Langsdale Wanderers. Since their meeting with Jack Drake the rascally trio had decided to shake the dust of Langsdale from their feet while the going was good. They had accordingly paid a flying visit to an empty house in Begelhamstead, coming from which place Jack Drake had surprised them a short time since, loaded with something that made their suitcases bulge. Followed a hasty consultation of the time-table, and a frantic dash to catch the two-thirty to London.

One or two people they had passed on the way, recognising them, wondered what business it was that demanded such haste, for were not Spindle, Jagers, and Bowsley members of the Langsdale Wanderers?

They were—or, rather, they had been prior to catching the two-thirty! And were, which was of more account, three of the most daring cracksmen the English police had ever had to cope with. All the same for that their exteriors bore a deceiving air of respectability.

"So this is the end of our turn as pro footballers," grunted Jagers, at length, pulling away strenuously at an obstinate pipe. "One crib cracked, and us nearly pinched into the bargain."

"Jolly glad, too!" exclaimed Jerry Spindle, with a grimace. "Give me kiss in the ring, every time. Football's too busy a game."

"Do you think we're wise in beating it like this, you guys?" came the query from Bowsley, who sat hunched up in the corner of the carriage.

"Dunno about wise!" exclaimed Spindle. "But I'm not exactly pining to meet Mr. Blessed Ferrers Locke. You can bet your life he's not far off if his brat of an assistant is hanging around."

"Something in that, Jerry," said Jagers shrewdly. "Why, we should be in the dock inside a couple of days if we tried to crack any more cribs at Langsdale. Marlow was a blind fool to send us to Langsdale."

"He was that," growled Spindle. "And there was I mapping out such a lovely plan of campaign, too. I'd booked the parson's house, boys. Lots of silver there. Then there was old Judge Meredith's place—enough stuff there to keep us quiet for a year or more. And there were we, respectable members of Langsdale, bang in the public eye all the time. Why, it looked as easy as nicking sugar in a restaurant, until that swop-faced kid Drake hove in sight."

"I don't know about that," said Bowsley slowly. "We kidded ourselves that we had taken that footling, wall-eyed idiot Speedlow in. Seems to me he's taken us in very nicely."

"What do you mean, granny?"

Spindle and Jagers put the question in unison. "Granny" Bowsley smiled dourly.

"Simply this," he said. "That it's durned strange the key-ring we left knocking around the club premises, when we had cleared the safe, belonged to that youngster Curly Taylor."

"But old Marlow gave us that," put in Jagers. "He said the key had come into his possession, and that we might find it useful. Of course, I remember he gave us instructions to leave it lying about in a prominent position when we cleared off. But that was to throw the police off our trail."

"Not a bit of it," grunted Bowsley. "That was done purposely to drag Taylor into it. We didn't know whose the key was until the midday paper told us all about the robbery and Taylor's arrest, did we?"

"Well, that's so."

"But Marlow did!" exclaimed Bowsley triumphantly. "And what is he doing with Curly Taylor's key-ring? How did he get hold of it?"

"Ask me another!"

"I'll durned soon enlighten you," said Bowsley warmly. "Marlow was fixing a frame up for somebody, and that somebody, as far as I can see, is Wall-eye Speedlow."

"Good lor!"

Jagers and Spindle looked up in surprise.

"You're bigger idiots than I thought you," went on Bowsley. "Haven't you seen since we've been in Langsdale that Curly Taylor and Speedlow hate each other like poison? Can't you let your imagination do something for you? Why, it's as clear as crystal that Speedlow somehow got Marlow to fix things for him—"

"And like blamed sheep we did all that Marlow told us!" stormed Jagers suddenly. "He knew, he must have known, that Ferrers Locke was in the district, for Marlow never lets the tecs out of his sight. They can go to Jericho, and Marlow gets a wire from someone saying 'So-and-so landed to-day.'"

"Good!" jeered Granny Bowsley. "You're waking up, my buck. But it's a bit deeper than that; for if Speedlow, as I surmise, fixed this with Marlow, then he must have known that our credentials were forged when we were signed on for the Wanderers."

"Oh!"

"Which means," continued Bowsley, "that Speedlow held a trump card over us all the time if things went against him. He could declare that he had been imposed upon; that the three men he had signed on for the Wanderers were impostors—were the burglars, in fact, who had made away with a thousand of his money, and left a false trail to rope in his cousin Curly Taylor."

"The dirty dog!" roared Spindle, bringing a brawny fist down into an equally brawny palm with a resounding smack. "I'd like to scrag him!"

"If things happen to work out like that," continued Bowsley, "Speedlow would apologise to his cousin, shift the blame on to us, and retire gracefully from the eyes of the law."

"The swab! But Marlow knew this—he knew what he was sending us to when he told us of the easy cribs going begging at Langsdale!" roared Spindle. "It seems as if he had a double purpose in sending us there—"

"We'll have a talk with him the moment we get to the 'ronday,'" muttered Bowsley, his last word being a phonetic contraction of "rendezvous."

"And if it's as I have said, then Heaven help him!"

"Hear, hear!"

There was no mistaking the menacing note in the voices of the speakers, for there is nothing a crackman hates more than treachery from the man who, as a general rule, collars the lion's share of the spoils.

"Cheer up, mates!" said Bowsley at length. "We've come to no harm. In a way, it was a good job we bumped into that feller Drake, for I don't doubt he had got on our trail. But the swag is O.K. We've got most of the thousand quid. Wish there had been more of the silver, though," he added ruefully. "Coppers remind me of dragging a steam-roller about—"

"There's another comfort," broke in Spindle. "We sha'n't have any difficulty in getting rid of the stuff—not like notes, you know."

"Talking of that," said Bowsley suddenly, "reminds me that the police—according to the midday paper—have found some of the silver in young Curly Taylor's room. Now, how the deuce did it get there? We cleared the whole lot, didn't we?"

"You answered the question long ago," said Jagers. "Mr. Wall-eye Speedlow put it there, of course! And he'll have a dickens of a job to account for it, too, I'll wager, if that nose-parker Locke is hitting the trail."

The train began to slow down; Euston Station signal-box flashed a sign for it to proceed; and five minutes later Messrs. Spindle, Jagers, and Bowsley were beating it at the double for the "ronday."

They found Werthemir Marlow at home—very much at home, for he was handling with great affection a diamond and sapphire necklace that must have been worth fifty thousand of the best. But his interest in the necklace faded out as he saw who his visitors were, as he saw their grim expressions.

For once in a way, old man Marlow felt that he had exceeded himself. Lie as he might—and Marlow was a pretty good understudy of Ananias—the money-grabbing receiver failed to satisfy Messrs. Spindle, Jagers, and Bowsley that he had dealt fairly with them. And, on the maxim of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, the three ex-members of the Langsdale Wanderers proceeded to take it out of Marlow's hide. They finally left him in a senseless heap, sprawled over his own desk, his closed eyes an inch or so from the sparkling gems in the necklace he loved so much.

And subsequent events, as Ferrers Locke was to prove, showed that the trio had just cause to take the law into their own hands.

"Good heavens!"

This ejaculation escaped Ferrers Locke, as, looking up from a rough diagram he had been drawing, his eyes fell upon the bandaged head of his boy assistant.

"Don't get excited, guv'nor!" chirruped Drake. "Just a smack on the head—nothing to worry about."

But Ferrers Locke was worried—or, rather, he was anxious—for there was a great bond of affection between him and his plucky assistant.

Before Drake knew what was happening he was firmly but forcibly pushed down into a comfortable armchair, what time his chief's eyes roamed that bandaged head, as if seeking to peer beneath the white folds.

(Continued on the back page.)

TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR!

THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY, Nos. 23 and 24.

I FEEL that I must draw your attention to the fact that two new numbers of this monster school story library are now on sale. But No. 23 features your old chums, Harry Wharton & Co., in a thrilling adventure "up aloft." The title, perhaps—"The Schoolboy Balloonists!"—will give you a better idea of what I mean. It's one of the best yarns Mr. Richards has ever given us, and that's saying something. So no Magnetite should miss it. Its companion volume, entitled "Wake up, Katie's!" is by that celebrated author of school yarns, Michael Poole, and "Michael" knows exactly the "stuff to give 'em." Trot round to your newsagent to-day and get a copy of one or both of this month's "Schoolboys' Own Library." It'll be money spent to good advantage, take it from me, chums.

HE WANTS TO JOIN THE MER- CANTILE MARINE!

A Magnetite writes to me for information on how to get into the Mercantile Marine. He says that he cannot enter the service via the training-ships, for reasons which we need not go into here. Can he join up in any other way? Yes, my chum. You could start as an apprentice with one of the steamship companies. It will cost you about forty pounds, as a premium for the four years' apprenticeship, which is returned to you by instalments in the form of a bonus at the end of each year of service. The correct age for an apprentice is fifteen to sixteen years, and candidates must pass various physical tests as prescribed by the Board of Trade.

For Next Monday.

"A STAR OF THE CIRCUS!" By Frank Richards.

That's the title of the grand school tale for next week, chums. There's a fine theme running through it which Mr. Richards

develops in his own inimitable style. Don't miss it on any account!

FOOTBALL SUPPLEMENT No. 8.

Harry Wharton and his merry men have piled in with another topping footer Supplement for next Monday. Wharton has proved himself with this new feature, judging by the enthusiastic letters pouring into this office, and no one's more delighted than yours truly.

"THE CASE OF THE LANGSDALE WANDERERS!"

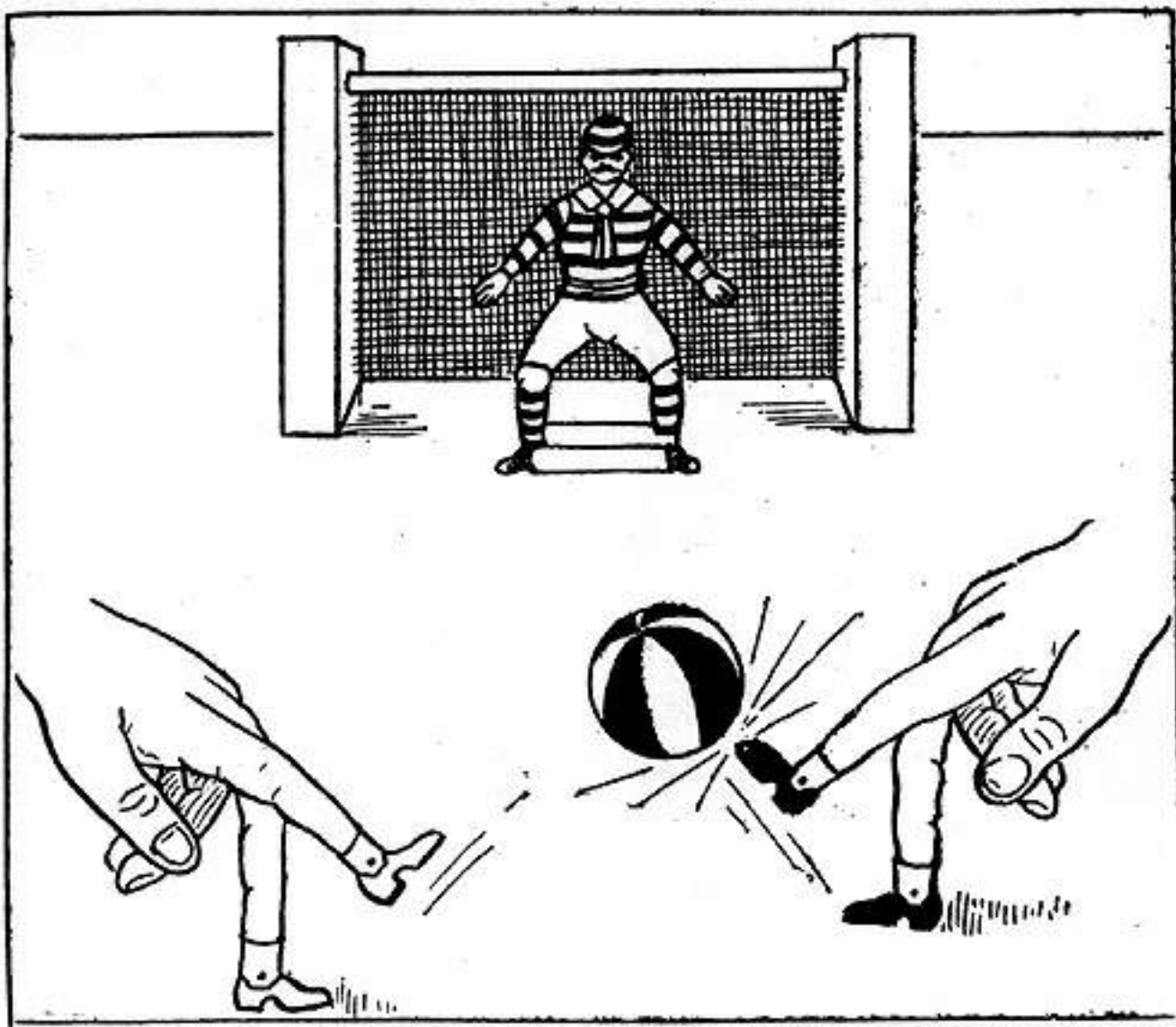
There will, of course, be another powerful instalment of this popular football and detective story. Ferrers Locke is well on the trail; he knows more about this strange case than even his capable assistant, so you can bet your life that some startling revelations are in store.

TWENTY TOPPING TABLE FOOT- BALL GAMES!

Last week I gave you full instructions on how to win one of these fascinating table games, and for the benefit of readers who missed this announcement I will repeat the offer in detail. All you have to do is to send in a "par"—not more than three hundred words in length—describing any incident which you consider interesting, seen or heard on the football ground. Now, this is delightfully simple; one can hardly call it a competition, as it is within the reach of everyone. For the best twenty efforts sent in each week I am going to award twenty topping table games. The picture below gives you an idea of the game. Note the miniature footer boots attached to the fingers of the hand. Practically the same tricks and movements as played on a proper football field apply to this table game. There's a football, there are two sides, there are the footer boots. What more would you have! Now pile in with those pars; you can send in as many as you like. All efforts must be addressed "Pars," No. 2, The MAGNET LIBRARY, Gough House, Gough Square, London, E.C. 4.

Your Editor reserves the right to publish any prizewinning paragraph. Now get busy!

YOUR EDITOR.



SEE IF YOU CAN WIN ONE OF THESE FASCINATING
TABLE GAMES. (Full Particulars Given Above.)

The WIZARDRY of WALKER!



A nutshell biography of the famous Villa forward.

By
"REFEREE."

SMALL need, methinks, to introduce you to William Walker. Walker, I grant you, is not an uncommon name, and neither, come to think of it, is William. In the world there must be hundreds of Walkers and thousands of Williams, but to the average footer fan there is only ONE William Walker.

This is the lad who wears the claret and blue of the famous Villa—the lad whom I have often mentioned in these notes as being among the first few wizards of modern footer. Here is an inside-left with an international reputation; a flying and a scheming craftsman, whose every move and every kick on the field has the workings of subtle Soccer brain behind it. Here is Walker whose left foot alone has won many a bright game for the Villa—Walker, the one and only, and first choice as England's inside-left.

Walker is one of the fortunate few who is deemed to have been born with football in his blood. Whether that is true or not I cannot say, but I can testify to the fact that Walker certainly comes of footballing stock, for his father, George Walker, was a leading light in the Wolverhampton Wanderers team of days gone by.

It was when Walker senior was at the zenith of his fame that young William came into the world. That was on October 29th, 1898, in a little town called Wednesbury, which you will find, if you consult your map, lies equidistant between Walsall and Wolverhampton, and is only eight or so miles removed from the Villa ground. At a very early age young William showed an enthusiastic aptitude for the Soccer code, and there was no greater worshipper of George Walker than this, his destined-to-be-famous son.

Therefore, you fellows, it will come as no surprise to you to learn that a great deal of little William's spare time was spent at the Wolves' ground, and, if the stories I have heard in the neighbourhood of Wednesbury have any truth in them, a great deal of time that was not to spare.

In those early days one imagines William as having had two ambitions—one to shine as a footballer like his idolised dad; the other—closely linked, you will observe—to be a shining light in the ranks of Aston Villa F.C. For the Villa, you must know, was William's favourite team, just as, in the other sense, George Walker was his favourite player.

Lucky William! Not often does it fall to our lot to have ambition so early gratified. At an early age he was the heart and soul of the King's Hill School team. Leaving that and the scholastic establishment to which it belonged, he joined up in the ranks of Hednesford, for whom he played three games before throwing in his lot with Darlaston.

Then came the War, and as William was too young to join up he persevered with his favourite game. Presently then, we find him taking a step farther towards the goal of ambition in transferring his affection to a club nearer home in Wednesbury Old Park—a club, nevertheless, which was keenly watched by the bigger clubs round about. By his smartness on the field of play, by his really prodigious scoring powers, it was not long before some of these bigger fish began to visualise him in the colours of the clubs to which they belonged. Thus Birmingham was keen on him, but keener than they were the Villa.

Oh, yes! The Villa knew an International in the making when they saw one, and they

saw one, in all truth, in young Walker. Therefore the Villa, whose motto you might have remarked is "Prepared," began to think about post-War football, and decided that William would form a very useful unit of that team. They signed him as an amateur, and from then until the War was over William occasionally assisted them.

With the coming of peace William found one youthful ambition realised—that of being a fully fledged player on the books of his most idolised club. At the beginning of the season of 1919-20 he played either at inside-right or centre-forward for his new club, but, not being used to such big occasions, was not a brilliant success, and so was relegated to the reserves in order to gain experience. That was a wise move, as subsequent events showed; for in January of 1920 he was recalled to the first string, and given a chance to see what he could do in the Villa's First Round Cup tie against Queen's Park Rangers.

What did he do? He scored two goals, and later went on to help the Villa in winning the Cup by beating Huddersfield in the Final at Stamford Bridge. Thus, in his initial season of first-class football, did William achieve an honour and ambition that Steve Bloomer would have given almost anything to have won.

And not only that, indeed. Oh dear, no! Among his outstanding feats in that season he scored four goals in one match!

But the next season saw England's inside-left fairly launch upon his career, for in this season he had the tremendous honour of playing for his country and laying the foundation of that International career which is surely the triumph of post-War soccer. It was then that he earned his first cap against Ireland. What he has done since in the International and representative line is fully set out in the record here appended.

I think I have forgotten to mention that, though William as a youngster was so keen on a football career himself, his father, having "had some," had no such illusions; and when William left King's Hill School, so far from being encouraged to take up the game as a means of livelihood, he was peremptorily packed off to a nut-and-bolt works at Darlaston with a view to learning the ironworks trade. But William was not happy in this line. That football seems to have been uppermost in his mind is rather proved by the fact that he joined Hednesford Town.

Twice has he figured in Cup Finals—on the Villa's victorious occasion in 1920, and again when they lost to Newcastle United in 1924 at Wembley. In the latter case it may be said, however, that Walker was undoubtedly the finest forward on the field.

Here is his record:

INTERNATIONAL MATCHES.

1922-24-25.—For England v. Scotland.
1922-25.—For England v. Wales.
1921-22-25-26.—For England v. Ireland.
1923.—For England v. Sweden (2).
1925.—For England v. Belgium.
1925.—For England v. France.

INTERNATIONAL TRIAL MATCHES.

1925.—For North v. South.
1925.—For Professionals v. Amateurs.
1921-22-25-26.—For England v. The Rest.

INTER-LEAGUE MATCHES.

1922-26.—For the Football League v. Irish League.

THIS week I want to air a personal grievance against my friend—I am not sure that he still is my friend—Harry Wharton. He asked me to slip up to Highbury to see how the guns were firing, but he didn't give me any headache powders, and the result is that I have a headache I wouldn't sell for a fiver.

I certainly thought when I got to Highbury—which is a name—both to myself!—where the Arsenal play—that the guns were firing good and plenty. I soon discovered, however, that the noise up at Highbury—that of having played in this season with was not of guns at all, but of carpenters hard at work under the stand. They are busy building new recreation of course—young Jock and old Jock. Buchanan and Rutherford are a good wing, and there is always this to be said for the Arsenal—they never lack Brain in their stand—with my fingers in my ears—I have come to the conclusion that the Arsenal mean to be the "poshest"—or Haden. He is ever such a tiny fellow, frail and suggesting should it be most "posh"—club in the country. I don't think you could blow him over. But Haden's Christian suppose any of the players will speak to anybody else once name is Samson!

Having had a look round these new rooms under the old for the Arsenal—they never lack Brain in their stand—with my fingers in my ears—I have come to the conclusion that the Arsenal mean to be the "poshest"—or Haden. He is ever such a tiny fellow, frail and suggesting should it be most "posh"—club in the country. I don't think you could blow him over. But Haden's Christian suppose any of the players will speak to anybody else once name is Samson!

These new rooms which they are building at Highbury, however, stand to me as representing the new spirit of the club in general. Instead of ghosts of relegation stalking around the place there are rosy visions of championships, and to spike the Arsenal guns will take a bit of doing. By the way, the dictates of grammar will compel me, right through these notes, to refer to the club as the Arsenal.

But the real name is "Arsenal," and I will tell you why the word "The" was dropped from the title. It was in order that the club should always be the first in any alphabetical list of football clubs. An Arsenal, and I told him some-way, that is the story as told to me.

You will remember that when I was at Liverpool last week I noticed the absence of tobacco fumes, and told you that there were several players of the Liverpool club who don't smoke. At Highbury they go one better, for there is a rule to the effect that there must be no smoking "on the premises" by the players of the Arsenal club. George Hardy, the trainer, sees that this rule is carried out, and what is equally to the point he practises what he preaches. Indeed, George told me that he only allows himself to smoke once a week, and that is a cigar on a Sunday afternoon. I am not going to tell you which player it was who said that the trainer doesn't even smoke on Sundays unless he has a cigar given to him, because I don't believe it.

One thing I do know, that Hardy, who served under "Billy" Williams, now the trainer of Sunderland, sees more with one eye than most of us see with two. Long ago, the Arsenal trainer lost the sight of his left eye while working at a circular saw. It was this accident which caused him to give up his carpenter's job.

I was rather lucky to catch the Arsenal players "at home," because two or three days a week they go off somewhere for golf. They are not all good golfers, but they all have to play, because in the view of Mr. Herbert Chapman, the new autocrat of the managerial chair, it is a very good way of training. But if the Arsenal men keep playing golf it is possible that sooner or later some of them will be able to beat Billy Blyth. They have a long way to go, though, to do this, for the half-back who has surprised everybody by his play this season is a wonder with the "pill" on the golf course.

"Billy" is the character of the team—the optimist whose sense of humour never fails him. What the other Arsenal players would do without "Billy" I haven't the faintest notion, for they are what I should call a

AT HOME WITH THE GUNNERS

By "PAUL PRY."
(Our Travelling Correspondent.)



A. BIER.



W. N. BLYTH.

LIGHTNING SKETCHES OF FOOTER CELEBRITIES.



An impression of N. Harris, the famous Scottish International forward of Notts County, by Jimmy Sed of the Spurs.

dour, determined lot—certainly not a set of comedians. But Billy keeps them alive. Some time ago the club lost to Newcastle United by seven goals to nothing. I expressed my sympathy for Billy and the club. "Oh, you needn't worry about that," said the half-back. "I did pretty well per-

sonally, and made two good passes in the course of the game—both to myself!" Charlie Buchan is also proud of a record which he has set and plenty. I soon discovered, however, that the noise up at Highbury—that of having played in this season with was not of guns at all, but of carpenters hard at work under the stand. They are busy building new recreation of course—young Jock and old Jock. Buchanan and Rutherford are a good wing, and there is always this to be said for the Arsenal—they never lack Brain in their stand—with my fingers in my ears—I have come to the conclusion that the Arsenal mean to be the "poshest"—or Haden. He is ever such a tiny fellow, frail and suggesting should it be most "posh"—club in the country. I don't think you could blow him over. But Haden's Christian suppose any of the players will speak to anybody else once name is Samson!

I have got the idea that Harper still thinks rather a lot about the old folks at home, for although he may have found that London's streets are paved with Treasury notes, the fact remains that it is not always easy to settle down such a long way from one's native heather. But all in all, I think the time Harper will be a list of football clubs. An Arsenal, and I told him some-way, that is the story as told to me.

Leaving the players for a minute, we can now put the tip of a nose into the manager's room. What a man he has—fit for a cabinet minister I should say, and incidentally Mr. Chapman is regarded as the Prime Minister among football managers. He pulled Huddersfield Town through with two successive First Division championships. When he starts talking you just have to listen, and I listened for so long that he actually made my headache worse than the carpenters down below had done.

One of the things which I said about Mr. Chapman by those who know him best is that he has an amazing habit of knowing exactly what he wants, and never rests a moment until he gets it. Possibly the people who say this of the Arsenal manager are alluding to the salary with which rumour associates him.

There are so many stories of how much the Arsenal manager gets that I am not going to repeat any of them so far as actual figures go, but I can say definitely that there is no manager in football to-day who gets as much as Mr. Chapman. Rumour further says that he will receive a nice little bonus if his club finishes in the first half-dozen places in the League table, and, believe me, the boys are all out to earn that bonus for their "boss."

That Mr. Chapman does get what he wants is shown by some of his captures this season—Harper, Scotland's goalkeeper, for instance. Take another case, too. On a certain Wednesday recently Rutherford had to go into hospital. On the Thursday morning Manager Chapman secured the transfer of Jack Hulme from Blackburn Rovers, and he appeared for the Arsenal on the following Saturday.

PLAYING ALL OVER THE FIELD!



Should a good footballer be able to fill any position?

By
JOHN MCINTYRE.
(The famous Blackburn Rovers player.)

JUST recently there has been a lot of discussion on the lines of good footballers being able to play in practically any position on the field. This season, perhaps more than any other in our day, has been a time of experiment, and there have been several of these experiments which have certainly come off "trumps." At Blackburn, for instance, we have seen Syd Puddefoot, coming to the club as a centre-forward, do remarkably well at inside-right, and there have also been other experiments in the Blackburn team. Again, I scarcely go anywhere in Lancashire in these days without hearing of the promise of John O'Donnell, the Everton man, as a forward.

FROM FULL-BACK TO FORWARD.

It may be remembered that a year or so ago O'Donnell was secured by Everton from Darlington as a full-back of much promise. Indeed, I think I am right in saying that the Evertonians paid a fairly substantial fee to secure his services. But now we find O'Donnell making a name, not as a full-back at all, but as an inside-left. Scores of similar cases could be quoted of men who have switched from one position to another and done as well, if not better, in their new position than they did in the old one. There are also the players who have established a reputation for being able to play in any department—full-back, half-back, and the various forward positions.

WHAT AM I?

I have done a little bit in the versatility business, as we might call it, myself—in fact, I might revise the following statement, and say that I have played in so many positions since I was at Fulham that if you asked me now what I really am I should find it difficult to say exactly. I could tell you what I am not—a goalkeeper; but, then, the goalkeeper's job is so different, and there are so few of us who play in other positions who can make anything like a good show between the sticks. Possibly we don't want to do so, but that is a question which can well be left for goalkeepers themselves to discuss.

AN ASSET TO THE CLUB.

When we get these cases of players switching from one position to another and making a "good enough" show wherever they are played, we get people declaring from the house-tops that these are the real footballers—the men who are worthy of being put on a pedestal. It is added that the footballer who is really worthy of the name—who knows his job—should be able to put up a good show in any position. Although on the face of it this sounds reasonable argument, I am not so sure that we ought to accept this without question. I am quite prepared to admit that it must be very nice for a club to have two or three versatile players on the staff. If you have one man who can put up a good show anywhere, then it is comparatively safe to travel to away matches with twelve players only, for if any one falls out at the last minute through sudden indisposition, then the "able to play anywhere" footballer can fill the vacancy.

FINDING THE RIGHT PLACE.

Consider this switching business from one or two other points of view, however. In the first place, it does not necessarily follow that a footballer who is switched from one

place to another, and in the new place makes a success, can necessarily lay claim to extraordinary versatility. It may be that the change has given him an opportunity of shining in what really ought to have been his position all the time. We footballers fall into positions more or less haphazard. In our young days we go into a junior team, not with any deep-rooted convictions as to the position on the field to which our abilities are best suited, but with the prime object of getting a game of some sort. Thus we play, not necessarily in our best position, but in the position which happens to be vacant at the time.

THE CASE OF WADSWORTH.

Take the case of Sam Wadsworth as an example. For years he had been a forward, and not so long ago he told me that when he was at Nelson the officials there had the utmost difficulty in persuading him to have a shot at full-back in an emergency. He tried his luck there in the end, and, as we all know, Wadsworth has won fame as a full-back streets ahead of anything he ever achieved as a member of the attack. The case of Wadsworth—and others on similar lines which could be mentioned—seems to prove to me that there may be many footballers in the game to-day—just ordinary club men—who would become positively brilliant if they were changed to some other place, either by accident or design. There are some footballers, "two-footed" men, who are such good all-round players that they can be played anywhere almost without detriment to themselves or the side for which they play.

THE DAY OF THE SPECIALIST.

I certainly do not think, though, that we ought to lay it down as a maxim that the footballer ought to be able to put up a good show in any position. Rather do I incline to the view that this, particularly, is the day of the specialist, and that there are so many things to be learnt in connection with every position on the field that life is too short to learn everything about several positions. I repeat that the real footballer will probably put up a decent show in any position, but a decent show is not going quite far enough; you want a really good show.

"JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES."

While on this subject, let me make a candid confession. Looking back on my career as a footballer, I am sometimes more than a little bit sorry that I ever gained any sort of reputation as a fellow who could be put in practically any position in an emergency. Often in my career have I had the feeling that I was regarded as the jack-of-all-trades and a master of none. The player who has no fixed position on the field doesn't get International caps, though occasionally he may be chosen as reserve man. The compensation comes, of course, because, having a reputation for versatility, you sometimes get into a team in one position when there is no vacancy in another. So to the coming lads I would say—never mind all this talk about a good footballer being able to take on any job. Find your corner, the place which best suits you, and stick to it.

John McIntyre