

"THE SCHOOLBOY BROADCASTERS!"

(This week's ripping school story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.)

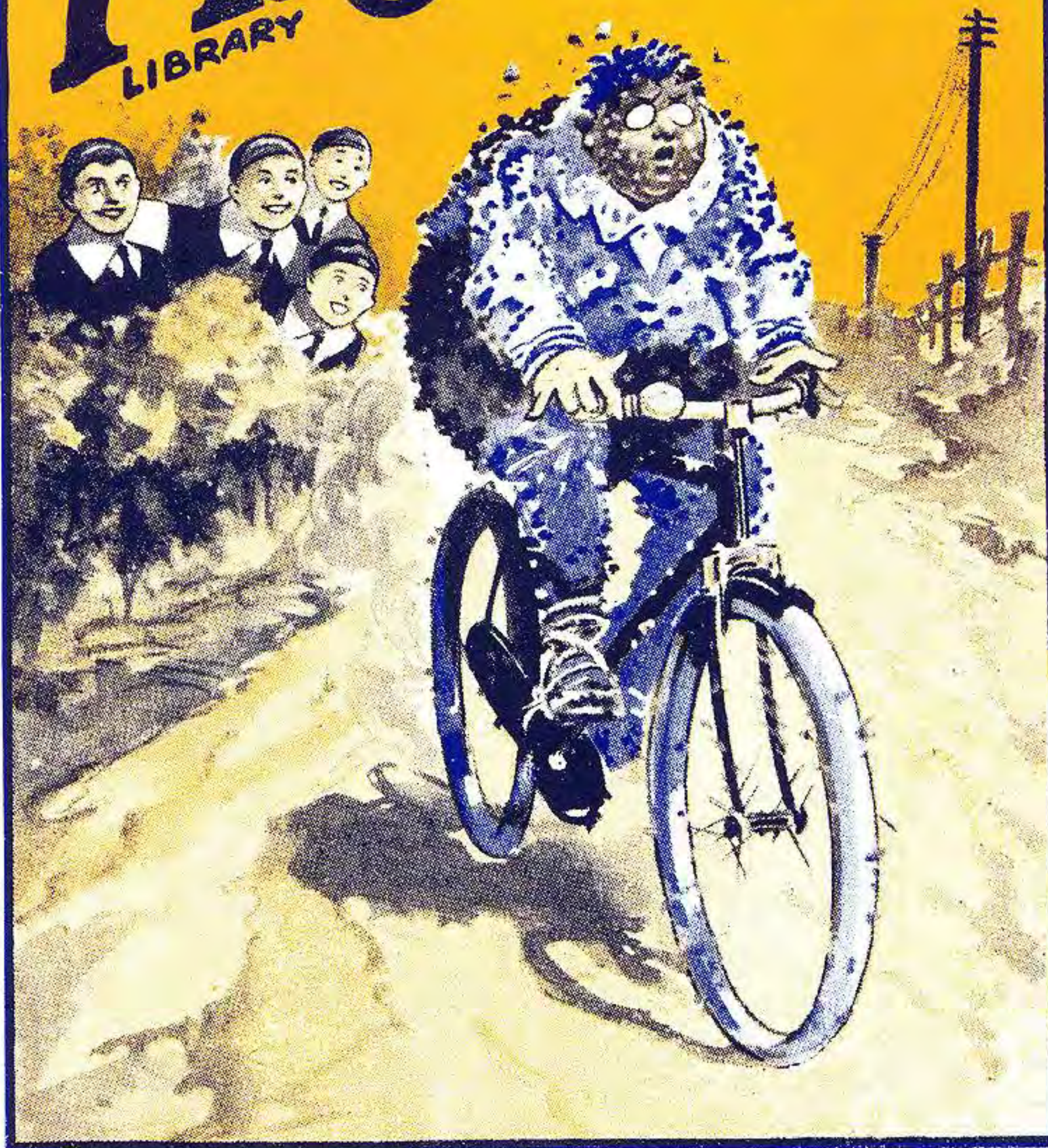
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Week Ending February 12th, 1927.

The Magnet 2^d

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EVERY MONDAY.



"WOW! I'M BUNTER!"

(Underneath the fur and feathers is Billy Bunter, the fattest and funniest schoolboy in the world! Read about him in the grand, extra-long school story in this issue.)

BEFORE THE MICROPHONE! Great excitement reigns at Greyfriars when it is announced that certain members from each Form are to broadcast the evening entertainment from the Pegg Wireless Station, and competition for the coveted places runs high!

The Schoolboy Broadcasters!



A Magnificent Extra-long Story of Harry Wharton & Co., the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Knows!

"**H**E, he, he! I say, Wharton, old man—" The Famous Five were laying tea in Study No. 1 in the Remove passage at Greyfriars when Billy Bunter rolled in.

There was a fat, satisfied grin upon the face of the Owl of the Remove; and his unmusical cackinnation seemed to indicate that at that precise moment something irresistibly funny was greatly tickling William George Bunter's fancy.

"He, he, he!"

Bob Cherry paused in the act of cutting bread-and-butter and looked up.

"Hullo, hallo, hallo!" Bob exclaimed in surprise. "What's biting the Bunter-bird? What's the little joke, old fat man?"

Billy Bunter doubled his fat form in another vain effort to control his mirth; and chuckled anew.

"He, he, he! I say, Wharton, old man—"

"Oh, chuck the fat freak out," Johnny Bull grunted impatiently, "and let's get on with tea. Russell will be along at any moment now!"

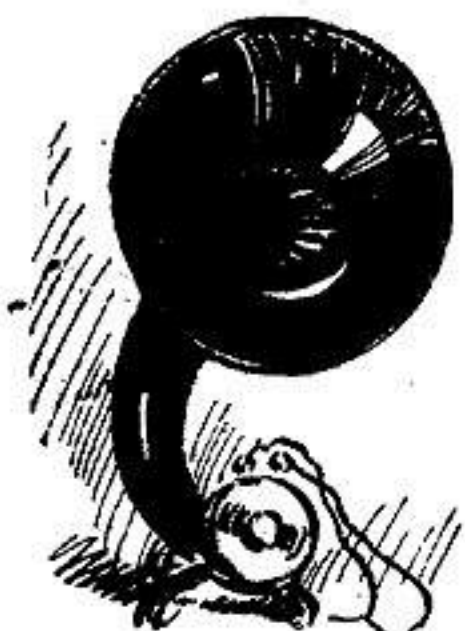
"Yes, rather," put in Nugent. "We've got to talk over the tennis—"

"Tennis!" ejaculated Bunter. "Garn, you know! You can't kid me! Think I don't know it's the blessed footer season, Nugent?"

"It's also the Public Schools' Hard Courts finals on Saturday. Hard-court tennis is played all the year round without a break. And now trot off! Tennis isn't much in your line, old barrel."

"The trot-alongfulness," solemnly observed Hurree Janset Ram Singh, the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur, in his weird and wonderful English, "is, in the ludicrous circumstances, the correct and proper caper, my esteemed Bunter."

The Owl of the Remove glared from one to another of the Co. obstinately. Frank Nugent had just finished piling one plate with meringues, and was steadily piling jam-tarts on to a second. Inky was filling a glass biscuit-barrel with coconut biscuits and chocolate fingers, while the captain of the Remove himself carefully coaxed a tempting plum cake from its packing.



"Hands off, porpoise!" grinned Bob Cherry warningly, following the Owl's covetous glance. "Blessed if I can ever make out, you know, how old barrel of lard always manages to nose out a fellow's grub. Beats me every time, it does. How do you do it, Fatty?"

Billy Bunter drew his podgy form indignantly to its full height.

"Really, Cherry," he said warmly, "I came along specially to speak to old Harry; to warn him—"

"To warn me!" Wharton ejaculated wonderingly. "What the thump's the ass burbling about?"

"And all that you rotters can do is to cast rotten asp—asp"—Bunter groped for the word—"aspersions on a fellow's character! The character of a Bunter, too!"

"The—the character of a Bunter!" roared Johnny Bull. "You fat rogue!"

Bunter waited calmly.

"As if a Bunter would even think of helping himself to anything without being asked first!" he went on. "We Bunters have learned our manners a little better than that, I should hope!" the Owl concluded bitterly.

But he took another furtive little step towards that groaning table, all the same. Whatever heights the Bunter family manners might soar to in William George Bunter's vivid imagination, they were never likely to be proof against a surreptitiously snatched tart.

"Well, carry me home to die!" Bob Cherry ejaculated weakly. "Billy, you—you—"

Mere ordinary words failed Bob in that great moment, and he groped wildly in one corner.

"Where's that blessed stump?" he asked. "There's only one way to argue with a porpoise."

"Ow! Keep off, you beast! I've explained to you I wouldn't think of pinching anything, haven't I?" hooted Bunter. "I've got to warn my pal Wharton, I tell you. It might save old Harry no end of a licking. Yarooogh! call him off, Harry, old chap! Grooogh! You awful beast!"

"Keep off our grub," warned Bob, "unless you want your fat fingers rapped again—like that! See?"

"Yooooop! Yarooooogh! Oh, you rotter!"

Bunter sucked his damaged knuckles sulphurously.

"Yow! As if I'd dream of taking anything! Besides, you beast, it was only a measly jam-puff—and I thought you weren't looking! Ow! Wharrer you at?"

Wharton had seized Bunter by one fat shoulder and spun him round like a fat top.

"What's this about a licking for me, Bunter?"

"Oh, sling him out into the passage, Harry," said Frank Nugent, "and for goodness' sake let's get on! We'll never get tea ready, at this rate. It's only another of Bunter's yarns again."

"It hadn't better be," the skipper of the Remove said grimly, "or there will be a dead porpoise ready for burial within five seconds! Now, Bunter, out with it—quick!"

Shake, shake, shake!

"Ow! D-don't d-do that, you beast! I'm a very d-delicate chap, you know, and my d-delicate c-constitution won't stand it—really, it won't!" gasped Bunter. "And, besides, if my spectacles f-fall off and get b-broken, you'll have them to pay for!"

Shake, shake, shake!

"Out with it!" said Wharton, gritting his teeth. "Hand me that fives-bat, Inky."

Bunter set his big glasses straight and blinked savagely through them at the determined leader of the Famous Five. That Harry Wharton meant every word was only too plain.

"Buck up!" said Wharton impatiently.

"It—it's really like this, Harry, old man—"

"Don't 'Harry, old man' me! And time's running on."

"Oh, really! And I've got most important news for you, too, Wharton. 'Tain't—'tain't even as if I had any interior motive, either—"

"Ulterior motive, do you mean?"

"Yes, that's it!" Bunter gasped. "I'm doing this solely to—to get a pal of mine out of a Head's licking. Now, s'pose you invited me to tea with you—"

"In-invited you to tea with us?"

"Yes. And then I could tell you all about it comfortably—see?"

"I don't see at all!" Wharton rapped out briefly. "Is that all you've to say?"

"Nunno!" Bunter paused. But that groaning festive-board was not going to elude him without a good tussle. "Look here, then," he began again. "S'pose we all got together and locked old Russell out—"

"What?"

"Lock the bounder out. Tell him—tell him the invitation's cancelled, you know," went on Bunter eagerly. "After all, invitations are often cancelled—and you only wanted to jaw tennis rot. That would get the coast clear, you see, and—and then you could invite me instead."

"Well!"

"Of all the thumping nerve!"

"The nervefulness is terrific!"

"We're still waiting," said Wharton grimly. "I'm not wasting time much longer on you. And if we find you've been gathering private information by listening at keyholes, you can consider yourself booked for a bumping!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! How ever did you guess that?" Bunter gasped, and backed away apprehensively. "What I mean to say is, of course I wouldn't think of doing such a thing! Here, you rotter, wharrer you at? Ow! Yarooogh! Stop it, Cherry, you awful beast!"

"That," said Bob cheerily, "is just a gentle reminder of what will happen every time a certain porpoise forsakes the straight and narrow path of strict veracity. You're getting it from this stump—hard! Now for it!"

And Bunter "went it," with one eye desperately upon that threatening stump.

"Yah—keep off! Being near Dr. Locke's study, I—I happened to twig old Quelch going in, you know, looking like a—like a blessed boiled owl!" Bunter blinked seriously. "The beak had sent for him. Well, somehow or other, just at that moment my shoelace came undone, and while I stooped down just outside the beak's door to tie it up, I may accidentally have happened to overhear something that was said."

"You fat sneak!" rapped Wharton disgustedly. "Eavesdropping again!"

"I haven't, I tell you! While I was tying up my shoelace, I may inadvertently have heard the beak jawing to Quelch. But I haven't been eavesdropping. That's a different thing altogether. And—"

"Oh, cut it short!" said Johnny Bull, with a snort. "We want our tea!"

"Well, old Quelch was mumbling away, and then suddenly the beak spoke up and said, 'Look here, Quelch—'"

"Ha, ha, ha! He would!"

"Well, perhaps he didn't put it quite like that," admitted Bunter peevishly. "What he actually said was: 'We must have Wharton of the Remove before us, and hear what the lad has to say about this matter.' Those are his very words."

"Well?" said Wharton.

Bunter gave him a surprised blink.

"That's all," he grunted. "Ain't—ain't you getting uneasy? Why, it's bound to mean a flogging at the least. P'raps the sack, even." Bunter chuckled happily. "I couldn't catch any more, because Wingate came along and pulled my ear, the beast. But I reckon that's enough. He, he, he!"

"Well, I'm jiggered!" Harry Wharton gasped incredulously. "So that's the wonderful news, Bunter? Here, catch hold of him, you chaps! Bump the fat fibber!"

Before he could protest Bunter was grasped by five pairs of willing hands and whirled off his feet.

Bump, bump, bump!

"Ow! Grooogh, you beasts!" roared Bunter. "Wow, you'll smash my glasses in a minute! Yooop! Oh, stop it, you awful rotters!"

Bump, bump, bump!

"Now sling him out!" said Harry Wharton.

Crash!

And bruised and battered, aching in body and in spirit, William George Bunter whizzed suddenly through the open doorway of Study No. 1. He landed in the hard and unsympathetic Remove passage with a bump and a roar.

"There, you fat fraud!" breathed Harry Wharton from the doorway. "Now go and do some more of your rotten spying!"

And then the Famous Five settled down once more to the job of getting tea ready for the honoured guest.

Russell came along a moment later, and they began. But hardly was the spread in progress than, with a quick knock, the door was thrown open again, and Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, looked in sharply.

"Wharton!" Wingate rapped out. "Head's study at once! You're wanted!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Not a Licking!

"COME in!"

Harry Wharton frowned slightly as Wingate tapped at the Head's door. Dr. Locke's deep voice called to them to enter.

Quick as Wharton had been at ridiculing Bunter's suggestion of a flogging, or even the "sack" itself, in store, it did really begin to look now as if the smirking Owl of the Remove might have been right for once.

Wingate and Wharton entered the study quietly.

And then the captain of the Remove started with surprise. For, in addition to the Head and Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, there were George Blundell of the Fifth, Hobson of the Shell, and Cecil Reginald Temple, the lofty skipper of the Upper Fourth.

And Blundell and Hobby and Cecil Reginald Temple were toeing the line expectantly. They glanced up at the captain of the Remove as he entered and exchanged commiserating glances.

Wharton's frown deepened. It was utterly beyond him, this sudden gathering of the clans business. He racked his memory for some recent rag which

had included the Fifth and Shell and Upper Fourth, as well as embracing the Remove, his own Form, and which could possibly have come to the notice of the powers that were. And he racked his memory in vain. There was nothing.

The Head coughed behind his hand, and motioned to Mr. Quelch.

"Mr. Quelch and I have called you together, my boys," Dr. Locke began in his kindest tones, "as captains of your respective Forms, in order that we may put before you a suggestion—a very kind invitation, I may say—which has come to hand by the afternoon post."

So, whatever it was to be, it was not a licking. As this much was made clear the captains brightened visibly, and Cecil Reginald Temple's attitude of lofty superiority sat upon him much more comfortably. But, if not a ragging from those set in authority, then what the thump was it?

Dr. Locke proceeded to enlighten them.

"I have given Mr. Quelch entire control of this matter, boys. He will at once explain fully, and you will listen carefully."

The master of the Remove stepped forward.

"By now you will all know, boys, that a wireless station has been established on the cliffs between Black Pike and Pegg."

Harry Wharton nodded. During the past weeks lorry-loads of timber and constructional material had been arriving almost hourly from London, and gradually, on the top of the cliffs, a wireless station had come into being.

There was mystery about that wireless station. No one seemed to know when broadcasting would begin. But already fellows scouting curiously round it and along the cliffs on Sundays wondered mightily to themselves what the broadcasting artistes would have to say about the tedious train journey from London to Friardale. And even then they had to get from Friardale. The fact was that, perched up there on top of the cliffs between Black Pike and Pegg village, the new broadcasting station was in about the most hopelessly inaccessible spot anyone could possibly have found for it.

But next moment Mr. Quelch went on to explain, and as he explained the whole position grew clearer.

"This wireless station which has been erected," he said, "is not to be used for general broadcasting at all, boys. In fact, it would be more correctly described as purely an experimental station. Its sole purpose is to test an entirely new discovery. This, it was found, could not be undertaken at any of the permanent stations without disorganising their programmes, so that a temporary station had to be built. This part of the country was chosen chiefly on account of its seclusion—for the experiments are, of course, being conducted in secret."

"Well, the experiments are turning out a wonderful success, and all that is now necessary is something in the nature of a final test, something exhaustive, to which various qualified persons in several parts of the country can listen, and upon which they can base a final report."

"This final test of the new apparatus is to be an evening's broadcast, complete in every detail."

"This afternoon your headmaster, Dr. Locke, received from the engineer in charge of the station a very cordial communication, explaining all that, I

have told you, and inviting Greyfriars to make that big final test, giving us, in short, nothing less than a great opportunity to broadcast. Naturally I—"

"To broadcast!"

"Whew!"

"Oh, begad!" murmured Cecil Reginald Temple faintly.

Mr. Quelch smiled at the interest he had aroused, and continued:

"Naturally, it is quite impossible, in one evening, for the whole of Greyfriars to broadcast. You will readily understand that, I am sure. Dr. Locke, therefore, has suggested that the invitation be confined to the Upper School. The younger boys might possibly feel somewhat nervous in front of the—er—the—"

"The microphone, sir," Blundell supplied. Blundell nearly choked at the notion of Tubb of the Third, or Gatty of the Second being nervous in front of anything.

"Thank you, Blundell, thank you! In front of the microphone. So that the arrangements will be confined to the Upper School. Now, this is what chiefly concerns you boys. I have suggested to Dr. Locke that the details would be best left entirely to the captains of the various Forms."

George Blundell rubbed his hands enthusiastically.

"That's a first-rate wheeze, sir. Put me down for a solo. That one in the Prison scene in 'Il Trovatore,' I think."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"That, my boys, is precisely what you will have to settle amongst yourselves. We are leaving entirely with the captains the problem of who actually is to represent the Form. Er—" Mr. Quelch coughed. "We hope that it may be settled in an amicable manner."

"Oh, rather!" said Cecil Reginald Temple.

Harry Wharton grinned.

"Leave it to us, sir," he said respectfully. "How many fellows from each Form are to be chosen?"

Dr. Locke retired behind his hand, and pondered.

"Four would be best, I think, Quelch. What do you think? That gives us sixteen broadcasters from these four Forms. Then possibly one or two of the Sixth might care to join in, too. Eh, Wingate?"

"We'd be jolly pleased, sir!" responded Wingate.

"Very well, that is settled. Four boys from a Form, and each boy to restrict his—er—performance to not more than ten minutes."

"Saturday is the evening put at our disposal," added Mr. Quelch, "so that you had better bring to my study not later than Friday evening the names of the boys who will be broadcasting, together with a note of what they intend to do."

"Right, sir!"

"Leave it to us!"

"For the moment, then, that is all, or if there is anything at all I can help you with, do not hesitate about coming straight to my study."

"Oh, thank you, sir!"

And the captains trooped out, having in their hearts towards that wireless station quite a fatherly feeling!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Shock for Skinner!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! What's the verdict, Harry? Licked?" A crowd of juniors waited excitedly. The little passage outside Dr. Locke's study was packed tight. After being slung out of Study

No. 1, Bunter had deemed it nothing but his solemn duty to spread the news among more attentive listeners. And the Removites, concerned for their leader, had rallied round.

Bob Cherry strode forward as he spoke, and gripped Wharton's hand. And then, glancing past his chum, Bob suddenly started, his sturdy face blank with consternation.

"Well, my hat, you chaps!" he ejaculated. "Here's Temple and Blundell and old Hobby! I say, what's wrong? Are you all blessed well bowed out together, or what is it?"

"You silly ass, Bob!" grinned Wharton. "I told you it was only Bunter's rot, as usual. What he overheard may have been right enough, but the fat idiot put a wrong construction upon it. Shush, now, here he comes!"

Billy Bunter was pushing up through the crowd. The fat Removite blinked in outraged surprise at the sight of Wharton's grinning face.

"Well, I'm blessed!" he burst out. "Ain't you licked?"

"Not this time, old lard-tub! Try again!" Wharton moved on cheerfully. "I say, come on down to the Rag, you chaps. I've something for you to listen to."

"What about tea?" Nugent demanded. "We've not had it yet, you know."

"Never mind about tea just now, old scout. Other and more pressing matters demand attention. Come on, you chaps!" he repeated. "Form meeting in the Rag!"

Vernon-Smith came drifting along.

"Hallo, Wharton! What's the game?"

"Meeting in the Rag. Fall in, Smithy!"

"Come on, Remove—Form meeting! Wharton's going to speak."

Jumping up upon the Common-room table, Wharton surveyed his assembled Form-fellows. The Rag had filled with excited Removites. Everyone was asking in breathless whispers what it was about. Elsewhere Blundell and Hobby and Temple were probably already engaged in addressing similar gatherings.

At a signal from his leader Inky closed the door, and the meeting began.

"Gentlemen of the Remove—"

"Hear, hear!"

"Go it!"

"Friends, rum 'uns, countrymen—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Go it, Wharton—on the ball, you know!"

"We are gathered here this evening to discuss great events—events unique in the history of Greyfriars—Oooch, don't shove the table, Toddy, you blessed ass, you'll have me off in a minute!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'll begin again. We've all been along to see the new wireless station on top of the cliffs halfway between Black Pike and Pegg."

"Rather!"

"Well, to cut a long story short, then, Saturday evening has been put at the disposal of Greyfriars by the engineer in charge, and the Head has accepted his invitation on behalf of the school. Consequently, the Head has got to recruit a dozen or so merry broadcasters, who will represent their respective Forms."

"Phew!"

"Great pip!"

"Count me in, Harry," said Bunter promptly. "You can put me down for a jaw on cookery."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at!"



"Look here, Wun Lung, before we decide, suppose you treat us to a sample of your singing," said Wharton. Beaming with pleasure, the Chinese junior began. "Ai-al-ai-ai-ai-Chong! Ai-al-ai—" "Stop!" "Smother him, somebody, quick!" Wun Lung broke off suddenly, amazed at the reception his Chinese song had been accorded. (See Chapter 6.)

"We can. Good old grub-hound!"

"The Fifth are in this, you chaps," Wharton went on, shouting to make his voice carry above the din and uproar. "The Fifth and Hobby of the Shell, and Temple's crowd. But I'm to make it plain that no more than four fellows can be included from one Form, and that fellows are to limit their turns to ten minutes."

"Oh!"

"And now, gentlemen of the Remove, it's really up to you," continued Wharton. "You've heard the scheme. Four fellows to represent us, turns limited to ten minutes apiece, and broadcasting to take place on Saturday night, beginning at seven-thirty, sharp. All names in to Quelch by Friday. And now, chaps, who's it going to be?"

The enthusiastic Removites roared applause. Harry Wharton stepped down and rejoined his chums. All round the Rag the fellows were talking in little excited groups.

The Greyfriars broadcasting station! There was something novel in the idea that caught the Removites' imagination. It was unheard of. And speculation ran riot as to who would fill the four vacancies.

Billy Bunter rolled across to the chums of the Remove with an ingratiating blink.

"I've hit it, you chaps. Something for the youngsters, you know. A sort of jaw, on the lines of that uncle what's-his-name chap who used to spout to kids from 2LO. What do you think of that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The Removites laughed until the tears ran down their faces.

"Uncle Billy of Greyfriars will now tell the bairns a bed-time story!"

"Uncle Ananias!" chuckled Bob Cherry, whereupon there was another great shout from the hilarious Removites, and Bunter relapsed into a sulky silence.

"Well, any more suggestions? Come along, chaps, do! Roll up, you know!"

"Get Wun Lung to do some of his Chinese conjuring tricks," grinned Peter Todd. "How's that one, Wharton?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's a suggestion," announced Vernon-Smith—"and a serious one, too. I put it before this meeting that, as skipper of the Remove and leader of the sporting activities of the Form generally, Wharton ought to broadcast a ten minutes' talk on the subject of games—our Remove footer and cricket, you know. What do you say? Is that carried, you chaps?"

"Rather, Smithy!"

"Well played, the Bounder!"

"Of course, we might have expected Wharton to make sure of his own place all right," sneered Stott. "It's a put-up job, I reckon; and the other places will carefully be filled with three of his goody-goody pals."

"Thanks for this honour, you fellows," said Harry quietly, ignoring the cheap sneer. "You don't know how much I appreciate it. And you can rest assured, you chaps, that I won't forget to let listeners-in know absolutely everything there is to know about our football and cricket."

"Well, come along, chaps!" urged Smithy. "Who's next for the slaughter? There's Stott, now—Stott's got a

lot to say. What about putting you down for a little talk on backing the giddy gee-gees, Stott?"

But William Stott was staring across at the door, and the eyes in his weak face held a tremendous fear.

"Oh, you fool, Smithy!" he hissed.

"Oh, you silly fool!"

"Skinner, then," the Bounder rattled on. "One of those merry drinking-songs, Skinner. Or it might be a pleasant ten minutes on the subject of banker. What! No takers? It's too bad of you, really it is!"

And Vernon-Smith shook his head sadly.

"Skinner!"

Harold Skinner spun suddenly round in alarm. So did the rest of the juniors. And there, on the threshold, a thunderous expression darkening his brow, stood North of the Sixth! In the general excitement and tumult of the crowded Rag not one of them had heard the door open—not one of them, that is, save William Stott. And Stott's frenzied effort to shut up the Bounder before it was too late had come to naught, and now he stood with Skinner, trembling like a leaf.

"Skinner, what was Vernon-Smith saying in connection with banker?" said North grimly. "Repeat it, please."

Harold Skinner's tongue clave to his mouth. He stood there before the prefect absolutely dumb with terror.

"Come on!" North insisted grimly. "Out with it—unless, of course, you would rather go straight before Dr. Locke."

Billy Bunter gave a fat chuckle.

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"Skinny's bawling some blessed drinking-songs, North, and after that he's giving us a jaw on banker, you know."

"What!"

"A jaw on banker, old chap: Well, either a jaw on banker, or a jaw on gee-gees. It isn't quite settled yet. But, I say, I'm surprised at him! Ain't you, North?"

White with rage, Harold Skinner turned upon Bunter a furious look. It was a look which boded ill for that prattling junior's future safety.

North of the Sixth breathed hard.

"Is this right, Skinner, what Bunter says? I think you'd better follow me to Dr. Locke straightaway——"

"Stop! I—I never——"

"Hold on, North!" Vernon-Smith stepped forward coolly. "It's only a little joke. We're drawing up the Remove broadcasting programme. I put it to Skinner that he might sing us a drinking-song. No harm in that, North?"

"No harm at all—if that is all!"

"And then I suggested he could follow it up with a little talk on banker. A sort of comic talk, you know. Why, old Skinner's no end of a comedian. Ain't you, Skinner?"

As a matter of fact, the cad of the Remove at that moment looked anything but a comedian. His face was deathly-white and his hands trembled spasmodically. Savagely he swore to himself that Bunter should pay full toll for that reckless outburst. But he clutched at the straw; seized desperately at the opening the Bunder had made for him.

"Y-yes. That's it, North!" he gasped, and somehow he turned on a twisted grin. "A—a comic broadcast turn, you know. Jokes about backing wrong 'uns and that sort of thing, North."

Very grimly North looked from one to the other of the two juniors, turned from Vernon-Smith to Harold Skinner, searching their faces as if to read their inmost soul.

"Very well, Vernon-Smith, I accept your explanation." The words came slowly, after what seemed to the cad of the Remove an eternity of time. "As for you, Skinner, you young sweep, unless you can find better subjects for your humour than gambling and horse-racing, you would be well advised to leave the comic business alone."

North glanced round as he finished speaking and fingered his ashplant grimly.

"I looked in to warn you to make a bit less noise," he said. "Now, mind and don't let me hear any more of it!"

The door of the Rag closed behind the prefect. Harold Skinner licked his dry lips. Skinner was in a black and bitter fury. Never as at that moment had he felt towards Bunter such bitter hatred.

"You just wait, you dashed fat pig!" he ground out between his clenched teeth, hurling open the door. "I'll get level with you!"

Wharton got up on the table again.

"Well, you've all got the idea now, I think. Suppose this—er—selection committee adjourns until Friday morning after classes. We don't seem to be making much headway; and that would give us time to dig out some giddy talent. Besides, I've suddenly missed Bunter. Unless he's gone to challenge Skinner to mortal combat, the fat thief is scoffing our tea. What do you say, then, chaps?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"That's the wheeze, Wharton. We'll leave it until Friday."

"Right-ho!"

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And the Famous Five and Dick Russell went back to their interrupted tea.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

An Adventure for Two!

"HALLO, chaps! Greyfriars cads!"

Thus Gadsby.

Nugent and Russell dismounted hastily outside the gates of Highcliffe, and tumbled their bicycles against the wall. Signalling urgently to a Highcliffe fag, Nugent despatched him post-haste in search of Frank Courtenay. "And tell Courtenay it's pax," Nugent added, as an afterthought.

The two Greyfriars juniors were in a hurry. And neither of them at that moment particularly hungered after participation in a Highcliffe versus Greyfriars battle-royal.

Subsequent upon the Form-meeting in the Rag, tea in No. 1 had been a merry meal. Bunter had been come upon in the very nick of time, just as he was sitting himself down to the jam-tarts. And for the second time that evening Bunter had been unceremoniously pitched neck-and-crop from the study.

During tea there was keen discussion upon the finals of the Public Schools' Hard Courts Championships. This year the championships were being played off upon Highcliffe courts. Highcliffe itself, of course, as well as Greyfriars, had won through to the finals, for in the Caterpillar and Courtenay Highcliffe treasured two indubitable champions.

Then there was St. Jim's; and St. Jim's, in Tom Merry, had a terrific wielder of the racquet, and in the person of Ralph Reckness Cardew a very dark horse. Then, besides Greyfriars, Highcliffe and St. Jim's, there were two other public schools about whose game no one knew anything definite. One was St. Jude's, somewhere in Cornwall; and the other one Burchester Grammar School, whom Greyfriars had once met and defeated at Soccer in the Public Schools' Championship. And last of all there was Rookwood, and for Rookwood there existed a firm belief that Jimmy Silver and Val Mornington would do battle.

Nugent and Russell had cycled across to Highcliffe after that late and interrupted tea in order to fix up final arrangements. There was, Nugent had thought, time and to spare before calling-over. But the spin, taken as it was in the quiet of the evening, had been so thoroughly enjoyable that neither of the juniors had felt inclined to hurry it. So that now, arrived outside the enemy's camp, as it were, they discovered themselves with very little time to spare.

Nugent was fingering his watch anxiously.

"Hope Franky and the Caterpillar won't be long, Russell. We've no time at all."

But Russell's eyes were busy sweeping the Highcliffe quad; and suddenly they lighted up.

"Here they come!"

And even as Russell said, so it was. Highcliffe's tennis strength was advancing across the Quad to meet them.

"Welcome, strangers," grinned Courtenay.

"You'll excuse us, I know, Courtenay," Nugent said hurriedly, "but we're rather in a tear to get back. We popped over to fix finally with you regarding Saturday's little dustup."

"Oh, the tennis? Why, I thought it

was all understood. We're wiping up the courts with all comers!"

"Good old Franky!" chuckled the Caterpillar.

"My hat, are you, though!" Nugent returned warmly. "Why, you blessed Highcliffe asses——"

"Begad!" murmured the Caterpillar, coughing. "Didn't I understand somebody to say 'pax' or somethin'?"

Nugent blushed a beautiful shade in beetroot-red.

"What we want to know definitely is the time we all begin." Russell jumped in hastily, and filled the awkward breach. "Nothing, so far as we know, has been settled. And then after that, if you don't mind, we'll be getting back to calling-over."

Two-thirty was the time arranged; and then Nugent and Russell threw a leg over their machines.

"Expect us over about two-twenty," Nugent called as they pushed off, "and mind you look out for a terrific licking. Cheerio for the present!"

"Ta-ta, children!"

Nugent glanced at his watch as Highcliffe fell away behind them, and started as he noted the time.

"My hat, Russell! Only seven blessed minutes to call-over! We'll need to put the pace on, if we're going to do it!"

And put it on they did. A small two-seater car in front of them, set the pace, and the hedges simply whizzed by behind them. When they had covered half the distance between Highcliffe and Greyfriars, Nugent felt behind his back a freshening breeze from the sea, and promptly increased the speed. Russell was coming along nicely ten yards in his rear. The car they had done their best to keep up with suddenly swerved off into a lane that ran at right angles to the main road.

And then, just as Nugent passed this lane, there occurred something which caused him desperately to jam on the brakes and call wildly to Russell to stop himself.

Not five yards from where the two juniors now stood against their bicycles staring at it, and stretched right across the quiet lane, was a rope. The rope was stretched taut, at about two feet from the ground. Lucky indeed that Nugent's sharp eyes had not failed to pick it out from among the shadows. Lucky, too, that the car they had followed had branched off into another road. In the dusk the rope was barely perceptible at all. Had either of them run into it he must, without possible hope of escape, have been hurled headlong from his machine. At the very best that would have meant severe injury, perhaps concussion, for him; at the worst——

At the worst who knows what terrible thing might not have happened!

The juniors, trembling a little, put their machines against the bank, and walked up to inspect that dastardly trap closer. And then, when they were within two feet of it, another amazing thing happened. From among the thick bushes two foreign-looking men sprang out suddenly, one from each side of the lane, and each in his right hand clutched a cudgel of thick wood.

"Oh, look out, man!"

But there was no need for Nugent's warning, for after one look at the juniors the two men turned and jumped back into the bushes.

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Russell.

"Ye gods?" yelled Nugent, in blank amazement. "Come on, Russell—after them!"

But by the time the juniors gained that gap in the hedge too, the men had reached the shelter of a thick belt of

trees across a field, and pursuit was abandoned as being hopeless.

"Well, I'm blessed!" Nugent gasped. "What do you make of it, Russell?"

"They're footpads, Franky! They were both 'froggie' men, too! I reckon they fixed that rope for the car we followed."

"The dangerous rotters!" breathed Nugent, and he began to cut down the rope.

Although neither thick nor heavy, it was immensely strong, and the toughened strands took a surprising amount of work from his pocketknife before they finally parted.

"Great pip, Russell," he was calling a moment later. "I say, what do you think? This is part of a blessed climbing-rope! You know, the kind of rope chappies use to shin up and down cliffs with! Now, what were those two foreign birds up to with it, I wonder? Look here, we'll cart it along to Quelch as evidence."

The rope was draped across Nugent's handlebars, and then they remounted, and began the return journey to Greyfriars—this time much more leisurely, for they had missed call-over.

When they burst at length into Study No. 1, that famous study, in the person of Harry Wharton, was settling down solitarily to prep.

"Well, here we are, Harry. The merry prodigal returns to the ancestral dug-out."

Harry Wharton looked up from his prep and smiled.

"Quelch's thirsting for your gore, I'm afraid, you chaps. What's kept you?"

"Footpads!" said Nugent.

"Footpads!"

"Footpads!" Nugent repeated firmly. "And now we must buzz along to Quelch. Kim on, Russell!"

They "buzzed along" to Mr. Quelch, and that astonished gentleman, upon hearing their story, telephoned straightway to the Courtfield police. It was, Mr. Quelch intimated grimly, indubitably a matter for police action. And the Courtfield police indicated smugly that to such old hands as themselves the capture of the two scoundrels was merely a small matter of hours.

Later on, after prep, while Nugent and Russell were recounting their adventure to a crowd of excited Removites, Billy Bunter rolled into the Rag. Bunter was wearing a fat, satisfied smirk—an irritating grin that Harold Skinner itched to knock yards!

The Owl had some urgent yarn of having fallen in with one of the engineers from the wireless station, and of having pointed out indignantly to that gentleman how bitter jealousy and opposition from his Form-fellows was preventing a certain budding broadcaster from making his initial bow before the microphone.

It was all very vague and silly. But then nobody took much notice of Bunter. Nobody, for that matter, ever did. And Russell and Nugent, frowning at the interruption, resumed their joint narrative.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Invitation!

"LETTER in the rack for you, Bunter!"

"Eh? What's that, Skinny?"

The Owl of the Remove turned upon Harold Skinner a faintly suspicious look as that youth tapped him on the shoulder before morning school.

True, Wednesday morning usually

brought with it for Bunter a small remittance from home—a very small remittance, it must be told! But this was Friday morning, the weekly "whack" from Bunter senior had duly arrived on the Wednesday, and, for all his extravagant yarns of P.O.'s and cheques, and money-orders "in the post," even Bunter's fat brain really refused to entertain the possibility of more than one "whack" per week. And there was no one else who would be likely to write.

So, knowing his Skinner, instead of scuttling straightway to the letter rack, he hesitated, eyeing the cad of the Remove and his two cronies through his big glasses with stern suspicion.

"You—you ain't pulling my leg, Skinny, old man?" he gasped at last, with an anxious blink. "I believe you are, you beast!"

Harold Skinner turned to his two cronies.

"You tell the fat unbeliever, Snoopy!" he grunted.

"Honest Injun, Bunt!" said Sidney James Snoopy. "Ain't it, Stotty?"

"That's right," assented William Stott.

"Perhaps you'll believe a chap now. Dashed if you deserve a fellow trying to do you a good turn, you dashed fat freak!" Skinner grunted virtuously. Apparently Skinner had quite forgotten that threat of his to get level. "Come on, you chaps! Next time the fat barrel of lard can discover his own dashed correspondence!"

And, elevating his thin nose, Harold Skinner linked arms with his cronies, and the cads of the Remove stamped away from Bunter in righteous indignation.

Bunter's fat jaw dropped as he watched them go.

"Blessed if I don't think there really is a letter for me!" he ejaculated finally.

As that thought struck the Owl he positively jumped, and set off like steam down the Remove passage to get hold of that precious letter before the bell for morning lessons sounded.

Skinner & Co., had Bunter but known, stamped sulphurously away no farther than took them well out of his view, and there their indignation fell from them like a mantle. When they reached the end of the Remove passage they halted suddenly in their stride, turned on their heel, and chuckled hugely among themselves.

"Bunt on the trail!" murmured Skinner, as they watched the Owl's retreating figure. "Come on, chaps; we'll get along to our study, leave the door open, and wait for him to come back. Just time before lessons. A lot of the chaps will be about soon."

And Stott and Snoopy dutifully grinned knowing grins.

Racing headlong into Hall, Bunter brought up breathlessly before the letter-rack, his glistening eyes running urgently over the "B's"—Bolsover, Bull, Bulstrode—Bunter!

There the letter was, just as old Skinny had said, and plainly addressed to him in an incisive business "fiver."

"W. G. Bunter, Esq.,
Greyfriars School,
Near Friardale, Kent."

Bunter's fat little eyes glistened greedily as he read it. True, he did not recognise the handwriting. Certainly it was not Bunter senior's. But possibly it was some unknown uncle, hitherto quiescent, who, suddenly remembering his nephew's existence, had turned up trumps! So long as the letter contained a remittance, Bunter really cared very little who it came from.

With impatient fingers, he snatched it quickly from the rack, as if, like fairy gold, it might vanish suddenly from his sight.

"W. G. Bunter, Esq." Not just "Master W. G. Bunter," but "W. G. Bunter, Esq."! It was not very often that William George Bunter found himself thus addressed, and he purred with content as he mumbled over to himself the unfamiliar designation. Why, it was a certain fiver, at least. There could be no doubt at all. This was something like!

He slit open the flap. And then, when he had drawn forth the contents, Bunter's fat face fell suddenly in dismay.

"Why, it ain't a whack—it ain't a blessed fiver after all! Blow! Crumbs."

BEST VALUE FOR TWO PENCE

Cadbury's Chocolate
Turkish Delight, 2d.



Bournville
Chocolate Bar, 2d.
Also in 1d. and 1/2d. Bars.

Cadbury's Milk
Chocolate Bar, 2d.
Also in 1d. and 1/2d. Bars.

Bournville Fruit
and Nut
Chocolate Bar, 2d.

A Cadbury Bar for
sheer goodness, size
and taste will always
give you best value.



"Ask for Cadbury's"

See the name 'Cadbury' on every piece of chocolate.

though, it's all typewritten! Wonder what the thump it can be about?"

He began to read, blinking short-sightedly at the typewritten lines through his big glasses. Then he gave vent to a sudden, startled little gasp; and across his fat face spread an expression of absolute incredulous amazement. This increased in intensity, so to speak, until by the time he reached the quiet, authoritative signature at the foot of the communication, his fat little eyes were positively popping from his head.

"My hat!" he muttered. Bunter was as one in a dream. "Whew! Won't the fellows be jealous when they hear about this?"

In Study No. 11 Skinner grew reckless, and he walked across to the door. He stood for a moment, and then he stood and beckoned to his cronies.

"Come on, chaps!" he murmured, with a deep chuckle. "Bunter returneth. Mind, now, not a blessed word!"

And, even as Skinner had said, Bunter was returning—in top gear and treading on the gas! He tore along the Remove passage like one demented, puffing for breath, face red, his podgy little legs going like clockwork. And, in one grimy paw, for all to see, he grasped a letter, which he waved aloft triumphantly!

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, emerging from Study No. 13, Mark Linley close at his heels. "Stop Bunter, somebody! Bunter's gone dotty!"

"The dottyfulness of the ludicrous Bunter is terrific!"

"Begad!" murmured Mauly sleepily. "What a din!"

Fellows who had dropped into their studies to glance over prep for a few minutes before morning school heard Bunter rage like a tornado, looked at one another with a wild surmise, and forthwith poured out into the Remove passage on all sides, demanding indignantly to know what the row was about.

"It's only Buntty," explained Bob Cherry humorously. "That Kruschen feeling's got him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Skinner & Co. stood apart, chuckling.

"Yah! It's come! I'm fixed up! I might have known it would be all right!"

Bawling at the very top of his voice, Bunter waved the letter aloft again.

Peter Todd, framed in the doorway of Study No. 7, stared out at the spectacle in blank amazement.

"What's the porpoise burbling about, chaps?" Bunter being in Toddy's study, Toddy always felt the weight of responsibility. "Anybody know? One of his titted relations kicked the bucket and left him a fortune, or something?"

"Perhaps the esteemed and venerable Bunter postal-order has arrivefully turned up," suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Vernon-Smith chuckled.

"Perhaps!" he said. "And perhaps not!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Peter Todd rushed suddenly into the passage, and, seizing Bunter grimly by one fat shoulder, grabbed at the letter.

"Ow, you rotter! Gimme my letter! Ow, you beast, Toddy! Blessed if I'll let any of you read it now! Serve you right, you grinning rotters!"

And Bunter turned upon the hilarious Removeites a glare that came near to cracking his glasses.

Withdrawing a handkerchief from his pocket, Bob Cherry dabbed his eyes.

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"If—if that historic postal-order really has turned up at last, O fat Bunter," he sobbed entreatingly, "keep not the news thereof from thy countrymen! Leave us not in suspense!"

And the Removeites roared again.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter sniffed in deep and bitter contempt, and waited patiently. He was inured by long usage to this treatment—in fact, his fat leg was pulled hourly, from the rising up of the sun unto the going down thereof, so to speak.

"If you beasts don't shut up," he howled again desperately, "I shall simply refuse to tell you a thing!" And his big spectacles glimmered indignantly round.

Skinner glanced at his watch. It had occurred to the cad of the Remove that if Bunter didn't get a move on, the bell would supervene ere he could get the letter off his fat chest.

So he poked Bunter severely in the ribs.

"Let's have it, old fat man!" he urged. "Spill the gravy, you know. Go it!"

"Here, you can read it out, Toddy," said Bunter, magnificently and unexpectedly, stuffing the letter back into Peter Todd's hand again.

Peter Todd glanced over the letter, started slightly, and read:

"Dear Mr. Bunter,—Further to your conversation of last evening with our Engineer, we have carefully considered the matter, and quite appreciate the very unfortunate position you are in at your school, due to Form jealousy.

"If, therefore, you would come along to this Station on Saturday next at 2.30 p.m., you will be given an opportunity for displaying your undoubted talent as entertainer.—Yours very truly,

"Pegg Wireless (Experimental) Station."

This was followed by a signature in a business-like slash, which Toddy could not decipher.

The expressions of amazement on the Removeites' faces as Toddy read aloud that startling communication grew apace, and Bunter's fat chest swelled importantly. It was fortunate, really, that the letter was no longer, or the Owl might have burst.

"Whew!" gasped Bob Cherry, as Peter Todd finished reading. "Let's have a look, Toddy! I thought it was only Bunter's rot last night!"

He took Bunter's letter and glanced at it.

"My hat, it's right enough, chaps! This makes five giddy broadcasters from the Remove now. There's old Harry, and now there's Bunter, and three others to be chosen after morning school. Well, my hat!"

"Typewritten and signed," put in Ogilvy, looking over Bob's shoulder. "The fat fraud ain't pulling our legs this time! Well, good luck, old fat man! Fancy, a whole afternoon, very likely, to himself—broadcasting and looking over the apparatus! Who wouldn't be Bunter?"

"Form jealousy," quoted Skinner. "The secretary-johnny who wrote the letter is right enough there, anyway."

Vernon-Smith was staring at the letter, a thoughtful look on his face, when bell for morning classes went, and Bunter snatched it rudely from his fingers. Immediately there was a stampede in the direction of the Form-room, Bunter tucking his precious communication carefully into an inner pocket and scuttling away hastily to

collect his books. Mr. Quelch's summary method of wreaking his wrath upon the late-comer was, as the Owl knew only too well, decidedly painful to a fellow.

Vernon-Smith was following Bunter's figure with his eyes and chuckling.

"Hallo! What's the little joke, Smithy?" Wharton asked, in surprise.

"Old fat man is, if I mistake not," murmured the Bounder, with another chuckle, as they passed on down the Remove passage. "Didn't you fellows twig the merry typing on that letter of Bunter's?"

Wharton puckered his brows.

"Can't remember that anything peculiar struck me, Smithy."

"That letter was typed out on Mr. Quelch's machine," declared the Bounder coolly. "Didn't you notice how the capital letters blur slightly? Then the colour of the ribbon—there's not a single doubt, Wharton!"

The captain of the Remove uttered a gasp.

"Then—then it's a fraud, Smithy? But—but the signature—surely that at least indicates the genuineness of the letter, doesn't it? And besides, Smithy, the Pegg Wireless Station people might quite easily have got hold of a machine similar to Quelch's, you know."

Vernon-Smith smiled.

"Toddy baulked at that precious signature, Wharton, if you think. And why? Purely because it's not a signature at all. What Toddy took to be a beastly illegible signature is simply a scrawl. Buntty, being short-sighted, hasn't spotted that, of course."

"Well, I'm blessed!" Wharton gasped, as the Bounder's explanation dawned upon him. He could see now that about that letter there was something decidedly fishy. Broadcasting engineers were not very likely birds to be taken in by William George Bunter's silly fabrications of Form jealousy debarring him from the school broadcasting. As well might Bunter have tried "touching" the Head for a loan on the strength of his famous postal-order!

"You're right, I reckon, Smithy," he said at last. "It stands to reason. And wait a minute—Skinner & Co. had a hand in this business, I reckon! I recollect now, Skinner was nudging Snoop and Stott, and chuckling all the time Bunter's letter was being read. By Jove, you chaps, that's it! Skinner's behind this business, possibly because of that row in the Rag, when old North looked in and nearly bowled him out. There's a rod in pickle for old fat man, it strikes me. When he goes along to broadcast—"

"The picklefulness will be terrific!"

"Ha, ha, ha! That's it, Inky! 'Shush, now! We'll keep it dark. Not a blessed word to Bunter! He's asked for whatever Skinner's got in store for him!"

And, still chuckling quietly to themselves, Vernon-Smith and the Famous Five took their places, just before Mr. Quelch swept in.

As for Bunter, in order completely to assure himself that it was all really and honestly true, and not just some pleasant dream from which he would presently wake, that fatuous youth kept fingering the letter in his jacket pocket lovingly at short intervals during lessons, a beatific smile playing about his fat features.

What he would have said, had he even dimly suspected that that precious missive was typed out, not at the Pegg experimental station, but very surreptitiously upon his own Form master's typewriter, during that gentleman's

temporary absence in Friardale the previous evening, might have been worth hearing!

But he didn't know—and hence, Harold Skinner, stealing a sidelong glance at Bunter's seraphic visage, decided that the shilling he had "tipped" a passing farm-labourer, just before bedtime the previous evening, to post a certain letter in Pegg village for him, would prove, if all went as he intended it should go, to be well and wisely spent.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Plenty of Offers!

IMEDIATELY after morning school the adjourned meeting of the Remove selection committee—which, in actual fact, meant the entire Form—took place in the Rag.

"Now then, chaps," Harry Wharton began in businesslike tones, "just time before dinner to get this little matter of who really is going to represent the Remove settled. Three vacancies, as you are aware, remain to be filled. Since the last meeting you've all had time to think it over. So come along, gentlemen, please. All suggestions, however fatheaded, are welcome!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Donald Ogilvy was the first to take the floor.

"I move," he said, "that Micky Desmond be included. If the Remove is out for variety in the programme—and I take it that we are—some of Micky's Irish songs would go down like hot cakes!"

"Seconded, please!" said Wharton; and Squiff obliged.

"It is now proposed and seconded," Wharton said, "that Micky Desmond broadcast on behalf of this Form. All those in favour, please signify in the usual way."

A forest of hands shot into the air.

"That's carried, I think! Next gent, please."

Vernon-Smith stood up.

"If we want to get off the beaten track, Wharton, I propose that Hurree Singh should broadcast a song or two in Hindustani—his own giddy native language. No; I'm quite serious. A lot of these Indian songs are really first-rate. Nobody'd understand the lingo, of course; but that wouldn't matter at all."

Get to know "Atta Boy," Pals!



Every week BOYS' CINEMA contains a long book-length complete story of the world-famous Atta Boy and his chums. The hair-raising, rollicking adventures of this popular trio are alive with all the movement, drama, fun, and excitement of the screen. There is no finer "two-penn'orth" on the market than

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On Sale every Wednesday. Buy it regularly.

"I second that!" cried Monty Newland. "It's a first-rate wheeze!"

Inky rose to his feet, and Harry Wharton rapped upon the table for silence.

"The candidate desires to address his constituents!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"My worthy chums—"

"Hear, hear!"

"The esteemed and grateful thanks for this honour. Unfortunately, however, the desire on my part is not great. The ludicrous Skinner, I think, might perhaps suggestfully feel called upon to remark that, with the worthy Wharton already broadcasting, my ridiculous and unworthy self would be one too much."

What the sensitive Inky was trying to point out was that, with only four vacancies among the whole Form, two inclusions from the Famous Five would scarcely be "cricket."

Wharton saw what he was driving at. "Look here, old man," he said, "you broadcast, and I'll stand down. We'd all be jolly glad to hear some of your songs."

"No, my worthy chum!" Inky stood firm. "You are leader of the esteemed Remove, and the stand-downfulness on my part is the proper caper."

"Well, look here," Vernon-Smith interjected, "if we can't have Inky, what price a Chinese song from Wun Lung? How would that do?"

"Allee light top-hole!" chuckled Wun Lung, the little, almond-eyed Celestial. "Me singee plente good song. He lastee all evening."

"What?"

"D-do you honestly mean to tell us that you know a Chinese song which would last all the evening?" stuttered Wharton, in amazement.

"Yes. Plenty song. Allee good fellow. One lastee seven hours, 'nother one lastee ten hours, and thlee I know lastee all night!"

"Well—well, my only giddy hat! Look here, Wun Lung, before we decide, suppose you treat us to a sample. Turn on a bit of the chorus, you know!"

Beaming with pleasure, Wun Lung began:

"Ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai-ai—Chong!
Ai-ai-ai-ai—"

"Stop!"

"Smother him, somebody—quick!" Wun Lung, breaking off suddenly, appeared amazed at the reception his Chinese song had been accorded.

"You no likee song?" he demanded.

"Song!" said Johnny Bull, with a snort. "It sounded to me more like the tune the old cow died of!"

"That velly gleet Chinese song," said Wun Lung. "People only sing him when they velly happy! It lastee all night long!"

"Well, if there isn't too much more of that blessed 'Ai-ai-ai' business in it, there's no reason why you shouldn't broadcast it, Wun Lung. After all, it's something nobody has heard before; and, besides, when that lot trickles through the headphones listeners-in'll think they've suddenly got Hong Kong, or something! What do you think of it, chaps, if Wun Lung can dish up ten minutes of it?"

"It's no worse than Johnny Bull's mouth-organ, anyway!" Vernon-Smith chuckled.

"Why, you rotter, Smithy!" exclaimed Johnny. "I—I'll burst you! Just as I was going to suggest a mouth-organ turn, too!"

"Well, shove up your hands, then, all

those in favour. In favour of 'Wun Lung, I mean; we wouldn't have Johnny Bull's blessed mouth-organ on the programme at any price!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Smithy counted the hands.

"All right," he nodded. "Carried!"

"Now, then, chaps, one more vacancy! Lot Number Three—one vacant spot before the microphone. Chappies to provide their own chaperon and organist. Now, gentlemen of the Remove, what am I bid?"

"I guess—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess and calculate, Wharton, that these here wireless fans might kinder take kindly to a sorter li'l chin-wag on li'l old Noo Yark. I kinder reckon that if any galoot knows Noo Yark village right from the word 'go!' that galoot's before you right now! Yep, sirree! Boys, listen here! When it comes to real gilt-edged, go-ahead burgs, I'll say that li'l old Noo Yark's the cat's pyjamas!"

"I reckon we ain't running a tourist agency, Fishy. Take li'l old Noo Yark outside and bury it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

When the laughter subsided, Bolsover lumbered to his feet.

"I beg to propose—"

"Good old Bolsy!"

"I beg to propose"—Bolsover glared round defiantly—"myself! I've got a little lecture ready, called 'Reminiscences of the Prize Ring'!"

"Boil it!"

"Bury it with the cat's pyjamas, old man!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the meeting in the Rag rocked again with laughter.

"Oow! Yow-wow!"

That sudden squeal of pain proceeded from Alonzo Todd. Immediately all eyes turned upon that bony youth, and George Bulstrode, who was sitting next to him, got to his feet.

"It's quite all right, chaps!" Bulstrode explained soothingly. "Old Lonzy wanted to broadcast some remarks upon 'The Quasi-psychological Influence in Determinism; with Selected Chapters from Professor Otto Strumpff.' I punched his blessed head for him. I trust my action is approved by this meeting."

"Ha, ha! Rather, Bulstrode! Dot him another one!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton rapped the table for silence.

"Come along now, you chaps!" he urged. "Let's be serious! Dinner-bell will be going in a few minutes. One vacancy still remains to be filled. Seeing that the talent of the Remove is somewhat backward in coming forward, I will put aside for one moment my position as auctioneer—chairman, I mean—and propose Piet Delarey to broadcast some South African songs."

"Hurrah!"

"Good old Wharton!"

"Jolly good wheeze, man!"

Piet Delarey, the South African junior, rose to his feet with a smile.

"Thanks very much for this great opportunity, you chaps! If someone will second Wharton's proposal, there are some stunning Veldt choruses. In the ten minutes I could get through nearly half a dozen of them, I believe. I'm sure you'd like them."

"I second Wharton's proposal!" a dozen voices shouted.

"No need for a count, I think!" said Wharton, with a smile at the enthusiastic forest of hands.

"And now it's all settled, then."

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Desmond is to broadcast Irish airs, Wun Lung is doing what you might call a prolonged howl in C sharp, and then there's Delarey with his songs of the Veldt.

"Gentlemen of the Remove—to dinner! The meeting is closed!"

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Discovery!

"ZAT I broadcast ze French song to-night, Doctaire Locke say. Bien! It shall be done! Mais, que chanson est-ce que je chante? Vat song to sing? I vunder. Zat I sit me here viz me and zink."

And, sitting himself down upon a fallen pillar of masonry near the top of the vault steps, Monsieur Henri Charpentier, the dapper little French master at Greyfriars, proceeded to "zink," an anxious expression on his face.

The previous evening Dr. Locke had invited Mossoo to contribute to the broadcasting programme one of his French songs. So Mossoo was walking before dinner in the empty Cloisters, turning the problem of that song over and over in his Gallic mind.

"Ha, at last I 'ave him!"

The tune of a song had flitted across before his mind, and Mossoo, sitting there on the fallen masonry, began to hum. Then, after a moment, there came back to him the words of that old song, and presently he began to sing it:

"Combien j'ai douce souvenance
Du joli lieu de ma naissance!
Ma soeur, qu'ils étaient beaux, les
jours,
De Franco!
O mon pays, sois mes amours,
Toujours!"

And as he warbled that old song of the mountaineer in exile, Mossoo thought of his beloved country, of his France, and his voice trembled up and down with feeling. When he cared to sing, the little French master had a good, powerful voice, and there in the Cloisters he elected to use it. Firmly believing himself to be quite alone and secluded, Mossoo sort of opened out on all cylinders, as it were, and fairly let the ancient walls have the benefit. The way Mossoo looked at it, he had sought that cloistered calm in order to think of a song, and, having thought, he saw no reason why he should not sing.

But in his judgment that he was alone Mossoo was utterly mistaken. As it happened, he had not the Cloisters quite to himself.

For that morning William George Bunter had preyed upon the aristocracy. He had preyed to the extent of five bob. Rolling purposefully into Study No. 12, Bunter had put it very firmly to Lord Mauleverer that no fellow, after being specially invited to face the microphone as he had been, could possibly be expected to maintain the reputation of Greyfriars upon an empty stomach.

Maully hadn't quite been able to see what it had to do with him; but, to save argument, he had capitulated, fishing a couple of half-crowns from his pocket and sleepily requesting that William George would shut the door behind him.

Bunter had clutched the two half-crowns with a firm clutch, he had rolled straightway across to the tuckshop, he had seated his bulging form at the little counter, and then he had called magnificently for tuck to the tune of five bob.

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And then, like Nemesis in his wake, Samuel Tuckless Bunter had rolled in after him, with a starving expression upon his podgy little face and a shrill request for "Halves!"

Bunter major, quaking in his very shoes lest he should have to give something away to his hungry minor, acted with the promptness of despair. Hurriedly ordering the remaining pastries to be put into a huge paper-bag, he sat the unsuspecting Samuel Tuckless suddenly and with great force down upon the hard and unsympathetic floor. And then, clutching the pastries, he bolted out of the door for dear life! Before Sammy could pick himself up Bunter major was strategically around a corner, and Bunter major neither paused nor looked back until he had gained the old ruined chapel in the Cloisters. There he hoped he would be left alone.

Samuel Tuckless issued tuckless from the tuckshop, infuriated, and breathing slaughter.

"Ow, the rotten mingy beast!" he gasped.

Bob Cherry was standing outside the door. Bob had witnessed the little episode of brotherly love between the Bunters with a deep chuckle, and very thoughtfully he put Sammy upon the right trail.

Sammy came upon Billy suddenly, like a bolt from the blue. In a dark corner of the Cloisters, Bunter major was hopefully attempting to conceal himself from sight behind a narrow stone column. But, considering that quite fourteen inches of Bunter major's person bulged on either side of the column, the attempt was hardly a success.

"Yah, you mean beast, Billy!" shrieked Sammy. "Come on, out of there! Come on—halves! Hand over!"

The Owl was beaten—beaten on the post; and he knew it. That breathless dash from the tuckshop, taken immediately on top of a lemonade, two ginger-pops, two cream-buns, and six jam-tarts, had left him in no fit condition for successful fistic argument with a ravenous minor.

Sullenly at his minor's behest, William George came forth.

"Come on, Billy. Here, take that! Now will you hand over?"

"Ow! Yow! Stoppit! Ow, don't punch me, Sammy, you rotten little beast. You—you'll bust up all the blessed tarts in a minute, you will! Yow-ow-ooooop! I—I say, I'll stand you a whack if—if you'll only leave off pitching into me, you awful bully!"

"Halves, then?"

The Owl hesitated. But it was only momentary, before he gave in. Billy knew only too well that he really hadn't an earthly.

"All—all right, then. Halves!"

Sammy grinned, proceeding to pile in. "My hat," he mumbled joyfully, with a mouth full of tarts. "These are prime, Billy!"

But Billy said not a word.

Sammy was just grunting piggishly over his fifth tart when Mossoo, a little farther away down the Cloisters, but behind some fallen masonry from the old chapel, began his French song.

Mossoo's Gallic voice rose and fell round the old Cloisters in weird, unearthly cadences. It fell upon the old stones, and it fell upon the ears of Bunter major and Bunter minor. And Bunter major and Bunter minor stared at one another, and moved uneasily.

"Crumbs," muttered Sammy, "what-ever is it, Billy?"

They both stopped eating, and together they listened. Then Billy Bunter burst suddenly into a wide grin.

"I've got it," he chuckled. "It's some chap stuck down in the blessed vaults. He's howling to be let out, you know. Listen! Yes, that's where's the row's coming from! Come on, Sammy, we'll go and have a look!"

Curiosity burning within him, Billy Bunter set off to investigate, and Sammy followed at his back. The sound now was very low, and they crept round the cloisters softly. But almost as Billy and Sammy were upon him, and only that huge pile of fallen masonry separated them, Mossoo reached the last line of his song. And he reached it full of beans. It swept round the dark and gloomy Cloisters, did that last line, in one awful howl of darkest despair, like the wailing of a lost soul.

"Well, I'm blessed!" said Billy, as it fell upon his disgusted ears. "I don't believe it's anybody stuck in the vaults, after all. I believe it's somebody killing blessed moggies on the other side of this masonry. Have a look, Sammy! Couldn't be a chap singing, with a voice like that."

Dutifully, Sammy had a look. He had one look. That was enough; and more than enough. He spotted Monsieur Charpentier just around the corner, as it were, not two yards from them, and one peep upon the horrified expression gradually suffusing Mossoo's Gallic features was quite sufficient for Sammy. All too evidently every one of Billy's incautious remarks had been overheard, had carried round the masonry. So Sammy, leaving tarts and pop and everything, flew! He stood not upon the order of his going, but he went—as fast as his podgy legs would carry him. And Bunter major was left alone to bear the brunt.

"Buntaire!"

Billy Bunter had been blinking in petrified amazement after the flying figure of his minor. But as that command fell upon his ears he jumped, and spun round.

"Ow! Yes, Mossoo?"

"Come here viz you, Buntaire!"

"Ow, yes!" Bunter trotted round the masonry.

"Zat—zat you make ze big laff at my singing, Buntaire? Zat—"

"Me, sir? Oh, no, Mossoo. Not at all! I—I—"

"Ciel! Taisez vous! Zat is to say, silence! Zat is very beautiful French song, Buntaire, and I make you sit up wiz yourself, hein? You will write out for me two hundred times—"

With that imminent prospect of finding himself landed with a couple of hundred lines when he was booked to go broadcasting, Bunter got desperate.

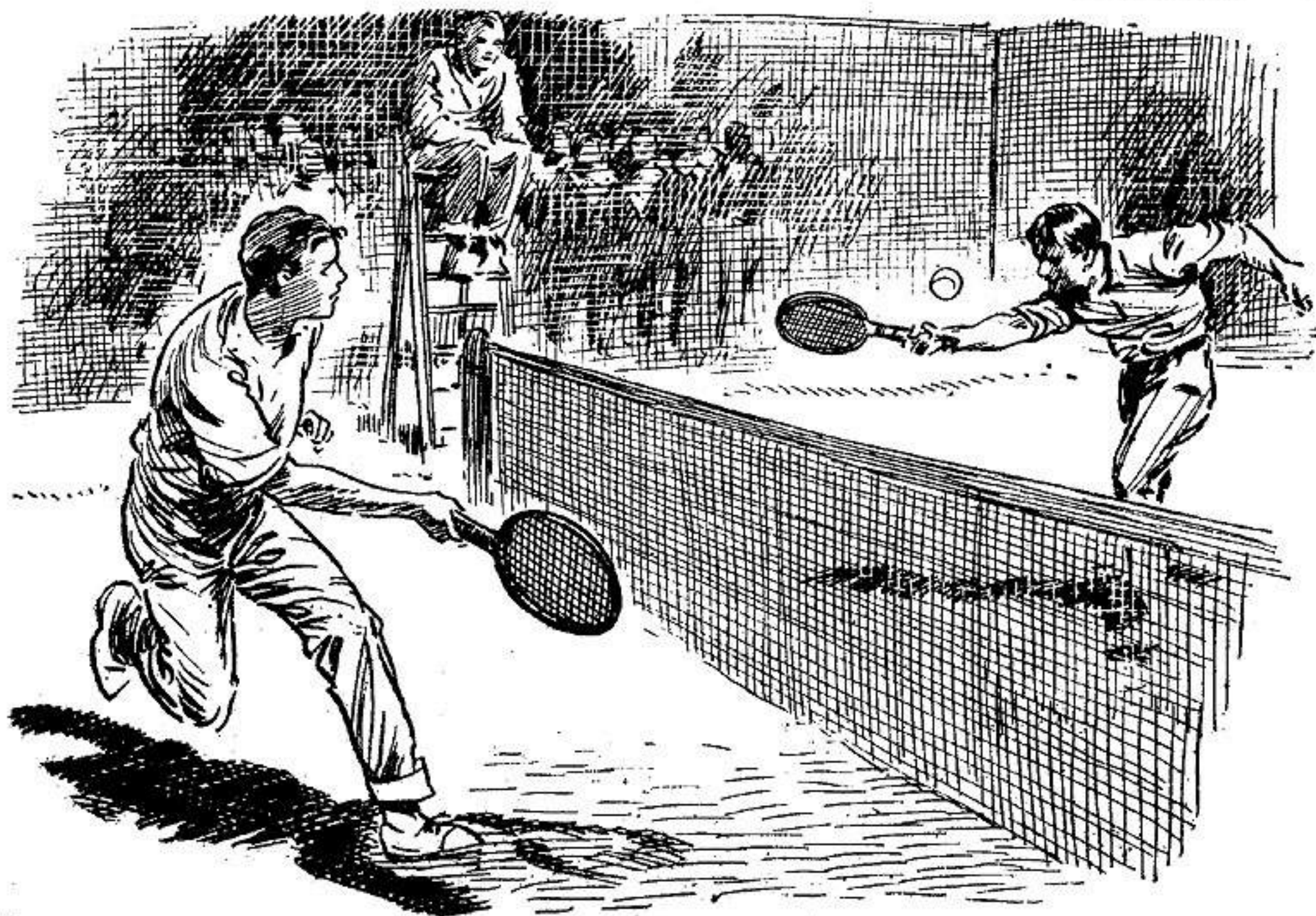
"Ow!" he squirmed. "I never! It—it must have been Sammy, you know, if you happened to hear anything, you rotten French beast. Yow, sus-sorry, sir! I—I mean—"

What he meant, Bunter was not given time to put into words. Mossoo bounced to his feet; Mossoo danced; and finally Mossoo breathed hard.

"Vat, Buntaire! Vat is zat you say of me? Vat is it you say of your masters? Ciel! Write five hundred times, 'I must not make insolences to my French master.' You will bring ze lines to me affaire dinnaire wizout fail. Now take yourself off wiz you, will you!"

Bunter took himself off, furiously.

Subsequent upon his exit, Monsieur Charpentier's Gallic wrath evaporated rapidly, departing from his brow like the mist before the morning sun. Actually the little French master was among the mildest of men. For several moments after Bunter's departure Mossoo appeared to be considering, and his



Dick Russell caught the ball with a beautiful half volley, lifting it low across the net. Courtenay made a desperate attempt at returning, but the ball was hopelessly placed for him, and he failed. (See Chapter 10.)

glance turned often towards the stone steps leading down and giving access to the vaults.

No one could have called the old Greyfriars crypt an ideal place for singing-practice. But Mossoo badly wanted to try his song over again, and he wanted to try it this time without fear of interruption, and finally he made up his mind. Going quickly across to the porter's lodge to demand of Gosling the key, he found Gosling not there, so, helping himself from the hook, Mossoo traced his steps back to the Cloisters and proceeded to descend the short flight of worn, moss-grown steps.

It was tricky going; and then, down at the bottom of the old steps, Mossoo got a surprise. Feeling about in the darkness for the keyhole, he discovered with a start that the big door, which was supposed always to be kept closed and locked, actually stood partly open.

Then it dawned upon him.

"Ha!" he smiled. "Ze bad juniors, zey go exploring viz zemselves, hein—and zey forget to shut up ze door again."

He switched on a little pocket-torch, pushed open the door, and entered the vaults, cold and dank as the tomb itself. And then, a thought crossing his mind, Mossoo switched the light suddenly off again. It was extremely possible that the exploring juniors, whoever they were, might still be down there. Not in that vault, perhaps, but further on.

On tiptoes he crossed the first of the vaults. For the moment the matter of the song was dismissed from mind. First he would discover if he were alone. He had no intention whatever of allowing himself to be so rudely interrupted a

second time. Of course, he admitted to himself, there was the possibility that the door had been standing open for days, or even longer than that. The old vaults was a spot seldom visited by anyone at Greyfriars. But he would soon make sure.

"Ha!"

Mossoo, arrived at the end of that first vault, was about to pass on into the second, when there caught his eyes from ahead a faint glimmer of yellow light, and he paused. Low voices were audible, too, talking together in subdued whispers. By keeping perfectly still and straining intently, Mossoo could just detect the sounds.

The juniors, then, were still down there, and exploring at the farther end of the next vault. That much was now settled, and the little French master stood for a brief moment irresolute. He had little taste for acting the part of a spy, but unless he could get near enough to catch a glimpse of the juniors' faces before he was discovered, it was hopeless attempting to bring the culprits to book at all. For, as soon as his footsteps were heard, whoever was in the next vault had but to plunge the place into darkness to make his escape quite easily.

His mind now made up to the duty before him, Mossoo edged forward. Here and there at short intervals along the whole stretch of vaults were big stone columns which carried the roof. And it was from behind one of those big columns ahead of him that the light was sending forth its guttering rays, so that Mossoo could not see the actual light itself, nor yet could he see who was talking round it. So Mossoo hugged the deep shadows and stole steadily on,

until at last he came within six feet of it and the low voices.

And then Mossoo jumped.

For what was being spoken behind the big stone pier was in French, and in low French, too, such as French seamen use. The intruders were not Greyfriars juniors at all, but men—French, and apparently seamen!

In Mossoo's youth he had served with the French Army, and he had his full share of courage. Without a moment's hesitation the little French master began to edge still nearer. He badly wanted to see, and he badly wanted to hear—but most of all to hear. What was the secret thing that French seafaring men should go to the risk of entering the vaults beneath a public school to discuss?

It did occur to Mossoo as he crept nearer and nearer that they were perhaps only after a night's free lodging—destitute seamen, very likely, tramping it from one port to another to catch a boat. If that was so, then the emotional little Frenchman's heart went out to them. But—

It was a big but.

At last only the big stone pier itself was between them. There was Mossoo on one side of it, crouched in the deep shadows, and on the other the unknown men. Ever so cautiously Mossoo peered round the huge stone column. And what he saw there caused him to catch his breath in amazement.

There were two men on the other side of that stone pier, and before them on the ground was spread a large paper—a plan, it seemed, or a map. In low tones they were discussing it, pointing

again and again to one particular spot marked upon it in red.

One, the fellow nearest to Mossoo, was clean-shaven and tolerably well turned out. But this was just a little more than could be said for his companion. In place of collar and tie this other wore round his rough neck a dirty red muffler, knotted, and the scrub on his chin proclaimed that it was days since he had shaved. There was, too, a dirty peaked cap beside him on the ground, and from his ears came to Mossoo the glint of gold earrings.

They looked about as unscrupulous a pair of scoundrels as one could possibly meet with—unscrupulous and crafty. Mossoo behind his stone pier listened feverishly with straining ears. And very gradually, as he listened, there came first to his face an expression of sheer stark incredulity, and then one of absolute horror.

For that which he overheard was sufficient to blanch the cheeks of the strongest man alive. That queer little insignificant red mark he could see upon the map represented nothing less than the experimental station up on the cliffs between Black Pike and Pegg village. And it was doomed to be destroyed—blown to atoms! The whole rock beneath was heavily mined. These men were foreign agents. At the mere touch of a button wireless-station and all was to go sky-high. And eight that very night was the hour fixed upon. Eight o'clock, when the Greyfriars broadcasting would be at its height, when Dr. Locke and half the masters and a score of fellows would be there!

"Ciel!" gasped Mossoo distractedly. "Ciel!"

From the other side of the big stone pier came a sudden startled scuffling, and a quick cry of alarm in French. And next moment both men were upon him. That incautious exclamation of distress Mossoo had uttered had given him away. They were fighting now tooth and nail. Mossoo made one desperate attempt to kick over the candle, but his foot swept by it. The next moment he was pinioned, and the brute with the earrings was glaring savagely down into his face.

Two merciless blows from behind smashed down upon his head, and Mossoo felt his senses swimming away. His legs grew strangely weak, as if they could no longer support his body. He remembered falling helpless to his knees. Then another brutal blow was aimed at the back of his head, and Mossoo knew no more.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Goes Broadcasting!

BUNTER, with that dazzling appointment for two-thirty vivid before his mind, was in a twitter of excitement. Mr. Quelch glanced curiously at him several times during dinner, and when Bunter pushed away a fourth helping of pudding untouched, Mr. Quelch nearly died of shock on the spot.

But William George Bunter had other and more urgent business on hand than pudding. Before dinner, in his usual laborious scrawl, he had succeeded in churning out half the lines Mossoo had awarded him, but there still remained two hundred and fifty to be done. And with Mossoo in the frame of mind in which Bunter had parted from him, Bunter came glumly to the conclusion that he simply dare not "chance it" with him, lest worse befall.

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"I must not make insolences to my French master." Bunter, long before he scrawled that line for the five-hundredth time, positively loathed the very sight of it, and wished with fervour that he had never "made insolences" to his French master. When at last he finished and threw down the pen, his podgy hand ached, his head ached, and he bent upon the innocent clock a savage glare. Nearly two o'clock!

Snatching up the scrawled sheets of impot paper, he collected his cap hurriedly, and raced along to Mossoo's study, into which he burst without the preliminary ceremony of a knock. Mossoo was not there, perhaps very fortunately for Bunter, and so, only staying to bestow around Mossoo's den a spiteful little glare, Bunter dumped his lines upon Mossoo's desk and bolted.

As he rolled across the Close towards the gates the hour chimed from the old clock-tower. There was just comfortable time before two-thirty in which to get down to the wireless-station. Passing the tuckshop, his pace for a moment slackened from sheer force of habit, and he paused to gloat in at the window. (Chocolate-fingers, cream-slices, and meringues! After all, he reflected slowly, there was no great hurry. They couldn't expect much of a show before the microphone from a chap who was practically starving.

Besides, having sold Peter Todd's penknife for sixpence to Smith tertius of the Second just before dinner, there was money to burn. Bunter groped in his trousers' pocket.

"Chap must keep up his blessed strength!" he muttered to himself, and brought out the coin. Not that you could keep up much on a measly tanher. But there it was. The entire sum total of his financial resources was represented by that sixpence, and Mrs. Mumble knew him only too well to trust him for tick.

So, clutching the precious sixpence, which stood alone, as it were, between the inner Bunter and starvation, he rolled into the little tuckshop, and banged it down majestically upon the counter.

"Buns," he ordered, "and some lemonade!"

Mrs. Mumble, behind the little counter, threw up her hands in sheer horror.

"Lawks-a-mussy, Master Bunter, you again! And after all those rich jam-tarts and things this morning, too! Where you put it all I don't know!"

Jam-tarts! Jam-tarts! Then, in a flash, Bunter remembered. That interrupted bag of tarts and pastries in the Cloisters! Why, unless Sammy had dodged back and devoured them they must still be where he had left them. And the ginger-pop as well!

Bunter decided rapidly that if it was to be a little snack before rolling down to the broadcasting station, he could not do better than put his sixpence back again in his pocket and reconnoitre the Cloisters. In fact, with the Premier and the Chancellor of the Exchequer everlastingly howling at you to save money, it was positively a chap's duty.

So the sixpence was picked up, and disappeared into a pocket, and then Bunter calmly proceeded to push the

buns and lemonade Mrs. Mumble had brought back across the counter to her.

"I—I don't think I'll have anything, after all," he said. "I—I've changed my mind, you know."

And, leaving the astonished Mrs. Mumble, gasping, he trotted audaciously out.

Once away from the tuckshop, he broke into a gentle run, crossed the Close, and, reaching the shady Cloisters, made directly towards the spot where the bag of tarts had been abandoned.

"Oh, thank goodness they ain't gone!" Bunter heaved a sigh of relief. "That young rascal Sammy must have forgotten them, too!"

He plumped down with the bag.

"My these are prime!"

Whether it was writing out the five hundred lines for Mossoo, or whether it was because he had restricted himself to only three helpings of pudding for dinner, Bunter found himself ravenous, and his fat jaws fairly worked overtime.

"After all," he grunted to himself, "it'll be quite easy borrowing one of the chaps' bikes to get down to Pegg on. A chap must eat—that's a blessed duty, I reckon. Oh, crumbs, what—what ever's that?"

"Help! Help!"

There it was again.

"Oh, crikey!" muttered Bunter, in awe. "It—it's somebody stuck in the vaults, really stuck in this time! Ow! I thought at first it was a blessed spook!"

He got to his feet, screwed up his courage, and blinked his way uncertainly through the gloom to where the vault steps went down into the earth. At the top of these he came to a standstill, peering uncertainly down into the unsavoury darkness.

"Crumbs!" he muttered again, beginning to tremble. "I ain't going down that dark hole alone! No blessed fear! I—I'd better go and—"

While he still blinked uncertainly about him, a furious rain of blows was showered upon the door at the bottom of the old stone steps, and from the blackness to which he dared not descend came once more the faint cry:

"Help! Help!"

And, lo, the voice was the voice of Mossoo!

Mossoo! Several seconds it took to dawn fully upon his fat intelligence, but when at last he did come to realise that Mossoo was really and truly and hopelessly stuck in the vaults—Mossoo, for whom he had just slaved out that beastly impot five hundred times—Billy Bunter actually danced with joy.

"He, he, he! Well, blessed if I'm going down to let him out!" he chortled gleefully. "Serve the rotten Froggie right, I reckon, for giving me lines!"

And William George Bunter fetched the remainder of his tarts and pop, calmly settled himself down upon that top step, and unconcernedly proceeded with his repast.

At intervals Mossoo would send up from the vaults below a terrific howl, and then Bunter smiled happily. The way Bunter looked at it, Mossoo had got himself into the mess, and while it lasted Bunter saw no reason whatever why he should not thoroughly enjoy the unexpected entertainment.

"Suppose he went down exploring, or some such balmy game, and the blessed door slammed on him. It does sometimes!" Bunter chuckled a deep, fat chuckle, and finished the last of the tarts. "Well, that's better,

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anyway. Just time to borrow a bike, and then I'll be tooting."

Brushing the crumbs from his mouth, he gave the stops a final, hesitating blink. And then he turned resolutely away.

"No," he murmured. "Dashed if I'll let him out. Nobody's likely to hear his howls, and for all I worry he can stay there all the afternoon, the Froggie blighter! Crikey, that's the wheeze! Leave him stuck down there, and then just before bed-time I'll accidentally discover him, and—and earn his undying gratitude. He, he, he! What a lark! Only wish I could stop here, though, and listen to his blessed howls to be let out!"

And William George Bunter, bursting every now and again into a deep, deep chuckle, proceeded to roll away in the direction of the bike-shed.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

"Rescue, Remove!"

"WHAT price getting over to Highcliffe, you chaps?"

Thus Frank Nugent, addressing Harry Wharton, Johnny Bull, Bob Cherry, and Inky in Study No. 1. It was the afternoon of the tennis championships.

Dick Russell, who was also in No. 1, paused in the act of unscrewing a racket from its press and nodded assent.

"Just what I was thinking. We may as well be getting along, as Franky says. A breather before play will do us good."

"One moment!" ejaculated Harry Wharton grimly. "Precautionary measures, first, against the merry Bunter-bird. We've half a plum-cake in that cupboard, you know, as well as a squiffy tin of sardines. We'll lock them up. Safety first, you chaps."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And as an act of additional precaution the study door was locked, too, and Harry Wharton pocketed the key. When Bunter was about, you never could tell!

But the Famous Five need not have worried themselves about William George Bunter that afternoon—at least, not on the score of tuck. For as the chums strolled slowly toward the bicycle-shed, Bob Cherry espied the Owl from afar off, as it were, clumsily straddling a machine near Gosling's lodge. Apparently, William George had some urgent engagement out of gates.

Bob Cherry gave a chuckle.

"Wonder who's been fathead enough to lend old fat man a jigger, you chaps?" he murmured. "Mauly, maybe, to get rid of him."

And the humorous Bob proceeded to send after the fat cyclist what was intended to be a shout of encouragement.

But as that stentorian hail of Bob's fell upon his ears, Bunter jumped as if he had been shot, and the next moment, in amazement, the Famous Five watched him digging frantically at the pedals. Down the drive and out through the gates he shot like an arrow. And then they saw him swerve his way madly into the lane in the direction of Friardale.

"My hat, you chaps!" Bob Cherry burst out suddenly. "I've got it! Old Bunter's off to keep his merry broadcasting appointment. That's it! Now I come to think, I did notice Skinner & Co. pop off half an hour ago, chuckling and carrying big bags. When Bunter walks into their trap—whatever it might be—it strikes me there's going to be ructions. Skinner's still nursing that episode in the Rag, of course, when North butted in and Bunter nearly got him bowled

out. However, it's none of our bizney; old barrel deserves all he gets." Bob broke off. "Hallo! Here's old Prouty, you chaps. What's he want, I wonder?"

The master of the Fifth was bearing down upon them across the Close. Importantly he puffed his way up to the little group, inquiring of them in anxious tones if they had seen Monsieur Charpentier.

"Monsieur did not take dinner with us as usual," Mr. Prout explained. "Perhaps you boys noticed. He was absent from his place. Probably there is no reason for alarm, and monsieur has only gone out of gates for a long stroll."

"But if you boys should happen to encounter monsieur while you are out of gates," he went on, "you might perhaps tell him that Dr. Locke particularly wishes to speak with him as soon as possible regarding some examination papers."

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"Very well, sir."

"Thank you, my boys. Dr. Locke will be deeply grateful. You are playing football this afternoon?"

"Tennis, sir," Harry Wharton explained. "It's the Public Schools' Championships, you know, sir, at Highcliffe. Frank Nugent and Russell are representing Greyfriars."

"Oh! Ah, yes!" Actually, Mr. Paul Prout was not one whit the wiser, but he turned upon the Removites a benevolent look. "Well, best of luck, my boys! May the best eleven win, eh? Keep a look out for monsieur, remember."

"Yes, sir."

It was Bob Cherry who reached the cycle-shed first, and he threw open the door, and the rest filed in after him.

"Mum-my giddy hat!" he blinked. "I say, Bunter's been stirring things up some! Pick up that jigger, Inky, old man. It looks like Peter Todd's."

Johnny Bull gave an indignant snort.

"The fat villain ought to be burst for leaving the bikes in this condition!"

But Harry Wharton had thrust his hands deep down into his pockets, and he was regarding the bikes queerly, a frown upon his face.

"I know now why Bunter bolted when you hailed him just now, Bob," he said quietly. "That jigger the fat thief went out of gates on was mine!"

"Well, of all the nerve!"

"Phew!"

"No wonder he dug away at the pedals!" said Bob grimly.

"Look here, Wharton," Dick Russell put in, "Bunter ought jolly well to be taught a lesson. You take my machine and go after him. Prouty held us up for ten minutes, but he can't have travelled far, and you know where he's going. Johnny Bull and Inky and Bob will go along with you. Franky'll step me over to Highcliffe on his bike, and then when you've caught the fat rogue and wiped up the road with him, you fellows can follow on and join us. How's that?"

"Russell's right, Harry," grunted Johnny Bull. "Take his bike, as he suggests, and let's get after Bunter. My word, I'm fairly aching for the blood of that porpoise!"

The captain of the Remove considered.

"Very well," he agreed, his eyes gleaming. "We'll follow Bunter. He's got to be taught the difference between meum and tuum. Thanks for the trusty steed, Russell. We'll be over as soon as we've slaughtered Bunter. Come on, you chaps—after him!"

Hurriedly the juniors wheeled out their machines and mounted. Down the gravel drive fiercely and out through the big gateway they swept, even as Bunter had done, and rode madly into the Friardale lane. Within a very few minutes they reached the narrow foot-path where nearly twenty minutes before them, William George Bunter, on his way to fulfil that momentous engagement at the wireless-station on top of the cliffs, was bound to have turned off upon his borrowed mount.

And here the avengers spread out into single file, riding one behind the other, Wharton in the van and Inky bringing up a resolute rear.

There was a grim, set expression upon the face of the captain of the Remove—an expression which boded ill for the Owl when they should come up with him.

For a few minutes they rode along in silence. Then Wharton, gazing ahead of him with shaded eyes, suddenly applied his brakes.

"Hallo!" he called quickly. "Halt, you chaps! Bunter's returning. My hat, but he hasn't been long, though. Get off and stick the bikes over the hedge out of our way, and then we'll ambush him. Here, behind these bushes!"

Quickly concealing their machines, the Removites crept behind the bushes Wharton indicated, where they were completely hidden from sight. Then all eyes were turned upon Billy Bunter, toiling towards them from the distance. The juniors could see plainly enough, but they could not be seen.

Very slowly and very painfully Bunter drew nearer and yet nearer that waiting ambushade, Wharton following his progress with set teeth. Over the bicycle's movements Bunter appeared to be exercising no control whatsoever. First to one side of the narrow little lane and then across to the other it zig-zagged its way; and at any moment it seemed

(Continued on page 17.)

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DOCTOR BIRCHEMALL'S DILEMMA!

(Continued from previous page.)

"Yes, yes!" gasped the Head, in sobbing tones of relief.

"Very well. You see here my son and air, Cuthbert. A very fine boy, Doctor Birchermall, and the apple of my eye."

"Why does he wear such horrible trowsis?" interposed the Head.

Mr. Tweedy frowned.

"They are the latest stile and cut," he said brusquely. "And they have been duly paid for, which is more than you can say of your own. But to continue. I have grate ambitions for Cuthbert. I want him to go far. How can I best achieve that object, think you?"

"A charge of dynamite would make him go far," suggested the Head.

"Tut-tut! You don't grasp my meaning. I want my son to suck seed and prosper."

"Put him in a birdcage," ventured the Head.

Mr. Tweedy snorted.

"For a headmaster, you are about the densest specimen I ever met!" he said. "Can't I make my meaning clear to you? I want Cuthbert to carve out a niche for himself—to jump ahead of all his fellows, and get into the full glare of the limelight. I want him to be a Big Noise!"

The Head was about to remark that there was already far too much noise at St. Sam's, but Mr. Tweedy's hand stretched towards the birch-rod again, and the Head's jaws shut with a snap.

"Cuthbert has already been to several schools—preparatory schools," went on Mr. Tweedy. "He has been eggspelled from all of them."

"My hat!"

"Not for misconduct," said Mr. Tweedy hastily. "They sacked him bekauso he was far too brainy and intelligent, and knew a jolly sight more than his teachers."

"Oh!"

"I now propose," said Mr. Tweedy, "that you take Cuthbert into this school as a pupil, in part payment for the trowsis. That is to say, instead of paying term-fees, I shall deduct the amount from your account."

The Head had guessed what was coming; but he was not at all pleased at the prospect of having Cuthbert Tweedy as a pupil. Cuthbert seemed a cheeky young cub; and apart from that, his remarkable trowsis would be pretty certain to create a breach of the piece.

"You will take my son?" said Mr. Tweedy, his hand closing significantly upon the birch-rod.

"It's a case of Hobson's choice," said the Head. "I wish you'd stop toying with that birch, Mr. Tweedy. It gives me pins-and-needles down my back! Yes, certainly I will take your son; but—er—not in those trowsis!"

Cuthbert's trowsis seemed to be rather a sore point with the Head.

Mr. Tweedy frowned.

"You will take him in those trowsis, or none at all!" he said sharply.

"Really, really, Mr. Tweedy, we must observe the proprieties!" mermured the Head. "I cannot take a pupil in pants!"

"Those trowsis," said Mr. Tweedy, pointing to the offending baggs, "have been brought up to date, and they conform to modern fashion. They were good enuff for Cuthbert's father, and for Cuthbert's grandfather, so they are good enuff for Cuthbert. I will not hear another word against them! You will agree to my terms, Doctor Birchermall?"

"Yes, yes—any old thing!" gasped the Head, with an apprehensive eye on the birch-rod.

"And you will take him under your wing?"

"I am not an angel Mr. Tweedy."

"That is quite obvious!" said the tailor dryly. "But when I ask you to take Cuthbert under your wing, I mean that I want you to look after him, and advance him to a position of power and prominence in the school. I want you to make him captain of St. Sam's!"

"C-c-captain of St. Sam's?" stuttered the Head, wondering if he had heard aright.

Mr. Tweedy nodded.

"I'm not going to have my Cuthbert playing second fiddle to anybody," he said. "He's going to boss the show, and rule the roost, and be cock-of-the-walk generally. You understand?"

"But—but I cannot appoint a new boy captain of the school!" gasped the Head.

"It would be against all president! And then, your son is much too young to skipper St. Sam's. And then, again, fancy a captain of St. Sam's rolling around in those awful trowsis!"

"Not another word about those trowsis," said Mr. Tweedy, fiercely. "Will you do as I demand, or do you want to feel this birch across your back?"

The Head groaned. He was in the tailor's power, and he had no choice but to agree to Mr. Tweedy's terms.

"I will do as you ask, Mr. Tweedy," he said. "But it will take a little time. I cannot make your son captain of the school at a stroke. I shall first of all have to find an excuse for sacking the present captain. Then there will have to be an election; for it is the boys who elect a new captain—not the Head. This has been the procedure from time immemorial. But I will make it my bizziness to see that your son wins the election, by fair means or by fowl."

"Good enuff!" said Mr. Tweedy. "If the headmaster can't wangle these things, why, nobody can. I'll leave the matter in your hands, doctor. But I shall eggspert to see Cuthbert captain of the school within a fortnight. If he isn't, I shall have something to say to you; and I shall say it with a birch-rod!"

The Head cringed in his chair.

"It shall be done!" he said. "I'll wangle it somehow."

"You'd better!" said Mr. Tweedy. "I go now, and I leave my son in your hands."

Cuthbert, who had been listening to the conversation with grate relish, now embraced his father in the doorway of the Head's study.

"Good-bye, pop!" he said. "I'll see that this old fogey carries out your wishes. If he duzzent look after me properly, and wangle me into the captaincy, I'll tip you the wink, and you'll know how to deal with him!"

"Rather!" said Mr. Tweedy. "Good-bye, my dear boy—and mind you take grate care of your trowsis, and put them on a stretcher every night, so that they don't shrink!"

So saying, Mr. Tweedy took his departure, leaving his young hopeful at St. Sam's, as part payment for the Head's trowsis.

The Head listened in grate relief to the tailor's retreating footmarks. Then he turned to Cuthbert.

"I will do all I can for you, my boy," he said. "But we mustn't rush matters. I can't shove you into the Sixth right away, or it would look suspicious. You must go into the Fourth Form for the present; and I will devise ways and means of getting you promoted."

"Righty-oh, old bean!" said Cuthbert cheerfully.

"Before I send for Mr. Lickham, your Form-master," said the Head, "won't you change those trowsis?"

"No jolly fear!" said Cuthbert. "They're rippin' baggs—nice an' roomy—an' I'm not changin' into a pair of tights to suit anybody!"

"Very well!" said the Head, with a sigh. "But I fear you will have to suffer Percy-cution at the hands of your school-fellows. Those trowsis are an outrage against all the cannons of convention."

"Ratts!"

No other fellow would have dared to say "Ratts!" to the Head with impunity. But Cuthbert was in the enviable position of being able to cheek the Head as much as he liked; and he meant to make the most of it.

The Head rang the bell, and sent Binding, the page, with a message to Mr. Lickham, asking the master of the Fourth to step along to his study.

Doctor Birchermall was gratefully relieved to get the cheeky Cuthbert off his hands, if only for a time. But he felt awfully worried about the future, and he wondered by what miracle he could wangle Cuthbert into the captaincy. It was the very dickens of a problem; and the Head found himself regretting more bitterly than ever that he had obtained that pair of trowsis from Mr. Tweedy. Those trowsis had caused a lot of trouble; and they seemed likely to cause a whole heap more.

THE END.

(Look out for another Dicky Nugent special next week, chums, entitled: "IN THE NEW BOY'S POWER!" It's a fair corker!)

DO YOU KNOW THAT—?

The English Cup has not been won by any team not in the First Division since 1912. Barnsley were then victorious. Will this be an "outsider's" season?

In the long days ago the clubs which were drawn to play together in the Cup competition tossed for choice of ground.
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 991.

Of the players who have passed through the ranks of Newcastle United during the last twenty years, no fewer than nineteen have held appointments as managers of other clubs.

Leonard Hobbs, the son of the famous England batsman, plays at centre-forward for his school team, and recently scored four goals in one match.

Since the Sunderland club entered the First Division in 1890, they have only finished in the bottom half of the table on six occasions when the final reckoning has been made.

The longest Cup-tie on record was that between Barrow and Gillingham, in 1924. The clubs met five times, and in all played for nine hours before a definite result was arrived at.

Swansea Town possess a curious sort of mascot. It is a hawk which hovers over their ground in wait for the carrier pigeons which some of their supporters make a habit of sending off when Swansea score a goal. It is considered a sure sign that Swansea won't score many goals if the hawk is not there, hovering above the ground, soon after the kick-off.

THE SCHOOLBOY BROADCASTERS !

(Continued from page 13.)

as if the Owl must inevitably come crashing off. Wharton's eyes, as he witnessed that crazy progress from behind the bushes, flashed angrily. That bicycle had cost ten guineas, and that not so very long back.

And then, while Bunter was still some yards from them, Bob Cherry uttered a cry—an incoherent cry of startled amazement.

"Oh, look, you fellows," Bob was gibbering, with shaded eyes. "Bunter's fastened to the bike hand and foot! Tied on, you know. And—and look at his blessed head, too! Great pip, he—he's been tarred and feathered! Oh, hold me up, somebody—quick! Skinner's had his merry revenge. Tared and feathered, and then tied hand and foot to his jigger! Oh, my hat! Oh dear! Oh, my blessed ribs!"

And as his eyes followed Bob's shaking forefinger, even Wharton's grim features relaxed in a smile. For when he had fared forth that afternoon as entertainer, the Owl of the Remove had little guessed in quite what way he was destined to entertain. Truly had retribution fallen upon him, swift and sure.

But worse was to follow, for suddenly the fat Owl of the Remove seemed to lose his head. The bike wobbled more dangerously than ever, and, as was to be expected, Bunter completely lost his balance.

Crash! Clatter!

Bump!

Bike and rider went in a heap to the roadway, and Bunter's roars echoed loud and long.

"Yaroooo! My spine's broken! Yooop! My neck's dislocated! Help!"

"Oh, my hat!" sobbed Bob Cherry.

"Let's give him a hand," said Wharton.

The Removites rushed forward.

Billy Bunter was still roaring and yelling at the very top of his lungs, sure indication that neither his neck was dislocated or his spine broken.

"Yow! Cut me free, you beasts!" he roared, as the juniors surrounded him. "Whooooop! Look sharp!"

Bob Cherry pulled out his pocket-knife, cut the Owl free from his bonds, and proceeded to jerk him right end up again.

"Yoooooop! Steady on, you beast!" roared Bunter.

And he set his tarry glasses straight upon his fat little nose, and blinked peevishly up into Bob Cherry's astonished face.

"Well, I'm jiggered! If Bunter isn't the giddy limit, chaps!" gasped Bob. "At least, you might express a little gratitude, you fat clam!"

"Oh, really, Cherry!" said Bunter. "If you had been through what I've been through this last twenty minutes you wouldn't look so blessed cheerful! Wow!"

"Tell us all about it, old fat man," said Bob, with a grin.

And Bunter told.

"As soon as I got to the wireless station," he said, "some chap with a blessed moustache ambled up, and said: 'Come this way, Mr. Bunter. We were expecting you, of course. All is ready.'"

"Go on," urged Bob.

"Well, I followed the awful beast, of course, and he led me into a sort of blessed shed place, you know. Yah, I thought I was going in to broadcast."

"And weren't you?"

"No. There were two other beasts inside this blessed shed, and as soon as

I got inside they slammed the door shut, and then they all set on me, you know. They—they had a big bucket of tar between 'em and a bag of feathers, and while two ducked my blessed napper in the b-bucket, the other rotter was swamping me with feathers. What do you think of that?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"After all that the rotters hugged me outside again, and—and t-tied me on to old Harry's beastly bike, and then they set me going. Yah, I had to keep on peddling away, the beasts, or I'd have pitched off! I—I believe it was Skinner all the blessed time, you know, and—and Stott and Snoop, in disguises. The—the rotten, revengeful beasts!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, carry me home to die!"

The Removites could not help laughing.

Bunter turned upon Harry Wharton & Co. a fiendish and tarry glare.

"All right, you blessed rotters, you can cackle!"

"Thanks, old fat man," Bob returned sweetly, "we will!"

And the hilarious Removites roared again.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I wish you chaps would shut up, and set to work and help a chap clean off some of this blessed tar. After all, it was only Wharton's fault that this happened to me at all!"

"Mum-my fault? Why you—"

"If you hadn't pressed your blessed mouldy iron upon me I'd have been all right, wouldn't I?" hooted Bunter. "Come on, now, what are you going to do about it?"

For answer Harry Wharton bent swiftly and grabbed a fat ankle.

"Lay hold, chaps!" he muttered.

"This is what we're going to do about it. We're bumping this dashed fat clam till we dent the dashed roadway! Put it down as our little contribution towards Bunter's pleasant afternoon. All together, now!"

And, taking up one corner of Bunter apiece, so to speak, the Remove avengers exerted their united strength until Bunter was suspended ominously above the hard, stony ground. And then, still studiously steering clear of the tar and feathers, and callously ignoring frantic apprehensive howls, they bumped him. They bumped him, in that hard and stony lane, good and hard and properly, as a bumping should be administered.

When at last they deemed themselves satisfied and justice done, they were breathless. The Owl was breathless, too, but he was far from feeling satisfied! He was bruised in person and broken in spirit. And, then, to crown all, at a signal from Bob Cherry, the four of them let go suddenly, and Bunter hit the ground with a terrific yell, which roused the echoes and scared the rooks for miles around.

"Yow-ow-ow-oooooop!"

And there they left him.

Wharton proceeded to pick up his sadly-used bicycle, the rest recovered their machines from the hedgerow, and then all four speedily remounted and struck out for Highcliffe with a will, Wharton trundling Russell's bicycle along beside his own.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Tennis Champions !

"IF we are ready—"

The umpire, an old 'Varsity Soccer Blue, gave a little, tentative glance at his watch.

"All present on parade, I think, sir," Frank Courtenay returned, looking

quickly about them. "There's the Burchester fellows and St. Jude's playing a knock-up set on the centre court; and I saw Tom Merry and Cardew of St. Jim's only a moment ago strolling about with the Rookwood fellows. There they go. Look!"

Courtenay made a trumpet of his hands and gave a hail.

"All competitors, please! Come on, you fellows! Time!"

The contestants came up at a run.

"You understand the rules governing these finals, you men!" warned the 'Varsity Blue, when they were all assembled round him. "Three matches to be played simultaneously as an eliminating round—three sets to the match. Winners go into the hat again, and a bye is drawn and played. Then a tea interval, and after that the final round before dusk. Quite clear, everybody? Right, then! Let's get on with the draw, and get going."

Rapidly the fateful chips were shaken together and then drawn forth in pairs. The contestants hung upon the umpire's words.

"Highcliffe and St. Jim's!" A cheer went up. "St. Jude's and Burchester! Greyfriars versus Rookwood!"

"Oh, jolly good!" murmured Harry Wharton; and Bob Cherry nodded assent. After leaving Bunter, the chums had gone directly to Highcliffe. "That gives you and Russell a great chance to bring it off, Franky, you know. Ought to pip Rookwood, anyway."

"Rather, Harry! Hallo! Come on, Russell. Bye-bye, you chaps! Silver's waiting to spin racquets for choice of ends. My hat, what a gallery we've got! It's a regular Wimbledon, Russell!"

They were walking on to the courts, and Russell glanced round at the crowd, nodding agreement.

"Yes. Look! There's Lovell and Raby and Newcome of Rookwood. And a crowd of Rookwooders behind them, come to cheer their giddy champions on."

"There's three times as many of our own chaps here, Russell," Nugent objected. "So that if cheering on is going to help at all—"

"Little us should pull it off, eh? Well, we shall see. Hallo! Who's this, Franky?"

It was Mr. Railton of St. Jim's. Being an "outsider"—or, at any rate, an outsider so far as the Greyfriars-Rookwood match was concerned, the popular St. Jim's Housemaster had willingly been pressed into service, so to speak, and was umpiring. Farther along, on the end court, was the 'Varsity Blue; and on the centre court Mr. Lascelles of Greyfriars was "seeing to things." And as the juniors approached Mr. Railton waved a cheery hand.

Greyfriars won the spin-up. Nugent and Russell elected to "serve" first, leaving choice of ends to the Rookwood pair.

Mr. Railton was signalling for play, and Dick Russell began Greyfriars' first service.

There were a couple of Highcliffe's Third "fagging" as ball-boys; and Kildare and Darrell of the St. Jim's Sixth foot-fault judges and linesmen. And round the stop-netting there were the contingents from Greyfriars and Rookwood.

Whiz!

The first ball of Russell's service left his racket like the shell from a gun. It smashed across the net, plumped in the service-court, and broke outward. Anybody but the cool Mornington would

have been hopelessly outpaced. But Val Mornington, who was receiving, had rather expected that nasty, breaking service. He had watched Russell play before this, and it had been anticipated.

Quick as thought, as the ball broke, his racket flashed out. A tremendous spring, a beautiful half-volley, and Russell's service was on the safe side of the net again. But Nugent was upon it even as it came over—was upon it with the spring of a tiger. And his stroke, when he made it, was a lob—a gentle, exasperating, little lob that just carried the ball back across. Jimmy Silver, playing up to the net though he was, was completely deceived by it. He was quick, but not quick enough, and the first point was lost to Rookwood.

"Fifteen-love!" Mr. Railton chanted; and the Greyfriars section of the "gallery" round the stop-netting nearly went mad with delight. They took it as an omen, that indication of first blood to Greyfriars—a token of more to come.

Farther along, on the centre court, and surrounded by a breathless, excited crowd of partisans from the rival schools, Highcliffe was engaged in desperate battle with St. Jim's. And on the third court, the end one, Burchester and St. Jude's were level, under the eye of the 'Varsity Blue, at thirty-all.

The different games proceeded rapidly, the scoring running up without pause. Thirty-love for Greyfriars, then Greyfriars lost a stroke, and it was thirty-fifteen. But Nugent won the next, and Russell followed it up with another smashing service that neither of the Rookwood pair really saw until it bounded up off their court and hit the stop-netting with a musical ping! Mr. Railton proceeded laconically to call "Game!"

Sammy Bunter of the Second was on the ropes, with a horde of fags from the Second and Third at his back.

"Game?" Sammy blinked round blankly. "Is—is it all over, then?"

"Ass!" snorted George Tubb of the Third. "Mean to say you don't understand tennis better than that, young Bunter?"

"Well, if it comes to that, Tubby," Paget grumbled, "dashed if I do, either!"

"Well, you couple of blessed——"

"That's only the first game to Greyfriars," broke in Nugent minor pacifically. "Just one game, you see. The side which first wins six games wins the set, and best out of three sets constitutes the match. Of course, Greyfriars'll win the match, all serene!" he finished confidently.

"Just because your blessed major's playing, young Nugent?" jeered Tubb; and Nugent minor flushed.

Truth to tell, Tubb was a little piqued at having explanations taken out of his hands. While he spoke he was fishing in his pocket. Tubb had in his heart secret aspirations towards tennis fame, and surreptitiously in odd moments he had been swotting up the rules by way of fitting himself for future participation at Wimbledon. So now he thumbed the pages of the little rule-book that had come to light authoritatively.

"Here you are, you pair of blessed ignoramuses! Rule 23. I'll read something out to you:

"The player who first wins six games wins a set, except as follows:

"If both players have won five games the score is called games-all; and the next game won by a player is scored advantage-game for that player. If the same player wins the next game he wins

the set; if the other player wins the next game the score is again called games-all; and so on until a player wins two games more than his opponent, when the set is scored for that player."

"There!" said George Tubb triumphantly. "Now, perhaps, you know!" And the little book was restored to its owner's pocket.

"H'm!" said Paget doubtfully. "Sounded jolly learned to me. But what about this blessed 'love' business that keeps cropping up? Thought it was a tennis tournament, not a blessed honeymoon!"

"There you go again, Paget, showing off your dashed ignorance before these Second Form kids," Tubb snorted. "Love means 'nothing'—'nil'—'nix'!"

"Or now?" queried Nugent minor innocently.

"Or now! Now shut up your fat-headed remarks, young Nugent, and watch. Hallo, game to Greyfriars again. Hurrah! My hat, we'll lick 'em hollow at this rate. Your major is some good, after all, young Nugent."

"What did I tell you?" said Nugent minor happily.

Greyfriars won that first set hands down, with the score at 6-2; and Greyfriars, from its position behind the stop-netting, sent up a howl of delight as the figures went up.

The Rookwooders looked suddenly glum. They had come to Highcliffe to cheer on the victors. And, apparently, it had not entered into their calculations that the victors might be from some school other than Rookwood.

"Buck up, Uncle James!" roared Arthur Edward Lovell anxiously. "Put it across 'em!"

But "Uncle James" only grinned ruefully. If "putting it across" Greyfriars were humanly possible, then Uncle James, of Rookwood, needed no urge to perform that operation.

"Bedad, ye Classical jabberwocks, ye're no good at all at all," yelled Tommy Doyle, the Rookwood Modern's wild Irishman.

"Rather not!" frowned Tommy Dodd. "Far better have left it to the Moderns."

"Absolutely!" finished Tommy Cook with great decision.

But the three Tommies condemned too hastily. For, in the second set, Jimmy Silver and Val Mornington set their teeth, pulled themselves together, and played up for Rookwood like Trojans.

Val Mornington set the ball rolling, as it were, with a service ace that simply left Dick Russell standing. And Nugent, when he came to face the serving, fared no better.

Greyfriars lost the first game, and the second, and then the third. Then they won a game, just scraping home narrowly.

"My hat!" groaned Dick Russell. "Three-one against us! Rookwood must have taken a tonic, or something."

Apparently, Rookwood had. Greyfriars won the next game, again narrowly, making it 3-2; and then there began a ding-dong struggle which lasted right to the finish. First Jimmy Silver and Morny would creep ahead, gaining a game; and then, fighting like grim death, Nugent and Russell would equalise, and the score would again be games-all.

Then, when Rookwood had the 'van at 8-7, Val Mornington sprang up and notched the sixteenth game for Rookwood with a terrific volley against which nothing could stand.

"Set to us, begad!" ejaculated Adolphus Smythe; and Rookwood, as

represented round the stop-netting, proceeded to go mad. After Rookwood's decline in the first set, this come-back was nothing short of marvellous.

"Hurroo!" roared Tommy Doyle, nearly beside himself. "Bedad, the mouldy old casual ward of a Classical side ain't so bad, bejabbers, sometimes," he admitted.

"Who's cock o' the walk now, you blessed Modern bounders?" chirruped Arthur Edward Lovell in high glee.

Set three began quickly at Mr. Railton's signal. But Rookwood could do nothing right. It had shot its bolt. Rookwood had made its great effort in that wonderful second set. In the third, it was nowhere. There was only one pair in the picture at all, and that pair was Nugent and Russell.

Smash! Nugent's determined half-volleying made short work of even Val Mornington's serving; and Dick Russell's smashing volleys killed the Rookwooders' returns every time.

Greyfriars won five games straight off, one after the other without pause, and it looked like being a love-set. Then Rookwood recovered a little, and Jimmy Silver snatched a narrow victory. Five—one! But that was the end. Even Val Mornington's service aces availed Rookwood nothing. Love-fifteen; love-thirty; love-forty; fifteen-forty: Game!

Game! Rookwood was finished on the final set. 6-2; 7-9; 6-1: Three wonderful sets. And Greyfriars had pulled through, and was in the second round!

"Very good, my boys," Mr. Railton smiled. "Very good play, indeed! And Rookwood has nothing to be despondent about. Really, until the third set it was anybody's game."

"Yes, rather! Jolly well played, you men!" And Nugent and Russell shook heartily with Silver and Val Mornington.

"First-rate," said Wharton, as they came off. "Come on, the other two matches are just finishing. Let's trot along, and see what's doing."

Highcliffe and St. Jim's, indeed, had finished. Tom Merry and Ralph Eckness Cardew were strolling off as Harry Wharton & Co. came up.

"Licked, dear boy!" said Cardew, in reply to Wharton's unspoken question. "Licked, dishd, and diddled. My hat, that blessed Caterpillar's a downy old bird, an' no dashed mistake, either."

"Four-six, eight-six, and five-seven," Tom Merry explained. "We went down on first and third sets. Best men won, without a doubt. Let's stroll along and look at the Burchester v St. Jude's dust-up."

The Burchester—St. Jude's "dust-up" came to an end almost as soon as they took up their positions behind the stop-netting. A St. Jude's prefect volunteered the information, with obvious relish, that St. Jude's led.

"This is set two!" he explained cheerily. "It's been a regular Homeric affair so far, and no mistake. Those Burchester fellows are the real goods. We just pulled the first set out of the fire at 11-9. This is 10-9 for us—our 'van, you know. And it looks as if there'll be no need to play on through a third set— Oh, good man, Tiny! Oh, splendid!" The St. Jude's prefect turned to the Greyfriars juniors, his face wreathed in smiles. "Our match," he grinned, "Eleven-nine again. Burchester is pipped!"

"St. Jude's and Highcliffe and our little selves, then," whispered Nugent. "The three of us! Well, it strikes me that the pair which is left out in the bye is going to win this little lot. May it be our noble selves, Dicky. Hallo,

there's the ref's whistle! We'll soon know now, anyway."

And even as Nugent said, so it was. But, when the draw was made, it was not Greyfriars that was left out in the bye, nor yet Highcliffe, but St. Jude's. They caught the Caterpillar's rueful glance as he grinned across at them.

"It's really made things a lot fairer, you know, Franky, this leaving St. Jude's out in the bye." Dick Russell squeezed Nugent's arm as he spoke. "You see, they ain't really up to Highcliffe's standard, and I'm sure they're not up to ours. That isn't swank, Franky, but truth. And there's tea to look forward to after this."

Whether or no St. Jude's really were inferior to either Highcliffe or Greyfriars remained to be discovered later. But there was no doubt at all that being passed over in the bye gave them a wonderful chance of snatching the victory, for even after tea and a good rest, both Greyfriars and Highcliffe, whichever of those two they were to meet, was bound to be feeling the force of the paco. Whereas, St. Jude's only having had the one match to play, would be comparatively fresh.

The Greyfriars-Highcliffe duel was surprisingly mild to begin with—but only to begin with. Greyfriars won the first set easily at 6-3. Then things began to wake up. Truth to tell, during the Highcliffe-St. Jim's match neither Tom Merry nor Ralph Reckness Cardew had been quite up to scratch. Cardew had turned out in a Form footer practice match that morning at St. Jim's, and being still but the beginning of the season, it had left him slow and a little stiff. This had upset Tom Merry's play, had affected it badly, and the "combination" had gone to pieces. The

Caterpillar and Frank Courtenay had enjoyed, almost without realising it, what practically amounted to a walk-over.

But both the Greyfriars pair were fit as fiddles, and their play dovetailed perfectly. And, for that first set, neither the Caterpillar nor Courtenay could quite accommodate their play to it. But with the beginning of the second set the Caterpillar found himself. He seemed to come, somehow, out of a reverie. Love-fifteen, love-thirty, fifteen-thirty, thirty-all, thirty-forty, game!

Game for Highcliffe, though. They won the first of that second set, and they were not given pause until they had won the second, and the third, and the fourth as well, and it looked as if they might run up the whole six games of the set with no one to say them nay.

But with the score-board at 4-0 against them, Greyfriars set its teeth and began to do great things. When the Caterpillar served, backcourt play was the only thing possible, such was the length and pace of his service. So Russell retreated, and killed every ball the Caterpillar served as it came. Courtenay's service was more easily dealt with, and Nugent patted most of them just out of reach of either of the

Highcliffe pair. And gradually things levelled up again—4-1, 4-2, 4-3. Then Highcliffe spurted, and played through the next games like International champions, and won both them easily, with only a couple of fifteens notched against them.

"My hat!" gasped Harry Wharton. "One set apiece! Play up, ye cripples! Look! They're beginning the third set!"

That third set was memorable in Public School tennis. Every inch of the game was contested hotly. Not a point but was literally fought for. Highcliffe took the lead at 1-0, and secured the next game as well. Then the Greyfriars pair came into the picture and carried the score up to 3-2 for Greyfriars. The Caterpillar made it 3-3 with a wonderful service ace, and next it went to 4-3 for the 'Friars, and then level again. The next two games were split as well, and the scoring was at games-all with 5-5.

And then to the onlookers Dick Russell seemed to go mad. Courtenay found his services knocked back to where neither he nor the Caterpillar could get to them in time. Love-fifteen, love-thirty, love-forty. And still Courtenay could do nothing. Russell's clean, hard returns were coming over



A match flared up, and pierced the pitch blackness of the vault. Carefully shielding the flame, Wharton stared about him. The next moment both Wharton and Bob Cherry realised why Mossoo could not open the door of the vault, for the French master was bound hand and foot, trussed like a bird! (See Chapter 11.)

the net, and Nugent's deceptive little lobs, that looked so "soft" to the inexperienced eye. And neither of the Highcliffe pair could do a thing. The game seemed entirely to be taken from their control. One more stroke and the game was lost to them, and up on the scoring-board popped the ominous figures—6-5!

Greyfriars' 'van! Courtenay set his teeth, determined to do or die, and Caterpillar muttered lurid things to himself. But their rally was too late to be effective. Nugent and Russell were in perfect combination, and taking everything in their stride.

Whiz! Crash!

And the points swept up to forty without the Highcliffe pair having done a thing. One more stroke and the match was Greyfriars'!

But Courtenay stole a couple of points, the tables were turned, and it was thirty—forty, and the Caterpillar's service. Courtenay gave his chum an appealing look. If the game was entirely to be pulled from the fire it must be now. The Caterpillar grinned back reassuringly, braced himself for the effort, and sent across from his racket such a service that would have puzzled W. T. Tilden himself, let alone Frank Nugent of the Greyfriars Remove.

Ping!

Nugent scarcely saw the ball until it bounced, and he heard it hit the stop-netting behind his head.

"Oh, good man, Caterpillar!" breathed Courtenay. "Deuce!"

"Deuce" it was—forty-forty. Caterpillar and Courtenay changed sides, and Dick Russell faced the service.

Whiz!

It was a red-hot ball that left the Caterpillar's racket, but Dick Russell was ready for it. It hit the ground in front of him, broke to the right, and he caught it with a beautiful half-volley, lifting it low across the net. Courtenay made a desperate attempt at returning, but the ball was hopelessly placed for him, and he failed.

"Our 'van," grinned Bob Cherry to Johnny Bull. "Now Nugent faces the music again. Hold your breaths!"

Caterpillar and Courtenay recrossed. The first ball of the service was a fault. Caterpillar was a trifle pale as he measured the distance with his eye for the second ball, but the ball which left his racket showed no trace of that momentary nervousness.

Whiz! Straight and true it drove across the limply-hanging net, and Nugent made to play it when—

Pheep!

The umpire's whistle was trilling out its protest, and all eyes were fixed upon him. He was motioning to the Caterpillar and saying something. Kildare of St. Jim's, officiating as foot-fault judge at that end, had called to him.

"Foot-fault there, De Courcy. You shifted your left foot across the baseline during that last service. Accidental, I know, but I'm afraid we can't disregard Rule 6 on that account. The stroke goes to Greyfriars, which gives them the match."

"Oh, begad!" began the Caterpillar dismally. "Franky, old man, beastly sorry—"

"Never mind, old chap," returned Courtenay softly. "These things will happen, you know, in the best-regulated families."

Nugent and Russell were hurrying across. They understood perfectly how the Caterpillar must be feeling, and their firm handgrip did more for the Caterpillar than any mere words.

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"Well, you know, I reckon we'd have pulled it off, even without that foot-fault of Caterpillar's," Bob Cherry remarked thoughtfully. "Still, there it is, and we're in the final with St. Jude's after tea. Better get old Franky and Russell away from here—flop 'em down in a couple of deck-chairs, and brace 'em with Glaxo, I think. Hallo! What does this merchant want?"

The "merchant" referred to was none other than Dr. Voysey, the headmaster of Highcliffe, bearing down upon them in cap and gown. He made straight for the little group of Removites.

"Wharton," he was saying. "Which boy is Wharton of Greyfriars? There is a telephone message for him."

Wharton stepped forward, wondering at the strange interruption.

"Here I am, sir," he said. "I am Wharton."

"Dr. Locke desires me to ask you to be good enough to return to Greyfriars at once, together with your friends. It is something in connection with Monsieur Charpentier, I understand, who is missing."

— — —

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Prisoner of the Vault!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Anybody at home? Come on, show a leg!"

The inquirer was Bob Cherry; and, getting no response, Bob burst open the door of Study No. 11 by the simple and time-honoured expedient of jamming his boot against it.

"Skinner— Oh, so it's you, is it, my dear old fat man! You got back all right, then. My hat! What a merry sight you do look. Bunt, and no mistake!"

Bunter's hair was tousled and greasy, and in places still streaked with the tar. But it was not that which was most noticeable. For under Bob's gaze he was shuffling awkwardly, plainly ill at ease. His expression was that of one who has screwed his courage up to the sticking-point. Behind his back one hand was trying to keep something from view.

Bob noted it all and wondered. For Study No. 11 was, of course, Skinner's study.

"What's the little game—eh?" he inquired.

Bunter was hesitating, and then suddenly he tiptoed to the door and gave a cautious blink up and down the length of the Remove passage.

"Promise not to let on, then, if I tell?"

"Right-ho, old conspirator!"

Immediately the hand swept into sight. It was a grubby hand and sticky, and it flourished triumphantly beneath Bob's nose a bottle.

"It's gum!" Bunter chuckled happily. "That beast Skinner would slaughter me if he knew. Blessed if you didn't startle me when you came in, old chap! Just as I'd mucked up his blessed desk, too. I upended the thing, you know, and trickled in the gum through the keyhole. He, he, he! Don't I hope I've swamped all his blessed fags, too! Serves him right, the rotten beast, for soaking me with tar. Why, I had the dickens of a job to get it all off—had to rub my blessed napper with butter, you know. I say, like to watch me muck up his clock?"

Bob declined the invitation.

"No, thanks," he said with a chuckle. "Hallo! Who's this?"

Quick footsteps had sounded outside,

and next moment the door was thrown open.

It was Harry Wharton. Bob turned to his leader.

"Any luck?"

"None whatever, I'm afraid," Wharton returned with a worried look. "Inky and I have been searching high and low ever since we got back from Highcliffe. Dr. Locke had phoned all the hospitals round about before we arrived, and now Johnny Bull's gone off on his bike to scout round Friardale and Courtfield and Pegg. One doesn't know what to do next. It's a mystery!"

"I say, you fellows, what's up?" Bunter ejaculated curiously.

"Mossoo is missing. The whole countryside is being ransacked for him. We were called back from Highcliffe to lend a hand. The police are on the job, too." Wharton spoke curtly. He was by no means disposed towards conversation with Bunter. "Come on, Bob. We'll have to cut along to the wireless-station and tell the Head we've drawn blank here, I'm afraid."

"I—I say, hold on a minute!"

Bunter was clawing at Wharton's blazer with anxious, detaining fingers.

"Mossoo missing! The countryside being ransacked! Why, of course, he must still be down in the vaults, a prisoner!"

"Come on, porpoise!" Bob Cherry jerked out impatiently. "Cough it up. What's biting you? You don't know anything about Mossoo's disappearance, I suppose?"

Wharton, too, was scanning Bunter's face with dawning suspicion.

"Nunno! Certainly not! But it—it just struck me, you fellows, that p'r'aps he—he might have got himself stuck in the vaults, you know. It just struck me, I mean. Not that I know anything about it, of course!"

Wharton and Cherry exchanged meaning glances.

"That's good enough, Bunter," Wharton rapped out. "No one dreamed of looking down there for Mossoo. Did you shut him in, you fat clam?"

"Nunno!" returned Bunter again, promptly.

"Then how do you know that's where he is?"

"Really, Cherry, I never said I did. Still, if he is stuck down in the vaults, I reckon it serves the froggie little beast jolly well right. Giving a chap lines, you know, just for cackling at him!" And Bunter snorted with righteous indignation. "Crums, he didn't half pitch into that blessed door, and he was yelling like—like anything. He, he, he!" Bunter chuckled a reminiscent chuckle. "You chaps should have heard him. That is to say, I never heard him at all, and I know nothing whatever about it!"

"Come along, Bob," said Wharton. "I don't know whether Bunter shut him in out of revenge, or whether Mossoo shut himself in accidentally. We'll settle that later on. But if Mossoo's down in the vaults, it's up to us to go and get the poor beggar out."

To gain the Close was the matter of brief seconds. Away at the wireless-station the school broadcasting had been in progress for half an hour and more. There were loud-speakers in the Rag, arranged for by Dr. Locke, and before the chums turned out of the School House and plunged into the deserted and gloomy Cloisters, they had literally to fight their way through the crowds of excited juniors.

"Listen!" breathed Wharton suddenly.

They were very near the vaults now, and at intervals a very faint knocking sound was audible, and then a weak cry for help. And both juniors recognised the well-known accents of the little French master.

"Come on!" muttered Wharton, and he plunged headlong down the dark steps.

They were at the bottom, in the darkness. There was no room to get a good run, so they retreated as far back as they could get, and then they both rushed suddenly, hurling their strong shoulders against the stout door with all the force they had at command.

Crash!

The big door flew open quite easily, and the two juniors, unable to stay their progress, hurtled right through and into the vault beyond with terrific force, where they landed sprawling in the pitch darkness.

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Bob angrily. "The blessed door was scarcely stuck at all. Why, a fag from the Second could have pushed it open with one finger. Ow, I'm bruised all over! What the thump's Mossos playing at?"

"Garçons! Mes braves enfants!"

From close to the two juniors came the well-known voice of Monsieur Charpentier.

"Hullo, that's his toot, anyway!"

A match flared up and pierced the pitch blackness of the vault. Carefully shielding the flame, Wharton stared about him. And then, next moment, both the juniors saw in a twinkling why Mossos could not open the door of the vault that a child could have opened with ease. For Mossos was bound hand and foot, trussed like a bird.

One hand alone he had managed to get partly free of its bonds, and it was with this that he had been beating upon the door.

"Wharton! Sherry! Si vous saviez comme je souffre! Queek! Zere is vat you call 'lectric torch dans ma poche—in my pocket! Coot ze rope, mes enfants! Zat I am mooch glad to see you."

Mossos's voice was weak and exhausted. Wharton was down on his knees, directing the beam of light from the torch. Bob Cherry slashed at Mossos's bonds frantically. One by one the ropes parted and fell away, and Mossos was free!

"Les matelots, zey do sis!" One on each side, the two Removites were chafing his wrists and numb limbs, striving to set up the circulation again. "Les matelots—two of zem. Sailors—vat you would call ze jolly Jack 'Tars!"

Wharton gasped in amazement. Two sailors! Nugent and Russell in the lane returning from Highcliffe, and now Mossos! It was beginning to be serious.

"Cos sont scelerats—scoundrels! I spy on zem, hein! I listen. Zey catch me and tie me up!"

Wharton gave a nod.

"If you feel able to walk now, Mossos," he said kindly, "we'll get you up out of here first, and then you can explain. Take Mossos's other arm, Bob. By the way, Mossos, you're broadcasting to-night. Do you think you'll feel up to it, after this?"

At the words of the captain of the Remove the little French master started suddenly to his feet, clutching his temples. There burst from his lips a wild cry of horror.

"Nom d'un nom!"

Wharton stared, wondering blankly if Mossos had suddenly taken leave of his senses.

"Ze broadcast! Heavens, and I forget all about him! Zose scoundrels, zey go

to blow him up! Zere is explosives in caves beneath, all ready for it. Heavens, le coup a tête—ze blow on ze head, it make me to forget!"

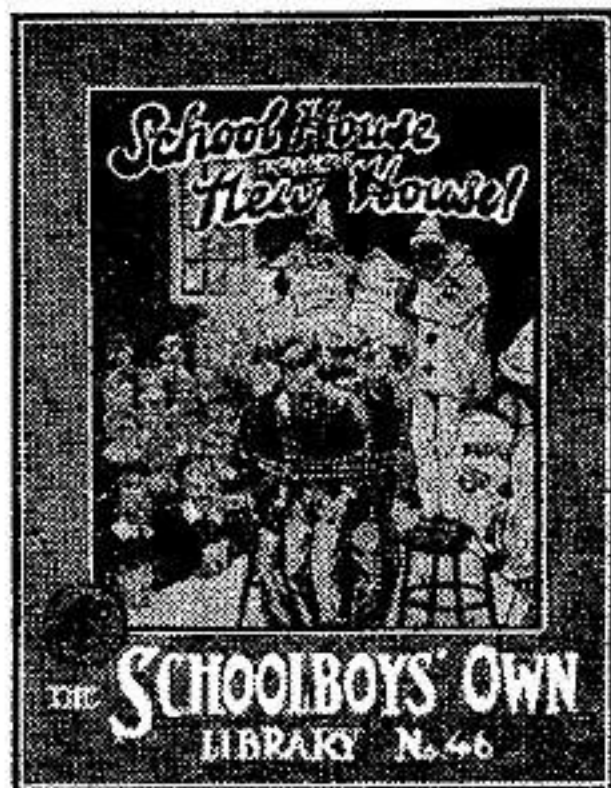
Harry Wharton's cheeks were pale with horror.

"What's that you're saying, Mossos? The wireless-station to be blown up from the caves—destroyed? Why, our chaps are there, and—Are you absolutely certain of this thing, Mossos?"

They had climbed the moss-covered steps, were in the gloom of the Cloisters. Mossos negotiated the steps in a painful, agitated hurry. The clock above them in the old tower chimed a half-hour, and in the unaccustomed light Mossos blinked uncertainly.

Breathlessly he clutched Wharton's arm.

RIVALS AND CHUMS!



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"Vat time is zat, Wharton—three-thirty—four-thirty? Zat we must hurry. I must see ze Head queek, before zese boys leave ze school."

In blank, incredulous amazement the captain of the Remove stared again at Mossos's ashen face. Obviously the deep boom of the hours from the clock above them had entirely failed to penetrate the deepness of the vaults. It was either that, or else that the long confinement had affected the little French master's mind. Harry had more than a suspicion that that might be the case.

Deliberately he pushed his watch under Mossos's eyes.

"The time is half-past seven," he said steadily. "And I'm afraid that Dr. Locke went down to the wireless-station more than an hour ago, together with most of the masters. There's only Mr. Hacker and Mr. Capper here."

Mossos was wringing his hands, and Mossos uttered a wail of despair.

"Seven-thirty? Seven-thirty, you say? Ciel, zen it is too late! We cannot get there in time! Zose scoundrels, zey blow him up at eight o'clock!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

In the Caves!

"TOO late!"

Away at the broadcasting-station it was Coker's turn before the microphone, and in the Rag at Greyfriars the loud-speakers were blaring out the comic song Coker was singing with wonderful faithfulness, so that you thought old Coker himself was there.

"And the night shall be filled with music," quoted Vernon-Smith, and there was a chuckle from a cluster of the mighty Fifth who stood near by, and knew their Coker. "Listen! Here, I say, Wharton, what ever's up? Why man, you're ghastly!"

"Cut off to Quelch's study, Bob," Wharton jerked out. "Try and get the broadcasting-station itself on the 'phone. If you can't, get hold of the police at Courtfield. Tell them to rush over in the fastest car they can find, and get our fellows out before the whole blessed place goes up!"

"My hat!" ejaculated Vernon-Smith, in amazement. "What's up, Wharton? Anything a chap can do?"

Squiff had rushed up, too, seeing from Wharton's agitation that something was wrong, and Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull came after him. Mark Linley, Redwing, and Bolsover dashed up hurriedly the next minute.

"We passed Bob on the steps," Linley explained breathlessly. "What is wrong? Bob looked as if he'd seen a ghost."

Very quickly and briefly Wharton put the juniors into possession of the facts. There were cries of horror when he finished.

"Good heavens! What are we going to do? We can't stand idly here, Wharton. The police—"

"Bob's telephoning them now. Here he comes!"

"It's no go, Harry! The wireless-station's not connected up, it seems, being there temporarily. But I got the Courtfield police all serene, and a car is being rushed over there straightway. It's twenty to eight now; with luck they should get through in time!"

"Thank goodness! Oh, thank goodness!" Harry breathed. "But we're taking no chances!" he added grimly the next moment. "Get out jiggers, you chaps, and be ready to ride like the wind. We're going along to those caves beneath the wireless-station. There'll be no death and destruction while the Remove can prevent it!"

Vaguely through the darkness the steel masts and cage aërials of the wireless-station loomed into view ahead. About five hundred yards from the wireless-station, just to the left of them, there was a little, narrow, winding path which dropped precariously down the very face of the cliffs to the narrow spit of shore below.

Forsaking the lane as they drew level—the lane where, earlier in the day, Bunter had been attacked—Wharton led straight towards this path, the rest of the juniors trailing behind him, bumping their way with unslackened pace over that hummocky cliff-top. Not till they were come to the very edge of the cliff did they pause and spring off; and

then Vernon-Smith consulted his wrist-watch coolly.

"Exactly twelve minutes to the hour, dear old warriors. If you ask me, it's a Remove cycling record we've put up to-night!"

"Twelve minutes to go?" Wharton was panting desperately. "Look here, Smith, we can spare one! You hop on your jigger again, and tear up to the wireless-station along the top of the cliffs here. The police-car may not arrive—may be delayed on the way by road-traffic, or anything—and we just daren't risk anything happening now. Get everyone out!"

It was dangerous riding at any time along the cliff-top. But now, in the darkness, it needed a nerve of steel. One false turn, a wrong twist of the handle-bars, and there could only follow instant destruction upon the rocks below. But it was a risk, as the Bounder recognised, that someone had to take, so, as Wharton spoke he nodded, coolly throwing one leg over his machine again.

Then Wharton plunged ahead down that perilous path, leading the way at a mad pace, and calling to the others to follow him.

Somehow, panting and breathless, they got to the bottom, and set off at a run along the narrow spit of shore.

Redwing was in front, and presently he halted them, pointing

"Here we are, you fellows," Redwing was breathing. "This cave must be the one the scoundrels are using. Look! You can see the aerials of the wireless-station above us on the cliff-top!"

"There's just seven minutes to go," Wharton said. "They daren't begin the fireworks before eight, because of an accomplice in the wireless-station—chap who's pinching the plans, or something. Mossoo was saying—who's got to get well clear of the neighbourhood. Come on, Remove! We'll do it yet!"

At that, Wharton plunged instantly into the black, mysterious mouth of the cave, followed by the rest in a silent little band at his back. Now that they were within an ace of coming to grips the juniors realised vividly what a dastardly plot this was, how awful were the possibilities.

Inside, the cave fell away rapidly, narrowing, until it was little more than a winding passage in the rock. For the first twenty yards the beam from Mossoo's torch danced ahead, illuminating the juniors' path. The floor of the passage was blanketed with a fine, firm sand, washed in by the sea at high tides, and, treading this silent carpet, the feet of the juniors made no sound whatever. Only the alternate lull and roar of the breakers out upon the beach followed them, and gradually this grew fainter and fainter.

Suddenly Wharton pulled up dead; the little torch was switched out.

"Hist!" he breathed.

Turning a twist of the tunnel, the captain of the Remove had come strangely upon a dimly-burning storm-lantern. The storm-lantern was on the ground before them, quite unattended, and directly in the middle of their path. And there, apparently, the tunnel came to an end, for the light was burning before a wall of solid rock, like a candle before a shrine.

"Well," said Bolsover, "we've got the right blessed cave, all right. But the birds appear to have flown."

Wharton was nodding dumbly, without speaking. This seemed the end. There was the lantern, and there beyond was the solid rock, and apparently that was

all. He had not reckoned on this eventuality, and it was bitterly, gallingly disappointing. The police-car, suppose it failed to arrive in time, suppose—

But Redwing, seizing up the lantern, had been swinging it high overhead, showing its light high up round the walls, and suddenly he gave a shout.

"Look!" he cried out, waving it aloft that all might see. "There's the way!"

And there, above the Greyfriars juniors' heads, nine feet high and more in the solid rock, was another dark opening. Hurriedly Wharton switched on the torch, flashing the beam of light upward and into the very mouth of it, and the juniors saw that it led up and up into the very heart of the cliff.

Bolsover was the biggest man, and Bolsover braced himself against the wall of rock beneath that dark cavity. Harry Wharton, catching on to the idea, swarmed up upon his shoulders, and next moment was lost to sight.

A moment later he was calling down to them.

"Look out, down below there! There's a rope-ladder fixed up here. I'm going to let it down!"

One by one the juniors joined him.

"Just four minutes to go, you chaps! Leave the ladder swinging there, and come on. Look, there's a number of natural steps here in front of us now! And, my hat, you chaps, there's a light at the top! That's where our birds are. Come on, Remove!"

Silently as ghosts walking, the juniors crept up the crude stairway, with ahead of them at the top the beckoning yellow glow.

"Shush now! Steady!"

They were at the top now, the stairway behind them, and the steps had opened out on to a wide shelf of rock, a gallery in the heart of the cliff which branched right and left. And above their heads, swinging and swaying from rusty old hooks fixed into the roof, were lanterns, similar to the one they had come upon below, casting all along the length of the gallery a yellow light. But of occupants, apart from the fact of that significant string of lights, there was neither sight nor sign.

"Bit of a mess!" Wharton muttered grimly. "Which branch are we going to take—left or right? There's two and a half minutes to go."

"Split forces, then," came the quick suggestion from Linley. "You take—"

"Hark!"

Redwing had raised a warning hand, and the Greyfriars juniors listened with bated breath.

"That's enough!" snapped Wharton suddenly. "They're down here! Follow up, Remove!" And he crept off down the left-hand passage, the juniors at his back, silently grim and determined.

Ahead, coming from the distant end of the tunnel, was a subdued murmur and buzz of voices. Very, very faintly had it come at first, indeed, barely perceptible, but growing louder and louder as they stole forward. And then, when perhaps thirty yards had been traversed, there came an abrupt and unexpected twist to the tunnel, and, without warning, it widened into a big chamber.

So unexpectedly was it come upon indeed that Wharton, who was in front, stayed his progress only just in the nick of time, or inevitably he must have pitched precipitately into it, plunging headlong down five steps. But he did manage to check himself; and very cautiously he peered round the bend.

It was an astonishing sight that met the juniors' eyes. From the roof of the chamber there were lighted lanterns, swinging, similar to that string of lights behind them in the gallery, casting over the rough stone walls a yellow glow. But it was not only upon the walls that the yellow light fell. There was a tangle of insulated wires upon the floor, straying in all directions; but, still more than the wires, bending over them anxiously, were the burly figures of two men.

"Our two sailormen!" Nugent breathed into Wharton's ear, and Wharton nodded, turning and glancing back over the juniors. All had seen; and not one but was ready and eager for the fray.

At that moment the man who wore earrings got to his feet, and, crossing to a rough wooden packing-case, looked at a little clock which stood upon it. Then Wharton saw that the time was come. There was not a second more to be lost, and, giving the signal to attack, sprang down the five short steps and into the chamber.

Behind him in a resolute body poured the rest. The quarry swung round with a sudden startled cry, a string of oaths falling from his mouth as he turned to face the Removeites. He had only time to seize up a spanner, and then—

Biff! Crash!

The captain of the Remove was upon him, grim and intent. Wharton's left connected with the man's jaw, while his right, taking the other man, who had scrambled upon his feet, fully between the eyes, stretched him down again upon the ground.

"Go for the rotters!" roared Wharton. "Come on!"

"Hurrah! Slaughter the blessed rotters!" yelled Bob Cherry. "Pile in!"

The chamber echoed and re-echoed with the excited Removeites' cries. The men got desperately to their feet again, and the juniors piled in with grim determination. There was standing out vividly in the minds of all the thought of their schoolfellows above in the wireless station, and the realisation of what might have happened to them lent power to their blows. While the fight lasted it was fierce enough, but it could not last for long. Burly as the man with earrings was, he was dragged at last to the floor with five juniors clinging to him.

As for the other scoundrel, he was not much of a fighting-man, as fighting-men go, and, finally, a smashing left to the point from Nugent knocked all the battle out of him, and he sank to his knees with a gasp.

Bolsover and Squiff promptly pounced upon the man to keep him down, but really there was no need. Tenderly caressing a rapidly darkening eye, Nugent grinned down upon him, and proceeded to unwind from about his shoulders a thin rope that he had brought.

"Here you are, Squiff!" he chuckled, as he tossed the rope over. "Truss them up with that. It's their own merry rope that they used on us, so they ought not to mind!"

"Well," grinned Squiff, when the men were bound, "we've saved the giddy wireless station, you chaps. It ought to be a knighthood and a pension all round for this, I reckon. Look at all this junk lying about—it's like a blessed electrician's shop!" Squiff began poking curiously about. "Look, you chaps, there's wires running all over the place!"

The juniors, sitting on the man with



Giving the signal to attack Wharton sprang down the five short steps into the chamber. Behind him, in a resolute body, poured the rest. The quarry swung round with a sudden startled cry, and faced the Removeites. The man with the earrings had time only to seize up a spanner, and then Biff! Crash! The captain of the Remove was upon him, hitting out fiercely. (See Chapter 12.)

earrings, felt him give a sudden convulsive shudder.

"Sacre bleu!" he howled desperately. "Do not touch! You keel us all!"

"Chuck it, Squiff!" Wharton directed, and proceeded to turn upon the man a look of utter scorn. "It didn't matter so very much about our own school-fellows who are broadcasting from the wireless station above, apparently!" he said contemptuously.

The other, his companion, started with surprise.

"Schoolfellows?" he said in English, with just the trace of a foreign accent. "There is no one whatever in the wireless station after seven. Gaston, who is our friend there, say so. Besides, no one can make ze broadcast from that station. It is not for ze broadcast at all—it is joost for ze experiment."

"You seem to know a lot about it!" Wharton observed curtly.

The man shrugged his bound shoulders.

"Shall we say, monsieur, zat it is my business to know, and leave it at that? I serve my country—no, it is not France, though I speak ze French. We in our country have been making experiments similar to yours." For a fleeting moment the man's eyes gleamed. "It will revolutionise wireless, this discovery. You make ze success, monsieur—we do not. We in our country cannot allow that you make ze success. I am agent—I have what you call ze free hand. I decide it is best that we blow your experimental station up, destroy him, and—"

Wharton cut him short.

"What good could that do you?" he burst out angrily. "The results of the experiments, whatever they are—the formulæ—will have been put into writing, I suppose?"

"True, monsieur—true," returned the man softly. "But they have been stolen. Gaston, he steal them this evening. I have not seen Gaston, but I know he keep his word. By now, monsieur, he is miles away, and the so valuable formulæ with him."

"Scotland Yard will soon have Gaston, don't you make any mistake, my pippin! And even supposing you had been successful to-night, and the wireless station had gone sky-high, don't you think we could have repeated the experiments—eh?"

"Mais oui, monsieur! Yes, yes, yes! But it would take years—two years—three years, hein? And by that time it would be too late. My country would have the world's markets; our factories would be turning out the new product in millions. It is the race for trade, you see."

"I suppose that your spying French Master has been discovered, and that is how you found us here? Well, I may as well tell you now. It can do no harm. We have been living in the vaults at your school for two-three weeks!"

"It was longer than we expected, and our supply of money ran short. So we attempted to obtain more by holding up your English motorists. Ze rope across ze road, you know—"

"You scoundrel!" breathed Wharton.

"And now you have us in your hands, monsieur, bound and helpless; but

Gaston is free with the formulæ, and so I do not mind—we have won! And because I know that we are successful, you English pigs, I laugh at you!"

Wharton jumped suddenly to his feet. "That's enough!" he rapped out. "Jerk them both up, you chaps."

Helped by Bolsover's boot, the men were hauled to their feet, none too gently, be it said!

"Now march, you rotters! Take them down, chaps. I've just spotted wire-cutters. I'll cut these blessed wires, just to be sure of things, and follow you chaps down in a jiffy."

Left to himself, Wharton bent to his task rapidly and carefully. The roof of the chamber could not be so many feet below the wireless station, and Wharton judged that the whole rock above his head must be heavily mined.

Squiff had referred to "junk," and Harry Wharton, knee-deep among the web of wires, could see that there were powerful batteries, carefully connected up, which would explode the hidden charge at the mere touch of a button.

But this puzzled the captain of the Remove. Surely the scoundrels were not intending firing the charge from that chamber? Why, the roof would come down on the moment, the gallery outside would be impassably blocked, and even if they escaped being killed instantly, they would be hopelessly entombed by the falling rock. Then, as Wharton severed the wires, he saw.

The wires—all the wires—led ultimately out of the door and back along the gallery, but bunched overhead, so as

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to be out of the way, and quite out of sight.

Wharton whistled. Obviously, the scoundrels had but been making final adjustments, for all was in readiness. Equally obviously the scheme had been to fire the mined cliff from the foot of the rocks below—probably from the shelter of the first cave.

And when Harry Wharton got down there and rejoined his chums, he saw that he was correct. For in the cave, up out of sight on a shelf of rock so that they had passed it unnoticed, was the firing-cabinet, the box to which all the wires ran down. Squiff disconnected the vile thing, and they took it and pitched it into the sea, and after that they really felt safe.

Vernon-Smith came pattering up, his eyes shining. Smithy had come down from the top of the cliff, and at his back there were half a dozen stalwart men, who took over charge of the two foreigners.

"Great news, you fellows!" Smithy gasped out. "Nugent's been telling me about Gaston, and Gaston has been captured, and the plans recovered! It seems he drove things a little late at the wireless-station, was discovered right in the act of pinching the merry documents, and pursued. He pinched the chief-engineer's car, though, and got clean away. Weopin' an' wailin' an' gnashin' of teeth!"

The Bounder paused.

"Scene Two. Arrival of the police-car from Courtfield," he continued. "In it these half-dozen stalwart merchants behind me. They're detectives from Scotland Yard."

"Detectives from Scotland Yard—from Courtfield, Smithy?"

"Yes." There was the light of fun in Smithy's eyes. Despite his air of cool nonchalance, Smithy was as delighted as any of them at the way things had gone. Perhaps more thankful, for the Bounder was deeper and older and more discerning than any of them. What he had gone through in agony of mind during that mad dash across the cliffs to the wireless-station no one would ever know. But now he was again the Bounder, cool and mocking.

"Yes," he repeated. "The Courtfield police were bein' honoured by a demonstration. Scotland Yard was showin' 'em how wireless can track down the merry criminal. They were usin' portable transmittin' and receivin' sets on fast cars, you know."

"Oh!"

"One of the cars was out at Wapshot," went on the Bounder. "Gaston, in his stolen car, was unwise enough to take the same direction. A message was sent

by wireless, an' Gaston was led away, like Eugene Aram, with gyves upon his wrists."

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Before the Microphone!

WHARTON tapped upon the door of the little studio. Wun Lung and Piet Delarey and Micky Desmond had broadcast earlier in the evening. There was a freckle-faced, athletic-looking fellow inside, who grinned genially as the captain of the Remove entered.

"Trot right in!" he said cheerily. "You're the fellow who saved us from going sky-high just now, aren't you? Put it there, old son! Now, all you've got to do is to stand in front of this beastly gadget and speak slowly and distinctly—just as though you're in the Form-room churning out Latin construe, y'know. There's nothin' in it—really, there isn't."

Wharton waited while he was announced, and then stepped forward and took his stand before the box-like object which was the microphone.

As the friendly announcer had remarked, there was really "nothin' in it." Of "nerves" Wharton had not the slightest trace. His talk on the sporting activities of the Lower School was quite extempore. Perhaps it was better, the more natural, because of that. And he finished by announcing that only that very afternoon the Remove had carried off the Public Schools' Hard Courts Championship.

The announcer touched a switch as the captain of the Remove stepped back, and grinned.

"Jolly good!" he said. "Now there's a two minutes' break, and then a few of your Sixth are putting something across, I think. We'll have a little jaw."

Mr. Prout looked in at that moment, rubbing his hands affably.

"Ha, Wharton, my lad! So we discovered Monsieur Charpentier—eh? Who would have dreamed— But what have we here? They tell me that the microphone is in this room. Surely this weird contrivance—"

"Yes, that's our microphone, sir!" interjected the announcer, with a grin.

"Ha!" said Mr. Prout.

"One of the chief points in connection with the choice of a microphone, y'know, is equal response over the whole range of audible frequencies. That is to say, from 50 to 8,000 cycles a second."

"Ha, quite!" interposed Mr. Prout hastily, beginning to sidle towards the door.

"And the main A.C. supply is stepped by means of transformers, and is then

rectified by large valves and smoothed out!" the announcer rattled on cheerfully. "That gives us a direct current of—"

Mr. Prout fairly bolted from the room.

"I—I will go now and examine the— the aerial system, I think!" he gasped. "You—you must excuse my running away."

"Thought I could get rid of him!" murmured the announcer. "We had a master like him when I was at school— St. Jude's, it was. Know it at all?"

"Know it?" said Wharton. "Well, we licked you in the finals at tennis this afternoon. Not easily, I'll admit, but we did it!"

"The deuce, you did!" ejaculated the announcer. "The Hard Courts' Championship, of course. I heard you mention it just now, but, somehow, I didn't connect the two. Well, I'm jiggered! If that ain't just like your blessed nerve! Oh dash!"

A tap had come to the door.

"The mighty Sixth, if I mistake not. Look here, old man, you needn't run away. You can stay here and listen, if you promise not to breathe a blessed word. In fact, don't even breathe, if you can help it!"

"Right-ho!" Wharton promised; and Wingate and North and Patrick Gwynne of the Sixth trooped in.

Wingate gave the captain of the Remove a genial nod, and then the announcer was busy explaining to them where they had to stand, and apologising that there was really "nothin' in it."

Gwynne faced the microphone first, and then Tom North. North had spent his holidays in Norway, and he sang a couple of Scandinavian folk-songs with wonderful effect. When Wingate had spoken the announcer switched off.

"Bravo, Wingate!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Dashed good!" murmured the announcer; and then there sounded a discreet tap at the door, and Dr. Locke himself, accompanied by Mr. Quelch and Monsieur Charpentier, entered.

"Do we intrude?" Dr. Locke was murmuring.

"Not at all, sir!" The freckled announcer hastily jumped to his feet and pushed forward chairs. "Walk right in! The—er—doings is switched off for a moment. You won't be heard."

The masters disposed themselves. Dr. Locke leaned forward.

"Monsieur Charpentier is hoping to transmit a French song," he smiled. "And, by the way, Wharton, we have to thank you and your friends for monsieur's timely rescue from the vaults, and also"—Dr. Locke's voice assumed a graver tone—"for what you and your friends have done to-night to save this station, and possibly very many lives."

"Oh, rot, sir! I—I mean—"

"It was dashed plucky!" put in the announcer. "If the French gentleman is ready—"

"Parfaitement!" responded Mossoo, springing up with alacrity; and a moment later the Rag at Greyfriars was echoing to the strains of "The Mountaineer in Exile."

After that Mr. Quelch took the boards, as it were, and spoke on Greyfriars in the Middle Ages, which he had culled from his famous "History." It was an interesting talk, not a bit dry, as Wharton had rather anticipated upon hearing it announced, and the Remove master was glowing with pride when he stepped down.

(Continued on page 28.)

Next Monday's Bumper Programme!

"THE FOOTPRINT IN THE SAND!"

By FRANK RICHARDS.

A magnificent new long complete story of schoolboy adventure, featuring Harry Wharton & Co., the Chums of Greyfriars.

"IN THE NEW BOY'S POWER!"

By DICKY NUGENT.

A mirth-making short complete tale of Jack Jolly & Co.—the boys of St. Sam's.

"THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE!"

By LIONEL DAY.

The opening chapters of a powerful new serial, introducing Jack Horner and his wolf-dog Squall—a story in a thousand. Order this bumper twopennyworth to-day, chums—Ed.

BRAVO THE SHERIFF! Ferrers Locke makes good his boast to lay by the heels the mystery man of Wolf Point, and his identity comes as a shock to the ranchers upon whom he has preyed!

The MYSTERY of FLYING VRANCH!



The concluding chapters of our Wild West Detective Adventure Story featuring Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake.

The Capture of the Wolf!

WITHOUT taking his eyes from Ferrers Locke's face, the rustler groped behind him for the handle of the door. His hand closed on it. Next moment the door swung open, and the rustler backed slowly into the room, followed by the detective.

A masked man, bending down at a safe against the wall, looked up with a startled ejaculation.

"Stay just where you are!" grated Ferrers Locke. "I've got you covered, Wolf!"

There was a moment of intense silence in the room. Ferrers Locke broke it harshly.

"I shall fire at the first hostile move," he warned. "You," to the rustler in front of him, "stand over there!"

Obediently the man shuffled backwards till he stood against the wall near the safe in front of which still crouched the masked Wolf.

"Stand up!"

The words came like the crack of a whip, but the Wolf still remained crouched, glaring at Ferrers Locke from behind his mask.

"I shall give you two seconds!" warned the detective.

With an oath the Wolf rose to his feet.

"Yuh skunk!" he gritted. "Yore Henderson!"

"I am! Come here!"

The Wolf advanced a step.

"It's yore call!" he said snarlingly. "I wish ter blazes that I'd killed yuh!"

"Yes, I have no doubt! Keep your hands away from your belt!"

The Wolf glared at the sleuth in silence. From outside came the crackle of rifle and revolver fire. It sounded very close.

"They're coming this way, Wolf!" said Ferrers Locke sternly. "It's the end of the trail for you!"

For a moment the Wolf turned his head away. He appeared to be listening. Then he nodded.

"As-yuh-say!" he said slowly,

haltingly. "They're shore comin' nearer! Reckon-it-is-th'-end-fer me!" His voice rose to a scream. "An' fer yuh, curse yuh!"

His hand streaked for his gun. But Ferrers Locke's finger tightened on the trigger of his own weapon. There came the short, vicious bark of his automatic, and the Wolf's gun, half drawn from its holster, slipped back, whilst the Wolf gave a yell of sheer agony and clutched at his wrist.

"Don't try that again!" warned Ferrers Locke grimly. "I want you alive!"

He stepped forward. With a lightning movement he thrust one of his guns in his belt and whipped the Wolf's gun from his holster.

The firing outside was very close indeed, almost on the outskirts of the camp itself.

"Reckon you were just going to make your get-away, Wolf!" he remarked.

The Wolf snarled out an oath.

"By heck, Henderson, yore not through yet! I reckon—" He broke off as heavily-booted feet came running down the corridor. Ferrers Locke had only a few seconds in which to act. He grabbed the Wolf by the front of his shirt, and, wheeling round, literally dragged him to the table where, with a rapid movement, he turned out the oil-lamp, plunging the room into darkness. The next moment the door was thrown open, and a voice cried hoarsely:

"We're on th' run, Wolf! We're beat!"

"Henderson's gotten Wolf!" shouted the rustler, whom Locke had disarmed. "Henderson—"

Ferrers Locke fired a sharp burst in his direction. He aimed high purposely as he had no wish to shoot down an unarmed man. The fellow who had brought the warning sensed that something was radically wrong, for the door banged shut and his running feet were heard retreating up the passageway, his voice raised shouting an alarm.

"So your men are on the run, Wolf!" said the detective quietly, easing his revolver from the pressure with which

he had jabbed it against the Wolf's ribs. "Reckon the ranchers are rounding up a rotten herd!"

"Ferrers Locke," said the Wolf quickly, "it's not too late. Say, there's a mighty fine pile of dollars in that safe. Lemme go, an' stuff 'em in yore pocket! Locke, I'm askin' yuh! Yore a Britisher! Can't make no difference to yuh if I goes loose now. My pack is scattered! Lemme go, an' yuh stand to rake in a pile!"

"Be quiet!" snapped Ferrers Locke. "You're wasting your breath!"

His hand on the Wolf's shirt tightened. Someone was coming stealthily down the corridor. Pressing his revolver in the Wolf's ribs, he moved to the wall near the door.

Someone fumbled at the handle. The door was thrown open. Ferrers Locke waited in silence. He could hear the stranger breathing heavily, and could visualise him peering into the darkened room. Then a voice said huskily:

"Sheriff! Sheriff, are yuh hyar?"

"That you, Hiffler!" replied Ferrers Locke. "How are things going?"

"We've gotten 'em! I heered a feller screech that Henderson hed gotten th' Wolf, so I streaked along hyar!"

"Thanks, Hiffler!" replied Ferrers Locke. "If you've got a match you might light the lamp!"

The Unmasked!

HIFFLER stepped forward, and, striking a match, lit the lamp. The rustler whom Ferrers Locke had disarmed, had dashed out of the room, under cover of the darkness.

"Let him go!" remarked the detective. "He won't get far!"

"Nossir!" responded Hiffler. "Guess us hes rounded them up proper!"

"Yuh skunk!" snarled the Wolf. "Yuh blamed traitor! By heck, thar's a bullet comin' ter yuh some day fer this, Hiffler!"

Hiffler strode towards him.

"I don't reckon so!" he said quietly.

"Yuh knows plumb waal that I niver

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cottoned onter takin' sarvice wi' yuh. I plugged at sheriff, onect, but my slate war shore clean 'cept fer thet. Guess it war fear, plumb fear of what war mebbe's comin' ter me thet made me act thet away! Waal, he give' me a chance an' yit yuh roped me in again! I'm no great shakes, but, by heck, when a feller treats me white I don't stan' ter see him murdered, nohow!"

"Hifler," said Ferrers Locke, "get Jack, Cal, Jake, and Spud, and bring them here if the show's over!"

"Shore!" grunted Hifler, and departed on his errand.

"You'd better sit down!" remarked Ferrers Locke quietly, when he and the Wolf were alone.

The Wolf looked at him steadily from behind his mask.

"Yuh knew me, Ferrers Locke?" he asked, a hoarseness in his voice.

"Yes!"

The Wolf nodded.

"Reckon some fellers is due for a shock!" he replied, slumping into a chair.

He put his elbows on his knees, and, cupping his chin in his hands, stared sombrely in front of him.

"Ferrers Locke," he said, after a few moments of silence, "I played fer big stakes, an' I've lost! Reckon it's mighty funny when a feller's world comes a-tumblin' about his ears like this!"

"What made you do it?" asked the Baker Street detective, watching him curiously.

"I dunno! I allus war a wild hombre, an' I guess th' money-bug hed bit me real bad! Things went well wi' me at fust, till yuh comed ter th' cattle country! Reckon I thought mighty lil' of a Britisher at fust, but after I'd tried ter git yuh an' cudn't, waal I kinda reckoned I war up agin a feller what hed brains, an' I got fidgety! But yuh hed luck, Ferrers Locke!"

"How?"

"Hifler!"

Ferrers Locke shook his head with a smile.

"No, it wasn't luck, Wolf! Whenever possible I look for the good points in a man. Hifler was a mighty poor liar. He was just what he was, an ordinary, honest old-timer. But he had fallen into your clutches, Wolf, and was working for you under fear of death. I turned him loose, but I did not lose sight of the fact that some day he might turn up trumps. In his way, he owed me a debt, and by the rigid code of honour of the real Western that debt had to be paid. Well, he paid it!"

"I wish, by heck, thet I hed let him go when us got him second time!"

Ferrers Locke shook his head again.

"It would only have meant that you'd have run free a little longer," he replied; "I left an envelope with my assistant, to be opened on my death! In it was the secret of your identity. They were bound to have got you then. It was by your working in the dark, behind the scenes, that you have escaped so far!"

The Wolf sat silent.

"How yuh rumble me?" he jerked, after a full minute had passed.

Before Ferrers Locke could answer the door was thrown open, and Jack, Cal, Jack, and Spud entered the room. They looked curiously at the Wolf, who rose from his chair and returned their gaze defiantly.

"You all right, Jack?" asked Ferrers Locke anxiously.

"Yes, sir! In the pink!" replied Jack. "Had a great time!"

Cal laughed rumblingly.

"He's a real he-man!" he drawled.

"By heck, sheriff, you shud be proud of him! He-fair eats gunpowder!"

Jack grinned and flushed.

"We've gotten 'em all corralled, sheriff!" went on Cal. "One or two mebbe's slipped way back 'long th' gulch, but us hes th' exit guarded, an' us'll git 'em in th' mornin'!"

"Our casualties heavy?" inquired Ferrers Locke.

"Nossir! Not much!" cut in Spud. "Reckon a few fellers'll have ter lay up

a week or two. One or two's got their last packet, pore fellows; but we cudn't round up a gang like this, nohow, wi'out a few goin' west!"

There followed a silence. The eyes of the ranchers were turned again to the masked figure which stood facing them in the centre of the room.

"Waal?" drawled Cal softly.

There was a world of expectancy in the voice. At last they were face to face with the Wolf, the mysterious criminal, rustler, and murderer, who had brought a trail of death and terror to the cattle country.

Not one in the room but sensed the tension in the air. Ferrers Locke stepped forward, and every man stiffened into immobility.

His hand fumbled with the fastenings of the Wolf's face mask. Then with a jerk he whipped it off.

Dead silence followed his action. Then Cal Jefferson whispered the one word:

"Caister!"

Ferrers Locke Explains!

IN the living-room of the Flying V, two nights later, sat Ferrers Locke, Jack, Cal, Jefferson, Jake Peters, and Hank Herman. The latter had just arrived back from England that day, and was looking fit and well again.

"I'm blamed sorry I missed th' fightin'!" he grumbled. "But, by heck, I'm shore glad th' cattle country's clean once more! Caister—hey? Caister, yuh tell me? Waal, how'n blazes did yuh rumble him, sheriff?"

"Yep!" grunted Cal. "Us's bin so busy since then thet us hasn't heered yit jest how Mister Locke got wise ter him!"

"Well, gentlemen," replied Ferrers Locke, "you will remember that you told me this Wolf was getting information which could only be known to yourselves, and that he knew of things which were discussed by you behind locked

(Continued on next page.)

A DOG IN A THOUSAND AND A BOY IN A MILLION!

The TRAIL of ADVENTURE!

by
Lionel
Day



Make the acquaintance of these two happy-go-lucky characters in next week's *Magnet*, for they are going to roam the broad highway in search of adventure.

And the adventures they meet with will fairly make your hair curl.

Don't forget—the trail starts in next week's issue of the

MAGNET.

ON SALE MONDAY!



The rustler backed slowly into the room, followed by Ferrers Locke. A masked man, bending down at a safe against the wall, looked up with a startled ejaculation. "Stay just where you are!" ordered Ferrers Locke. "I've got you covered, Wolf!" (See page 25.)

doors. I, therefore, considered the possibility—if you do not mind my saying so—of any one of you being the Wolf. I wish to be perfectly frank. Mr. Herman, of course, I ruled out at once. Cal and Jake I dismissed, for obvious reasons, but Caister struck me as something rather different!"

"Jest how, Mister Locke?" drawled Jake interestedly.

"Well, you will quite understand that the study of psychology is of primary importance in my work. Caister interested me. He talked glibly on every occasion, as to how he and his men stood for the law and were behind the law!"

"He did that?" cut in Cal.

"Yes, and he rather overdid it. The night Bud was killed during his attempt on my life he whispered, before he died, 'The law of the Wolf!' He obviously thought he had been shot by the Wolf. As you have discovered from some of the prisoners we have taken, the law of the Wolf meant that one failure brought death. Bud had failed in his first attempt to get me, and he thought the Wolf had shot him. Hardly had he said the words than Caister rode up the street. Now it seemed a coincidence to me that Caister should be in the vicinity when Bud either thought or knew that the Wolf was in the vicinity. It was the weakest possible support for any theory, but it was support rather than negation.

"Then I found out that Caister's story was a lie. He told me that he happened to be riding through the town because he had been taking a drive across country. His round-up, the only one he had fixed, was not scheduled to come off for another week. Then during the fight at One Tree Creek his men quit. Certainly he displayed an overwhelming anger about it, but that part was easy.

But you follow me. It all fitted in, to an extent, with my theory that he might be the Wolf.

"However, it was far from actual proof. The night he rode out when I had been attacked by the wolf which I killed, he fired three shots in rapid succession into the wolf's carcass. Why? Could it be a signal to someone out on the range who had unleashed the brute? It could, certainly. It was, otherwise, a motiveless action for a man who had himself under control as Caister obviously had. But still I had no proof at all.

"Then Monty Earl was murdered. I have the bullets here which were fired at him by the murderer. That was, of course, the Wolf. I confess I was surprised when Caister offered to stay and help me keep off Panzales' men in the sheriff's office. But he gave himself away then. He said, 'What would the ranchers think of me if I left you?' Certainly there would have been some questions asked."

"There shore would," drawled Jake.

"Another thing, he had sent Alf for help. Alf got in touch with the gang, and they rode into Wolf Point with Alf as leader. Why should the Wolf let Caister, who stood for law and order, go free as he did on that occasion? It was ridiculous. My theory was almost certainly then.

"However, the night I released Hiffler I got Caister's gun whilst he slept. He blamed Hiffler for that, I'm afraid. I fired a bullet out of it. It is here. Under the microscope you will find that the markings of the bullet made by the barrel casing—you can see them plainly under the microscope—are absolutely identical with the bullets that killed Monty Earl. The night Earl was killed Caister was there on the spot a

few hours later. He had come to tell me that he had shot one of his men. He came in the middle of the night to do it. An extraordinary time it seemed to me.

"I mention these points to let you see how my suspicions were gradually strengthened till they evolved into proof conclusive with the finding of the similarity between the bullets."

"But his faked death?" interposed Cal.

"That was easy. Caister was beginning to suspect I knew him. The body they brought here was some poor devil trampled out of all recognition. Then Alf tried a frame-up on me, prompted by Knuller."

"Who was that hombre?"

"Caister."

"What?"

"Yes, Caister. He wore thick horn-rimmed spectacles. His goatee beard had been shaved off, and the high-bridged nose could easily have been made by injecting wax under the skin with a syringe. It's an old trick. But little mannerisms gave him away. He had previously tried the disguise out on you chaps, and you had not tumbled to it, so he knew he was reasonably safe. I suggest that the beard he wore latterly was a false one. He could easily get one made up so like his original one as to defy detection."

"Gosh!" breathed Cal. "But why did he do it?"

"He wanted your ranches. He wanted to scare you right out of them. Listen! I have been making inquiries, and some day, in the near future, a railroad will, in all probability, be constructed over your land. It's valuable land now, but it will be worth infinitely

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"THE SCHOOLBOY BROADCASTERS!"

(Continued from page 24.)

"Hallo, everybody! Dr. Locke, the Headmaster of Greyfriars, will now conduct evening prayer. After that the station closes down finally." And Dr. Locke stepped quietly into place.

That night in the Remove dormitory, long after lights were supposed to be out, there were great things done. As soon as the broadcasters got back to Greyfriars the entire length and breadth of the Remove passage was raided for tuck. And before the juniors were shepherded to bed, this was stealthily conveyed upstairs to the dormitory, and stowed away beneath the beds.

It was not, perhaps in accordance with the best traditions for a Fifth-Former to encourage a junior orgy. But Horace Coker, learning with a deep shudder how nearly they had all taken the long jump to eternity, positively insisted upon being allowed to weigh in with a plum-cake. And Coker's plum-cake was remembered affectionately for weeks. It was an outsize in plum-cakes. It was nearly, in fact, the father and mother of all plum-cakes. Though undeniably he was several kinds of a champ, it was equally undeniable also that Horace Coker possessed a heart of gold.

But that was not all. For Cecil Reginald Temple went forthwith to the kitchens, late as it was, and bribed the cook into supplying him with a half-dozen cases of minerals, that there should be no lack of wine in the land of the Remove dormitory.

Up and down the Remove studies, all contributed to the common weal. Maul-everyer, as it happened, had only that afternoon laid in a goodly supply of tuck. Maul had rather been expecting an aunt, and the aunt had failed to materialise. When it was all assembled and candles lighted, the spread was of truly magnificent proportions, so that even Billy Bunter was satisfied, and presently his grumblings that he had not been allowed to partner Russell as Greyfriars tennis representative ceased, and he even stopped muttering about being kept out of the broadcasting.

And if Mr. Quelch and Dr. Locke, talking together in Dr. Locke's study before turning in, detected certain unlawful noises proceeding from the direction of the Remove dormitory, why, what was there to do but smile one to the other and affect not to hear?

And suppose behind the veil of the smile there was the trace of tears, who could wonder? For Greyfriars had been nearer to tragedy that night than probably it had ever been. Most of the broadcasters themselves realised that, careless and thoughtless though they usually were. But in the hearts of Mr. Quelch and Dr. Locke there was a feeling only of deep thankfulness that disaster had been averted.

THE END.

(There will be another topping long complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. in next Monday's MAGNET, entitled: "THE FOOTPRINT IN THE SAND!" This yarn will go down like hot cakes—don't miss it, whatever you do, boys!)

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The MYSTERY of FLYING VRANCH!



(Continued from previous page.)

more when the railroad company approach you to either lease from you or buy."

"Waal," remarked Hank quietly, "he's dead now. He's shore paid th' penalty, an' so's his foreman Alf. Did all his ranch run w' him?"

"No. Only picked men, and even they did not know all. Only Alf knew him as Kneller as well as the Wolf."

"Gosh!" murmured Cal, rising. "Waal, us is shore obliged ter yuh, Mr. Locke. It's bin a mighty tough trail, but yuh've won through—you an' th' boy. What're yore plans?"

"To-morrow," replied Ferrers Locke, with a smile, "we leave for England."

"That'll mean a new sheriff for Wolf Point," granted Cal.

"Yep! Reckon us'll never git sich a dingbuster agin as Sheriff Henderson," replied Jake heartily.

"Yore right!" laughed Hank. "By heck, they've gotten so blained polite now an' scared o' sheriff in Wolf Point that a hombre raised his lid ter me ter-night. Gosh, I nearly fell off'n my hoss!"

THE END.

(Now look out for the opening chapters of our grand new serial, entitled: "THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE!" The author—Lionel Day—is new to our pages, but you will agree that he's hit the bullseye with his first MAGNET contribution! Shake him by the hand, then, next Monday, chums!)

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DICKY
NUGENT.

A Sensational Side-splitting Story of St. Sam's.

his voice grimmer than ever, "are not yet paid for!"

The Head groaned. He wiped his perspiring brow with the sleeve of his gown.

"It—it was an oversight!" he muttered. "In that case," said Mr. Tweedy, "I suppose it will be all right for me to come up to the school now and collect the munny?"

"No, no!" cried the Head. "I—er—hum—the fact is, Mr. Tweedy, I'm not in a position to settle with you at the moment. I have been disappointed about a post-order I am expecting. I will pay when I can; but give me time!"

"I desecrate the magistrate will do that," when you appear before him on a charge of obtaining a pair of breeches by false pretences!" said Mr. Tweedy.

The Head shuddered. "How much are the trousers?" he inquired.

"Three and eleven-threepence," was the reply. "They are a special Bond Street cut, guaranteed not to shrink when they go through the wash-tub. You had better find the munny at once, Doctor Birchmell, or I shall have to take measures."

"But you've taken my measures once!" said the Head.

"I mean different measures—measures for the recovery of the debt," said Mr. Tweedy. "But we need not discuss this matter further on the tellyphone. I am coming up to the school right now, to collect the diths!"

"Hold on!" cried the Head wildly. "I tell you, I cannot pay you at the moment! You must give me a few years' grace. Do you hear me, Mr. Tweedy?"

But Mr. Tweedy had rung off.

With a deep groan, the Head stepped away from the tellyphone. He forgot, in his agitation, that the reeever was still glued to his ear; and as he stepped to his desk, he dragged the whole box of tricks after him. The instrument bumped and clumped on the floor of the study. With a savage wrench, the Head unstuck the reeever, and flung himself into his chair.



"I am Mr. Tweedy, the tailor. Those Oxford bags you had from me about a month ago. Can I come up to the school now and collect the munny for them?"

The Head sank back in his chair, with a despairing gesture.

"You are wasting your time, Mr. Tweedy," he said. "Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to square up to you—I mean, with you—but I am broke! But I promise you that the moment my post-order comes I will settle your account."

Mr. Tweedy sneered.

"I've heard that tail before, sir," he said. "I might have to wait donkeys' years before your post-order turns up; and I don't propose to wait another hour! I want my munny!"

"You cannot get blind out of a stone," said the Head.

Mr. Tweedy shrugged his big shoulders.

"There are more ways than one of killing a cat, or collecting a debt," he said. "Unless you pay me at once, I shall levy distress upon you!"

The Head sighed.

"You've given me enough distress already," he said. "I wish from the bottom of my heart that I'd never bought those beastly bags!"

Mr. Tweedy laughed sardonically.

"You fail to grasp my meaning, sir. Distress, in this case, means the seizure of a debtor's goods and chattels, in default of payment." The speaker glanced round the study. "You have some good stuff here, Doctor Birchmell. This Persian carpet is a beauty! It will look very nice in my shop—eh, Cuthbert?"

"Yes, poppe!" said the boy in the bulging bag.

And these chairs look jolly cosy and comfy," went on Mr. Tweedy. "That bookcase fits my fancy, too; to say

nothing of the handsome clock on the mantelpiece!"

The Head jumped to his feet, his face against.

"You dare not touch my furniture!" he cried. "I got it on the highest-purchase system, and it must not be removed!"

"Well, well!" said Mr. Tweedy, in tones of resignation. "If I can't get my pound of flesh that way, I must take it out of your hide!"

So saying, he stretched out his powerful arm, and picked up the birch-rod from the Head's desk.

"Now, then, Birchmell!" he said briskly. "Touch your toes!"

The Head glanced wildly round the study, like a hunted animal. He had been in a good many tight fixes in the course of his criminal career, but never in such a tight fix as this.

To be birched in his own study, with his own birch-rod; to suffer the shame and humiliation of corporal punishment upon his sacred person, in the presence of this brute of a boy. Oh, it was galling.

The Head dared not ring for help, for the whole miserable story would come to light, and St. Sam's would know that its headmaster was wearing a pair of trousers which he had not paid for. He would never be able to hold up his head again.

Mr. Tweedy swished the birch through the air.

"I am waiting, Birchmell!" he said grimly.

The Head turned to his crool creditor, with outflung arms.

"Is there no alternative?" he cried hoarsely. "I will do anything you wish."

Mr. Tweedy—anything short of paying the munny! State your terms, and I will faithfully adhere to them! But spare me from physical violence; spare me from being walloped with my own birch-rod! Anything but that! It would be a stroke from which my pride and dignity would never recover!

II.

R. TWEEDY laid down the birch-rod.

"Ah! Now we're talking!" he said. "Shall I proceed to state my terms?"

(Continued on next page.)

BANG! Crash! Wallop!

Tubby Barrell, the fat fellow of the Fourth, gave a timid rather-late on the door of the Head's study.

"Come in!" growled the Head, in his gutturing tones.

Tubby turned the handle, and stepped gingerly into the sacred department. He was shaking in his shoes, and he darted a nervous glance towards Doctor Birchmell, who sat at his desk, biting his claw-like finger-nails.

"You—you sent for me, sir?" faltered Tubby.

"Right on the wicket!" said the Head, jeffally. He rose lazily to his feet.

"Just hand me that birch-rod, Barrell!"

"Oh, crumb!" gasped the quaking fat junior. "You—you're not going to birch me, sir?"

"Oh, no!" said the Head, with crushing assurance. "I merely want the birch-rod in order to sweep the cobwebs off the sealing!"

The Head drew aside his gown, and swung the birch back over his shoulder. He was about to bring it down upon Tubby's plump person, when suddenly there was a whirling and a clanging from the corner of the study.

"Oh, bother the beedily tellyphone!" growled the Head. "It's always interfering with business."

He tossed the birch on to his desk, and strode across to the tellyphone.

Tubby Barrell scrambled to his feet, his heart beating high with hope. While the Head's back was turned, and he was engaged at the tellyphone, Tubby might find it possible to slip quietly out of the study.

The Head picked up the reeever, and with the aid of a bottle of gum, he glued it to his ear.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "St. Sam's calling! Who are you?"

A very grim voice sounded over the wires.

"I am Mr. Tweedy, the tailor," it said. "Am I addressing, Doctor Birchmell?"

"Oh, crumb!" gasped the Head, his face blanching.

"Are you, the doctor?" insisted the grim voice.

"Y-e-s," quavered the Head. "What have you rung me up about, Mr. Tweedy?"

"I wish to speak to you, sir, in the matter of a pair of trousers. A month ago, I supplied you with a pair of Oxford bags, made to measure."

"Ah, yes! I have a dim recollection of the transactshun," murmured the Head.

"Those trousers," said Mr. Tweedy.

"But I don't fancy it, sir!" said Tubby, with a shudder. And it duzzent do no good, either. A fellow with my frail and delicate constitution ought never to be birched. Let me off, sir, and send for somebody else! Jack Jolly can stand a birching better than I can; and Merry and Bright are pretty thick-skinned."

"Enuff!" said the Head sternly. "Get across that chair!"

Very reluctantly, Tubby Barrell put himself in a convenient posture for resewing corporal punishment. For several aggrized seconds he waited thus, while the Head fondly caressed the instrument of torture.

"Wait, he'd buck up and get it over!" thought the unhappy Tubby.



Dr. Birchmell was about to bring the birch down upon Tubby's plump person when the tellyphone bell started ringing.

His coat fitted him to perfection; but the most remarkable thing about him was his trousers. They were very broad in the beam—almost nautical, in fact. The Head, gazing at those amazing bags, half expected their wearer to start dancing a sailor's hornpipe, and singing:

"We sail on the ocean blow, And our sorry ship's a bowty!"

The Head was still staring at the youth's trousers, when the big man's voice suddenly boomed in his ear.

"I am Mr. Tweedy, sir! I have come, as per our tellyphone conversation, to collect my dues—or, rather, my overdues. I will trouble you to fork out the sum of three-and-eleven-threepence!"

"Good-bye, pop!" said Cuthbert. "I'll see that this old fogey carries out your wishes. If he duzzent wangle me into the captaincy I'll tip you the wink!"

The Head jumped to his feet, his face against.