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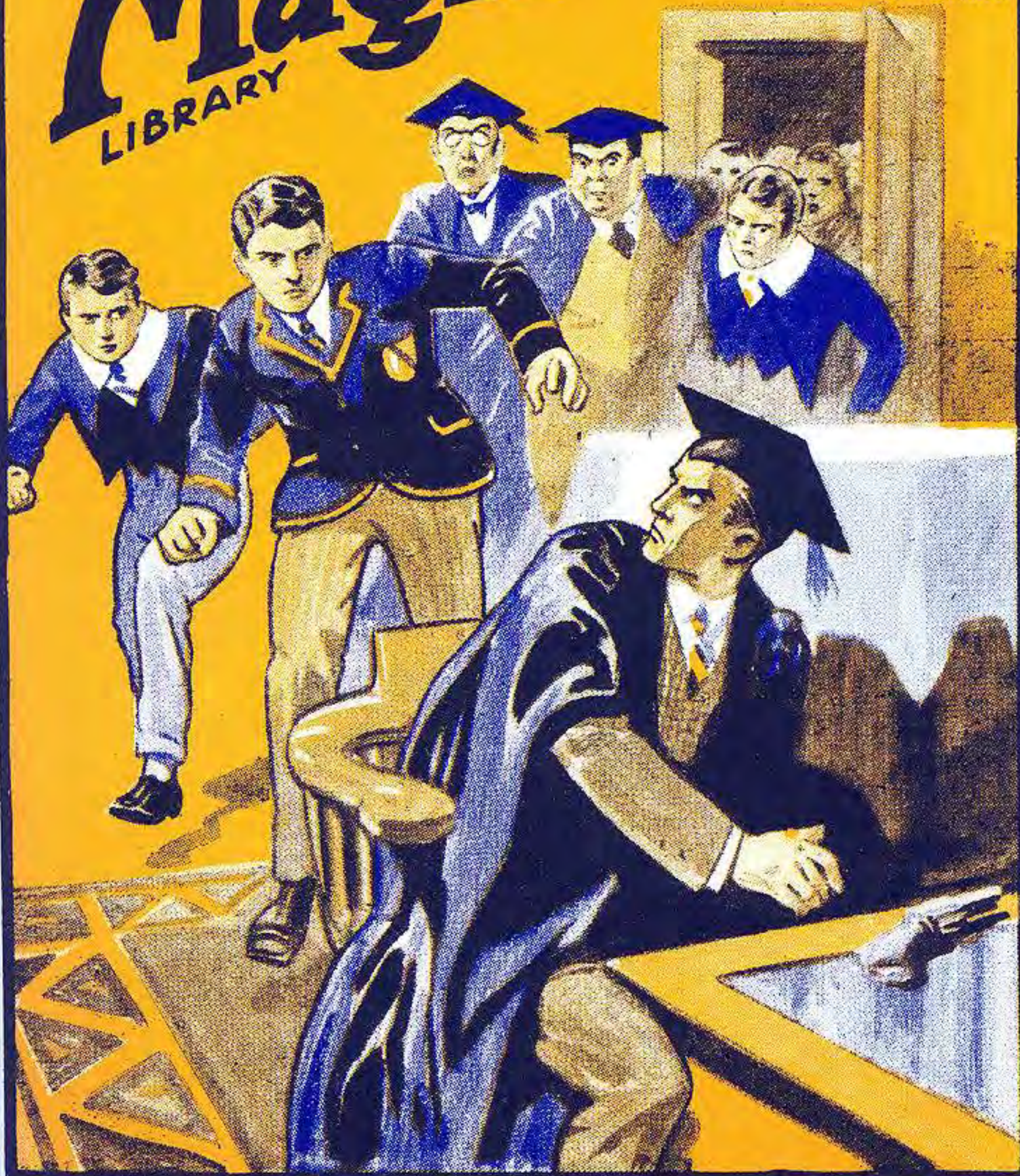
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By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Rag in the Second!

MR. QUELCH frowned. The Remove smiled. What was happening was exasperating, or entertaining, according to the point of view. On this matter, as on many others, the views of the Greyfriars Remove and their Form master were wide as the poles asunder. From the Second Form room, across the corridor, came strange and unaccustomed sounds. The Remove were in class; and the Second Form were—or should have been—in class also. Judging by the terrific uproar that proceeded from the Second Form room, classes were “off” there—very much off!

The sound of a tin-whistle blended—more or less—with the notes of a mouth-organ. Repeated bangs indicated that some festive fag was beating on a desk-lid with a ruler, perhaps keeping time to the music. Scuffling of feet and gasping and yelling, seemed to hint that a fight was also in progress—perhaps more than one fight. From what could be heard of them, the fags of the Second Form were having a high old time.

Mr. Quelch's frown intensified.

No doubt the din penetrated into other Form-rooms. But the door of the Remove-room was almost opposite that of the Second, so the Remove got most of the benefit.

It interrupted lessons.

The Remove did not mind that—few of them were really keen and eager on Latin prose. But Mr. Quelch seemed to mind very much. Latin prose was, to his mind, a serious thing, to be taken seriously. The Remove fellows agreed that it was undoubtedly serious—awfully serious—but they were not keen on

taking it at all. So they smiled contentedly as the uproar rang and echoed from the Second Form room, and Mr. Quelch grew wrathier and wrathier, till—as Hurree Singh expressed it—his wrathfulness was terrific. The Remove were not without hopes that their Form master would feel it his duty to step into the Second Form room and take control, and give his own Form a much-needed rest.

“Bless my soul!” ejaculated Mr. Quelch at last. “This is really growing intolerable.”

Bump! Crash! Bang! Yell! came across the corridor.

“Wharton!” rapped out Mr. Quelch.

“Yes, sir?”

“Stop across into the Second Form room, and tell Walker of the Sixth that I insist upon his keeping order there!”

“Certainly, sir!”

“Tell him,” boomed Mr. Quelch, “that if order is not kept, I shall place the matter before the Head.”

“Very well, sir.”

Harry Wharton crossed to the door of the Remove-room, and opened it. With the door open, the din rang in with additional volume. It really was almost deafening.

“Shut the door, Wharton!”

Mr. Quelch fairly barked.

Harry Wharton stepped quickly into the corridor, and closed the door after him.

He smiled as he strolled across the passage.

Walker of the Sixth was in charge of the Second Form that morning; but he did not seem to be making much of a success of it. The master of the Second had lately left Greyfriars, and the new master appointed to take his place had been prevented, at the last moment, from arriving, by an attack of influenza. A temporary master had been hurriedly

engaged by the Head, but he was not yet at Greyfriars. For a few days, therefore, the Second Form had been without a master, and were “taken” by a Sixth Form prefect instead. It appeared to be the view of the Second that a Form without a Form master was like unto the Israelites of old, when there was no King in Israel, and every man did what was right in his own eyes.

Wharton threw open the door of the Second Form room.

Quite a startling scene met his gaze.

Gatty of the Second was extracting sweet music from a tin-whistle. Myers was blowing the mouth-organ. Sammy Bunter was beating time with a ruler. Dicky Nugent was engaged in deadly combat with another fag. Five or six fellows were stamping their feet, with the laudable object of making as much row as possible. Another enterprising youth was lifting the heavy lid of the Form master's desk, and letting it fall again, with a series of terrific bangs.

The Second Form seemed to be enjoying themselves.

Of Walker of the Sixth nothing was to be seen. Walker was a good deal of a slacker, and evidently he had not yet arrived to take his class. While the cat was away the mice were playing.

“Here, you young hooligans—” called out Wharton.

“What?”

“Remove cad!”

“Clear off!”

“Where's Walker?” demanded Wharton.

“Walking, probably,” said Gatty, ceasing the torture of the tin-whistle for a moment. “You'd better walk, too. We don't allow Remove jads in our Form-room.”

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"You've got to stop this row!"

"Rats!"

"Go home!"

"Chuck it!"

"Why, you cheeky Remove duffer!" Dicky Nugent disengaged himself from his adversary. "What the thump do you mean by butting into our Form-room? Beat it while you're safe!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"You young ass! You can be heard all over Greyfriars!" he said. "Walker ought to be here—"

"Oh, he's slacking somewhere!" said Nugent minor. "He's later and later every time. Not that we'd let Walker boss us. Who's Walker?"

"I've got a message for him from Mr. Quelch," said the captain of the Remove. "This row has got to stop!"

"Tell Quelchy to go and eat coke!" retorted Dicky Nugent independently. "He's not our Form master!"

"Look here—"

"Chuck that Remove cad out!" roared Gatty. "What's he doing in our Form-room?"

"Outside!" yelled the Second.

A mob of belligerent fags gathered round the captain of the Remove. Harry Wharton did not back out of the Form-room, as would have been only prudent with the Second Form in this wild and woolly state. It was miles beneath the dignity of a Remove man to retreat before any number of fags.

"Look here, you young asses—"

"Can it!"

"Outside!"

"Hurrah! Chuck him out!" yelled Nugent minor.

There was a rush.

"Hands off!" roared Wharton. "I tell you, I'll— Oh, my hat!"

Three or four fags were knocked right and left. But numbers told. The captain of the Remove was swept out into the passage, sprawling, with six or seven breathless fags sprawling over him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him socks!"

"Tap his napper!"

"Whooooop!" roared the captain of the Remove, as his head was tapped—not gently—on the hard, unsympathetic floor.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Give him another!"

Bang!

"Ow! Oh, my hat! You young villains—yarooooop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Now come in again, you Remove sweep!" yelled Dicky Nugent; and the fags retreated into their Form-room and banged the door.

Harry Wharton staggered to his feet. He was dusty and breathless, and he rubbed his head ruefully. He was strongly tempted to rush into the Second Form-room, hitting out right and left. But he restrained that natural impulse and returned to his own Form-room to report.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Heavy Hand!

"SCANDALOUS!"

Mr. Quelch fairly hooted. The news that Wharton was unable to deliver his message, owing to the absence of Walker of the Sixth from the post of duty, seemed to have an exciting effect on the Remove master.

Wharton said nothing of the rousing reception the fags had given him personally. But he had to say that Walker

was not there, for as soon as he re-entered the Remove-room Mr. Quelch demanded whether he had delivered his message. Uproar was still proceeding from the happy quarters of the Second.

"Scandalous!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Quelch was a very dutiful gentleman himself. Sometimes the Remove thought him over-dutiful. He had scant consideration for any man who neglected his duty. The conduct of James Walker of the Sixth Form seemed shocking to him. The Head had appointed Walker to take charge of the Second Form that morning. The path of duty might be a thorny one—it was no great "catch" to be in charge of a mob of unruly fags. But the path of duty had to be trodden, whether it was thorny, or whether there were roses, roses all the way. James Walker was loafing on the Sixth Form green with a novel, in the bright morning sunshine, actually forgetful of classes in the Second Form-room. No wonder Mr. Quelch said it was scandalous!

"Wharton!"

The captain of the Remove jumped as Mr. Quelch rapped out his name like a pistol-shot.

"Yes, sir!"

"I shall leave you in charge here for a few minutes," said Mr. Quelch. "You will keep order here while I am gone, Wharton!"

"Oh! Certainly, sir!"

Mr. Quelch looked at his class.

"You will proceed with your Latin papers," he said. "If there is any disorder in this room while I am absent the whole Form will be detained this afternoon."

That was enough for the Removites. Fellows who were already thinking of allowing themselves a little relaxation while their Form master's back was turned gave up the idea on the spot. That afternoon was a half-holiday, and there was no doubt that Mr. Quelch would keep his word. Every fellow in the Remove decided to keep the most meticulous order.

Mr. Quelch picked up his cane and left the Remove-room.

The Remove fellows grinned at one another as soon as he was gone. They relaxed so far as to grin. That, at least, was safe.

"The dear old beak's got his rag out!" remarked Bob Cherry. "I think I'd rather be in the Remove than the Second just now."

"The ratherfulness is terrific," chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Those fags are kicking up no end of a shindy," said Johnny Bull. "But, after all, Quelchy isn't their Form master."

"Well, it's too thick!" said Harry.

"What are they up to?" asked Frank Nugent.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Playing the goat—and your minor is the worst of the lot."

"He would be!" agreed Frank.

"Hark!" murmured Bob.

There was a sudden silence. It indicated that the Remove master had entered the Second Form-room.

And the Remove fellows grinned and went on with their Latin papers. They had no doubt that their Form master would soon have the uproarious fags well in hand. Mr. Quelch had taken his cane with him. Properly speaking, the Remove master was not entitled to use his cane in any Form-room but the one where he reigned supreme. The Removites guessed that Mr. Quelch was about to do that to which he was not entitled.

And they were right.

Mr. Quelch opened the door of the

Second Form-room, and as he did so there was a howl.

"That Remove rotter again!"

"Chuck him out!"

There was a rush of the fags towards the door. Then, as Mr. Quelch strode in, the Second Form saw who it was.

They stopped suddenly.

Silence fell on the Second Form-room. The fags backed away from the awful apparition of the Remove master, cane in hand, with frowning brow, and eyes that glinted. The glance of the fabled basilisk could not have had a more dismaying effect on the heroes of the Second.

"What does this mean?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!"

"Hem!"

"How dare you make this disturbance!"

"Um!"

"Why are you not at your lessons?"

"We—we—we're waiting for Walker, sir," stammered Dicky Nugent. "We—we were just wondering what had become of him."

Snort from Mr. Quelch.

"Our—our Form master has left, sir," said Nugent minor, as if Mr. Quelch did not know that already, "and—and the new master, sir, can't come as he's got the 'flu, and—and Mr. Sutcliffe doesn't get here till this afternoon, and—and—"

"I am aware of that, Nugent minor."

"Um!"

"Take your places at once."

The Second Form were already taking their places. They sneaked to their desks softly, but with suppressed wrath. After all, Quelchy was not their Form master. What the thump did he mean by butting into their Form-room? It was like his cheek, in the opinion of the Second. They did not, however, tell Mr. Quelch that it was like his cheek.

"I shall take charge of this class until Walker arrives," rumbled the Remove master.

"Oh dear!" ejaculated Sammy Bunter involuntarily, in his dismay.

"Bunter minor!"

"Oh! Yes, sir?"

"What did you say?"

"N-n-nothing, sir!" gasped Sammy.

"What is the lesson?" snapped Mr. Quelch, having pulverised Sammy Bunter with a glance.

"Hem!"

"Answer me, Nugent minor!"

Dicky Nugent breathed hard. He was a great chief in the Second Form. He was popularly supposed to have nerve enough to float a battleship. His nerve failed him a little under the Remove master's basilisk eyes. But he made an effort.

"If—if you please, sir—"

"What?"

"The Head told Walker to take us, sir—"

"What—what—"

"You are not our Form master, sir!" said Dicky Nugent, encouraged by a murmur of support from his comrades.

Silence followed Dicky Nugent's remark. For a second a pin might have been heard to fall in the Second Form-room. The expression on Mr. Quelch's face would have silenced a gramophone. For one moment Mr. Quelch was speechless. Then he found his voice.

"Nugent minor, come here!"

"I—I—I mean—I didn't mean—"

From the bottom of his heart Dicky Nugent wished that he hadn't spoken.

"Come here!"

Some irresistible force dragged Nugent minor out before the class. He did not want to obey. He was entitled

"Chuck that Remove cad out!" roared Gatty. "What's he doing in our Form-room?" There was a rush, and Wharton was carried off his feet and swept out into the passage, sprawling, with six or seven breathless fags sprawling over him. "Whooooop!" roared the captain of the Remove. "You young villains——" (See Chapter 1.)



to stand upon his rights, and decline to be castigated by the master of another Form. He wanted to stay where he was. In fact, as he told his friends afterwards, he had a "jolly good mind" to tell Quelch to go and eat coke. But he did not tell Quelch to go and eat coke. He came out before the class.

"Bend over that desk."

Again Nugent minor had a jolly good mind to do nothing of the sort. But he found himself bending over the desk.

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!

Mr. Quelch's cane rose and fell as if he were beating a carpet. Every whack of the cane was signalled by a wild yell that rang through the Form-room.

The Second looked on in horror. Their late Form master had been an easy-going gentleman; never had "six" been administered in that Form-room, and such a six! Dicky Nugent was quite pale when he straightened up after the infliction.

"Take your place, Nugent minor."

Dicky took his place like a lamb.

"What is the lesson?"

"Geography, sir," murmured Gatty. The hapless Dicky was past speech.

There had never been so orderly a class at Greyfriars as that which now had the benefit of geographical instruction from Mr. Quelch. The Second Form hung on Mr. Quelch's words as if they were pearls of wisdom falling from the Remove master's lips. They watched

him anxiously, eager to anticipate his wishes.

Walker of the Sixth, strolling along the corridor with his novel in his pocket, was surprised and pleased to hear no sound of disorder in the Form-room of which he was supposed to have taken charge. He had left it rather late—he realised that. He had rather feared that the young sweeps would be kicking up a row—playing leap-frog, or something of the kind. Instead of which order reigned—there was scarcely a sound from the Form-room as James Walker arrived at the door.

He pushed it open and entered.

"Well, you young rascals——"

Walker broke off suddenly at the sight of Mr. Quelch.

The Remove master laid down his book. He gave James Walker one glance—one was enough. It almost shrivelled up Walker of the Sixth.

"I will now hand this class over to you, Walker, if you have time to attend to it?" said Mr. Quelch icily.

"Oh, yes, sir! Certainly, sir! I—I—the fact is, I——" stammered Walker, greatly flurried.

Mr. Quelch, ruthlessly regardless, walked out of the Second Form room, leaving Walker stuttering.

"Oh, gad!" gasped Walker.

"I—I say, Walker, it's a shame!" said Gatty. "Mr. Quelch oughtn't to have butted in here."

"He's licked Nugent minor," said Myers.

"Glared at me like a wild beast!" squeaked Sammy Bunter.

"I suppose you were kicking up a row?" said Walker.

"I—I—I think somebody dropped a book," said Gatty cautiously. George Gatty was really under-stating the case.

"You young sweeps!" said Walker. "This may mean a jaw from the Head. You make another sound, and your lives won't be worth living!"

And James Walker sat down at the master's desk with his novel, leaving the Second to imbibe knowledge from their geography books if they liked, and as much as they liked. That was Walker's way of taking a class when the eye of authority was not on him. The Second Form liked it better than Mr. Quelch's way.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Bump for Bunter!

HARRY WHARTON gathered up the Latin papers from the Form, and placed them in a neat little stack on Mr. Quelch's desk. The thunder had passed from Mr. Quelch's brow; he had found the Remove as quiet as lambs when he returned to them. The Lower Fourth

were dismissed for morning break, leaving their Form master to peruse and enjoy their Latin prose papers.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's your minor doing physical jerks, Franky," chuckled Bob Cherry, as the Famous Five came out into the quadrangle.

The Second had already been dismissed for break. If Walker of the Sixth was late in taking his class, he made up for it by being quite early in dismissing it. Walker was not a very popular prefect personally, but in the place of a Form master the Second liked him immensely. Their late master had been easy-going, but he had never allowed them to carry on a buzz of conversation while he read a novel at his desk. Walker's system seemed to the Second an enormous improvement. They had been quite pleased to hear that their new master was delayed by influenza, and proportionately disappointed to hear that Mr. Sutcliffe, a temporary master, had been engaged to fill up the interval. They nourished a hope that Mr. Sutcliffe, too, would fall a victim to influenza before he arrived at Greyfriars.

Dicky Nugent, however, did not look as if he had been enjoying this especial morning. He was still feeling severely the effect of the six. He wriggled and wriggled, and Gatty and Myers were sympathising with him. They declared that it was hard cheese, that Quelchy was an interfering beast, that Walker ought to protest to the Head. All this was perhaps very true, but it did not seem to help Nugent minor much. He continued to wriggle spasmodically.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Enjoying life?" boomed Bob Cherry.

Nugent minor groaned. Obviously he was not enjoying life.

"Did you catch it, Dicky?" asked Frank Nugent.

Groan!

"Your beastly Form master pitched into him," said Gatty indignantly. "Making out that we were kicking up a row."

"You could be heard all over the school," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Well, that's no bizney of your Form master's," said Myers. "You keep your dashed Form master in your own Form-room, blow you!"

"If he comes into our Form-room again we'll jolly well mob him!" said Gatty darkly.

"I don't think!" grinned Johnny Bull.

"Feeling bad, old son?" asked Frank Nugent sympathetically.

Dicky gave him a glare.

"Do you think I'm wriggling like this because I'm feeling well and bonny?" he grunted. "Don't be an ass!"

Frank chuckled.

"You'll get over it," he said.

"I don't need a Remove duffer to tell me that." Nugent minor did not seem in a grateful mood.

"How many did you get?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Six!"

"Well, you asked for it, you know."

"Yah!"

"My esteemed Dicky—" began Hurree Singh.

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

The Famous Five walked on, smiling. Billy Bunter rolled along, and blinked at Dicky through his big spectacles, and grinned.

"Had it bad?" he asked.

"Ow! Yes."

"Serve you jolly well right," said the Owl of the Remove cheerfully.

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"Our Form master knows how to keep noisy fags in order, I can tell you."

"You fat dummy!"

"Did my minor catch it, too?" asked Bunter.

"No, ass!"

"It would have done him good," said Bunter. "It does all you fags good to get a licking. He, he, he!"

And Bunter, having delivered that valuable opinion, rolled on—but he rolled only a pace or two. Nugent minor, Gatty, and Myers, as if moved by the same spring, jumped at Bunter, and grasped him, and sat him down in the quad.

Bump!

"Whooooop!" roared Bunter.

And Dicky Nugent & Co. walked away chuckling, leaving the Owl of the Remove to roar.

"Ow! Wow, wow, wow! Oooop!" spluttered Bunter.

Vernon-Smith and Tom Redwing of the Remove came up, laughing, and gave Bunter a hand up.

"Ow!" spluttered Bunter, as he landed on his feet again. "Cheeky little beasts, you know, bumping a Remove man over! I wish Quelchy had given them twice as much. Ow! I say, you fellows, are my bags dusty?"

"Thick with it," grinned Vernon Smith.

"You might dust a chap down, Smithy."

"Certainly."

Smack!

"Yaroooooop!" roared Bunter, jumping clear of the ground as the Bounder smacked. "Whooop! Wharrer you at?"

"Dusting you, old chap."

"You silly owl!" yelled Bunter.

"The dust was coming out," said Redwing, laughing. "Another smack like that will do the trick, Bunter."

"Ready?" asked Smithy.

"Yaroooo! Keep off, you silly chump!" howled Bunter, squirming out of reach. "I didn't ask you to spank me, you dummy."

"I'm such an obligin' chap I do these things without bein' asked," explained the Bounder. "Have another?"

"Beast!"

The Bounder went on with Redwing. Bunter glaring after them with a glare that almost cracked his big spectacles. He blinked at Peter Todd as that lean youth came out of the House.

"I say, Toddy, I've been bumped over by a gang of Second Form fags," said Bunter.

Peter Todd stopped, with a frown on his brow. Peter was the head of Study No. 7 in the Remove, which was honoured—more or less—by the distinguished company of Billy Bunter. Bunter considered that his study-mate ought to concern himself in the matter.

"What's that?" demanded Peter.

"Young Nugent and Gatty and Myers," said Bunter. "You could wallop the three of them together, Peter."

"Easily," assented Peter.

"I'll hold your hat, old chap," said Bunter eagerly. "It's—it's an insult to Study No. 7, you know."

"Let's have it clear," said Peter. "Three fags of the Second bumped you over, my fat tulip?"

"That's it."

"That's a disgrace to the study," said Peter sternly.

"Just what I think," said Bunter.

"Go after them and—"

"I won't go after them," said Peter. "I'll jolly well bump you over again, for not going after them yourself—see?"

"Why, you silly ass, I didn't mean that, I meant—I—I say, Peter—I say—Yarooooop!"

And Bunter sat down once more.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Cash Required!

"ROT!"

That was the opinion of Legge of the Second Form.

In the Second Form at Greyfriars they stated their opinions without any beating about the bush. In that juvenile Form Chesterfieldian politeness was at a heavy discount.

Dicky Nugent glared at Legge. Dicky Nugent regarded himself as cock of the walk in the Second. George Gatty also regarded himself as cock of the walk in the Form. This difference of views sometimes led to internecine strife. On the present occasion, however, the chiefs of the Second were in accord, and it was Legge—a mere nobody—who had ventured to characterise Nugent minor's remark as "rot."

"Did you say rot, young Legge?" inquired Nugent minor, pushing back his cuffs with an air of preparation.

"Yes, I jolly well did!" retorted Legge.

"Where will you have it?" further inquired Nugent minor.

"Wherever you can put it!" retorted Legge independently.

And then there was a pause in the discussion that was being held in the Second Form-room after dinner, while Nugent minor and "young Legge" rolled on the floor in a terrific struggle, collecting and scattering dust, gasping and spluttering, and breathing blood-curdling threats.

Nugent minor emerged victorious from the combat, wiping a crimson nose, what time Legge struggled for his second wind under the desks.

"And now—" said Dicky Nugent breathlessly.

"I think it's a jolly good idea," said Gatty. "A bit out of the common."

"Think Sutcliffe will be pleased?" asked Myers.

"Pleased!" retorted Dicky Nugent. "I should jolly well think so. Delighted!"

"He might think it a cheek," said Sammy Bunter.

"He might if he were a silly idiot like you, Bunter mi; but we've no reason to suppose that he's a silly idiot like you."

"Look here, young Nugent—"

"Shut up, Bunter mi," said Gatty. "Nobody wants to hear your opinion. You're as silly an ass as your major in the Remove, and that's saying a lot."

"I jolly well think—"

"Shut up!" roared Gatty.

"All you've got to do, Bunter mi, is to make your contribution like other men," said Nugent minor. "We don't want your opinion."

Snort from Sammy Bunter. He would rather have given his opinion than his cash at any time. He had a strong objection to giving his cash.

"How much each?" asked Myers.

"Well," said Dicky Nugent thoughtfully, "it's six bob for a taxi from Courtfield. Say a bob tip for the chauffeur—"

"I don't believe in tipping," said Sammy Bunter.

"You wouldn't," agreed Dicky Nugent. "But I've told you we don't want your opinion, Bunter mi. Threepence each all round ought to wangle it. Where are you going, young Bunter?"

Young Bunter did not delay to state

where he was going; he went. The Form-room door slammed after him in a hurry.

"Mingy toad!" said Gatty. "We can do without his measly threepence. You fellows shell out."

Legge emerged from under the desks. "Rot!" he said.

"What!" roared Nugent minor. "Rot!"

And Legge of the Second hurriedly departed from the Form-room. And, oddly enough, quite a number of the fags who had attended the meeting called by Dicky Nugent followed him hastily. Most of them had agreed that the "stunt" propounded by Dicky was great. But when the time came for the collection they seemed to have pressing business elsewhere.

"Well, my hat!" said Gatty, as he found himself left in the Form-room with only Myers and Nugent minor. "My only hat! What have the men cleared off like that for?"

Dicky Nugent sniffed. "Look here, we can manage it," he said. "And we'll get a ride in the car—see?"

"Will Sutcliffe like three kids in the car with him?" asked Myers doubtfully.

"What rot! Why shouldn't he? Anyhow, if he doesn't like it he can lump it; it's our car."

"That's so."

"But that will be two bob each for us, if the taxi is six bob," said Gatty. "Too jolly expensive, Nugent mi."

"I've got two bob," said Dicky.

"I've got threepence."

"Same here, and a ha'penny over," said Myers.

Dicky Nugent grunted. He had thought of a great wheeze; he was the fellow for wheezes. Most of the Second had thought it a great wheeze, too, and had been prepared to give it their moral support. Unfortunately, moral support would not pay the taximan. Financial support was required for that, and financial support seemed to be lacking.

"Well, I can squeeze a loan out of my major in the Remove," said Dicky, after some thought. "The mater told him specially to look after me this term. He does a lot of elder-brotherly bizney. He can't expect to do it on the cheap."

"That's so," agreed Gatty. "It's against a man to have a brother in an upper Form. He ought to make up for it somehow."

"I believe those Remove bounders are going out this afternoon," said Myers. "I heard Cherry saying something about going to the smugglers' cave at Pegg."

"Buck up, then, Dicky," said Gatty. "If you don't get it out of your major, the game's up."

Dicky Nugent nodded, and hurried out of the Form-room. Three-and-sixpence was required to make Nugent minor's scheme a success; that was really not a large sum for Frank Nugent, of the Remove, to expend upon a fascinating young brother in the Second.

"Seen my major?" asked Dicky, coming on William George Bunter of the Remove.

Billy Bunter turned towards him and gave him a crushing blink through his big spectacles. Dicky had forgotten the bumping incident in the quad; Bunter hadn't. The bumper naturally had a shorter memory for such an incident than the bumpee, so to speak. The Owl of the Remove looked the fag up and down, and did not deign to answer.

"Deaf?" hooted Dicky.

"Don't address me, you cheeky fag!" said Bunter loftily. "I don't allow you inky little sweeps to talk to me!"

"You silly ass—"

"I hope my Form master will take you again to-morrow," said Bunter. "I hope he'll give you something hot. And I jolly well hope that your new Form master, when he comes, will be as big a beast as Quelch!"

"Bunter!"

It was a voice not loud, but deep. Billy Bunter felt a chill run right down his backbone. How was a fellow to know that Mr. Quelch was passing only a few feet behind him? A fellow hadn't eyes in the back of his head. Bunter spun round in dismay.

"Ye-e-es, sir," he gasped. "D-d-did you speak, sir?"

"I did," said Mr. Quelch, his gimlet-

big a beast as—as— No! I—I don't mean that, either!" gasped Bunter, greatly confused. "I—I really meant to say, sir, that—that you ain't a beast, sir. Not at all, sir. Lots of the fellows think you a beast—"

"What?"

"But I—I admire you, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I do, really, sir. I don't think you're such a beast as you look, sir—"

"Bunter!"

"I—I don't, really, sir!" spluttered the wretched Owl. "I—I think looks ain't everything, sir. I—I think you're quite nice, sir, and I've said to the fellows lots of times that you can't help your face, sir—"



"You cheeky fag, Nugent!" said Bunter loftily. "I hope my Form-master will take you again to-morrow, and give you something hot. And I jolly well hope your new Form-master, when he comes, will be as big a beast as Quelch." "Bunter!" A chill ran down the Owl of the Remove's backbone as he recognised the voice of the Remove-master, who was standing only a few feet behind him. (See Chapter 4.)

eyes almost boring holes in Bunter. "I heard your remark, Bunter."

"Oh dear!"

Dicky Nugent grinned, and cut off in further search for his major. Billy Bunter would have been glad to cut off also. But there was no escape for the Owl of the Remove.

"You applied an opprobrious epithet to your Form master, Bunter!" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir! I—I didn't—" gasped Bunter.

"What? I heard you!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"You—you misunderstood, sir," groaned Bunter. "I—I didn't say I hoped young Nugent's master would be as big a beast as you, sir. I—I—I said—"

"Indeed! What did you say, Bunter?"

"I—I said I hoped he wouldn't be as

"Follow me to my study, Bunter!" boomed Mr. Quelch.

"Wha-a-at for, sir?"

"To be caned for outrageous impertinence, Bunter!"

"Oh, lor'!"

William George Bunter trailed dismally after his Form master. It did not seem to be Bunter's lucky day at all!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Some Stunt!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Is your giddy minor coming, Franky?"

"Not that I know of."

"There he is, anyhow."

Frank Nugent looked back. The chums of the Remove had left the

school gates, and were tramping cheerily down the lane towards Friar-dale, when Bob Cherry glanced back at the stile and spotted Dicky Nugent.

Dicky was coming after the Famous Five at breathless speed.

The Famous Five had to cross the stile, to take the short cut across the fields to the cliffs. Nugent stopped.

"Waiting for him?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Yes," said Nugent, rather curtly.

Johnny's tone implied that fags of the Second were hardly worth waiting for.

"Oh, all right!" said Johnny amicably. "I'll sit down for a bit." And he straddled the top bar of the stile.

"The waitfulness is the proper caper," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gracefully. "If the esteemed and ridiculous Dicky desires to accompany us explore-fully in the caves, the addition of his honourable society will be the boonful blessing."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob Cherry.

And the Famous Five waited for the fag to come up. Frank Nugent was a dutiful and affectionate major. His chums did not, perhaps, quite see what there was in Dicky Nugent to inspire attachment. But they bore patiently with Frank on that subject.

"I suppose there's no harm if Dicky comes along," said Nugent.

"None at all," agreed Wharton, with great politeness.

Remove men really did not yearn for the company of Second Form fags, as a rule. But the Co. were prepared to make an exception in favour of Frank's minor—cheerfully, if not enthusiastically.

Dicky came panting up.

"Come on, kid!" said Frank.

"Eh! What? Where?" asked Dicky breathlessly.

"We're going to explore the caves at Pegg—"

"Kid's game!" said Nugent minor.

"What?"

"Catch me!" said Dicky derisively.

Johnny Bull winked at Bob Cherry, who turned away his head to hide his smiles. Harry Wharton coughed, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh remained as grave as a bronze image.

"You cheeky little sweep!" exclaimed Nugent, nettled. "What the thump do you come bolting after us for, then, and making us waste time? Buzz off!"

"Oh, don't get waxy, old bean!" said Nugent minor. "I've got something on more jolly important than mucking about in silly old caves!"

"Go and get on with it, then!" snapped Frank; and he turned to the stile.

"Hold on a minute, fathead! I want three-and-six."

"Rats!"

"Don't be a waxy idiot, Frank!" urged Nugent minor. "It's jolly important. We've got two-and-six, and we want three-and-six to make up six bob—see?"

"What's it for?" grunted Nugent.

"I don't mind telling you, old chap," said Dicky. "It's a great stunt. Look here, you lend me three-and-six, and I'll do the letter home this week. Honest Injun!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You know our Form master's gone—your Form master came messing about in our Form-room this morning," said Dicky, "and the new master can't come yet, and a man named Sutcliffe is filling the job pro tem. Well, this

man Sutcliffe is arriving by the three-thirty at Courtfield—I've found that out. He's a beast, of course—"

"How do you know he's a beast?"

"Oh, don't be a goat! Ain't all Form masters beasts? But we're going to get on the right side of him to begin with," said Dicky. "We're going to the station to meet him. We're standing him a car to the school!" added the fag in an off-hand way.

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob Cherry.

"Some stunt, what?" said Nugent minor complacently. "The idea is, we want to welcome our new Form master, and show him what nice chaps we are—respectful to our kind teachers, and all that—story-book stuff, you know. It was my idea."

"Sounds as if it might have been!" remarked Bob.

"Oh, don't you be funny!" said Nugent minor. "It's a ripping wheeze, and Gatty thinks so, too. Of course, we get the drive in the car, and that's worth the money, so we don't really lose anything. We meet Mr. Sutcliffe on the platform at Courtfield—we speak to him nicely, and tell him that we've got a car outside to take him to the school. Even a beast will be bound to be pleased at getting kind attentions like that from his Form. It will put him in a good temper, and it ought to get us off prep to-night at the very least."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, you can cackle," said Dicky, "but I jolly well think it's a great wheeze. You'd never have thought of it in a month of Sundays."

"They only think of these great things in the Second Form," said Bob Cherry solemnly.

"You see, Quelchy is certain to speak to him—tip him that we're a rowdy mob, and all that," said Dicky. "He carried on like a Hun in our Form-room this morning. I came jolly near buzzing my geography book at his napper, I can tell you. Only I—I didn't."

"You needn't mention that you didn't," said Harry Wharton gravely. "We can guess that."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Dicky crossly. "You see the idea, Franky. If he hears that we're a rowdy gang, he won't take any notice, after being met at the station and talked to nicely and respectfully, and brought to the school in a car. But of course, we shall have to pay for the car. If he had to shell out it would spoil the effect."

"The spoiffulness would be terrific."

"You're a young ass!" said Frank, laughing. "It's a risky game pulling a master's leg."

"It isn't exactly pulling his leg, you know. We want to make a good impression on the beast," explained Dicky. "We want to bottle up Quelchy in advance, too. Anyhow, we get the ride—see? 'Tain't throwing money away, like buying a master a birthday present, frinstance."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, here's the tin, and I wish you luck!" said Nugent. "I've got only half-a-crown. One of you fellows lend me a bob."

"The lendfulness will be the esteemed pleasure."

"Thanks!" said Dicky, pocketing the half-crown and the shilling. "I'll settle this, of course, Franky, along with the other little lots, some time."

"This year, next year, sometime, never!" chanted Bob Cherry softly.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sorry I can't come with you," said

Dicky patronisingly. "You want somebody to look after you if you're going into the smugglers' cave. It's haunted, you know. I can see you bolting when you hear the groans."

Dicky Nugent dodged a lunge of Bob Cherry's boot, and started back to Greyfriars at a run.

The Famous Five clambered over the stile, and pursued their way, with smiling faces. Whether Mr. Sutcliffe, the temporary master of the Second Form at Greyfriars, would be pleased and gratified at finding a gang of fags waiting for him with a taxicab was, to their minds, a doubtful question. Still, Dicky Nugent was greatly pleased with his scheme, and as he so sapiently observed, the fags would get the ride in the car at any rate. Even if Mr. Sutcliffe wasn't pleased, a joy-ride on a half-holiday was grateful and comforting.

But from Dicky's point of view the man was bound to be pleased at such a kind attention. No doubt he was a beast—all Form masters being beasts—but a beast could be soothed into a good temper by being stroked down the right way. It was Dicky's impression that he was going to stroke down this particular beast the right way. And Harry Wharton & Co. cheerfully left him to it, and pursued their way to the sea-caves under the great Shoulder that towered over the bay at Pegg.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Man on the Cliff!

"**C**AREFUL, here!"

"You bet!"

"The carefulness is terrific."

Care was needed on the path the chums of the Remove were taking down from the great chalk cliffs to the caves. From the summit of the mighty Shoulder the beach looked a pebbly strip, the fishermen's boats like dots. It was a long way down to the caves on the sea level, and the way was perilous. Rifts and faults in the great mass of chalk formed a kind of rough staircase, and the steps were steep and irregular, and wet with the spray that dashed up when the sea was rough, as it very often was below the Shoulder.

But the five juniors were lithe and active, and they tramped down the rocky way, here and there holding on with their hands when it was necessary, their faces glowing with the rough exercise and the keen wind from the North Sea.

They had the place to themselves; on that cold, windy afternoon the cliffs were deserted. The rock steps from the top of the cliffs down to the beach were seldom trodden, in any case. Strong limbs and a cool head were required, and the exertion was considerable. And only natives of the locality knew that way down the cliffs at all; strangers and tourists would never have suspected that the mighty Shoulder could be climbed or descended at all.

Half-way down there was a plateau of chalk, from which there was a magnificent view of the sea, with ships far out in the distance. There the Greyfriars juniors stopped to rest a little.

"Jolly here, isn't it?" said Bob Cherry, breathing hard and deep.

"Top-hole, old bean!"

"I don't think your minor would have been equal to this if he had con-

descended to come, Franky."

"We could have gone round on the level, by way of Pegg," said Nugent.

"Hem! So we could!" said Bob, closing one eye at Wharton. "It's a

longer way round, and rather uninteresting; but your minor's company would have made up for that."

"Fathead!" said Frank.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's somebody else on the giddy cliff-path as well as our noble selves!" ejaculated Bob.

The clink of a falling stone came from below. Someone was coming up the natural stairway from the beach, and had almost reached the plateau where the schoolboys were resting.

They could not see him yet; the rough windings and projections of the chalk hid the newcomer from sight, so far.

A hat came in sight at last, rising into view up the steep, and it was followed by a clean-shaven face. The juniors were looking towards the spot where the newcomer was bound to appear as he came higher, and they saw the man before he saw them.

The expression on his face struck them a little.

He was a young man, not over thirty; with a rather hard, clear-cut face, and extremely keen eyes set close together. His expression puzzled the juniors a little; there was something grim and dogged in it, something that told of a grim, hard determination. He was a stranger to them, though certainly he could not have been a stranger in the locality, or he would not have known his way up the rugged path on the cliff.

He clambered on to the plateau and stopped to breathe, and then he saw the juniors sitting on the chalk boulders, resting. He started violently as he saw them.

Apparently he had not expected to meet anyone on the rough cliff-path, or perhaps had not desired to meet anyone. He stood looking at them with a very unpleasant expression on his face.

Bob Cherry gave him an affable nod. The man looked anything but good-tempered; but Bob had good-temper enough for two.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" sang out Bob cheerily.

The man did not answer the greeting.

He had placed a bag on the ground, to relieve himself of the weight, and the juniors noticed, without especially heeding, that the initials on the leather were "J. S." They wondered a little at a man carrying a bag on a rough climb over the cliffs. The path up from the bay was not easy for a climber unencumbered.

"Hefty climb up, sir, what?" said Bob, not at all abashed by the bad manners of the stranger.

The man seemed to think better of his bad manners, however, and he smiled and nodded.

"Yes; it's longer than it looks from the sea," he remarked. "Is it far to the top?"

"You're just half-way up," said Bob.

"You know the path?" asked Wharton.

"No; I am quite a stranger here."

"It's rather risky if you don't know the way," said the captain of the Remove.

The man nodded, picked up his bag, and went on. The juniors looked after him rather curiously. It was perfectly plain that the man had intended to sit down and rest, and had changed his intention on seeing the schoolboys there.

Why he should have done so was a mystery.

He disappeared in a few moments from sight among the windings of the cliff path.

Bob Cherry grinned.

"The dear man doesn't seem to like good company," he remarked. "At least, he doesn't seem to care for ours."

"He's a bad egg," said Johnny Bull, sententiously.

"Because he didn't want to take a pew with us?" asked Nugent, laughing.

"Because he tells lies, and silly lies, so far as I can see," answered Johnny stolidly. "He hasn't any reason for telling us lies, that I know of, as we've never seen him before, and shall never see him again."

"How do you make that out?" asked Frank.

"He said he was quite a stranger here," returned Johnny Bull. "But he isn't, or he wouldn't know this path. He's gone right up—and a stranger would never know the way without stopping and picking his way jolly carefully. He's out of sight already."

Harry Wharton nodded.

"That's true," he said. "He's been over the ground before, that's a cert. I remember the first time I came up this path I was puzzled in a dozen places. That chap came right up to where we are, and he's gone right on without having to stop to think. He knows the ground as well as we do."

"The knowfulness is terrific," agreed Harree Janset Ram Singh. "But why did the esteemed and rotten person tell us whoppers?"

"Goodness knows!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, here comes his bonnet!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as a hat flew by on the wind.

Bob made a jump and a grab at the whirling hat, but missed it, and it flew on beyond the little chalk plateau, and went careering down the cliff towards the beach.

Evidently the wind, higher up the cliff, had whisked the hat from the stranger's head, and whirled it away. With his bag in one hand, and doubtless holding on to the rocks with the other, he had been unable to save it.

The juniors half-expected to see the stranger returning for his hat. But he did not come back. Probably he did not consider the hat worth a laborious climb down to the cliffs, and a still more laborious climb up again.

"A jolly queer fish," said Johnny Bull.

"For losing his hat?" grinned Bob.

"Yes."

"My dear man, I've had a cap blown off on this path!"

"Very likely. But that hat was too big for him. You noticed that?"

"Now you speak of it, yes," said Harry. "He looked baggy all over, as if he had a stouter man's clothes on."

"That's it," said Johnny Bull, with a nod. "There isn't any bathing here at this time of the year, or I should think he had bagged some bather's outfit. You remember last summer a tramp bagged old Prout's clobber, and left a suit of rags in their place."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"But it isn't the summer now," he said. "People don't bathe in the sea in February. Not as a rule."

"That chap didn't look like a tramp!" chuckled Bob. "I don't like his chivvy; but I shouldn't think he was a Weary Willie."

"No; but it's odd."

The juniors agreed that it was odd. The stranger was a slightly-built man, and though his clothes were good and well-cut, they had really looked as if they had been made for a man a size larger. But the Co. were not much interested in the matter, and, having rested, they rose and resumed their way down the cliff, dismissing the peculiar stranger from their minds.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not a Success!

"LEAVE the talking to me!" said Dicky Nugent.

"That's you, all over!" said Gatty.

"Just!" agreed Myers.

The three fags were standing on the platform at Courtfield Junction, and the station clock indicated half-past three. The train was signalled—the train that was to bring Mr. John Sutcliffe to Courtfield to meet, unexpectedly, three leading members of the Form he was to take at Greyfriars.

Outside the station waited the car.

It was not a common, or garden, taxi; it was a car from Courtfield Garage, specially engaged by Nugent minor & Co. to carry them and their new Form master to Greyfriars.

Keen bargaining on the part of the fags had reduced the charge for the drive to five shillings and sixpence; which left sixpence over for a tip to the chauffeur. It was quite a nice car; perhaps a little dusty here and there, and a trifle in want of polish there and here, still, a nice car. Sutcliffe wouldn't expect to be taken to Greyfriars in a Rolls, anyhow, as Dicky remarked. Form masters weren't rolling in money; very likely the chap would be glad to save the taxi fare.

After all, he wasn't a regular master—only one of those temporary merchants, sort of locum tenens, a stop-gap merchant supplied by the Head's scholastic agency. Very likely quite hard up, Dicky Nugent opined sapiently; and, in that case, he would be all the more pleased to find a car engaged to take him to the school. The harder up he was, the more he would be pleased; so the fags hoped that he was not specially favoured by fortune in the financial line.

The three fags waited eagerly, as the train came rolling in.

Myers was a little doubtful about this stunt; Gatty was not wholly confident. But Dicky Nugent was serenely confident. As it was his wheeze, he, naturally, thought well of it.

The fags, of course, did not know Mr. Sutcliffe by sight; he was a complete stranger at Greyfriars, and nobody at the school had seen him yet. He had been engaged in a hurry from the agency in London, to fill the vacant place for a couple of weeks or so. But although they had never seen him before, they expected to be able to pick out a schoolmaster easily enough.

The train stopped, and at least fifteen or sixteen people alighted from it.

Dicky Nugent & Co. scanned them eagerly as they passed.

Most of them, evidently, could not have been schoolmasters: There were only two men in the lot who could possibly have been Mr. Sutcliffe—though both of them, of course, could not have been that gentleman. The fags eyed the two warily and keenly, but could not make up their minds which of the two was their quarry.

"Well, we've got tongues in our heads!" remarked Dicky Nugent. "We can ask."

And Dicky cut after the two gentlemen, who were going to the barrier.

"Excuse me, sir, are you Mr. Sutcliffe?"

"No."

"Bound to catch the wrong man first!" said Myers satirically.

"Well, the other man must be Sutcliffe," said Dicky.

And he rushed after the other man.

"Mr. Sutcliffe—"

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The gentleman stared at him.
"My name is not Sutcliffe," he said, and walked on.

"Oh, my only hat!" ejaculated Dicky, in dismay.

Neither gentleman, evidently, was John Sutcliffe. The three fags gathered on the platform again, in doubt.

"Must have been one of the other johnnies that we let pass!" said Myers. "Gone now."

Dicky shook his head.

"Nothing of the kind. I looked 'em over—grocers and commercial travellers and farmers and a soldier and some girls. He's missed his train, that's what it is."

"Sure he was coming by the three-thirty?" asked Gatty.

"I heard Mr. Quelch tell Walker."

"Might have got out at Redclyffe and walked," suggested Gatty.

"Why should he?" said Nugent minor irritably. "It would be a jolly long walk from Redclyffe to Greyfriars!"

"People do, though, sometimes. Might be a merchant who likes country walks."

"Oh, rot!"

Dicky Nugent refused to entertain the idea for a moment. If Mr. Sutcliffe had got out at Redclyffe, and walked by way of the Pegg road and Friardale, the scheme of meeting him at Courtfield was evidently N. G. Nugent minor, as the great chief of the Second Form, did not feel disposed to admit that any scheme of his could possibly be N. G. Therefore, Mr. Sutcliffe had not got out of the train at Redclyffe and walked!

"Lost his train, of course," said Nugent minor confidently. "He'll come by the next."

"Are we going to hang on?"

"I am!" said Nugent minor. "You can go and chop chips, if you like—or eat coke!"

"Don't be huffy, old man. I was thinking of the taxi."

"Do you mean the car?" asked Dicky loftily.

"Yes, ass."

"Well, if you mean the car, I don't see why you can't say the car."

"Car or taxi, the man was engaged for three-thirty, and he will want something extra for waiting half an hour."

"We're going to tip him sixpence."

"I hope he'll be satisfied," said Myers, his tone hinting that he did not expect that such would prove to be the case.

"Oh, rats."

The fags waited for the next train. They waited impatiently. But the train came in at last.

This time, they posted themselves by the barrier, and scanned each passenger carefully as he came by on the way out.

But this time, there was no one that could possibly have been taken for a schoolmaster.

Half the passengers were women, and there was a couple of schoolboys—Ponsonby and Gadsby of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe, who passed the Greyfriars fags with supercilious noses in the air. There was a stout farmer, there was a white-whiskered retired colonel, there was a man with a violin-case, and a Hebrew gentleman, and a fisherman, and two nutty youths. And that was all, and they passed out and left the fags with the platform to themselves.

"Well," said Myers, with a touch of irony.

"Well?" said Gatty.

Dicky Nugent breathed hard.

Mr. Sutcliffe had not arrived by the

three-thirty, and he had not arrived by the four o'clock train. It looked very doubtful whether he would arrive at Courtfield Junction at all. It was borne in upon Nugent minor's mind that Mr. Sutcliffe must, after all, have got out at Redclyffe and walked.

"Waiting for the next train?" smiled Myers.

"And the train after that?" inquired Gatty.

"If you fellows want to spend a half-holiday hanging around a railway station, there's nothing to stop you," said Nugent minor. "I'm going."

And he went.

Gatty and Myers followed him. They generously forbore to chip him further, for the present. The failure of Dicky's scheme had been complete and ghastly. Certainly, a fellow couldn't possibly have guessed that even an ass of a schoolmaster wouldn't arrive by the train by which he was booked to arrive. Dicky Nugent could not see that he was to blame in any way. Still, it was undoubtedly the fact that the scheme was a ghastly failure; and it only remained to dispose of the car that had been hired in vain, and walk back to Greyfriars. The fags did not see expending six shillings on a car for themselves alone.

There was a somewhat heated argument with the driver of the car. His view was that he had been engaged for a five-and-six drive, and that he had waited half an hour over and above. However, that matter was settled more or less amicably for half-a-crown; and the three fags walked back to Greyfriars.

"After all, it will run to a jolly good tea in the Form-room," said Dicky Nugent on the way home. "We've got three-and-six."

Gatty and Myers brightened up. This was a solace; indeed, they began to perceive that it was not wholly a disaster after all, that Mr. Sutcliffe had failed to arrive by the train at Courtfield Junction. A spread in the Form-room was a compensation.

Dicky Nugent & Co. were rather tired and dusty when they arrived at the school. Sammy Bunter was loafing around near the gates, and Nugent minor called to him.

"Sutcliffe blown in yet, young Bunter?"

Sammy chuckled.

"Long ago! You duffers were waiting for him at Courtfield, weren't you? He, he, he!"

"So he's come?" exclaimed Myers.

"Half an hour ago!" cackled Sammy Bunter. "He, he, he!"

Dicky Nugent & Co. stayed only to bang Bunter minor's head on the gate, and then walked off to the school shop, where the sum of three shillings and sixpence was expended on the good things supplied by Mrs. Mimble. The goods were carried off to the Second Form-room—where a feast of the gods was soon in progress.

Even Dicky Nugent began to think that it wasn't such a bad thing, after all, that the Sutcliffe man had failed to turn up at Courtfield. Gatty and Myers had little doubt on that point. And the other fags who joined in the spread had none at all.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

In the Chalk Caves!

"IN this style, three-and-nine!" said Bob Cherry humorously.

And the Famous Five chuckled.

Harry Wharton and his comrades had reached the bottom of the steep path

down the cliff, and sand and shingle, broken by great chalky boulders, lay round them. And on a point of chalky rock lay a hat—obviously that which had blown from the head of the stranger who had passed them on the cliff. The wind had landed it there, till a strong gust should catch it and carry it away again.

"I suppose we sha'n't see that merchant again, and can't give him back his roof," he remarked. "But it seems a pity to leave it here—it's a good hat."

"My dear man, we can't carry other people's hats about on a half-holiday," said Nugent.

"Nunno! But—it's a decent lid," said Bob. "It must have cost the owner thirty bob or so. If there's a name in it, we might be able to send it home, if the johnny lives about here anywhere."

"He said he was a stranger here."

"But he wasn't, or he wouldn't have known the path up the cliffs, as Johnny pointed out, old bean."

Bob Cherry was looking into the hat to see whether there was a name or other indication of proprietorship within.

He gave a yell of surprise.

"Oh, great pip!"

"What the thump——" exclaimed Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha! We can take this tile home to the owner," said Bob. "Who'd have thought it? Look!"

He held up the hat and the juniors stared blankly at the name stamped on the inside band.

"J. Sutcliffe."

"You remember, there were the initials 'J.S.' on the bag he was carting up the cliff," said Bob. "It's the new Second Form master for Greyfriars. So we can take his hat home with us."

"Great Scott!"

It was a surprise for the juniors. They had heard a good deal about Mr. Sutcliffe, the temporary master of the Second, who was due to arrive at Greyfriars that afternoon. Certainly they had not dreamed of meeting him on his way to the school. But the evidence of the name in the hat was plain. It was not probable that there were two Mr. Sutcliffes on the spot at the same time.

Bob burst into a sudden roar.

"Ha, ha, ha! Your minor, Franky is——"

"What about my minor?"

"Forgotten his stunt?" roared Bob. "He's waiting at Courtfield Junction for that merchant who's walking over the cliffs."

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the juniors.

"Poor old Dicky!" exclaimed Nugent, laughing. "What a rotten shame. He said he knew the man was getting to Courtfield by the three-thirty."

"Must have got out at Redclyffe and walked," said Bob. "I wonder how long those fags will hang up at the station waiting for him?"

"And they've hired a giddy taxi to take him to the school!" chortled Johnny Bull. "I daresay it serves them right for trying on leg-pulling on a new master. That hard-faced merchant didn't look as if he were the kind of man to have his leg pulled, either."

"Poor old Dicky! What a sell!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'd better carry the hat along," said Wharton. "As it belongs to Mr. Sutcliffe we can give it back to him at Greyfriars."



The stranger clambered on to the plateau and stopped to breathe. Then he started suddenly, as he saw the Greyfriars juniors sitting on the chalk boulders, resting. He stood looking at them with a very unpleasant expression on his face. (See Chapter 6.)

"That would be the proper and polite caper," assented Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

Johnny Bull had a thoughtful look.

"I don't think much of the new master of the Second," he remarked. "A Form master ought not to tell lies. He was telling us lies about being a stranger in this locality. Blessed if I know why, but he was!"

"He must be more or less a stranger here," said Harry. "I've heard that he was engaged from the Head's agency in London."

"But he knows the district; he's been here before, and knows the place quite well," said Johnny. "He couldn't have gone up the cliff as he did otherwise. He's an odd fish altogether. It was queer his being here at all. If he got out at Redelyffe to walk he would naturally take the Pegg road and the Friardale footpath; he's come eight miles out of his way by the beach and the cliff path."

"Might have liked a walk by the sea, old bean."

"It proves he knows the country well here. Fancy a stranger coming along the beach from Pegg, past the caves, and taking the chance of finding the path up the cliffs. If he hadn't found it he would have been cut off when the tide comes in. And it's no joke tramping over a mile of shingle with a heavy bag and then carting it up the cliff. It's not a natural proceeding for a new

master coming to a school. Blessed if I make the man out at all!"

"Never mind! No bizney of ours," said Bob. "Who's going to carry this hat?"

"Findings keepings, old man. You carry it!"

"Come on, then," said Bob cheerily.

The juniors tramped along the shingle to the opening of the sea-caves. The tide was out to a great distance; there was no danger of the sea coming in yet. When the tide was in the water washed right into the caves, filling the open spaces with foam and spray.

According to legend the caves had been used by smugglers in old days. The great cliff was honeycombed with them, and the interior caves were out of reach of the tide, though, of course, cut off from access when the water was in the outer caves.

Nugent glanced out over the tumbling sea as the juniors reached the opening in the cliff.

"It's on the turn," he said.

"Lots of time," said Wharton. "I looked it out, of course, when we fixed on this excursion. The tide doesn't get in till dark—and we're not staying till dark."

"No joke to get shut in the caves by the tide," said Bob. "Some fellows were once, and they had a chilly night of it."

"No danger of that now. No danger

except from the ghost of the smuggler, and we're not afraid of that."

"Ha, ha! No."

The Famous Five tramped into the cave.

The legend ran that a smuggler, slain in a desperate affray with the Revenue officers, haunted the scene of his ancient misdeeds. His groans and cries were frequently heard echoing and whining in the hollows of the cliff. That was not surprising, for the hollows and fissures were filled with the echoing sounds of the sea, and when the wind was high it wailed through the caves. There was plenty of sound, strangely like wailing cries and sobs, in the deep caverns, but the chums of the Remove were not likely to believe that the spirit of the old smuggler was haunting his lonely cavern.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! We're not the first here to-day," exclaimed Bob, pointing to a footprint in a patch of sand within the opening of the cave. "That was made since the last tide."

The juniors looked at the footprint in silent surprise. The same thought was in all their minds. Only a few days previously they had made a strange discovery in the caves beneath the new wireless station on the cliffs and on the other side of Pegg village. Surely they could not be on the verge of finding another secret hoard of explosives.

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beneath the massive Shoulder? The idea was absurd, and yet—the footprint! Whose could it be?

"Jolly few people come along here in the winter," exclaimed Wharton abruptly.

Bob Cherry raised his voice and shouted into the deep cave.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Anybody at home?"

His voice came thundering back in a thousand echoes. But there was no other reply.

"Whoever he was, he's gone," said Nugent. "Come on!"

Outside the cave the bright winter sunshine was sharp and clear. But once inside all was gloomy and shadowy. In hollows of the chalk lay pools of water left by the last receding tide, and the ground was almost carpeted by masses of dripping seaweed. The juniors glanced round them for other footprints, but the hard chalk showed no trace of any. They advanced a dozen yards up the rugged cave, and then Wharton turned on the light of his electric torch.

"Which way for the smugglers' treasure?" asked Bob.

Harry Wharton laughed. The tension was relieved.

In Pegg village there was a fixed belief that a treasure was hidden somewhere in the depths of the smugglers' cave. It was said—nobody knew exactly on what grounds—that the last cargo run by the smugglers had been hidden there, and never found.

The chums of the Remove had little hope of discovering that ancient cargo, if it existed. They did not expect to come across puncheons of rum, and bales of costly silks, and chests stacked with pieces of eight. But the legend of the smugglers' treasure gave a zest to the exploration of the shadowy, winding caves.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's the giddy spook!" exclaimed Bob suddenly. "Jolly polite of him to be at home when we're calling."

A wild and wailing sound echoed through the caves.

"The wind!" said Harry.

"Of course! But it sounds jolly human, all the same. No wonder the fishermen believe the place is haunted."

"Hark!"

From somewhere in the dense darkness, at a distance from the juniors, came a faint and painful cry.

The chums of the Remove started and drew together rather quickly. It was an eerie, unnerving sound.

"My hat! Was that the wind?" asked Nugent, in a low voice.

"Must have been," said Harry, but his face was grave. "The wind plays all sorts of tricks in these fissures and crevices. Couldn't have been anything else."

"Of—of course not!"

But the juniors stood still for a few minutes, listening with almost painful intentness. That strange, eerie cry had startled them. But though the wailing of the wind in the hollows still sounded and echoed, they did not hear again that peculiar cry.

Bob Cherry shook himself.

"Dash it all! Are we getting nervy?" he exclaimed. "Come on! We sha'n't find the smugglers' treasure before calling-over at this rate."

And the juniors tramped on, their electric torches gleaming about them on the wet and rugged rocks; but in spite of themselves, their faces were grave now, and their voices, when they spoke,

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subdued. That strange cry, echoing from the heart of the chalk caves, still seemed to be ringing in their ears.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The New Master of the Second!

"WHAT'S he like?"

The feast in the Second Form-room was ending.

Sammy Bunter was not one of the invited guests, but he was there. In such matters Sammy was very like his major in the Remove.

"You've seen him, Bunter?" said Gatty.

Bunter minor nodded. He was not able to speak for the moment, his mouth being full of cake.

"Well, what sort of a merchant is he to look at?" demanded Dicky Nugent. "Anything like our old Form master?"

Bunter minor shook his head.

"Looks a beast—what?" asked Myers. Another nod.

"Anything like Quelch?" asked Gatty in dismay.

"Worse!" said Sammy Bunter, finding his voice at last, the cake having gone the way of all cakes.

"Oh, rats!" said Dicky. "He couldn't be worse than Quelch. Don't you pull the long bow, young Bunter."

"Well, he looks worse," said Sammy Bunter. "Looks a jolly hard nut to crack, I can tell you. I heard him speaking to Mr. Quelch when he came in, and he's got a voice like—like—like an iron bar. Hard, you know. I'm jolly glad he's only a temporary beast. Shouldn't like to have a whole term with him."

"That sounds nice!" grunted Legge.

"Oh, that's only Bunter mi's rot!" said Dicky Nugent. "I dare say he's all right, and he would have been jolly pleased if he'd come to Courtfield Junction, and found us waiting for him with a taxi—I mean, a car. Do you know how he got here, Sammy?"

"In a taxi."

"Well, if he took a taxi from Redclyffe, he must be a silly ass," said Gatty. "It's three times the distance from Courtfield, and the fare would be enormous!"

"He didn't pay the man a big fare," said Sammy Bunter. "I saw him pay the taxi."

"You see everything, don't you?" jeered Gatty. "Just like your major in the Remove."

"Look here, Gatty—"

"Let that cake alone, you fat brigand. You've had half of it already!"

"If you're going to be mean about a slice of cake—"

"I'm going to rap your knuckles if you don't keep your paw off it!" said Gatty belligerently.

"He's close with money, just like you fellows with a cake," said Bunter minor, reverting to the subject of Mr. Sutcliffe.

"How do you know that, then?" asked Dicky.

"The taxi-driver wanted six shillings from Courtfield, and Sutcliffe made it five," said Bunter minor.

Dicky Nugent stared.

"From Courtfield?" he repeated.

"What rot!" said Gatty. "I tell you he never came to Courtfield. We waited on the platform for him."

"You missed him!" said Bunter minor. "You silly owl, as if we should miss him!"

"Well, the taxi came from Courtfield, anyhow," said Sammy. "I know the driver by sight; he's in the rank at the station there."

Myers chuckled.

"He must have been one of that lot in the first train, Dicky, after all. You missed him."

"You missed him, you mean!" said Nugent minor hotly.

"We all missed him," said Gatty pacifically; "but it's jolly queer. There wasn't a man who looked like a school-master, except the two we spoke to, and they weren't Sutcliffe."

"He never came to Courtfield," said Nugent minor obstinately. "May have picked up an empty taxi on the road from Redclyffe."

"Rot!" said Legge.

"What?"

"He came to Courtfield all right. You fellows were looking for him with your eyes shut!" explained Legge.

Dicky Nugent jumped up with a warlike look.

"Oh, cheese it!" said Legge, without moving. "You can jolly well prove it if you like. Go and look at him. He's in his study now. He went there after seeing the Head. Look at him, and you'll see that he's one of the passengers you let pass you at Courtfield."

Nugent minor glared at Legge.

"I know he jolly well isn't!" he said.

"I'll go and squint at him, and if he isn't, as I know he isn't, I'll jolly well punch your head when I come back, young Legge!"

"I'll be there when you do it," said Legge.

"Look here—"

"Order!" said Gatty. "Go and squint at the man, Nugent minor; that will settle it. Ask him if prep's at the usual time. That will be an excuse for butting into his study. Look here! I'll come with you!"

"Come on, then!" said Dicky. "You wait here, Legge. I'm punching your head when I get back!"

And Nugent minor left the Form-room with George Gatty. They proceeded to the masters' corridor, and Dicky tapped at the door of the study belonging to the master of the Second Form.

"Come in!"

It was rather a hard and metallic voice from within the study. It bore out Sammy Bunter's description.

Dicky opened the door, and entered with Gatty.

Both the fags looked curiously at the man who was to have charge of the Second Form for a couple of weeks.

He was sitting in an armchair before a glowing fire, smoking a cigarette. He was a man of rather slight, but strong and wiry build, with a hard face and penetrating eyes. Certainly he did not look the easy-going gentleman that the fags had hoped to see. Whether as a beast, he was equal to Mr. Quelch, they had yet to discover; but they had little doubt that he was a beast.

"Mr. Sutcliffe, sir?" said Nugent minor.

"I am Mr. Sutcliffe."

"We—we're in the Second, sir," said Dicky. "I'm Nugent minor, sir."

"Indeed!"

"This chap is Gatty, sir."

"Well?"

The new master did not seem especially pleased to make the acquaintance of these two important members of his Form.

The fags were staring at him hard.

They had never seen him before, and they were quite certain that he had not been among the passengers who had arrived at Courtfield by the three-thirty or by the four-o'clock train. They would not have forgotten that hard face with its strongly-marked features.

"I—I hope you had a good journey down, sir?" said Nugent minor.

"Thank you, I did!"

"We—we went to the station to meet you, sir—" Nugent minor thought that that was worth mentioning. Having taken so much trouble on the new master's behalf, the heroes of the Second were at least entitled to the credit of it.

"What?" exclaimed the new master.

He rose quickly from his chair, as if startled.

"We—we thought you'd like it," said Dicky, faltering under the hard stare of the Form master.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed the new master harshly. "I don't understand you. What do you mean?"

"We—we went to Courtfield—"

"To Courtfield?"

"Yes, sir. To meet your train, sir," stammered Nugent minor.

Nugent minor, when he had propounded his scheme in the Second, had declared that the newcomer would be certainly pleased by such a kind attention. Even if he was not pleased, there was no reason why he should be displeased.

But there was no doubt that he looked displeased. He looked angry and annoyed.

For a moment, indeed, his angry look startled the fags, and they backed a little towards the door.

But the new master's face cleared the next moment.

"You went to Courtfield to meet my train?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. We—we thought—"

The new master smiled.

"Did you meet it?"

"Yes, sir—the three-thirty; but you didn't come by it," said Nugent minor, "so we missed you, sir."

"You need not have taken the trouble," said the new master. "As it happens, I lost the connection at Lantham, and came on by the next train. You may go, my boys."

Dicky Nugent gasped.

"You—you came on by the next train to Courtfield, sir?" he stuttered.

"Yes. You may go. I do not desire to be troubled by the boys of my Form till I am rested after my journey."

The two fags backed out into the passage. It was only too obvious that the new master did not want them in his study. Dicky Nugent drew the door shut, and stared blankly at Gatty.

"The next train!" he whispered. "He says he came on by the next train. We waited for the next train, and we know he never came in it."

"What on earth is he telling us lies for?" said Gatty, in wonder.

"Goodness knows."

The two fags returned to the Second Form-room. Legge greeted them with a grin.

"Well?" he asked.

"I was right!" snapped Nugent minor. "He never came to Courtfield by train. We've never seen him before."

"Only—only he says he did!" gasped Gatty. "He's told us lies. What has he told us lies for? He says he came on by the second train, after losing the first."

"Well, so he did, then," said Legge.

"He didn't! He doesn't know we waited for the second train; but we did, and he never came in it. We looked at every passenger as he went off the platform, and there wasn't one a bit like him."

"Rot!" said Legge.

"I tell you he never came to Courtfield!" roared Nugent minor.

"But he says he did!" grinned Legge.

"He's telling whoppers!"

"Why should he?"

"I don't know—but he is."

"Rot!"

"Look here, young Legge, do you think we don't know whether we saw him at Courtfield Junction or not?"

"Oh, you looked for him with your eyes shut!" jeered Legge.

That did it, so to speak. Further argument was conducted, not by words, but by actions. Legge of the Second rolled on the floor in the enraged grasp of Nugent minor and Gatty. Legge of the Second was certain that Dicky Nugent and Gatty were wrong. It was not till his head had been thumped five or six times on the Form-room floor that he admitted that they were right.

have suggested returning before the appointed hour.

"Dash it all, that's rather beastly!" muttered Johnny Bull. "I suppose it can only be the wind!"

"Well, what else could it be?" said Wharton.

"Nothing else, I suppose. But it makes a fellow feel creepy."

"The creepfulness is rather terrific," remarked Hurree Singh. "As honourable, poetic Shakespeare says, it makes a fellow's particular hairs stand on end like quills upon the frightful porcupine."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob. "Fretful porcupine, fathead. Shakespeare made it a fretful porcupine."

"My esteemed Cherry—"

"How it echoes!" said Nugent, as Bob Cherry's stentorian laugh came rolling back from the rocks like thunder. "Sounds as if there were a hun-



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THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Mystery of the Cave!

"HARK!"

Bob Cherry uttered that exclamation suddenly.

The Famous Five stopped, their hearts beating fast.

From somewhere in the gloomy depths of the caverns, far beyond the glimmer of their torches, a weird and wailing cry came.

It was like the wailing of the wind in the hidden hollows, and yet unlike. Anywhere but in the depths of the caves under the great Shoulder, the juniors would have been certain that that cry came from a human throat—that it was the cry of one in pain and despair.

It had a strangely thrilling effect on their nerves. All the quintette began rather to wish that they had found some other occupation for the half-day, instead of the exploration of the smugglers' cave. But they were ashamed of admitting uneasiness, and not for worlds would any member of the party

dread silly asses chortling, instead of only one."

"Why, you duffer—" said Bob.

"Hark!"

As the loud echoes died down, the wailing cry came again from the hidden distance. Nugent gave a shudder.

"By Jove! I'll swear that wasn't the wind!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Suppose somebody's got lost in the cave? There's no end of winding fissures leading out of one cave into another. People have been lost here. Might be some poor beggar yelling for help."

Bob Cherry whistled.

"It's possible," he said. "We know somebody's been here since the morning tide—there was that footprint. We thought he had gone—but he may have got lost—whoever he was."

"If that's the case, it's jolly lucky we came," said Nugent. "Let's look, anyhow. We may find a giddy lost tripper instead of a smugglers' treasure."

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'IN THE NEW BOY'S POWER!'

(Continued from previous page.)

on his arrival, and found that his brane was developed far above the avveridge. He has an uncanny nollidge of all sorts of subjects. And a jeenius, my dear Lickham, is not to be judged by the same standers as a common or garden mortle. He is aloud to do things which they would not dare to do. If Jolly, for instance, had thrown a jam-tart at you, I should have birched him until he squealed for mercy! But I should not dream of birching Tweedy, or punnishing him in any way. You cannot ask a jeenius to touch his toes. It simply isn't done."

"Besides, it would spoil the shape of my trowsis!" chimed in Tweedy.

"Eggsactly!" said the Head, with a nod. Then he turned to Mr. Lickham, who was gaping at him in blank amazement. "I fear I have made a mistake, Lickham, in placing this boy in your Form. It is an insult to his intelligenco. He must be promoted into the Fifth at once!"

The Head linked his arm with that of Tweedy.

"Come, my dear boy!" he said. "I will interjuice you to Mr. Justiss, the master of the Fifth, in whose Form you will hencefourth be a pupil."

And the Head, with a curt nod at the flabbergasted Mr. Lickham, piloted young Tweedy out of the Form-room.

II.

OUT in the passidge, the Head turned to the new boy.

"You really ought not to have shyed that jam-tart at Mr. Lickham," he said. "These things aren't done, you know!"

"Bow-wow!" said Tweedy cheerfully. "If I choose to pelt old Lickham—or any other master, for that matter—with jam-tarts, you can't stop me. And you know it!"

The Head breathed hard through his nose. Gladly would he have froggs-marched this cheeky youth to his study, and birched all the impudence out of him. But he dared not lay a finger on the tailor's son, and he knew it. And Tweedy knew it, too, and took advantage of it.

The Head was in the new boy's power! He was compleatly under his thum!

Some time since, the Head had bought a pair of trowsis from Tweedy's father. He had bought them, but he hadn't paid for them. And the tailor, a big and powerful man, had come to St. Sam's to demand his dues.

Being temperily on the rox, the Head was not able to pay for the trowsis; whereupon it had been arranged that he should reseave Cuthbert Tweedy into St. Sam's as a pupil, in part payment for the trowsis.

Mr. Tweedy was very ambitious for his son. He was not content that Cuthbert should remain a humble member of the Fourth Form, rapped in obscurity, like a rose that is born to blush unseen. Oh, dear, no! He wanted to see his son right at the top of the tree—Kaptin of St. Sam's, Head of Games, cock of the walk, and lord of the manner.

"If my Cuthbert isn't Kaptin of the School within a fortnight," Mr. Tweedy had told the Head, "I shall have something to say to you—and I shall say it with a birch-rod!"

Being an awful cowerd at hart, for all his bombast and bluster, the Head had agreed to the tailor's terms. He had

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undertaken, by hook or crook, to wangle Cuthbert into the Kaptinsy.

This could not be done at a stroke, of course. But the first step had now been taken. Cuthbert had been promoted from the Fourth to the Fifth. Prezzantly, the Head would find an excuse for shifting him into the Sixth. Then he would pick a quarrel with Burleigh, the prezzant Kaptin, and sack him from his offis. There would have to be an election for a new skipper, and Cuthbert Tweedy would be one of the candied-dates, with the whole weight of the Head's support and influence behind him.

Within a fortnight—if all went well—the new boy would find himself skipper of St. Sam's.

The Head did not relish the part he had to play—the part of a Senior Wangler. But unless he wished to be shown up by Mr. Tweedy, as a man who had obtained a pair of trowsis without paying for them, he would have to conform to his credditer's terms. Besides, Mr. Tweedy had threatened him with a birching; and the meer thought of a flagellation was enuff to make the Head's elation flag.

"Look hear, Tweedy," said the Head, turning to Cuthbert, "I hope you won't make yourself a newsance in the Fifth. Mr. Justiss is a very funny man to play trix with; and, anyway, I can't always be coming to your reskew, and saving you from the wrath of outraged Form-masters. I want you to be as good as gold, in the Fifth."

"Go and eat coke!" said Cuthbert perlutely. "I'll do as I jolly well like!"

"So be it," mermered the Head.

And he ushered the cheeky-faced Cuthbert into the Fifth Form-room, where the Fifth were at lessons.

Mr. Justiss boughed to the Head with curtesy.

"Good-mourning, sir!" he said.

"Good-mourning, Justiss! I have brought you a new pupil—Cuthbert Tweedy. I put him in the Fourth when he came, but he is far too advanced for that Form."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Justiss, with a disparting glanse at Cuthbert's trowsis.

"Take no notiss of his baggs, Mr. Justiss," said the Head. "The fact is, this boy is a jeenius and a jeenius is permitted to wear trowsis which, on the legs of others, would be considered an affront to good taste. And bekawse this boy is a jeenius, Justiss, I want you to make every allowance for him. He will probably be somewhat strange in his manner. If he should cheek you, or pot at you with a peashooter occasionally, or throw a jam-tart in your face, you must wink your eye at it. Do not punnish him for his conduct. Put it down to the fact that he is a jeenius."

"Bless my sole!" gasped Mr. Justiss.

"I will now leave Tweedy in your hands," said the Head.

And he was gone in a flash.

As for Cuthbert, he dropped into a vacant place in the front row, and settled down to enjoy himself.

Mr. Justiss soon discovered that it was not all hunny, having a jeenius in his class. Cuthbert amused himself by making paper pellets, and dipping them in the ink, and flicking them at his Form-master. Mr. Justiss was fairly peppered with pellets, and his face was soon as black as a nigger minstrol's. But after the Head's warning, he dared not raise his hand against this eggsasperating jeenius, who seemed to be at liberty to do what he jolly well liked.

But the trials and tribulations of Mr. Justiss came to an end the next day.

The Head considered that the time was ripe for Cuthbert Tweedy to be promoted from the Fifth to the Sixth; and with this object in view, Doctor Birchmell swept into the Fifth Form-room during the joggraphy lesson.

"Good-morning, Justiss!" he said jenially. "How's things?"

Mr. Justiss groaned.

"That dredful boy, Tweedy, has been leading me the dickens of a dance, sir!" he said. "He has turned the Form-room into a bare-garden! As to his being a jeenius, I have failed to detect any sign of jeenius in him. He refuses to do any manner of work——"

"A sure sympton of jeenius," said the Head. "A jeenius need only work when he is in the mood for it. Like the lillies of the field, he toils not, neither does he spin. But I will quickly prove to you that Tweedy is indeed a jeenius. Stand out before the class, Tweedy!"

The Head gave Cuthbert a sly wink, and the new boy stepped out.

"Stand behind me," said the Head, who had a slate tied round his neck and hanging down his back, "and I will proceed to put you through your paces. I will ask you a number of questions, and if you are able to answer them correctly, it will prove beyond all doubt that you are indeed a jeenius."

Cuthbert promptly stepped behind the Head's back. On the slate were chalked a number of questions, together with the correct answers. Neither the class nor Mr. Justiss were aware of the slate, for the Head took jolly good care to stand facing them all the time.

"Now, Tweedy," he said sharply, "what is the cappital of France?"

"Rome, sir!" said Cuthbert promptly.

The Head turned triumphantly to Mr. Justiss.

"You here him, Justiss? He knows that Rome is the cappital of France!"

"I wasn't aware of it myself, sir," said Mr. Justiss dryly.

"Ah, but then you are not a jeenius!" smiled the Head.

Then, keeping his back turned to Tweedy, he rattled off a running fire of questions.

"Where does the River Tems rise, Tweedy?"

"At its sauce, sir."

"And where does it set—I mean, terminate?"

"At its mouth, sir."

"Wonderful! Wonderful!" mermered the Head. "Now, what is the cheef industry in Bradford?"

"Brads, sir!"

"And Hamburg?"

"Hams, sir!"

"And Brussela?"

"Sprouts, sir!"

So it went on, until the cattychism was finished.

Tweedy's answers astonnished Mr. Justiss. They seemed to him to show evidence of pottiness rather than of jeenius. As for the Fifth, they could only sit and stare, and wonder how the Head would take it.

Doctor Birchmell beemed all over his dial.

"Tweedy," he said, "you are indeed a jeenius! There is not a boy at St. Sam's who would have answered those questions as you have done!"

"Indeed there is not!" mermered Mr. Justiss.

"I cannot allow you to remain in a Form where there is no scope for your jeenius," went on the Head. "I hearby promote you into the Sixth, where your jeenius will be given a chance to flower and blossom. Follow me!"

So saying, the Head whisked out of the Fifth Form-room—walking backwards, so that nobody should see the slate—and Cuthbert trotted at his heels.

Mr. Justiss and the Fifth, were left gasping!

THE END.

(Don't miss: "THE FIGHT FOR THE KAPTINCY!"—next week's thriller by Dicky Nugent.)



(Continued from page 13.)

The juniors pushed in, in the direction from which the wailing sound had seemed to proceed—though in the midst of the hollow echoes it was difficult to ascertain the precise direction.

They had explored the caves a good many times before, on half-holidays, and knew their way about them pretty well. But the caves were so extensive that no one, probably, had ever explored their full extent. Still, the juniors were in little danger of losing themselves, a fate that might very easily have happened to a stranger, once out of sight of the daylight at the mouth of the cavern.

From one great hollow to another, fissures and "faults" in the chalk gave access—in some places with ample space, in others, with barely room for a fellow to squeeze through.

The cry was heard no more; and the chums of the Remove wondered whether their cars had deceived them, or whether they had overshot the mark and left the place they were seeking behind them.

They turned back at last, tramping and clambering from cave to cave, flashing their lights to and fro.

"There it is again!" breathed Bob.

The faint, painful cry awoke the echoes once more.

"We've passed the place," said Harry.

"But we've been keeping our eyes open," said Johnny Bull. "If there was anyone here we'd have seen him."

"Might have fallen into some pit—there are big holes in the chalk, in places."

"Better be careful—we don't want to follow him in."

Again and again, though at lengthy intervals, the juniors heard the cry; and they were fully convinced now that it was a human cry. The wind was wailing in the fissures of the rock, but they picked out that strange cry at once, whenever it recurred, from the wail of the wind.

But of the unseen individual who was calling they could find nothing. They came back to the great outer cave, where they were in sight of the daylight and the sea once more. It was here that they had heard the strange sound at its loudest.

And now they heard it again—strange, eerie, nerve-shaking—like the cry of a lost soul.

They stared round them in bewilderment.

In the massive sides of the cavern there were innumerable fissures; a day and a night would not have sufficed to explore them all. But it was inconceivable that anyone could have penetrated into one of the narrow fissures and remained there. Why should he have done so?

"This is jolly well getting on my nerves!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Blessed if I don't begin to believe

that it's the giddy old smuggler haunting the caves, just as the fishermen say."

"The hauntfulness is not terrific," said Hurree Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

"Listen!"

"Oh, come on!" exclaimed Wharton. "I'm certain of the direction this time—it's over there."

He tramped across the rugged floor of the cave, flashing his light ahead. Before him, as he stopped, rose the slanting side of the cave, great masses of rough chalk, split by countless cracks. He flashed the light into a dozen fissures one after another. Some of them were a few feet deep; others extended far into the rock. The cry was repeated, so close that it made Wharton jump.

He leaped back, startled.

"What the thump—"

"I—I say, it's uncanny!" stammered Nugent. "It came from the solid chalk, Harry—here—"

"I—I can't make it out. If it's some fellow wanting help, why doesn't he call for help, instead of wailing like that?" muttered the captain of the Remove. "It can't be some silly ass larking with us, surely."

"My hat, if that's it, we'll jolly well thump him when we've rooted him out!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I shall enjoy bestowing the thumpfulness on the esteemed idiot," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look!"

Bob Cherry gasped out the words. His light glimmered on a dark spot on the chalk at their feet, and he pointed to it with a shaking finger.

Wharton uttered an exclamation.

"Blood!"

"Good heavens!" stammered Nugent, his teeth chattering.

"What on earth has happened here this afternoon?" exclaimed Wharton. "There's been foul play of some sort."

He bent over the mark on the chalk. It was a bloodstain, as if some wounded man had lain there. And now that their attention was directed to the ground, the juniors found several more spots of dull crimson on the chalk. They cast startled glances into the deep shadows that surrounded them.

Far away, at the end of a tunnel as it seemed to the eye, was the light of day, and the glimmering sea rolling on the shingle. But where the juniors stood all was dark, save for the light of the electric torches. Round them was deep shadows—blackness at a short distance. The thought that some terrible tragedy had taken place in the shadowy caves that very day was unnerving.

Wharton pulled himself together with an effort.

"Somebody's been hurt here, and quite recently," he said. "We've got to find him. There! Listen!"

The feeble, anguished cry came again, and it seemed to the bewildered juniors that it came from the solid chalk side of the cavern, where no opening was to be seen.

But Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gave a sudden shout. The keen eyes of the nabob had detected what had so far escaped the juniors' eyes.

"Look, my esteemed chums! There is a fissure here; it has been blocked up!" he exclaimed.

"Great pip!"

"Oh, so that's it!" exclaimed Wharton.

The Famous Five gathered close to the spot, throwing the light upon it, and examining it keenly. There was a cavity in the chalk, and the mouth of the

opening had been blocked up. Boulders and fragments of chalky rock had been stacked in, so carefully that scarcely a rift was left, and the block looked like a part of the cavern wall.

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"That accounts," he said. "Whoever was crying out is blocked in there, shut up in a hollow of the rock. Somebody has been knocked on the head and buried alive in the chalk. What awful villain—"

"Hark!"

The weird cry came again, close at hand now. All the juniors knew now that it came from the recess in the cavern wall, so carefully blocked up by an unknown and ruthless hand.

"We'll jolly soon have him out!" said Bob between his teeth.

"Put your beef into it."

The juniors set the torches down, with the light gleaming on the chalk wall, and set to work. With busy, eager hands they tore away the masses and rugged fragments that blocked the opening. Many hands made light work, and the barrier was rapidly torn away and the opening of the fissure revealed.

Wharton caught up his torch, and plunged through as soon as the opening was large enough to admit him. Then he gave a shout.

"Here he is!"

On the chalk at his feet lay a man bound hand and foot, gagged with a handkerchief fastened across his mouth. His white, drawn face glimmered colourless in the light; his eyes stared wildly at the captain of the Remove. Wharton understood now why the unfortunate prisoner of the cave had uttered that wailing cry, instead of shouting for help. The gag in his mouth prevented utterance of words. Only with painful efforts was the hapless man able to utter a sound at all. He could not speak, but he cried out faintly as he saw the school-boys, and his dilated eyes beseeched them.

Wharton threw himself on his knees beside the bound man, and tore at the cords that fastened him.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Not Nice for the Second!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

It was roll-call at Greyfriars, and Billy Bunter rolled into Hall with the Remove. He blinked over the juniors and noted the absence of five members of the Form.

"I say, you fellows, Wharton's mob haven't come in," said Bunter, with a grin. "They'll be for it."

"Silly asses!" commented Peter Todd. "They've been out of gates all the afternoon. Where have they got to?"

Bunter chuckled.

"Rooting about in the caves at Pegg," he said. "Catch me spending a half-holiday rooting about filthy old caves. I say, Peter, I wonder if they've got cut off by the tide? He, he, he!"

"You fat image!" said Peter. "If they've got cut off by the tide, they're booked for a night in the caves. Is that anything to cackle at?"

"He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter appeared to think that it was something to cackle at, for he cackled unmusically.

"Tide isn't in till after dark to-day," said Redwing. "They won't stay late enough for that."

"Well, it's dark now," said Bunter. "I think it's jolly likely, myself. I offered to go with them if they'd take a lunch-basket. They refused. Now

they'll be sorry I wasn't with them. He, he, he!"

"Silence!" called out Wingate of the Sixth.

Mr. Quelch had entered to take the roll.

Some of the Removites glanced towards the big oaken doors, expecting to see the Famous Five dodge in at the last moment and scuttle to their places in the Remove.

But they did not appear, and Mr. Quelch began to take the roll. When he came to the B's there was a pause.

"Bull!"

Johnny Bull was marked absent.

At the C's there was another pause.

"Cherry!"

Mr. Quelch frowned, and marked down a second absentee.

He frowned still more when he came to the H's, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh failed to answer to his name.

"Looks a bit stormy—what?" giggled Bunter. "I told you those fellows were for it."

"Shurrup!" grunted Toddy.

The roll continued, with another pause in the N's.

"Nugent major."

No answer came from the Remove. For a fourth time Mr. Quelch marked down an absentee and frowned more thunderously than ever.

"Nugent minor!"

"Adsum!" squeaked Dicky Nugent from the ranks of the Second.

The roll went on without a break till the letter W was reached.

"Wharton!"

No reply.

Mr. Quelch's frown was quite formidable now. No fewer than five absentees had to be marked, and they were all members of his own Form. The Remove master's expression hinted that William George Bunter's surmise was well-founded, that the five culprits were "for it."

"Trouble waiting for those chaps when they come home with the milk in the morning," remarked the Bunder, as the Greyfriars fellows trooped out of Hall after call-over.

"I say, you fellows, suppose they're drowned?"

"Fathead!"

"Well, they might be, you know," said Bunter brightly. "Fellows have been drowned in those caves. I fancy they're wishing by this time that I'd gone with them to look after them. He, he, he!"

"Perhaps they preferred drowning to your company, Bunter," suggested Vernon-Smith. "Almost anybody would, I think."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"If they're drowned, I'm going to have Study No. 1," said Bunter.

"What?" roared Peter Todd.

"Don't you get butting in, Toddy," said Bunter warmly. "I used to be in Study No. 1 at one time, as you know. I couldn't stand Wharton and Nugent, they were cheeky. Of course, I'm sorry if they're drowned; still, they were cheeky. I shall have Study No. 1 again."

"Why, you—you—"

"You cheese it, Toddy," said Bunter, wagging a fat forefinger admonishingly at Peter Todd. "I've put in first claim, and I'm going to have the study. And I say again—Yarooooooop!"

Billy Bunter really had no intention of saying that. He said it as Toddy grasped him and flattened him down on the floor. Bunter smote the floor with a terrific bump, and roared.

"There!" gasped Peter. "Take that!"

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"Yarooooooop!"

"And that!"

Peter tapped Bunter's head on the floor, not gently, and left him roaring. Bunter sat up, still roaring.

"Yow-ow-ow-wooop! Oh crumbs! Beast! Wow!"

"What's that thumping row?" asked Dicky Nugent, coming along from Big Hall with a mob of fags. "Shut up, Bunter!"

"Yow-ow!" gasped Bunter. "I—I'll lick that cad Toddy! He thinks he's going to have Study No. 1, if Wharton and Nugent are drowned!"

"What?" yelled Nugent minor. "Who says my major's drowned, you fat dummy?"

"Eh?" Bunter blinked at him. "I think it's very likely, you know, young Nugent. They went exploring the caves, and they haven't come in, and it's high tide at dark. Most likely they're drowned—Yaroooh! Why, you cheeky fag! Leggo! Hands off! Yooooop!"

Bunter's cheeky suggestion that his major was probably drowned did not seem to please Dicky Nugent, somehow. He grasped the Owl of the Remove by the collar with both hands, and banged his head on the floor, and Bunter gave a fiendish yell.

Dicky Nugent & Co. walked on, and left Bunter sprawling and spluttering. Mr. Quelch, coming along from Big Hall, almost tripped over him. He jumped back just in time.

"Bless my soul! What is that?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Who—what—Bunter! Why are you sprawling on the floor, in that ridiculous manner, Bunter? What do you mean by it?"

"I—I—ow—oh—groogh—I—" spluttered Bunter.

"Get up at once!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "How dare you play such absurd pranks in the corridor, Bunter? Are you not ashamed of yourself?"

"I—I didn't—groogh—I wasn't—I mean—I—"

"Take a hundred lines!"

"Oh dear! But I wasn't—"

"Take two hundred lines!"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Bunter rolled away hurriedly. He felt that it was wiser to depart before Mr. Quelch made it three hundred. The Remove master gave an angry snort, and strode away to his study.

Mr. Quelch was not in a good temper. He was deeply annoyed by five members of his Form being absent from call-over. Such a matter seemed a trifle light as air to the Remove fellows; but that was only one of the many matters upon which they did not see eye to eye with their Form master. But that was not all. The new master of the Second had a severe headache after his train journey—at all events, so he declared—and the Head had asked Mr. Quelch to take the Second in prep that evening.

The Head had asked him very courteously, but a request from the Head was equivalent to a command. Mr. Quelch was not unwilling to oblige a colleague, especially on his first day at the school. But he had had enough of the Second Form for one day—too much, in fact.

Mr. Quelch was fed-up with the Second, though certainly he would not have expressed his feelings in those words.

Certainly the Second Form would have let him off the duty gladly, if they had known. Unfortunately, that did not rest with the Second Form.

Towards seven o'clock there were cheery faces in the Second Form room,

the happy fags being quite unconscious so far, of their impending fate.

The rumour had spread that Mr. Sutcliffe had a bad headache after his journey, and that he was lying down on the sofa in his study. Dicky Nugent & Co. were not, perhaps, unsympathetic towards a gentleman who was suffering from a bad headache. But they really had no leisure to think about Mr. Sutcliffe, being occupied with thinking about their worthy selves.

If Mr. Sutcliffe was lying down with a bad headache, it looked as if there might be no prep that evening. That prospect was so joyful that the Second Form naturally had no consideration to waste upon their Form master.

"No prep, very likely!" said Dicky Nugent blissfully. "If his napper's really bad, you know, he won't want us in prep—his first night here, too. Looks like a good thing for us."

"We don't mind if Walker takes us," grinned Gatty. "Walker will let us do as we like, so long as we don't make row enough to interrupt his reading."

"May be no prep at all."

"Hurrah!"

The Form-room door opened.

"Why—what!" ejaculated Dicky Nugent.

The grim face and lean, angular figure of Mr. Quelch appeared in the doorway. There was a sudden silence as the Remove master entered. The Second Form blinked at him.

"Take your places," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Your new Form master has a headache, my boys, and I am taking you in preparation this evening."

"You, sir?" stuttered Nugent minor.

"I!" said Mr. Quelch, more grimly than before.

"Oh!"

And throughout the Second Form the happy satisfaction died out of every face.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Startling Discovery!

HARRY WHARTON, kneeling beside the bound man in the fissure of the smugglers' cave, did not lose a moment. The man's eyes watched him like those of a wounded animal. From the blackness of despair the unexpected arrival of the Greyfriars juniors had brought the hapless man life and hope, and he seemed overcome. The Co. looked into the fissure over Wharton's shoulders while he released the prisoner. Their faces were pale and tense.

It was plain that the chums of the Remove had come upon a terrible crime, which might very easily have proved a terrible tragedy. They were thankful that they had given that half-holiday to the exploration of the old caves. What would have happened to this man if no one had come? His cries, half-strangled by the gag, could never have sounded as far as the mouth of the cavern, even had anyone passed so close along the foot of the cliff as to hear.

Wharton found it no easy task to release the bound man, and he opened his knife to cut the cords. The prisoner was bound with great care and skill, and whoever had fastened him up had evidently taken a great deal of trouble over the task. He could not move a limb, and the gag had been secured in his mouth by cords winding about his head. By desperate chewing and biting the hapless man had only been able to shift it sufficiently to give utterance to feeble cries. Wharton removed the gag first, but the man did not speak; his

"You needn't have taken the trouble to meet my train," said the new master. "As it happens, I lost the connection at Lantham, and came on by the next train." Dicky Nugent gasped, for he and Gatty knew that the new master was lying.
(See Chapter 9.)



lips were white and numbed, his teeth chattered. Wharton noticed that he lay on a thick travelling-rug, but the cold in the cavern was intense.

The bonds fell to pieces at last under the sawing of Wharton's pocket-knife, and the man was free. But he did not move.

"Let me help you up," said Wharton softly. "Lend a hand, Bob."

"What-ho!"

The fissure extended back about a dozen feet into the chalk, and it was not more than four feet wide. Blocked up as it had been with fragments of rock, it was as secure a prison as could have been devised. But for the cries of the prisoner, certainly the juniors would never have guessed that he was there; indeed, even while he was crying out, they had passed the spot two or three times unsuspecting. There was little room to move in the confined space, but Wharton and Bob Cherry grasped the man and lifted him to his feet. He gave a shrill cry of pain.

"Cramp," said Bob. "Keep your pecker up, sir. It will pass off when you get moving."

"Lift him out," said Harry.

The man was a good size, somewhat stout in build. Johnny Bull lent a hand, and the three juniors lifted him out of the fissure and bore him into the cave. The man's eyes gleamed as he caught sight of the daylight in the far distance down the cave and the gleam of the tumbling sea in the winter sunset. It was the sight of freedom to him.

Hurree Janset Ram Singh lifted out the rug, and it was wrapped round the shivering man, and he sat down on a chalk boulder. He tried to speak, but failed, and sat hugging himself in the warmth of the rug, his teeth chattering almost like castanets. He breathed in gasps, shaken from head to foot by long, icy shudders.

The juniors gathered round him, silent and sympathetic. They had saved him, they were ready to help him to get away from the cave; but the man was in no state to move yet.

The daylight at the mouth of the cavern was growing dimmer; it was time for the juniors to go if they were to reach the school in time for calling-over. But they were not thinking of call-over now. The rescued prisoner of

the cave demanded their care and attention, and school could wait.

Who he was, how he had come to be imprisoned in the cave, they could not even begin to guess. It was an amazing mystery to them so far. The man looked a respectable, middle-aged gentleman, rather stout in build, with a bald spot on his head. His clothes were good, but they were obviously very tight for him—he looked as if he was dressed in the clothes of a man slighter in build than himself. There was a bruise on his head, and on his colourless cheek blood was dried where it had run down from a cut.

The juniors knew that he must have been struck down—probably stunned, or almost stunned—and then he had been blocked up in the fissure. His wound had bled while he was being handled by his unknown assailant; the crimson stains yet showed on the chalk near the fissure.

The man stirred at last; his breathing became more regular, his face showed a little colour, and he rubbed and chafed his hands to restore the warmth. Several times he tried to speak, but his

numbed lips refused to form the words. But he succeeded at last.

"Heaven bless you!" were his first words.

"Thank goodness we came here this afternoon, sir!" said Harry. "Thank goodness we found you!"

"I think you have saved my life. I should have frozen to death if I had remained there the night. And that wretch told me I should remain! He promised to send word where I could be found to-morrow. But—but I should have frozen to death before the morning; I am sure of it!"

He shuddered.

"As soon as you're able to walk, sir, we'll help you along to Pegg," said Bob. "You can get a bed at the Anchor, and a doctor, or a trap to take you home. It's only a mile, and we'll help you."

"Heaven bless you!" said the man again.

There was another long silence, but the hapless man was evidently recovering a little. He pressed his hand to the bruise on his head.

Wharton was thinking it out.

"One of us had better cut in to Pegg and telephone for the doctor from the Anchor," he said. "Dr. Pillbury can get across there in his car by the time we get this gentleman there."

"Good egg!" said Bob.

"I'll go," said Nugent.

And Frank Nugent hurried down to the mouth of the cave and scudded away over sand and shingle towards the fishing village, where the lights were already beginning to gleam out over the bay.

"Thank you for helping me like this," said the rescued man faintly. "You are schoolboys, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir; we belong to Greyfriars."

The man started.

"Greyfriars School?" he exclaimed. "I was going there."

"You were going to Greyfriars?" exclaimed Wharton in astonishment.

"Yes."

The man was silent again, breathing hard; and the juniors watched him in great surprise. Their interest in the stranger deepened when they learned that he was going to their school.

"I came from London to-day," the man went on, after a long pause. "I should have gone to Courtfield Junction; but owing to that—that villain—I got out at Redclyffe to walk. He represented himself as a Greyfriars master—a falsehood, as I know now." He pressed his hands to his head and groaned. "Fool that I was! He must have been watching me, and entered into conversation with the intention of deceiving me and robbing me!"

"You've been robbed?" asked Bob.

"Everything! Even my clothes and papers, even to my boots and hat. He gave me his own in exchange, the dastard!"

"But why did he change clothes?" exclaimed Wharton, in astonishment. "He's given you a good suit of clothes, though it's rather too small for you."

"I cannot understand that. I cannot understand it at all; for I had little to make this crime worth while—a watch, a pin, a few pounds. It is amazing that he should have committed the crime for so little. We talked in the express; he told me he was a Greyfriars master, and he seemed to know a good deal about the school—and I had no doubts. As I was going to the school I was interested in what he could tell me about the place. He looked a well-dressed and respectable man. He told me there was

a short cut from Redclyffe, which people belonging to Greyfriars were in the habit of using instead of going on to Courtfield."

"It's a jolly long cut!" said Bob.

"I did not know that. I took him for what he represented himself to be. I got out at Redclyffe to walk to the school with him, leaving my trunk to go on to Courtfield. He said that the short cut lay by the beach, and I was glad enough to see the sea——"

"The awful rotter! The way is on the Pegg road, not in this direction at all," said Johnny Bull.

The man nodded.

"I guessed afterwards, of course, that he was tricking me into a lonely place. But I suspected nothing then; it would never have occurred to me that I was worth deluding and robbing. I had told him in our conversation that I was poor and glad of a temporary post as a master in a school. He knew I had a little—a few things and some books in my bag—a few pounds in my pocket. What man in his senses would risk penal servitude, and perhaps the gallows, for so little? It was not as if he were some desperate tramp; he was well-dressed and looked well-off. I cannot understand it. But when we were passing this cave he told me the legend connected with it, and suggested entering. I preferred to get to the school as soon as possible, so declined; and then, to my amazement, he whipped out a pistol and ordered me into the cave."

"My hat!"

"Even then I supposed it was some ghastly jest. But as I refused to obey he struck me down with the butt of the pistol. I was half-stunned; he led and dragged me into the cave. Then I knew that I was in desperate hands. He was stronger than I, and he had the pistol; I was at his mercy. He forced me to change clothes. Why, I cannot imagine, for his clothes were more expensive than mine—twice the value at least—and mine did not fit him; they were too large for him. His, as you see, are too small for me. He took even my hat, though it was too large for him, and he had to pad the lining with something to keep it on. Unless he was mad, I cannot understand it. But he was sane enough."

The juniors listened in amazed silence.

"Then he bound me, as you saw—bound me very carefully—and placed the gag in my mouth, and blocked me up in the fissure. I supposed that he was burying me alive. I was frantic with terror, but I could not speak. But he told me that he was simply shutting me up here to keep me safe till he was clear away, and that to-morrow morning he would send word to the headmaster at Greyfriars where I was to be found."

The man shuddered.

"Then I was left in cold and darkness. For his own sake, I suppose, he wished me to survive if possible; and he left me the rug, which is all that saved me from freezing. It was his own rug, worth a good deal, for it is a good one—worth more than the money he took from me. I cannot understand his actions in the least. For he was sane."

"Blessed if it doesn't sound like a lunatic!" said Bob Cherry. "He doesn't seem to have gained much, and he will go to prison for this for years."

"It is inexplicable. From what he said, it appears that he will not be clear away till to-night at least; and now I am free I can set the police on his track. He must be still in the vicinity."

Johnny Bull uttered an exclamation.

"It's the man! The man we saw in——"

"What?"

"The man with clothes too large for him, and a hat too large, that blew off! Look here, sir, what's your name?"

"John Sutcliffe."

Bob Cherry gave a shout of amazement.

"Mr. Sutcliffe! The new master of the Second at Greyfriars?"

"Yes."

"Great Scott!"

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Light at Last!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stared blankly at the man they had rescued.

The discovery was simply amazing.

This was the man whom Dicky Nugent & Co. had schemed to meet at Courtfield Junction. This was John Sutcliffe, the temporary master of the Second Form at Greyfriars.

It was the last name the chums of the Remove had expected to hear.

Bob Cherry made a dive for the hat he had been carrying, and which he had dropped and forgotten. He picked it up and brought it to the man sitting on the chalk boulder.

"Is this yours?"

Mr. Sutcliffe took it and stared at it. "Yes; that is my hat. My name is written in it."

"Then we've seen the man!" shouted Bob.

"I knew he was a bad egg!" said Johnny Bull sententiously. "I told you fellows so."

Wharton's eyes blazed with excitement.

"We know the man by sight. We know the way he went," he exclaimed. "We can jolly well put the police after him. The man who was wearing your hat was the man who shut you up here, that's certain."

"You—you saw him?"

Wharton explained. The new master of the Second nodded when he had finished.

"That's the man, undoubtedly," he said. "He must have passed you going up the cliff path after leaving me here. A man with strongly-marked features and very sharp eyes, rather close together——"

"That's the man," said Bob. "His clobber was too large for him, and his hat blew off on the cliff for the same reason. The bobbies will know the sort of man to look for with so many witnesses to describe him."

"But what he did it for is a giddy mystery," said Johnny Bull. "He must have had some reason, but I'm blessed if I can get on to it."

Mr. Sutcliffe shook his head.

"I can't understand it," he said. "The exchange of clothes was to his disadvantage; the rug he left with me was worth more than the money he took. He has gained nothing, or next to nothing, yet if I had died in the cave of cold it would have been a hanging matter. But I think I can move now, my dear boys, if you will help me!"

"What-ho!"

Mr. Sutcliffe rose feebly to his feet. Harry Wharton took one of his arms, Bob the other. Most of his weight fell on them as they led him from the cave, but the juniors were strong and sturdy. It was high time to be moving, for the winter dusk was thickening, and the tide was coming in.

Out of the gloomy cave the juniors tramped away over the sand and shingle towards the glimmering lights of Pegg.



Dicky Nugent & Co. walked on, leaving Bunter sprawling and spluttering. Mr. Quelch, coming along from Big Hall, almost tripped over him. He jumped back just in time. "Bless my soul! What is that?" exclaimed the Remove master. "Who—what—Bunter! Why are you sprawling on the floor in that ridiculous manner, Bunter? What do you mean by it?"
(See Chapter 11.)

The unfortunate master dragged more and more heavily on the juniors. At last the four of them lifted him bodily and carried him along. Even with four strong pairs of arms to bear the burden it was no easy task getting him to the village. As they came in sight of the Anchor Inn Frank Nugent came running to meet them.

"All serene!" he exclaimed. "There's a room and a bed got ready. I've phoned to the doctor, and he's coming over in his car as quick as he can. He will be here by the time we get the chap to his room."

"Good!"
A curious crowd at the Anchor surveyed the juniors and the injured man as Mr. Sutcliffe was carried in. He was taken up and placed on a bed, and by that time the doctor's car was heard in the cobbly street. Dr. Pillbury came up, and Harry Wharton & Co. explained to him, and willingly enough handed Mr. Sutcliffe over to the medical gentleman's care.

"Leave him to me," said Dr. Pillbury. "I will give him a lift to Greyfriars in my car when I've attended to him, and I will speak to the police. You boys had better get back to school."

"I was thinking so, sir," said Wharton, with a smile. "They will be wondering what on earth's become of us."

And a few minutes later the trap from the Anchor was bowling away by the shadowy lanes, with the Famous Five in it, bound for Greyfriars.

"Who'd have thought it?" said Frank Nugent. "Fancy the man being Sutcliffe! Poor beggar, he's had a rough time. I'll bet my minor never guessed why he didn't turn up at Courtfield Junction this afternoon."

"Not likely!" chuckled Bob.

"But what on earth did the villain handle him like that for?" asked Harry Wharton, wrinkling his brows in perplexity. "Can the man be some wandering lunatic?"

"Goodness knows!"

The juniors arrived at the school late—very late. Gosling came down to open the gates for them.

"Which you're to report yourselves to your Form master," grunted Gosling. "Nice goings hon! Wot I say is this 'ere—"

"Bow-wow!" said Bob Cherry cheerily. "We've been doing rescue stunts, Gossy, and Mr. Quelch is going to pat us on the back and look as pleased as Punch!"

"I don't think!" grunted Gosling.

Harry Wharton & Co. walked across to the House, feeling quite cheery. They had reason to be pleased with their exploits that afternoon, and there was no doubt that Mr. Quelch would excuse them for missing call-over when they explained what had happened. Only, as Bob remarked, they would have to be sure to start in with the explanation before Quelch started in with the cano.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry greeted the Owl of the

Remove with a cheery smack as Bunter rolled up to meet them in the lighted hall.

"Yow-ow! So you're not drowned?" exclaimed Bunter.

"Not quite," said Bob. "Do we look drowned?"

"The drownfulness is not terrific, my esteemed idiotic Bunter."

"Bunter was going to bag your study if you were drowned," explained Peter Todd.

"Oh, my hat! Why, you fat villain!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But where on earth have you been?" asked Peter. "Quelch's got his rag out."

"That's all right. Quelch is going to smile sweetly when we tell him the stunt," said Bob cheerily. "Come on, you chaps, and get it over."

And Bob started for the Remove-master's study.

"Quelch's not there!" called out Peter. "He's taking the Second in prep. The new master's lying down with a giddy headache."

Harry Wharton & Co. stopped dead. They stared at Peter Todd in such amazement that Peter stared at them, amazed also.

"The—the—the what?" stuttered Wharton. "What did you say, Peter?"

"Quelch's taking the Second—"

"I don't mean that. You said—"

"The new master's lying down with

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a headache," said Peter in wonder.

"Why shouldn't he?"

"What new master?"

"Man named Sutcliffe."

"Man named Sutcliffe!" repeated Bob Cherry faintly. "D-d-d-did you say a man named Sutcliffe?"

"Yes, ass. Haven't you heard that there was a new boss coming to-day for the Second Form?"

"But he hasn't come!"

"He has," said Peter.

"He has come?" repeated Wharton. "What do you mean, Toddy? Are you trying to pull our leg, or what?"

"Blessed if I make you out," said Peter blankly. "Mr. Sutcliffe is in his study now. He's got a headache after his train journey, and Quelch is taking his Form in prep. What is there surprising in that?"

The Famous Five looked at one another.

Had Peter told them that Pontius Pilate or Julius Caesar was lying down with a headache in the Second Form master's study it could not have surprised them more.

Wharton grasped Toddy by the arm.

"Look here—"

"Leggo, you ass! What the thump are you—"

"Has a man come here calling himself Mr. Sutcliffe, the new master?" demanded Wharton, in a tense voice.

"Yes, ass!"

"You've seen him?"

"Dozens of fellows have seen him! What do you mean?" yelled Peter.

"Are you off your dot?"

"Good heavens!" gasped Wharton.

The discovery was staggering. Like a flood of light, the truth came to the captain of the Remove.

The inexplicable happenings in the cave were explained now. It was not for a suit of clothes or a few pounds that the unknown scoundrel had taken such risks. What he had wanted from the hapless Form master was his clothes, his papers, his bag—his name!

His name, his identity! The Famous Five knew now where to look for the man who had robbed Mr. Sutcliffe and blocked him up in the fissure in the smugglers' cave!

They knew where to look for him—in the Second Form master's study, under the name of the man he had robbed!

"Great pip!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"The great pipfulness is terrific! The esteemed scoundrel is here—at Greyfriars!" ejaculated Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You've seen him, Peter Todd—"

"Yes, ass! What—"

"What is he like?"

"Blessed if I noticed specially!"

"About thirty, with strongly-marked features, and eyes rather close together?"

Peter stared.

"That suits him," he said. "You've seen him yourself, then?"

"Yes," said Wharton grimly. "we've seen him. Did he look as if his clothes were too big for him?"

"Blessed if I noticed!"

"I say, you fellows, I did!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "His trousers were as baggy as anything, and his coat hung on him like a sack. I told Squiff that I believed he'd got his clothes second-hand."

"Just what you would say!" grunted Peter.

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"It's the man!" said Wharton.

"But this is awfully serious; we've got to be careful. He's got a revolver, too!"

"Who has?" yelled Peter.

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"Never mind at present. Let's go and see Wingate," said Harry. "We'd better tell him first."

"But what—" exclaimed half a dozen voices.

But the Famous Five did not heed them. They hurried away to Wingate's study, where the captain of Greyfriars listened, with eyes growing wider and wider, to a tale that fairly made him jump. The juniors had finished, and the Sixth-Former was staring at them blankly, when there was the sound of a car outside the House.

"That's the doctor's car, with Mr. Sutcliffe himself!" said Harry. "Go out and see him, Wingate, and then you—"

"I—I will!" gasped the Greyfriars captain. "If this is straight, we've got a dangerous customer here. Good heavens! Mind, not a word; he mustn't take the alarm till we're ready to handle him!"

And the captain of Greyfriars hurried out to the car, where he helped a white-faced, bandaged gentleman to alight.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Catching the Cracksman!

TAP!

The hard-faced man who was known at Greyfriars as Mr. Sutcliffe, the temporary master of the Second, frowned darkly.

He had been smoking a cigarette before the fire, in a contented and satisfied frame of mind.

So far all had gone well for the schemer. Mr. John Sutcliffe, alias Gentleman Jim, the cracksman, was safely installed at Greyfriars.

Never had Gentleman Jim handled a "job" so easily.

Greyfriars was a "crib" well worth "cracking," in the language of Gentleman Jim. But it was not an easy crib to crack. "Inside information," so important to a gentleman of his peculiar profession, had been hard to come by.

A dozen times the rascal had visited the neighbourhood, staying for two or three days at a time, studying the locality, picking up what information he could, in various disguises. Gentleman Jim knew the country round Greyfriars like a book now. But he had still been at a loss for "inside information." But that day he had resolved to chance it, and then his good luck—Gentleman Jim was generally lucky—had befriended him once more. A chatty and unguarded gentleman in the train—

The cracksman had known at a glance that Mr. Sutcliffe was a schoolmaster. He had known that he was going to Courtfield, the station for Greyfriars. He had surmised that the master might have some connection with Greyfriars School, and he had entered into talk with him with a view to extracting, if possible, some of that "inside information" he so keenly desired. The cool and wary rascal had turned a chatty and unsuspecting gentleman inside out in a few minutes, and then the scheme had come into his head.

A temporary master engaged for a couple of weeks from an agency—utterly unknown at Greyfriars. It was "pie" to Gentleman Jim, as he would have expressed it.

The whole thing had been almost too easy. It had only required nerve, iron nerve, and a grim, relentless determination. Those qualities Gentleman Jim possessed in abundance.

In the Form master's clothes, with the Form master's papers and credentials, the bag marked with the Form master's

initials—he was Mr. Sutcliffe, the new master. He had walked by solitary paths to Courtfield, where he had bought a new hat to replace the one that had blown off on the cliff, and taken a taxi to the school from the station.

Only one hitch had occurred—the little scheme of the Second Form fags to meet their new master at the junction.

Dicky Nugent had given the new master a shock of which he never dreamed, when he came to the study with Gatty.

But there had been no trouble. Trouble certainly might have transpired had the man attempted to take the Second Form in prep. Even Sammy Bunter would have discovered that he was no genuine Form master.

But a severe headache after a long railway journey—that was good enough. That saw the impostor through the first evening. And the next day he was to be gone. He was waiting only for the school to sleep—by two in the morning, at the latest, "Mr. Sutcliffe" would have vanished from Greyfriars School for ever. To save his neck, he would leave a message where his hapless victim was to be found. That lack of "inside information," which had promised to make the cracksman's job difficult and dangerous, mattered nothing now. Installed in the House, unsuspected, the job had become child's play.

So the reflections of Gentleman Jim were very pleasant and agreeable as he smoked his cigarette before the study fire.

But he frowned as the tap came at the door.

The story of a severe headache ought to have kept him clear of visitors. Some fag, perhaps, bothering him again. But he had his part to play, and he called out calmly:

"Come in!"

The study door opened, and Wingate of the Sixth entered. Gwynne of the Sixth, and Walker, and Mr. Quelch followed him in. Behind them was the stout form of Mr. Prout, and behind Mr. Prout was Gosling and Harry Wharton & Co.

The cracksman rose quickly to his feet. Nothing was suspected—he had seen the headmaster and satisfied him with his credentials—he had chatted with Mr. Quelch. Nothing could be suspected. But he had a feeling of sudden uneasiness.

"What—" he began.

Gentleman Jim was generally very much on his guard. But he was not prepared for the sudden spring with which George Wingate reached him, and he went tumbling over in the grasp of the captain of Greyfriars, almost before he knew what was happening.

The rascal was on his back on the study carpet, with Wingate on him. He knew then that the game was up, and desperately strove to get at his revolver. But he had no chance. That sudden attack had been made to prevent him from getting at the revolver, and it was successful.

"Hold him!"

Gwynne and Walker were grasping the rascal; and Wingate's grip was like iron. Mr. Quelch added a tenacious grasp; a moment more, and Mr. Prout and Gosling had hold of the man.

Wingate took charge of the revolver while the cracksman was still struggling frantically but helplessly in the grasp of so many hands.

"There's the revolver," said Wingate. "Lucky those young beggars warned us about it!"

"Let me go!" panted the struggling

(Continued on page 27.)

JACK HORNER DOES A MOONLIGHT FLIT! They wanted to kill his dog—wanted to kill the only pal he'd got in the world. But Jack wouldn't stand for that; far better to seek his fortune in the outside world than lose old "Squall." So Jack and his dog set out together on. . . .

The TRAIL of ADVENTURE!

by
Lionel
Day



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Turning Point!

"YOU give me any more of your sauce, and I'll take this here stick to you, my lad! Get on with that job! You don't have bite or sup till you've finished it!"

The big yard at Dane's Farm was flooded with moonlight. Up there in the heart of the Cumberland mountains, it was very cold, though it was spring. George Parker, who farmed the stony acres and herded his sheep on the mountain side, glowered at the boy, who, with chapped and bleeding hands, was piling heavy logs of wood in the woodshed.

Locally he was known as Mean-as-Mud Parker, but there was something more than meanness about money in that glowering face. There was a savagery—a cruelty that was hardly human.

Jack Horner made no effort to move the log at which his uncle was pointing with threatening hand. Since sunset that day he had been made to labour there in the yard. Yesterday he had been fourteen. Now that the law no longer required him to go to school, his uncle and aunt had told him he must work for his living. Not that Jack minded work. He liked the idea of being independent. But this wasn't independence. And he was being robbed of his rights.

"I won that scholarship at the Grammar School," he said. "You ought to let me go there, uncle. After all, the Ministry of Pensions are paying you twelve shillings a week for me until I'm sixteen!"

He stood there, a stocky little figure, his clear, blue eyes fixed resolutely on his uncle's brutalised countenance.

"You've had all the schooling you're going to have. It's time you made yourself useful!" gasped his uncle. "Me and your aunt have been keeping you all these years, and now you've got to make some return!"

"You've been paid for me, uncle.

You know quite well that, because father was killed in France, and because mother died, you've been getting twelve shillings a week for me all these years."

Jack could not remember his father. He had been only four when the desolating news had come of his death in Flanders. But he had a cherished photograph of him in the uniform of a sergeant in the dismal garret he occupied in Dane's Farm. That and the photograph of his mother, who had died suddenly of heart failure while on a visit to her elder sister a few months after his father's death, were all the possessions he had in the world—except one other thing. That other "thing" was also in the yard at the moment. "It" had been given him at his urgent entreaty just twelve months ago by a man in a travelling circus.

"It" was just a miserable little puppy, then, one of a large litter, and as it was not expected to live it was about to be drowned in the lake when Jack had begged for it.

"Right-ho, sonny! You take the pup, and see what you can do with it. But it'll not live, I'm afraid," he had been told. "And, mind you, if it does live, just you remember it's more a wolf—red-eyed, red-tongued, tearing, swearing, wild wolf—than it is dog!"

But it had lived, under Jack's careful nursing. Now it stood at the very limits of its chain, a huge, massive creature, with a furry ruff about its neck, its ears cocked, its eyes red in the moonlight, watching George Parker silently.

"You just say that again, my lad, and see what you'll get!"

His uncle was moving closer to him, licking his lips, as if in anticipation of some delectable treat. His right hand closed more firmly on the heavy ash stick he carried. Jack Horner summoned up all his courage. He must have this out with his uncle—he must, if he could manage it, claim the right to take up the scholarship he had won at the Grammar School.

"You ought to let me go to the Grammar School, uncle, seeing—"

He got no further. With the back of his left hand George Parker hit him across the face, almost stunning him. Then, as Jack reeled back, his uncle caught him adroitly by the collar of his coat and almost lifted him off the ground.

"I'll have to teach you to respect your elders, my lad. I'm going to give you the lesson you want badly, more than all that nonsensical book stuff. It'll be a lesson you'll feel!"

He raised the heavy ash stick, his little pig eyes gloating over his victim. The boy struggled fiercely.

"Let me go—let me go! I don't care how much you beat me! You'll never stop me from saying that you ought to send me to the Grammar School!"

The heavy ash stick descended with a resounding thwack upon Jack's squirming body. He bit his lip to stifle the cry of pain. He would have died sooner than have given his uncle the satisfaction of knowing how that blow hurt.

He managed to twist round and back across the yard towards the wall, forcing his uncle to follow him. The stick descended again and again.

"I'll learn you, you little cub! Take that—and that—"

Suddenly George Parker's voice petered off into a yell of pain. His heavy boots scraped upon the cobbles. There was a crash as his big figure came to the ground. In the struggle with the child he had been drawn insensibly nearer to the spot where the wolf dog was straining at his chain. Suddenly those jaws had closed upon his trousers and dragged him to the ground.

"Call him off—call him off!" George Parker bawled. "He's biting me; I'll get hydrophobia, and—"

The boy laid his hand on the dog's head.

"Down, Squall, down!" he ordered. Instantly the great dog dropped to

the ground, his front paws stretched out, his ears cocked, his eyes watching George Parker, who was slowly scrambling to his feet, feeling the slit in the seat of his trousers.

"Ah, you brute, I'll pay you for this! They were my second best, and all! I was a fool ever to have kept you—a nasty, dangerous brute like you—but I'll finish you this night!"

He stooped down, and, keeping a safe distance from the dog's jaws, snapped his fingers in its face.

"I'll hang you for this, you brute—hang you by the neck until you are dead!"

He made a grab at Jack's collar, and dragged him out of reach of the dog.

"It'll be a lesson for you, my lad, not to keep nasty, dangerous, brute beasts about the place. You go and fetch that rope from the kitchen, and be smart about it! And you shall stay here and watch him hang!"

What the cruel beating he had received could not do, this brutal threat nearly accomplished. Tears sprang to Jack's eyes. Squall to be hanged—Squall, his wonderful dog—his only friend! A very terror of despair took possession of him.

"I won't—I won't!" he screamed. "Oh, uncle, you mustn't—you mustn't! I'll do anything you want me to do—I'll work hard, early and late, and I won't ever ask you again to send me to the Grammar School!"

His words seemed to give George Parker intense pleasure. This was hurting the boy far more than the thrashing. He wondered he had never thought of it before.

"Oh, that's the way of it, is it? Now I've taught you who's master here, have I?" he sneered. "Now you're beginning to whimper and scream! You go and get that rope, my lad, and look smart about it. And, just to drive the lesson home, it's you that shall hang the dog!"

That order was something which even George Parker could not force the boy to carry out. Blows, threats, brutal kicks, alike were unavailing. Jack wouldn't fetch the rope.

"All right, my lad. I'll settle with you afterwards when I've settled with the dog. I'll teach you to be disobedient. I'll have to go and fetch the

rope myself it seems, but I ain't going to leave you here to play any of your tricks."

He looked about him. Close to the kennel in which Squall lived, two rusty staples were fixed in the wall. Taking a piece of rope from his pocket, George Parker fastened one end to the boy's left wrist, twisted it round the staple and then passing it across the other staple, tied it tightly to his right hand.

"You won't get away from that in a hurry, my lad," he snarled.

Leaving Jack helpless there, he strode across the yard. The moonlight cast his shadow upon the cobbles—a monstrous grotesque shadow, that seemed like some evil spirit of cruelty. He was some twenty yards from the back door when it was suddenly opened letting out a flood of light. A tall, spare woman with a hard face appeared on the threshold.

"George, where are you?" she called. "There's a man want's to see you. And what's that dratted boy doing?"

George Parker chuckled.

"It's all right, my dear. I've just been giving him a bit of a lesson which I haven't finished yet."

"Serve him right," his wife snapped. "But you'd better wash your hands, George, before you go into the parlour. By the looks of him, this man that wants to see you is a gentleman."

The rest of the conversation was lost to Jack. The door had closed. He was alone there, helpless. By a lucky chance, the arrival of the visitor had secured for Squall a brief reprieve, but he knew too well his uncle's nature to imagine that it would be anything more than a brief reprieve. Sooner or later he would return, and the dog Jack loved so dearly, would be done to death.

"Squall," he whispered. "Squall, old son!"

The dog who had remained motionless on the ground all this time, sprang to his feet and rushed at the boy. To his astonishment, Jack discovered that the length of the chain allowed the animal to stand on its hind legs and reach his face. An idea flashed into his mind. He glanced at his right hand, pulling at it as best he could, to indicate the rope with which it was fastened.

"I can't move, Squall, and if you can't help me, I'm afraid it'll be the end of you, poor old dog."

It would be difficult to say whether it was his words or the movement of his hand tugging at those bonds, which conveyed to Squall what he wanted done. But the dog seemed instantly to understand. Standing on his hind legs against the wall, he caught the rope in his teeth and began to pull. Discovering that nothing was to be done by pulling, he began to use those sharp fanged teeth for another purpose. Bit by bit, he tore the rope to pieces, strand by strand. Suddenly, Jack, giving his arm a pull, found that he could free himself. To loosen the other end of the rope was the work of a moment.

He had escaped from his bonds but other obvious dangers lay ahead. George Parker would not be balked of his revenge and he would execute his vengeance on Squall—if not that day, then some other day. There was only one way for Jack to save his dog's life and that was to run away—away into the world beyond those mountains—away from the mean cruelty and brutality of which he had been the victim since childhood.

Bending down, he slipped the chain from the dog's collar. Then, putting his arm about that furry neck, he

hugged the animal for a moment and whispered in his ear.

"We'll run away, Squall—you and I. We'll go and make our fortunes and we'll never come back to this horrible place. But you mustn't make a noise, Squall, as we must go at once, and there's things I've got to get; we'd better be moving."

To have told Squall not to make a noise was really quite unnecessary. Silently, like some shadow, the wolf dog slipped across the yard at the boy's heels. Climbing over a wall, which Squall leapt at a bound, Jack crept round the house until he gained a certain drain pipe that carried the water from the roof. Whispering to his companion to lie down, he clambered like a monkey up the pipe, gained the slates above and crept across the roof to the window of the garret in which he slept. There he collected the few treasures he possessed—the photographs of his father and mother. With these in his pocket and a bundle of clothes under his arm, he returned as he had come.

"Now, Squall," he whispered, "now for the world and freedom. This is where you and I begin our adventures, Squall. Come along, old dog."

He felt Squall's tongue lick his hand as if the animal quite understood him and was encouraging him. A moment later and Jack Horner was racing southward across the heather, Squall at his heels with only one thought in his heart—to put as great a distance between himself and Dane's Farm as quickly as possible.

Too Late!

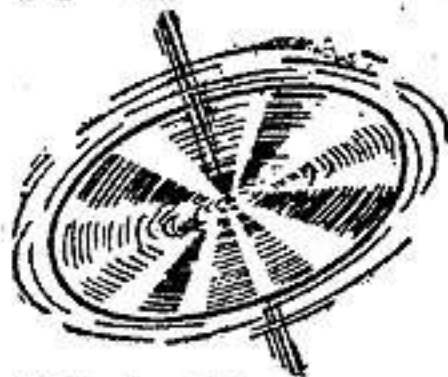
GEORGE PARKER, having changed his torn trousers for a pair of his Sunday best and washed his hands, was seated at the moment of Jack's flight in the parlour of Dane's Farm. It was a stuffy room only used on very state occasions. It was because the visitor had looked like a gentleman that Mrs. Parker had shown him into the parlour instead of the more homely kitchen. He sat there, a tall, well-dressed man in a tweed suit, watching Parker. He had seated himself so that the lamplight played upon his host's face leaving his own in the shadow.

It was a curious face, long, thin, clean-shaven, and handsome, the face of a poet or an actor or a monk—if it hadn't been for the eyes. They were curious eyes—the colour of dark velvet but with the irises, in which those dark spots were set, veined with little blood vessels. They were set strangely close together, and they had the effect of completely altering the man's face from that of a poet or an actor or a monk to one of those old world pictures of the Devil himself. They were eyes of mystery—evil mystery—eyes that seemed to look straight into the heart of other men, plucking from them their secrets—laying bare the mean passions which they would have kept hidden. These eyes were looking now into the heart of George Parker and what they saw there seemed to amuse their possessor.

"Mr. Parker, I am sure you are a most estimable person! I am sure you are the ideal protector of the orphaned and the fatherless! All the virtues of kindness of heart and charity, I am convinced, you possess. That being so, suppose we cut the cackle and get to the horses?"

George Parker blinked at his visitor. He had been reciting a quite mythical

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Standing on his hind legs the sagacious animal caught the rope in his teeth and, bit by bit, tore it to pieces. (See page 24.)

account of how he had looked after Jack—how he had loved him like a son—how the boy's mother had been his wife's favourite sister—how it was the duty and the pleasure of every decent Englishman to watch over and protect the child of one of those heroes who had died for his country in France. He was becoming quite moved by his own eloquence, when his visitor had suddenly interrupted him in this brutal way.

"I don't know what you mean," he stammered. "I was telling you how much the boy—"

The stranger leaned forward, a little furrow appearing between his eyes, his face looking very dark.

"Cut it all out—I know the sort you are—Mean-as-mud Parker they call you round these parts, don't they? You see, I made it my business to find out something about you before I came here."

George Parker was possessed by a feeling of terror. Mere brute though he was—a man who had never done a kind act in his life, who was incapable of pity or mercy—there was at any rate one emotion to which he responded. That emotion was fear. And there was something eerie about this stranger—something in his way of looking and talking that made the beads of perspiration stand out on Parker's forehead. He stared back at his visitor like one hypnotised.

"I know just the sort you are, Mr. Parker. You've taken everything that belonged to this boy—that his mother left him. You've used the allowance granted by the government for the son of a dead soldier for your own purposes, spending as little on the lad as

you possibly could. And your wife is just such another as you are."

He smiled at his host, and that smile had in it something so bitter—so frosty—that George Parker's mean soul withered.

"Don't think I'm blaming you! We've all got to make our way in the world, and if somebody else suffers in the process—well, that's their funeral! I'm entirely of your view, Mr. Parker. Don't imagine I'm criticising your conduct towards Jack Horner. I'm only stating facts. I approve of your behaviour."

George Parker, with an effort, forced down that feeling of terror.

"What the blazes do you want?" he growled.

"I want the boy!" the stranger replied.

The two men's eyes met across the table.

"Name your price, Mr. Parker," the stranger said presently.

"I've got to know something more before I'll meddle with this business," George Parker said cautiously. "Who are you? What do you want the boy for?"

Again that frosty smile spread itself upon the man's lips.

"Most people call me 'Black Michael'—that's as much as I need tell you! You can perhaps guess the rest from my answer to your second question."

He leaned still further over the table sinking his voice to a whisper.

"There are certain estates—and a title, as a matter of fact—which I am anxious to secure. Both will be very useful to me. The one can be converted into cash, and the other will be of the greatest service to me in my

business. I am the heir to those estates and to that title, if Sergeant John Horner, who ran away from home in 1911 and was subsequently killed in France had no son at present living. Now do you get me, Mr. Parker?"

"You mean Jack—the lad that we've looked after all these years?"

"I mean that if there were no Jack Horner to interfere, the estates and title are mine. And I want them. I've asked you to name your price."

"What are you going to do with the boy?" George Parker stammered.

"What has that to do with you? You don't care tuppence for him. Very soon he'll cease to bring you in even twelve shillings a week! I'm offering you a lump sum to hand the boy over to me and keep your mouth shut!"

"But the Ministry of Pensions will want to know where he is?"

"Quite; I know that! But he could be an ungrateful little cub who ran away from his dear aunt and uncle who loved him so much. You can tell the police to search for him—after you've given me a few days' grace. There are no difficulties I assure you, Mr. Parker. It's simply a question of how much!"

A crafty look came into George Parker's face.

"But I'm likely to make more if I was to lay claim to this property you tell me of, as Jack's guardian."

"You may think so. It may also have occurred to you that it would be quite a simple matter to relate what I have just told you to the police. Do you know what would happen to you, Mr. Parker?"

"Here, don't you try to bully me," George Parker protested. "This here's THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 992."

a conspiracy! I don't know that I oughtn't to tell the police."

Black Michael rose quietly and, with an almost cat-like grace, walked across to the window and, lifting the latch, thrust it open. From his lips came a long, low whistle. Then he shut the window and pulled up the blinds. There was a moment's silence, broken only by George Parker's heavy breathing. Presently Black Michael spoke again.

"Look, my friend," he said, with a faint smile. "You're a free agent, of course, and you can do what you like, but you'd have to deal with these friends of mine afterwards. Look!"

He stood away from the window as if to give George Parker an uninterrupted view of the scene. The farmer half rose to his feet, the colour draining from his cheeks. There, pressed against the window panes, were the faces of some half-dozen men—villainous faces that would have been notable even in the photographic album of a convict establishment. George Parker sank back into the chair trembling violently.

"My friends are noted for their good looks, and for the unfailing regularity with which they pay certain kinds of debt—such as splitting to the police—or betraying a frank confidence—such as I have given you in this room," said Black Michael. "Do you understand?"

No word came from the farmer's lips, but his ashen face and his terror-stricken eyes showed that he understood only too well. Black Michael made a movement with his hand. The diabolical faces disappeared, and he pulled down the blind.

"Well, as you're so long in proposing a sum, I'll make an offer myself," he said. "Here's two hundred pounds!"

At the mention of money, George Parker recovered somewhat from his trance of terror.

"It's worth more than that, mister, what you're asking me to do! Fair's fair! Make it four hundred and we'll call it a deal!"

Black Michael smiled, and taking a leather case from his pocket, began to count out some notes on the table.

"You are not anywhere near as expensive as I thought you would be, Mr. Parker. Just see that that's right and then bring me the boy."

Slowly and methodically, occasionally licking the ball of his thumb, George Parker counted over the notes, pronounced the sum to be correct, and then rose to his feet.

"As a matter of fact, mister," he said, with a wink, "I've got him tied up in the yard! I was going to give him a jolly good hiding just as you came along."

"I'll attend in future to all the hidings, Mr. Parker. You needn't feel at all anxious that your system of training and education will not be continued," came the reply. "It will be a little more vigorous perhaps—that is all! But come, I don't want to waste time! Take me to the boy."

George Parker opened the door of the parlour and led the way through the kitchen to the back door. Opening this, he passed out into the moon-flooded yard.

"You'd better be careful where you're going, mister," he grunted. "It ain't the best of places to be walking about in, for them as don't know it."

"Don't you worry, my friend, I can see in the dark. Where's the boy?"

George Parker halted abruptly. There, in the moonlight, was the kennel, and there by its side were the two rusty staples in the wall to which he had bound Jack. But the kennel was empty—the dog was not on the chain, and Jack was nowhere to be seen!

"He's gone!" he gasped. "Jack—he's gone!"

A vice-like grip fastened itself upon Parker's shoulder. He heard Black Michael's voice, as cold and grim as fate in his ears:

"If you've been trying to double-cross me, my friend—"

"I haven't," the farmer whimpered. "I swear to you, I had the boy there. I was going to hang his dratted dog, and so as he shouldn't interfere, I tied him up to them staples. Look, here is the bit of rope I tied him with."

Black Michael snatched at the rope and examined it closely.

"It has been bitten through. That must have taken some time," he said softly. "However sharp the boy's teeth are it must have taken him the better part of twenty minutes to free his wrist. When did you tie him up here?"

"I'd just finished tying him up, and was going to get the rope from the kitchen to hang his dog," stammered the farmer, "when the missus came to the door and said you was here."

Black Michael glanced at his watch. "I arrived here at nine. It is now ten minutes to ten. Seeing he took twenty minutes to release himself he's had half an hour's start. He can't have got far."

He spoke to himself rather than to George Parker. And when he had finished he pursed his lips together and whistled that eerie call that the other had heard already that night. Two seconds went by, and then, with a rush of feet, some six men appeared in the moonlit yard. Black Michael turned to them.

"Did you see anybody leave this house about half an hour ago?"

One of the men, who wore a thick lock of hair over his receding forehead, answered him.

"There was a boy as had a dog with him, guv'nor. He got over the garden wall and beat it across the heather."

A rage took possession of Black Michael. He took one step forward, his fists clenched.

"You muddle-headed fool! Why didn't you stop him?"

The man recoiled a step.

"You give us our orders, guvner—we wasn't to move or do anything unless you called us. That's right, ain't it, mates?"

With an effort of will Black Michael calmed himself.

"Quite right, Curly," he said sulkily. "Those were my orders. Now, listen to me! That boy has got to be found and caught. Which way did he go?"

Curly pointed southward.

"He was running that way, guvner, straight as a die. I watched him for the better part of a mile. He took the track along the end of the lake."

"Then after him, my lads, and catch him! Come!"

Without another word to George Parker, without even a glance at him, Black Michael raced across the yard to the gates with the six men following close at his heels.

A Race for Freedom!

JACK HORNER had begun his flight from Dane's Farm and the cruelty of his uncle and aunt at a run, but he had not covered more than half a mile before his steps began to flag. Finally he dropped into a walk. Now that the first excitement was over he realised how tired he was, and how hungry. With the exception of some bread and margarine for breakfast and a glass of milk, that he had drunk at milking-time, he had been given nothing to eat all day, and he had been working until every fibre of his stocky little body ached. Moreover, those blows of the ash stick had tried him more than he had realised.

But there must be no halting. As soon as his uncle discovered he had escaped he would be after him. He wouldn't lose that twelve shillings a week from the Ministry of Pensions if he could help it, and as long as he had Jack he was sure of that—until he was sixteen, at any rate.

It was Jack's spirit, his courage, his fears, not for himself so much as for Squall, lest his uncle should overtake him and carry out his murderous threat of hanging Squall, that enabled him to triumph for a while over his ever-growing weariness. If only he could struggle across the mountains and gain the big main road on the other side he might persuade someone to give him a lift. There was always traffic passing along that road, which ran from the mountains of Cumberland down into the heart of the Midlands. That was his plan; but to accomplish it he would have to trudge ten miles across the heather.

"I can't go on, Squall—I must rest!" he panted. "You watch, old fellow, and wake me if anybody comes."

He turned up the collar of his coat and pillowed his head in his arm, and almost instantly fell asleep. Squall, after sniffing at him, laid himself down by his side, pushing his warm, furry body close to his master's, as if determined to make him as warm as possible. Lying there, with his head resting on his paws, the dog remained motionless, staring down into the moonlit valley.

No dreams disturbed Jack's sleep of exhaustion. It seemed to him he had only just lain down when he was roused by a pull at his arm. He sat up, rubbing his eyes. Squall, he noticed, was standing up, his long body stretched, the ruff about his neck erect, his whole manner suggesting clearly that danger lay at hand. Jack dropped on his hands and knees and followed the direction of the dog's gaze.

A momentary panic seized upon him as he realised what it was that had alarmed Squall. Down there, stretched out in a line, like beaters at a grouse shoot, were seven men. They were climbing the slope of the Pike, and were then less than a quarter of a mile away. Obviously, the boy decided, his uncle had discovered his flight, and with the assistance of men from the neighbouring farms, he was sweeping the moors to track him down.

But that feeling of panic passed swiftly. After all, his pursuers were still a quarter of a mile away, and they had to climb the slope, while he was on the top. And not only had Jack this advantage, but he realised how difficult it would be for his pursuers to find him

in these lonely wastes. But to wait where he was would be fatal.

"Come on, Squall!" he whispered.

With one last glance at that advancing line of men, Jack began to race along the level stretch of heather that crowned the summit of the Pike. His short sleep had done him good. His limbs no longer ached so badly, nor did his feet feel as if they were shod with lead. But he was very, very hungry. But there was only seven miles more now. Beyond there to the southward, where the moon was sinking, lay the long grey ribbon of road which linked this world of mountain and fells with the great cities of the land. If only he could reach that road he felt sure he would be safe.

"I wish we could get something to eat, Squall!" he exclaimed. "I don't know how you feel, old fellow, but I'm nearly starving."

The dog at his side raised his eyes for a moment, as if to indicate that he understood, and then fell again to the business of covering the ground with that long, tireless wolf stride of his.

Presently the ground sloped up again a little. Now they had gained the summit of that low ridge. Jack halted a moment and looked back. Behind him was the glowing circle of the sinking moon. Forgetful that in that position he could be seen for miles, he stood looking back. There were his pursuers. They had breasted the top of the Pike, and were now streaming across the long stretch of level country over which he had just passed. He noticed with some alarm that, in spite of all his efforts, in spite of all his original advantage, they had gained upon him appreciably.

He was about to turn, deciding that he must run, when the folly of what he had been doing was brought home to him! There was a sudden ringing shout from below. His pursuers had seen him standing there on the ridge with his back to the moon. He saw the whole line break suddenly into a run. Like a pack of fox-hounds they had passed from the scent to the view. They had seen their prey, and they meant to catch him now.

The thought gave speed to Jack's legs. He ran as he had never run before in

all his life—across heather and bog—now tripping over a half-hidden rock—now wading knee-deep in mud and water. For four miles he raced, his heart pounding against his ribs, his breath labouring in his lungs, his strength nearly spent. When he glanced over his shoulder it was only to discover that his pursuers had drawn nearer.

Two men—evidently the fastest runners—had been detailed to catch him up, for they were well ahead of their companions, who had dropped into a leisurely trot. For a moment Jack wondered who they could be. He knew everybody in the neighbourhood of Dane's Farm, but nobody who answered exactly to the two men who were closing upon him every moment. There was no time to waste, however, in troubling his head about the identity of his pursuers. The problem was how to escape them.

It was clear that his hopes of getting away by running were doomed to failure. These men could travel three yards to his one. In a very few minutes they would be up with him, and then he would be dragged back to Dane's Farm, and Squall would meet his death at his uncle's hands. He must try other methods to get away.

Jack looked about him despairingly. On his right there was a rock-strewn ravine. Perhaps down there he might hide himself. No sooner had he formed this plan than he was racing across the intervening space. Another moment and he had hurled himself down the steep slope, and gained the bed of the mountain stream. The moon now had almost sunk behind the rim of the mountains, but by its fading light he saw that the ravine stretched down to the valley beyond, and far away in the distance he saw the long yellow line which he knew was the road he was seeking.

For a few moments he stumbled down the bed of the stream, and then halted, listening. From above him came the sound of voices. He ducked down behind a stone. As he did so he became aware of a deep hole in the bank. It was a cave with a very narrow entrance—just such a hiding-place as he was

seeking. Without a second's delay he crept into the cave, and found himself presently curled up on a bed of dried bracken, with his arm about Squall's neck.

"They'll never find us here, Squall!" he whispered.

Even as he uttered the words, he felt the dog stiffen. He listened with all his ears. Above the beating of his own heart, Jack could hear the approach of footsteps.

"Durn that moon!" a coarse voice exclaimed. "It's going down just as we want it. 'Ere, Curly, show a light!"

A look of surprise crept into the boy's face. That was not the voice nor the accent of anyone who lived in the neighbourhood of Dane's Farm. That was a stranger to these parts. For a moment the thought flashed through Jack's mind that perhaps he had been mistaken in thinking these men were his uncle's allies, and that they were not pursuing him, after all. But the next moment all doubts on this point were set at rest.

"Somebody will be for it," another voice growled, "if we lose the lad now. Black Michael's got one of his big games on, and he wants this boy."

"Here, hold that light steady! Who's talking about losing him? Look, there are his tracks! We've got the kid all right. He's somewhere round here, likely lying possum."

Frightened though he was, Jack could not help wondering who Black Michael might be, and for what earthly reason he was pursuing him like this. Then every other thought was swallowed up in the discovery that the men had found the entrance to the cave.

"Got him!" Jack heard one of them exclaim delightedly. "Look here, Curly, this is where the kid's hidden himself!"

(Now look out for the continuation of this powerful serial in next week's MAGNET, chums. Poor old Jack Horner is fairly in the thick of it, isn't he? But he's not so green as Black Michael & Co. think! Introduce him to your pals, they will be thrilled by his many exciting adventures.)

"THE FOOTPRINT IN THE SAND!"

(Continued from page 22.)

rascal. "What does this mean? What—what—?" He gasped for breath.

"Scoundrel!" said Mr. Quelch icily. "It means that some boys of this school have found your victim, blocked up in the cave at Pegg—that Mr. Sutcliffe is now here, in my study—that the police have been telephoned for, and that you will be handed over to them."

The cracksman spat out an oath.

"And it means that we've got you safe, and you can't use a weapon," said Wingate. "It means that you're going where you belong, you villain—and that's prison!"

"Hear, hear!" chortled Bob Cherry from the passage.

"Secure his hands!" said Mr. Quelch. "Take care; he is a dangerous scoundrel! Make him secure!"

The cracksman still resisted feebly; but his hands were bound together, and then his struggles ceased. Wingate pitched him into the armchair.

He sat there, panting, his eyes glittering like a snake's. And the Greyfriars prefects remained with him, watching

and guarding him, till Inspector Grimes arrived from Courtfield with a constable; and in the midst of a buzz of excitement from all Greyfriars he was taken away."

It was a nine days' wonder at Greyfriars.

The Famous Five, of course, came very prominently into the limelight.

The Head thanked them publicly, the chums of the Remove doing their best to look meek and modest. The Head told them that they were a credit to the school, a statement to which the Famous Five fully subscribed.

Mr. Sutcliffe was the recipient of much sympathy. He stayed only a few days, cared for in the school hospital; the shock he had received had made him quite unable to take up his duties at the school. The Famous Five saw him off, when he went, very cordially. He had lost his temporary engagement at Greyfriars; but he told them that the Head had kindly insisted that he should be put to no loss in the matter, so that was all right. Everyone, in fact, was content with the way the matter had turned out—excepting the cracksman who was in prison awaiting trial.

Mr. Sutcliffe was content with receiving a fortnight's fee without a

fortnight's work; the Famous Five were content with having distinguished their noble selves; the Head was more than content at having escaped a thorough rifling of his safe: Inspector Grimes was not only content, but almost dancing for joy at finding so notorious a cracksman as Gentleman Jim in his hands.

But most content of all were the Second Form.

"Sorry for the old bird, of course," said Dicky Nugent to his comrades. "Sorry and all that. But we really didn't want him."

"We didn't!" agreed Catty.

"So long as we don't give Quelch an excuse for butting into our Form-room again," said Myers.

And the Second Form were careful to that extent. And until a new master arrived to take the Second, Walker of the Sixth read his novels in the Second Form-room, and Dicky Nugent & Co. had the time of their lives.

THE END.

(There will be another topping tale of the chums of Greyfriars in next week's bumper issue of the MAGNET, entitled: "Fishy's Travel Agency!" This magnificent yarn shows Frank Richards in tip-top form. Make no mistake about reading it, chums; order your copy well in advance.)

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TO AND FROM YOUR EDITOR!

THE NEW SERIAL!

MOST of my chums who scan this column will have read the opening chapters of our new serial, and are eager, I'll wager, for next Monday to come round. "The Trail of Adventure" is going to make a great hit; Jack Horner and his dog Squall are booked for some stirring times ahead, and Lionel Day, the author, is going to turn out a real MAGNET chum. Now I want you fellows to give the tip to your non-reader pals. It would be a pity if they missed this treat of a yarn, to say nothing of the popular tales of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars. Just lend them your copy of the MAGNET for one week; that will do the trick, believe me. Like Oliver Twist, they will be eager for more, and more! You'll do that, I know. Many thanks!

HE WANTS TO BE AN ARTIST!

From Scotland comes a cheery letter, which is accompanied by several sketches—the work of a young MAGNET chum. Now, this chum is keen to become a professional artist. He certainly shows some ability in the drawing line, but he has a lot of ground to make up before he can expect to earn a living with his pen. I don't wish to discourage this enthusiast, but he asks for honest advice. "Do you think," he says, "that my work is good enough for publication?" Well, frankly, I don't. As I said above, there is a certain amount of merit in your work, but it is not up to publication standard. But don't let this worry you. Your age is fourteen, I believe. Why not take a course of instruction at one of the evening schools in your locality? Stick to it, though—that's the main thing. Then, when you have given your enthusiasm a good, sound test, you will know if it is worth while sticking to this ambition of yours to become a professional artist. And your instructors, too, will be able to give you an unbiased opinion of your chances in this direction. Many thanks for all the nice things you say about the MAGNET!

For Next Monday:

"FISHY'S TRAVEL AGENCY!"

By Frank Richards.

This is a real corker, chums—extra long, and extra good! Fisher T. Fish, the cute business junior from the States, hasn't figured in our pages for a long time. But he is very much alive, as you will see next week.

"THE TRAIL OF ADVENTURE!"

By Lionel Day.

Don't miss the second instalment of this grand serial, boys, or you will be missing something really good. And look out, too, for

"THE FIGHT FOR THE KAPTINCY!"

A special story from the pen of Dicky Nugent. If this doesn't make you laugh, then I'll eat my hat! Cheerio, chums!
YOUR EDITOR.

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WHEN ANSWERING ADVERTISEMENTS PLEASE MENTION THIS PAPER.

TWEEDY THE TERRIBLE!—Snapping his fingers dissipated and poking his tongue out at prefects, the new boy at St. Sam's went care a fig for law and order!

IN THE NEW BOYS' POWER!

A Side-splitting Story of the Chum of St. Sam's, Introducing Tweedy,
a New Boy. By DICKY NUGENT.



"Did he not here the lesson-bell?" demanded Mr. Lickham.

"Oh, yes, sir," "Did he realise why the bell was being rung?" "Of course, sir. We told him it was time for mourning lessons, and that we had a fussy old fogey of a Form-master, who would be awfully sorry if he was late."

"Jolly!" roared Mr. Lickham. "How dare you? Take a hundred lines for disobedience! And go and fetch Tweedy at once! Tell him that unless he comes immediately, he will get it where the chicken got the chop!"

"Right-ho, sir!" said Jack Jolly. And he hurried out of the Form-room. The class waited with bated breath for the arrival of Cuthbert Tweedy. That youth—the son of the local tailor—had only been a day at St. Sam's, but already he had managed to make a few sensations. He seemed to do everything as he liked. He snapped his fingers at prefects, and didn't care a fig for law and order. He wouldn't do anything he was told to do, and he did everything he was a jolly queer character, and he seemed to be asking for trouble. He would get it, too, if he fell foul of Mr. Lickham, for the master of the Fourth was not a man to be trifled with.

Five minutes passed, and footmarks became visible in the passageway. Then the door of the Form-room opened, and Jack Jolly came in, followed by his own shadow instead of by the new boy. "My hat!" ejaculated Mr. Lickham, in surprise. "Have you failed to find Tweedy?" "I found him all right, sir. He's still in the tuckshop, feeding his face. But he refuses to come."

"What?" "Give Mr. Lickham my compliments," he said, "and tell him I'm quite happy where I am. I came to St. Sam's to have a good time—not to learn Latin and Greek and silly old dead languages."

"My only aunt!" gasped Mr. Lickham. "Did he really say that, Jolly?" "Oh, yes, sir!" "What cheek!" "What cheek!" cried Mr. Lickham, snapping his fingers and poking his tongue out at prefects, the new boy at St. Sam's went care a fig for law and order!



Jack Jolly came into the Form-room, dragging after him a jammy-faced youth, wearing an enormous pair of baggy, which bulged out like a peero's pantaloons.

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Dr. Birchmell gave Cuthbert a stony stare. "Get behind me," he said, "and I will ask you a number of questions." With his eyes glued to the desk, the new boy rattled off the correct answers.

In his hand he clutched a huge jam-tart, which he had brought with him from the tuckshop.

Mr. Lickham turned upon the new boy with a roar like the Bull of Baseline. "Tweedy! You are half an hour late for lessons! And you sent me a most disrespectful message by Jolly! What do you mean by it?"

"All right, old pie-face! Keep your hands off!" said the new boy calmly. "What!" gasped Mr. Lickham. "It's awfully good. You should say, 'I beg your pardon.'"

Mr. Lickham looked very far from happy. "You—you—" he spluttered. "I have never been so consulted in my life! And you add insult to injury by daring to bring a sticky and unwholesome jam-tart into the Form-room! Do you think this is an eating-house?"

"Touch your toes!" he commanded.

Tweedy shook his head. "I never bend down," he said. "It spoils the shape of my trousers."

With a snort of rage, Mr. Lickham seized the new boy by the collar. For the first time, Tweedy showed signs of alarm. "Leggo!" he cried. "I won't be caned!"

"What!" "I'll appeal to the Head!" Mr. Lickham released his grip, in sheer amazement. "You young fool! Do you know what would happen, if you appealed to Doctor Birchmell? Instead of a caning, you would get a public birching!"

"I'll chance that," said Tweedy. "Do you want me to send for the Head?" gasped Mr. Lickham. "Have you not heard of his reputation? He is a brooder, a savidge tyrant, who takes a delight in birching boys black and blue! Is not that so, boys?" he added, turning to the class.

"Yes, rather!" shouted the Fourth. "So you had better alter your mind. Tweedy, about appealing to the Head!" said Mr. Lickham grimly.

Tweedy bowed. "I'm not afraid of tyrants," he said. "I insist on the Head being sent for."

"Very well!" said Mr. Lickham, laying down the cane. "When you have been birched in Big Hall until your trousers are torn to ribbons, perhaps you will wish that you had heeded my warning. Jolly! Ask Doctor Birchmell if he will be good enough to stop along to the Form-room."

Jack Jolly departed on his mission; and a grave gravity settled upon the class. For Doctor Birchmell was a Head who inspired terror in the hearts of the boldest. A licking from Mr. Lickham was a mere caress, compared with a birching from the dreaded Doctor Birchmell. It was sheer madness on Tweedy's part, the juniors reflected, to drag the Head into this business. Prezanly there was the



russling of a gown, and the Head swept into the Form-room. He frowned fiercely at the Fourth-Formers, who cowered in their seats; then he turned to Mr. Lickham. "Why, Lickham!" he ejaculated. "Have you been putting your face in a jam-pot?"

Mr. Lickham pointed a trembling finger at Tweedy. "Sir!" he cried. "I have been assaulted by this young villain, in the presence of the class! He has behaved in a most dastardly manner. He was late for lessons; he has been grossly disrespectful; and he crowned his conduct by throwing a jam-tart in my face!"

The class blinked nervously at the Head. They expected one of those egg-splodions that they knew so well. They waited for the viles of his wrath to overflow on Tweedy's head. But they waited in vain!

Instead of egg-splodions, the Head merely grinned. "Dear me!" he murmured. "All this must have been very disturbing to you, my dear Lickham; but such behaviour is only to be expected from a jeeningus."

"W-w-what!" stuttered Mr. Lickham, in amazement. "This boy," Tweedy," said the Head, "is a lad of grave jeenings. I tested him

(Continued on next page.)



"Coming over! Catch!" said Tweedy. Mr. Lickham caught the jam-tart full in the face and staggered back, spluttering wildly.