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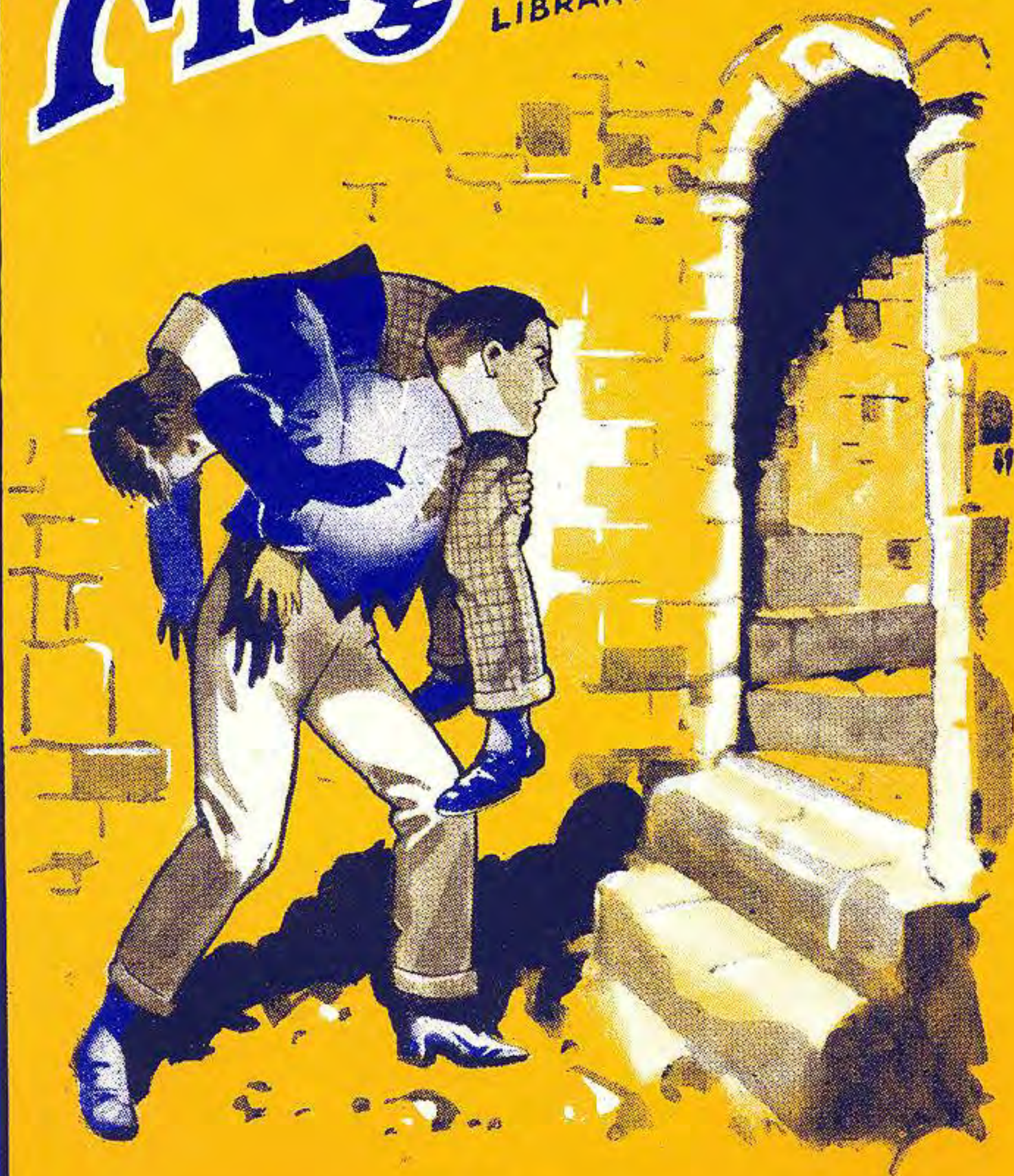
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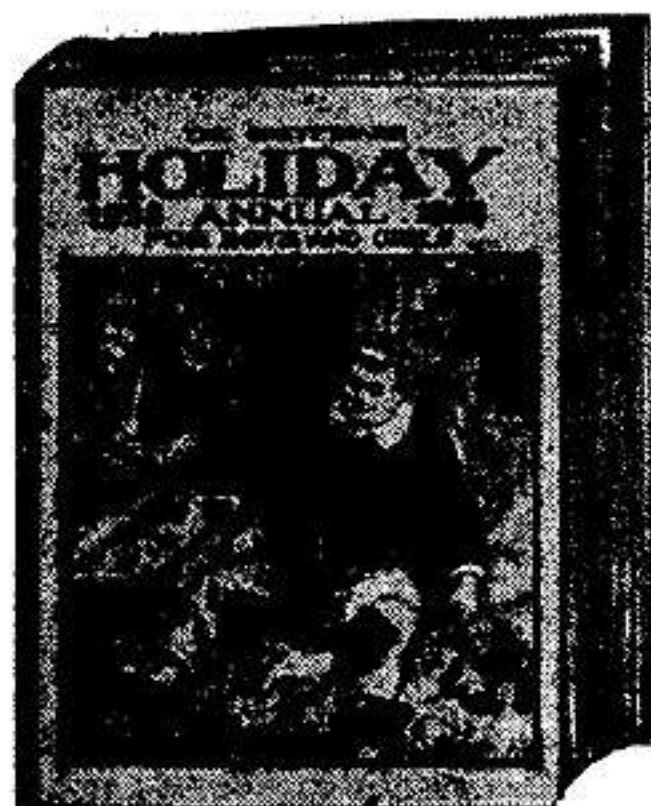


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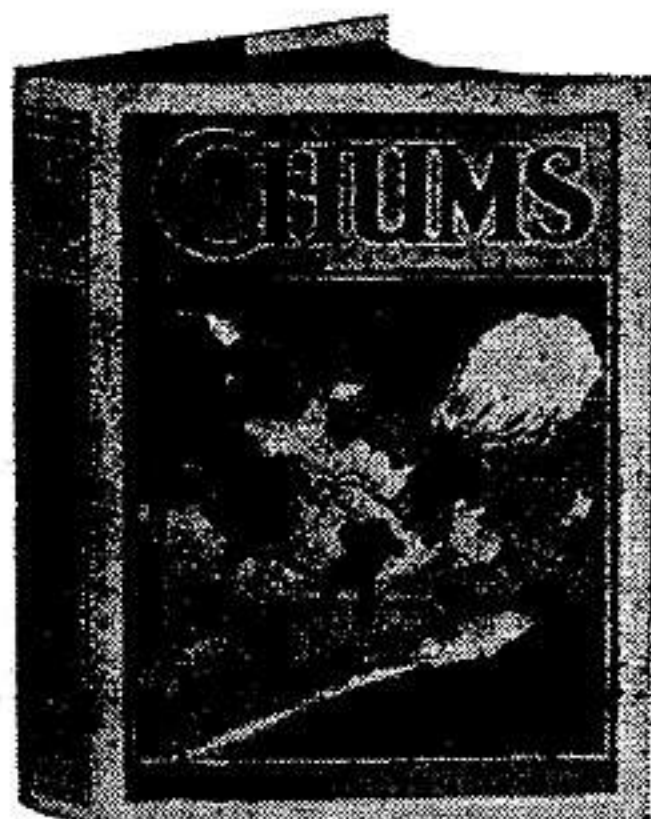
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Levison's Luck!

A Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. and Ernest Levison of Greyfriars. :: By Frank Richards.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

A Letter from St. Jim's!

ONE for Bunter!" said Bob Cherry.

It was morning break at Greyfriars, and some of the juniors had gathered round the letter-rack. Among the Remove fellows who came along was William George Bunter.

Billy Bunter was expecting a postal-order!

It was true that he had been expecting it for a very long while, and that it had never materialised. But hope, as the poet has remarked, springs eternal in the human breast. Bunter was still expecting it.

The Owl of the Remove rolled up eagerly as Bob called out.

"Hand it down, old chap," he said. "It's my postal-order at last! I think I told you fellows that I was expecting a postal-order."

"I think you did," chuckled Bob.

"Once or twice," said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Still expecting that postal-order, Bunter?" asked Levison of the Remove, with a laugh. "You were expecting it, I remember, when I was at Greyfriars before."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob took the letter from the rack.

"The question is, to whom does that postal-order belong, if any?" he asked.

"Me, of course!" roared Bunter.

"Nearly every fellow in the Remove has cashed that postal-order in advance," answered Bob. "Some fellows have cashed it two or three times."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter blinked at him wrathfully through his big spectacles.

"Beast! Gimme my letter!"

"Catch!"

Bob Cherry tossed the letter to Bunter, who, of course, did not catch it. It fluttered along the floor, and Skinner of the Remove, who was of a humorous turn, put his foot on it.

It was out of sight when Bunter blinked round in search of it.

"I say, you fellows, where's that letter?"

"Oh where, and oh where can it be?" sang Skinner.

William George Bunter blinked owlishly round the floor among the many feet. There was no sign of the letter.

"I say, you fellows, who's picked up that letter?" howled Bunter. "That letter's jolly valuable! There's a postal-order in it—perhaps banknotes! Very likely banknotes! Have you got it, Levison?"

"No, ass!"

"Something blew along the passage," said Skinner.

"Oh, dear!"

Bunter rushed along the passage in search of his letter. Johnny Bull gave a grunt.

"Telling whoppers isn't a joke, Skinner," he said.

"Who's telling whoppers?" asked Skinner.

"You told Bunter that something blew along the passage."

"Something did."

"I didn't see anything, anyhow."

"There are lots of things you don't see, dear man. For instance, you are the biggest ass at Greyfriars, and you don't see it. I'll bet you two to one in

doughnuts that something blew along the passage."

"Done!" said Johnny Bull at once.

"Now, what was it?"

"The wind!" answered Skinner.

"Oh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Johnny Bull's face was quite a study.

"You owe me a doughnut," yawned Skinner. "There are lots and lots of things you don't see, such as the wind—but I hope you see that."

Skinner removed his foot from the letter, and picked it up. Billy Bunter was at a distance, rooting eagerly along the passage. The junior watched him, grinning.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" bawled Bob Cherry. "Here is your letter, Bunter!"

"Eh? Where?"

"I've found it for you, old fat bean!" said Skinner, holding it up. "You ought to stand me something handsome out of the postal order, or the banknotes, or the stack of currency notes—though I really don't see why any fellow at St. Jim's should be sending you cash."

"Eh? Is that letter from St. Jim's?" asked Bunter, rolling up breathlessly.

"The postmark's Rylcombe, anyway, and that's the postmark on letters from St. Jim's," said Skinner. "Have you been touching a St. Jim's man for a loan by post?"

Bunter grabbed at the letter.

There was disappointment in his fat face.

From the postmark, the letter obviously was not from home; and it was addressed, moreover, in a scrawling, sprawling, round hand, evidently the hand of a schoolboy, and of a schoolboy who had never taken pains in class so far as calligraphy was concerned.

Bunter gave a grunt.

Once more his perpetual hope had been dashed; it was evident that this letter did not contain his celebrated postal order.

Levison glanced at him rather nervously.

Since he had come back to his old school, Levison had had a good many letters from St. Jim's; his old friends there had not forgotten him. But it was certainly unusual for Bunter to receive letters from the school Levison had left. Bunter had been at St. Jim's a good many times; Levison had seen him there when he was a St. Jim's fellow. But he certainly had not been aware that Bunter had any friends at the school likely to correspond with him.

Bunter jammed a fat thumb into the envelope, which was his way of opening a letter.

"From my old pal D'Arcy, I expect!" he remarked. "Most likely he wants me to spend Christmas with him."

"No accounting for tastes, if he does," remarked Skinner. "If that's D'Arcy's fist, I don't think much of the aristocratic style in handwriting."

"Might be Tom Merry!" said Bunter. "I'm awfully pally with Tom Merry."

"Are you?" ejaculated Levison, in astonishment.

Bunter blinked at him.

"Yes. I dare say you noticed it, when you were at St. Jim's."

"Can't say I did!" answered Levison. "The only fellow I saw you friendly with was that fat boulder Trimble, of the Fourth."

"Yah!"

Bunter drew out the letter from the envelope. It was a grubby letter, and there were smudges and blots on it. The Owl of the Remove blinked at it. Then he grinned.

"Oh, my hat!" he exclaimed.

"Any news from St. Jim's?" asked Nugent.

"He, he, he!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Have they sent you along some jolly old joke?" asked Bob Cherry.

"He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter chuckled explosively. Evidently there was something in the letter from St. Jim's that struck him as entertaining.

He blinked at Levison.

"You'd like to know what's in this letter!" he chortled.

"Not in the least!" answered Levison.

"He, he, he! I won't give you away," said Bunter.

"What?"

"Rely on me, old chap! I'm not saying anything."

"What on earth do you mean?" exclaimed Levison, staring at the fat junior. "Trimble has nothing to tell you about me, I suppose?"

"How do you know this letter's from Trimble?"

"Because I can see his smudgy fist from here!" answered Levison. "You're welcome to read out to all the fellows anything that Trimble has said, for all I care."

"He, he, he!"

"Look here, Bunter, what are you cackling about?" demanded Harry Wharton gruffly.

"He, he, he! That's telling."

"If there's anything in that letter about Levison, he's told you that you can read it out if you like."

"He, he, he! I fancy he wouldn't like it if I did!" chortled Bunter.

"Read it out then, you fat fool!" snapped Levison.

"He, he, he!"

Bunter put the letter in his pocket and rolled away, still chuckling. The juniors stared after him in wonder, Levison with a red face.

"What on earth can be in the letter to tickle the fat idiot like that?" asked Peter Todd.

"Goodness knows."

"I suppose Levison knows?" grinned Snoop.

"I know nothing about it," said Levison curtly, "and care just as much."

"Only Bunter's rot!" said Squiff.

But a good many curious glances were bestowed on Ernest Levison, and he frowned, and walked away with a flush in his cheeks.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

A Tip from Cardew!

"ERNIE!"

Frank Levison, of the Third Form, came rather breathlessly after his major. Levison turned his head.

"What?"

"You're wanted on the phone in the prefects' room," said Frank.

Levison stared at him.

"Wingate told me to call you," said the fag. "You'd better hurry up—he said you were to take the call. It's from St. Jim's."

"Oh, all right!"

Levison hurried back into the House. No doubt he was pleased to hear from an old friend at St. Jim's, and of course it must have been a friend who had rung him up. But he was feeling rather uneasy. It was not, of course, allowed for junior schoolboys to be rung up on the telephone, and it was a great concession for the captain of Greyfriars to allow him to take the call. Levison could guess that it was Ralph Reckness Cardew, of the St. Jim's Fourth, who

was on the phone. No other fellow was likely to have the check for it. Levison lost no time in getting to the prefects' room; but his manner was hesitating as he presented himself there, and he was not surprised to find Wingate, of the Sixth, looking rather grim.

"You're asked for on the phone, Levison," said the Greyfriars captain. "The kid, whoever he is, says it's very important; and as the call comes from your old school, you can take it. At the same time, you'd better give your friend the tip that Lower boys aren't allowed the use of the telephone here."

"Yes, Wingate," said Levison meekly. Wingate left the prefects' room, and Levison picked up the receiver.

"Hallo! Levison speaking."

"Is that you, Ernest, old bean?" came the well-known drawling tones of Ralph Reckness Cardew. "Jolly glad to hear your cheery old toot again. How are you gettin' on at Greyfriars?"

"Fine! I've told you so in half-a-dozen letters. You haven't rung me up to ask me that."

"Oh, no! Are you goin' to play for your jolly old new school in the match against us next week?"

"I think so."

"Then I shall play for St. Jim's, for the pleasure of seein' you again, old pippin."

"I hope so, but—"

"Oh, I'm goin' to fix it! I shall talk to Tom Merry on the subject till he gives in for the sake of a quiet life. Also, I shall put in some football practice."

"I think you'd better, if you want to play for St. Jim's."

"Oh, quite! But that isn't what I really rang you up for. There's somethin' else, old fellow."

"Better get to the point before we're cut off."

"Good idea—you always had good ideas, old bean! I suppose you remember a sort of fat snail that you used to see crawling about the Form-room and the passages—a slinkin', sneakin', crawlin' fat worm named Trimble?"

Levison laughed.

"Yes, I remember Baggy Trimble. You haven't rung me up to tell me about Trimble, I suppose?"

"I just have," answered Cardew.

"What on earth—"

"Trimble's written to Greyfriars."

"I know."

"Oh, you know? Do you know what he's written?"

"No. Does it matter?"

"I think it does a little. Trimble's on the war-path. He has suffered considerably from boot-leather, and it seems to have annoyed him. I needn't waste time givin' you the whole history, but he's owned up about having written a letter to a boulder named Bunter, and that boulder Bunter will get the letter this morning—got it, from what you say. As soon as I knew, I tried to get you on the phone, to put you wise. I tried your Form master's number—man named Squelch or somethin'—"

"Mr. Quelch."

"That's it—I knew it was somethin' pleasin' and euphonious like that. But he didn't seem pleased—he bit me off sharp."

"I dare say he thought it a cheek."

"I dare say he did—I've noticed lots of times that when I do anythin', old jossers seem to think it a cheek. Queer, ain't it?"

"Will you have another three minutes?" came a feminine voice, apparently from the exchange.

"Yes, thank you," came Cardew's reply. "Expense is no object in this

case, madam, as I am usin' somebody else's telephone."

"Do come to the point, old man!" urged Levison. "I'm almost due in the Form-room for third lesson."

"Same here; but I'm not worryin'. Well, look here, you remember that cad Trimble got hold of it that your people were—were—hard up, and all that; and that there was some difficulty about fees and things, and spread it over the House. Sorry to mention it, but it's the point you were askin' me to come to."

"Yes," said Levison quietly.

"Well, the little beast has shoved it all in a letter to a fellow he knows at Greyfriars—some other beast like himself, I suppose. Unless you can nobble that letter, it will be all over Greyfriars, just as it was all over St. Jim's."

"Oh!"

"If you can suppress the letter, all right. Trimble won't write again. He understands that it's as much as his life is worth, if it's worth anythin'. You don't want to have it the talk of your new school, what?"

"No!" said Levison, between his set lips.

"I thought not, so I'm burglin' Mr. Railton's telephone to give you the tip. When his telephone bill comes in, he will be slangin' the exchange for chargin' him with trunk calls he never had. My suggestion is to get hold of that letter before it spreads round your school. And—Oh, my only Aunt Sempronius!"

"What's the matter?"

"Nothin' much," came Cardew's airy reply. "Only Mr. Railton is just comin' into the study, and I'm nabbed. Think of me gettin' six for your sake, old bean, and don't say that I'm not a good pal, what?"

Cardew rang off.

Ernest Levison put up the receiver, with a troubled face. Cardew had taken some risk in borrowing his House-master's telephone to ring him up and put him on his guard, and evidently the risk had materialised. Levison left the prefects' room with a knitted brow.

He looked for Bunter.

He knew now what the letter from St. Jim's contained, and he was grateful to Cardew for having warned him. Cardew would have collared the Owl of the Remove, seized the letter, and burned it. But such high-handed methods were not in Levison's line.

The Removites were going to the Form-room now for third lesson. Levison joined the stream of juniors, and Billy Bunter, who was rolling in with the rest, gave him a grin that was full of meaning. Levison dropped into step beside the fat junior.

"You've read that letter from Trimble, Bunter?"

"He, he, he! Yes, rather. Awfully sorry for you, old chap!" grinned Bunter. "Must be horrid to be on the rocks, and expecting to go to the workhouse. I'm really sympathetic!"

"You fat idiot!"

"Oh, really, Levison—"

"Go and eat coke!" growled Levison, and he walked on and left Bunter.

It had been in his mind, for the moment, to ask Bunter to destroy the letter, and say nothing about its contents. But that idea was gone now. He could not ask a favour of the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter grinned.

"All right, old chap!" he called out loudly. "I'm not saying anything. I ain't going to give you away."

A dozen Remove fellows looked round. Levison, with burning cheeks,

clouded his usually cheery face that morning. His friends could not help wondering why it should be so. Levison, when he had been formerly at Greyfriars, had had to leave the school under a cloud. But he had pulled up; at St. Jim's he had been a very different fellow, and Dr. Locke had gladly allowed him to come back to his old school.

It seemed very unlikely, therefore, that he had left behind him at St. Jim's any story that he might be unwilling to let Greyfriars hear of. All the Form knew that he was looking forward to the visit of the St. Jim's football team the following week; which certainly did not indicate that he feared anything that St. Jim's fellows might say at Greyfriars. Yet he was evidently troubled by that letter which



"I thought so!" roared Bolsover. "You're speaking to that cad who's barred by the Form, you fat rotter!" "I'm not!" roared Bunter. "Not a word! Bright will bear me out—I haven't said a word to him, have I, Bright? I was only saying——" He broke off suddenly as Bolsover's fists clenched.

(See Chapter 4.)

went into the Form-room. He had to make up his mind now that his personal affairs would soon be the talk of the Remove; and he knew there were a few fellows, at least, who would be as willing to throw the unpleasant word, charity, in his face as Baggy Trimble had been at St. Jim's. But it could not be helped now; and Levison had to bear that, as he had borne many things.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Means Business!

HARRY WHARTON glanced curiously at Levison in class. A good many other Remove fellows looked at him also. Levison's face was dark and thoughtful, and it was not difficult for the fellows to see that he was troubled. Obviously, it was the letter from St. Jim's, received by Billy Bunter, that had

had arrived for Bunter from Baggy Trimble of the St. Jim's Fourth.

Almost all the Remove were on friendly terms with Levison—many of them fast friends. The Bounder had been rather against him to begin with, but had come round, and was now his friend. Even Skinner, who had been bitterly down on the returned Removite, had entirely ceased his enmity, and though he was not the kind of fellow of whom Levison could make a friend, he certainly wished the junior from St. Jim's well.

In all the Form, Levison had only one enemy—the new fellow, Bright; and Bright had been sent to Coventry by all the Remove. Even Bunter rather liked Levison, and certainly wished him no harm; but it was the nature of William George Bunter to use any power that might happen to be in his fat hands, and it was also his nature to tattle of anything that came to his knowledge.

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Without wishing to do Levison any real harm, it was certain that the Owl of the Remove would sooner or later spread Trimble's story all over the Lower School. In class during third lesson Bunter was grinning like a fellow in possession of some great joke, so far his own secret. Levison had only one enemy in the Form, and that enemy was barred by the Remove; but Edgar Bright's shifty eyes were watching him now, and watching Bunter. The "Toad" seemed to be scenting an opportunity of wreaking his old grudge.

After third lesson, as the juniors went out, Bob Cherry clapped Levison on the shoulder.

"Hallo hallo, hallo! Anything up?" he asked.

"Eh! No."

"You're looking like that because you're enjoying life, what?" asked Bob, with a grin.

"Like what?" asked Levison, rather testily.

"Down in the mouth."

"I wasn't aware that I was looking down in the mouth."

"Well, take my word for it—you were, and are," said Bob cheerily. "Come and help us punt a footer about—it will buck you up."

"I say, Levison," Billy Bunter rolled up. "You can sheer off, Bob Cherry; I want to speak to Levison."

"Fathead!" said Bob.

"Come on, old chap," said Bunter.

Levison did not come on. Bunter's manner was kind, and encouraging, and protecting; not at all the manner that Levison wanted from Bunter. He was not exactly the fellow to be patronised by the fat and fatuous Owl.

"What do you want?" he snapped.

"Oh, really, Levison—"

"Get out!" said Levison sharply. "If you've anything to say, say it, and leave me alone."

Bunter blinked at him wrathfully. This was not the talk he wanted from a fellow to whom he meant to be kind, in a lofty and patronising way.

"Look here, Levison, you'd jolly well better keep a civil tongue in your head," he said warmly.

"Oh, rats!"

"Perhaps you'd like me to read Trimble's letter out to all the fellows in the Rag?" sneered Bunter.

"Read it out and be hanged!"

Bob Cherry was staring at the Owl of the Remove.

"What's all this?" he demanded.

"What are you driving at, Bunter?"

"That's telling!" said Bunter. "I'm not giving Levison away."

"You fat chump, there's nothing to give away."

"That's all you know," grinned Bunter.

Bob stared at him and then glanced at Levison's clouded face. Then he walked away quietly. Evidently there was "something," and Bob certainly did not want to butt into it, whatever it was.

"Hold on; Levison!" said Bunter, as the junior from St. Jim's was turning away. "Look here, you needn't get your back up. I'm not down on you. In fact, I'm sympathetic."

"Keep your sympathy, you fat fool!" said Levison savagely.

"Oh, really, you know—"

"And leave me alone!"

Levison strode away, but the Owl of the Remove rolled after him. Bunter had something to say, and it was important.

"Look here, Levison—"

"Shut up!"

"My postal-order didn't come this

morning, after all," persisted Bunter. "I believe you know that I was expecting a postal-order."

Levison laughed impatiently.

"Well, it didn't come, and I got this letter from St. Jim's," said Bunter. "I never asked Trimble to write to me; he's not really one of my friends. A fat boulder, who butts in anywhere, you know, and sticks to well-off fellows and makes out he's friendly with them. That's Trimble. Not my sort."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Levison. "That's not your sort?"

"Not at all. The fellow's an outsider," said Bunter. "He freezes on to me because I'm wealthy and highly connected, that's all."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at. But look here, to come to the point, I was disappointed about a postal-order this morning. I didn't want this letter from Trimble, but I did want a postal-order; for it happens that I'm short of money at the present moment. You being my pal, old chap, I think you might stand me the ten bob, and take the postal-order when it comes. What do you say?"

"Rats!"

"If you're going to refuse—"

"No 'if' about it."

"You'd better remember that one good turn deserves another, Levison. If you refuse to oblige me, you can't expect me to keep your shady secrets; and, in fact, I hardly think that I can continue to know you," said Bunter, shaking his head seriously. "I'm not a snob, I hope, but a fellow in my position can hardly know a charity chap—Yaroooooh!"

Bunter sat down in the passage so suddenly that he hardly knew how he had got there. Levison walked out into the quad, and left him sitting there, roaring.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Toad's Chance!

BRIGHT of the Remove came across the Form-room passage and gave Bunter a helping hand to rise. All the other fellows had gone out into the winter sunshine, but the Toad had lingered near the Form-room, covertly watching Bunter and Levison. Now he came forward and helped the spluttering Owl of the Remove to his feet.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" spluttered Bunter breathlessly. "Groogh! Cheeky cad! I'll jolly well go after him and lick him! Ow!"

"Hurt?" asked Bright sympathetically.

"Ow! Yow! Of course I'm hurt, you silly idiot! Yow-ow-ow!"

"Sorry, old fellow!"

Billy Bunter set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose and blinked at the Toad.

"Here, you sheer off!" he said. "You're in Coventry! Don't you speak to me, Toad."

"Is that the way of saying thank you?" sneered Bright.

"You sheer off!" repeated Bunter.

"About that letter, Bunter?"

"Mind your own business," said Bunter. "Don't I keep on telling you not to speak to me? You're barred!"

Bright set his thin lips hard.

"You were asking Levison—"

"Shut up, I tell you!"

"About cashing a postal-order—"

"Oh!"

Bunter's manner changed at once. The Toad was barred by the Remove for good reasons, and Bunter had

entered cordially into barring him. But the Toad had plenty of money, and Bunter was of the opinion of that ancient Roman emperor who declared that the smell of all money was sweet.

"Let's go into the Form-room, old chap," said Bunter cautiously. "Quelch's gone. It's all right."

"We can talk here," said Bright sourly.

"Well, if the fellows saw me speaking to you there'd be trouble; that beast Bolsover would kick me. See?" Bunter linked his arm in the Toad's and drew him into the Remove-room, vacant now. "Of course, I don't mind speaking to you sometimes, old chap. I dare say it was only a joke of yours, just as you said, your trying to get Levison bunked from the school. Hem! I say, the postal-order was for ten bob."

"Let me see that letter."

"What letter?"

"You know what letter—the one you had from a St. Jim's man this morning."

Bunter hesitated.

"That isn't your business," he said. "Keep to the point, old chap. My postal-order will be here this afternoon, or to-morrow morning at the latest."

"Will you show me that letter?"

"No, I won't!"

"Just as you like," said Bright.

"You can clear off, then."

Bunter blinked at him.

"Look here, there's nothing to interest you in that letter," he said. "You mind your own bizney, you know."

"You can clear off," repeated Bright.

But William George Bunter was not likely to clear off, so long as there was a chance of getting his celebrated postal-order cashed.

"Of course, I've a right to show that letter to any fellow I like," he said.

"Levison can't expect me to keep it dark, when he's treated me so rottenly."

"Of course not," agreed Bright.

"Well, here it is."

The next moment Bright was reading the letter from St. Jim's. It was written in a hand, and with a style of spelling, worthy of William George Bunter himself. Blots and smudges were numerous, and the finger-prints would have enabled any detective to track down the writer with ease. It ran:

"Dear Bunter,—I daresay you'll be glad to hear some newsc about that fellow Levison, who was kicked out of Greyfriars long agow, and has come bak. He had to leave St. Jim's because his people couldn't pay his feeze here. There was a lott of talk about it before he left, and sum of the fellows say he left so suddenly because the Head was going to serve a rit on his people for the feeze. I'll bet he hasn't told them at Greyfriars that he's been taken in there on charrity without being paid for, him and his young brother, too. He treeted me very badly, and left oweing me munny. All the fellows here kno that he's at Greyfriars on charity. I thrashed him before he left, though I daresay he will make out that he thrashed me. He's a bad lott.

"Yores sincerely,

"B. TRIMBLE."

The Toad's shifty eyes glinted over the letter. He had narrowly escaped expulsion from Greyfriars, he had been sent to Coventry by his Form for his dastardly attempt to fasten a falso charge upon Ernest Levison and drive him from the school. Further scheming and plotting the Toad dared not attempt; he had been too thoroughly scared for that. But chance, and the malice of Baggy Trimble had delivered

his enemy into his hands, so it seemed to him now.

He smiled, a very disagreeable smile. He had observed Levison very closely; he knew his proud and sensitive nature. Nothing had been said at Greyfriars of the terms upon which Ernest Levison had returned to his old school; the natural supposition was that he was there on the same terms as the rest of the fellows. And he was there on charity!

The Toad's eyes glittered. He had striven to drive his rival from the school, to make it impossible for him to search further for the lost will which, if found, would save his father from ruin. His scheme had failed, and recoiled upon himself. Levison was safe now from his machinations. But would the fellow stay on, to be taunted with charity? When all Greyfriars knew this story, would not the fellow be glad to go—leaving Bright a clear field to search for John Thorpe's will?

Levison was proud, he was sensitive, he was even a little touchy and suspicious, Bright thought. Fellows who disliked him would make the most of this; even his friends, if they kept up their friendship, would have a tincture of patronage about him, or Levison would think that they had. His position would be an impossible one for any fellow who was not thick-skinned. And Levison certainly was not thick-skinned.

"Mind, it's a secret!" said Bunter uneasily, almost alarmed by the gloating malice in the Toad's face.

Bright laughed. "It won't be a secret long when you know it," he answered.

"Of course, I'm not going to give the fellow away," said Bunter. "He's rather a beast, but it wouldn't be cricket to give him away."

Bright laughed again. He did not suppose for a moment that the tattling Owl would, or could, keep the secret. But if Bunter kept it, that would be of little use now; Bright would see that it was made generally known.

"I don't see why you should keep it dark, Bunter," he said. "The fellow is really here under false pretences. A charity cad!"

"Yes, it's rather thick, come to think of it," agreed Bunter. "Still, I shan't say anything—if he's civil."

"It wasn't very civil, knocking you down in the passage."

"No, it wasn't," said Bunter. "Cheeky cad—and him here on charity all the time! Awful cheek! But I say—about that ten bob—"

"Here you are!"

"Look here, Bright, I don't mind speaking to you sometimes, you know," said Bunter affably. "Of course, you're an awful worm, and a rank outsider, and all that, and not fit for a decent fellow to touch with a barge-pole; but I'll speak to you sometimes, when the other fellows ain't about, of course." No doubt William George Bunter was thinking of the cashing of his next postal-order.

Bolsover major looked into the Form-room.

"I thought so!" he roared. "You're speaking to that cad who's barred by the Form, you fat rotter."

"I'm not!" roared Bunter. "Not a word! Bright will bear me out. I haven't said a word to him, have I, Bright? I was only saying—"

Bunter broke off and dodged among the desks. Bolsover's boot was dangerously near.

"Ow! Yow! Keep off!" roared Bunter.

Crash! Bolsover major's boot landed

on Bunter, and Bunter landed in the Form-room passage.

"Yow-ow-ow!" William George Bunter scrambled up and fled. His fleeing footsteps led him to the school shop, where he found consolation in refreshments, liquid and solid, to the precise value of a ten-shilling note.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Trouble in the Third!

"HUSH!" murmured Tubb of the Third. And the half dozen fags who had been talking in the Third Form room fell into sudden silence.

"Were we?" murmured Tubb.

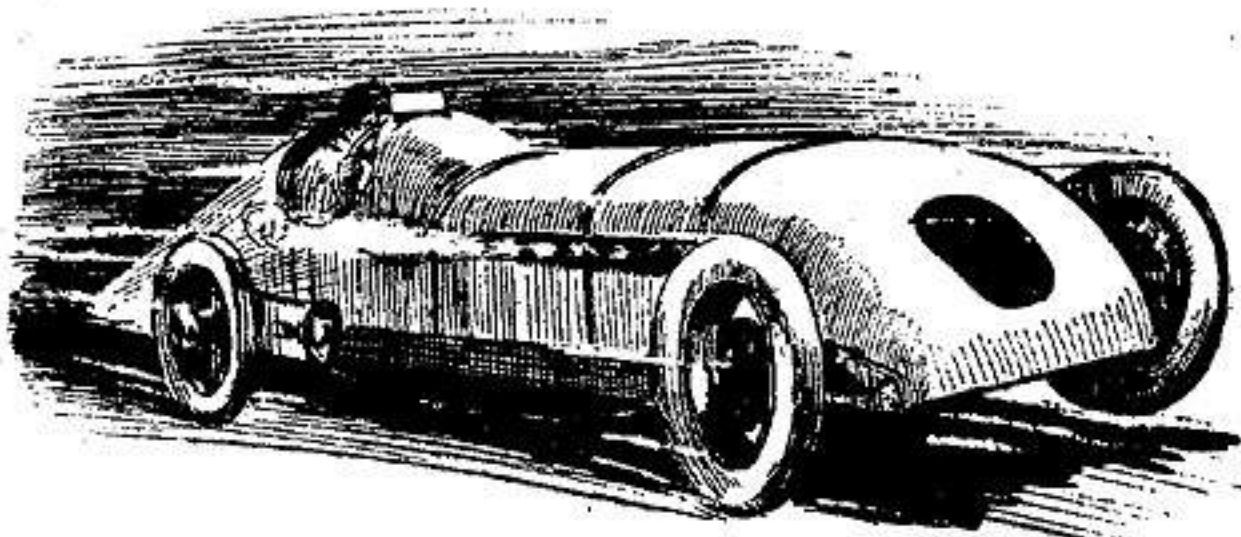
"Only sayin' what a nice fellow you are, old bean," said Paget of the Third blandly. Percival Spencer Paget, the little dandy of the Third, was never at a loss.

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Levison minor. "You were chattering like a lot of parrots a minute ago; I heard you as I came up the passage. You chucked it when I came in. What's up?"

The fags were silent. Frank flushed a little as he eyed them. They were all fellows he was on friendly terms with; Tubb, and Paget, and Bolsover minor, and Wingate minor, and Smith minimus. But it was not pleasant to feel that they had been discussing him in a way that caused them

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Levison minor had just entered.

Frank glanced at Tubb & Co., raising his eyebrows a little. He had strolled cheerily into the Form-room, where most of the Third had gathered; prep with Mr. Wiggins being due shortly. He came in carelessly, whistling; but his cheery whistle ceased and he stared at the group of fags. A much less keen youngster than Frank Levison would have guessed that he had been under discussion, and that the fags had ceased suddenly to speak, as he came in, for that reason. One or two of them coloured and looked very uncomfortable, and avoided meeting his glance.

"What's up?" asked Frank Levison in surprise.

"Up?" repeated Tubb.

"Yes; you were talking about me, weren't you?"

to break off and look extremely uncomfortable when he appeared on the scene.

"Well, what is it?" demanded Frank.

"Nothing," said Wingate minor.

"You were talking about nothing?"

"Yes—no—exactly."

"What about a game of leap-frog before old Wiggy comes in to bung prep at us?" asked Bolsover minor.

"Good egg!" said all the fags at once.

"Look here, what's this game?" demanded Levison minor, colouring angrily. "Can't you say to me what you've been saying about me?"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Tubb.

"My dear men," drawled Paget. "Franky's in the right—he ought to know. As his friends, we'd better tell him."

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"Oh, it's rotten!" said Tubb. "I don't believe a word of it, for one."

"No fear!" said Jack Wingate.

"Well, what is it?" exclaimed the fag from St. Jim's. "Blessed if you're not as mysterious as a lot of film merchants! What is it?"

"There's a yarn goin' about," said Paget. "Somebody in the Third seems to have got it from a Remove man. It's about you and your brother."

"Get it off your chest," grunted Frank. "I'll jolly well find that Remove man and punch his nose! But tell me the yarn first."

"The yarn is that you and your brother left St. Jim's because your pater owed your fees and couldn't pay them, and that the Head let you come here for nothin'," said Paget.

Frank started violently.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

"Mind, we don't believe a word of it," said George Tubb; "and I don't if it's true," he added, reading the expression on Frank Levison's face. "Nothing against a fellow if his people are hard up."

"Nothin' at all," said Paget, with a slightly supercilious air. "In fact, it's rather vulgar to be rich these days. Every outsider is rich now."

Frank Levison stood silent. He was utterly taken aback. He had almost forgotten the discomfort that had been caused to him and his brother, at St. Jim's, by Baggy Trimble's prying and tattling. It was utterly dismaying to find the same experience awaiting him at Greyfriars.

"It isn't true, is it, young Levison?" asked Smith minimus.

Frank did not answer.

The fags exchanged glances.

"Blessed if I know how it got about," said Tubb uncomfortably. "The fellow who told about it must be an awful cad. You needn't think we shall have it up against you, Levison mi."

"Certainly not," said Paget. "In fact, I'd like to know how your pater wangled it, kid. My pater would be glad of the tip. He would be no end bucked if he found out a way of savin' my fees here."

There was a laugh from the fags.

But Frank Levison did not laugh. His face was crimson, and he seemed unable to speak. Bolter of the Third came into the Form-room.

"Young Levison here?" he asked. "I say, Levison mi, what's this yarn about you being here on charity? 'Tain't true, is it?"

"Shut up, Bolter!" grunted Tubb.

"Eh? Only asking Levison mi a question," said Bolter. "I've just had it from a Remove man. He said young Levison and his brother are here on charity—that was his word. I said it was a cram."

"You talk too much, old bean," said Paget.

"Oh, rot!" answered Bolter. "I suppose the man can say whether it's true or not. Is it true, Levison mi?"

"Find out!" snapped Frank.

Bolter stared at him.

"I suppose that means it's true," he said. "You needn't fly out at a man—I'm not chipping you about it, am I? I think you ought to have told us, though," he added, shaking his head.

"No bizney of yours, anyway."

"Perhaps not," said Bolter, getting angry. "But I'm blessed if I knew before that Greyfriars was a charitable institution. We live and learn!"

"That's caddish, dear man," drawled Paget.

"Is it?" retorted Bolter. "Can't the

fellow be civil, then? 'Tain't my fault if he's here on the nod, is it?"

"I'm not here on the nod!" exclaimed Frank fiercely.

"If you're here without your fees being paid, you're here on the nod," retorted Bolter. "Are your fees paid?"

"Find out!"

"That means that they're not. A fellow who comes here for nothing is taking charity, and you can't get round that!"

Frank's eyes blazed.

"Do you think I'm a fellow to take charity, or my brother either, you rotter? You don't know the circumstances, and I'm not going to tell you, but I'm as much entitled to be here as any man in the Third. You can ask the Head if you like."

"Yes, I'm likely to ask the Head—I don't think!" chuckled Bolter. "You needn't get your rag out; I'm going to speak to you just the same, whether you're here on charity or not."

"You needn't trouble to speak to me. Keep to yourself, and be hanged to you!" blazed out Frank.

"Well, I will, then," said Bolter wrathfully. "I think you might be civil, Levison mi, when you're a charity chap."

Smack!

Oliver Bolter gave a roar and sat down on the floor of the Form-room.

"Well hit!" drawled Paget.

"Why, I—I—I'll smash him!" roared Bolter, scrambling up in great wrath and prancing up to Frank Levison with doubled fists. "Do that again, you charity cad!"

Frank did it again, promptly and rather to Bolter's surprise. Oliver Bolter sat down again.

The Form-room door opened, and Mr. Wiggins, the master of the Third, came in. He glanced severely at the fags.

"What's this? What—what? Take your places at once!"

The Third Form took their places, Frank with burning cheeks and Bolter giving him inimical glances.

Prep was a painful ordeal to Levison minor that evening.

Immediately it was over, when Mr. Wiggins left the Form-room, Frank Levison left it also. The story was all over the Third now, and for once he shrank from the society of his Form-fellows. His friends probably thought little of it, and most of the Third did not care a straw one way or the other; but there were two or three fellows who were grinning maliciously. Taunts from foes and sympathy from friends were equally distasteful to the sensitive fag. He left the Form-room; and as he went he heard a buzz of discussion break out, and he knew that he was the topic. His ears burned as he went, and it was with a troubled and clouded face that he made his way to the Remove passage.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Loyal Chums!

HARRY WHARTON laid down his pen.

"You chaps finished?"

"Just!" said Nugent.

Levison nodded.

The three juniors had been at prep in Study No. 1. Generally, there was an air of cheerfulness in that study when the three gathered there, even for prep.

Now there was just a trace of constraint in the manner of Wharton and Nugent. Levison, who observed most things, had not failed to observe that.

His face was dark, and his feelings were bitter.

He had disdained to ask Bunter to keep dark the information he had received from Trimble of St. Jim's. He had expected Bunter to tattle; but he had hardly expected the story to be spread through the Remove so soon. He did not know yet that Bright had nosed it out, and was busy spreading it.

The Toad was in Coventry, and hardly a fellow in the Remove would speak to him, or answer him if he spoke. Nevertheless, it was easy enough for him to spread the tale. He had told Snoop and Skinner, in Study No. 11. Skinner had said nothing; but Snoop was not the fellow to say nothing about it. Bright had told fags in the Third and the Second; he had told fellows in the Upper Fourth and the Shell. Bunter, to do him justice, had not intended to spread the story. But he had given many mysterious hints and nods and winks; and he had shown Trimble's letter to three or four fellows, in strict confidence, of course. Between Bunter's fatuousness and Bright's bitter animosity, the story was not long in spreading up and down the Remove passage.

That it had come to the ears of his study-mates, Ernest Levison was well aware.

The constraint in their manner told him that; and it told him more, in his present moody and touchy frame of mind, than there really was to be told, for he drew from it the conclusion that his friends were regretting that they had chummed up with a fellow who had come to the school "on the nod." As a matter of fact, Wharton and Nugent were only feeling uncomfortable on Levison's account, and trying to conceal the fact that they had heard anything.

"Coming down to the Rag?" asked Wharton cheerily, with a rather forced geniality.

"Hold on a minute," said Levison quietly.

He looked at his study-mates.

"You've heard what Bunter's got from that cad Trimble at St. Jim's?" he asked directly.

"Yes," answered Wharton, with equal directness. "It's being talked of right and left. You've only to deny it, of course."

"I can't very well deny what's true."

"Oh!"

"I quite understand how the matter stands," said Levison. "Perhaps I ought to have told you. But a fellow doesn't usually discuss his personal affairs even with friends. Now you know, you'd rather that I kept my distance. Let it go at that. I understand."

Wharton looked him in the face.

"Don't be a silly ass, Levison!" he said unceremoniously. "If you're out to take offence over nothing, you'll be getting busy soon. Nobody in this study cares a button about your personal affairs."

"Not a brass button!" said Nugent, with a smile. "Not even a bone button!"

"Oh!" said Levison.

He coloured a little.

"I—I thought—"

"Well, chuck it," said Wharton. "What the thump do you think it matters to us any arrangement your father may have made with the Head?"

"I've already been called a charity cad!"

"Not by any decent chap."

"Well, no," said Levison, smiling.

"I ask your pardon. I suppose I'm getting touchy. It's not pleasant."

"That's so," said Harry. "But it's nobody's business but your own, and

"Why, I'll smash him!" roared Bolter, prancing up to Frank Levison with doubled fists. "Do that again, you cheeky charity cad!" Frank's eyes gleamed and his fists clenched. (See Chapter 5.)



there's hardly a man at Greyfriars who will say a word about it, or think a word. You needn't mind a few outsiders."

"And it makes no difference to you fellows?"

"What rot! Of course not!" "Why the dickens should it?" asked Nugent. "You don't want to be too jolly sensitive in the Lower Fourth, Levison, if you'll take a tip from me."

"I'd like to explain to you fellows, as you're taking it so decently," said Levison. "From what Trimble's told Bunter, and Bunter's spread up and down the Form, it would look as if my brother and I are here on charity. But that's not really the case; we should not have come here on those terms."

"No harm if you did," said Harry. "Greyfriars was founded originally for poor scholars, like most old public schools—though things have changed a bit since that time, somehow or other."

"Still, it isn't the case," said Levison. "I'd like you to know the facts. You know that my great-uncle, Mr. Thorpe, was once master of the Remove here? He came into money when he was old; and by a will he made early in life, Esau Bright is his heir. That's Bright's father. They were great friends when they were young men—Bright a solicitor at Lantham, and Thorpe a Form master here. Bright went abroad for many years, and the will was unknown. When old Mr. Thorpe died at Worthing, my father inherited, as his nephew and next-of-kin. Mr. Bright recently came back from abroad—a rich man. I think he had been a moneylender in one of the Dominions, and had made his pile. But, rich as he was, he seems to have started as a moneylender in Lantham, and he has claimed John Thorpe's twenty thou-

sand pounds under the will, which he has produced and proved."

Levison paused a moment.

"My father had been in America. He came home and saw his uncle here, and found him in a bad state of health. Mr. Thorpe told him that he had made a will in his favour, and mentioned certain legacies he was making to others—among them, five hundred pounds to Greyfriars School."

"Oh!" said Harry.

"He was ill at Greyfriars some time before he was taken away to a nursing-home at Worthing," went on Levison. "He was removed, I believe, in an ambulance. Many of his papers were not found after his death. He was known to have written a book on archaeology, which was his hobby; but the manuscript was not found. And his last will was not found, either. That made no difference to my father, who inherited it as his only near relation; but the bequests he had intended to make were not, of course, legally provided for. My father, knowing his wishes, carried them out as soon as the money came to him. Among the other bequests he paid five hundred pounds into the school funds, because that had been his uncle's intention."

"Oh!" said Nugent.

"At that time he knew nothing of the will Mr. Thorpe had made, making his friend Bright his heir. He never dreamed that such a document was in existence till Bright returned from abroad and made his claim. The will is genuine, and cannot be contested. My father is called upon to hand over the twenty thousand pounds he inherited. He firmly believes that there is a later will cancelling the earlier one. He believes that Thorpe left it in some

secret place in this school. He was, in no state to think of such things when he was taken away ill. That will, if it is found, will save my father from ruin; and I have already told you fellows that I hope to find it."

"I remember," said Harry.

"But, as the matter stands, my father has to make restitution of the twenty thousand pounds, and the legacies he paid out of it must come out of his own pocket. In the circumstances, the governors of Greyfriars have offered to take measures, if possible, to return him the five hundred pounds he paid under a misapprehension. He has refused that; but he has accepted, instead, the admission of his two sons to Greyfriars without the payment of the usual fees."

"I see," said Wharton.

"It is true that we had to leave St. Jim's because my father could not pay for us there. But it is not true that we are at Greyfriars on charity. What my father paid into the school funds when he came into old Mr. Thorpe's money would more than see us through. My father thinks, and the Head and Mr. Quelch think, and I think, that we are entitled to be here for that reason."

"Of course!" said Harry. "Look here. Levison, you can have no objection to letting the fellows know all this?"

"None at all," said Levison quietly. "I did not want the matter talked about; but now it has become the talk of the Form, it's better for the fellows to know the whole story. I was twitted with charity by some fellows at St. Jim's, and it would have been true if I'd stayed on there. But it is not true here."

Wharton looked thoughtful.
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"Is it quite certain that old Mr. Thorpe made that new will?" he asked. "My father is convinced of it. His idea is that Mr. Thorpe must have heard something against his former friend Bright that caused him to cut him off. Perhaps he knew he was rich, perhaps he knew he was a money-lender, perhaps he knew that he was a scoundrel," added Levison bitterly.

"Is he a scoundrel?"

"He has sent his son to Greyfriars to search for the lost will. He knows it is here. What does he want with it?" asked Levison. "To make it public, and thus destroy his own claim to the fortune?"

"Hardly."

"If Bright finds that will, it will be suppressed," said Levison, "and my father will be ruined. If I find it, my father will be saved! Bright has been searching for it ever since he came; you fellows yourselves caught him rooting about Mr. Quelch's study, which was Mr. Thorpe's study when he was a master here. He is after the will, and if he finds it it will go to his father, and will never be seen again!"

"Why, it's against the law to destroy a will!" exclaimed Nugent. "It means chokey if a man's found out!"

Levison smiled bitterly.

"I think a good many of Mr. Esau Bright's proceedings would mean chokey, if they were found out," he said. "He is a scoundrel—the man who would give his son such a task is a scoundrel!"

"The fellow ought to be turned out of the school!" exclaimed Wharton. "He would be, if the Head knew what he was after!"

"He's found nothing so far," said Levison. "I've found nothing, either. If the secret recess is in that old study, it's too well hidden to be found. I'm thinking of trying the subterranean passage under the school—that may lead to something. I don't know. But—"

"We'll make up a party to explore it on a half-holiday," said Harry. "It's not safe for a fellow to go down into the vaults alone. A chap might get lost among all those passages, and never see the daylight again."

"Good egg!" said Nugent.

The door of Study No. 1 opened, and the three juniors looked round. It was the thin, sallow face of the Toad that looked in.

Wharton gave him a grim stare.

"Get out!" he snapped.

"Hallo! Found your voice?" sneered Bright.

"Get out!"

"Oh, I'll get out fast enough!" jeered Bright. "I've looked in for a word with Levison! I'm sent to Coventry—good! I've been turned out of this study—good! I should have got out of my own accord when I found out that one of the fellows here was a beggar, a sneaking charity cad, who ought to be sent to the workhouse instead of a public school!"

Slam!

The Toad slammed the door and went as Wharton made a fierce stride towards him.

Levison breathed hard.

"That's what I've to stand now!" he muttered.

"Nobody cares for that cad!" said Wharton. "If he opens his rascally mouth again, I'd advise you to plant your knuckles on it—hard! Look here, Levison, you've told me the terms you're on here, and, if you've no objection, I'll tell the fellows in the Rag, and that will shut up that charity story. What do you say?"

"Do!" said Levison.

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"Right-ho, then!"

Wharton and Nugent left the study. Levison remained. He had explained enough to make his position clear—to set himself right with the Remove. But there was a bitter sting in Bright's taunt, all the same. Levison knew that he was discussed all through the Form, and he did not care to go down to the Rag and face a host of curious eyes.

He was not at Greyfriars on charity, but any ill-natured fellow could take that view if he liked; the position was at least a curious one. Levison threw himself into a chair with a dark and clouded brow.

"I've got to find that will," he muttered—"I've got to find it! I've got to save the pater and Doris and mother—I've got to do it!" He clenched his hands. "Only me between them all and poverty, and I've done nothing—nothing! I've got to find it!"

There was a tap at the door, and Frank Levison came in.

In an instant the black cloud passed from Ernest Levison's brow, and there was a smile on his face as he nodded to his minor.

"Hallo, kid! Got your books?"

Frank shook his head.

"It isn't that, Ernie! I—I say, I—I've had rather a row in the Third! The—the fellows know—"

Levison winced.

He had not thought of it, but he realised that the story must spread to the lower Forms, that the Third would all hear of it—that Frank had to face in the Third what he had to face in the Remove.

"I don't know how it got out," said Frank miserably. "Ernie, it's not true that we're here on charity, but the fellows would never understand how it is. I—I say, it's rotten! I—I wish we'd never come to Greyfriars, Ernie!"

"We had to come—I had, at least!" said Levison. "We've got a duty to do here, Franky; we've got to find that will, and save the people at home from being sold up. If we find it rough, we've got to stand it, for their sakes. It's up to us to go ahead and keep a stiff upper lip!"

"I—I know! But—"

"Brace up, kid; you're not the fellow to give in!" said Levison. "No good weakening when a trouble comes along."

Frank flushed.

"I can stand it if you can, Ernie."

"We'll stand it together," said Levison.

—

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Unpleasant!

ERNEST LEVISON was the object of a good deal of interest in the Lower School the next day.

Not only Remove fellows, but men in the Upper Fourth and the Shell, gave him curious glances when they came across him.

He was quite aware of it, though his face was absolutely unconscious of anything of the kind.

Certainly it was not pleasant.

Harry Wharton had told the Remove fellows in the Rag what Levison had told him—with the exception, of course, of the circumstance that Levison was seeking his great-uncle's lost will at Greyfriars. That was not a matter to be allowed to become the talk of the school.

Every fellow, who chose to see, could see that Levison and his brother had a real claim upon the school, and that there was no taint of charity in their being at Greyfriars without the payment of fees. But there were fellows who did not choose to see.

Bright, of course, was one of them. Snoop was another. But they were the only fellows in the Remove who desired to make themselves unpleasant.

But there were other fellows, like Bolsover major and a few others, who assumed a rather patronising air towards the juniors from St. Jim's; not meaning any harm thereby, but rather wishing to make it clear what generous fellows they were.

Levison would have preferred open enmity to condescending kindness; and his manner to fellows who were condescendingly kind could not be called grateful or comforting.

Some of the fellows began to think that Levison was very touchy; some considered him ill-tempered and ungrateful. And condescending kindness, being ruthlessly snubbed, became much less kind—and, in fact, very unkind. Bolsover major was heard to remark that it was not for a charity chap to put on airs. Other fellows made similar remarks. Billy Bunter loudly complained of having his fat ear pulled by a fellow whose fees were not even paid. Bob Cherry heard that complaint, and Bunter's fat ear was promptly pulled by a fellow whose fees were certainly paid—though that did not seem to bring any great consolation to Bunter.

Temple of the Fourth made it a point to speak to Levison in the quad, with an air of kind condescension that brought a glint into Levison's eyes. The snub that Cecil Reginald Temple received in return made him quite crimson, and he did not waste any more kindness on Levison. After that Cecil Reginald Temple told all the Fourth that Greyfriars was comin' to somethin' when rank outsiders were let into the school on charity.

It was not Levison's way to betray his feelings in his looks; he did not wear his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at. His looks told nothing. But he was feeling deeply.

Bright had calculated well.

To a high-spirited fellow the position was painful and likely to grow intolerable.

But for his hope of finding the lost will, Levison would have been glad to leave Greyfriars now.

He had been glad to come back to his old school, but there was a shadow on it now for him.

It was natural, in the circumstances, that he should grow reserved, that his temper should become less uniformly good.

Indeed, but for his friends in the Form, he might very probably have grown soured and bitter. The taunts of a fellow like Bright, the lofty airs of a duffer like Temple, the fat sneers of a fatuous ass like Bunter, were not worth his notice, and he knew it; yet they hurt. But with the Famous Five and Squiff and Brown and Toddy and Lord Mauleverer and Mark Linley, and his other loyal friends, he was still at his ease. There was no condescension about those fellows; they were just as cheery and friendly as ever, and only by an extreme touchiness on his own part could he have found fault with them. And he was very careful not to be touchy.

But the position was very unpleasant, and Levison longed almost passionately for success in the task he had undertaken.

Yet the hope with which he had started was fading away.

From what his father knew, from what it was evident that Bright knew, it was clear to his mind that old Mr. Thorpe's papers had been left in some secret recess. The old gentleman had dabbled

in archæology; he had explored every recess of the old buildings during his long years at Greyfriars, and it was known that he had written a book on the subject, which existed somewhere in manuscript.

The ancient buildings of Greyfriars were full of secrets, and it was extremely likely that Mr. Thorpe, in his ramblings and rummagings, had become acquainted with them. The ancient, oak-panelled walls of his study—now Mr. Quelch's study—might have held the secret. Bright obviously thought so, and what he knew he had derived from his father, who had known John Thorpe intimately. Yet Levison, after the most exhaustive search, had failed to discover any opening or sliding panel in the Form master's study. If there was a secret, it was well hidden. Yet that old Mr. Thorpe had left papers at the school was certain, from the fact that his archæological manuscripts had never been found.

Whether the supposed will existed or not, the manuscripts existed, and were hidden somewhere. Some secret recess in the ancient building had come to Mr. Thorpe's knowledge by chance or search, and he had used it as a receptacle for his most valuable papers; and in his last illness, when his faculties had been breaking down, it had passed from his mind. Levison was as certain of it as he could be of anything, yet he had failed to make any discovery.

He had had plenty of time before him—but that was altered now. His position had become almost intolerable in the school, and he was passionately eager to complete his task at Greyfriars. As his hope faded, his determination grew more keen.

"Sort of charity match to-morrow, you fellows!" sniggered Snoop, as he read down the football list posted in the

Rag the day before the fixture with St. Jim's.

"How's that?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Levison's playing!"

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter.

"Oh shut up, Snoop!" said Skinner.

"Yes, shut up, you worm, if you don't want to have your head banged on the wall!" growled Bob.

"Rather a come-down for Greyfriars, playing a charity cad in the matches!" said Bright.

Nobody answered Bright.

In the seclusion of Study No. 11 Skinner & Co. were on speaking terms with the ostracised Toad; but outside the study they never spoke to him. The other fellows never spoke to him at all.

"Disgrace for the school, I call it!" went on Bright.

"Rather thick!" said Snoop.

Bob Cherry made a sudden grasp at the two and grabbed them by their collars.

Bang!

Two heads came together with a terrific collision. Two wild yells rang in unison through the Rag.

"Let go, you rotter!" howled Snoop.

Bob Cherry swung them away after banging their heads, and Snoop staggered against the wall, and the Toad collapsed on the floor.

"You've only got to keep on if you want some more!" said Bob, glaring at the two.

"And the morefulness will be terrific," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, that's all very well, you know!" said Billy Bunter.

"But I can jolly well tell you that I draw the line at fellows who come here on charity, and won't even cash a postal-order for a fellow."

Bang!

"Yarocoh!"

Bunter's head smote the wall of the Rag.

"Have another?" asked Bob Cherry affably.

"Whooop!"

"You've only got to ask, you know!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

He did not ask for any more.

Levison came into the Rag. He knew that his name was in the football list, but he naturally wanted to see it there. Snoop, rubbing his head, gave him a sneering look; Bright curled his lip.

"Charity cad!"

The colour flushed into Levison's face.

"You rotter!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Do you want some more?"

"I suppose I can tell a beggar what I think of him, if I like," jeered the Toad.

Levison made a movement towards him, his eyes blazing. But he controlled himself, and turned quietly to Wharton's notice on the wall. The captain of the Remove came into the Rag just then, and his eyes gleamed as he heard Bright's words.

"Put that cad across the table, you men," he said.

"What ho!"

Wharton picked the shovel out of the fender.

The Toad, wriggling and resisting fiercely, was flung across the table face down, in the grip of half a dozen pairs of hands.

"Six!" said Bob.

"And let the sixfulness be terrific, my esteemed chum."

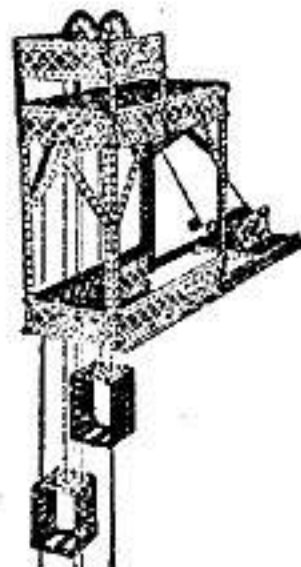
Wharton nodded, and wielded the shovel. Six from the flat of a shovel was not quite so severe as six from a prefect's ashplant. But Bright found that six quite severe enough. He roared at every swipe.

(Continued on next page.)

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"There, you outsider," said the captain of the Remove. "That's a tip for you! Hold your caddish tongue after this!"

Bright rolled off the table, gasping. He limped out of the Rag crimson with fury.

Levison, quietly reading down the football list, gave no heed. But his ears were burning. Even the championship of his friends added to the intolerable discomfort of his position. He made no remark, and his friends made none. But his heart was heavy, and his face was clouded, as he left the Rag, and went out into the quad. And Bright's eyes followed him with malicious satisfaction. The fellow was getting fed up—and he would go—that was the Toad's reflection, and it comforted him for the well-deserved six he had received.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Tom Merry & Co. at Greyfriars!

LEVISON'S face was bright the following day.

The St. Jim's match was coming off that afternoon; which meant not only a good game of football—a great solace for many troubles, in itself—but that he would see his old friends again.

Levison was not the fellow to indulge in useless repining. He was the fellow to make the best of things without complaint. But he had felt his parting from his pals at St. Jim's. He had good friends at Greyfriars—he was attached to them, he had a keen sense of their kindly comradeship—he liked to be with them. But his bosom pals were Sidney Clive and Ralph Reckness Cardew, of the St. Jim's Fourth; and no other friends could ever be quite the same. Clive, quiet and steady and easy-going; Cardew, whimsical and volatile, full of changing moods, were utterly unlike one another, and both unlike Ernest Levison. But that unlikeness never made any difference to their friendship.

It had been a good thing for Levison, that he was able to get into Greyfriars when he had to leave St. Jim's. He had an affection for the place, too; he liked the fellows. But his heart was always with his old chums at St. Jim's—more than half his heart, at all events; and Harry Wharton & Co. had early perceived that fact. They liked him all the better for it; certainly they could not have respected a fellow who could forget old friends easily.

On that Wednesday, Levison gave no thought to Bright, no thought to his strange and difficult task as yet unperformed, no thought to the many troubles and shadows he had to face and bear. His face was bright, his eyes cheery, his heart light. Both Clive and Cardew were coming over with the Saints, he knew; Clive as a full-back in the team, and Cardew possibly in the team; at any rate, as a reserve. He looked forward keenly to seeing them, and he was keen, too, to see his other friends—Tom Merry, Talbot, D'Arcy, Blake, and the rest.

It was a rather odd position for Levison, in the team that was to play, perhaps defeat, his old comrades. But he was keen to play. He was a Greyfriars man, for the present at least, and his business was to uphold the colours of the school that gave him shelter. But it was in Tom Merry's team that he had learned to play the good game that was now to be played against Tom Merry & Co.

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Long before the Saints arrived, a crowd was gathering on Little Side at Greyfriars.

Frank Levison was there early. Levison minor had not witnessed the Highcliffe match; and this was his first chance to see his brother play for Greyfriars. He was not likely to miss the chance. The Third were not much interested in Remove football, and Tubb and Paget, Bolsover minor and Jack Wingate, declined to roll up, as Frank urged them to do.

"We ignore the Remove, dear man!" Paget told him, as he had told him before. "Who are the Remove?"

"Oh, rot!" said Frank. "Nobodies," said Bolsover minor, "except my brother."

"Bother your brother," answered Paget politely. "Bother Levison mi's brother, too. We take no notice of the Remove."

"We shall pass up into the Remove later on," remarked Bolsover minor.

"That will make a difference," admitted Paget. "The Remove will then have some decent men in it. At present I can only say—what a crew!"

And the little dandy of the Third shrugged his shoulders with great disagreement.

"Rot!" said Frank cheerily. "I'm going to see my brother play footer, anyhow."

"Rather lackin' in good form, dear man!" said Paget. "But have your way; watch him for all you're worth."

"You fellows come too."

"Catch me!" grunted Tubb. "Blow the Remove and their matches. They don't play us—they make out we can't play Soccer."

"Check!" said Wingate minor.

"Check is an outstandin' characteristic of the Remove," remarked Paget. "I disapprove of the Remove in every possible way. Are you men comin' out of gates this afternoon?"

The Third-Form "men" signified that they were. And so Frank Levison was the only "man" in the Third who went down to Little Side for the match, finding himself almost lost there in a crowd of Remove men. But when the St. Jim's men came, Frank's face brightened wonderfully at the sight of two extremely juvenile followers of the team.

"Wally!" he shouted. "Reggie!"

D'Arcy minor, and Manners minor, of the St. Jim's Third, rushed to greet him. The three juniors, once the closest of chums at St. Jim's, fraternised with great glee.

"You kids have come over with the team, then?" exclaimed Frank.

"Looks like it!" smiled Wally.

"We came over to see you, old scout," said Reggie Manners. "I stuck my major for the fare!"

"Good man!"

"Glad to see your old pals, what?" asked D'Arcy minor.

Frank's face beamed.

"What-ho!"

"Scrubby lot here, I suppose?" asked Wally.

"Oh, no; some jolly decent chaps in the Third," said Frank.

"You like Greyfriars?" inquired Reggie.

"Oh, yes."

"No accounting for tastes."

"Greyfriars is all right," said Frank, remembering that Greyfriars was his school now. "We're going to beat your crowd at Soccer."

"Not in your lifetime," said Reggie disdainfully. "We beat your lot in the home fixture, and we're going to beat them away."

"Hollow!" said D'Arcy minor. The two fags might have been chief members of the St. Jim's eleven by the way they talked.

"Rot!" said Levison minor. "Your brother playing?" asked Reggie sarcastically.

"Yes, rather!" beamed Frank.

"Then that makes it a cert."

"For Greyfriars?"

"No; for St. Jim's."

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Wally.

"You're the same cheeky little ass that you always were, Reggie," said Levison minor.

"And you're still the same howling chump, old chap!"

"Look here, fathead—"

"Well, you look here, dummy—"

"Ain't it just like old times, us three together, and you two ragging like a pair of bantams," chuckled Wally. "I wish we could take you back to St. Jim's with us, Franky."

"I wish I could—I mean, I'm all right at Greyfriars," said Frank hastily, rather distressed between his affection for his old comrades and his allegiance to his new school.

"Hallo, here they come," said Wally, alluding to the footballers, who were turning out into the field.

"There's Franky's major," remarked Reggie. "Looks the same ass as he used to look at St. Jim's."

"Look here, Reggie—"

"Shut up, Manners minor," said Wally. "Can't you be civil when you're on a visit?"

"My mistake!" grinned Reggie. "I won't say a word about what I think of your major, Franky; and that will be awfully civil."

"Fathead!" said Frank, laughing.

And he turned his attention to the game. Even the society of his old comrades in the St. Jim's Third could not keep his eyes off his major in the ranks of the Greyfriars footballers.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The St. Jim's Match!

ERNEST LEVISON, meanwhile, had greeted Clive and Cardew of the St. Jim's Fourth. Clive's greeting was quiet and affectionate; Cardew was as whimsical as ever, but was obviously glad to see his old friend. And Levison had the satisfaction of learning that both were in Tom Merry's eleven.

"No end of a struggle for me to get in," Cardew explained. "But I put my beef into it, and Thomas had to see reason. So here I am to knock spots off you, Ernest, on the jolly old Soccer field. Bit queer for you to be playin' against us, what?"

"Yes, a little," agreed Levison. "I played for St. Jim's against Greyfriars in the last fixture."

"And beat them," said Clive, with a smile. "Any luck?" he added, in a lower voice.

Levison understood that he was alluding to the lost will.

He shook his head.

"None, so far," he answered.

"Hard cheese, old bean," said Cardew. "If you should find that giddy document, you'd be able to come back to St. Jim's."

"I suppose so," assented Levison.

"Unless you've grown too fond of Greyfriars to leave it?" added Cardew, with a rather curious look at his friend. Levison smiled.

"I'm fond enough of Greyfriars, and there are some splendid fellows here,"

he said. "But—if things shaped that way, I'd like to find myself back in Study No. 9 in the old School House."

"Then you're still a St. Jim's man at heart?"

"I suppose I am," said Levison; "except in football," he added, "I'm going all out to beat you."

"That's right," said Clive.

"Yaas, wathah," chimed in Arthur Augustus D'Arcy, the ornament of the St. Jim's Fourth, strolling gracefully up. "Jollay glad to see you again, Levison, old bean. I've bwrought my young bwothah ovah to see your minah, and young Weggie Mannahs has come with him. I daresay they are havin' a wow by this time, somewhah."

Levison laughed.

"Oh! Forgot you had a brother here," said Reggie negligently.

"Ass!"

"Fathead!"

Really it was, as Wally of the Third had said, like old times at St. Jim's again!

The game was hard and fast, and the goals slow in coming. The Greyfriars attack swept down on goal many times, but Fatty Wynn of St. Jim's was there, and David Llewellyn Wynn was not easy to beat. Ralph Reckness Cardew grinned breathlessly as he sprawled on the ground, left there by Ernest Levison as he came down the field. He sat up rather dizzily, and grinned again as he saw a St. Jim's back shoulder Levison off the ball—with a powerful heave that sent Levison staggering a couple of yards before he reeled over. Clive cleared with a kick to mid-field, and Cardew scrambled up and joined in again. Levison was limping a little from the fall his old chum had given him, but he was soon active again,

"Is that a sample?" asked Wally sarcastically, as Levison was sent sprawling by Blake of St. Jim's. "There he is lying down again. He ought to have brought a cushion to fall on."

"He thinks he's playing skittles, and that he's a skittle," said Reggie. "He forgot all about Soccer when he left St. Jim's."

"There goes my major," said Wally. "Good old Gus! Go it! Give 'em jip, old Gus!"

But Squiff, in goal, sent out the ball that Arthur Augustus D'Arcy sent in. It whizzed out; Levison captured it and took it away. The Remove forwards went down the field in great style, with quick, short passing, and they seemed to go through the defence like a knife through cheese. Once more Fatty Wynn was defeated in goal; and this time it was from Ernest Levison's foot that the leather came.

"What price that?" grinned Frank.

"Goal! Goal!"

"Not bad!" said Wally.

"Fairish!" said Reggie.

"We're two up, and there goes the whistle," grinned Levison minor.

At the interval, Greyfriars were two to the good. But the merry men from St. Jim's were not beaten yet. In the second half, the ball went in twice in succession, first from Tom Merry, second from Cardew. The score was level



Bob Cherry made a sudden grasp at Bright and Snoop, and grabbed them by their collars. Bang! Two heads came together with a terrific collision, and two wild yells rang in unison through the Rag.

(See Chapter 7.)

Every man in the St. Jim's eleven came up to greet Levison. The Greyfriars men had an opportunity to see what St. Jim's thought of him, if they had not already known it. It was odd enough to see Levison in the blue-and-white of Greyfriars, instead of the red-and-white of St. Jim's. To the minds of Tom Merry & Co., he was still Levison of the Fourth—a School House man of St. Jim's.

Levison lined up with the Greyfriars men. His old friends were facing him now, prepared to see him play for Greyfriars as he had played for St. Jim's. And they soon discerned that Levison had lost none of his old form.

"There he goes!" chuckled Frank Lovison.

"There who goes?" asked Manners minor.

"My brother, of course," said Frank indignantly.

and it was he that robbed Cardew of the ball, and centred to Wharton, who drove it into the visitors' net, beating Fatty Wynn at last.

"Goal!" roared the Greyfriars crowd.

"Goal!" yelled Frank Levison waving his cap. "You men see that?"

"Wharton's goal?" asked Reggie.

"My brother gave him the pass—didn't you see him?"

"I was eating toffee."

"Fathead!"

"Same to you!"

"Your major ain't bad, Franky," said D'Arcy minor. "He seems rather fond of lying down when he's playing football, but—"

"Lot you know about football!"

"More than a Greyfriars ass, anyhow," said Wally warmly.

"My dear man, we know more about football here than you'll ever learn in three terms at St. Jim's."

again, with nearly half an hour still to go. From that time the game was harder and faster than ever, both sides fighting hard for victory, but in spite of efforts, goals did not materialise.

"It's going to be a draw!" Wally of the Third remarked.

"Five minutes more," yawned Reggie.

"Anybody's game."

"St. Jim's game," said D'Arcy minor.

"Look at Cardew! I say, that slacker seems to have woke up."

"Look at my major!" chuckled Frank, as Ernest Levison neatly hooked the ball away from Cardew and ran it up the field.

"There goes Clive—"

Sidney Clive was on his back, and Levison was shooting for goal. Fatty Wynn's plump fist drove out the leather—but it met a ready head, and was

(Continued on page 16.)

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HERE'S ANOTHER CHEERY YARN OF THE BOYS OF ST. SAM'S!



On the Villains' Track!

DICKY
NUGENT

the "Genius" of
the Second Form
at Greyfriars.

"The wicked old tyrant!" breathed Frank Fearless.

The sympathies of the heroes of the Fourth were all with John Steddy's father and uncle. But the word of the majestic Head of St. Sam's was law, and Jack Jolly & Co. couldn't interfere. All they could do, was to stand by with burning cheeks, and suffer the humiliation of watching their chum's people chucked out on their nex.

Touched to the hart, Jack Jolly & Co., returned to their study and talked the matter over. Then they adjourned to the school tuck-shop vowing that they would endeavor to turn the tables, and prove that the charges against John Steddy were false.

The tuck-shop was crowded. Snarl and Leer, the cads of the Fourth, were apparently in funds. They were scoffing doonuts until they seemed like bursting, and sundry eggsplosivo chuckles escaped them.

"Something suspicious about that precious pair, don't you think?" mormered Jack Jolly to his chums. "Look, Tubby Barrell's with 'em, and he's helping himself to their doonuts."

Jack Jolly & Co. watched with baited breths. It seemed so fishy to them that they thought there must be a catch in it, for Snarl and Leer were usually anything but friendly towards the fat Fourth Former.

Jack Jolly's suspishuns were awakened, and he continued to stare, with ill-consealed curiosity, at Snarl and Leer and their fat guest.

One by one, the fellows drifted out of the shop until Jolly & Co. and Tubby were the only customers there, and Jack Jolly decided that action could no longer be delayed.

"Tubby!" he wrapped out suddenly. "What is the nature of this mysterious hold you have over Snarl and Leer?"

"Hold?" stammered Tubby. "I don't quite catch on!"

"It is obvious to me," said Jack Jolly sternly, "that the fellows I have named are under your thumb, and I have an idea that if we face the facts, it will give John Steddy a leg-up!"

"Hear, hear!" corussed the Co.

"You wouldn't like any more doonuts, Tubby, I suppose?" said Jack, with well assumed carelessness.

"Wouldn't I?" grinned Tubby, his mouth beginning to water. "You just try me!"

"Suppose I offered you a duzen doonuts, would you tell me what you know about Snarl and Leer?" asked Jack.

Tubby hesitated.

"I—there isn't anything—that is to say—oh, crikey! I'll tell you if you make it two duzen!"

"Done!" said Jack at once.

His roos had succeeded almost beyond his eggspexpectations. Tubby Barrell hadn't a sole above doonuts. At the meer mention of them, he had weakened.

"The fact is, you fellows," he said. "I saw them do it!"

"Do what?" asked Jack Jolly & Co., eagerly.

"Put the jam jar in Steddy's desk! I followed Snarl and Leer up, when I saw the jar in their hands, because I thought

I.
"MY heye!" Fossil, the ancient porter at St. Sam's, rubbed his eyes, for rolling through the ancient ivy-covered gates was a donkey-barrow. And perched up in the barrow were two old gentlemen, in tattered shirt-sleeves, and battered bowler hats.

Fossil was not the only one to notiss the unusual visitors. Quite a crowd of juniors gathered round the humble vehikle, while several Sixth-Formers ceased playing marbles to have a look.

The visitors seemed rather taken aback by the attenshun they had attracted.

"Which you can't come in!" yelled Fossil, recovering himself at last. "No 'awkers aloud on these 'ere premises!"

"We ain't 'awkers, sir!" said one of the old gentlemen. "I'm a respectable rag-and-bone man, name of Ebenezer Steddy; this is my brother, and we've come to see my son, John Steddy who is, I understand, to be flogged and chucked out of this beautiful school, for stealing a jam jar."

"Hear, hear!" "Serves him right!"

"Well, wot I says, is this 'ere," said the old rag-and-bone man. "If I know my son, he never done it!"

"Bah!" said the black sheep of St. Sam's. "Tell that to the Maroons!"

It was at that moment that Jack Jolly & Co., the heroes of the Fourth, strolled on the scene.

These bright young sparks faced the cads fearlessly, their eyes flashing fire. They new that they were more than a match for Snarl & Co., the snobs of the Fourth, if it came to a set 2.

A look of infinitive skorn came into Jack Jolly's face.

"I hope you'll take no notiss of these chaps," he said, doffing his cap politely to the visitors. "These are meerly the cads of St. Sam's. Me and my pals are sticking to your son through thick and thin. We know he's in the soup, but even though the Head's jam jar has been found

in his desk, we still beleave in his immo-sense."

"Oh, thank you, young sir, thank you!" muttered the old rag-and-bone man, brokenly.

"P'raps you'd like to see the Head now," said Jack Jolly helpfully.

"The—the Head?" stuttered John's father agarst. "Surely, they 'aven't executed my son, sir, 'ave they?"

"Oh crumbs! Not quite!" grinned Jack Jolly. "I mean our Head—our Headmaster, Dr. Birchmall, you know!"

"Ha! Some cheeky rotter taking my name in vein, eh?" came a severe voice from behind Jack Jolly, and into the egg-sited crowd stalked Dr. Birchmall himself.

"What's the giddy rumpus about?" demanded the scholarly old gentleman. "I'm blowed if this school isn't getting more like a blessed sercuss every day! What's it all about? Coff it up, somebody!"

"Please, sir, this is John Steddy's father and uncle!" sniggered Leer, of the Fourth.

"So you are John Steddy's pa and uncle, are you?" said the Head, staring at the visitors with bulging eyes.

"Yes, sir," said the rag-and-bone dealer. "You see—"

"Silense!" roared the Head feercely. "I'm doing the talking, my man, not you! Furthermore, we don't like theeves at St. Sam's!"

"But my son ain't a theef!" protested Mr. Steddy. "Even these 'ere boys say they don't think he pinched your jam jar!"

The Head glared savidgely at the old marine-store dealer.

"Enuff!" he barked doggedly. "There is but one answer to people of your kidney! Boys, give them beans!"

"Grato pip!" gasped Jack Jolly. "Surely he duzzent mean—"

"Chuck 'em out on their nex, boys!" yelled the Head, rubbing his skinny hands togetner in delight. "We don't want no rag dealers round here. Chuck 'em out!"

there might be some jam in it! But when I looked in his desk and saw the jar, after they'd gone, I found it was empty."

"Yes, yes!" breathed Jack Jolly & Co.

"Of course, I didn't quite understand it at the time. But after, when Steddy was accused, I saw through it all, and tackled Snarl and Leer about it. And they promised me a feed of doenuts, if I'd keep mum. That's all!"

"And quite enuff!" merrered Jack Jolly.

"The—the awful scoundrels!" said Frank Fearless. "So this is their revenge for the licking they got from Steddy!"

"Rotters, ain't they?" agreed Tubby cheerfully. "Now what about my doenuts?"

"Your doenuts can wait!" snapped Jack Jolly, seizing the fat junior by the scruff of the neck. "You're going to see the Head before you have those doenuts. Yank him along, you fellows!"

"Oh crumbs! Yarooop!" yelled Tubby, struggling furiously, but in vein. "I don't want to see the Head! Lemme alone. Oh, crikey!"

But the juniors were deff to his appeals.

II.

DR. BIRCHEMALL, the venerated Head of St. Sam's, was enjoying a bottle of gingerpop and a packet of bullseyes as the juniors entered his study.

"What's the merry idea, boys?" he demanded suspiciously.

"Our business is this," said Jolly, coming to the point sharply. "We have got proof that John Steddy is innocent!"

The Head started violently. "Good grashus me! Impossible, Jolly!"

"Tubby Barrell, here," said Jack Jolly, unheeding, "was a witness of the dastardly deed which led to Steddy being convicted. He will prove to you, sir, how fishy the whole business is, for he saw the jam-jar plaiced in Steddy's desk."

Jack Jolly nudged Tubby Barrell, and the fat junior told how he had seen two boys put the jam jar in Steddy's desk.

"Oh crumbs!" merrered the Head, as tho he was more dismayed than pleezed by the knowledge that John Steddy's innocence could be proved. "But, look here, you boys, you're not going to take Barrell's word in this matter, are you?"

"Of course we are, sir!" replied Jack Jolly sternly. "You herd what Tubby said. John Steddy is the viktin of a fowl plot, and you yourself appear to be implicated in it."

"What ever makes you think that?" asked Dr. Birchmall, with a sickly smile that fayled to impress. "I know of no plot, and as to the idea of me knowing anything about the little shady wangles of Snarl and Leer, it's simply obstreperous—preposterous, I mean!"

The Juniors chuckled. As no names had been mentioned, it was rather funny to hear the Head deny that he had been plotting with Snarl and Leer. In his anxiety to convince the juniors of his innocence, the Head seemed to be revealing all that they wanted to know.

"It's absurd—ridiculous, I tell you!" continued the Head, quite warming up to his subject. "I never sent for Snarl and Leer to ask them to get Steddy falsely accused—I wouldn't dream of doing such a thing!"

"Oh crumbs! Don't you think you're running on a bit too fast?" asked Jack

Jolly, with a grin. "If you're not careful, sir, you'll be giving the game away in a minnit!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Dr. Birchmall bit his lip savvidgely. "Hem! I was merely putting a case—using a figger of speech, you know!" he said, rather weekly.

The juniors grinned skeptically. "Don't you think that sounds a bit thin?" asked Jack Jolly.

"Sounds a bit thick to me!" said Merry. "To think that the old rogue has been plotting to get a scholarship chap eggspelled, you know! Can you beat it?" The juniors had to admit that they could not beat it.

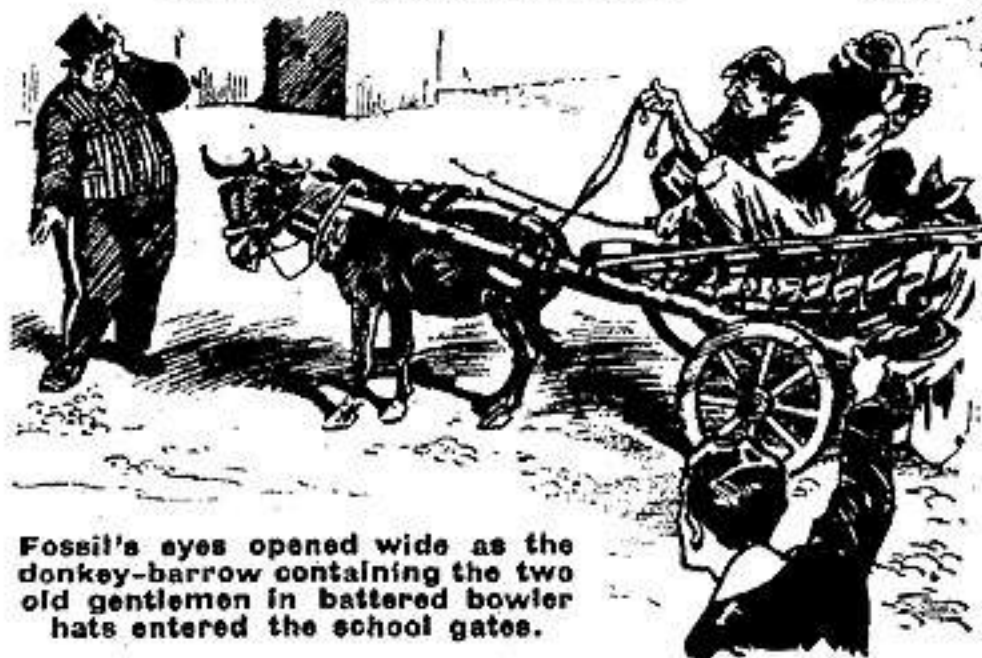
"Well, have you anything to say, you—you werm?" asked Jack Jolly, with a look of infinitive skorn on his dial as he regarded the unscrewfulous Head of St. Sam's.

"What's the use?" asked Dr. Birchmall, with a shrugg. "Evidently this bladder of lard, Barrell, has been Eve's dropping again, so it looks as if the game is up, all right."

"Good!" said Jack Jolly, with great satisfaction. "Then we shall get what we came here to demand—justiss for John Steddy!"

"I suppose that's the only thing to be done," said Dr. Birchmall reluctantly. "I had been looking forward so much to flogging the lad, too!"

"Why not flog Snarl and Leer insted, sir?" suggested Bright. "That will give you two viktims insted of one!"



Fossil's eyes opened wide as the donkey-drawn carriage containing the two old gentlemen in battered bowler hats entered the school gates.

A gleam came into the Head's eyes again.

"That's not a bad wheeze!" he said thoughtfully. "I can pretend I was only testing their carrikters over this John Steddy business. Their agreeing to plot against a schoolfellow shows that they are in need of a flogging. Yes, I'll do it!"

He rang a bell for Binding, the page.

"Have the bell told for a general assembly!" he ordered, when Binding appeared.

Binding went off and told Fossil, the porter, and the juniors, with cheerful grins on their dials, quitted the study.

A tense silence brooded over the Big Hall at St. Sam's shortly afterwards—a silence broken only by the eggspelled chattering of several hundreds of boys, and a storm of hissing and booing, as John Steddy was conducted on to the platform.

Since he had been falsely accused of pinching the Head's jam jar, John Steddy had been skorned by St. Sam's and most of the boys welcomed the opportunity of giving expression to their skorn.

"S-s-s-s! Booooo!"

Dr. Birchmall rustled on to the platform, rubbing his skinny hands together and grinning all over his dial.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows!" he began gravely. "We are assembled here to-day on a very suspishus occashun!"

"Hear, hear!" corussed Jack Jolly & Co., hartily, and the Head frowned.

"Recently," said the Head, "a jam jar, in which I am in the habit of plaicing my falso teeth at night, disappeared. That jam jar was found in the desk of John Steddy of the Fourth."

A loud storm of hissing broke out, but the Head checked it with a jesture.

"Can it!" he said torcely. "You haven't herd everything yet. There's more to come! I have to announce to you that John Steddy is innocent of the crime!"

"Grate pip!" merrered three hundred voices.

"I will eggspain the sorcumstances fully if you will lend me your ears," said the Head.

"Go ahead, then!" corussed the St. Sam's scholars.

"The guilty parties in the case," said Dr. Birchmall, "are Snarl and Leer, of the Fourth. Snarl and Leer! Stand forth!"

Amid a buzz of eggspitement, the two cads of the Fourth stood forth. Astonishment was written in large letters on their dials.

"There are the guilty ones!" said the Head, pointing an accusing finger at the dismayed cads. "Snarl and Leer, who cower before us over there, deliberately stole my jam jar, and put it in John Steddy's desk, in order to get him eggspelled!"

"Few!" breathed the assembly, while John Steddy drew a sobbing breth of relief. His name was cleared at last.

"You cur!" yelled Snarl, "I'll eggspose you! I'll—"

"You'll keep your mouth shut!" snapped the Head, with dignity. "Kindly allow a bloke to speak, Snarl!"

With an icy fear gripping his hart, Snarl reluctantly obeyed.

"I know eggspactly what Snarl was going to say, if I had aloud him," said the Head, a sinnical grin playing about his features. "Snarl was going to say that I asked him and Leer to get Steddy falsely accused of some crime. That is quite troo!"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped the school.

"I did ask them to do that, as a matter of fact," admitted

Dr. Birchmall. "But my motives were not what Snarl and Leer thought they were! I did it to test their carrikters!"

"D-d-did you?"

"Certainly I did!" said Dr. Birchmall easily. "I had my suspishuns that they were evil-minded ladds, and I thought I would put them to the test. I have done so, and Snarl and Leer have fallen for it!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fellows looked at one another, and burst into a roar of larfter. They couldn't help it. The Head's yarn was so obviussly untroo that nobody in the Hall credited it for a moment.

"And now to business!" eggspclaimed Dr. Birchmall, pulling out a dredful-looking birch from his desk. "Snarl and Leer! Step forward and take your grool!"

The cads of the Fourth, looking very woebigon now, stepped forward, and without further delay, were flogged on the spot. And by the time Dr. Birchmall had finished with them, they had quite made up their minds that for the future, they would let scholarship lads severely alone.

Thus the battle between John Steddy and the snobs of St. Sam's ended in the defeat of the snobs, and the triumph of of John Steddy.

THE END.

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LEVISON'S LUCK!

(Continued from page 13.)

headed back into the net before the plump custodian knew that it was coming.

"Goal!"

"Good old Levison!"

"Greyfriars wins! Hurrah!"

"What price that?" roared Levison minor ecstatically.

"Not half bad!" admitted Wally.

"Fairish!" grinned Reggie.

"Goal! Goal! Goal!" yelled Levison minor.

"Bravo, Levison!"

Tom Merry gave Levison a rather rueful grin when the men came off the field.

"You brought your shooting-boots with you from St. Jim's, old scout!" he said.

"Yaas, wathah!" said Arthur Augustus. "We seem to have been beaten this time, somehow. I vewy neahly scored thwee times, which would have made all the diffewence; but it did not seem to come off."

"What a lot of your goals never come off, Gussy!" remarked Blake. "Hundreds—in fact, millions."

"Weally, Blake—"

"We were putting a rod in pickle for our own back when we taught Levison to play Soccer!" grinned Monty Lowther.

"Yaas, wathah!"

"I had some vague idea of the game when I came to St. Jim's, you know!" said Levison, laughing.

"Well, we'll mop you up next time," said Blake. "Perhaps Gussy will bring off his goals next time, instead of very nearly."

"The perhapfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

But he did not allow the swell of St. Jim's to bear that remark.

Tom Merry & Co. had been beaten, but they took their beating very cheerfully. It was a consolation, as Gussy remarked, that the winning goal had been captured by a St. Jim's man, though he happened to be playing against St. Jim's at the time. When the time came to say good-bye, Clive and Cardew lingered for a few last words with their old chum.

"You've got to find that jolly old will, and come back to St. Jim's!" Cardew told Levison.

"I wish you could, old man!" said Clive wistfully. "I'd like to see you bagging goals for St. Jim's next time."

"By the way, did that letter from Trimble cause you any trouble, after all, old bean?" asked Cardew.

"Oh, nothing to speak of."

Cardew gave him a keen look.

"Trimble was sorry he wrote," he remarked.

Levison laughed. He could guess that Cardew had been the cause of Baggy Trimble's sorrow.

"The dear boy isn't far away," added Cardew. "He wanted to come over and see the match."

"Trimble did?" exclaimed Levison, in surprise.

"Yes—keen on it."

"I should never have thought Trimble was keen on football."

"Well, as a matter of fact, I think he had ulterior motives," smiled Cardew. "Anyway, I persuaded him not to come on to Greyfriars."

"You persuaded him?"

"Yes—emphatically. I fancy he wanted to talk too much—that's rather a fault of Trimble's, you know."

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"Thanks, old chap!" said Levison quietly.

"I'll give him another kick for you," said Cardew; "but I want you to come back to St. Jim's, old bean, and kick him yourself."

Levison smiled.

"You never know!" he said.

"We're walkin' to the station," said Cardew. "Feelin' too tired after your great exertions to trot along?"

"No fear!"

"You'll have the pleasure of seein' Trimble, too."

"Bother Trimble!"

And Levison went with his old friends.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Eavesdropper!

"WHAT about Wednesday?"

Bob Cherry asked that question a few days later.

"Well, what about it?" inquired Nugent.

"Wednesday's a half-holiday," said Bob, "and there's no game on. What about making up an exploring party, to help Levison do the vaults?"

"Good, if Levison would like our help."

"The helpfulness would be offered with terrific willingness!" remarked the nabob of Bhanipur.

The Famous Five and Levison were at tea in Study No. 1 on Tuesday. Bob's suggestion was approved at once by his comrades, and they looked at Ernest Levison for confirmation.

Levison nodded.

"I'll be jolly glad," he said. "But it will be taking up your half-holiday."

"That's all right—we'd like to root round the old vaults," said Johnny Bull.

"It will be rather a lark."

"Only the vaults are out of bounds," said Nugent. "They're kept locked up, and Quelch keeps the key."

"Mr. Quelch has given me permission to search in the vaults," said Levison, "but he will not allow me to go alone. There's a certain amount of danger of getting lost in that old labyrinth of passages—though I don't think I should be likely to get lost. But if you fellows will come that will make it all right."

"Done, then!" said Harry Wharton.

"But I don't quite see what you expect to find in the vaults, old chap!" remarked Johnny Bull. "Surely old Mr. Thorpe couldn't have kept his giddy papers in a subterranean nook or cranny."

"Not likely!" said Levison. "But I think it's possible that I may find out something, all the same. I've been in the vaults before, when I used to be at Greyfriars, and I remember the place was a regular labyrinth. Greyfriars was built at a time when secret passages were put into a building, as a matter of course, just as they put in gas-pipes or electric light now. A man's life sometimes depended in those jolly old days on having some nook that he could disappear into. If any secret passage or stair exists from Quelch's study, it's quite likely that it leads to somewhere in the vaults. I can find nothing to trace it above ground—but I may hit on something from the other end."

"It's possible," assented Wharton.

"You'll have a clear field, anyhow, as the Toad can't go into the vaults," said Bob. "As they're locked up and out of bounds, he hasn't given them a look-in yet. I fancy he would be scared of going, too, even if he had a chance."

"Then we'll fix it for to-morrow afternoon!" said Levison.

"That's settled."

"I'll ask Mr. Quelch for the key to-morrow, then!"

Crash!

The door of Study No. 1 burst open so suddenly that the six juniors jumped.

The crash of the door was followed by another crash, as a junior came head-long into the study.

It was Bright, of the Remove. He sprawled on the floor with a loud yell.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"What the thump—"

Tom Redwing looked in at the doorway.

"Did I startle you?" he asked.

"Just a little!" answered Wharton. "What—"

"I hope you weren't discussing anything private. That rotter had his ear to the keyhole when I came upstairs," explained Redwing, "so I thought I'd pitch him in."

"Thanks!" said Harry.

Redwing nodded, and went up the passage. The Famous Five gathered round the Toad with grim looks.

"Eavesdropping again, you rat!" said the captain of the Remove.

Bright sat up, gasping.

"I—I was just coming into the study!" he panted.

"Don't tell lies!" said Wharton scornfully. "Redwing caught you listening, as we've caught you before."

"I—I tell you I—I was coming—"

"Well, what were you coming for? You know you're not wanted here."

Bright snarled.

"I was coming to ask Levison what it feels like to be a charity kid!" he sneered.

"That's enough!" said Harry. "Kick the cad out, you fellows, and kick him hard."

"All together!" said Bob.

Bright yelled and scrambled for the door. Six boots were planted on him as he went, and he fairly flew through the doorway, and landed, crashing, in the Remove passage.

"Dribble him home!" suggested Bob.

"Good egg!"

The Toad did not wait to be dribbled home. He scrambled up and fled along the passage, and the door of Study No. 11 slammed behind him, and the key turned in the lock.

Harry Wharton & Co. resumed their tea, and the discussion of the exploration planned for the morrow. That Bright was aware of their plans for the half-holiday, they knew. But his knowledge seemed to them to matter little, if at all. None of the chums of the Remove dreamed, just then, of what was to be the strange outcome of that exploration of the ancient recesses beneath the school, or of the part the Toad was to play.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Under Greyfriars!

MR. QUELCH looked up rather irritably as a tap came at his study door on the following afternoon. That afternoon was a half-holiday, not only for the Greyfriars fellows, but for the Greyfriars staff. Mr. Quelch had handed to Ernest Levison the key of the vaults, with many injunctions to take care and not to take risks, and then had retired to an armchair by his window, with a scholastic volume to keep him company. He did not want to be interrupted again, but the tap at the door interrupted him.

"Come in!" rapped out the Remove master, laying down his volume.

It was Bright who entered the study. Mr. Quelch gave him a glance of disfavour. There were several fellows in the Remove who were no credit to their Form or to their school; but of all the Remove Mr. Quelch liked the Toad least.

"Well?" he snapped.
"If you please, sir—"

"Come to the point!"
"Some of the fellows have told me that they're going to explore the school vaults this afternoon, sir, with your permission."

"That is correct."
"Being new here, sir, I've never seen the vaults," said Bright. "As a party are going, I thought you might give me leave to join them, sir, just to have a look at the place."

Mr. Quelch paused. It was a reasonable request, especially as Bright might have joined the party without asking leave.

"Very well, Bright," said the Form master. "You may ask Wharton to allow you to join the party."

"Thank you, sir!"
And Mr. Quelch returned to his volume, and forgot the incident and Bright's existence as the door closed behind the Toad.

In the passage Bright grinned.
Without the Form master's leave he could not have joined the exploring party, for the simple reason that they would have kicked him out. Armed with Mr. Quelch's permission, however, he felt safe from such drastic measures.

He hurried away. He had been watching the chums of the Remove since dinner, and knew that they were starting. The great door of the vaults was at the end of a gloomy, arched corridor, and Bright found the juniors there, Levison already fitting the great key into the lock of the oaken, iron-bound door.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's the Toad!" said Bob Cherry.

"You can clear off, Bright," said Harry Wharton, frowning.

"I'm going into the vaults," answered Bright.

"You're jolly well not!"

"I've asked Mr. Quelch, and he has given me leave to go down at the same time that you fellows do. You can ask him if you don't believe me!" sneered Bright.

Levison compressed his lips.

He knew what the Toad wanted—to keep the explorers under his eye and ascertain whether the junior from St. Jim's made any discovery. Certainly

he had not told Mr. Quelch that, but that was his object.

"Look here, that rat's not coming!" said Johnny Bull.

"Do you think we don't know what you're after, Bright?" exclaimed Nugent. "You can keep your distance."

"I've got leave, and I'm going down when you open that door!" answered Bright doggedly.

"Kick him out!" said Bob.

"Yes, rather!"

"The kickfulness is the proper caper."

"Hold on, you fellows," said Levison quietly. "If that fellow's got leave from Mr. Quelch we can't very well stop him."

"Mr. Quelch wouldn't give him leave if he knew what the cad was after!" growled Johnny Bull.

"You can think what you like!" sneered Bright. "But you can't prove that—"

"Oh, shut up!"

"Let him do as he likes," said Levison.

"All right, if you say so," said the captain of the Remove.

And no further heed was taken of the Toad.

Levison unlocked the great door and it swung open. Dim and dark and forbidding, a stone staircase loomed faintly in the gloom. Harry Wharton lighted a bicycle lantern, and Levison flashed on the light of an electric torch.

In his old days at Greyfriars Levison had explored the vaults more than once, although they were out of bounds. So had the Famous Five, as a matter of fact. But the eerie old place was new to Bright, and he shivered a little as he looked at the dim, dreary depths.

But his mind was made up. The dismal vaults were no more dismal for him than for the other fellows. He followed the chums of the Remove into the opening.

Levison closed the door and jammed the key into the inner side of the lock. Then he led the way down the stone staircase.

The Famous Five followed him, and Bright followed on in the rear.

They did not heed him with a word or a look, but Bright was accustomed to Coventry by this time. He had not expected the schoolboy explorers to welcome him.

The staircase led into the deep vaults, endless arches opening one after another, wrapped in darkness, save where the lights of the explorers glimmered. Each of the juniors had brought a lantern or a torch, with the exception of Bright. He intended to keep close to Levison wherever the latter went.

In ancient days Greyfriars had covered a much larger space of ground, and the vaults had extended under all the ancient buildings. They were, therefore, very much more extensive than the school itself. Vaults opened from vaults, almost to infinitude, so far as the juniors could see. In one direction, they knew, was the subterranean passage leading to the old priory in Friar-dale Wood, through which they had passed more than once. But in many directions the ancient recesses had never been explored. No plan of them was known to be in existence, and any fellow going alone into the dim recesses ran a very real risk of getting lost. Stone passages, reeking with damp, stone stairs, leading apparently nowhere, were to be found in a score of places. Here and there earth had fallen in and choked up vaults and passages.

"It won't be a pleasant afternoon for you fellows," Levison remarked, rather hesitatingly.

"That's all right," said Bob Cherry. "Lead on, Macduff!"

The juniors proceeded along the vaults.

Bright followed them.

Levison had formed a theory that one of the old staircases in the gloomy depths might communicate with Mr. Quelch's study, in which, he was almost assured, existed the secret opening. But it was a vague theory, rather a hope than anything more, and there was no clue to guide him. It was a matter for grim persistent exploration in the heavy air of the underground recesses, and undoubtedly, as Levison had said, it would not be a pleasant afternoon. Possibly the Famous Five thought of the winter sunshine above and of the fellows skating on the frozen Sark. But they were there to help Levison so far as they could, and they made up their minds to it.

By dreary dark vault and shadowy passage they went, their lights flashing ahead to and fro, speaking little, for in spite of themselves the darkness and dreariness had an effect on their spirits. Sturdy fellows as they were, they found it fatiguing in the heavy air and the encircling gloom. Bright was very soon dragging his footsteps and showing signs of weariness. For a long time he did not speak, but tramped sullenly and persistently after the juniors wherever they went. But after an hour of it he broke out angrily.

"Look here, how long are you fellows keeping this up?"

Wharton glanced round.

"No bizney of yours," he answered.

(Continued on next page.)



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"I'm jolly well fed-up!"

"Chuck it, then!"

"You're not wanted here, old pippin," said Bob Cherry. "You butted in, and the sooner you clear the better."

"The betterfulness will be terrific, my esteemed and execrable Toad."

Levison smiled faintly.

He intended to put in four hours that afternoon in the vaults, or at least as long as his companions were willing to keep it up. It was for that reason that he had not let Frank join in the expedition; it would have been too much for the fag. He had had no doubt whatever that the Toad would tire very much sooner, and wish himself back above ground again.

The Toad gave him a black and bitter look.

"I'm not going back," he said sullenly.

"Please yourself!" said Levison, with a shrug of the shoulders.

"You rotter! I'll keep it up as long as you do."

"Keep your mouth shut, then!" said Johnny Bull. "If you open it too wide you'll get a set of knuckles in it!"

And the juniors went on, taking no heed of the sullen, savage, malicious fellow who tramped persistently after them. Bright's steps lagged more and more; but a savage determination not to lose sight of Levison kept him on; but that determination gradually faded away. He was tired out—and moreover, Levison had made no sort of discovery so far, and it seemed to Bright more and more improbable that he would find a clue to the missing will in those dismal depths. He halted at last.

"Look here, you rotters, I'm chucking this."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Lend me a light to get back."

"Go and eat coko!" growled Johnny Bull.

"You're not far from the staircase," said Levison. "Follow the vaults and you'll reach it in ten minutes. We haven't left it far behind."

"I can't find it in the dark."

"Well, you came here of your own accord," said Nugent, laughing. "If you're afraid of the dark, you can keep on."

"Look here—"

"Oh, shut up!" said Wharton sharply.

Bright almost tottered after the Removites as they went on. They had covered a great deal of ground; but it was in seeking up and down the vaults and the passages, which were, so far as Levison could judge, under the school buildings, and especially under Masters' passage. The stone staircase below the door of the vaults was not fifty yards away all the time. But the blackness was like a wall when Bright looked back, and he dared not venture away from the lights.

His face was white now, and he was a little scared. His faltering footsteps faltered more and more.

He sank down at last on a block of stone, gasping. The lights carried by the juniors moved farther on.

"Stop!" exclaimed Bright shrilly.

"Oh, rats!"

"Don't leave me here in the dark."

"Keep on, then."

"I—I can't! I'm tired out!"

The juniors halted and looked back. Bright was evidently exhausted; he never was in good condition. Loafing and frowsting and smoking did not make a fellow fit for exertion.

"Sorry you came?" grinned Bob.

"Yes, hang you!" panted Bright.

"Nobody asked you to spy on us," said Levison. "But the sooner you clear off the better. Get out of it!"

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"I can't find my way in the dark," panted the Toad in alarm. "I tell you I can't! Suppose I missed the way and got lost?"

Levison looked thoughtful. As a matter of fact, it would not have been safe for the Toad to return without a light. Short as the distance was, there was a bewildering confusion of vaults opening one out of another, and he might very easily have groped in the wrong direction. The fellow was a rascal, and he had come there to spy; but certainly the juniors did not want him to be lost in the subterranean windings beneath Greyfriars. It was quite possible that he would never have been found alive. There was a story current in the school of a skeleton that had once been found in the grim depths under Greyfriars; all that remained of some hapless explorer who had lost his way. Levison looked at his comrades.

"We can spare him a light," he said.

"Here, take my torch, Bright."

"More than he deserves!" growled Johnny Bull. "Still, I suppose the fellow won't be safe without it."

Levison handed his electric torch to the Toad. Bright accepted it without a word of thanks.

Bright turned back, and the juniors gave him no further heed. They went on their way, exploring and scanning the dim, old recesses, searching for the secret stair which, according to Levison's idea, probably existed somewhere there, and led to Mr. Quelch's study far above. So far not a trace of it had been seen, and the juniors were very doubtful. Levison, perhaps, was doubtful also; but he had marked out his task for the afternoon, and he was resolute and tireless.

The footsteps of the Toad died away, and the juniors forgot him. It was about half an hour later that Bob Cherry, with a sudden start, flashed his bike lantern round him in the gloom.

"You fellows hear anything?" he asked.

"No!" said Harry.

"They say that those jolly old vaults are haunted," said Bob.

"For goodness' sake, don't let's talk about that now!" said Nugent.

"Well, I heard something—"

"It wasn't a ghost, anyhow," said Levison, with a smile.

"No; I dare say the wind gets in here sometimes—there's said to be one passage running down to the smuggler's cave on the coast," said Bob. "There—hark! Did you hear that?"

All the juniors heard it now. Instinctively they drew closer together, and cast startled glances round them, as a low, echoing, wailing cry rang from the black distance, sounding to their shuddering hearing like the wail of some lost soul in despair.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Lost!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. stood silent, startled, their hearts beating fast. With painful intentness they listened for a repetition of the strange, eerie sound. Many a story they had heard of the haunted vaults came back into their minds now. Certainly, they did not dream of believing in such things; but a ghost story in daylight above ground was one matter, and in the gloomy recesses of the old vaults quite another. Faintly, but unmistakably, the strange cry came again, echoing feebly through the hollow darkness.

"What the dickens—" muttered Nugent, his teeth chattering.

"Goodness knows!" said Wharton. In spite of himself, there was a shake in his voice.

"What ever it is," said Levison quietly, "it's not a spook. We know that."

"Ye-es—but what—"

"It's horrid, anyhow," muttered Johnny Bull.

"The horrorfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But it is not an esteemed and ridiculous ghost. I thinkfully opine that I can guess what it is."

"What, then, Inky?" asked Bob.

"The esteemed and execrable Bright."

"Bright?" exclaimed all the juniors together.

The dusky nabob nodded.

"The execrable ass has lost his way, and he is howling for help!" he said. "That is what I opine, my esteemed chums."

"Oh!" said Nugent.

"But even a fool couldn't lose his way with a light in his hand," exclaimed Johnny Bull. "He had only to go straight back."

"All the vaults are very much alike, my worthy Johnny. He may have taken the wrongfu. turning."

Ernest Levison nodded. Now that the nabob had made the suggestion, he realised at once that it was well-founded. Indeed, it was the only possible explanation of the echoing cry, since no one but the juniors and Bright had entered the vaults, and the cry must have come from a human throat.

"The fool!" growled Bob Cherry. "That's it, of course. I dare say he was in a blue funk as soon as he lost sight of us, and turned a corner or something."

"It's his own look-out," said Johnny Bull. "If he's lost his way, he can find it again. He's got a light."

Levison bit his lip. He was there to search for that secret of Greyfriars which, he believed, John Thorpe had discovered long ago, and of which all knowledge had since been lost. To give up the search, after so much trouble had been taken, and so much fatigue endured, on the account of the wretched Toad, was exasperating enough. But a cry for help was not to be disregarded, and Levison read the same thought in the faces of his comrades. Even Johnny Bull realised it, in spite of his remark:

"I suppose we've got to look for him," said Bob at last.

"We must!" said Levison.

"We'll jolly well kick him when we find him," grunted Johnny Bull. "He came down here to spy on us, and now he's making us waste time."

"We can't leave him in distress," said Levison. "He might wander anywhere; some of these old passages run for miles. I've heard. A skeleton was found here once; we don't want to risk another being found. We've got to look for that rotter!"

"Can't be helped," said Wharton. "It mayn't take long; we're bound to see his light."

"Long or short, we must do it," said Levison. "Hark! There it is again."

The cry, fainter than before, echoed feebly. It did not sound like a shout for help; it sounded like a shriek. The juniors could imagine the wretched Toad palpitating with terror when he found himself lost in the blackness, and shrieking and screaming.

"Well, come on," said Wharton. "We know which way to go now."

It seemed to the captain of the Remove that the cry was a guide. But he soon realised that in the hollow, echoing vaults and passages it might have come from almost any direction. The juniors started, watching for a sign

of the light carried by Bright, and listening for a repetition of the cry. It was obvious that, in retracing his steps towards the outlet of the vaults, Bright had not kept to the right way, but had turned unconsciously into another series of vaults. Once off the right path, there was nothing to guide him, and he might have wandered anywhere. And it was no light matter for the juniors to seek him if he had wandered far. They knew the main vaults and some of the passages from previous explorations. But once off the beaten track they were by no means sure of finding their way back again through that maze of subterranean windings.

They listened intently, but no sound came to their ears save the dim echo of their own footfalls in the hollow gloom.

Harry Wharton halted at last. "Look here, this won't do," he said. "We may be going farther and farther from him all the time. We're a good distance from the staircase now, and we don't want to get lost ourselves."

"What's to be done, then?" asked Bob.

"Let's try shouting to him."

"Good!" The juniors stood and shouted, and their shouts rolled back in thunderous echoes from the gloom.

But no other answer came. "He's out of hearing," said Nugent at last.

"Might have fainted," grunted Johnny Bull. "He's that sort. Frightened out of his wits before this."

"Likely enough," said Levison. His face was dark. "If we have to fetch help to hunt for him, I'm afraid that knocks on the head any more expeditions down here. But we must save him."

"There's nothing else for it," said Wharton.

"I'm afraid so; one of us had better go back and tell Mr. Quelch that Bright is lost. There will have to be a regular search. The others had better stay here; he may call out again, or he may turn up."

"Nice—to waste the afternoon on the Toad!" said Johnny Bull savagely.

"No good thinking of that now," said Levison patiently. "I'll get back, and you fellows take a rest here. You're tired out."

"No more tired than you are, old chap."

"That's all right. Lend me a lantern and I'll get back; no fear of my losing my way," added Levison, with a smile.

Bob Cherry handed him the bike lantern he carried. No more time was wasted in words; evidently the only thing to be done was to report what had happened to the Remove master, so that a regular search might be undertaken for the lost junior.

The Famous Five were glad enough of a rest; their legs were aching with their long tramping in the vaults. They leaned on a pillar and waited, occasionally calling out in case the Toad might be within hearing. But no answer came to their calling. Levison's light disappeared in the direction of the distant staircase.

Ernest Levison hurried on his way. He had made up his mind to give up the search, for the sake of the wretched fellow who had watched and spied upon him; but his feelings were bitter. He could picture Mr. Quelch's anger and

annoyance when he learned that a schoolboy was lost in the vaults; the fuss and excitement and general irritation and annoyance when an extensive search had to be undertaken. Certainly, it was Bright's own fault; but it was extremely probable that Mr. Quelch would put a severe veto upon any further exploration in the vaults. That meant the end of Levison's explorations below Greyfriars; and above ground his search had been long and thorough, and had led to nothing. By his very helplessness and cowardice his enemy was defeating him.

It was bitter enough; but Levison did not think for one moment of abandoning the wretched Toad to his fate. He hurried on his way, by dim vaults and gloomy stone passages, and was soon out of sight of his comrades.

Suddenly he stopped. From a dark passage that opened out of the vault he was now traversing came a low, wailing cry.



Bright's face looked like chalk in the fading light of Levison's lantern. His eyes glinted wildly at Levison, and his whole appearance showed that he was almost frantic with fear. "Oh! Help! Help!" he panted. "I'm lost—help!" (See Chapter 12.)

He caught his breath. "The Toad!" he muttered. His face brightened.

Evidently the searchers had been far off the track. By chance he had come on it again. He was within hearing of the junior who was lost in the mazes below Greyfriars. It was not necessary, after all, to ascend into the school and inform Mr. Quelch that the Toad was lost. Levison turned into the dark passage along which the cry had echoed and hurried on.

He shouted as he went: "Bright! Are you there? Answer me!"

There was no reply. He hurried on, flashing the light to and fro. This stone passage was taking him off the track he knew, but he did not hesitate. He noted every sign as he went, and his eyes were keen, his sense of direction good. Once he found the Toad all was well.

"Bright!" he shouted again. There was a faint cry in the distance. "Help!" "Thank goodness!" breathed Levison.

The cry came from a winding turn of the passage. Levison turned and hurried along. No gleam of light met his eyes, but he knew that he was near the Toad now. He could hear a whimpering, frightened voice calling. It came suddenly to Levison's attention that the light he carried was fading. As all the explorers had taken torches or lanterns, Bob had probably not taken the trouble to refill his bike lantern before starting; and anyhow it had now been burning for three hours. It would easily have lasted Levison to get out of the vaults had he kept on his direct way; but it was not likely to last him now. But the Toad had his torch, which was good for a dozen hours at least, and Levison did not think of stopping.

His failing light cast strange gleams and shadows over the grim stone walls as he hurried on.

"Help!" It was the Toad.

Bright's face looked like chalk in the fading light of Levison's lantern. His eyes glinted wildly at Levison, and his whole appearance showed that he was almost frantic with fear. "Oh! Help! Help!" he panted. "I'm lost—help!" (See Chapter 12.)

Levison almost stumbled on him. Bright, white-faced, haggard, worn, terrified, was crouching, half-lying, at the foot of a stone buttress in the dark. His face looked like chalk in the fading light of Levison's lantern. His eyes glinted wildly at Levison. His whole appearance showed that he was almost frantic with fear.

"Oh, help, help!" he panted. "I'm lost—help!"

"Pull yourself together!" said Levison contemptuously. "I'm here to help you. Why are you in the dark? Where's the torch?"

"I dropped it." "You dropped it!" Levison's heart stood still for a moment. "You fool! Where did you drop it? Do you mean that it's lost?"

"Yes," whimpered the Toad. "I've been in the dark for hours and hours—days, it seems like—"

"It's not an hour since you left us. Get a grip on your nerves—you'll need it. Look here, where did you drop the torch, you miserable funk?" exclaimed

Levison savagely. "My light's going out; it won't last five minutes longer! We've got to find that torch if we're to get out of this. Do you understand? Where did you drop it?"

"I—I don't know."

"You've got to know. Think!"

"I—I fell over something, and—and dropped it. I couldn't find it again," mumbled the Toad. "I couldn't help it."

"Was it close by here?"

"I don't know! I—I tried to find my way in the dark afterwards, but—but I couldn't—" Bright groaned. "I think I've been wandering about for hours in this awful place."

Levison set his teeth.

He had depended on the torch. And the torch was gone. The bike lantern was burning out fast; by this time, only the wick was burning; the oil was done. It gave only a glimmer, and that was dying.

"Get me out of this," moaned Bright. "I—I'll never follow you again—I'll never interfere with you! I'll ask my father to take me away from Greyfriars—I hate the place. I'll do anything you like, only get me out of this."

He clutched Levison's arm in his terror. He could hardly see his rescuer in the fading light.

The bike lantern gave a last splutter, and was done. Save for a faint glow from the dying wick, all was darkness.

"Levison—save me—"

"Shut up!" breathed Levison. "Let me think!"

He had memorised his way—and he had a good memory. But he had counted on the light. He knew the turnings he had followed—but he knew there were other turnings he had not followed. In the pitchy darkness all turnings were the same. One false step—and he might have his back to safety, and every further step would take him farther and farther from hope. And in that maze, in the pitchy dark, could he avoid at least one false step? He knew that he could not. He was too far from Harry Wharton & Co. to hope that they would hear him shouting; and even if they heard, the subterranean passages, multiplying the sound from all directions, would give them no clue. And the juniors would not seek him—they supposed that he was gone for help; they would not stir till he returned, or until a long lapse of time made them guess that something had happened to him.

The last glow faded out of the wick. All was blackness. Levison could not see the wretched fellow who was whimpering with terror by his side, but he could feel the hysterical clutch of the fingers on his arm.

"Get me out of this!" breathed the Toad.

"I'll try! Keep hold of my arm! I'll try—but the chances are against it. If we had the torch, it would be all right," Levison broke off. It was useless to reproach the whimpering wretch, whose cowardice and incapacity had endangered both their lives. "Come on!"

And groping his way along the unseen wall of the passage, Levison started, the Toad clinging to his arm like a limpet.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Life or Death!

LEVISON stopped.

The Toad was hanging more and more heavily on him, exhausted, scarcely able to drag one lagging leg after the other.

Levison was fatigued, too; and his head was almost swimming with his efforts to find his way. The darkness confused and bewildered him, clear-headed as he was. He knew that he had missed the way, as he had known that he must miss it in the dark. He had covered more than the distance to the staircase—more than the distance to the spot where he had left the juniors—but he had not found the stairs, he had not seen a gleam of light. Whether he was now in a passage he had followed before, or whether he was on entirely new ground, he could not even guess.

All was blackness and bewilderment.

He had struck match after match; but the brief glimmer helped him little. Now he had only three matches left, and he was keeping them in case of greater need. He had asked the Toad if he had matches; the fellow had none. In entering the vaults, the miserable fellow had thought only of watching Levison, of spying on the explorers. And now he was a helpless burden on the hands of the junior he had injured, on the hands of the junior who was almost sinking with weariness.

As Levison stopped, almost desperate, Bright sank, to the floor by his side, unseen in the blackness.

"I can't go on," he whimpered.

"Pull yourself together—can't we get help? Somebody must hear us—"

"Haven't you been howling all the time, and has anybody heard?"

"Shut up—let me think!"

The Toad whimpered into silence.

Levison tried to think it out. With the exhausted Toad hanging on to him, he had moved almost at a snail's pace. What chance he had had of finding his way out of the den of death and darkness had been faken away by his helpless burden.

"Look here, Bright," he said at last quietly. "This is doing no good. We're lost! You can't keep on. I'd better leave you here and try to get out. If I succeed, I can bring a search-party for you."

There was a wail of terror from Bright.

"Don't leave me!"

"It's our only chance."

"Don't leave me alone here—in the dark! I should go mad!" screamed Bright. "Don't—don't leave me!"

Levison breathed hard.

The fellow was clutching him again, holding to him frantically. Well he knew that the only chance for both of them was to shake off that hysterical hold, and make an attempt to find the way out of the black labyrinth while yet he had a little strength remaining. But he could not do it. The chance, too, was faint—he knew that. And he could not abandon the poor wretch, in his terror.

"Very well," he said. "Keep on!"

The Toad dragged himself on again.

Where they were going, neither had the faintest idea. But it was better to move than to keep still. The cold was bitter and penetrating in the underground passages—standing still even for a few minutes made the teeth chatter. And there was always the faint chance of finding safety.

Heavier and heavier the Toad dragged.

Levison threw an arm round his shoulders, to help him along. The fellow was his enemy, and it was his life that he was risking, perhaps sacrificing, to save him. But he did not think of that.

The ground was sloping under his feet as he realised, after a time. That was

a proof that he was going the wrong way. He turned, and retraced his steps, the Toad dragging along with him. But whether he followed the same passage back, or turned into another, he could not know. Blackness closed him in like a wrapping.

In spite of his help, the Toad sank down again at last. His weary limbs refused to move.

"Don't leave me!" he moaned.

Levison stopped.

He was breathing in panting gulps. Fatigue ached in his limbs, and his head was growing dizzy.

"We can't stop here, Bright—we shall freeze," he said hoarsely.

"I can't go on!"

"Then I must!"

"Don't leave me—don't leave me!"

Bright's voice was an hysterical shriek.

"Get up," said Levison roughly. "It's death to stay here—death, can you understand? I must carry you if you can't walk!"

He lifted the collapsing junior on his shoulder like a sack. He tottered under the weight of his burden; but he kept on. A few minutes more, and he reeled.

"Don't leave me!" whispered Bright huskily. "Levison, I'm sorry—sorry—I've been a beast to you—my father and I—I've tried to rob you—I came to the school to steal the will—to rob you! Oh, I'm sorry—sorry! But don't leave me! I know we're going to die here—I know it—but don't leave me till—till—" He broke off with a strangled sob.

The miserable words of repentance touched Levison strangely.

"Heaven help us!" he muttered. "I'll save you somehow!"

And he gathered his strength for another effort, and with his helpless burden weighing on him, he tramped on again in the bitter darkness. Bright did not speak again; he was only half-conscious now.

Suddenly Levison stumbled.

Something had caught him across the shins, and he fell forward helplessly. Bright gave a faint cry.

For some moments Levison lay panting; but it was borne into his mind that what he had stumbled over was a stone step.

Was it the staircase at last—had he blundered, in the wrapping darkness, upon the way to safety, to light and life!

The thought of it gave him new energy.

Leaving Bright for the moment, he groped about with his hands. Step rose above step of cold stone. It was a staircase, but it was not the staircase that led up to the great door of the vaults. He soon discovered that; for these steps were narrow, scarcely eighteen inches in width, and the stair was spiral.

It was not the way out of the vaults.

Levison's hope faded.

But the spiral stair must lead somewhere, and it was a last chance. He whispered to Bright—a husky whisper:

"It's a staircase, Bright! Sit there and rest, while I go up. I'll come back; keep your pecker up!"

Only a faint moan answered him. Bright was past speech.

Groping before him with his hands Levison crawled up the steep, narrow stairs. A dozen steps, and he paused to strike one of his remaining matches. The glimmer showed the spiral stair winding on and on upward.

He crawled on again.

Higher and higher, till it seemed to

Levison that he had gone so far that he must be on the level of the earth. Blackness and that endless spiral stair surrounded him, but his heart was beating with hope.

This was a way out of the vaults, hitherto undiscovered—but it was, or had been, a way out, that was certain. That spiral stair must have been built, in ages long past, as a secret way down to the depths of the vaults from the ancient monastery that had once occupied the site of Greyfriars.

He groped on. The spiral stair ended. He was standing, in the darkness, on a level floor of stone flags—a narrow passage, as he ascertained by stretching his arms on either side. He struck another match.

Solid stone encompassed him. The narrow passage, only a few feet long, ended in a wall of stone blocks. Levison gazed at it with haggard eyes till the match flickered out. He groped over the stone wall with his numbed hands. It was solid to the touch. Yet, unless that long spiral stair was a senseless freak, built for no purpose whatever, there must be an opening.

Groping on all sides, his hand came into a recess of the side wall, and, to his amazement, he felt the hard edges of a box. He struck his last match.

The light glimmered out. His dazed eyes saw a recess in the stone, in which a black metal box lay—an ordinary deed-box. On the lid, in white letters, were the initials, "J. T."

The match went out. In the darkness those letters danced before Levison's eyes like letters of fire. "J. T."—John Thorpe!

He had discovered the secret hiding-place of the papers John Thorpe had left behind him at Greyfriars!

He knew it! His hands groped over the deed-box; but it was locked. It mattered little; he knew what it contained. He had found what he had come to Greyfriars to find. He had found it, with the shadow of death upon him.

But Levison's brain was working feverishly now.

That John Thorpe had kept his papers in some secret recess he had been assured. But that the one-time Form master of Greyfriars had approached that hidden recess by way of the gloomy vaults and the winding stair was unthinkable. There was an opening in the wall before Levison, and on the other side, he had not the slightest doubt now, was the Remove master's study.

The walls, where he had tapped and tapped, had sounded solid—the solid stone was behind the old oak. But, somehow or other, there was an opening—a moving stone, and his life depended on discovering the moving of it!

Desperately he groped over the stone. Rough to the fingers, cold as ice—solid as rock! He groped and groped, and pressed and struck with desperate hands.

Suddenly there was a low, grinding whirr, and he felt the solid stone move. One of the blocks had rolled out of its place; he had struck the secret spring!

His eyes gleamed in the darkness. He groped in the opening; there was wood beyond, thick wood, and he knew it. He knew that it was the oaken wall of the Remove master's study. There was some secret way of moving the panel, but he did not seek it. With his clenched hand he struck again and again on the hard oak, and the echo of his blows reverberated dully round him.

Knock, knock, knock!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Last Will and Testament!

MR. QUELCH started. The Remove master was seated at his table, in his study, with a stack of papers before him. Mr. Quelch's brief leisure was over, and he was going through a pile of Remove Latin exercises.

He was interrupted by the sound of knocking.

"Come in!" called out Mr. Quelch. The door did not open.

Mr. Quelch glanced round him in surprise.

He had supposed, for the moment, that it was a knock at the door that he had heard. But he quickly realised that the knocking did not come from the door.

In utter amazement he realised that it was behind him—coming, apparently, from the solid oaken wall of the study.

Mr. Quelch swung round in his chair. Knock, knock, knock!

Heavy and dull, almost continuous, the knocking went on.

Mr. Quelch stared at the oak-panelled wall, with eyes that almost bulged from his head.

Never had the Remove master been so utterly astonished.

Knock, knock, knock!

It was no delusion. The knocking was on the other side of the solid wall—the wall of thick old oak panels backed by solid stone. Someone was there!

Mr. Quelch remembered at last what Levison had told him, of his belief that a secret opening existed in the old oak wall of the study that had once been John Thorpe's.

He had given Levison permission to examine the study, but the search had been futile. He knew that Levison had hoped, by exploring the vaults, to discover the secret from the other side.

It dawned on his mind what had happened—though he was far from guessing all that had happened.

"Bless my soul!" murmured Mr. Quelch.

He rose from his chair at last, and approached the wall. The knocking went on without cessation.

Mr. Quelch tapped on the oak. Tap, tap, tap!

Evidently the unseen person on the other side heard him, for the knocking ceased for a moment or two. Then it was renewed. Faintly through the thick oak came a voice:

"Help!"

Muffled by the thick wood it reached Mr. Quelch's ears faintly.

"Levison! Is that you, Levison?"

"Help!"

Levison had not heard. Mr. Quelch raised his voice and shouted:

"Are you there, Levison?"

The junior heard this time.

"Yes! Yes! Is that Mr. Quelch?" he shouted back.

"Yes! Bless my soul!"

"Help! I'm almost done, sir! Bright is here; he's fainted, I think. For mercy's sake, sir, get the panel open somehow!"

"Good heavens!" murmured Mr. Quelch.

It was useless for him to seek the secret of moving the panel—a secret which was too well hidden. He stood nonplussed.

"I don't know the way out of the vaults, sir!" Levison's voice came faint and muffled and husky. "I can't carry Bright any farther! I'm done! I must get out this way, sir!"

"Wait, Levison! I will send for Gosling."

Mr. Quelch lost no time.

It was severely against the grain with the Remove master to inflict any damage upon the beautiful old oak. But it was a case of necessity. In a very short time Gosling, the porter, was on the spot with tools, in a state of great astonishment.

As Gosling confided afterwards to Mr. Minble, the gardener, these were precious goings-on. But Gosling did as he was directed, and in a short time he had wrenched out a large panel of oak.

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Beyond was a narrow opening in the stone wall.

At the opening appeared a haggard face. Gosling blinked at Ernest Levison. Mr. Quelch rustled forward. He had been annoyed by the damage to his precious oaken wall; but the look on Levison's face banished all anger. The junior was evidently utterly spent, and at the end of his strength.

"Levison!"

He helped the exhausted junior into the study.

Levison staggered to the table and leaned on it for support.

"Never mind me, sir. Bright's there!"

"But what—"

"He's lying at the bottom of the stairs, sir, too far gone to move," panted Levison. "I—I think he's fainted."

"Gosling, follow me!" Mr. Quelch produced an electric torch from a drawer, and led the way through the opening in the wall. Gosling blinked at Levison, grunted, and followed him.

They disappeared from Levison's sight.

Levison sank down in a chair to rest. He was dazed with fatigue and stress of mind. He scarcely stirred while the minutes passed, and gradually his strength revived.

There were footsteps at last on the secret stair. Gosling appeared in view, grunting with exertion, and carrying Bright slung on his shoulder. He set the hapless junior down in the study, and grunted again emphatically. Mr. Quelch followed him from the secret doorway.

"Bright, my poor boy!" he said.

Bright was only half-conscious. His face was deadly white, and his eyes still had a dazed, scared look. Ernest Levison was already pulling round after his terrible experience, but evidently the effect was to last longer in the case of the Toad. That he was booked for an illness was clear in his face. He lay limply in a chair, his chin sunk on his breast.

"Buck up, kid!" said Levison, feeling, at that moment, only kindness towards the poor wretch who had been his bitter enemy. "You're safe now."

Bright's lips moved feebly.

"I know, I know!" The words were scarcely audible. "I'm going to be ill, Levison, but I know you've saved me—saved my life—after what I've done to you. I'm sorry—sorry—sorry! I'd undo it if I could. I've been a beast to you—a beast! And you've saved me like this—"

Bright's trailing voice broke off and he was silent, only half-conscious again.

Mr. Quelch looked oddly from one junior to the other.

"Bright must be taken to the sanatorium at once!" he said. "I will telephone for Dr. Pillbury. You, Levison, must—"

"I'm all right, sir."

"The others who were with you—Wharton and the rest—"

"They're safe, sir, waiting for me. I know where they are, and can fetch them when I've rested a little."

"You are sure they are safe?"

"Quite, sir."

"Then you need not explain at present. Rest, while Bright is attended to. Say no more now."

Edgar Bright was taken away at once. Within a very short time the school doctor arrived, and was attending to the hapless Bright in the sanatorium. Bright was delirious by that time, and his nervous system, never strong, had been shaken to its very

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roots by his terrors and fatigue in the black depths below Greyfriars. But his life was in no danger, as Levison was glad to learn from Mr. Quelch. He was likely to be long ill; he was not likely to be seen in the Remove again that term. But that was the worst, and but for Ernest Levison it would have been very much worse for the wretched Toad.

Levison was feeling almost himself again by the time Mr. Quelch returned to the study after seeing the doctor. The Remove master listened to his succinct account of what had happened in the vaults. Harry Wharton & Co. had not yet returned, and it was evident that they were still waiting where Levison had left them.

"From your description, it will be easy to find them," said Mr. Quelch. "I will ask Wingate and Gwynne to go down for them. You may rest, my boy."

And Mr. Quelch left the study again. For some minutes Levison sat, thinking. His thoughts had now turned upon the deed-box, still where he had glimpsed it, in the recess beyond the secret doorway.

He rose to his feet.

His heart beat as he passed through the gap in the oak-panelled wall and through the narrow, secret doorway where the moving stone had been. He groped into the recess in the stone.

A minute more, and the deed-box was in his hands and he had carried it back into the study.

You will enjoy reading

"LEVISON'S RETURN!"

the topping tale of Tom Merry & Co. and the whimsical Cardew, in this week's issue of

The "GEM" LIBRARY.

ON SALE WEDNESDAY.

The deed-box was locked, but the lock was a mass of rust. One powerful wrench, and it parted.

Levison lifted the lid.

The deed-box was stacked with papers. There was a pile of neatly-written manuscript, hundreds of sheets of it pinned in sections together, evidently the work on archaeology which had occupied many years of John Thorpe's life. To that, however, Levison gave little heed.

His fingers closed on a large thick envelope which bore on the outside the inscription:

"Last will and testament of John Thorpe."

His heart throbbed.

He drew out the stiff, folded document, unfolded it, and examined it with gleaming eyes. He ascertained the date, and that was enough. The will was dated fifteen years later than the old will under which Esau Bright, of Lantham, inherited John Thorpe's property. His father had been right. The will was, as he believed, in existence, and here it was under the hand of Mr. Levison's son!

Quietly, steadily, Levison scanned the will. He could see that it was in order, witnessed in due form. His father was saved—his family saved from ruin, and he had saved them. There was a feeling of deep thankfulness in his breast.

"Ernie!"

He started and turned.

He had not heard Frank enter the study.

Levison minor ran to him.

"Ernie, Mr. Quelch told me I could come to you here," he said. "Oh,

Ernie, you've been in danger, and I never knew!"

Levison smiled.

"It's all right, Frank, old man. Look at that!"

"That—what is that?" Frank Levison glanced at the document Ernest had taken from the deed-box.

"The last will and testament of our great-uncle, John Thorpe," answered Levison quietly.

"Ernie!"

"Fifteen years later than the early will," said Levison. "Do you understand, Frank? Do you understand what it means?"

"Ernie, you've found it?"

Levison nodded.

"And—and it means—"

Frank's eyes were shining. "It means, Frank, that our father is heir to Mr. Thorpe's fortune; that what he took, as next-of-kin, knowing nothing of the early will, is his by Mr. Thorpe's last will—this will in my hand. It means that he will not have to hand twenty thousand pounds to Mr. Esau Bright, of Lantham. It means that Mr. Bright has no claim whatever. He knew it well enough—his sending his son here to hunt for the will proves that he knew it—but now it will be known to everybody—to the law, Frank. It means that we are saved from ruin—the pater, Doris, mother. It means that we can go back to St. Jim's, if we like!"

"Oh!" panted Frank.

Mr. Quelch entered the study.

"Wharton and his friends have returned, Levison," he said. "And you—why, bless my soul, what is that?"

Levison held up the will.

"It is what I came to Greyfriars to find, sir, and I have found it—the last will and testament of John Thorpe!"

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch blankly.

"If you will allow me to use your telephone, sir—a word to my father—"

"Most certainly, Levison!"

And ere long Mr. Levison heard the news, and he knew that his son at Greyfriars had saved him.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

All's Well That Ends Well!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Harry Wharton & Co., and a crowd of Remove fellows, greeted Levison, as he came up to the Remove passage.

"All right, kid?" asked Wharton.

"Right as rain!"

"Wingate and Gwynne came down for us," said Wharton. "We were still waiting for you to come back, and wondering why the dickens you didn't come."

"The wonderfulness was terrific, my esteemed Levison."

"Quelch's told us," said Bob Cherry. "It seems that you found the jolly old Toad, after all, and had a hectic time."

Levison smiled faintly.

"I had a time I shouldn't care to have over again," he said. "It's no jest to be lost in the vaults, with a helpless fellow to look after."

"I hear that Bright's in sanny, and got the doctor," said Johnny Bull. "He got all the trouble he asked for, and a little more."

"You fellows will be fed-up with the vaults after this—what?" grinned Vernon-Smith.

"Yes, rather!" said Levison. "I never want to go down again, for one!"

"No?" asked Nugent.

"No, old fellow—no need now. I've found what I wanted."

"Found it?" exclaimed all the Famous Five together.

"Yes."

"Oh, good luck!"

"Tell us about it over tea," said Bob Cherry. "I'm jolly hungry, for one, and there's a spread ready."

And over tea, in Study No. 1, Ernest Levison told of what had happened after he had left his comrades in the vaults, passing lightly over his devoted care of his hapless enemy the Toad.

"Well, my hat!" said Bob. "Of course, we never guessed that you'd met the Toad, and got lost with him. I say, you've had tremendous luck, Levison!"

"The luckfulness has been terrific!"

"Levison deserved all his luck," said Harry Wharton. "If he hadn't stuck to the Toad as he did—if he'd deserted him and looked after himself—ten to one he'd never have happened on that secret staircase to Quelch's study. No one ever heard of its existence before. Levison has had luck—and he has deserved it all."

"Hear, hear!"

"And this will see your people through, Levison?" asked Nugent.

"Yes."

"That's good!"

"Everything will now be as it was before Mr. Bright returned from abroad and laid claim to old Mr. Thorpe's fortune," said Levison. "And—and you fellows won't think me ungrateful—"

"How do you mean?"

Levison coloured.

"You've been awfully decent to me—all the fellows—or nearly all—have been awfully decent. But—"

Wharton smiled.

"I think I catch on," he said. "This means that you will be going back to St. Jim's?"

"I think so," said Levison. "I should hate you to think me ungrateful, or forgetful of the jolly welcome I had here; but the fact is, I'm a St. Jim's man, really, and I felt it all the more when my old friends came over last week for the footer. They rather miss me, you know."

"We shall miss you, too," said Harry frankly. "All the same, I think you're right."

"The missfulness will be terrific; but the rightfulness is also great," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

There was a tap at the door, and Tom Redwing looked in.

"Levison here?"

"Adsum!" said Levison, with a smile.

"Mr. Bright's come over from Lantham to see his son," said Redwing. "He has seen him—the kid's delirious—and he's asked to see you. Mr. Quelch says you can see him if you choose—he's in the visitors' room now—but if you don't like—"

"I'll see him," said Levison.

He went downstairs, with a thoughtful frown on his brow. In the visitors' room a hard-faced man, with a gash of

a mouth, rose from a chair as he entered.

"You are John Levison's son?"

"Yes, Mr. Bright," answered Levison quietly.

The hard-faced moneylender of Lantham looked at him, with a keen, penetrating look. But for once there was some trace of softness, some sign of emotion, in the hard, callous face of Esau Bright.

"I have seen my son," he said, and his voice was not so hard as usual. "Edgar is delirious. The doctor fears that he is going to be very ill."

"I am sorry, sir," said Levison, sincerely enough.

Mr. Bright gave him another very keen look.

"In a week or two he will be removed—as soon as practicable—and I shall take him abroad for a time," he said. "He will not return to Greyfriars."

money is little to me. I would have given twice the sum to save my only son—and you saved him! Master Levison, I congratulate you—and your father!"

"Thank you!" said Levison.

The moneylender compressed his lips. He was rich; but he loved money, and the news that the will had been found was a blow to him. But even the hard-faced usurer had human feelings; the fact that Levison had saved his son had at least softened the blow. Possibly, too, there was in his hard heart some repentance for the unscrupulous part he had played—for the crime he had contemplated; for the wretched scheme which had failed, but which had brought his son into terrible danger. But if it was so, he said no word to it. With hardly a word more, he left Levison and the school.



Mr. Quelch was annoyed by the damage to his precious oaken wall; but the look on Levison's face banished all anger. The junior was evidently utterly spent, and at the end of his strength.

"Levison!" gasped the Remove Form master. (See Chapter 14.)

"Oh!" said Levison.

"From what Mr. Quelch has told me, and from my son's delirious ravings, I know what has occurred to-day," said Mr. Bright. "You have saved my son's life!"

Levison was silent.

"I know, from my son, that you are aware of the purpose for which he was at Greyfriars. That is over. He will not return; you will have a free hand here, Master Levison. If the will in which your father believes has a real existence, and if your search for it should be successful, you have no interference to fear from my son or from me."

"I am glad to hear you say so, Mr. Bright—though it matters little now. The will is found."

Mr. Bright started.

"Found?"

"Yes, and is now in safe hands."

There was a short silence.

"I will not say I am glad," said Mr. Bright, at last. "But I am, at least, not sorry. I am a rich man, and the

Harry Wharton & Co. were sorry to lose Levison.

They had welcomed him back into his old place in the Greyfriars Remove; they had been glad to see him a Greyfriars man again. He had been a more than welcome inmate of Study No. 1.

But they quite understood that his heart was with the school he had left; that good friends as they were, he wanted to be with the good pals he had left at St. Jim's.

Levison minor was feeling the same. He was friendly enough with Tubbs and Paget, Jack Wingate and Bolsover minor. But he fairly danced with glee at the prospect of rejoining Wally of the Third and Reggie Manners at St. Jim's.

The time of parting came, and a crowd of fellows saw Levison major and minor off. They parted with the Greyfriars crowd on the best of terms, and with real regret at leaving so many good chums. But their faces were bright as

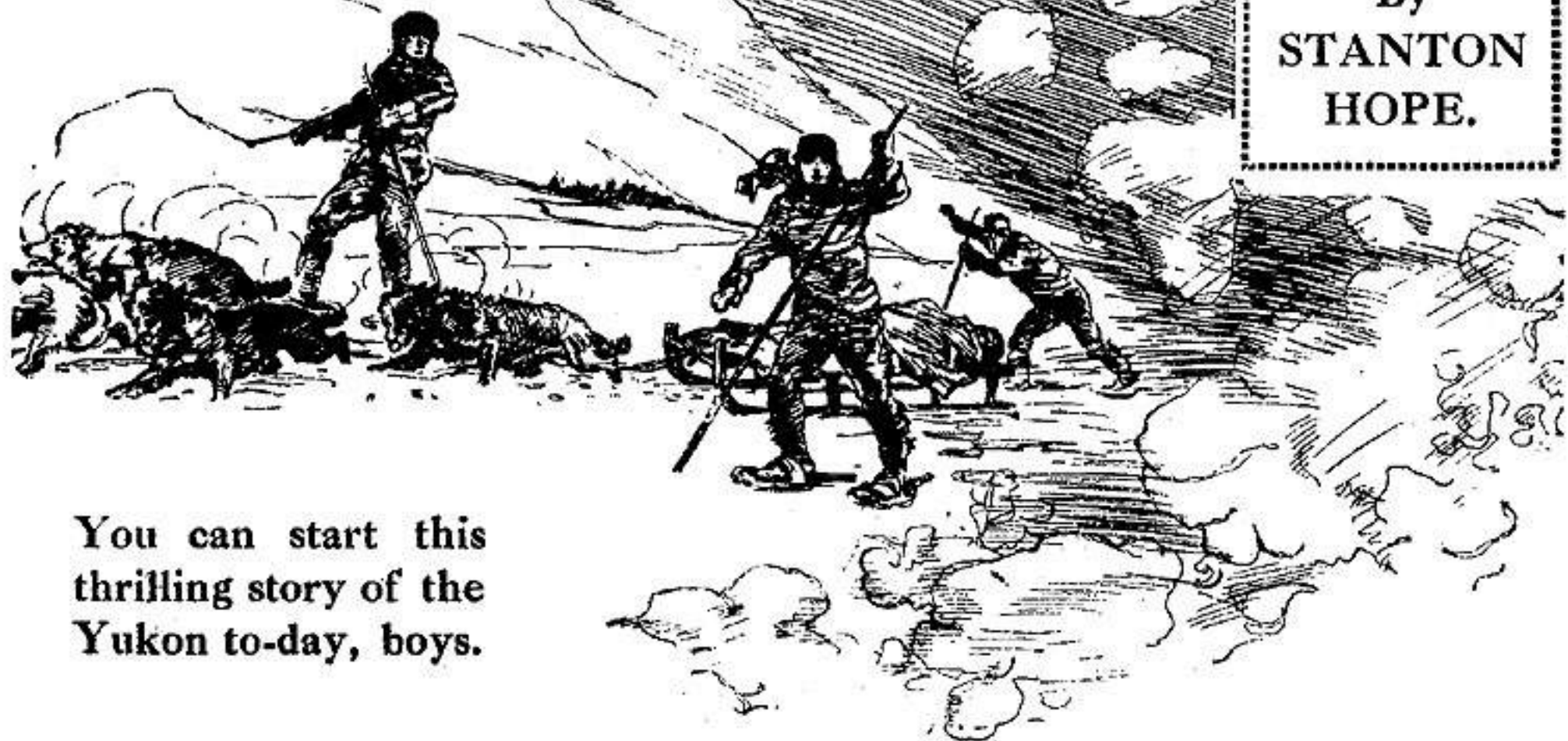
(Continued on page 27.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,034.

A DEAL THAT DIDN'T COME OFF! Bull Morgan and his rascally pard, Lefty Simons, reckon they're on a good thing when they sell a "gold mine" to a tenderfoot who doesn't know the first thing about prospecting. But if the tenderfoot is a "simp" the same can't be said of his two pals, Terry O'Hara and Jack Orchard!

GOLD FOR THE GETTING!

By
**STANTON
HOPE.**



You can start this thrilling story of the Yukon to-day, boys.

Rough Justice!

JACK ORCHARD arrives in San Francisco to find his uncle, Dave Orchard, missing, having apparently absconded with a bag of gold. Jack falls in with Terry O'Hara, a cheery Irish boy, and Clem Hardy, an old prospector, with whom he joins forces in a gold-rush up the Yukon. At intervals the trio have trouble with Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons, two shady camp followers. Hardy proves to be none other than Dave Orchard, and is arrested; but he manages to escape again. Later Jack and Terry are visited by Washington K. Gellibrand, an American greenhorn, who has purchased a claim from Morgan and Simons. Jack's suspicions are aroused, and a close examination of a nugget of "gold," taken from the claim reveals the fact that it is only a compound of gold dust and mercury.

Elbowing Terry away from Jack's side, Washington K. Gellibrand stared as though hypnotised at the nugget which Jack held between his finger and thumb in the light of the oil-lamp.

"You—you mean," he stuttered, "that this is a mixture of gold and mercury?"

"That's the ticket," answered Jack. "And when you've been up here in the Yukon another couple of months, you'll be able to recognise it almost on sight. The whole thing's as plain as Terry's face; Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons happened to have with them some of this stuff which, as you may know, is simply very fine gold held together by mercury. That's how some fellows have to do their mining—by putting mercury in their sluices when the gold is so fine that it can't be got out by ordinary washing. A piece of amalgam isn't worth as much as a golden nugget of

the same size, and nor is it the same colour as the ordinary coarse Yukon gold."

He took from a pocket a small nugget which was one of those he and his pards had found at Starvation Creek.

"Notice the diff?" he said. "This nugget from our other claim near the Stewart has a slightly red hue to it. Your amalgam is a bright yellow colour. Take it from me, those rotters, Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons, salted that mine for you—stuck the amalgam in there neat and tidy ready for you to find it—and you thought you'd made a strike! Wash, old chap," he added sadly; "they saw you coming and sized you up for a simp."

The American stood silently by the table, his rather good-looking face reddening and his fists slowly clenching.

"You've hit it, Jack," he said thickly. "Those wise guys sure knew I was little Johnny - Straight - From - Home, and handed me one big-sized lemon."

Thrusting the amalgam back into his pocket, and ignoring the steaming mug of cocoa set for him on the table, Washington K. Gellibrand strode toward the door.

"Say, where are you going, me bhoys?" demanded Terry sharply.

"On the trail of those two hulking crooks!" shouted back the American youth wildly, "and to knock the heads off the pair of them!"

With a great bound Terry leaped for his fur cap.

"Shure, wait a minute!" he howled. "Isn't ut help you'll be needing? I'm wid ye to a man!"

"Me, too!" yelled Jack. And the three stumbled out of the cosy warmth of the log cabin into the fierce crackling cold of the Yukon night.

The cold was like the crack of a rawhide whip in their faces after the cabin warmth.

It struck keen-toothed as a weasel at them, but they heeded not the danger of

it in their anxiety to get to grips with the two swindlers. Above, the Yukon sky was spread like a frozen sea of blue-black ink, with stars hard and bright as diamonds embedded in it. The trunks and branches of gaunt pine and spruce threw fantastic shadows on the snow, and a few yellow pencils of light struck out into the bitter night from the miners' cabins.

Some of the men had gathered in the shack of Shorty Gibbs, for the gruff, melodious rumble of voices could be heard singing that old favourite, "My ain folk." The only other sounds were the crunch of the boys' own feet in the thick, white carpet which covered the earth, and the dull thump of an occasional small avalanche of snow which fell from some overlaid branch.

From behind some rocks came the figure of a man, and it proved to be Jock McLennan. He was on his way to see Jack, and he was surprised by the sudden appearance of the two chums and the American youth.

In a few short sentences Jack made him aware of the trick played upon Gellibrand, and Jock, while evincing no sympathy with the American, became as keen as the others on seeing justice done.

Together they hurried to the cabin which Morgan and Simons had built, but the birds had flown.

"Well, they couldn't have been gone long," Jock muttered. "And as they didn't bring their dog team to Kettle Creek, it shouldn't be a mighty difficult matter to bag 'em!"

As they hurried through the camp, Shorty Gibbs' cabin decanted its merry-makers, and a brief halt was made to acquaint these other men with what had happened.

Among them were miners who had been "rooked" at the card table by the rogues, and they were by no means averse to lending a hand in their capture. Some others, hearing the racket,

emerged into the night to find out what was the matter, and soon a score of indignant folk, including the two chums and Washington K. Gellibrand, were on the trail of the crooks.

Owing to the numerous footprints in the snow round the creek, it was hopeless to try and distinguish the actual trail taken by Morgan and Simons. All agreed, however, that the pair had banked on their dupe being in ignorance of the trick played upon him for at least a day. Thus it might be presumed they would make a bee-line for Dawson, there quickly to realise on what possessions they had and light out for some other part of the Yukon or Klondike.

As luck would have it, there was to be no protracted chase that bitterly cold night. On the outskirts of the new diggings, Lefty Simons' pack had come to grief, and the pursuers sighted him and his big pard stooping in the snow and trying to adjust it.

There was no need for Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons to wait and hear what was the reason of this pursuit. They knew all about it directly they heard the dull crunch of feet in the frozen snow, and the panting breath of the avengers on the night air.

Both the scoundrels were wearing snowshoes, and without waiting to make the final adjustments to Lefty's pack, they took to their heels like scared jack-rabbits. As they went they unstrapped their loads and dropped them in their tracks, to enable them to flee the faster.

Unluckily for them, they had to traverse some ground which had been the site of a deal of wood-cutting, and had been partially cleared of snow. In the circumstances, their snowshoes were of little advantage; and Jack, racing ahead, launched himself with the ferocity of a lynx upon Morgan's broad, pack-laden back, sending him bowling head foremost to the ground. Terry and the American youth outdistanced the other; and, with deadly fear on his face, Lefty Simons turned at bay.

Without preamble, Wash floored the crook with a straight-from-the-shoulder left to his wolfish mouth.

"My wad! Hand it out!" he panted. "And here's the transfer for your phoney mine right here!"

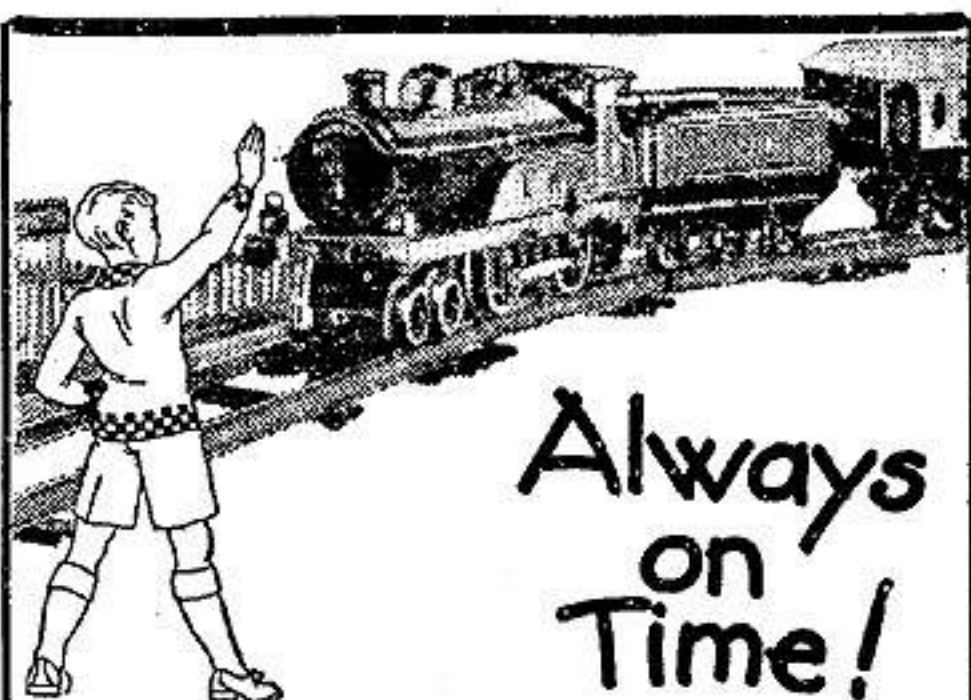
The rough hands of Jock McLennan and the other miners dragged the pair together, and the avengers gathered about them.

"Say, what's the idea?" growled Morgan, trying to bluff. "What have you got against us this time?"

No one replied directly to him, but Jock McLennan turned to Jack.

"Search 'em both, son!" he commanded. "And if either
(Continued on next page.)

Dear Father
Christmas
Please remember
that I'd like some
chocolates at Christmas.
And if you can bring
Cadburys I like them
best of all
Hopefully
Bobby
P.S. Dad helped me with the spelling.
Couldnt you bring some Cadburys
every saturday night?



"That's her signal — and here she comes round the bend. Dead on time, as usual!"

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of the sons-o'-guns lifts a finger against ye there'll be two holes burned in the ground to-morrow to take their worthless carcasses."

Jack searched his old enemies with a will. First he produced the fifteen hundred dollars paid for claims five and six, and handed them over to Jock to return to the American youth. Then he did a bit of searching on his own account, hoping to find the Bear's Claw nugget, which was part of the gold that Uncle Dave had been accused of stealing.

He had once seen the Bear's Claw in Morgan's possession, and his heart beat faster when he discovered that there was a coarse string tied round the big bully's neck.

He roughly dragged the string from Morgan's chest and held up the object tied to the end of it. But the object was a rabbit's foot.

"You let my mascot alone, y' cub!" growled Morgan. "Ain't you taken enough offen me?"

Jack bit his lip with chagrin.

"You'd got a different mascot tied there last time I saw that string!" he retorted. "What have you done with it, you big rotter?"

The evil eyes of Morgan glowed fire.

"I don't know what you're a-talking about," he replied.

"Search their bags, too, Jack me bhoys," advised Terry, who well understood his chum's object. "I'll lend you a hand."

The search was made in the most painstaking way, and during it Jack explained to the men standing round the motive of the search.

There was not a sign, however, of the Bear's Claw, though further specimens of amalgam were discovered similar to the stuff which had deceived the gullible Gellibrand. Obviously, Morgan and Simons had hidden the big nugget somewhere—or, a worse possibility still, had broken it up. Sick at heart, in spite of the recovery of the American lad's dollars, Jack stood aside.

"We'll have the law on you for this!" said Morgan angrily, as he gazed about him. "You're nothing but a lot of all-fired bandits!"

"Salting mines ain't exactly reckoned in law," returned Jock McLennan calmly. "Pity for your own sakes you hadn't any real nuggets by you to salt your claims; for then you might have got away with it. Now, give 'em back that amalgam, my lad," he said to the American youth, "and likewise the transfer of their claims."

The gratified greenhorn did as he was bidden, and Lefty Simons reached down as though to recover his pack.

"Can we go now?" he sneered. "Believe me, you haven't heard the last of this!"

"Nor have you!" answered Jock bluntly. "I guess it won't pay none of us to go wasting our time wi' lawyers round the Dawson courthouse. And as we've got a full jury here, I reckon it can be decided right hyer and now what punishment's coming to you."

"P-p-punishment!" gasped the discomfited rogues.

"That's so!" said Jock. "And seeing that fellows who salt mines are liable to a consid'able stretch in the 'pen,' you two pards will be the first to agree that anything that's coming to you from us will be perty light by comparison. Well, boys, what do you think they deserve?"

"A good hiding—the haythens!" piped Terry.

"Ay, let 'em run the gauntlet!" cried Shorty Gibbs.

"Good notion, Shorty!" smiled Jock. "All agreed?"

A burst of voices on the night announced that all were agreed, except Morgan and Simons themselves. Leather belts were dragged from underneath the thick woollen garments or furs which the miners wore, and some picked up sticks broken from the spruce-trees in the course of the wood-gathering operations.

Two rows were formed. The packs of Morgan and Simons were placed at the extreme end of them. Then Jock, with lusty kicks from his boots, forced the rogues between the rows of men, who, with rough justice, had constituted themselves both jury and executioners of the sentence.

At first the crooked pair showed a marked reluctance to pass between the lines. Stinging blows from stick and belt fell like slashing rain upon their devoted backs and shoulders. They dashed forward between the lusty avengers to regain their packs, in which had been placed most of the amalgam.

Arrived at the end of the lines, howling with pain, the two pards stopped to recover their property. Terry had positioned himself at the extreme end of one of the rows, and—thwack, thwack!—his stout stick descended with stinging violence in turn upon the stooping bodies of the rogues.

"There, me bhoys!" he cried, with heartiest satisfaction. "Take those back to Dawson wid ye as a present from Terry O'Hara!"

With two final howls, Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons leaped erect, grasping the straps of their packs between their mitten-covered hands. Then away they bounded Dawson-wards, while Jack, Terry, the American youth, and the older men threw away their sticks, replaced their belts, and sent roar upon roar of laughter to the winking stars.

The Great Dog Derby!

ON a bright, bitterly cold morning in early April, Nome, in Alaska—roughly seven miles due west of Dawson, in the Yukon—was gay with flags. For to-day was the day of days in the Northland—the day of the great Dog Derby, a race of four hundred and twelve odd miles to Candle Creek and back.

Competitors and even some of the spectators had come from all parts of the far-flung North—from Seward in the Kenai Peninsula and the islands of South-East Alaska to Point Barrow, far within the Arctic Circle, and that part of the Dominion of Canada which lies in the great Mackenzie basin.

To Jack and many others who had entered from the Yukon there had been a journey of some seven hundred miles from Dawson to Nome, in the Seward Peninsula.

Claims on Kettle Creek had been temporarily left to look after themselves, for the Government conditions as to building on them and working them had been fulfilled. They were left the more readily by those intending to enter the race owing to the fact that Kettle Creek hitherto had proved a disappointment. Even Shorty Gibbs, whose claim had panned out best, had got in his tests no more than two-dollars-fifty per pan.

Very early arrivals in Nome were Bull Morgan and Lefty Simons. For two or three weeks prior to the race they had been "mushing" their dogs for practice by day and fleecing a new set of miners at the card-table by night.

Jack and Terry had set off from Kettle Creek in advance of Jock McLennan and Shorty Gibbs, the other two competitors from that district. And Jack had gained much experience by finding his way through the white wilderness without aid. Beside the racing team he brought two "reserve" dogs, in case of accidents, and during the journey practised various manoeuvres with the huskies until he felt that he had absolute control of them.

Subsequent to his arrival in Nome, he had made one complete journey over the course of the race, which extended from Nome to Fort Davis, the United States military post, Solomon on Norton Sound, and then northward via the little mining town of Topkok and Council—now joined to Solomon by a railroad—and so to Candle on the northern coast of the peninsula.

Besides this, he had spared neither himself nor the dogs in other matters of training. Terry took on the duties of night-guard over the dogs during the last few tense days, keeping them as closely watched as are real Derby thoroughbreds at Epsom.

Nevertheless, just before the great day, two of the animals sickened with a strange malady—one of the racing team and one of the reserves, so the remaining dog which had been brought from the Yukon, a thoroughly bad-tempered husky named Ribbons, had to be included in the outfit.

There was no doubt that this eleventh-hour change reduced Jack's chances in the great race. For Ribbons—so called because both his ears had been in ribbons almost since his puppyhood, thanks to the fangs of others of his breed—was not an acceptable companion to the rest of the racing team.

He had the reputation of being a "yaller" dog—a surly, ill-tempered brute—and Jack himself considered he was the worst of his doggy purchases.

The other dogs fought with Ribbons, and undoubtedly would have killed him but for the intervention of Skookum the leader. He, by the force of his own great personality and vice-like jaws, quickly settled matters on behalf of his master. The other huskies submitted to Skookum's ruling that Ribbons should run in harness with them; but it was plain that their morale was slightly upset by his inclusion.

On the great day itself business was at a standstill in Nome. The streets were thronged with men and women eagerly discussing the chances of the numerous competitors. And not only was there a record entry, but there were some "dark horses" entered for the event, notably a Russian prospector called Vladoroff, whose team consisted of dogs brought especially from Siberia by himself.

Rumour had it that Shorty Gibbs, the favourite, who had won the race on two previous occasions, would be all out to lower the great record of seventy-four hours fourteen minutes set up by a team driven by a Finn in pre-War days.

Other rumours had it that Jock McLennan had wagered his new claim on Kettle Creek against a box of tallow candles that Gibbs would be out of sight when he himself entered Nome on the return journey. There was no truth in the rumour, for Jock was too canny a man to make any such wild wagers; but it was a fact that he greatly fancied his chance.

From between specially constructed stands, ablaze with bunting in one of the principal streets in Nome, the teams were sent away in pairs at fifteen-minute intervals.

The first off was an Indian and an Englishman named Charles Peebery-Smethwick—popularly known as "Lord Chawles"—who was ranked among the veriest outsiders. Bull Morgan, loudly cheered by Lefty Simons, went away second with the Russian. Jock McLennan and another "sourdough" were ninth in order.

Every nerve of Jock's body thrilled as he urged his own team of huskies to the starting point in company with Shorty Gibbs, the crack musher. There for some minutes they waited under thousands of critical eyes.

"Are y' ready, boys?"

The booming voice of an official burst above the general babel of human voices and doggy snarls.

Jack and Shorty nodded and rapped out warnings to their restless malamutes.

Crack!

The report of the starter's revolver cut the icy air.

"Mush!" roared Jack and Shorty together.

And the husky teams went swinging down the ice-bound street on the long white trail to Candle Creek!

"Arrah! Best luck go wid ye, Jack

me bboy!" bellowed Terry. "Hurry back to your old pal and the finest hot-baked murphies of your life!"

His voice rose clear above the clamour of the mob, most of whom were giving a boisterous farewell to Shorty Gibbs, the crack dog-driver, who had started away with the English lad.

A few of the Dawson citizens hurled a bit of chaff after Jack, who laughed and crackled his whip cheerily in response.

Not a man there even remotely considered him as a possible winner of the great Dog Derby, and odds offered of twenty to one against him went begging for lack of takers. But if the crowd were not impressed with his skill as a "musher," they admired his pluck in attempting the terrible frozen course of over 400 miles to Candle Creek and back.

Shorty and his team quickly swung ahead, and Jack was quite content that the crack musher should set the pace. Moreover, he knew he could rely on Skookum, the leader of his own pack of dogs, to keep his black nose close behind the other sledge. So Jack swung out of the Dawson streets a despised "outsider" who was destined, however, to give the critics the surprise of their lives!

(Don't miss the continuation of this grand serial which will appear in next week's bumper number of the MAGNET.)

LEVISON'S LUCK!

(Continued from page 23.)

they were set in the direction of St. Jim's.

"Sorry to lose Levison," Bob Cherry remarked, as the Famous Five walked back to Greyfriars: "But I hear that we're losing the Toad, too—and that's a consolation!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Bunter!"

"I say, I forgot to ask Levison for ten bob I lent him before he went," said Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five. "One of you fellows might lend it to me til' he r from him—what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"That chicken won't fight, old fat man!" explained Bob. "All Levison forgot to give you when he left was a thick ear. I'll give you that now!"

"Yaroooooh!"

"And here's another, old bean!" said Johnny Bull genially.

"Whoooooop!"

And William George Bunter beat a hasty retreat, and Harry Wharton & Co. chuckled and went on their way.

THE END.

(Be sure you read: "THE PERFECT'S SECRET?" next week's magnificent yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. It's a winner at the "ay, chums.")

2/6 DEPOSIT

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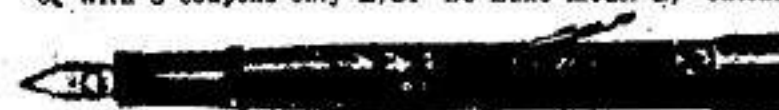
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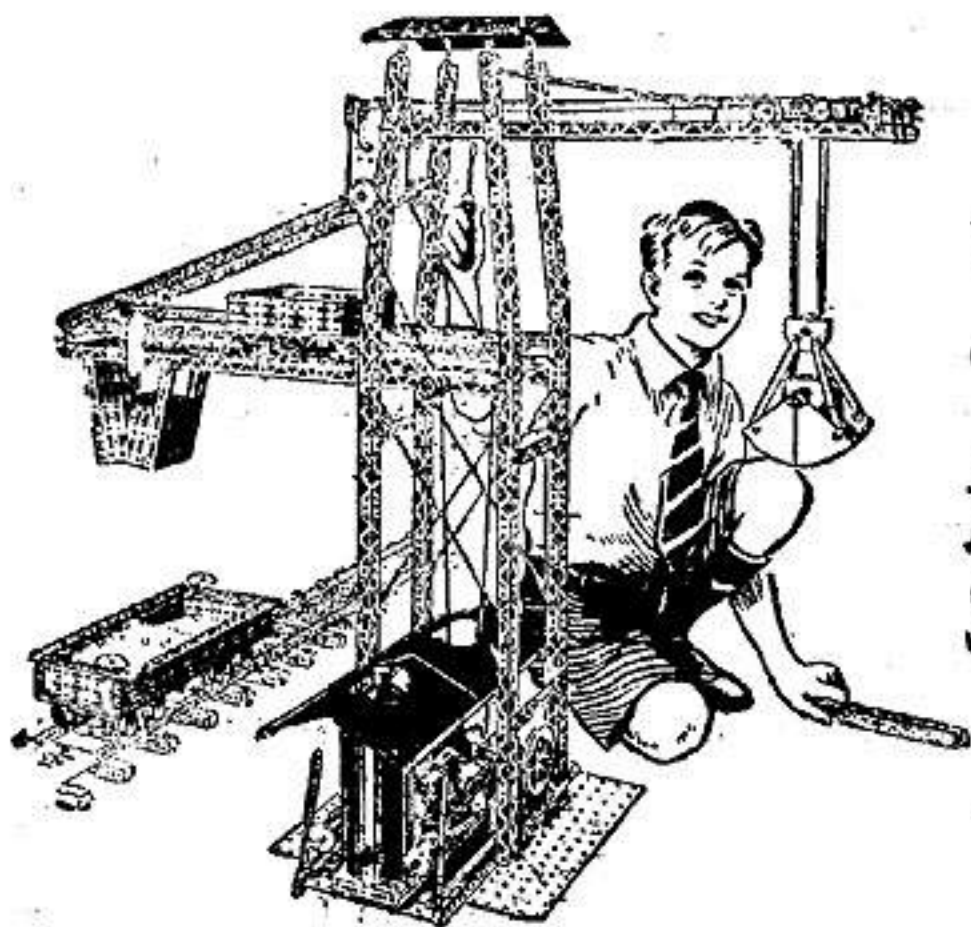
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