

"THE BOY WITH A PAST!" THIS WEEK'S MAGNIFICENT YARN
OF HARRY WHARTON & CO.

The Magnet

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EVERY SATURDAY.



HARRY WHARTON BREAKS BOUNDS!

(See the grand story of Greyfriars School—inside!)

Our Special Football Feature!



This week "Referee" tells us of the clever tactics of Jack Hill, the famous English International centre-half and captain of Burnley.

IT is not always easy to say why this or that player is specially popular on our big football fields. One man to whom I put this question as to the secrets of popularity replied thus: "You don't need to be a good footballer to be popular. What you need is a pair of bandy legs, a bald head, or red hair."

The real meaning of this remark was, of course, that for a player to become popular with the onlookers there must be some distinguishing characteristic about him; something which makes him stand out so that the good things for which he is responsible shall not be credited to some other player.

A Giant Centre-Half!

Now, John Henry Hill, the centre-half of Burnley, has been well blessed, even according to my friend's definition. Once you have seen him on the football field you would never confuse him with any other player. In the first place, he has what I have heard described as the longest legs of any footballer. Anyway, he stands six feet three inches altogether in his socks, and that, of course, makes him stand out above his colleagues and his opponents. In addition, Hill is blessed with that type of hair which caused him to be named "Ginger!"

When all is said that can be said about the distinguishing features of Jack Hill, the fact remains that he is most distinguished as a real footballer—a complete centre-half-back—and in some respects, at any rate, the best in the game of these times.

It is said that opportunity knocks at all our doors at least once, and that the difference between success and failure lies in our being in or out when opportunity knocks. Opportunity knocked at the door of Jack Hill much sooner than he or anybody else could have expected, but he took the precaution of being "at home."

Hill comes "fra Durham," and it was as a raw lad that Manager Bob Jack, of Plymouth Argyle, seeing him playing there, signed him up on a professional form for the Argyle. The cost to the manager of Plymouth was a five-pound note. I want you to bear that amount in mind, because there is a note of contrast to be struck a little later on.

The Plymouth manager has told me that he expected it would take two years for Hill to develop into a first-team man, so raw was he at the time he was signed on. But man proposes and fate disposes. During Hill's first season at Plymouth, the Argyle had a terrible run of bad luck in respect of injuries. First one man and then another had to fall out of the team, until finally Hill simply had to be put in, although the manager

himself did not think he was ready for promotion. But to such an extent was Jack Hill at home when opportunity knocked at his door that afterwards he was never left out of the first team.

Some Jump!

He began to make a name for himself in the Cup-ties, when in a prolonged affair he held up Jack Cock, then of Chelsea, and one of the most dangerous forwards in the game.

Gradually the rawness, the crudeness went out of Hill's play, and in 1923—three years after Plymouth had paid a five-pound note to secure his services,



JACK HILL,

the giant centre-half of Burnley, who stands six feet three inches in his socks.

Burnley paid five thousand pounds for the transfer of the giant centre-half. From being worth five pounds in 1920 to five thousand pounds in 1925 is some jump, isn't it?

Jack Hill has jumped in other directions, too. He has captained England in International matches, but somehow or other he has come to be known as an unlucky skipper. Things haven't seemed to run England's way when Hill has been skipper of the side. That has not been his fault; it has been his misfortune. In one match against Scotland in which Hill was the captain he was badly hurt in the first half, and had to go to outside-left. Actually, he was so badly injured that his trainer did not want him to go back on the field at all. That shows the spirit of the man. A little later, in an England against Ireland match, when Hill was captain, the England goalkeeper was hurt in the first half and could not resume after the interval.

But though in respect of International matches Hill's luck has been out, he has proved a great club man for Burnley, and he has all the essentials of a good captain and a masterful centre-half. Some of his success is due to physical qualities. "How can you get round a man with telescopic legs?" is a question one centre-forward put to me after ninety minutes up against Hill. Another player said: "He is misnamed. He ought not to have been called Hill, but Mountain."

A Useful Tip!

In these days centre-forwards carry the danger-signals in most of football attacks, and first and foremost Hill makes it his business to see that opposing centre-forwards don't get too many chances. I think he has come more and more to believe that the first duty of a centre-half is to hold up the centre-forward opposed to him. At one time he used to go much farther forward than he does now. To-day, as a general rule, he keeps fairly well back, and relies on setting his own attackers in motion with long, swinging passes to the wings or up the middle. But he doesn't just pass wildly. He finds his man with the ball, and occasionally starts a movement by nodding the ball to one of his wing-half-backs, to whom he gives the instruction: "Hold it."

But there are times when Hill goes right up. If his side is taking a corner-kick he advances into goal, there to make use of his exceptional height should the ball come towards his head. This is a useful tip for all tall centre-half-backs. Hill has got several goals in this way.

(Continued on page 28.)

SACKED FROM OLDCROFT! Christopher Clarence Carboy was sacked from his last school! That's the rumour Billy Bunter, the Paul Pry of Greyfriars, starts. Nobody believes it at first, but the extraordinary events which follow go to prove that Bunter's "rumour" is true!

The Boy with A Past!



A Magnificent New Long Complete School Story of Harry Wharton & Co., starring Christopher Clarence Carboy, the prince of japers. By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER:

Black, but Not Comely!

HARRY WHARTON stood before the looking-glass in Study No. 1 in the Greyfriars Remove, and looked at his reflection therein with deep and intent interest. For quite a long time Wharton had been standing there, gazing at the reflected face in the mirror. It was rather an unusual proceeding on Wharton's part, for, though quite a good-looking fellow, he was not at all conceited. Billy Bunter often found deep satisfaction in the contemplation of his fat features in a looking-glass, seeing in them much to admire. But it was not Wharton's way, and when Bob Cherry came along the Remove passage and glanced into the study he stared at Wharton's back in surprise.

The captain of the Remove was so absorbed that he did not hear, or heed, Bob's footsteps, though they were far from fairy-like. His eyes remained fixed on the mirror, and Bob Cherry grinned. "Hallo, hallo, hallo!" he roared suddenly.

Wharton started and spun round. "Make you jump?" asked Bob cheerily.

"Yes, you ass."

"Well, I thought I'd interrupt you before you cracked the glass," explained Bob.

"Fathead!"

Wharton turned to the looking-glass again.

"Admiring the view?" asked Bob.

"Ass!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Bob, comprehending suddenly. "It's the jolly old eye you're worrying about."

The face reflecting in the mirror was not so pleasing to the view as it generally was. Round Harry Wharton's left eye was a dark circle. It was not so prominent as it had been a few days ago. It could not, perhaps, be called a black eye. But obviously it had been a black eye very recently, and it was still a deep and peculiar shade of blue.

Nobody could have glanced at the captain of the Remove without becoming aware at once that he had been seriously damaged in a scrap not very long ago.

Wharton grunted and turned from the glass.

"It's no good," he said. "I hoped it would buck up and be gone by Wednesday, but— What do you think of it, Bob?"

"Behold, it is black, but not comely!" grinned Bob.

"Oh, don't be an ass! Quelch has gated me till this eye is well. It feels all right now, but it looks—"

"Horrid!" said Bob.

"You don't think there's a chance?"

"Nunno."

"And the Highcliffe match this afternoon!" said Wharton bitterly. "I've got to stay within gates while the team goes over to Highcliffe. All that fool Carboy's fault."

"Well, you gave Carboy a worse eye than that, and he's gated, too," said Bob. "You were rather an ass to lose your temper with the chap and pitch into him without the gloves."

"Fifteen!" said Wharton.

"Eh? What do you mean?"

"That's the fifteenth time you've told me that!" answered the captain of the Remove sarcastically.

"Well, it's true, anyway," said Bob, a little tartly. "You really might have remembered that you are football captain, and that you'd be wanted in the Highcliffe match to-day. You can't expect Quelch to let you go out of gates with a black eye, and I suppose you're not keen on showing it off at Highcliffe, either."

"I don't think it looks so bad as all that. I might have got it boxing, or an accident at footer. Fellows have had black eyes before without all this thumping fuss."

"M'yes! But—"

"I'm going to ask Quelch, anyhow," said Wharton abruptly. "He's had time to cool down, and he may let me off. I can't explain to him that Carboy was entirely to blame for the scrap we

had in this study; but he ought to know me well enough by this time to guess."

Bob Cherry gave him rather a comic look.

"But Carboy wasn't so much to blame as all that, old bean. He never wanted to scrap with you."

"No," snapped Wharton. "He wanted to keep on ragging me, without getting what he was asking for. Anyhow, he got it, bother him. I'm going to try my luck with Quelch, anyhow."

"Good luck, old chap, though I'm afraid there's nothing doing."

Harry Wharton left the study, and went along to the Remove staircase. Skinner, in the Remove passage, gave him a grin, his glance dwelling on Wharton's discoloured eye. On the Remove staircase he encountered Billy Bunter, who blinked at him through his big spectacles and chuckled.

"He, he, he!"

Wharton frowned and passed on.

"I say, old chap, hold on a minute!" exclaimed Bunter, catching at his arm.

"Oh, dry up!"

"It's rather important—about the Highcliffe match this afternoon—"

"What do you mean, you fat frump?" demanded Wharton impatiently.

"You can't go over to Highcliffe with that eye. Quelch's gated you, and I must say he's right," said Bunter, wagging his head seriously at the captain of the Remove. "It's hard cheese; but he's right. Can't have a Greyfriars man showing up at another school looking as if he's just been chucked out of a pub on a Saturday night."

Harry Wharton breathed hard.

"Is that all you've got to say?" he asked.

"No, old fellow! You can't go over to Highcliffe—that's settled. Smithy's no good to captain the team—he's not a patch on you—"

"Many thanks."

"Though you're not much to speak of, if you don't mind my mentioning it," continued Bunter.

"Thanks again."

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"I've been thinking it over, and I've thought of a way out," explained Bunter. "I'll go in your place. See?"

"What?"

"Now that you've got to stand out yourself I don't see why you can't give up your usual system of keeping me out of the matches!" said Bunter, blinking at Wharton. "Play the game, you know—just this once, at least. Give a fellow a chance. I'm willing to skipper the team this time, and I'll undertake to knock Highcliffe into a cocked hat. What do you say?"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Go and eat coke!"

Wharton tramped on down the stairs, leaving William George Bunter blinking after him indignantly. Obviously—to Bunter—the captain of the Remove was as jealous as ever of his amazing form at Soccer.

"Beast!" howled Bunter, after Wharton's departing figure.

Wharton went on.

"Yah! You come back here, and I'll give you another eye to match the one you've got!" roared Bunter.

Wharton turned round on the stairs. It was not necessary to ascend; turning round was enough for Bunter. The Owl of the Remove bolted up the staircase and disappeared into the Remove passage. Wharton, with a laugh, turned again, and resumed his way to Mr. Quelch's study. Billy Bunter, in an unfortunate moment for himself, bolted into the Remove passage, just as Bob Cherry was coming out of the doorway of Study No. 1.

Crash!

"Oooop!"

Bob Cherry stood like a rock.

William George Bunter broke like a wave on the rock.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" said Bob cheerily, grinning down at the fat and breathless figure that sprawled at his feet.

"Groooogh!"

"What's this game?"

"Oooqooh!"

"Like to try it again?"

"Mmmmmmmmm!"

"Is that Esperanto or Dutch?"

"Gurrrrrgg!" gasped Bunter.

"Beast! Ooooh! I'm winded—oooh! Mooh!" He scrambled to his feet.

"Gug-gug-gug! Ooooh!"

"You want a smack on the back, old fat bean!" said Bob. "Stand steady—here goes! One jolly good hefty smack—Hallo, hallo, hallo! Where are you going?"

But Bunter was gone.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

No Leave!

"CARBOY! Well?"

The tone in which Mr. Quelch uttered those words indicated that it was not well; indeed, that it was far from well.

He frowned at Christopher Clarence Carboy.

The master of the Greyfriars Remove had two reasons for feeling annoyed. In the first place, Carboy's eye was blackened, and his nose red and swollen. In the second place he had come to Quelch's study, as the Form master easily guessed, to ask for leave out of gates. Mr. Quelch was at the fifth paper out of a pile of thirty which he had to correct. He did not desire to be interrupted for frivolous reasons.

So he shot his question at Christopher Clarence Carboy like a bullet from a rifle.

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"Excuse me, sir—" murmured Carboy.

"Well?"

"It's a half-holiday this afternoon, sir," said Carboy meekly.

"You can scarcely suppose that I am unaware of that circumstance, Carboy!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Nunno, sir! Please may I go out of gates?"

"I have already told you, Carboy, that you may go out of gates when your disfigured and disgraceful countenance shall have resumed its normal aspect!"

"Yes, sir. But—"

"No Greyfriars boy is allowed to show himself in public with a blackened and swollen face, Carboy! You should be ashamed of desiring to do so. Both you and Wharton are detained within gates until all the signs of a very brutal conflict have disappeared."

"The fact is, sir—"

"That will do, Carboy!"

Mr. Quelch turned again to his stack of papers.

"Oh, sir!" murmured Carboy.

"I have nothing more to say, Carboy! You are gated until your face is fit to be seen in public again."

Carboy gave his Form master an appealing look. It was wasted on Mr. Quelch, whose eyes were on the heap of Latin exercises. Slowly the new junior of Greyfriars moved to the door.

As he reached it Mr. Quelch looked up. Stern gentleman as the Remove master was, a human heart beat under his crusty exterior, as his boys often discovered with surprise.

"Carboy, I cannot excuse you or give you leave. Wharton, the head boy of my Form, is detained also within gates for the same reason—I cannot have two weights and measures. A Form master must be just. You may go."

"Yes, sir, but—"

"Close the door after you, Carboy!" said the Remove master in a tone of finality.

The new junior left the study and closed the door. As he went slowly and dismally down Masters passage Harry Wharton came in sight from the other end, coming up towards Mr. Quelch's study.

Carboy grinned. He guessed that the captain of the Remove was on the same errand.

Wharton glanced at him and averted his glance at once. He was not on speaking terms with Carboy. He did not want to see him; and he was annoyed to see him in Masters passage. If Carboy had just been bothering Quelch for leave, it probably lessened Wharton's own chance. And leave for Wharton was important, as the captaincy of the football eleven at the Highcliffe match depended on it.

"Nothing doing!" said Carboy, with a jerk of his head towards the study he had left.

He cheerfully ignored the fact that Wharton was not on speaking terms with him.

"We're both for it!" he added. "I say, we were a pair of fatheads to biff each other to this extent. What?"

"You shouldn't have asked for it."

"You mean, you shouldn't have got your silly back up over a practical joke!" grunted Carboy.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"That's a matter of opinion," he answered. "Anyhow, we needn't discuss it. Keep your fool japes for those who like them, and it needn't happen again."

"Nobody seems to like them," grinned Carboy. "It was the same at my last school. A fellow with a sense of humour doesn't get a chance. Look

at the way Bolsover major cut up rusty, because he smashed his own silk hat thinking it was mine. Look at the fuss Skinner made, because he found pepper in the cigarettes he keeps in his study. Even Hurree Singh, who's a good-tempered chap, got his back up when he received a whitewash brush as a present. There's no sense of humour in the Remove. Look here," went on Carboy, suddenly changing the subject as Wharton, with very obvious impatience, would have pushed past him. "What happens to a man who clears out, forgetting that he's been gated by his Form master?"

"That depends! Anything from six from a Form master's cane to a Head's licking."

"Oh, my hat and umbrella! That means a flogging?"

"Yes."

"Blessed if I don't chance it!" grunted Carboy. "Look here, I hear that you're booked for a footer match at Highcliffe this afternoon. Are you going to chance hooking it, if Quelch won't let you off?"

"That's my bizney!"

With that curt answer, Wharton moved round Carboy and walked on down the passage. Christopher Clarence Carboy stared after him.

"Sulky ass!" he commented, and went on his way.

Harry Wharton knocked at Mr. Quelch's door, and an exceedingly sharp voice bade him enter.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes fixed on him as he came into the study. Over those gimlet eyes the Form master's brow was grimly wrinkled.

"Wharton! Well?"

Mr. Quelch guessed what was coming. His look was more than sufficient to tell that he was going to refuse.

Wharton compressed his lips. He detested asking favours of anyone, most of all a favour that was almost certain to be refused. But he had made up his mind to it.

"Excuse me, sir. This afternoon—"

Mr. Quelch raised his hand.

"If you are about to ask for leave out of gates, Wharton, you may save your breath. Carboy has already made the same request, and has been refused. I cannot have two weights and measures."

"The case is rather different, sir. The Remove eleven plays at Highcliffe this afternoon, and I am captain of the eleven. I should like leave to go to Highcliffe for the match."

"I am sorry, Wharton!" Mr. Quelch showed some signs of compunction, but he was quite firm. "I could not approve of your presenting yourself at another school with your face in its present disgraceful condition. I should not care for Highcliffe boys to suppose that Greyfriars boys bruise one another like pugilists. You should feel this yourself."

"Just for the match, sir!" said Harry. "All the fellows think I ought to be there."

"As I have already refused Carboy, Wharton, I cannot possibly accede. I am sorry, but the matter is at an end."

"Very well, sir."

The captain of the Remove would not plead further. He left the study, with his lips tightly shut.

Carboy, loitering at the corner of the passage, gave him a look of inquiry as he passed.

"Anything doing?" he asked.

"Mind your own business."

"Hoity-toity!" grinned Carboy.

Harry Wharton went on his way to the changing-room, where he found most of the Remove footballers.



"I jolly well hope that Quelchy will find out that you've gone out of gates, and drop on you!" bawled Bunter. "It will serve you right, Wharton! I— Oh crikey!" The Owl of the Remove broke off suddenly, as a hand dropped on his shoulder. Then he almost fell down, as he blinked round at Mr. Quelch! (See Chapter 3.)

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Have you put it to Quelchy?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Yes. Nothing doing."

"Rotten!" said Frank Nugent.

"The rottenfulness is terrific," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Dash it all, Quelchy might have stretched a point," growled Johnny Bull. "You were a howling ass to bag an eye like that!"

"Oh, cheese it!" snapped Wharton. "I've heard enough about that. It's all that new cad's fault."

"Rot! He never asked you to fly out in a silly temper—"

"Look here—"

"My esteemed chums," murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "the angry jawfulness will not mend the cracked pitcher that goes longest to the well. Speech is silver, but silence saves a stitch in time, as the English proverb says."

"Good old English proverb!" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, if you can't come, Wharton, who's going to captain the team?" asked Herbert Vernon-Smith.

Smithy was not looking displeased, for he knew the answer to that question. No doubt he was sorry for Wharton, but he was not sorry that he was going to captain the Remove eleven at the Highcliffe match.

Wharton's face set grimly.

"I haven't said I can't come," he answered.

"You've said that Quelchy won't let you off."

"That doesn't amount to the same thing."

The Bounder whistled. All the fellows in the changing-room became grave at once.

"I say, it will be jolly serious to cut out of gates, especially after asking Quelchy and being refused," said Bob.

"I know that."

"Head boy of the Form, too," said Hazeldene. "It's not the right thing to do."

"Yes, but the match—"

"Well, your job as skipper is more important than that."

Wharton's lip curled. If he stood out of the eleven a new man would be wanted to make up the team, and that man would have been Hazel. That little circumstance accounted for Hazel's sudden and unaccustomed regard for the "right thing."

"I'm going!" said Wharton curtly. "Quelchy has no right to interfere with games fixtures. Other Form masters wouldn't. If he finds it out, and there's a row, I can stand it."

"My esteemed chum—" murmured Hurree Singh.

"It's settled!"

"I don't like the idea," said Johnny Bull. "It's too risky."

"I'm not asking you to take the risk."

"Oh, keep your blessed temper!" exclaimed Johnny Bull warmly. "Keep it for Carboy. Your pals don't want it!"

"I'd think it over a bit, Wharton," said Mark Linley, in his quiet way.

"After all, you're head of the Form, as Hazel said, and—"

"I'm going."

"And suppose Quelchy sees you going, and hooks you back by the collar?" inquired Hazel sarcastically.

Wharton made no reply to that. He left the changing-room, leaving the fellows there in a buzz of excited discussion.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter Talks Too Much!

HARRY WHARTON stood at the window of Study No. 1, looking down into the quad. His face was deeply thoughtful, and not very happy. His mind was quite made up. After what he had said in the changing-room, he could not possibly draw back. But a very little reflection showed him how serious the matter was. Hazel's remark had only annoyed him, but he knew very well that more was expected of the head of the Form than of any other fellow in it, and rightly so.

It was not for the head boy in the Remove to set the example of indiscipline and disobedience. Neither was Wharton, as a rule, the fellow to act with such recklessness. But he was feeling sore and savage, and felt that he had been unjustly treated. And he was wanted at Highcliffe. Courtenay's team, as he knew, was at the top of its form, and the Remove needed their best men in the field. Dropping Wharton, and putting in Hazel, might quite possibly mean a defeat for Greyfriars. Even the fellows who regarded him as foolhardy and reckless were glad that he was going to be there, at all events.

After all, it was not likely to come out. He was gated, but that gating allowed him the wide limits of the school precincts for the afternoon. It was quite unlikely that he would have caught Mr. Quelch's eye, even if he had remained within gates. The Remove master, who was not likely to see him if he remained within gates, was therefore not likely to miss him if he went out of gates. It was only necessary to

avoid being seen going, and that was easy enough. Bob Cherry was taking his football things along. Wharton was to slip out quietly over the Cloister wall, and rejoin the party at a safe distance from Greyfriars. He would be back in time for tea and call-over. Any fellow in the Remove, certainly, could have given him away, but no fellow was likely to do so. Fellows in other Forms who might see would not concern themselves about the matter—in fact, were not likely to know that he was gated at all.

After all, where was the risk?

The punishment was certain to be severe in case of discovery. Carboy, if he "bolted," would doubtless get six from Mr. Quelch. The head boy of the Form would be reported to the headmaster for a flogging, and would most likely be deprived of his position as head of the Form. He would be in the Form master's black books, and that worried Wharton more than the punishment. He respected Mr. Quelch, and desired to stand well with him, though he assuredly thought that his Form master was in the wrong in the present instance. It was not his fault that that japing ass Carboy had asked for trouble. Mr. Quelch had sentenced both offenders to gating, doubtless considering that sentence impartial. It did not seem impartial to Wharton, whose opinion was that Carboy was wholly to blame for the trouble.

Anyhow, the die was cast now. He was going.

But from the bottom of his heart he hoped that his escapade would not come to Mr. Quelch's knowledge.

The footballers were starting now, and Wharton was watching them from the window of the study. He was to let them get clear away before he made a move himself. The spot where they were to wait for him was arranged, and they were starting early to allow plenty of time. It was more than probable that Mr. Quelch's eye would be upon them when they went, to make sure that their skipper did not go with them. Quelch did not, perhaps, understand how important a football fixture was to his Form, but he understood quite well what the gated captain of the eleven would be feeling like. And a grim, sarcastic smile came over Wharton's face as he saw the rather angular figure of Mr. Quelch appear in the quad, and saw that he was speaking to some of the footballers. The Remove master remained in sight only for a few moments, and went into the House again.

"I say, old fellow!"

Wharton turned from the window at the sound of Billy Bunter's fat voice. The Owl of the Remove rolled into the doorway of Study No. 1.

"Not gone yet?" he asked.

"Do I look as if I were gone, fat-head?"

"Don't be ratty, old chap," said Bunter. "I say, you're getting jolly ratty lately, ever since that chap Carboy came. Of course, he's a beast. He kicked me—"

"Good!"

"I've told you he was turned out of his last school—"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"I happened to see a letter from his father, by sheer chance—"

"Dry up, for goodness' sake!"

"Well, as you're down on him, I thought you'd be glad to know," said Bunter. "Of course, I'm not giving him away. I've told a few friends—in confidence."

"Are you wound up?"

"Now, look here, Wharton!" said

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Bunter, wagging a fat forefinger impressively at the captain of the Remove. "About the Highcliffe match and—"

"Give us a rest!"

"You're gated! You know you are! I've offered to captain the team in your place! My opinion is, that at such a time as this, petty personal jealousy of a superior player should be put aside."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," said Bunter peevishly. "Be a sportsman! Give a man a chance. You're always ragging me to turn up at games practice, though you know I don't need practice like other fellows. I've made you an offer."

"Fathead!"

"You're gated!" went on Bunter. "You're going to cut, all the same. I don't approve of it. It's bad form!"

"Shut up!"

"Quelch would be as mad as a hatter if he knew. He thinks a lot of you—goodness knows why! I never could account for it; but he does. That will make him all the madder if he finds out that you've hooked it, and you're laughing at him in your sleeve. You know how mad he was the time I hooked it to go to the circus. He will be madder with you. You'll get a Beak's licking."

"Will you ring off, you ass?"

"I want you to do the right thing," said Bunter, with dignity. "I'm a better footballer than you are—between ourselves, you may as well admit it. What's the good of gammoning when there's nobody to hear? Now, my advice to you is to stay within gates. That's your duty. I'll take your place at Highcliffe, so it will be all right. Dash it all, so long as we beat Highcliffe, what does your personal swank matter?"

"You frabjous ass!"

"Look here, 'Yes' or 'No'?" hooted Bunter.

"No, idiot!"

"Then I jolly well hope that Quelch will find out that you've gone out of gates, and drop on you!" bawled Bunter. "It will serve you jolly well right! I jolly well hope he will keep an eye open this afternoon and spot that you're missing! I—Oh crikey!"

Bunter broke off suddenly as a hand dropped on his shoulder as he stood in the doorway of Study No. 1 making those hopeful remarks.

He almost fell down as he blinked round at Mr. Quelch.

"Ow!" he gasped. "Oh! My hat! I—I didn't hear you coming, sir! I—I mean, I—I wasn't saying anything. I—I—"

Mr. Quelch hooked Bunter out of the doorway. His face was like iron. He stepped into the doorway himself, Bunter blinking at him in utter dismay. Certainly Bunter had had no intention whatever of giving the captain of the Remove away to the Form master—though he had done so very effectually. He had not had the remotest idea that Mr. Quelch might be coming up to the Remove passage. What the dickens did the beast want in the studies on a half-holiday? And he had not heard the master's footsteps, the sound of his own dulcet voice filling his ears.

"I—I say, sir!" he gasped. "I say, I—I wasn't saying that Wharton was going to cut, sir—"

"What?"

"I—I—I mean," stuttered Bunter, "I—I mean, I was only joking, sir! The fellows ain't going to wait for Wharton

on Courtfield Common, sir! Nothing of the kind, I assure you, sir!"

"You may go, Bunter!"

"Ow! Yes, sir. But I assure you, sir, that—"

"Go!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

And Bunter jumped and went, feeling that he had done his best for the captain of the Remove. And Mr. Quelch, standing in the doorway of Study No. 1, fixed his eyes on Wharton's troubled face, with a look that resembled that of the fabled basilisk.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Leder on Duty!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, sir!" muttered Harry.

"I came here, Wharton, to speak to you," said Mr. Quelch, in a deep and rumbling voice. "I came to give you a very serious warning, feeling that you might, in spite of my strict orders, be tempted to go out of gates this afternoon. I learn, by accident, that such is your intention."

Wharton was silent.

"You do not deny it, Wharton?"

No reply.

The babble of William George Bunter had fully enlightened the Remove master. To deny was useless, even had Wharton been capable of denying the truth.

"I trust," resumed Mr. Quelch, in his most magisterial manner—"I trust, Wharton, that, on reflection, you would have abandoned this intention."

It was useless to speak. Wharton had not abandoned his intention; but he certainly could not tell his Form master so.

"I shall take measures, however, to see that you are not guilty of such an act of disobedience," said the Remove master sternly. "Instead of being allowed the freedom of the school precincts, Wharton, you will, for this afternoon, be confined to the House."

Wharton breathed hard.

"I shall myself be absent during a part of the afternoon, but I shall request a Sixth Form prefect to see that you do not leave the House."

Mr. Quelch paused for a reply. There was no reply.

"In the event of your leaving the House on any pretext whatsoever, Wharton, you will be reported to Dr. Locke for a flogging, and I shall deprive you of your position as head boy of the Form." Mr. Quelch's voice grew harsh. The junior's silence irritated him. "Bear that in mind! I will now leave you to your reflections, Wharton."

Mr. Quelch rustled away from the study.

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"That puts the lid on!" he muttered.

Mr. Quelch's solemn warning did not fail to produce an effect on the captain of the Remove. But it did not alter his intention. It was, in fact, too late for him to change his mind now. The footballers were gone, and they would wait for him on Courtfield Common. He could not keep them waiting there in ignorance of the fact that their skipper was not coming, after all. He could not retreat from the position he had taken up—at all events, it seemed to him that he could not. His face coloured at the thought of figuring as a fellow who boasted that he would go. Form master or no Form master, and then changed his mind from fear of the consequences.

Wharton set his teeth hard. He

would go if it meant a flogging; if it meant the sack, he would go!

But if it had been necessary to be cautious before, it was doubly necessary now. He would not take more chances than he could help.

Ten minutes later, from the study window, he saw Mr. Quelch going down to the gates. As the Form master had stated that he was going out that afternoon, it was only wise to wait till he was gone, and Wharton was glad to see him disappear. No doubt he had already spoken to a Sixth Form prefect, and Wharton wondered which one it was. If it was good-natured old Wingate, or a careless fellow like Gwynne, he would not have a very strict watch to guard against. His heart sank as he heard footsteps in the Remove passage, and his old enemy, Loder of the Sixth, looked in.

Loder stared at him.

"Oh, you're still here!" he said.

Wharton raised his eyebrows. He was not giving any points away to Gerald Loder.

"I'm gated!" he explained.

Loder grinned.

"I know that. Quelch has just asked me to see that you don't clear out of the House this afternoon."

"Isn't that rather unusual?" yawned Wharton.

"Well, I'm going to keep an eye on you, you blackguardly-looking young bruiser. As I happen to be swotting Latin this afternoon, I shall be in till Quelch comes back."

Harry Wharton laughed involuntarily. If Loder was staying in that afternoon, he could guess how much "swotting" the sportsman of the Sixth was likely to do. A game of banker in his study with Walker or Carne was much more likely. The manners and customs of the sportive Loder were not so unknown as he supposed in the Lower School.

"Like me to come and sit in the study, then?" asked Harry.

He knew that that was a safe offer to make. Loder's occupation that afternoon was quite unlikely to be one that would bear inspection by a junior.

"No fear!" said Loder. "I don't like fags hanging about my study. What time does your precious footer match at Highcliffe begin?"

"Kick-off at three."

"Well, I'll drop into this study at three-thirty," grinned Loder. "If you're not here, I'll take it for granted that you've cut, and you'll be reported absent to Quelch when he comes in."

"Quelch has allowed me the freedom of the House. He's not told me to stick in this study."

"Suit yourself. I'm telling you to be in this study at three-thirty. If you're not, you'll take the consequences."

With that Gerald Loder walked away whistling down the Remove passage.

Loder had a little select party in his study that afternoon, and certainly did not want a junior butting in there. But he was quite willing to leave his friends for a few minutes to see that the gated junior was not gone. Loder of the Sixth was not, as a rule, a very dutiful prefect; but he was going to do his duty on this occasion very meticulously.

He had many old scores against the captain of the Remove, and this was a case where duty became a pleasure.

Harry Wharton waited till his footsteps had died away.

Then he left the study also.

His face was set.

To get away to the football match at Highcliffe undiscovered was now impossible. The match would be going on at three-thirty, when Loder would come up

to the Remove to look for him. Loder would find him absent. He might or might not look about the House for him. In any case, his absence would be reported. Wharton if he went to Highcliffe, went with the certain knowledge of discovery, and consequent punishment.

And he went. All the obstinacy of his nature was roused now, and he did not even think of changing his mind. His only care now was to get away unseen so that he could not be stopped and brought back. Later discovery was a certainty, and could not be prevented.

Loder and Carne and Walker were gathered in Gerald Loder's study busy with their game of banker and their cigarettes, ten minutes later, when Wharton slipped quietly from a side door and hurried away into the Cloisters. Loder had no intention of leaving his little game until half-past three. If Wharton was in the Remove

accessible to a climber. Getting out of the school precincts at that spot was simple. But when Wharton arrived there he found that he was not the only Remove man who had thought of it that afternoon. Christopher Clarence Carboy was nosing along the ivied wall, evidently looking for the spot of which he had heard in the Remove, but with which, being a new fellow, he was as yet unacquainted.

Carboy looked round quickly as he heard Wharton's footsteps under the old deserted stone arches, and looked relieved when he saw that the newcomer was only a junior.

"You!" repeated Wharton, knitting his brows.

Carboy grinned.

"Little me," he assented. "I was afraid for a minute that it was Quelch on the trail."

"Quelch's gone out," answered Harry curtly.

"More power to his giddy elbow," said Carboy. "It's all serene, then. I suppose you, as an old hand, know the jolly old place where a fellow can scoot out of bounds?"

"Yes."

"Of course, that's your game, too," grinned Carboy. "Well, go ahead, I'm after you! I'm going down to Court-field; and I suppose you're booked for Highcliffe and footer. I hope you'll have a good game, and get back without being spotted."

"Not likely," said Wharton bitterly.

"Why not, if Quelch's gone out?"

"Because he's asked Loder of the Sixth to see that I don't get out of the House."

Carboy whistled.

"Then you're an ass to go! You're certain to be nailed!"

"I know that."

"Is a footer match worth it?"

"I've said I shall go, and I'm going!" Wharton's lip curled. "If it's any satisfaction to you, Carboy, you've landed me for a Head's flogging, and the chuck from being head of the Form. That's what I shall get when Loder reports me absent."

"And you're going all the same?" asked Carboy, with a curious glance at Wharton's set face.

"I'm going."

"I don't see that it's my fault," said Carboy, after a pause. "You're gated for your black eye. You gave me one, too. And it was you started the fight in the study last week. I never wanted to scrap with you. I never expected you to get your rag out as you did over a jape."

Wharton made no answer to that. He moved along the old wall. Carboy followed him.

"Look here, Wharton," he said, with a touch of earnestness in contrast with his usual airy flippant manner. "I never meant any harm japing you, and I'm sorry it's led to all this trouble. I wish you'd take a tip from me and stay in this afternoon. You've got your back up now; but you'll be sorry when you find yourself in Quelch's black books for the rest of the term."

"Possibly. I'm going, all the same."

"Perhaps Loder will forget all about it," said Carboy hopefully. "I haven't seen much of him; but the fellows say he's a slacker, and isn't keen on his work as a prefect."

"That's true enough; only he happens to have a down on me," answered Wharton. "He's ordered me to be in my study at half-past three. That's because we kick off at Highcliffe at three. He will go to my study, and I shan't be there."

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passage at that hour, it would be clear that he had not bolted, and could not have gone to the Highcliffe match. If he was not there the reverse would be the case. Only a few minutes of Loder's valuable time would be required to ascertain one way or the other. So until three-thirty Gerald Loder dismissed the gated junior from his mind, and devoted his attention to cigarettes and banker.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Breaking Bounds!

"YOU!" muttered Harry Wharton.

He had scudded quietly through the old Cloisters to a certain spot in the ancient wall, screened by trees and creepers, where old crumbled bricks made climbing easy to an active fellow. It was a spot well known to most of the school, and had many advantages for a fellow breaking bounds. It was secluded, screened, and

"Then it's an absolute cert that you'll be lagged?"

"Quite."

"You must be a duffer to cut, then."

"It will be something for you to gloat over, anyhow," said Wharton sardonically. "You've been against me ever since you came to Greyfriars, for no reason that I know of. Now you'll have the satisfaction of seeing me flogged and disgraced. I wish you joy of it."

Carboy flushed.

"I've not been against you," he said.

"As a matter of fact, I rather like you personally."

Wharton stared at him.

"You've chosen a jolly queer way of showing it, then," he replied dryly.

"Perhaps so. You carry your head so high that a fellow simply can't resist pulling your leg a little," grinned Carboy. "You don't seem to be able to take a joke, either."

"Not your sort of joke, certainly."

Wharton began to climb the wall. Christopher Clarence Carboy stood and watched him with a very uneasy expression on his face.

"I wish you wouldn't go," he said.

"Rubbish!"

Wharton cleared the old wall, and dropped on the other side. Carboy could hear the sound of running feet that died away in a few moments. The captain of the Remove was gone.

Carboy knew now the spot he had been seeking. He had only to follow the way Wharton had gone. But he did not climb the wall. He stood with his hands in his pockets, staring up at it undecided.

"The ass!" he muttered aloud. "The silly ass! He will get it fairly in the neck for this. It's not my fault."

Perhaps it was not Carboy's fault; but his conscience was not quite at ease. For long minutes he stood staring at the wall, and then he turned and walked away through the Cloisters. Apparently he had given up his idea of breaking bounds that afternoon.

"I say, old fellow!" Billy Bunter met the new junior as he sauntered across the quad towards the House. "You haven't hooked it, then?"

"No, ass!"

"Wharton was just going to when Quelch spotted him," grinned Bunter. "Old Quelch was frightfully wild. I say, I've looked in the study and Wharton ain't there. My belief is that he's hooked it. He will get it right in the neck. I heard Quelch telling Loder to keep an eye on him. You know Loder. He's a beast. He will fairly gloat if he gets Wharton landed with the Beak. Ha, ha, ha!"

"You cackling ass!" grunted Carboy.

"Oh, really, Carboy, you know you'll be jolly glad if he gets the chopper!" giggled Bunter. "It's just what you want—"

"You burbling ass!" exclaimed Carboy angrily. "Why should I want anything of the sort?"

Bunter winked a fat wink.

"Gammon!" he said. "You can't stuff me, you know. You'll be jolly glad when Wharton's up before the Beak, and I say—Yoooop!"

Billy Bunter made that final remark as Carboy grasped him by his fat shoulders and sat him down in the quad—hard.

"Ow!" roared Bunter. "Beast!"

Christopher Clarence Carboy walked on to the House, his brow more thoughtful and worried than ever. The captain of the Remove was indubitably hooked

for punishment and disgrace, and Carboy could not help feeling that it was—in part, at least—his fault. And it worried him.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Highcliffe Match!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

"My esteemed Wharton—"

"You've done it, then."

"I think you're an ass," said the Bounder.

"A silly-ass!" remarked Hazeldene.

"Well, I'm here," said Harry Wharton quietly, "and now, the sooner we get on to Highcliffe the better."

"Yes, rather!" agreed Nugent.

The brake was waiting on the road over Courtfield Common. The Remove footballers had been waiting some time for Wharton, debating meanwhile whether he would turn up or not. That question was settled by the appearance of the captain of the Remove.

Most of the fellows were glad to see him. The Bounder was a little disappointed; Hazel was irritated. But the general feeling was one of relief that the captain of the Remove would be present at a match which all the footballers knew would be hotly contested. They had not wanted him to take the risk, but as he had taken it they were undoubtedly glad that he was there.

The brake rolled on to Highcliffe.

They arrived at Highcliffe School in good time, and were cheerily greeted

I · SEE · ALL

by Frank Courtenay, the Highcliffe junior captain. Perhaps Courtenay's glance lingered for a second on Wharton's discoloured eye, but if so, it was only for a second. His pal, the Caterpillar, however, expressed sympathy.

"Punch-ball—what?" he said amiably.

Wharton coloured.

"Oh! No."

"I bagged one once with a punch-ball," said the Caterpillar reminiscently. "You know how the beastly things jump back at you sometimes. I'd had a little trouble with Ponsonby, of our Form, here, and there was rather a shindy. Next mornin' I had to explain to Mobby—our Form master, you know—about the punch-ball. Coincidence, wasn't it?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

When the footballers came out into the field there were a good many Highcliffe men round the ropes, and Wharton was conscious of the fact that many amused glances turned on his rather prominent eye. It was quite an unusual adornment for a Greyfriars man, and the attention it drew made him feel extremely uncomfortable. Ponsonby, of the Highcliffe Fourth, came down to the field with some of his nutty friends, and they gave the captain of the Remove their very particular attention.

"Who's that bargeo with the black eye?" Wharton heard Ponsonby call out, in very distinct tones.

And there was a chuckle from the Highcliffe nuts as Wharton's face was seen to assume the hue of a beetroot.

Gadsby began to sing "Oh, what a surprise! Two lovely black eyes!" And there was a laugh from the Highcliffe crowd. Six or seven Remove fellows, who had gone over with the team,

grinned at one another rather uncomfortably.

"Nice for us!" grunted Hazeldene. "A Greyfriars man showing up here looking like a blinking bruiser."

"Quelch would be pleased!" grinned Russell. "Wharton was rather an ass to come. Fellows don't parade an eye like that in public."

As a matter of fact, Harry Wharton was, by that time, doubting very much whether he ought to have come. However, he was there now, and it was not very useful to think of that.

And when the whistle went he forgot all about his black eye and the smiles of the Highcliffians, and remembered only the game.

It was a hard game from the start, and ere many minutes had passed all the Remove footballers were glad that they had their captain in their ranks. The Bounder, certainly, had no doubt that he could have skippered the team to a victory as it stood, but had Hazel been in Wharton's place he would have doubted. Even Hazel, who had an excellent opinion of himself, doubted a little, as he stood looking on; whether he would have made much of a show against Highcliffe that day. Courtenay was in tremendous form, and the Caterpillar was at his very best—and his best was remarkably good. The rest of the Highcliffe team were quite up to the mark. There had been a time when Greyfriars was accustomed to beat Highcliffe easily, but that time was past. Under Courtenay's lead the Highcliffe junior team gave them all the tussle they wanted. The Remove footballers had to go "all out" to hold their own, and a score was long in coming to either side, and it had to be admitted that Highcliffe came nearer to it than the visitors several times.

Twice the leather whizzed in from the Caterpillar's foot, and Squiff, in goal, barely saved. Thrice the visitors' goal was closely besieged, and the Australian junior had to jump like the kangaroo of his native land to keep his citadel clear. Twenty minutes of hard tussling had passed before Greyfriars got fairly away, and the home goalie was given some serious work to do. And then the Bounder, with a good chance before him, miskicked and lost the chance, and, in his subsequent angry irritation at his failure, went quite off his form for a time. The game swayed to midfield, and neither side succeeded in getting away till a chance came to Harry Wharton, and he was on it like an arrow from a bow; and he did not miskick, as Smithy had done.

From somewhere in the distance the half-hour was chiming as the ball whizzed like a bullet into the Highcliffe net.

"Goal!" roared the Greyfriars men.

"Goal! Hurrah! Goal!"

"Well kicked, sir! Goal!" roared Hazeldene, quite forgetting, for the moment, his own annoyance at being left out of the team. "Bravo!"

Harry Wharton's face was flushed and pleased. It was a match that was evidently going to be fought every inch of the way, and the score was fairly certain to be small. That goal in the first half might mean the fate of the game. Half-past three was chiming out as he kicked it, and the thought came into his mind, even as the crowd roared "Goal!" that Loder of the Sixth would be going up to Study No. 1—to find him absent. He did not care.

The sides lined up again, and the first half went on ding-dong to the interval. But there were no more goals, and in the interval the fellows breathed hard



A chance came to Harry Wharton at last, and he fastened on to the leather in double-quick time. The next minute the ball was whizzing into the Highcliffe net. "Goal!" roared the Greyfriars men. "Hurray! Well kicked, sir!"
(See Chapter 6.)

and deep. The second half started with rather less vim, but the play grew harder with the passing minutes, and the Highcliffe attack was almost incessant. Few of the Greyfriars men expected that they would add anything to Wharton's goal, but they were grimly determined that Highcliffe should not break their duck at all. And in that they succeeded.

Right up to the finish Highcliffe fought hard for a goal, and every time they were stopped, sometimes by a hair's-breadth. Squiff, in. goal, had never been better, and he was given the time of his life. But he was equal to the strain, and the Highcliffe attacks, good as they were, always failed to materialise, and when the final whistle went the score still stood at one to nil.

Harry Wharton's goal was the only goal taken in the game, and to the Remove footballers, at least, that stood as a full justification for his presence there, though it was quite certain that the Remove master would take a very different view. But for the moment nobody, not even Wharton, thought about the Remove master, but rejoiced in the victory in one of the hardest games they had ever played.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Carboy's Wonderful Wheeze!

ROBERT DONALD OGILVY, of the Remove, gave a grunt. That grunt indicated displeasure.

When a fellow wanted to get off at the earliest possible moment to see the finish of a football match, and was kept in by the painful necessity of working out an exercise in Latin conjugations,

naturally that fellow did not want another fellow to come butting into his study.

So when Christopher Clarence Carboy looked into No. 3 in the Remove, the Scottish junior grunted—expressively, without taking the trouble to look up and see who it was.

Carboy smiled.

"Busy?" he asked.

Grunt!

"I want you, old bean," said Carboy.

"Get out!"

"What?"

"Out!"

"But I want you," said Carboy.

Ogilvy looked up at last. He laid his hand on the inkpot and bestowed a ferocious glare on Christopher Clarence Carboy.

"Do you want this inkpot right on your boko?" he asked.

"Not at all. I want you."

"Well, it's the inkpot that you'll get if you don't clear!"

"But I tell you—"

"Buzz off!" shrieked Ogilvy. "I've got to get this rotten exercise done before I can bunk. I want to get over to Highcliffe and see how the game's going. I can't go till I've finished. Do you think I want to listen to your chin-wag now, you fathead?"

"Are your manners always as nice as this to visitors?" asked Carboy.

Ogilvy jumped up, inkpot in hand.

"Draw it mild, old bean," said Carboy soothingly. "I really want you, and it's important. You're almost the only fellow in the House—"

"And I shouldn't be here if Quelch hadn't set me this rotten impot!" snorted Ogilvy. But he did not hurl the inkpot. "I say, Carboy, you're rather

a dab at this muck, I believe. You can squat down and help me out if you like."

"Pleased, if I had time. But—"

"Get out, then! If you've come to jaw, get out, and be blowed to you!" hooted Ogilvy. "I tell you I want to get over to Highcliffe and see as much of the game as I can!"

"I'll help you afterwards with that giddy impot," said Carboy soothingly. "But now I want you. It's a quarter-past three—"

"I know that, ass! The game's been going on a quarter of an hour at Highcliffe already, fathead. I haven't a minute to waste, idiot!"

"Wharton's out," said Carboy.

"I know that. Shut up and go!"

"Quelch's gone out and left Loder of the Sixth to keep an eye on him."

"Blow Quelch, and blow Loder, and blow you!"

"Loder's butting into Study No. 1 at half-past three to see whether Wharton's there."

"I don't care if he butts into every study in the Remove, so long as you don't butt into this study."

"Wharton will be nailed—"

"Well, I can't help that, can I?" demanded Ogilvy. "Do you want me to lay for Loder on the Remove staircase, and bi!f him with a fives-bat?"

"I want you to help me dish him," said Carboy. "I don't want Wharton nailed and ragged by the beaks."

"You're no friend of Wharton's," said Ogilvy, staring at him. "He gave you that eye you've got—and it's a beauty, too. You gave him the eye that Quelch gated him for."

"I know all that. But he will get into a fearful row if they find him

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missing, and I want to stop it," explained Carboy.

"Well, you can't! You can only stop me getting this putrid impot done in time to get across to Highcliffe before they finish!" growled Ogilvy. But he had put down the inkpot, and was giving Carboy his attention now.

"You'd like to keep Wharton from getting nailed, I suppose?" asked Carboy.

"Of course, ass."

"I thought so. Will you help me?"

"I will if there's anything doing, of course."

"It's a jape on Loder."

"Oh, bother your japes! It was your idiotic japing that caused all the trouble, and got Wharton gated!" growled Ogilvy. "A fellow can get fed-up on your japes."

"Do listen to a chap," urged Carboy. "I've been thinking it over till it's nearly given me a pain in my brain-box, and I've got a wheeze. I must have a chap to help me. I found you here, and so I've asked you. You'd be willing to cut out going to Highcliffe, I suppose, to save Wharton from a flogging for going over to-day in the match?"

"I suppose so. But how the dickens can I do anything of the sort? I can't stop Loder butting into his study and seeing that he's gone."

"I've got a wheeze—"

"Oh, rot! Your wheezes!" grunted Ogilvy.

"If you'll let a fellow explain—"

"For goodness' sake, get on with it! You're all jaw!"

Christopher Clarence Carboy proceeded to explain. Ogilvy stared at him in amazement as he listened.

"My only hat!" he said, when Carboy had finished. "We should never get away with it."

"We can jolly well try."

"It means six for me if Loder spots the game."

"I know. That doesn't matter," said Carboy cheerfully.

"Doesn't it?" hooted Ogilvy. "If you'd had six from a prefect, you'd jolly well think it mattered! Especially Loder. He lays it on like a carpet-beater. Still, of course, I'd risk it to see Wharton clear. The Highcliffe match would be lost without him, and it was plucky of him to go."

"Well, I'm risking six, too," said Carboy, "and Wharton's a friend of yours, and he's not exactly a friend of mine, is he?"

"No." Ogilvy laughed. "Blessed if I know what you're taking a hand in it for. Can't help japing, I suppose."

"Well, it will be one on Loder if it comes off," said Carboy, with a chuckle. "Come along to the study. I'll help you with that jolly old exercise afterwards. Never mind it now."

"Oh, all right."

The two juniors left the study together, and went along to No. 1. It was turned a quarter-past three now, and there was not much time to lose. Loder might be late—he was often late. On the other hand, he might be punctual, and he might even be early.

In Study No. 1, with the door shut, the proceedings of the two juniors were mysterious and remarkable. Carboy dipped his finger in soot from the chimney, and proceeded to trace with a sooty finger round Ogilvy's eye. In less than a minute Ogilvy looked as if he had a black eye, which needed quite a close inspection to show that it was not genuine. It looked like a twin to Wharton's black eye.

Ogilvy jerked his collar and tie loose.

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rumpled his jacket, and ruffled his hair; while Carboy overturned several articles of furniture, scattered books and papers round the floor, and pulled out the fender and kicked cinders and ashes about. In a very few minutes Study No. 1 looked as if a fierce struggle had taken place there.

"Now something on your chivvy," said Carboy. "The black eye's all right, and you're about Wharton's build; but your features won't pass without something on them."

"A handful of ashes—"

"And some ink—"

"Oh, never mind the ink!" said Ogilvy uneasily. "I don't want too much of a good thing."

"Can't be too careful," said Carboy. "I'll dab on some ink, too. We want to look as if we've had a fearful shindy!"

"Oh, all right!"

Ink and ashes dabbed on Ogilvy's face rendered him almost unrecognisable. Only the black eye stood out prominent.

Carboy surveyed him with a grin.

"That's all right! Now we're ready for dear old Loder."

He set the study door ajar. The two juniors listened for the sound of footsteps in the Remove passage.

They were not long in coming. The heavy tread of Loder of the Sixth came along from the Remove staircase.

"Now!" breathed Carboy.

"Ready!" grinned Ogilvy.

And the two juniors leaped at one another, and a terrific combat started in Study No. 1.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Loder Looks In!

LODER of the Sixth came along the Remove passage, with his ashplant under his arm and a frown on his face. Cigarettes and banker in his study had not put the sportsman of the Sixth into a good humour. Smoking in a stuffy atmosphere had made him peevish; and Walker had gathered up a good deal of his loose cash at banker, which added to his peevishness.

Loder was quite pleased that he had his prefectorial duty to perform. He hoped to find that Wharton had bolted; it would have been a pleasure to him to report the captain of the Remove for a flogging. But if Wharton was in his study Loder hoped that he would be cheeky, or give some sort of a pretext for the use of the ashplant.

Probably Loder would have liked to lay that ashplant round Walker of the Sixth. Certainly he was anxious to lay it about somebody.

As he came up the passage from the stairs a terrific uproar in Study No. 1 dawned on him.

There was a roar of trampling, scuffling, rocking furniture, and fierce exclamations.

"Carboy, you rotter—"

"Wharton, you beast—"

"Take that—"

"Take that, you rotter! Think you're going to bully me because you're captain of the Form! I'll show you!"

"Ow! Wow! Oh!"

"Yaroooooh! Wharton, you rotter—"

Crash! Bump! Scuffle!

Loder strode on to the study. Evidently a fight was in progress there; the two juniors who had given one another black eyes were at it again!

Apparently Wharton had not bolted. He was there—fighting again with Carboy.

Loder hurled the study door open.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated, as he stared in.

The study looked a wreck. Books and papers were scattered about, chairs were overturned, the fender kicked out of place, cinders and ashes and upset ink everywhere.

In the midst of the wreckage two juniors were rolling on the floor in frantic fight.

Loder gazed at them.

"Stop that!" he roared.

But the combatants seemed too excited to heed him. They rolled and struggled and scrapped and gasped and shouted.

"Ow! Leggo, Wharton, you beast! I'll smash you!"

"Take that, you rotter!"

Loder strode into the study. He grasped the two fighting juniors by their collars, and dragged them apart by main force, and pitched them to either side of the room.

"Now, what does this mean?" he demanded.

He slid the ashplant into his hand. He had hoped certainly that Wharton had bolted. Still, it was a satisfaction to have an excuse for the use of the ashplant. And the state of Study No. 1 was excuse enough.

The two juniors blinked at him.

Both had black eyes, both were smothered with dust and ashes, both were unrecognisable, save by their black eyes, which distinguished Wharton and Carboy from the rest of the Remove.

Ogilvy's nearest and dearest relation would not have dreamed of recognising him in his present state. Certainly Loder did not recognise him.

He had not the slightest doubt that the dusty, tousled fellow with the prominent black eye was either Wharton or Carboy. It was difficult to tell one from the other; only he knew that this one was Wharton, because the other one addressed him as Wharton.

"You're a precious-looking pair!" said Loder grimly. "You can't keep from fighting, you two, it seems."

"It was Wharton's fault!" gasped Carboy. "He pitched into me!"

"Grooooooh!" gasped Ogilvy. "Oh! Ow!"

Ogilvy deemed it safer to say as little as possible, lest his voice should give him away. Breathless ejaculations were safer.

"I dare say it was Wharton's fault," agreed Loder. "From what I hear he started it the time you gave him a black eye."

"Yes, he did!" hooted Carboy. "And he started it now! You know you did, Wharton!"

"Ow, ow, ow!" said Ogilvy.

"Just because he was wild at being kept in this afternoon!" exclaimed Carboy. "I never asked Quelch to gate him, did I? 'Tain't my fault he can't go over to Highcliffe! Oh, my nose! Ow!"

"I quite understand," said Loder grimly. "It seems that you've been taking it out of this new fellow, Wharton, because your Form master gated you. I'm not surprised to hear it."

"Groooooh!"

Loder swished his cane.

"I've no doubt that you were the aggressor, Wharton! You'll bend over that chair and take six."

"Ow, ow!"

"Now, then, sharp!"

Ogilvy picked himself up, and moved very slowly to the chair. He had known that he was risking six by helping Carboy in this remarkable stunt; but, really, in dealing with a fellow like Loder, he might have counted on it as a

certainty. It was a certainty now, at all events. Very gingerly the Scottish junior bent over the chair.

Whack, whack, whack!

Wild yells rang through Study No. 1.

Loder was putting his beef into it. If he could not report Wharton for breaking bounds, at least he could give him a good licking, with such an excellent pretext.

Whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

Whack!

The last of the six was a terrific swipe, and it fairly made the hapless Ogilvy curl up.

"Whoooooop!" he roared.

Loder grinned.

"You'll think twice before you pitch into a new kid again, Wharton," he said. "You must learn to keep your temper a bit better, my boy. See?"

Ogilvy did not answer. He leaned over the table, wriggling, with his face turned from Loder.

"Now, Carboy——"

"I say, it was Wharton——"

"No doubt," grinned Loder. "But you can't kick up a shindy like this in a Remove study. Three for you!"

Whack, whack, whack!

Having administered justice, Loder of the Sixth tucked his ashplant under his arm and walked out of the study. He was feeling better now.

His footsteps died away down the Remove staircase.

In Study No. 1 two wriggling juniors looked at one another.

"Ow!" said Carboy.

"Wow!" said Ogilvy.

"It worked!" mumbled Carboy.

"Ow! But it worked all right!"

"Yow-ow-wow! It did!" groaned Ogilvy. "I've got six that that beastly bully thought he was giving Wharton! Ow, ow, ow! I shan't be able to sit down till to-morrow! Wow!"

Carboy twisted painfully.

"Still, it was a good jape——"

"It doesn't feel good!" moaned Ogilvy. "Ow!"

"I say, you fellows——" Billy Bunter blinked into the study. "I say, I saw Loder come here—— He, he, he! I thought you were gone over to Highcliffe, Wharton! Had a jolly good licking? He, he, he!"

Really it was kind of Bunter to butt in at that moment. Carboy and Ogilvy jumped at him as if moved by the same spring. Billy Bunter's fat cackle died away in a howl as they seized him.

Bump!

Bunter landed in the Remove passage and roared. After which his fat cachinations were heard no more, and Study No. 1 was given up to the sounds of mumbling and groaning.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Waiting for the Chopper!

"THREE cheers for us!" said Bob Cherry jubilantly, as the Greyfriars brake rolled away from Highcliffe.

"We've pulled it off!" said Johnny Bull, with deep satisfaction.

"The pull-off-fulness was terrific," remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and absurd Highcliffians have been preposterously licked."

"Hurrah!"

"And Wharton's goal did it!" said Squiff. "It was jolly lucky you came, Wharton!"

"But after the giddy feast comes the jolly old reckoning," remarked the Bounder.

Harry Wharton was silent.

The brake was crammed with jubilant fellows, rejoicing in their victory. Wharton shared in the general satisfaction. But, as Vernon-Smith remarked, after the feast came the reckoning. And the reckoning was to be severe.

That Loder would report his absence to Mr. Quelch did not admit of doubt. A Head's flogging would follow as a matter of course. From that day Wharton would cease to be head of the Remove. He would be in the Remove master's black books. The Form master who had liked and trusted him would regard him with suspicion and distrust.

It was this last consideration that troubled Wharton most. The flogging would be painful enough, but he could stand that. But he had forfeited the esteem of a master whom he respected. Mr. Quelch's view would be that he had acted with deliberate disrespect and defiance of authority. That was not how Wharton looked at it; but it was assuredly how Mr. Quelch would look at it. And the satisfaction of having won a hard-fought match died away as the brake rolled homeward, and gave place to a deep depression of spirits.

Silence fell on the other fellows as the brake rolled along the road across Courtfield Common.

"No good grouching now," remarked Hazeldene, apparently in the role of Job's comforter. "You asked for it, you know."

"I'm not grouching, that I know of," answered Harry quietly.

"You're not looking very chippy."

"I'm not feeling very chippy!"

"I wonder who'll be the head of the Remove for the rest of the term?" remarked the Bounder.

Wharton winced.

"Oh, cheese it, Smithy!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"What rot!" said Vernon-Smith. "I suppose Wharton knows what to expect. He had his eyes open."

"The speechfulness is silver, but the silence is the stitch in time that saves ninepence, my esteemed Smithy."

"That fool Carboy——" muttered Wharton.

His feelings were bitter towards the japer of the Remove. He was prepared to face what he had risked. Still, he could not help reflecting that but for Carboy the trouble never would have arisen.

"Better get out here, Harry," said Nugent, when the brake passed the common. "You're not coming in with the team?"

"Why not? It's known by this time that I bolted."

"There's a chance; you know what a slacker Loder is. He may have forgotten about looking after you——"

"Not likely!"

"Anyhow, there's just a chance; and you can't go in with the team!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "It would look like cheek to Quelch—and you've got his rag out quite enough already. Walking into Greyfriars as if nothing had happened would look like sheer cheek."

"I suppose I may as well go in quietly."

Wharton dropped from the brake on the edge of the common, and it rolled on to Greyfriars without him. As a matter of fact, he was not sorry to get away from the other fellows, with his mind filled with gloomy thoughts.

He entered the school precincts by way of the Cloisters and made his way quietly and unobserved into the House. He went up to his study, a good many Remove fellows eyeing him curiously in the passage. Perhaps some faint hope

lingered in Wharton's breast. Loder was a notorious slacker, and if he found a duty irksome he was certain to neglect it. But the hope was very faint. It was rather a pleasure than a duty to Loder to score over his old enemy in the Remove, and if Gerald Loder neglected duty he certainly never neglected pleasure. Still, there was a remote chance; and Wharton, at least, was not going to give himself away.

The footballers had arrived before Wharton, and he found Frank Nugent in the study. Carboy was there also, and Wharton's eyes gleamed at the sight of him.

"Quelch's not in yet," said Frank. "I've asked, and he's not come in. Loder's in the quad—I saw him."

"He will report to Quelch as soon as he comes in," said Wharton, with a shrug of the shoulders.

Carboy looked up.

"He won't!" he said.

Wharton did not answer him or look at him, but Frank Nugent turned round quickly.

"What do you mean, Carboy? You've stayed in this afternoon, I suppose?"

"Yes—been gated, you know," said Carboy, with a grin.

"What makes you think that Loder won't report Wharton's absence?"

"He doesn't know that Wharton was absent."

Wharton made a movement, but he did not speak.

"Didn't he come up to the study, then?" asked Frank eagerly. "Just like that slacker to give it a miss!"

"He came up to the study. I was here."

"Then he found that Wharton wasn't here?"

"Not at all."

"Look here, you ass——"

"Honest Injun!" said Carboy. "Ogilvy was in the study with me. He's gone out now to walk off the pain——"

"The pain? What——"

"Loder gave him six."

"What the thump did Loder give Ogilvy six for?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Oh, he likes giving fellows six!"

"I know he does. But even Loder wouldn't without some reason. Look here, if Loder came to the study he saw that Wharton wasn't here."

"Not the least little bit! He took Ogilvy for Wharton, you see," explained Carboy.

"What?" yelled Nugent. "They're not a bit alike."

"Queer, isn't it?" yawned Carboy. "But that's what happened, and Loder thinks that Wharton was here all the time."

Wharton fixed his eyes on Christopher Clarence Carboy. They were gleaming with anger.

"I suppose this is one of your jests!" he said between his teeth.

"Sober as a judge, old bean."

"You know it's absolutely impossible for Loder to take Ogilvy for me. We're much the same size and build, but our faces are quite different. And I've got a black eye, and Ogilvy hasn't."

"I gave him a black eye to match yours."

"What?" yelled Nugent.

"And Ogilvy let you?" said Wharton contemptuously.

"Yes. Stood and took it like a cooing dove."

"And you expect us to believe that silly yarn. You think you can pull a fellow's leg to that extent, you japing idiot?"

"Quite!"

"Well, I don't know why you're

spinning such an idiotic yarn, but I'm fed up with it—and you!" said Harry savagely. "This may be a laughing matter to you—I've no doubt it is—but it's serious to me, and I've had enough of your rotten jokes on the subject. Shut up!"

"But I'm not joking——"

"Shut up!" roared Wharton, his eyes ablaze now. "I tell you I'm fed up with it!"

"And I tell you——" began Carboy, with cheerful coolness.

Wharton made a stride towards him.

"Hold on, Harry!" Frank Nugent interposed. "There's been enough scrapping in this study—too much, in fact!"

"I won't stand that burbling dummy making his rotten jokes about this!" exclaimed Wharton. "Do you think it's funny, too, for a fellow to be up for a flogging?"

"I think Carboy's a babbling ass," said Frank. "For goodness' sake, get out of the study, Carboy, and give us a rest. You ought to have more sense than to rag when a fellow's up for a Head's flogging."

"But I'm not ragging——"

"Get out, you silly ass!" exclaimed Frank, almost as angry as Wharton. "My hat! I'll jolly well punch you myself, if you don't leave us alone for a bit!"

"Anything to oblige!" drawled Carboy, and he strolled out of the study, with his hands in his pockets, whistling.

Harry Wharton breathed hard.

"I suppose I'm an ass to lose my temper with that fool," he said. "But—but he's really enough to exasperate a saint. Can't he leave off leg-pulling, even when a fellow's waiting for the chopper to come down?"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh crumbs—Bunter now! Get out, Bunter!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "Buzz off! Sharp!"

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

Bunter blinked at the exasperated face of the Remove captain.

"What's the row?" he asked.

"You've had a wash since I saw you last—He, he, he!"

"What do you mean, fathead?"

"But your eye's as beautiful as ever!" chuckled Bunter. "I'm not surprised that you didn't care to take that giddy eye over to Highcliffe. The fellows there would have stared. He, he, he!"

Wharton made no reply. If the Owl of the Remove did not know that he had been to Highcliffe, that was all to the good. Bunter, certainly, would not have "eneaked," but he was given to talking too much—much, too much.

"I say, you fellows, Quelch's come in!" grinned Bunter. "I saw him speaking to Loder in the quad." He gave a fat chuckle. "Lucky for you you didn't bunk, after all, what? He, he, he!"

"Oh, buzz off!" said Nugent.

Bunter buzzed off at last, and the chums of the Remove looked at one another.

"The fat chump doesn't seem to know that you cut, Harry," remarked Nugent. "He generally knows everything. It's possible that Loder never took the trouble to keep an eye on this study——"

"Not likely."

"No—but he may not have anything to report to Quelch. Don't give yourself away, anyhow. You never know your luck."

Wharton nodded—and waited. He expected to be called to the Remove master's study, now that Mr. Quelch had returned, and he waited for the "chopper" to come down. But there

came no message from the Remove master—and Wharton waited in vain. The chopper, apparently, was not coming down.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Surprise for Harry Wharton!

MR. QUELCH paused to speak to Loder of the Sixth, in the quad, as he came in. The Remove master had been away on business matters that afternoon, and had had plenty to occupy his mind. But he had not forgotten Wharton, or the condign punishment he intended for that junior, should he have "bolted" against orders—as Mr. Quelch strongly suspected that he had. He was quite prepared to hear from Loder that Wharton had vanished during the afternoon, to play football at Highcliffe. In which case, the vials of wrath were to be poured out unsparingly on the devoted head of the captain of the Remove.

But Loder's report both surprised and pleased Mr. Quelch. Wharton, it appeared, had not "bolted."

Loder amplified the shindy he had found going on in the study. He liked to make things as unpleasant as he could for the junior he disliked. But his description of that shindy only made it absolutely clear that the captain of the Remove had been in Study No. 1 at half-past three—in which case, of course, he could not possibly have been at Highcliffe playing football.

No doubt, Mr. Quelch disapproved of the shindy. But he undoubtedly was relieved to hear that Wharton had not gone out of bounds.

"You visited the study at half-past three, Loder?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. They were fighting——"

"Wharton was there, you are sure?"

"He was fighting with the new fellow, in the most ruffianly manner——"

"I am sorry to hear that," said Mr. Quelch, "but very glad indeed to hear that the boy had not gone out of bounds, as I feared that he would."

"Wharton seems to have been to blame for the fighting. He was struggling with Carboy on the floor when I got to the study. I considered it my duty to cane them."

"Quite so!" said Mr. Quelch. "Then the matter is at an end. I am much obliged to you, Loder!"

"Not at all, sir!" answered Loder, wishing that he had been able to report that the captain of the Remove had been absent.

Mr. Quelch went into the House, quite pleased and relieved. He had been prepared to deal with rebellion in the most drastic manner, but he was very glad that he had no rebellion to deal with. Wharton was a most useful and efficient head boy in the Form, and the Form master had no desire to degrade him from that position, if he could help it. It was a great relief to him to find that he had no occasion to deal sternly with a junior whom, upon the whole, he liked and respected.

When Mr. Quelch took the roll that evening in Hall, his glance rested on Wharton, in the ranks of the Remove, as he called his name.

Wharton met his glance and coloured. But he was surprised to see that Henry Samuel Quelch's expression was quite benignant.

He was deeply puzzled. He had waited in his study for the chopper to come down, until time for calling-over. It had begun to look as if the matter would blow over, but he couldn't understand it, and he more than half expected to see Mr. Quelch turn a basilisk eye

on him in Hall. The Remove master's kind glance perplexed him.

But after roll-call, Wingate called to him to stay behind when the school were dismissed, and then Wharton's hopes were dashed. It was coming at last!

Mr. Quelch came to speak to him, but his look was still quite benevolent.

"I desire to say a word to you, Wharton," said the Remove master, and the junior drew a deep breath. "I am sorry to hear that you seem still to be on very bad terms with the new boy in the Remove."

"Oh!" ejaculated Wharton. That was not what he had expected to hear.

"I am aware that Carboy has certain proclivities that may be very irritating," said Mr. Quelch. "An inveterate practical joker may sometimes excite dislike and even animosity."

Evidently, Mr. Quelch knew Christopher Clarence!

"But a boy of your sensible and thoughtful character should not give way to feelings of annoyance to such an extent," said Mr. Quelch. "I am speaking to you, Wharton, as a boy whose judgment I respect."

"Oh, sir!" stammered Harry.

"I should like you to reflect a little on this, Wharton, and I shall hope to see you overcome the dislike you seem to have formed for the new boy," said the Remove master. "At the very least, I hope I shall hear of no more fighting in your study."

"Not if I can help it, sir," said Harry earnestly. "I'm sorry I lost my temper with Carboy that time, and I shall try hard not to lose it again."

"Very good, my boy."

And Wharton was dismissed, wondering. He went into the Rag, where most of the Remove had gathered, and found that apartment rocking with merriment. Robert Donald Ogilvy had come in, in time for call-over, and now he had told the story in the Rag. By this time, Ogilvy had only a few twinges left over from the "six" Loder had given him; and he was able to enjoy the joke on the unpopular prefect as much as anyone.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, as Wharton came in. "Shut the door, old bean—we don't want any Sixth-Form man to hear this."

"Or Quelch!" chuckled Skinner.

"Oh, my hat! Rather not."

"What's the joke?" asked Wharton. "You fellows seem to have got hold of something good to judge by the row."

"The jest of the season!" chortled Bob. "That man Carboy——"

"Oh, give me a rest about Carboy!"

"But it was Carboy's wheeze," roared Bob. "I can't say I think much of his wheezes as a rule——"

"Thanks!" interjected Carboy.

"But this one was a real corker," chuckled Bob, "and Ogilvy played up like a little man and got six for it."

"And a hefty six!" said Ogilvy. "Loder thought he was caning Wharton, so you can guess how much beef he put into it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton looked bewildered. Ogilvy's remark called to mind the strange tale Carboy had told in the study.

"What on earth do you mean, Oggy?" he exclaimed. "What did Loder give you six for?"

"For you!" grinned Ogilvy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Why the merry thump should he give you six for me?" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "Have you caught the leg-pulling disease from Carboy, or what? What do you mean?"

"He thought I was you——"

"Fathead!"



"You're a precious-looking pair," said Loder grimly. "You can't keep from fighting, you two, it seems!" "It was Wharton's fault!" gasped Carboy. "He pitched into me!" "Groooogh!" gasped Ogilvy. "Oh! Ow!" Ogilvy deemed it safer to say as little as possible, lest his voice should give him away. (See Chapter 8.)

"He did!" roared Ogilvy. "Carboy fixed me up with a black eye like that beauty you've got—he made it with soot—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"And I had ashes and dust and ink on my face—and Loder found us scrapping in the study when he butted in at half-past three—and Carboy calling me Wharton—"

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

"I've got six brothers, but not one of them would have known me as I looked then," chuckled Ogilvy. "Loder never even dreamed that I wasn't you, you ass, when he saw a chap with a smothered face and a black eye scrapping with Carboy in your study."

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

"Only he gave me six for the scrapping, which rather spoiled the joke," added Ogilvy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I—I see," gasped Wharton. "I—I—I see! It was your idea, I suppose?"

"Wrong! It was Carboy's."

"Carboy's!" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes; he butted into my study and barged me into it. Loder hasn't reported you absent—if he's reported you at all it's for fighting in your study—while you were playing footer at Highcliffe."

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

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Wharton blankly. It was clear now why the chopper had not come down. It was also clear that he owed his escape to Carboy—and to one of the japer's weird practical jokes, too; which was not quite so pleasant a discovery.

"Isn't it the giddy joke of the term?" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"The jokefulness is truly terrific," said Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh. "The esteemed and execrable Loder has been done widefully."

"Wharton doesn't like Carboy's jokes, though," said Skinner maliciously. "Look out for your other eye, Carboy."

Wharton crimsoned.

"Oh, shut up, Skinner!" said Bob. "Can't you ever say something nice, just by way of a change once a term?"

Wharton stood for a moment or two, silent. Then he crossed over to Christopher Clarence Carboy.

"You've done me a good turn," he said quietly. "You seem to be a decent sort of chap, and I'm sorry I cut up so rusty over your japing. I won't say I like your practical jokes, because I jolly well don't; but I'm sorry I lost my temper the other day—I was sorry at the time, but didn't care to say so. Thanks very much for what you've done."

Carboy nodded cheerily.

"All serene, old bean!"

"Quelch's just spoken to me," said Harry. "I couldn't make it out quite; but I can see now it was that spoof row in the study he was thinking of. Loder must have reported it. He's asked me to stop rowing with you, Carboy, and I said I would if I could. I'll be glad to be friends, if you like the idea."

"What-ho!" said Carboy. "Jolly glad! Didn't I tell you that I liked you personally?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Right-ho! I'll feel the same if I can. No more rows, anyhow."

"My dear man, after this I'll pull Nugent's leg instead of yours," said Carboy.

The next morning, when Mr. Quelch

took his little walk in the quad after breakfast, he was pleased to see two juniors—both with discoloured eyes—walking together and talking in the most amicable manner. They were Harry Wharton and Christopher Clarence Carboy. Mr. Quelch glanced at them, smiled approval, and continued on his little walk in a pleased frame of mind. He had spoken only a few words to Wharton, and they had already produced this effect! The two juniors had evidently become friends, and Mr. Quelch could not help being gratified at this result of the few words he had spoken to Wharton in Hall!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Carboy's Secret!

BUMP!

William George Bunter left Study No. 1 in the Remove.

He left it quite suddenly.

The reason for Bunter's sudden departure was evident, in the shape of a boot that followed him out of the doorway.

Bunter sat in the passage and roared. "That's Carboy's foot!" said Frank Nugent, with a grin, as he came along from the Remove staircase with Wharton.

"Yow-ow-ow!" roared Bunter. "Beast! Ow! I'll jolly well tell all the fellows now."

"What's the row, fatty?" asked Wharton, stopping to look down on the Owl of the Remove.

"Ow! That beast Carboy!" gasped

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The Boy with



(Continued from page 13.)

Bunter. "He's kicked me! I say, you fellows, you go into the study and mop him up. Kicking a fellow for asking him to cash a postal-order! Ow!"

"Nothing more than that?" asked Wharton.

"Nothing at all! I promised to keep his shady secret for him, too, if he'd lend me a quid on my postal-order!" gasped Bunter. "It's no good being kind to that beast! Ow!"

"You fat worm!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I suppose one good turn deserves another!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "Blessed if I know why you've got so friendly with the brute. Look what a fool he made of you—"

"Oh, dry up, ass!"

"And that eye you've got! I'd jolly well lick a fellow who gave me an eye like that."

"Why not lick him for kicking you?" suggested Nugent. "Shall I call him out of the study?"

Bunter scrambled up.

"No! I'm not going to lick him! He ain't worth it! Besides, he ain't fit for me to touch! A fellow who was sacked from his last school—"

"Cheese it, ass!"

"I tell you he was sacked!" roared Bunter. "I saw it in that letter he—dropped in the study. I wasn't going to give him away. I've only mentioned it to a few friends in confidence—"

"About nine-tenths of the Remove!" remarked Nugent, "and a few in the Third and Fourth."

"Well, I'm not going to keep his mouldy secrets," said Bunter. "The Head wouldn't have let him in here if he'd known he was expelled from Oldcroft. Expelled chaps ain't let into Greyfriars. You know that."

"Which is a proof that he never was expelled, you fat chump," said Harry Wharton, frowning. "Ring off!"

"Shan't!" roared Bunter. "He was jolly well sacked, and I jolly well know it. And I'll jolly well tell all the chaps. Yah!"

And Bunter rolled away indignantly up the passage. Wharton and Nugent went into the study. It was tea-time, a few days after the Highcliffe match; and since that day, tea in Study No. 1 had been an amicable party of three. Carboy seemed to be making an effort to keep his weird sense of humour in check inside the study; and Harry Wharton had made up his mind to be as friendly as he could. Nugent, who had never disliked the new fellow at all, was glad to see a friendly relationship established.

The two juniors could not help glancing curiously at Carboy as they came in. They did not believe a word of Bunter's supposed discovery; but they were aware that there is seldom smoke without fire. Bunter had confided the secret to so many fellows by this time, that all the Remove knew what he had read in the letter from Carboy's father; and a good deal that he had not read there; for if Bunter's memory was bad, his

imagination was active, and well able to supply any deficiencies. Certainly it could not be pleasant for Carboy, or any fellow, to have it rumoured up and down the House that he had been sacked from his last school. Carboy, however, did not seem to heed.

He met the glances of his study-mates with a smile.

"Bunter's at it again," he remarked. "I shall never hear the end of that letter."

"Was there really a letter, then?" asked Frank.

"Oh, yes!"

"But Bunter never read in it what he says he read!" exclaimed Nugent, in astonishment. "You don't mean that."

"He certainly didn't read that I was bunked from Oldcroft, because I never was. The fat idiot ought to have sense to know that an expelled chap wouldn't be admitted at Greyfriars. At least, I suppose he wouldn't."

"Not likely," said Harry. "Of course, we don't believe a word of it. Nobody does, that I know of. All the same—" He paused.

"Well, what?" asked Carboy, rather tartly.

"No business of mine," said Harry. "I was going to give you a word of advice; but I'll wait till you ask me."

"Consider it asked."

"Oh, very well, then. A yarn of this sort ought to be knocked on the head, if it isn't true."

"If?" exclaimed Carboy. "I've told you it isn't!"

"Well, as it isn't, then," said Wharton, more patiently than he had ever spoken to Carboy before, "it will grow and spread if it isn't squashed, and you'll get talked about a lot. Better speak to Bunter—"

"I've spoken to him—and kicked him."

"I mean, warn him that if he doesn't chuck it, you'll have to speak to Quelch about it. Quelch can tell the Form whether you were sacked from Oldcroft or not; and he would do so like a shot if he knew a fellow was making up a yarn like this."

"Wouldn't the fellows call it sneaking to speak to a Form master?"

Wharton coloured.

"If you think I'm advising you to sneak I'll say no more about the matter. It doesn't concern me, anyhow."

"Oh, don't get your back up," said Carboy. "What I mean is, I can't speak to Quelch about a fellow yarning about me, without mentioning the fellow's name."

"Warn Bunter first what you're going to do. If that doesn't stop him, you have a right to speak to Quelch. Nobody would spread such a yarn about me without being called to account. If you let it run like this the whole Form will suspect that you really did something at your last school that you were sacked for."

"I shouldn't be here if I'd been sacked from my last school."

"Not if the Head knew! Bunter seems to think that your people pulled the wool over Dr. Locke's eyes somehow."

Carboy compressed his lips.

"I'll jolly well burst him!" he exclaimed.

"Well, you can't exactly burst him. You can stop him by warning him that the matter will be placed before Quelch if he doesn't chuck it."

Carboy made no answer to that; and the juniors sat down to tea. Tea in Study No. 1 was in progress when there was a knock at the door, and Billy Bunter's fat face and big spectacles glimmered in. Behind him loomed the

powerful figure of Bolsover major, and Skinner and Snoop, and one or two other fellows brought up the rear.

"Hallo! Is this a deputation?" asked Wharton, looking round.

"We've come to see Carboy," answered Bolsover major. Harry Wharton had got over his feud with the new fellow, or was trying his hardest to get over it; but Bolsover major was as inimical as ever. Bolsover could not forget how he had been tricked into smashing his own best Sunday topper in mistake for Carboy's; and Bolsover, in his own estimation, was far too important a person for such japes to be played upon.

"Here I am," said Carboy.

"Bunter says you were sacked from your last school," said Bolsover. "He's been spreading that yarn for a week now, or more; and you don't seem to mind."

"Why should I mind?" yawned Carboy. "If I minded fellows talking rot, I couldn't listen to you so politely, Bolsover."

There was a chuckle.

"Well, if it's true, I think it's jolly thick for you being at Greyfriars at all," said Bolsover major gruffly. "We don't want fellows who have been chucked out of other schools here. If it's not true—"

"It isn't, if you're curious about it."

"Well, if it isn't, it's up to you to prove it. I'm prepared to take Bunter to Quelch and make him repeat the yarn to our Form master. Are you prepared to come along?"

"Oh, really, Bolsover!" squeaked Bunter.

"Shut up, Bunter! If you're making up this yarn, it's a rotten trick, and you want shutting up."

"I'm not making it up!" wailed Bunter. "I don't want to give the chap away to Quelch. I ain't a sneak."

"You've no right to butt in, Bolsover," said the captain of the Remove. "It's no business of yours."

"That's where opinions differ," said Bolsover major, with a sneer. "If it's true, Carboy ought to be shown up. This school isn't a refuge for fellows kicked out of other schools. Bunter says he saw it in a letter from Carboy's father. He's a spying little fat beast, and—"

"Oh, really, you know—"

"Shut up!" roared Bolsover major. "Bunter found it out by spying; but that doesn't make any difference if it's true. I want you to say out plain, Carboy, whether you're ready to come to Quelch and face it?"

"Awfully obliged for your interest in my affairs," yawned Carboy. "Would you mind shutting the door after you? That is, of course, if you're finished. But if you're wound up, keep on till you run down. Don't mind me."

"That means that you won't go to Quelch?"

"Bright—very bright!" assented Carboy. "You've guessed it! It shows what a Greyfriars education will do for a fellow not naturally brilliant."

There was another chuckle from the passage. Bolsover major did not seem to be getting the best of the argument.

"Well," said Bolsover savagely, "you won't go to Quelch? You're afraid it will all come out. I believe the yarn's true, and that you were sacked from Oldcroft, wherever that is. That's what I think."

"Jolly glad to hear it," said Carboy. "I didn't think you could think at all, old bean. Does it give you a pain?"

"I say, you fellows, I'm not afraid

to go to Quelch!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I don't want to give a man away; but if Carboy likes, I'll come with him to Quelch and have it all out."

"You hear that, Carboy?"

"I'm not deaf!" answered Carboy.

"And you won't go to Quelch?" sneered Skinner.

"Thanks, no! I should hate to waste his time."

"Well, all the fellows in the Remove will know what to think!" said Bolsover major.

"What a comfort that will be to them!" remarked Carboy. "You'll shut the door after you, won't you?"

Bolsover major shut the door with a slam. Christopher Clarence Carboy helped himself to marmalade.

His study-mates eyed him fixedly.

"I don't want to butt into your affairs, Carboy," said Harry Wharton, after a long pause.

"Good! Don't!"

"But I must tell you that if you don't go to Quelch about it now, there won't be a fellow in the Remove to believe that you weren't sacked from your last school," said the captain of the Remove. "You did me a good turn the other day, and I don't want to see you cut by the Form. Can't you see for yourself that you must have the matter cleared up now?"

"This is jolly good marmalade!" said Carboy.

"What?"

"Jolly good marmalade!"

Wharton breathed hard through his nose.

"Very well; let it drop," he said. "I was speaking for your own good, because you did me a good turn. I should be landed in a lot of trouble now, if you hadn't chipped in as you did. I can't forget that."

"I haven't asked you to remember it," said Carboy. "Pass the teapot, if there's anything left in it."

Wharton passed the teapot, and finished his tea hurriedly. He rose from the table, and Nugent followed his example. Carboy, who had been much more serious for some minutes than was his wont, looked up as they went to the door.

"There's nothing in it," he said. "But I've got my own reasons for not dragging Quelch into it. That's all."

The two juniors left the study without replying. What they believed on the subject was what all the Remove believed, or soon would believe. Christopher Clarence Carboy, left alone in the study, gave a long, low whistle.

"The fat's in the fire now, Christopher," he said, to himself.

And he was right.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Why Carboy Left Oldcroft!

"LOST anything?"

Bob Cherry asked the question.

Christopher Clarence Carboy had stopped on the Remove staircase, and was feeling carefully in all his pockets, one after another. Billy Bunter, leaning in an attitude of unaffected grace on the banisters above, was watching him through his big spectacles, curiously. Bob Cherry was not at all curious. He asked the question because he was willing to help Carboy find anything that he might have lost.

"I seem to have dropped a letter, somewhere," said Carboy.

Bunter pricked up his fat ears.

"Better find it, then," said Bob, with a grin. "You're not a fellow to leave

letters lying about, from what I hear. Bunter may find out from the next that you're the man who's wanted for a trunk crime."

Carboy laughed.

"Must have dropped it somewhere," he said. "Not that it matters. I can look for it later."

"I'll help you if you like," said Bob good-naturedly. "Without looking at it, if I find it," he added, with a chuckle. "Bunter's the only man in the Remove who does that."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Oh, it's all right!" said Carboy. "I dare say it's in my study. I shall be coming up later."

And he went on down the stairs. Robert Cherry proceeded to his own study, dismissing the matter from his mind.

But not so Billy Bunter. Bunter's little round eyes gleamed behind his spectacles. Mislaid letters were in Bunter's line. He was curious about any fellow's business; but he was keenest of all about Carboy's. As soon as the new junior had disappeared in one direction, and Bob Cherry in the

other, Billy Bunter rolled into No. 1 Study to investigate.

It was odd that a fellow so keen as Carboy undoubtedly did not guess what Bunter's proceedings would be. But he did not seem to give it a thought. He strolled out of the House with a cheery smile on his face, apparently unconscious of the curious looks he received from a good many Remove fellows.

Harry Wharton gave him a nod, and Ogilvy a cheery grin; but some of the Remove fellows seemed to have forgotten that there was such a person as Christopher Clarence Carboy in existence. But if Carboy noticed that they ignored him, he did not seem to mind. Bolsover major gave him a hard, unseeing stare. Skinner and Snoop sniggered as he passed them. But his equanimity seemed quite unruffled.

Whether Carboy had, or had not, been expelled from his last school was now a topic in the Remove. And most of the fellows had made up their minds in the affirmative.

Still, many of them doubted. Fellows like Skinner, glad of a chance to be "down" on anybody, were not troubled

(Continued on next page.)

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by doubts. Moreover, Skinner had a bitter recollection of pepper in his cigarettes. Bob Cherry, who was too good-natured to be down on anybody if he could help it, was as cheery as ever to the new fellow. Some fellows suspected that it was just one more of Carboy's leg-pulling stunts, and that he was letting the fellows think he had been "sacked" from Oldcroft simply as a peculiar kind of jest.

Really, there was no telling with a fellow like Christopher Clarence Carboy. Certainly a fellow who was under a cloud and had been found out, might have been expected to take it quite differently. Carboy took it with careless good-humour and unruffled cheerfulness. The story had passed out of the limits of the Remove now, and was discussed in the Fourth and the Shell, and fellows in those Forms gave Carboy queer looks in the quad. On this particular occasion as he strolled across the quad Coker of the Fifth bore down on him. Coker of the Fifth had a frown on his face, and he stopped directly in Carboy's path, and the new junior, guessing what was coming, grinned.

"I hear you were sacked from your last school, Carboy," said Coker sternly. "What about it?"

"You've heard that?" asked Carboy. And half a dozen fellows gathered round at once.

"What did you do at Oldcroft?" demanded Coker.

"I'd rather not say," answered Carboy meekly.

Grunt from Coker.

"That means that it was something jolly serious," he said.

"Well, you might think it serious," admitted Carboy.

"I'm waiting to hear what it was," Coker's manner was quite magisterial. "Now, then, out with it, you young rascal!"

"Mind your own business, Coker!" broke in Harry Wharton. "What the thump right have you to ask a Remove man questions?"

"You shut up, Wharton! This is a jolly serious matter," said Coker. "A fellow isn't sacked from school for a trifle. This chap ought never to have come to Greyfriars at all. The Head's been hoodwinked."

"Rubbish!" said Wharton.

"Shut up!" roared Coker. "Now, then, Carboy, I want to know what it was. I warn you not to prevaricate."

"If I really must tell you—" faltered Carboy.

"Get on with it!"

"It was a sudden temptation!" gasped Carboy.

There was a general breath of interest in the crowd of fellows gathering round. A couple of dozen were on the spot now. Every Remove man there agreed that it was like Coker's cheek to butt in. But all of them undoubtedly were curious to hear what Carboy had to confess. Apparently he was so overwhelmed by the importance of the big Fifth-Former that he did not venture to refuse to answer.

"A sudden temptation, was it?" said Coker grimly. "Well, what was it? You pinched something—what?"

"N-no," faltered Carboy. "I—I—I— Must I tell you?"

"Yes!" hooted Coker. He was burning with curiosity now. "Out with it!"

"I—I—I never meant to kill him!" gasped Carboy.

"To what?" shrieked Coker.

"It was his whiskers that did it," said

Carboy, with a face of awful seriousness. "I've always said that Form masters shouldn't wear whiskers. My Form master at Oldcroft did. That was how it came about. His whiskers irritated me. They got on my nerves. One morning in Form I felt that I couldn't bear it any longer."

Coker gazed blankly at Carboy's serious face.

"It was a sudden temptation," continued Carboy. "Seizing a Latin dictionary, I smote him to the floor. He never smiled again."

"He—he—he never smiled again!" repeated Coker of the Fifth, like a fellow in a trance.

"They buried him with ham," said Carboy, still with the solemnity of a judge. "All the fellows went. The Head took a serious view of the matter. He admitted that the man's whiskers were irritating. They had irritated him, himself. But he said, very justly, that if fellows were allowed to brain Form masters with Latin dictionaries it would be difficult to get men to fill the posts. Moreover, there was the damage to the school books to be considered. And so—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a yell from Carboy's audience.

The bewildered expression on Horace Coker's face was entertaining.

"You—you—you young sweep!" gasped Coker. "Are you trying to pull my leg? If that's meant for cheek—"

"You've got it!" assented Carboy.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I've told you to own up to what you did at Oldcroft!" said Coker, breathing hard.

"Well, I'm trying to satisfy you," said Carboy. "But if you want me to try again, I don't mind. One dreary and dismal December night—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Don't talk that rot to me!" hooted Coker.

"My hat and umbrella! You're jolly hard to satisfy!" complained Carboy. "I'll try again. One bright and sunny afternoon in July—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Will you tell me at once why you left Oldcroft?" hissed Coker.

"Certainly. It was too big for me to bring with me."

"Wha-a-t?"

"I had to leave it," explained Carboy.

"It's still standing where I left it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

By that time Coker of the Fifth seemed to have made up his mind that he was not going to receive any information from Christopher Clarence Carboy. He made a jump at that humorous youth; and Carboy made a backward jump at the same moment. He landed, no doubt by accident, with his heels on Harold Skinner's toes.

"Yarooogh!" roared Skinner.

"Hold on, Coker!" shouted Wharton. "Line up, you fellows—the Fifth ain't allowed to bully the Remove!"

"What-ho! Collar him!" shouted Squiff.

"Give him beans!" yelled Ogilvy.

"Hands off, you cheeky fags!" roared Coker. "I'll smash you! I'm going to thrash that cheeky young sweep! I'm going to— Yow-ow-yow-yoop-groogh ooch! Whooooop!"

Coker came down in the quad in the grasp of six or seven Removites. He came down with a mighty concussion. Carboy leaned over him and squashed Coker's hat over his eyes with one fell swoop. Then the juniors departed, yelling with laughter, leaving Coker of the Fifth to extract his head from his hat. By the time Horace Coker had done so

Christopher Clarence Carboy had disappeared over the horizon, and Coker's thirst for information had to remain unslaked.

Carboy, as he strolled into the Rag, was stopped by Cecil Reginald Temple, of the Fourth Form.

"Hold on a minute," said Temple. "What's this I hear about your bein' sucked from your last school? What did they bunk you for?"

"Eating rice-pudding with a spoon!" answered Carboy. "They're frightfully particular about these things at Oldcroft."

And he strolled on, leaving Cecil Reginald Temple staring.

Fisher T. Fish, the Transatlantic junior, cornered him in the Rag a few minutes later. Fishy also wanted to know.

"Now, own up and tell a galoot," said Fisher T. Fish. "You were bunked from your last school. What was it for?"

"I poisoned the headmaster—"

"Eh?"

"With a dose of American canned beef."

"Why, you—you—you slabsided guy!" gasped Fisher T. Fish; and Carboy smiled and sauntered away.

Many fellows had questioned Carboy; and he was full of information, which he imparted with alacrity. But it really was not reliable information. There was nothing to be got from Christopher Clarence Carboy; if he had a secret it was clear that that secret was going to remain in the keeping of Christopher Clarence himself.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Awful!

BILLY BUNTER stepped lightly into Study No. 1, closed the door after him, and blinked eagerly round. He knew that the study would be vacant; he had seen Wharton and Nugent in the quad, and he had watched Carboy go downstairs. The coast was clear for Bunter's search for the letter Carboy had dropped. If he had dropped it in the study it was booked for Bunter's inquisitive eyes. The Owl of the Remove was prepared to root through the study from end to end, if necessary; but he was not given all that trouble. Almost the first object upon which his eyes rested, as he blinked round the room, was a letter that lay in the armchair—full in view of anyone who might enter the study.

Bunter made a jump for it.

"That's it!" he murmured.

Evidently it was "it." On the front page Bunter read the words, "Dear Chris."

That settled the point. The fat junior did not remain in the study to read the letter; he slipped it into his pocket and rolled out of Study No. 1. There was a possibility that Carboy might return, after all, to look for the letter, careless as he seemed about it. Bunter considered it judicious to convey his prize to a safer place for leisurely perusal.

He blinked into Study No. 7, and found it empty. He rolled in, shut the door, and drew the letter from his pocket.

He grinned a fat grin as he turned his little round eyes and his big spectacles on the letter. Very likely there was something definite in this letter—some allusion to Carboy's past—something that would make an exciting item of news for Bunter to tell a few friends in strict confidence.



Horace Coker made a jump at the humorous Carboy. Christopher Clarence, however, made a backward jump at the same moment, and landed, no doubt by accident, with his heels on Harold Skinner's toes. "Yaroooh!" roared Skinner. (See Chapter 12.)

But as he began to read the grin died off Bunter's fat countenance, and his eyes grew wide behind his spectacles.

"Oh, crikey!"

It was not merely an exciting item of news that Bunter had captured now. It was something more than that. It was amazing—it was thrilling—it was unnerving. The letter ran:

"Dear Chris.—I'm glad you haven't wasted your time while you've been at Greyfriars. Now you've spotted the exact place where the Head keeps his cash, we'll bring off the job to-night. I hope we shall make as big a haul as we did at Oldcroft. Come down from your dormitory to-night at midnight, and let me in at the door you mentioned in your last.

"Your old pal,

"SLIMEY."

Billy Bunter sat down quite suddenly on a chair. His fat limbs seemed to give way under him. He gazed in amazement and horror at the letter he held in his fat hand.

It was almost incredible. Whatsoever the Remove fellows had suspected about Christopher Clarence Carboy, they had never suspected anything like this. Even Bunter, who had a fertile imagination, richly fed up by the films, had never thought of anything of this sort. So this was why the fellow had left Oldcroft—he had admitted burglars to the school! He was at Greyfriars for the same purpose! That very night the headmaster was to be robbed—by a cracksman let secretly into the House by Carboy. It was awful to think of—positively unnerving.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter.

He recovered himself a little at last,

and read the letter through again. The handwriting, of course, was strange to him—it was a back-sloping hand, such as might be adopted for purposes of disguise. The signature, "Slimey," was evidently some nickname a cracksman might have. Bunter had, indeed, seen such burglarious nicknames in sub-titles on the films.

That letter, Bunter reflected, could not have come by post. Slimey would never have taken the chance of such a communication falling into the hands of authority. It had reached Carboy by some surreptitious route—perhaps left in some cranny of a wall, to be found there, stuck in some crevice of an ivied wall, hidden by ivy. Bunter knew that such things happened—on the pictures, at least. In his mind's eye Bunter could see Carboy sneaking guiltily along the Cloister wall, seeking the hidden missive, glancing over his shoulder, his face registering hesitation and guilty terror.

"The villain!" said Bunter.

He read the letter through again.

"The scoundrel!"

Bunter rose from the chair at last.

"The dastard! I've got him in the hollow of my hand!" Bunter was nothing if not dramatic. He closed his fat fist on the letter as if he were crushing Christopher Clarence Carboy. "The snake in the grass!" The word baffle, which Bunter had never heard anybody utter, but which was familiar to him from sub-titles at the pictures, came into his mind. "I'll baffle him! I'll jolly well baffle him!"

Bunter rolled away at last from Study No. 7, with the incriminating document safe in his pocket. His first thought was to go direct to Mr. Quelch with it. His Form master was obviously the man

to know about this, so that measures could be taken in time to baffle Carboy and his accomplice. But before he reached the Remove staircase Bunter paused, his fat face registering hesitation, if not terror.

Quelch was such a sceptical, practical beast. He never went to the pictures, probably had never read a sub-title in his life, or seen a crook play. His thoughts ran on severe scholastic lines. Would Quelch realise the import of that awful letter? Would he? Bunter could not help feeling that he wouldn't. That Carboy was in league with burglars, that he had let thieves into Oldcroft, and was now going to let thieves into Greyfriars, was clear as daylight to Bunter. He had had, as it were, the advantages of a film education. But a practical beast like Quelch might pooh-pooh the whole thing, and actually sniff at the idea—snort at it, in fact.

There was no proof save the letter Bunter held in his hand, which might have been written by a schoolboy for a lark, for anything that might be proved to the contrary. Quelch, unenlightened by crook plays on the films, was much more likely to believe that it was a "lark" than serious business. He might even think that Bunter had written that letter himself, to pull his majestic leg. Bunter shuddered at the thought of that possibility, and the simultaneous thought of Mr. Quelch's cane.

He realised that he had to be wary, and walk delicately, like Agag in ancient times.

It was better to consult some of the fellows before he acted. After all, there was lots of time. It was not dorn

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for hours yet. Bunter had time to think. His thinking apparatus, perhaps, was not of the best quality, but he had time to use it, such as it was.

Bunter was thinking over the matter, leaning on the banisters on the Remove landing, when Carboy came up to tea with Wharton and Nugent. Bunter grinned as they passed. They little knew, was the thought that flashed through Bunter's fat brain.

The three juniors went into their study. The next moment Bunter heard Carboy's voice:

"You fellows seen a letter anywhere?"

"No!" came Nugent's answer.

"I must have left it in the study, I think. You might help me to look for it; it would mean a lot of trouble if that letter got about."

Billy Bunter heard those words distinctly, without in the least expecting that he was intended to hear them distinctly. He leaned on the banisters, and grinned as he heard a sound of rum-maging in Study No. 1. Peter Todd came up the stairs with a package under his arm.

"What's the jolly old joke, fatty?" he asked, as he noted the fat grin on Bunter's face.

"Oh, nothing!" answered Bunter. "I say, Toddy, I'm ready for tea. I've got something to tell you, too, old chap."

"Tell somebody else, old bean, like a good chap!" said Toddy, going on to Study No. 7.

That was exactly like Toddy, never caring to hear the most exclusive news brought him by the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars. But Bunter followed him into Study No. 7, because it was tea-time, and he had noted Toddy's package, and because he had to consult somebody about that guilty letter. The consultation, however, was left till after tea. First things had to come first, second things second. But during tea Bunter could not help indulging in mys-

terious glances and remarks which indicated that he knew what he knew, and could say something surprising if he jolly well liked. Sad to relate, Toddy took not the slightest notice of these symptoms, having been there before, so to speak.

But after tea Bunter came down to brass tacks. He jerked the letter from his pocket.

"Read that, Toddy!" he said.

"No time. I've got to see Ogilvy—"

"Read it, you ass; it's awfully important."

"Oh, rot!" said Peter. But he glanced at the letter. "Hallo! Your front name isn't Chris, is it, all of a sudden?"

"It's Carboy's name, of course. That letter—"

Peter Todd did not read the letter. He fixed his eyes on Bunter, instead of upon the missive from Slimey.

"You fat rotter! You've pinched a letter from another fellow, and you're asking me to read it! My hat! I'll—"

"Hold on, you ass!" shrieked Bunter. "It's important. It's a letter from a burglar—"

"What!" roared Peter.

"A burglar. Carboy's going to let him into the school to-night to pinch the tin from the Head's safe—"

Bunter got no further.

Had Peter Todd been a fellow on the films, of course, he would have started violently, and gazed at Bunter, registering amazement and horror. But, as the matter stood, he concluded that Bunter was making an absolutely fatheaded attempt to pull his leg, and he reached for Bunter's ear. Bunter immediately registered pain and woe.

"Yaroo! Yoop! Leggo! Yaroo!"

"Now take that letter back to Carboy, if it's his," said Peter. "I'll give your fat flap another twist if you've still got it when I come back to the study."

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!" Bunter rubbed

his fat ear in anguish. "Beast! I tell you—"

Slam!

Peter Todd left the study, and Bunter remained rubbing a burning ear, his tale untold. Evidently Peter Todd was not going to be of any use.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Proof Positive!

"GAMMON!" said Bolsover major.

"Bosh!" said Skinner.

"Piffle!" remarked Snoop.

Billy Bunter blinked wrathfully at the three. He had found them together in Skinner's study after tea, and as they were all down on Carboy, he had not doubted that they were the fellows to help him out. But his opening statement was interrupted by expressions of disbelief that were frank, if not polite.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, shut it!" said Bolsover major.

"The fellow was sacked from his last school; that's clear. He did something. But don't start spinning us yarns you've mugged up at Courtfield Picture Palace."

"You see, we go to the films ourselves and we know the brand," explained Skinner.

"I've got the letter here—"

"Gammon!"

Bunter felt in his pocket for the letter. Bolsover major & Co. watched him, sarcastically. They knew Bunter of old, and they were quite prepared to see him draw his fat hand forth empty, with a remark that he must, after all, have mislaid the letter.

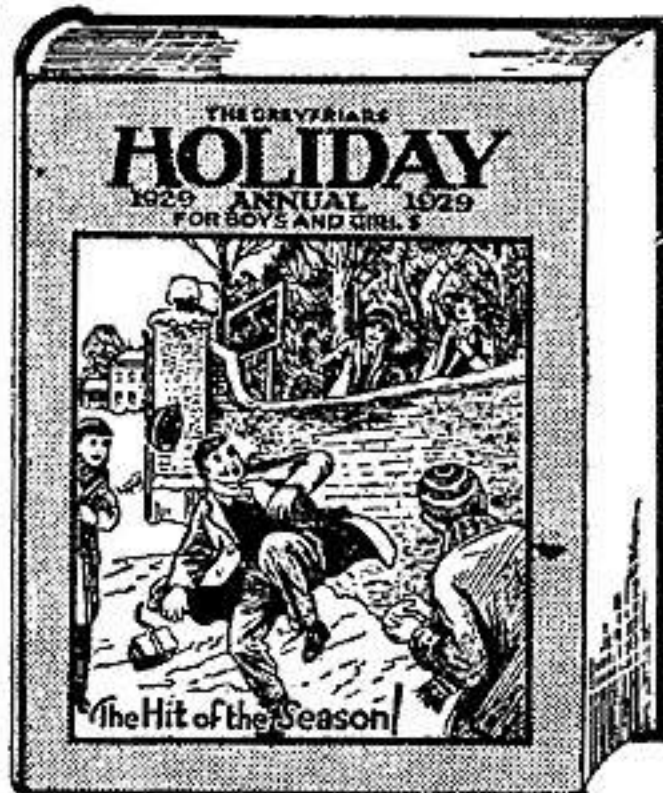
Rather to their surprise, he produced a letter.

"Read that!" he said, with dignity.

Bolsover major and his friends were not so particular on that point as Peter Todd. They read the letter, stared at one another, and stared at Bunter.

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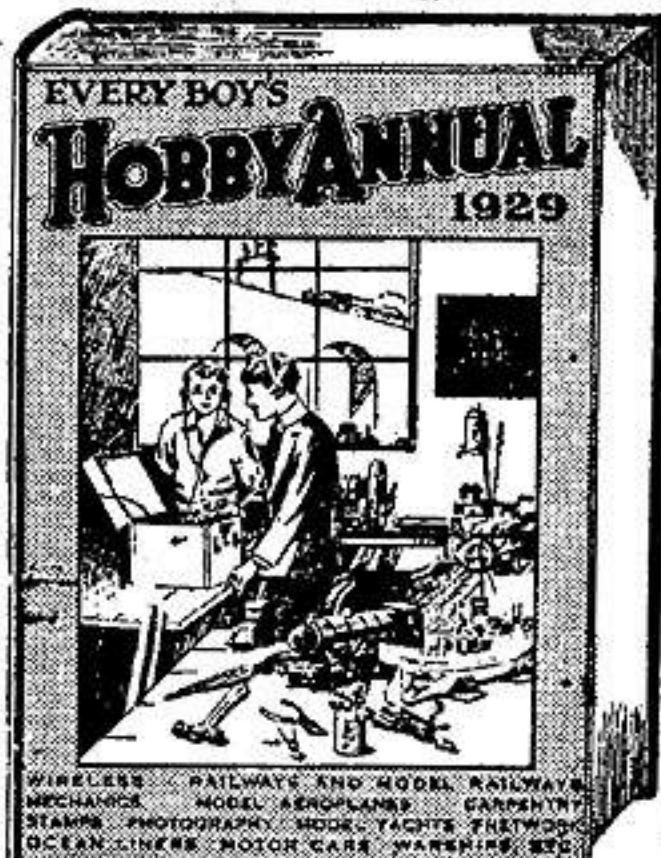
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"It's impossible!" said Bolsover major at last. "He did something at Olderoft, we know that—"

"Must have been something serious, to get sacked," said Snoop.

"But if he did what's in that letter he would be sent to a reformatory," said Skinner.

"If they had proof," said Bunter. "They mightn't have had any proof. For instance, what proof would there be if he let that man Slimey into Greyfriars to-night and then sneaked back quietly to bed?"

"That's so," said Bolsover major.

"They might have guessed, but couldn't prove it," remarked Snoop. "They'd push him out in that case, of course. After all, we know he did something; and I've thought several times it might be stealing, or something serious, like that. A fellow ain't bunked for nothing."

"It's too thick!" said Skinner.

"I say, you fellows, there's the letter," said Bunter. "I picked it up in Carboy's study, just the same as I did his father's letter last week, the one that mentioned that he had been sacked."

The three juniors scanned the letter. It was written upon a kind of notepaper that was not used at Greyfriars, in a heavy, back-sloping hand that was quite unknown to them. If the letter was genuine the matter was serious enough, and if it was not genuine how had it come into existence at all? Bunter, evidently, had not concocted it; and it was difficult to think that any Remove man could have done so.

"That man Carboy is a potty practical joker," said Skinner slowly. "Is it possible that he wrote this himself and planted it on Bunter?"

"Well, he's got japing on the brain, but there's a limit," said Snoop. "He's accused in this letter of thieving, and consorting with thieves. Nice sort of thing for a fellow to write about himself."

Bolsover major shook his head.

"I can't make it out!" he said. "We know he did something, but—"

"But—" said Snoop.

"I say, you fellows, what do you think Quelchy would say if I took the letter to him?" said Bunter.

"He would send for Carboy at once, of course, and ask him about it," said Bolsover major. "Then—if it's true—Carboy would get a word to his pal not to come to-night; he would say that the letter was a jape of some fellow who disliked him, and he would get clear."

"Of course he would!" agreed Bunter.

"And then they'd leave the burglary till a safer time."

"That's it! I'm blessed if I know what to think about it," confessed Bolsover. "I don't like the fellow; he's cheeky, and we know he did something serious to be sacked from his last school. But I wouldn't like to be the chap to take that letter to a Form master. Too jolly like the films."

"Films are founded on real life, you know," said Bunter.

"Are they?" asked Skinner. "Must be the real life of some other planet, then."

"Look here," said Bolsover major, "we can't make it out, but there's an easy way of proving it. If the thing's genuine Carboy's getting out of bed at midnight to go down and let the burglar in. Well, we've only got to stay awake to-night to see if he goes. If he does, that settles it. A fellow found out of his own dorm late at night gets a licking. He wouldn't risk it for

SPECIAL FOR NEXT WEEK!

Everyone in the Greyfriars Remove feels certain that Christopher Clarence Carboy was sacked from his last school in disgrace, and naturally no one wants to be pally with a fellow with such a past.

As a result Carboy finds himself barred by all his schoolfellows—sent to Coventry by even such fellows as Skinner and Bunter. But does that worry Christopher Clarence—not the slightest bit! The situation only gives the prince of japers yet another chance of launching one of his special brands of practical jokes on the school.

What happens then, you will learn in—

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nothing. If he clears off at twelve to-night—"

"That's all very well," said Bunter. "We shall know then, but it will be too late to stop the burglary. He will go down to let Slimey in at a window."

"If he does that we can jolly well give the alarm in time to stop them," said Bolsover major, "and Carboy being out of the dorm will be proof against him, with this letter to back it up."

"Good!" said Skinner.

"It sounds jolly filmy, but it's true. The rotter ought to be jolly well nailed and shown up," said Snoop. "Easy enough to stay awake and see if he clears off from the dorm."

"That's the game," said Bolsover, "and mind, not a word about this to other fellows. We don't want the rotter to get wind that we know, and be put on his guard. If he's guilty the sooner he jolly well gives himself away the better."

And that was agreed upon.

Billy Bunter had a strong desire to impart the matter to a few friends, in strict confidence, but even Bunter realised that in such a serious case silence was golden.

When the Remove went to their dormitory that night there were four fellows in the Form who had their eyes on Christopher Clarence Carboy. Bolsover major stared at him, Skinner and Snoop gave him sidelong glances, Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles. Carboy did not seem to notice their scrutiny, but they noticed, for their part, that he was looking unusually grave. He made no remarks, though generally he was talkative, and he hardly seemed to hear if a fellow spoke to him. His look was that of a fellow troubled by deep thought. Possibly he was worrying about that lost letter, possibly he was thinking of what was going to happen that night, at midnight's solemn hour. Certainly, his look and manner confirmed the deep sus-

picion with which Bolsover major & Co. regarded him.

Wingate put the light out for the Remove, and the juniors settled down to sleep—four of them excepted. Four fellows intended to keep awake that night and watch the suspected junior. Of the four, one was asleep within five minutes, Billy Bunter's reverberating snore announcing that Morpheus had been too strong for him. But the other three sat up in bed, shrouded in the darkness, determined to keep awake.

They nodded off several times. It was easy enough to plan keeping awake till midnight, but as long hour followed hour it seemed less and less easy to do it. They nodded, and nodded, and Snoop at last gave a final nod, and did not open his eyes again. But Skinner and Bolsover major were at least half awake when midnight boomed out from the clock-tower, and the deep strokes recalled them to wakefulness.

Midnight!

Now was the time. Bolsover major and Skinner, wide awake now, and watchful, listened intently, with a thrill at their hearts. From the rest of the Remove came the sound of steady breathing, and from Billy Bunter's bed a snore that was both loud and deep.

Was there a soft sound in the silence of the night—the sound of a bed creaking as a fellow stirred?

There was! Bolsover and Skinner both heard it, and caught their breath. From the silence came a whispering voice:

"You fellows asleep?"

There was no answer to the question. Evidently it had been asked, only to ascertain that the fellows were asleep. Bolsover major and Skinner were not likely to answer.

They heard Carboy creeping out of bed. Faint sounds—faint but distinguishable by intent ears—told that a fellow was dressing quickly in the dark.

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Soft, stealthy footfalls crossed to the door.

To the straining ears of the watchers came the sound of the dormitory door softly, cautiously, opening, and then shutting as softly and cautiously.

Deep silence followed.

"My hat!" breathed Bolsover major.

He needed no further proof. Why had Carboy crept silently out of the dormitory at that hour of the night?

Bolsover major jumped out of bed.

He struck a match, and lighted a candle-end. To make assurance doubly sure he held up the light over Carboy's bed. The bed was empty—the clothes that had been folded on a chair beside it were gone. Bolsover's heart thumped. It was true, then! And the fellow who had been expelled from Oldcroft had gone down to let Slimy in at a window, like a thief in the night.

"He's gone?"

Skinner panted the question.

"Yes, he's gone."

"That settles it."

"Yes, rather!"

Skinner leaped from his bed. Two or three other fellows awakened. There was a murmur of voices inquiring. Billy Bunter's deep snore ceased, his eyes opened, and he groped for his spectacles and jammed them on his fat little nose.

"I say, you fellows—" gasped Billy Bunter, blinking in the dim candle-light.

"He's gone!" said Snoop.

Bunter rolled out of bed. He blinked at Carboy's empty bed, and gave a gasp. He had expected it. He had been certain of it; yet this confirmation, strong as proof of holy writ, startled him. He blinked round at the staring Removites.

"I jolly well knew it! I say, you fellows, Carboy's gone down to let burglars into the house!"

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Spoofted!

HARRY WHARTON was looking at Carboy's empty bed—empty, in the dim glimmer of Bolsover's candle. He nearly fell out of his own bed as Bunter made his announcement, in his astonishment.

"What?" he exclaimed.

"Wake up, all of you fellows!" squeaked Bunter excitedly. "That fellow Carboy is a burglar!"

"You benighted idiot!" ejaculated Peter Todd.

"He's gone down to let a burglar in—"

"You howling ass!" said Bob Cherry.

"A man named Slimy—"

"Oh, crumbs!"

"They're going to rob the Head's safe—same as they did at Carboy's last school!" howled Bunter. "Carboy's letting the man into the House this very minute!"

"Fathead!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"I'm going to give the alarm!" said Bolsover major. "It's settled now, and we can't lose time—"

"You born idiot!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove. "Do you mean to say you believe any such piffle?"

"There's proof!" said Skinner.

"You, too!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Do you believe Carboy's a burglar because he put pepper into your smokes?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It's not a laughing matter," said Snoop, pointing to Carboy's bed. "It's struck twelve, and Carboy's gone out of the dorm—dressed himself before he went, too. What does that mean?"

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"Goodness knows!" said Harry Wharton. "It may mean anything but the utter rot that Bunter has suggested."

"That's all you know!" jeered Bunter. "If you'd seen the letter from Carboy's confederate—"

"The which?" ejaculated Nugent.

"Bunter found a letter from a man named Slimy that Carboy had dropped in his study," said Bolsover major. "I don't say he isn't a prying little beast to read another fellow's letters—"

"Oh, really, Bolsover—"

"But in this case it's justified. Now that Carboy has gone down at midnight, it proves the thing. I'm going to wake up Quelch and put him on his guard at once." Bolsover spoke with grim determination. "You fellows come with me, as you know about it!"

"I—I say, suppose—suppose the burglar's got in already!" stammered Bunter. "He—he might be in the—the passage—"

"You fat funk! Come along with me!" growled Bolsover.

"For goodness' sake, Bolsover, don't make such an utter idiot of yourself!" exclaimed Harry Wharton aghast. "Quelch will get you a flogging if you wake him up in the middle of the night with such a yarn!"

"It's true!" hooted Bolsover. "We've got proof!"

"I—I say, let the fellows know what's in the letter!" said Skinner, with a twinge of uneasiness. "Let's hear what they think."

"I'll read it out," said Billy Bunter.

"You won't read out a private letter, you fat chump!" growled Johnny Bull.

"It's a letter from a burglar—"

"Then it's spooft, and it doesn't matter if you read it out," said Harry Wharton, with a laugh. "Get on with it."

Bunter read the letter aloud. A dozen fellows crowded out of bed, and looked at the letter over his shoulders, in the glimmer of the candle.

"Gee-whiz!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess that sounds like the real goods. That galoot Carboy is an ornery jay, anyhow!"

There was a buzz of excitement in the Remove dormitory now. Fellows stared at the letter in blank amazement. There was no doubt that it put a different complexion on the matter.

"Are you satisfied now, Mr. Clever Wharton?" asked Skinner, with a sneer.

"I'm blessed if I can make it out!" said Harry. "But I know it's all bunkum. Whatever Carboy may have done at his last school, it wasn't anything of that kind, and couldn't have been. There's some sort of a trick in this. Did you write that letter, Skinner?"

"I!" howled Skinner.

"Well, if you didn't, somebody did! It's spooft!" said the captain of the Remove.

"All this time that scoundrel is letting a crackman into the House!" said Bolsover major.

Bolsover was not, perhaps, very bright; but he was very obstinate. He had been slow to credit this amazing thing; but now that he did fully believe it, he went the whole hog, so to speak. He had not the slightest doubt that, in those very moments, Carboy was admitting a crackman into the sleeping House.

Billy Bunter was equally certain. Only the fear of meeting the burglar kept him from rushing forth to raise the alarm. Skinner and Snoop were certain, too; but not to the extent of desiring to wake up Mr. Quelch with such startling news. Mr. Quelch was

such a very unpleasant gentleman to deal with, if it turned out that there had been some sort of a mistake, after all.

"Rot!" said Wharton tersely.

"As captain of the Form you ought to act in this matter!" said Skinner.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I've had no training for acting in film stunts!" he answered.

"You can see it's true—"

Bolsover major gave an angry snort.

"If you fellows are afraid to go and wake Quelch, I'm not! I'm not going to see the school robbed without interfering. Carboy's letting a burglar into the House this very minute. I'm going!"

Bolsover major stuck the candle on a washstand, and tramped across to the door.

"Come back, you ass!" called out Harry Wharton.

The captain of the Remove was puzzled by the mysterious letter—and startled by Carboy's absence from bed at midnight. But he did not and could not believe that there was anything in it.

Bolsover major did not heed.

He opened the dormitory door wide and tramped out into the passage. His footsteps receded towards the stairs.

"There can't be anything in it," said Bob Cherry. "There can't! It's some ghastly sort of a jape—"

"Why ghastly?" asked a quiet voice.

Every fellow in the Remove dormitory jumped. For the voice that drawled that question was the voice of Christopher Clarence Carboy.

"Why, what—what—" stuttered Bob Cherry.

"He's not gone!" gasped Skinner, in utter amazement.

"The gonefulness does not seem to be terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "But where is the esteemed and absurd Carboy?"

"I say, you fellows—" stuttered Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" howled Bob Cherry. "There he is! What the thump are you doing under that bed, Carboy?"

"Oh, crumbs!"

Every eye was fixed on Carboy. Christopher Clarence, with a cheery grin on his face, was crawling out from under his bed.

Evidently he had not gone down to let "Slimy" into the House! He had not left the dormitory at all.

Skinner gazed at him blankly. He had distinctly heard cautious footsteps cross to the door, and the door open and shut in the darkness before Bolsover turned out of bed. He had not the slightest doubt that Carboy had gone.

He realised now that the japer of the Remove must have been on the inner side of the door when he closed it, and had crept back noiselessly to his bed and crept underneath it.

Christopher Clarence Carboy grinned cheerfully at the amazed faces of the Removites. Skinner gritted his teeth. Snoop grinned foolishly and sneaked back to bed. Billy Bunter stared at Carboy open-mouthed, like a newly-landed fat fish.

"I—I—I say, you fellows, he—he—here's here!" babbled Bunter.

"The herefulness is terrific!"

"What does this mean, Carboy?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "You heard that letter read out—"

"Oh, quite!" yawned Carboy. "I didn't need to hear it really, as I knew it by heart. You see, I wrote it myself about ten minutes before I mentioned in Bunter's hearing that I'd dropped it somewhere."

"Oh, crumbs!" ejaculated Bob



As Billy Bunter began to read the letter the grin died off his fat countenance, and his eyes grew wide behind his large spectacles. "Oh, crikey!" he gasped. It was not merely an exciting item of news Bunter had captured. It was amazing, thrilling—unnerving! (See Chapter 13.)

Cherry. "You japing ass! And Bolsover's gone to wake up Quelch for—"

"Yes—it will be quite exciting, won't it?" smiled Carboy. "Quelch may be pleased! On the other hand, he may not. My opinion is, that Bolsover's taking a big chance."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Cut after him, somebody!" gasped Skinner. "Great pip—what on earth will happen if he wakes up Quelch?"

Harry Wharton ran out of the dormitory. He fairly raced down the dark passage to the stairs.

"I say, you fellows," gasped Bunter. "I—I say, I—I've been taken in—"

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

"You see," explained Carboy airily, "I ain't really a burglar! Not as a confirmed habit, anyhow. But when fellows want to find out things about a fellow, why not let 'em? It's only kind."

While the Removites gurgled with merriment, Harry Wharton was racing down the dark passage and shadowy staircase in pursuit of Bolsover. Fortunately, Bolsover was going slowly, partly to feel his way in the dark, partly because of the imaginary risk of running into "Slimey." Harry Wharton overtook him at the end of the passage leading to Mr. Quelch's room—bumping into him in the dark. There was a startled howl from Bolsover.

"You villain! Keep off! Help—"

"Your frabjous ass, it's Wharton!" panted the captain of the Remove.

"Wharton! You dummy—you may have alarmed him now—"

"There isn't any him, you born idiot!" gasped Harry. "Come back to the dorm before anybody wakes up, or—"

"I'm going to wake Quelch."

Wharton grasped his arm.

"You chump, Carboy's in the dorm—he was hiding under the bed—it's one of his japes—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"He planted that letter on Bunter, you ass—and he hid under the bed when you thought he had gone down, fat-head—he's pulling your silly leg, you goat—"

"Oh!" gasped Bolsover major.

He came back to the dormitory like a lamb. There was a fresh howl of laughter as he came in and stared at Christopher Clarence Carboy. Harry Wharton hastily closed the door.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's your giddy burglar, Bolsover!" howled Bob Cherry. "Only under the bed, old bean."

"Didn't you wake Quelch?" asked Carboy regretfully. "I'm sorry you didn't wake Quelch. I'm sure Quelch would have been interested in your jolly old investigations into my wicked past."

"You—you japing toad—" gasped Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bolsover major, with a crimson face, plunged into bed. Harry Wharton blew out the candle. Chuckles ran from bed to bed, to which Bolsover and Skinner and Snoop listened with burning ears.

"I say, you fellows—" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, that japing beast took us in—"

"Go hon!"

"But he don't dare to let on why he left Oldcroft, all the same," howled Bunter.

"I've no objection," said Carboy's voice in the darkness, cheerily.

There was a general movement of interest.

"Oh! You've no objection?" said Harry Wharton.

"None in the world."

"What was it, then?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"You'll keep it dark?" asked Carboy.

"Yes, yes."

"Every fellow in the Form will agree to keep it dark?"

"Yes, yes, yes."

"Well, then, I—sure you'll keep it dark?"

"Yes, you ass: get on with it."

"Then I'll own up. I blew up the Head with gunpowder on the Fifth of November."

"What?" howled all the Remove.

"Merely that, and nothing more," yawned Carboy. "But they're frightfully particular about these things at Oldcroft."

After which, Carboy laid his head on his pillow, in peaceful slumber—and was asked no more questions.

THE END.

(Now look out for next week's ripping long story of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "RALLYING ROUND CARBOY!" You'll vote this the best yarn of the series, chums.)

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BEFORE the acrid smoke had cleared, Ferrers Locke was beside the inanimate figure of Jack Drake. Supporting arms went round the youngster and, in one of his very rare moments, the Baker Street detective allowed his emotions free play. His face was drawn and anxious, as he peered into the set features of his young assistant.

"Hypnotised!"

Locke breathed the word in a whisper, as he drew down Drake's eyelid with fingers as gentle as those of any trained nurse.

Drake stirred, and a faint murmur left his lips.

"Poor kid!" said Locke. "A near thing—a dastardly thing. But the fiend responsible did not know enough of the science of hypnotism, or he would not have set the lad such a task."

"And what task was that, Locke?"

The detective, still with Drake's figure in his arms, turned and saw Inspector Pyecroft framed in the doorway, an expression of astonishment on his hard, heavy features.

With a gesture, Ferrers Locke beckoned him.

"I did not know you were here," he said softly.

"I only arrived a couple of seconds ago," returned the C.I.D. man. "But what's all this? And what's the matter with Drake?"

"The poor kid was sent here to shoot me," said Ferrers Locke quietly.

"Eh?"

The detective smiled faintly.

"I see you find that hard to believe," he remarked. "But it's true, nevertheless."

"What on earth are you talking about?"

"You have heard of hypnotism?" asked Locke patiently.

The C.I.D. man snorted.

"Of course!"

"Well, Drake is in a trance," explained Locke. "His orders were to shoot me—to kill me!"

"Phew!"

"The poor kid even went as far as to pull the trigger of that gun," went on Ferrers Locke. "But in that second the power of the hypnotist tumbled down. You know, doubtless, that it is a matter of impossibility for a hypnotised subject to do any act that is against his own code, or better nature?"

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"I know that you cannot make a hypnotised subject commit a theft, if the said subject is not in the habit of stealing," jerked out Pyecroft, in his ponderous fashion.

"Exactly. Neither could Drake commit a murder. He went near to it, perilously near it, but some thread of his own personality took hold over the vile will of the fiend who hypnotised him."

"And who did hypnotise him?"

Locke shrugged his shoulders.

"I have many enemies," he said simply, "and those arraigned against me at this moment are our friends in the Sparsdale Athletic."

Inspector Pyecroft started.

"The Sparsdale Athletic? What——"

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"Just help me make Drake comfortable," he said, "and then I'll explain."

Wonderingly, the C.I.D. man helped his old colleague. Then, when the cushions had been piled around Jack Drake, Ferrers Locke motioned Pyecroft to a chair.

"There's nothing I can do for poor Drake at the moment," he said. "He must come out of his trance in a natural manner. Now, just listen."

Forthwith, he explained all his adventures since he had embarked on the task of rounding up the gang of cracksmen which had been pillaging society with such good fortune. The C.I.D. man listened like one in a dream.

"Phew!" he ejaculated, when Ferrers Locke had finished. "Well, if that doesn't knock Edgar Wallace into a cocked-hat, I don't know what does."

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"A bit of a staggerer, isn't it? In view of what's happened, it is not hard to trace the work of Bigways in this attempt on my life."

"The fiend!" hooted Inspector Pyecroft. "The fiend! We'll arrest him at once!"

Ferrers Locke shook his head.

"Not just yet, old man," he remonstrated. "The time isn't quite ripe. We must play a waiting game. I'm not so sure that Bigways hasn't helped us by attempting to involve Drake in a murder."

"Meaning?"

"That Bigways—if I am not wrong in assuming that he is, behind all this—reckons that Drake will kill—will have killed me by now."

The C.I.D. man nodded.

"Why shouldn't Drake have killed me?" went on Ferrers Locke, speaking more to himself than to the Scotland Yard man. "Why shouldn't I be dead?"

Inspector Pyecroft's eyes almost started from their sockets.

"Eh?" he ejaculated. "Have you gone mad?"

Ferrers Locke smiled.

"Not quite. But I'll explain more fully."

"Good!" ejaculated the inspector dryly.

"Bigways sent Drake here to do me in," said Locke, in a hard, emotionless voice. "Obviously, then, he thought the hypnotic trick would work. It's his fiendish idea of killing two birds with one stone. In short, Ferrers Locke would be murdered, and Jack Drake would go to the gallows as his murderer. Do you follow that?"

The inspector nodded slowly.

"Yes, but——" he began.

"But me no buts," as Shakespeare said," interrupted Locke, with a grim smile. "Ferrers Locke is going to be dead, and Jack Drake is going to be arrested. With a little official wangling that, in effect, can be accomplished."

"But what's the idea?" grunted Pyecroft.

Locke smiled grimly.

"The idea is that Bigways and his gang will congratulate themselves on ridding the criminal world of two dangerous customers. Their fears of discovery will be lulled, for, without wishing to boast, I am sure that Bigways and his gang are genuinely afraid of me."

The C.I.D. man nodded.

"Well, what happens after you're 'dead'?"

"Drake will be arrested," said Locke, with a pitying glance at the sleeping figure of his assistant. "He will not know the rights and wrongs of the affair at the beginning, for a hypnotised subject does not remember what act he has performed while under the 'fluence. Drake will be told in the best official manner, preferably in a well-known public place, that he is arrested on the charge of having committed murder. He will be taken away in full view of the public, and the news will be flashing round the world in a very few minutes."

"But the boy——" began Inspector Pyecroft.

For a moment, indecision wavered in Ferrers Locke's intellectual face.

"It is hard, terribly hard on him," he said softly. "And yet it is for the good of the cause—for the good of the public at large. Bigways and his gang of scoundrels must be roped in."

"But the boy—" again protested Pyecroft. "Couldn't he be let into the secret?"

Locke shook his head.

"He would spoil the whole effect. The success of the scheme demands that his surprise, when arrested, should be genuine."

And Pyecroft, shaking his head as he gazed at Drake, gave in.

"In the meantime, I am going to impersonate Charles St. Leger Boothroyde, the plastic surgeon who was sent to prison for six months. Shortly afterwards, Boothroyde will escape from prison," he waved his hand for silence, as Pyecroft seemed about to interrupt, "and will seek out his old colleague, Bigways, at that gentleman's house. I, disguised as Boothroyde, will be given every facility of escaping."

"I follow," said the C.I.D. man thoughtfully. "You can leave that part of the business to me."

"The rest should be simple," said Locke. "I will arrange that finger-prints are taken of the entire gang. Their faces do not compare with any on your criminal record sheets, on account of Boothroyde's skill with the knife. But, although you change a man's face, you cannot change his finger-prints. I have in mind a wheeze for obtaining those finger-prints, and I'll get them, or perish in the attempt!"

"It's a risky job," said Pyecroft. "Far better let us arrest them right now."

Locke shrugged his shoulders.

"If you can find any real evidence, by all means arrest them. But you can't arrest a team of well-known and popular League footballers, complete with their Managing Director, on mere suspicion. Even then, you have no power to demand their finger-prints. No, Pyecroft, I have given this matter a deal of thought, and I think my plan is the best in the long run. It demands that Drake should suffer a little, but that will be of short duration. On the way to the station you can take the poor kid into your confidence."

"Very well."

Locke looked at the boy.

"Jack's coming to!" he whispered. "I will leave a note here telling him to wait for me at the Kreizler Night Club at one o'clock. It's nearly half-past now, so Jack will get a move on. In the meantime, you will frame the arrest. Got it? Good!"

With a last look at Drake, who now showed active signs of coming round, Ferrers Locke plucked Pyecroft by the arm, and the pair of them silently withdrew, leaving the room in darkness.

The Arrest!

"JUMPING snakes!" muttered Drake. "What's happened?"

He peered about him in the gloom, his mind a welter of confusing thoughts, rubbed his eyes again, and got to his feet.

In a moment the lights of the room were switched on.

"Oh, my head!" He pressed his hands to his throbbing temples in an effort to assuage the pain. Then, of a sudden, he caught sight of the revolver lying on the carpeted floor. That seemed to stir something in his brain.

"What in the name of goodness is that doing here?" he asked himself. "How long have I been here? Ah! I went to Bigways' house, I remember.

The rotter caught me. Wentworth—Lal Begwum—"

His youthful face grew strangely puckered as his brain refused further to function in its task of recalling past events beyond the time when he had seen Bigways and Lal Begwum, the Oriental with the strange, magnetic eyes.

Biting his lip, Drake moved towards the revolver and picked it up. Idly he examined the chambers, and noted with some surprise that one of the cartridges was spent.

"Rummy!" he grunted. "How did it get here? How did I—"

For the space of five seconds he looked at the revolver, strange thoughts chasing their way through his mind. But nothing tangible emerged from that self-analysis, and at last he gave it up, and put the revolver in his pocket.

"I wonder where the guv'nor is?"

That was his next question, and simultaneously he caught sight of a note propped against the ash-tray.

"See you at Kreizler Night Club—one o'clock," it read.

Drake recognised his beloved guv'nor's handwriting at once. Then he whistled in dismay as a glance at the clock on the mantel told him that he was already half an hour late for his appointment.

"Crumbs! I shall have to get a move on!"

He picked up his cap and moved doorwards. Three minutes later a taxi was bearing him away to the rendezvous Locke had named.

The commissionaire there greeted Drake with a cheery smile.

"Mr. Locke here?" asked Jack, and receiving an answer in the negative was somewhat cheered as he made his way into the big lounge. Greetings were smiled or nodded to him as many of the fashionably dressed men and women recognised him. An obsequious waiter ushered him to a table.

Feeling rather out of things, for Drake realised of a sudden that he was the only visitor not in evening dress, he made a lemonade last for quite half an hour. And when the lemonade had gone he realised that Ferrers Locke was exactly one hour and a quarter late.

"This is unusual!" muttered Drake. "Never known the guv'nor to be late. I—"

He broke off suddenly as there was a commotion at the doorway.

On the instant the chatter of the visitors ceased, and all eyes were focused on the figures of a police-inspector and an ordinary constable who came into view.

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

Barely has Ferrers Locke, the Baker Street detective, embarked on the job of rounding up a gang of cracksmen when a chance clue leads him to the Sparsdale Athletic Football Ground. Here, during the home team's fixture with the Arsenal, Wentworth, the Athletic's outside-right, is seen to collapse with a gun-shot wound in the chest. Before he can make a statement, however, he is whirled away in a car belonging to Samuel Bigways, the Managing Director of the Athletic. Convinced that Bigways himself fired the shot, Ferrers Locke joins up with the Athletic, and within a very short time discovers that the team is composed of a team of crooks. Fearing afterwards that in signing on Ferrers Locke he has signed his own death warrant, Bigways resolves to get the detective out of the way. Accordingly he enlists the services of Lal Begwum, a clever Hindu hypnotist, who puts Jack Drake, Ferrers Locke's boy assistant, in a trance, and then orders the youngster to go and shoot his chief. Under the hypnotic spell Drake returns home. Meeting his guv'nor, he fires his gun, at the same time collapsing in a faint.

(Now read on.)

The manager, a foreigner, was gesticulating and talking volubly. But the police-inspector, grim of countenance, heeded him not. His keen eyes were travelling to every quarter of the room. Suddenly they steeled as they lingered on Jack Drake.

The inspector whispered something to the constable, and the pair of them marched down the gangway. Scores of eyes were interested in that movement, and the band left a popular fox-trot unfinished.

Realising that the policemen were making for him, Drake shifted in his chair and blushed uncomfortably. He had a feeling of impending trouble.

The inspector and the constable stopped at the table. Behind them, a look of horror on his face, was the manager of the club.

"Jack Drake," began the inspector ponderously, "I have here a warrant for your arrest—"

"What?" ejaculated Drake.

The inspector frowned grimly, and continued:

"You are arrested on a charge of murder—"

Drake's face blanched.

"Are you mad?" he said faintly.

"Young man, you are arrested for the murder of Ferrers Locke, of Baker Street," went on the police-inspector. "And it is my duty to warn you that anything you may say will be taken down and used in evidence against you."

For the space of a few seconds Drake sat there at the table like a stunned being. Everyone in the lounge had heard the crisp, metallic words of the inspector, and all eyes were focused in Drake's direction.

Drake recovered his powers of speech and started to his feet, his face ablaze with anger.

"This is monstrous, officer!" he said. "Mr. Locke is—"

"Mr. Locke has been found dead in his rooms at Baker Street," broke in the inspector, in a toneless voice, little knowing, of course, that the instructions he had received from a higher officer were the direct result of a quarter of an hour's scheming on the part of the supposed dead man.

"Dead!"

Drake's face paled to a deathly hue. Some flicker of memory cast him back to Bigways' house in Cavendish Square. Again he saw Lal Begwum's terrible eyes. Some instinct prompted Jack's hand to travel to his jacket pocket. In it reposed the revolver he had found lying on the floor in the sitting-room at Baker Street. He had brought it with him to show to Ferrers Locke.

The inspector who, to do him justice, really thought he was in the presence of a murderer, mistook the action. He leaped forward, and a muscular grip fastened on Drake's arm.

"He's armed, Wilkins!"

The constable nodded, and his hand groped in Drake's jacket pocket. It emerged with the revolver.

The guests were on their feet now, crowding round the table. Everywhere Drake saw condemning, horrified eyes.

Arrested for murder!

Arrested for murdering Ferrers Locke—his beloved chief!

The thought sickened Drake. He licked his dry lips, and stood like one in a trance, for once in his life thoroughly unnerved and at a loss for words.

Mechanically he walked alongside the inspector as that individual drew him away from the table.

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The constable pocketed the revolver and ranged himself on the other side of the prisoner.

And with the manager still gesticulating and talking volubly, the little procession moved out to the street where a taxi was waiting.

Behind them they left a club full of horror-stricken guests, now all trying to talk at once.

Ferrers Locke had framed the arrest for the sake of publicity. It received all the publicity he wanted, for within three hours the newsboys were yelling the tidings through the streets of London, whilst on every hand could be seen glaring posters bearing the legend:

"FAMOUS BAKER STREET DETECTIVE MURDERED!"

BOY ASSISTANT ARRESTED!"

At a certain house in Cavendish Square a heavy-faced individual was rubbing his hands with satisfaction. His fiendish scheme had worked. Ferrers Locke was dead; Drake was under arrest! Verily had he "killed two birds with one stone."

But then Samuel Bigways in his sheer egotism little guessed that the fiendish scheme he had put into operation was to recoil on his own head.

That was something the future held in store for him!

The Escape!

LONDON, and all England for that matter, was provided with a fresh sensation that day, for the evening papers featured the news of a convict's escape from Blaxton Gaol. Charles St. Leger Boothroyde, the plastic surgeon, who had been sentenced to a term of imprisonment for fraud, was the convict—at least, so the

reading public was given to understand.

In reality it was Ferrers Locke.

The detective had visited Boothroyde at the prison. In the privacy of the governor's office Locke had interrogated his man; but, as he had anticipated, Boothroyde did not "split" on Samuel Bigways. All the time he was talking Ferrers Locke was making a mental note of Boothroyde's facial characteristics.

Boothroyde had been sent back to his task, and then, with the governor of the prison, who was in the "know," eyeing him in blank amazement Ferrers Locke proceeded to transform himself into the person of Charles St. Leger Boothroyde. An adept at the art of make-up and disguise, the Baker Street detective quickly built up his nose and eyebrows to resemble those of the man he was to impersonate. A red, closely-cropped wig helped matters considerably. A few skilful lines with a pencil gave the necessary weakness to the set of the mouth.

"Jove, Locke," exclaimed the governor, "you're a marvel!" Locke chuckled.

"I'm not finished yet," he remarked. "Kindly hand me Boothroyde's clothes."

A suit of blue serge—the very clothes which Boothroyde had worn during his trial—made a remarkable difference. Hunching his shoulders a trifle in the manner of Boothroyde, Ferrers Locke gave a preliminary cough, also in the manner of Charles St. Leger Boothroyde, and turned to the governor.

"And how does this strike you?" It was a high-pitched, nervous voice, and it was so realistic that the governor jumped.

"Jingo!" he ejaculated. "For one moment I really thought it was Boothroyde speaking."

"Good enough!" laughed Ferrers

Locke, eyeing himself in the glass and screwing up one side of his face after the fashion of Boothroyde. "And you think I look something like the prisoner?"

"His twin brother!"

"That is indeed a compliment," said Locke. "And now I must proceed to more desperate work. I am sorry the public have been given—or are to be given—two bogus reports in one day; still, it's all part of the game. You will let me out, my dear sir, and you will kindly report the escape of Charles St. Leger Boothroyde one hour from now."

"Rely on me, Mr. Locke!" The governor shook his visitor warmly by the hand. "Good luck!"

Five minutes later Ferrers Locke was making his way as quickly as possible to Bigways' house in Cavendish Square.

He smiled grimly to himself as he pictured the shock Bigways would get when he presented himself.

Still walking with slightly hunched shoulders, Ferrers Locke at last turned into the square. The night was dark; to gain access to the house from the gardens in the rear of it was simple enough.

Locke breathed more freely as he peered in at the french-windows of the library, for a broad-backed figure sitting at a writing desk was easily recognisable as Mr. Samuel Bigways. Hanging about in the grounds waiting for Bigways was not a prospect Locke had looked forward to. But the luck was with him.

The Sparsdale director looked pleased with himself, and occasionally a soft chuckle would escape him. Doubtless he was thinking of the "two birds he had killed."

Locke waited a few moments, got himself well in hand for the part he was to play, and then tapped softly at the window.

Tap, tap, tap!

Locke had to repeat the tapping before Bigways' attention was attracted. Then came the crucial moment.

Bigways rose from the chair, a slight frown of annoyance crossing his heavy features. But that frown speedily gave way to astonishment as his eyes dwelt on the figure of the man he thought to be in prison.

"You!" The ejaculation came hoarsely. Bigways' jaw dropped, his eyes almost started from their sockets. "You!"

Locke, assuming the air and demeanour of an escaped convict with commendable cleverness, knew that he had passed the test. Not a suspicion flickered across the astonished face of Samuel Bigways.

With feverish haste he opened the windows and admitted Ferrers Locke. Then he pulled the heavy curtains across, looked the door of the library, and stood staring at his visitor as if he couldn't believe the evidence of his own eyes.

"Good heavens!" He spoke at last. "What are you doing here?"

Really the question was superfluous. Locke could have smiled, but he remembered his part. His breathing was laboured, his hands twitched with excitement; he was the hunted man to the life.

"Hide me!" he gasped. "I couldn't stand another moment of that life. I saw my chance to escape, and I took it. My own clothes—that was lucky, wasn't it?"

He ended with a shrill burst of hysterical laughter that annoyed Bigways,

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for he strode forward and shook Locke by the shoulder.

"Stop that, you fool!" he hissed. "Do you want everyone to know that you're here?"

Locke wilted beneath the blaze of anger and sank into a chair.

"Hide me!" he pleaded. "Hide me!"

"Has anyone followed you?" demanded Bigways.

Locke shook his head weakly.

"No. I took my chance and bolted. Hide me. I'll never go back to that living death again."

Bigways took a flask from his pocket and gave it to his visitor.

"Here, take a nip of this—will pull you together."

Locke swallowed a mouthful of the liquor.

"That's better," he said in the shrill voice of Charles St. Leger Boothroyde. "I feel like a new man."

Bigways pulled up a chair, lit a cigar, and sat facing his visitor thoughtfully.

"You've done a darned risky thing coming here,"

he said at length. "Darned risky. If any other man had tried it on I would have sent for the police at once. But you're a privileged person. You're sure you've not been trailed here?"

"Quite sure!"

"You must lie doggo in the secret room for a day or two, and then we must smuggle you out of the country," said Bigways quietly. "I have lots to tell you. But the boys will be here very shortly. They've been playing at Portsmouth to-day. What a surprise for 'em when they see you!"

Locke smiled.

"I've been doing a lot of thinking while I've been stuck in that prison," he said. "You know it is generally thought that a man's finger-prints cannot be changed?"

"That's always been the rub, Charles," Bigways remarked. "You've done the faces so that the boys' own grandmothers wouldn't recognise them. But the finger-prints—"

"I've thought it all out," said Locke. "I feel sure I can change those, too."

Bigways sat bolt upright in his chair.

"The devil you can?"

Locke nodded. He was thoroughly at home in his part, and he knew that success was now within his reach.

For the space of half an hour the two sat talking, Bigways even speaking of his removal of Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake.

"That was clever," said his visitor. "I always held a great and wholesome respect for Ferrers Locke."

"Well, the dog's hunting crooks somewhere else now," chuckled Bigways. "I—Hullo, here's the boys!"

He rose to his feet and moved to the door. With his hand on the knob he winked at Locke.

"The boys will be in the dining-room. When I bang the gong just put your nose in. You follow?"

Locke nodded, and then allowed his face to relax as the door closed behind Bigways' broad back.

Meantime, the managing director of

The Inspector stepped up to the table. "Jack Drake," he said, "I have here a warrant for your arrest—" "What?" ejaculated Ferrers Locke's assistant. The inspector frowned grimly and continued. "You are arrested on a charge of murder!" (See page 25.)

the Sparsdale Athletic was confronting eleven very serious-looking footballers. The majority of them possessed newspapers—newspapers that proclaimed the escape of Charles St. Leger Boothroyde.

"Heard the news, boss?" asked Fred Bulsome.

"Boothroyde's bolted from gaol!" said the Sparsdale goalkeeper.

"Got clean away," said Ruff Thompson; and he thrust his newspaper into Bigways' hands.

The managing director read the report of the escape, and then gestured the eleven players into their seats.

"I've got a little surprise for you, boys," he said, picking up a drum-stick and tapping an ornate-looking dinner-gong.

Gong!

It was the signal for which Locke had been told to wait. As the note peeled out he trod quietly from the library and made his way to the dining-room. The footballers were looking at Bigways curiously, but as the door of the room opened their attention naturally turned thence.

"Boothroyde!" Eleven voices uttered the name simultaneously as the figure of the plastic surgeon came into full view.

And Ferrers Locke, bowing slightly, gave the preliminary cough of the man he was impersonating, and returned a greeting:

"Charmed to meet you all again!"

Bigways beckoned Locke to a seat at the table, and in a very few minutes Locke was answering a score of questions the "boys" hurled at him. Not a suspicion had any of them that he wasn't the man whose surgical skill had so effectively given them a permanent facial disguise.

Despite the perilous part he was playing, Locke thoroughly enjoyed the meal that ensued. In bursts of confidence the "boys," including Bigways himself, dilated on the "cribs" that had been cracked since he—"Boothroyde"—had

been sentenced to a term of imprisonment.

"Bravo!" said Locke at the finish. "I see I've missed a wonderful time. Still, I hadn't forgotten you, boys. You will—"

Bigways' heavy voice broke in.

"Charles reckons that he can fake your finger-prints, my boys," he said. "That'll put us on the safety line for keeps then. It'll have to be a quick job, for he'll have to fly the country as soon as the hue and cry of his escape dies down."

"It'll be something to occupy my mind," said Locke. "If you chaps will give me your finger-prints tabulated with your names so that I don't get identities confused, I'll take them to the secret room and browse over them. Then, to-morrow, I'll start on some of you."

It was surprising how these case-hardened rogues rose to the bait. Bigways produced some marking ink and paper, and within five minutes eleven "wanted" men were willingly giving undeniable proof of their real identity into the hands of the man they feared most in all the world—the man whom they all thought to be dead!

With a cheery smile Ferrers Locke pocketed these slips of paper. He was thinking of Pycroft and that individual's surprise and delight when, with the finger-prints in his possession, he compared them with the official records.

Eleven cheery footballers took their leave of Charles St. Leger Boothroyde that night, but not one of them would have slept so soundly in his bed had he known the real identity of the man who now held the proof of his double life in his hands!

(This is a bold step on Ferrers Locke's part, isn't it, chums? Whether or no it meets with success you will learn when you read next week's gripping instalment.)

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Stars and their Methods!

(Continued from page 2.)

Then I have seen him turn a match in Burnley's favour by taking the wing-half position, and going right up in support of his forwards. This suggests—and is a fact—that he believes in the wing-half going well up.

Speed he possesses, of course, and the never-say-die spirit in tackling. A great-hearted player, and the sort of fellow who revels in a specially hard struggle. As a captain he is not afraid to take the courageous course, and "pull the team about" when things are going badly.

During the present season there have been rumours that Hill might leave Burnley and throw in his lot with some other club. As a matter of fact there are several club managers of my acquaintance who would willingly pay as much—or possibly more—for Hill than Burnley paid for him.

But personally, I doubt if he will leave Burnley, because he now has very good reasons for staying in the town. You see, Jack of the auburn locks is not one of those fellows who merely live for the day. He thinks about to-morrow—about the time when he won't be able to play football.

Footballer and Outfitter!

So soon after he went to Burnley he had a good look round with a view to finding some business to which he could give his spare time. And he has now at least two shops in Burnley where his men friends can buy the things they need with which to adorn themselves—collars, ties, caps, hats, and so on.

Jack has promised all the players of the team of which he is captain a new cap when they win the Cup, but when I last saw the Burnley players they didn't seem to want anything new. They were all turned out smart and proper, which, of course, is the correct thing when the skipper is a gents' outfitter. It would never do for the Burnley players to look anything but smart; that would be a bad advertisement, and Jack Hill believes in good advertisements. The same qualities which have made him successful at football will lead him to success in business; thoroughness all the time, and a willingness to learn.

Perhaps it should also be mentioned that the Burnley captain is not at all a

bad cricketer. He has been known to make centuries in the Durham Senior League, and has also been known to return good bowling figures. Altogether, a good all-round sport—and a sportsman.

EDITORIAL!

A LOT has been written about the "good old days," when such things as wireless, motor-cars, railway expresses, and air-planes were unknown to the good people of merrie England, and such writings usually stir our imagination to the full. We picture the stage coach and those daring gentlemen of the road who held up at the pistol's point the traveller who looked as if he were worth plucking. We see the well-patronised taverns of England's seaports, with mine host, a jolly fellow, bustling to supply the needs of his customers. And what a mixed crowd of sea dogs, fresh from the hazards and perils of the sea, with strange tales of bloodshed, of piracy—of hidden treasure. Those were days of adventure, certainly, when men settled their differences with the steel; when men braved hardships and perils with a light laugh. And it is of this period our next serial story will treat.

"WOLVES OF THE SPANISH MAIN!"

By Ernest McKeag,

will take Magnetites back to those stirring days with a vividness that marks the good story—the story that holds the interest of its readers from the first to the last chapter. You will roam the high seas hand-in-hand with Roger Bartlett, a lad of fifteen, whose spirit craves for adventure. You will meet that prince of gentlemen, the Chevalier. You will meet, too, Slim Jim and One-Eye, two whose names are feared wherever the peaceful trader sails, for they acknowledge only one flag, and that's the skull and crossbones. Ruthless, merciless, these buccaneers sail the main, ever on the look-out for treasure. Treasure! Doesn't the very word send a thrill through you? It must do, for although years divide that period in history, when piracy was rife, from the present, the love of adventure burns just as fiercely in the heart of every boy now as it did then. You'll enjoy this coming treat, chums, believe me. It will appear in a fortnight's time!—Ed.

The Rival Firework Clubs!

(Continued from page 15.)

"Enuff! My mind is made up!" he cried. "Pack them up at once, and deliver them to the dunjuns underneath the Skool."

It was hopeless to argue the toss with the Head in his prezzent mood. The juniors, with despair in their hearts, packed up the fireworks as instructed, and the Head, grinning triumphantly now, returned to the Masters' Room, where the Masters' Firework Club was still in conference.

"What a sell, you chaps," said Jack Jolly, "and we've taken all the trubble to save up our spondulicks like we did. Think of the study feeds we could have had—doenuts, chocolate eclares, mince patties, and numerous other delishus comestibles. There's no dout about it, Dr. Birchmall is the biggest tirant that ever walked in two shoes."

"Rather!" agreed Bright. "If I had my way the old rotter would be hung, drawn, and quartered, and then shoved in boiling oil!"

"Anyway, I suppose it's not much use crying over spilt milk," said Jack Jolly.

"Not the least little bit," agreed Merry. "We must think of some gilt-edged wheeze to do old Birchmall yet. Never let it be said that the Fourth have had to take a back seat, even where masters are concerned. And we've got the right sort of nappers for wheezes, haven't we, chaps?"

"Rather!" chorused the others.

Grato was the delite of his subordinates when Dr. Birchmall proudly announced that he had acquired a magnificent supply of fireworks for their Guy Forks' Nite celebrations.

Meanwhile, the members of the Junior Firework Club, their faces the picture of woo, carted the fireworks which were no longer theirs, down into the subterranean cellars below St. Sam's.

It certainly looked as if the juniors' firework celebrations were doomed. But alreddy, the brane of Jack Jolly was bizzily engaged on the problem, and it remained to be seen whether the Head's triumf would be long-lived or the reverse.

THE END.

(You'll laugh loud and long when you read the next amusing yarn in this series, entitled: "SPOOFING THE HEAD!" It's one of Dicky Nugent's real rib-ticklers!)

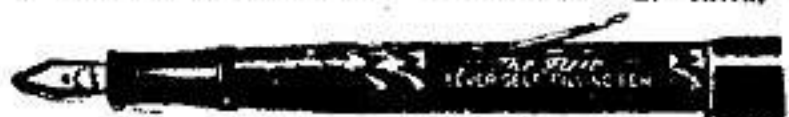
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The Rival Fireworks Clubs!

DICKY NUGENT.



Throughout the year Jack Jolly & Co. have schemed and scraped to celebrate Guy Fawkes' Day with a pyrotechnic display which will put the Crystal Palace fireworks in the shade. Whether their efforts will end in smoke of a different nature, however, remains to be seen!—Ed.

Bright of the Fourth hastily switched off the lights, plunging the room into inky blackness.

"And now what about suggestions for this year's guy?" said Jack Jolly. "Would any gentleman like to name a suitable subject?"

"Yes, rather!" The Head!" yelled scores of voices immediately.

"Good wheeze!" grinned the kaplin of the Fourth through the darkness.

"Hands up, all those in favour!" Bright switched on the lights again, and it was then seen that every hand in the Common-room was raised aloft.

"Passed, non-com!" announced Jack. "The Head it is, then. And now, all that remains is for me to hand over to Bangs the wearisome task of purchasing the fireworks. Would you mind stepping fourth, Bangs?"

"What-ho!" grinned Bangs, stepping fourth with alacrity to receive the spondulix.

"Here is the locker, then," said Jack Jolly, as he handed over the well-filled money-bag which had reposed on the table. "You will find that this bag contains exactly thirteen and eleven pence three farthings in English money, three dud German marks, a couple of marbles, half-a-dozen buttons, and an I O U for tuppence from Tubby Barrell. With that capital, Bangs, you should be able to obtain a supply that will light up the district for miles around."

"Rely on me!" grinned Bangs, as he collared the heavy load. "I'll forward the funds to my paler by registered post immediately, and within a couple of days we shall receive our fireworks to put the Crystal Palace in the shade."

That concluded the business of the evening, and the meeting then broke up. Now Bangs of the Third, altho the other members of the Junior Firework Club didn't know it, was a rank outsider, and a fearful cad. Underneath his grinning egg-shaped face was hidden the cloven hoof of a snake in the grass. As a matter of fact, on the quiet, he was a toady of the Head's, and frequently sneaked to him about the doings of the juniors at St. Sam's.

Consequently, Jack Jolly, in handing over the spondulix to Bangs was innocently jeopardising the very existence of the Junior Firework Club itself!

As soon as he left the Common-room, Bangs went straight to the Head's study, and "wreathed" on the door in a sinister kind of wreath.

From within the study came a mormer of voices, but nobody bade him enter. Bangs, however, did not hesitate. He simply opened the door, and trotted in, uninvited.

The voices were those of the Head, and Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth, and Bangs grinned as his ears caught the gist of their conversation.

"The position is simply despicable," Mr. Lickham was saying. "The Masters' Firework Club is broke to the wicks, and unless a miracle happens, we shan't have the funds for a fireworks display on Guy Fawkes' Night at all. Just think of the humiliation we shall suffer, when the Junior Club start chucking their

weight about with catharine wheels and Roman candles, and we find ourselves without even a Chinese cracker to bless ourselves with!"

"It's a bit ruff, sir, and no mistake!" agreed Mr. Lickham, scratching his head. "Of course, I suppose we can't very well collar the juniors' fireworks for our own use!"

"I'd jolly well like to!" hissed the Head, his eyes gleaming. "But it would be a bit infra dig for masters to join in a fireworks raid. And we can't very well confiscate them without some plausible egg-cuse, can we?"

"Ahem! Ahem!" cooed Bangs, trying to draw their attention to himself.

The two conspirators looked round with a guilty start, and Mr. Lickham coloured slightly. Dr. Birchmell, however, welcomed the newcomer with open arms, when he saw who it was.

"Trot in, Bangs, my boy!" he cried, heartily. "No need to look like a dying duck, Lickham. Bangs is my principal sneek and toady, so he is to be trusted."

"Oh, I see, sir," murmured the master of the Fourth, in tones of considerable relief. "Why has he introduced on our deliberations, then?"

"For a very good reason, if I'm not mistaken!" grinned the Head. "Speak out, my boy, and don't be afraid. What have you to report to me? Is that beastly rotter, Frank Fearless, plotting some practical joke on his headmaster? Or are Jack Jolly and his pals up to some of their pranks again?"

"Not egg-cuse, sir!" grinned Bangs. "As a matter of fact, nearly all the Lower School are in it this time."

"They are, are they?" said Dr. Birchmell, a fierce frown beginning to appear on his face. "It's the Junior Firework Club, sir?"

"They've just been making their plans for Guy Fawkes' Night, and what do you think they're going to do?" The Head stroked his beard reflectively, then he grinned slyly.

"I think I can guess. They're going to make a guy of Mr. Lickham!" he said. "Here, stop it, sir!" cried Mr. Lickham, indignantly, his face turning the colour of a ripe tomato.

"Well, perhaps one can hardly blame them. I have often been struck with your resemblance to a typical scarecrow, if you'll permit me to say so!" grinned the Head. "I presume I guessed correctly, Bangs?"

"No, sir!" answered Bangs. "One of the members did suggest Mr. Lickham, but most of them thought he wasn't ugly enough. So they chose you, instead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Mr. Lickham, while the Head went simply livid with rage, and pranced up and down the study like a cat on hot bricks.

"Donner und blitz!" he roared, lapsing into German in order to egg-cress his feelings better. "Never have I been so insulted. Send for the whole of the Lower School immediately, and I will flog them all until they shreek for mercy!"

"Half-a-minute!" interposed Mr. Lickham. "If you do that, they will realise at once that you are getting information from a secret source, and Bangs may be too scared to carry favour with you again. Take my tip, sir, and don't have them mustered for punishment yet."

"H'm! Perhaps you're right!" growled the Head. "Nevertheless, I'll take jolly good care they don't make an exhibition of me on Guy Fawkes' Night. Thinking it over, Lickham, this is just the egg-cuse we wanted for collaring their fireworks. With the help of Bangs, we can perhaps get them to convict themselves out of their own mouths, and then give us the chance of confiscating their fireworks in a quite legitimate manner."

"Egg-cuse!" agreed Mr. Lickham. "Let's sit down quietly and talk it over." Dr. Birchmell nodded, and sat down, and Bangs, the sneek of the Third and the traitor to the Junior Firework Club, stayed on and lent his aid.

Half-an-hour later, his cheeks bulging with the toffy Dr. Birchmell had given him, he left the Head's study. By that time a fowl plot had been hatched for hiding the Junior Firework Club and

handing over to the Masters' Club the proceeds of their theft.

"WHAT'S going to be done?" That was the question everybody was asking at the Masters' Meeting, two days later—everybody, that is, with the exception of Mr. Chas. Tyzer, who, being of a rather original turn of mind, asked:

"What's going to be done?" The problem of Guy Fawkes' Night had by this time become acute. All the masters were noticeably anxious that their fireworks display should eclipse that of the juniors. The puzzle was to know how that could be managed.

As usual, they were all hard up. Mr. Swishingham had suggested a whip-round, and hopelessly passed a hat round the gathering. All that he succeeded in collecting was a fano from Monsieur Froggery, a cigarette-picture from the Head, and a piece of string, a collar-stud, a couple of buttons, and a chunk of partly-chewed toffy from the rest. It was quite a useful sort of collection, of course, but it was doubtful whether the sum total would buy a grate many fireworks.

It was at that moment, that Bangs of the Third poked his head round the door, and winked meaningly at the Head.

Dr. Birchmell was on his feet immediately, his eyes gleamed with egg-citement. "The fireworks have arrived?" he asked, hoarsely.

"They've just been taken to Jack Jolly's study, sir!" he answered. "Good egg!" muttered the Head, then, turning to the Masters' Meeting, he cried: "Pray egg-cuse me, gentlemen. I am called away on urgent business. Please carry on, your deliberations during my absence, and I trust that by the time I return, I shall have welcome news for you!"

Most of the masters looked rather surprised, for Mr. Lickham was the only one among them who was aware of the sinister plot that was afoot. However, they cheerfully egg-cused their principal and resounded their discussion without him, leaving him to wander out of the room, and join Bangs outside.

"And now for it!" hissed the Head, rubbing his bony hands together with malicious satisfaction. "You understand what you are to do, Bangs?"

"Quite, sir!" nodded Bangs. "I am to proceed to Jolly's study on the pretext of egg-criminating the fireworks, and cunningly contrive to get them to talk about making a guy of you. In the meantime, outside the study, you'll be listening."

"Eavesdropping!" corrected Dr. Birchmell, with a frown. "Eavesdropping, I mean. When you have heard enough, you'll open the door, and show your face."

"I'll refrain from the use of slang egg-cpressions, Bangs!" snapped the Head. "What you mean is that I'll show my face. However, you seem to savvy what is required of you, so you can buzz off. I'll trot along after you in a minute or two."

Bangs nodded, and buzzed off in the direction of the Fourth form passage. After kicking his heels about for a minute or so, Dr. Birchmell followed.



As he drew near the study of the Kaplin of the Fourth, he could tell by the egg-cited chatter that was going on inside, that a large crowd of juniors had assembled to inspect the containment of fireworks that had arrived.

With a sinister grin on his face, the Head tip-toed down the passage to the study door, and listened to what was being said.

Bangs of the Third was evidently doing his work well, for just as the Head arrived, the voice of the firework manufacturer's son was crying:

"What with the fireworks and the guy, we ought to have a jolly good time of it. Let's see, now, who's going to be our guy did we say?"

"Why, the Head, of course!" replied half-a-dozen voices at once. "That was Dr. Birchmell's cue. From-ing fearfully, he flung open the door of the study, and yelled:

"So that's your giddy game, is it? Making a guy of your own headmaster, by hooky! How fortunate that I arrived at this moment!"

"Oh, grate pip!" gasped the juniors, agape. "The Head!" said the Head, grimly. "Wretched boys! You are caught in the giddy act this time, and no error! Denials and prevarications are useless after what I've heard."

The juniors looked at each other hopelessly. It certainly didn't seem much use trying to wiggle out of it, in the circumstances.

"I can scarcely believe that you have had the audacity to plan to guy me," continued the Head, sternly. "However, ever, seeing a believing, and what I have seen with my own ears can't be denied. Now listen to your punishment. I am not going to flog you—"

"Oh, good!" murmured the juniors, brieving up a bit. "Instead of that, I am going to pay you back in your own coin. As your misdeeds, the Firework Club intended to guy me, I am going to sentence all the members to remain in the School on Guy Fawkes' Night!"

"Oh, crilexy!" gasped the juniors, in utter dismay. "Furthermore," went on the Head, savagely, "I am going to confiscate all the fireworks belonging to the Club!"