

BEATS ALL OTHERS IN QUALITY AND QUANTITY !

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The MAGNET

EVERY SATURDAY.

2^d



BILLY BUNTER TAKES IT EASY WHILE OTHERS WORK!

(See the grand school story of Harry Wharton & Co., inside.)

More Useful Prizes Waiting To Be Won, Boys—See Below!



Come Into the Office, Boys!

Always glad to hear from you, chums, so drop me a line to the following address: The Editor, The "Magnet" Library, The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

NOTE.—All jokes and limericks should be sent to c/o "Magnet," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

LAST week, I told you how to stage a "thought-reading" stunt amongst your chums, but there wasn't space to elaborate upon it. However, I expect a number of you will be going to various parties in the near future, and you might like to mystify the rest of the guests. So I have prevailed upon "Mr. X" to tell you how, with the aid of a pack of cards, you can keep a whole party guessing.

Proceed in the usual manner. That is, have a chum blindfolded, and placed in a position where he cannot see what is going on, but can hear all that is said. Then ask someone to pick a card—and when you ask the blindfolded one, he will be able to tell what it is. This code is a little more elaborate, and needs some practice before you present it in public—but the practice will be found worth while!

HOW TO WANGLE IT!

Cards are divided into four suits, and the first thing is to convey the suit of the chosen card. The first word of the "thought-reader's" question conveys this: "What" means "Hearts"; "Can" means "Spades"; "Will" means "Diamonds"; and "I" means "Clubs."

"What is the suit of this card?" asks the thought-reader, and the blindfolded one immediately answers: "Hearts." For the other suits the questions are: "Can you tell me the suit of this card?" (Spades); "Will you tell me the suit of this card?" (Diamonds); and "I want to know the suit of this card" (Clubs).

All those questions end with the words: "of this card," and that means that they are not "picture cards." If the card should happen to be a King, Queen, or Jack, the question is put as follows: "What is this card's suit?" and the sentence always ends with "this card's suit!"

Then the questioner asks: "Is it a King, Jack, or a Queen?" and the reply is: "Jack"—because the questioner always mentions the actual card *second* when he asks! He can say: "King, Queen, or Jack?" or "Queen, King, or Jack?" just as he likes—so long as the actual card is mentioned *second*.

If the card has a number, he asks: "Is it an odd or an even number?" and the one who is blindfolded knows that it is even—i.e., the *second* mentioned. You have already discovered the suit of the card, and whether it is odd or even. Now comes the task of finding out the exact number, and here is the code for that:

"I should like to know what it is," means either one or two. (You already know whether it is odd or even.)

"I should like to know the number?" means either three or four.

"I should like to know the number, please!" means either five or six.

"Please tell me what it is?" means either seven or eight.

"Number, please!" means either nine or ten.

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SIMPLE, ISN'T IT?

But your chums won't think so! They'll be completely mystified, and you can do the trick as many times as you like without fear of it being discovered, so long as you commit the code to memory perfectly. It's not a bad idea to let everybody in the company pick a card. Then they can see for themselves that there is no fake—so far as they know!

One word of warning, however! Don't do the trick if there are several readers of the MAGNET present! As for those who don't read this paper of ours—well, it's their own fault if they are mystified!

MIRTH FOLLOWS MYSTERY,

so let's laugh with Norman Bennett, of 36, Hazelbeach Road, Aum Rock, Birmingham, who earns a penknife this week, for the following yarn:



HIS JOB!

Claude: "I say, I've got a new job. I'm cashier at the police-station!"

Clarence: "What do you do?"

Claude: "Aw! I count the coppers as they come in!"



GOSH, some of you fellows do ask some peculiar questions! Here is Alf Newman, of Watford, asking me:

HOW LONG IS THE "TWINKLING OF AN EYE"?

It may interest Alf—and some others of you—to know that a German scientist has worked this out, and he calculates that it is equivalent to two-fifths of a second! All I've got to say is, that if Billy Bunter can finish off a cake "in the twinkling of an eye," he's certainly going some!

My next letter comes from a very despondent reader, who wishes to remain anonymous. He's rather discouraged because, he says, that no matter how hard he tries to study, he always makes a hopeless mess of things; and he is wondering how he is going to get on in the future, when he has left school.

DON'T WORRY, OLD CHAP,

you're not the first fellow to suffer from this failing—and you won't be the last, by a long chalk! If it's any consolation to you, you can reflect that a large number of great men suffered in the same way. Isaac Watts, Emerson, Demosthenes, and others were looked upon as duffers and dreamers in their youth—but they won through! So stick it! It's only the "quitter" who never gets on!

Jack Wilde (no relation to Jonathan of the same name!) wants to know something about

THE BOW STREET RUNNERS

who figure so prominently in stories of highwaymen. The "runners" were really special officers who were attached to the police office of the metropolis in Bow Street. Their uniform included red waistcoats, and from this they were popularly known as "Robin Redbreasts." Despite many of the harsh things said about them in highwaymen stories, they certainly did detect a large number of hidden crimes, and, in fact, were the forerunners of Scotland

Yard. They were superseded by the new Police Force, in 1829.

HERE'S an interesting item for you! Do you know that, at one time, Christmas was not celebrated on December 25th, but was actually celebrated on January 7th? It's a fact! I mentioned this to Dicky Nugent, last time I saw him, and he was most jubilant. He said he didn't see why old customs should be allowed to fall into disuse, and he intended to ask his pater if they couldn't celebrate the day, by having another Christmas dinner! Somehow or other, I don't think Master Dicky will be lucky!

Still they come! What? Why, prize-winning limericks, of course! Here's one that comes from W. Patrick, of Steppy Lane, Lesbury, Northumberland:

Said Bunter to Nugent: "I say,
There's been a most awful delay—"
But Franky just grinned,
Said: "I'm not being skinned
By any fat boulder to-day!"

He's received a MAGNET pocket-wallet by now, and I dare say that his chums are admiring it, and making up their minds to have a shot at getting one for themselves. Why don't you try your luck? Our prizes are worth having—and it costs nothing to try!

Once more into the—black book!

Here's next week's programme: Frank Richards kicks off with a real "topper" of a yarn—one that you won't put down until you've finished! It's entitled:

"WANTED BY THE POLICE!"

and is a sequel to this week's grand story. The title alone suggests a series of thrills and exciting situations, and, believe me, chums, you won't be disappointed in this respect. A quick-firing yarn from beginning to end—that's it!

There's another fine, long instalment of our serial,

"PETER FRAZER—IRONMASTER."

And when I tell you it's the best instalment John Brearley has written, it'll give you some little idea of the treat in store for you.

I mustn't forget Dicky Nugent's contribution! It's entitled:

"CLEVERCOVE'S WHEEZE!"

and, as usual, is calculated to give you a pain—from too much laughing! I advise you to unbutton your waistcoat before you start reading it!

Another interesting article dealing with "footer," and my Chat complete the programme. Any complaints? No, I thought not!

Very well, until next week—adios!
YOUR EDITOR.

YOU'LL FIND FRANK RICHARDS IN TIP-TOP FETTLE IN—



THE FORM-MASTER'S FAVOURITE!

—This Week's Superb New Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

First Day of Term!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "This way, you men!"

Bob, hanging out of the carriage doorway with one hand, at a rather dangerous angle, waved the other over the crowd that thronged the platform at Lantham Junction.

"Wharton! Inky! Nugent! Johnny! This way, old beans!"

Bob's powerful voice boomed far and wide.

Among the crowd surging along the platform, all looking for seats in the train bound for Courtfield and Greyfriars, Bob's eyes picked up his four chums, and he waved and shouted to them.

On the first day of the term there was always a crowd of Greyfriars men at Lantham, and a bigger crowd than ever at Courtfield. The Famous Five, of the Remove, had agreed to meet at Lantham, and the first comer was to bag a carriage for the five. Bob was the first comer, and he bagged a first-class carriage in the corridor train, though it was not easy to keep sole possession of it when he had bagged it.

Other fellows, hunting for seats, did not see leaving a carriage empty for Bob's comrades, and they signified the same in the usual way.

Which was the reason why Temple of the Fourth was now holding a crimson-spotted handkerchief to his nose, and Skinner of the Remove was rubbing his chin ruefully, and Hobson of the Shell was sitting on the platform in a dazed and dizzy condition.

"This way, old beans!" roared Bob Cherry.

The four juniors waved back from the crowd and converged upon the carriage that Bob was keeping for them.

But other seekers of seats were nearer.

"Here's an empty carriage," said Coker of the Fifth. "Come on, Potter! Come on, Greene! Get out of the way, kid!" Bob Cherry did not get out of the way.

He stood on it, like a rock.

"Sorry, Coker, this carriage is taken!" he said.

"Don't be a young ass! Bunk!"

"Rats!"

Coker glared.

"Do you want me to shift you?" he demanded.

"Not the least little bit in the world, old thing," answered Bob cheerily.

"Run away and play!"

This, from a Lower Fourth junior to a senior man in the Fifth Form, was sheer cheek.

simultaneous howls awoke the echoes of Lantham Junction as Potter and Greene were strewn on the platform. Coker sat down between them.

"Oh!" he gasped.

"This way!" roared Bob. "Roll up, Remove!"

From one direction Harry Wharton and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh came speeding up, elbowing their way recklessly through a crowd that strongly and eloquently objected. From another direction Frank Nugent and Johnny Bull arrived.

They reached the spot as the three Fifth-Formers were scrambling up, red with wrath.

"Pile in, you men!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

The Removes piled in. All the Famous Five were safe inside the carriage by the time Coker & Co. were on their feet.

Five cheery faces grinned from the doorway at the enraged seniors.

"You young sweeps!" roared Coker.

"You old sweep!" retorted Bob.

"I'll smash you!"

"Get on with it."

"Hold on, Coker!" gasped Potter, rubbing his nose tenderly. "Hold on! Let's find another carriage."

"Ow! My eye! Ow!" said Greene.

Coker snorted.

"We're taking this carriage. Clear those cheeky fags out! Back me up, you fatheads!"

Coker charged again. Potter and Greene did not charge. They moved along the train, still caressing eye and nose, and found seats farther on. Coker, on his own, hurled himself into the midst of the Famous Five, with a desperate charge that landed him halfway in.

Head and shoulders, Coker was in. But the rest of him trailed outside.

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... Everywhere the babel of tongues, scurrying feet, and unpacking of boxes. Then, out of chaos, emerges order and discipline. . . . First day of term at Greyfriars!

Coker did not waste more time in words.

He hurled himself at the carriage doorway that was blocked by Bob Cherry's sturdy form. Potter and Greene of the Fifth followed him.

Bob, sturdy as he was, was not much use against a big Fifth-Former, backed up by two more Fifth-Form men. But he caught up a bag from a seat—a rather heavy bag—and smote, as Coker charged into the carriage.

Crash!

Coker received the smite on his manly chest. The impact was terrific. It up-ceded Coker.

He flew backwards, throwing out his arms wildly in an attempt to save himself. It was really unfortunate for Potter and Greene that they were so close behind their great leader. Coker's left landed on Potter's nose, and his right in Greene's eye, and two

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and his head and shoulders were promptly captured by the Removites as just prize of war.

Johnny Bull sat on his head, grinding Coker's features into the floor, and Bob Cherry stood on his shoulders. Wharton and Nugent planted a foot on either of Coker's arms.

A horrible gurgle came from Coker. There was a lot of dust on the carriage floor, and Coker was gulping it in.

"Grrrr-rrr-rrh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Coker wriggled spasmodically. His legs thrashed wildly out of the doorway.

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a roar from the platform. Quite a large crowd gathered round to look on at Horace Coker's acrobatic performances.

"Urrrrgh!" gurgled the unhappy Coker.

"Had enough, old bean?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Gurrrrr-rrr-rrh!"

"Say when!"

"Grooooooooooh!"

Coker, with a frantic wrench, dragged himself away. He rolled outside the carriage, breathless, crimson, dusty, tousled, hatless, and collarless. He rolled and spluttered.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Here's your hat, Coker!"

A hat was shied out of the carriage and bowled away along the platform. It landed at the feet of Tubbs of the Third, who promptly kicked it, and passed it to Paget, of that Form, and Paget as promptly passed it to Bolsover minor. The hat flew away, and it was followed up by a horde of fags, and in a few seconds it resembled anything but a hat.

Coker sat up.

Slam!

The carriage door was closed, and five grinning faces looked down from the windows at Coker.

Coker staggered to his feet and grasped the handle and wrenched. Even yet, Coker had not had enough.

But the handle was held inside, and Coker wrenched in vain.

There was a shriek from the engine. Coker gave it up and rushed along the train to hunt for a seat.

The Famous Five were left in victorious possession.

A fat figure rolled along the train, blinking at the carriages through a pair of big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows!"

"No room, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry?"

"Roll on, fatty!"

"Look here—" expostulated Billy Bunter.

"Roll on, then fat and frabjous Bunter, roll!" said Frank Nugent, in an unprompted parody of the celebrated "Apostrophe to the Ocean."

"Look here, you beasts, there's only five of you in there, and six seats!" roared Bunter. "There's room for one."

"That's no use to you," answered Bob.

"You want room for two."

"Beast! I say, old chap—look here, you rotter—lemme in, old fellow! I say, I want to tell you all about what we did at Bunter Court in the Christmas holidays."

"Oh, my hat! That tears it!" said Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "I shall be left behind! I say, old fellows, let in an old pal, old chaps!"

Bob Cherry chuckled, and opened the door.

"Back up, or there'll be a rush! Come early and avoid the crush!"

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Bunter rolled into the carriage. The door was slammed again, almost on the noses of three or four of the Fourth who rushed up.

"Look here, we're coming in!" shouted Fry of the Fourth.

"No room!"

"We'll stand—"

"Stand on the platform, old tulip! Wait for the next train! He also serves who only stands and waits, you know."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We'll scrag you at Greyfriars!" howled Fry, and he rushed along the train with his companions.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"We had great times at Bunter Court after I left your rather rotten show, Bob," said Bunter. "I'd have asked you fellows, but we had such distinguished company, that a fellow had to be a bit particular whom he asked, you know—"

"Sit on him!"

"Yaroooooh!"

Billy Bunter said no more. He was busily occupied in sorting himself out. The Famous Five crammed the windows with their cheery faces, watching the crowded platform—crowded with fellows who were still hunting for seats, or resignedly waiting for the next train—and exchanging greetings with friends, and cat-calls with foes.

Head and shoulders above the swarm of schoolboys, an athletic man with keen grey eyes and a very square jaw, came striding across the platform towards the train. And as Harry Wharton's eyes fell on him he ejaculated in tones of astonishment:

"Great pip!"

— — —

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Suspected Man!

HARRY WHARTON stared blankly at the man who was crossing the platform.

He was in sight only a few moments; he stepped into a carriage farther down the train, and disappeared.

Wharton's eyes followed him till he disappeared, in amazement.

"Great pip!" he repeated.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There's old Linley!" exclaimed Bob. "This way, Marky—room for you, old bean."

Mark Linley came up, with a smile, and was admitted.

"Standing room only," said Bob.

"But we'll take turns to stand till Courtfield. What's the odds so long as you're 'appy?"

"There's Toddy—" said Johnny Bull.

"Hop in here, Toddy!" roared Bob.

"What-ho!" said Toddy. And Peter Todd, of the Remove, added himself to the already full carriage.

"Room for any more?" asked Vernon-Smith of the Remove, coming up with Tom Redwing.

"None!" answered Bob. "But you fellows can come in, all the same. You can sit on Bunter."

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

The Boulder and Tom Redwing crowded in. There were now ten fellows in a carriage intended for six; and even standing-room was getting limited.

"What's up, old bean?" asked Bob, as Harry Wharton leaned from the window, looking along the train towards the carriage into which the square-jawed man had disappeared. "Want any more in? We're getting a bit crowded."

"The esteemed crowdfulness is truly terrific," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I say, you fellows, don't let any more beasts in! I've hardly room to breathe already."

"Shut up, Bunter!"

Wharton withdrew his head.

"No," he said. "But I've just seen a man—"

"I've seen quite a lot to-day," grinned Bob.

"I mean, that man—"

"What man?"

"The man I've told you about umpteen times—the man Bunter and I saw at Hogben Grange the night of the burglary there, last term, and who turned up near Sankey Hall just after the burglary there in the Christmas holidays. The man I jolly well believe to be the man the newspapers call the Courtfield cracksmen."

"Oh, my hat! That merchant again?"

"Yes; and he's got into this train."

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Then he's going back to Courtfield to crack some more cribs there. He was breaking new country when you saw him near Wharton Lodge; but he's going back to his old beat. Perhaps we shall see him at Greyfriars again, and Bunter may butt into him one night if he goes down to sneak a cake as he did last term—"

But Harry Wharton's face was grave. "It isn't a joke really, Bob! There's no actual proof against the man; but there's a jolly strong suspicion—"

"And he's on this train?" asked Nugent.

"Yes—about six carriages down."

"He travels around rather openly for a jolly old cracksmen!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"Well, he doesn't know he's suspected, I suppose. But he saw me, the night I saw him at Hogben Grange. He knows me as well as I know him, and he must guess that I described him to the police," said Harry.

"If he guesses that, he's running a lot of risk going back to Courtfield," said Bob. "It looks—"

"As if there's nothing in it!" concluded Nugent.

"But that night at Hogben Grange he was actually climbing over the park wall at midnight when I saw him. And the next day we heard that there had been a burglary there in the night," said Harry. "You remember—it was the time I went to Folkestone with Bunter, and we lost trains and got home just before the milk in the morning. The Head's chauffeur let us in, or we should have had a night out—"

"I remember. But—"

"Then he turned up near the scene of the burglary in the holidays, as far off as Surrey," said Wharton. "It couldn't be a coincidence. He's mixed up in it somehow."

"Well, if he's a jolly old cracksmen, it's jolly queer that he's taking this train openly to Courtfield," said Bob.

"There's a catch in it somewhere."

"Hallo, we're off!"

The train moved out of Lantham Junction at last.

As many of the juniors as could find room sat down, the rest remaining standing. Billy Bunter, of course, was sitting down. Taking his turn at standing did not appeal to Bunter; moreover, his attention was occupied in complaining that he wasn't given enough room. Bunter, owing to his remarkable circumference, required room for two, and he was given rather less than room for one.

"I say, you fellows, don't shove—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Shan't! Squeezing a fellow up in a corner, after asking him into a carriage!" snorted Bunter indignantly.

"What did you let all these beasts in

for? I'd jolly well get out if it wasn't the man at Hogben Grange, the night of the burglary there; and my uncle thought the same when I saw him near Redclyffe," said Bob. "You can get out Sankey Hall after General Sankey's collection of jewels were stolen. Both of them told me to keep the man in sight, if I could, if I saw him again. I'm going to."

"Easy enough," said Vernon-Smith. "He doesn't seem to want to keep out of sight. There'll be the usual rush for the Friardale train at Courtfield, though you'll lose it—"

"Can't be helped." "We've got to get in at Greyfriars," roared Bunter. "It's all right. I've you know," said Bob dubiously.

"I don't think!" grinned Peter Todd. "What about shoving Bunter on the floor and making an extra seat of him?" suggested Vernon-Smith. "Good egg!" "Hear, hear!" "I say, you fellows, no larks!"

ones leaving the railway at Courtfield to take taxis to the school. Bob Cherry hurled the door open and the Famous Five jumped out, followed by the rest. Wharton looked along the train in the direction of the square-jawed man's carriage, and his comrades followed his glance. From the other direction came a rush of feet and a vengeful roar.

"Got you, you young sweeps!" It was Coker of the Fifth. Coker had nursed his wrath and vengeance all the way from Lantham to Courtfield. Now they were going to be wreaked on the offending juniors.

Coker charged recklessly at the Famous Five, smiting right and left. The sudden charge bowled them over like skittles.

"Now, then—" roared Coker. "Yarooogh!" "Oh, crumbs!" "Collar that lunatic!" "Oh, my hat! Scrag him!"

Like one man the Famous Five hurled themselves on Coker of the Fifth. Three or four Fifth Form men rushed to his aid, and more juniors rallied to the help of the five; and for some minutes



The heavy bag smote Coker on the chest, and he reeled backwards, flinging out his arms wildly, much to Potter's and Greene's regret!

got room enough. I was only j-j-joking—"

"Then don't j-j-joke any more," advised Bob Cherry. "Next time you j-j-joke you go on the floor."

"Beast!" After which, William George Bunter bore his wrongs and grievances in an indignant silence.

The train ran on rapidly, and at each stop Harry Wharton glanced out to note whether the square-jawed man alighted.

But he did not alight; and he was still on the train when it left the last stop and rattled on towards Courtfield.

"He's going to Courtfield!" said Harry.

"Eh? Who is?" asked Bob.

"That man—"

"Oh, him! Are you thinking of keeping an eye on him?" asked Bob.

"Yes. Quelch thought it was jolly suspicious when I told him we'd seen

"I'm not losing sight of that man, if I can help it. You fellows can go on to the school, and if I'm late explain to Quelch—"

"Oh, we'll stick to you," said Bob. "We'll all track down the jolly old suspicious character together. He might get away from one, but he won't get away from five. Smithy can report to Quelch that we're on official police work."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Anyhow, point him out when we get out of the train," said Johnny Bull. "We don't know the merchant by sight yet."

Harry Wharton nodded.

The train ran on, and entered Courtfield Station. It clanked to a halt, and carriage doors flew open. On the opposite side of the platform stood the local train for Friardale, which most of the fellows were taking, only a few wealthy

there was a wild and whirling melee on the Courtfield platform.

Wingate of the Sixth came striding up.

"Stop that!" he shouted. The rough-and-tumble ceased at the voice of the Greyfriars captain.

Harry Wharton detached himself from Coker, who sprawled and roared. The other fellows sorted themselves out breathlessly.

"I'll smash 'em!" roared Coker.

"I'll—I'll—"

"Shut up!" said Wingate tersely.

"What's at?" gasped Coker.

"Be quiet. Don't kick up a shindy here, with a mob of fags!" snapped the captain of Greyfriars. "Behave yourself, Coker!"

Wingate moved on, leaving Coker stuttering with wrath. Harry Wharton, remembering the man with the square jaw, stared round for him. He had a

moment's glimpse of the athletic figure moving among several passengers to the station exit. It was gone the next moment.

Wharton made a hurried movement towards the exit from the platform. The square-jawed man was not, evidently, going on in the local train to Friar-dale, like the Greyfriars men; he was leaving the railway at Courtfield. Nugent caught the junior by the sleeve.

"Hold on, Harry! We've got to get into the local, or all the seats will be bagged, as usual."

"That man's cleared—"

Nugent laughed.

"If he's cleared, you can't go hunting him, old bean. Let's get our train."

"Yes, come on, Harry," grunted Johnny Bull. "Buck up, or we'll be left behind."

"The left-behindfulness will be terrific if the esteemed Harry doesn't hasten himself," remarked Hurrey Jamset Ram Singh.

Wharton hesitated.

The man with the square jaw had vanished—gone out into the traffic and crowds of the High Street of Courtfield. Wharton realised that he had lost him once more, and there was nothing to be done.

"That idiot, Coker!" he grunted.

"Come on! Hallo, hallo, hallo! Come on!" shouted Bob Cherry.

There was a rush for the local train. It rolled out of Courtfield Station, crammed with Greyfriars men. Harry Wharton, packed among a dozen fellows, was thinking of the man with the square jaw and wondering whether he would ever see him again.

He would have been surprised could he have been told how soon he was to see him again—and where!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

A Lift for Bunter!

"ROTTERS!" Billy Bunter addressed that remark to the tail-end of the train as it ran out of the station.

Bunter had not bagged a seat on the local.

An automatic sweetmeat machine had tempted Bunter, and he had fallen. As many pennies as Bunter possessed clicked into the machine, and the chocolates that emerged disappeared down Bunter's capacious neck like oysters. Too late, Bunter made a rush for the train.

"Rotters!" ejaculated Bunter. "Might have called a fellow! Leaving a pal behind! Just like 'em, after all I've done for 'em! Beasts!"

"Those cheeky young sweeps!" It was Coker's voice at his elbow, addressing Potter and Greene of the Fifth. "I'd have smashed them if Wingate hadn't butted in. Wingate butts in a lot too much. He may be captain of the school, but he can't butt in and interfere with the Fifth. I shall tell him so some day!"

"We've lost the train!" grunted Potter.

"Coker's lost it, you mean," growled Greene.

"Oh, don't grouse!" snapped Coker. "How was a fellow to catch a train when he was trying to get his necktie out of the back of his neck? Don't talk rot!"

"We've got to wait—"

"We haven't!" snapped Coker. "Think I'm waiting for the next train. We can get a taxi outside. Come on!"

Potter and Greene brightened up.

They preferred a taxi to a crowded train—so long as Coker paid for the taxi.

"I say, you fellows—" jerked out Bunter eagerly.

The three Fifth Form men deigned to glance at Bunter, but that was all. They walked on without answering.

Bunter rolled hurriedly after them.

"I say, you fellows!" he gasped. "I say, if you're whacking out a taxi I'll take my whack, if you like. It won't come to so much with four fellows paying."

"Kick him!" said Coker.

There was a roar from Billy Bunter as Potter obeyed Coker's behest.

Quite a number of Greyfriars men were standing about, waiting for the second train. In most cases, pocket-money did not run to such luxuries as taxicabs. But Bunter was not disposed to wait for the next train if he could help it; and he greatly preferred a taxi if he could get one. The difficulty, in Bunter's case, was that his financial resources were limited, and the last of them had been expended on the automatic machine. A group of Removites were discussing "whacking out" a taxi, and Bunter joined the group—Coker having been drawn blank, as it were.

"Five bob to the school—that's one-and-three each for us," said Ogilvy of the Remove to Russell, Kipps, and Newland. "What about it?"

"I say, you fellows—"

"Buzz off, Bunter!"

"Make it five, and that's a bob each!" said Bunter. "I'll stand my whack, and a tip over and above to the driver, what?"

"I can see you doing it!" agreed Ogilvy.

"Oh, really, Ogilvy—"

"Seat, you fat spoofer!"

The four Removites walked out of the station. Billy Bunter rolled after them. Outside the station, they called a taxi and crammed themselves into it.

"I say, you fellows—" urged Bunter.

"Bow-wow!"

"Look here, I'm going to stand my whack! If you can't take a fellow's word—"

"Gammon!" said Russell. "Don't we know you, you spoofer? When we get to Greyfriars you'll find that you've left your money at home! Run away and play."

"Beast!"

The taxi rolled away with the four juniors in it, leaving William George Bunter standing on the pavement.

Bunter blinked round him.

There were several more taxicabs on the stand, but they were of no use to Bunter. Without a fellow-passenger to pay the fare Bunter couldn't travel by taxi. As he stood there, an athletic man in an overcoat came out of the bun-shop close by the station and beckoned to a taxi, which came over to the kerb and drew up. Bunter blinked at him, seeing something familiar in the clear-cut face with its strong, square jaw.

The man glanced at him at the same moment and smiled faintly. Evidently he knew Bunter.

"You got over your ducking?" he asked, in a rather pleasant voice.

Then Bunter remembered him.

"I say, it was you pulled me out of the water that day at Wharton Lodge when I went through the ice!" he exclaimed.

"That is so. You remember me?"

"Oh, yes, rather!" said Bunter. "In fact, I believe I'd seen you somewhere before that day, though I can't remember where."

"Indeed!"

The grey eyes narrowed for a moment,

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fixed on Bunter's face. Then, as the taximan threw open the door of the cab, the square-jawed gentleman turned to the vehicle.

"Greyfriars School," he said, as he stepped in.

Bunter started.

He made a jump to the taxi and grabbed the door open again as the driver was closing it.

"You going to Greyfriars, sir?" he exclaimed.

"Yes."

"I—I say, sir, w-would you like to give me a lift?" gasped Bunter. "I'm going there, too, sir! I—I belong to Greyfriars."

"Oh!"

"The—the fact is, sir, I—I feel frightfully grateful to you for saving my life, and—and I'd like to thank you, sir!"

"You did not seem very grateful at the time, I remember."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"Neither, probably, did I save your life," added the square-jawed gentleman calmly. "You could have crawled out on the ice, in all probability, without my assistance."

"But—but I'm really awfully grateful, sir—fearfully grateful!" said Bunter eagerly. "I—I've thought about it a lot of times, sir, and—and I'd like to—to tell you about it, sir, in the taxi—"

The square-jawed gentleman smiled.

"You would like a lift, at all events," he said. "You can get in."

Bunter jumped in.

The door slammed, and the taxi rolled away. Billy Bunter settled down with a cheery grin on his fat face. The taxi threaded its way down Courtfield High Street, and turned into the road across the common that led to the school.

Bunter blinked at his companion.

He wondered who the man was, and why he was visiting Greyfriars School on the opening day of the term. The man had been in Surrey, hanging about near Sankey Hall in an old suit of tweeds, when Bunter had last seen him. Now he was dressed much more carefully. Some sort of visitor for the Head perhaps.

But the quiet, rather stern face of the square-jawed gentleman did not invite questioning, and Bunter had to restrain his impertinent curiosity. As conversation did not seem to be encouraged, Bunter searched through his pockets for the remnants of a packet of toffee, and he was in a state of happy stickiness by the time the taxi rolled in at the school gates.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The New Master of the Remove I

"**H**ERE we are, here we are, here we are again!" sang Bob Cherry, in a voice of which the volume made up for any lack of melody.

"The here-againfulness is terrific," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, jolly old Gosling!" roared Bob.

William Gosling grunted.

"Glad to see you looking so young and well, old dear!" said Bob affably.

The Greyfriars porter gave another grunt. Opening day of term was not a happy day to Gosling.

There was an unusual amount of work and activity on that day; and neither work nor activity appealed to Gosling. Neither was he overjoyed to see so many bright young faces about him once more. Bright young faces were at a discount in Gosling's estimation. He preferred Greyfriars in its deserted state, with no "dratted" boys there.

"Ain't he looking well, you men?"

said Bob, appealing to his comrades.

"Don't lie look younger than ever?"

"He do—he does!" agreed Johnny Bull. "Nobody would take Gosling for more than a hundred to-day."

GREYFRIARS CELEBRITIES.

Here's another snappy poem dealing with the popular schoolboy characters of Greyfriars.

No. 5.—HURREE JAMSET RAM SINGH.



I TO your notice proudly bring
A chap of high integrity.
The dusky Hurree Jamset Singh,
Our Indian celebrity.

Although his skin is rather dark,
There's nothing "black" about him,
He's white as white beneath the bark;
We couldn't do without him.

He finds great difficulty here
With our disturbing climate.
But his remarks are, never fear,
Seldom more than irate.
He's never jarred or out of sorts,
Despite his nationality;
He ranks among the greatest "sports,"
This pleasant personality.

Although a prince, with pockets lined,
He scorns all high pomposity,
And Hurree Singh, you'll always find
The soul of generosity.
Of Bhanipur the Nabob, though
Most folk would never guess it,
For free from side and regal show
Is Hurree. Come, confess it!

This member of the Famous Five
At sports is simply stunning;
At footer he is much alive,
And quite excels at running.
But where he's like a gleaming light
Is on the field at cricket;
His bowling is his team's delight,
He always finds the wicket.

Our Nabob's language is, at times,
Most weird and extraordinary;
In fact, like this, it almost rhymes,
Which you'll agree's not ordinary!
His "brightfulness" and "gayfulness"
Give others cause for chipping;
But Hurree takes their playfulness;
At standing jokes he's ripping.

Come, let us all our glasses raise,
With wholesome "pop" o'erflowing,
And yell our noble comrade's praise
In accents great and glowing.
We like him, for he plays the game
With loyal and sporty conduct;
Let one and all with joy acclaim
This British Empire product!

"Well, I don't know about that," said Bob thoughtfully. "Mustn't exaggerate. Say a hundred and twenty."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You've dropped forty years in the hole, Gosling!" said Bob. "Believe me, nobody would take you for more than a hundred and twenty to-day."

Gosling glared.

"Wot I says is this 'ere—" he snorted.

But the Famous Five did not remain to listen to Gosling. They walked on to the House, leaving the ancient porter to waste his sweetness on the desert air.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter! How the thump did Bunter get in before us? Didn't you lose the local, Bunter?"

"I was left behind by a set of sweeps," said Bunter. "Some fellows would have kept a place for a pal. Still, I got in before you, all the same. A friend gave me a lift in a car."

"Bilking a taximan, like you did in the hole?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! A friend gave me a lift in his Rolls-Royce," said Bunter. "He happened to be in Courtfield and picked me up. Lucky, wasn't it?"

"The luckfulness was terrific, my esteemed Bunter."

"I say, you fellows, if you want any help in unpacking—if you've brought back any tuck or anything—I'll help you with pleasure."

"Go on!"

"I mean it," said Bunter. "You've treated me rather rottenly; but I'm a good-natured chap. I'll save you all the trouble of unpacking your tuck—"

"And all the trouble of scoffing it?" asked Bob.

Needless of Bunter's kind offer—which if accepted would certainly have saved them any further trouble with any comestibles they had brought back to school—the chums of the Remove walked into the House.

First day of term was a busy day; boxes had to be unpacked, studies bagged, medical certificates handed in; long arguments argued with the House dame, who inspected the contents of boxes and packages; notices on the boards read and re-read and commented upon, changes in the time-tables, important among them being the abolition of Etons and "toppers" for the more modern lounge jacket and soft collars, criticised—generally adversely—amid a hurrying of feet and a babel of tongues.

Form masters flitted about in a hurried state; even the great and majestic Head lost a little of his usual majestic calm.

But when the Famous Five saw their headmaster, Dr. Locke found time for a kind word. He had stayed a few days in the Christmas holidays at Wharton Lodge, and had dined at Major Cherry's house one evening, so Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry were entitled to a few words, and did not mind in the least that they were only few.

To the surprise of the Remove men their Form master, Mr. Quelch, was not in evidence.

A rumour spread in the Remove that Quelch hadn't come for the new term.

That rumour caused intense excitement in the Lower Fourth.

It was, Skinner declared, too good to be true! On the other hand, Wibley quoted from Shakespeare, "I fear there may a worse come in his place."

The Remove without Quelch would be quite a different Form. The Removeites could hardly believe that such a fixture as Henry Samuel Quelch had been unrooted.

But certainly he was not to be seen!
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and it looked as if he was not in the school. At first roll-call he was not in Hall, and none of the fellows had spotted him.

Rumour, with its various tongues, declared that Quelch had caught influenza over Christmas, and was laid up; that he had retired from his post in order to devote his remaining years to his celebrated "History of Greyfriars"; that he had quarrelled with the Head and resigned; that he had quarrelled with the Head and been sacked; that he had lost his train, and was coming on the next day; that he had caught pneumonia, and wasn't coming back at all; and several other things.

All these things could not be true, and probably none of them was; but, undoubtedly, Quelch was not there.

"Fancy losing Quelch!" said Peter Todd, in the Rag. "Just fancy! He seemed a regular fixture, like the other gargoyles—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Too good to be true!" said Skinner, shaking his head. "But if he's gone, who's going to handle the Remove?"

"Might shove us under a prefect till they get a new beak—they did once," said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, my hat!" said Nugent. "If it's Loder there'll be trouble!"

"More trouble for Loder than for us!" chuckled Bob.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Bunter knows, of course," said Bob. "What's the latest keyhole news, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Cherry! As a matter of fact, I happen to know," said Bunter. "I hear that poor old Quelch's dead—"

"Dead?" yelled Bob.

"Yes; run over by a motor-car in the hols," said Bunter. "Awful, ain't it? I say, have you fellows got any toffee?"

"You fat chump!" said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton! It's quite true," said Bunter cheerfully. "He was rather a beast; but I forgive him, in the circumstances. Anyhow, I know for certain we're going to have a new master. I heard Prout saying to Capper that he was surprised at the Head selecting so young a man to take the Remove."

"But what about Quelch?" asked Vernon-Smith.

"Well, we shan't see him again," said Bunter. "I haven't seen the new beak yet, but he's got Quelch's study."

Wingate of the Sixth looked into the Rag.

"Wharton here?" he called out.

"Here," said Harry, coming forward.

"Mr. Steele wants to see the head boy of the Remove," said the prefect. "Trot along to your Form master's study."

"Mr. Steele!" repeated several voices.

"I say, Wingate, ain't Quelch coming back?" asked two or three of the Remove.

"Not yet," answered Wingate. "I understand that something's happened to keep him from coming back at present; and Steele is taking his place for a few weeks."

"Ill?" asked Nugent.

"I think not."

"Ain't he dead?" asked Billy Bunter.

"No, you young ass!"

"Oh, really, Wingate! I thought he was! I'm not disappointed, of course—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You'd better get along and see

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Steele, Wharton," said the captain of Greyfriars.

"Right-ho!"

Harry Wharton left the Rag, and proceeded to Masters' passage. George Wingate's statement had cleared up the many rumours on the subject of Quelch; for some reason, unknown at present, the Remove master was delaying his return to Greyfriars. Evidently the Head had known for some time that Quelch would not be coming back, as he had arranged for a new master to take the Lower Fourth.

Wharton wondered what the new Form master would be like. It was a rather interesting and important question to men in the Remove.

If he was some Tartar like Hacker of the Shell, the Removes were likely to miss Quelch, severe as Quelch was. If he was some mild gentleman like Capper of the Fourth, they would have an easier time this term than last. While, if he was a "rabbit" like Wiggins of the Third, there were likely to be rags and uproarious times in the Remove Form-room that term. As head boy of the Form, Wharton was rather anxious to know what kind of man he had to deal with.

WHO'S READY FOR A LAUGH

at this amusing joke, which earns for Frederick Turvil, of 18, Mays Road, Teddington, Middlesex, one of this week's useful pocket-knives?

CAREFUL CLEANING!

"What's the first thing you do when cleaning your rifle?" the sergeant demanded.

"Look at the number," said the newcomer.

"Oh!" barked the sergeant. "And what's the big idea?"

"To make sure I don't clean someone else's!"

Now then, you fellows, get busy and try your hand at winning one of these useful prizes.

He tapped at the door of the study that had been Quelch's.

"Come in!"

The voice that answered the tap was rather a deep one, and it had a pleasant note in it.

Wharton opened the door and entered.

A rather athletic gentleman, seated at Mr. Quelch's writing-table, rose to his feet, as the captain of the Remove came in.

His keen grey eyes turned on the junior, and he gave the slightest of starts.

Wharton stopped dead.

He could not speak; he could only stand rooted to the floor, staring at the man before him, at the new master of the Remove—the man with the grey eyes and the square jaw!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Astounding!

MR. STEELE looked steadily at Wharton.

Wharton looked at Mr.

Steele.

For a long second—it seemed many seconds to the startled junior—there was silence.

That Steele recognised him, that he was surprised to see him, was more or less plain, though, after that slight start

as Wharton entered, the new master's face expressed nothing.

Wharton's astonishment was simply staggering.

It was the man with the square jaw—the man he had seen, that dark December night last term, climbing the park wall of Hogben Grange, on the night of the burglary there. The man he had seen hanging about near Sankey Hall, after the burglary at Sankey Hall! The man he believed to be the Courtfield cracksmen—the unknown night marauder, whose depredations had filled the newspapers of late. This man—this man he more than suspected of being a cracksmen, this man whom he believed to be a cracksmen, was the new master of the Remove!

It was incredible.

After the first second of absolute, staggering astonishment, Harry Wharton wondered whether he had made a mistake—whether he had been deceived by some chance resemblance.

But that thought had to be dismissed at once.

It was the man!

There was no mistaking those clear-cut features, those deep, penetrating grey eyes, that square chin that told of iron will and resolution.

It was the man! Wharton knew that the man knew him—as he had known him when they came in contact by chance on break-up day last term, and again at Winford Station in the holidays, and again by the frozen river near Sankey Hall.

The recognition was mutual, though the surprise that fairly dumbfounded Wharton hardly showed in the well-controlled face of the man with the square jaw.

Wharton was utterly at a loss.

What he would have done, or said, he never knew; but the tense silence was broken by the deep, clear voice of the square-jawed man.

"Are you Wharton?"

The junior gasped.

"Yes, sir."

"Head boy of the Remove?"

"Yes, sir."

"No doubt you have been told that I am master of the Remove this term, Wharton?"

"Yes, sir."

"Please come in. You need not stand in the doorway, Wharton," said Mr. Steele, with a pleasant smile.

The junior, who had not collected his wits, almost tottered into the room. His brain was in a whirl.

Mr. Steele was speaking and acting exactly as any other master might have spoken and acted in his place. Yet he knew that Wharton had seen him climbing the wall of a place where a robbery had occurred only a few weeks ago; he knew—he must know—that the boy suspected him of being the robber. What did it all mean?

The man could not be a schoolmaster—he could not! How could he be a schoolmaster, when—unless Wharton was amazingly deceived—he was a night-thief, a cracksmen, a burglar?

Yet here he was, master of the Lower Fourth, in Quelch's place; and it was futile to think that he could have obtained such a post by trickery or deception. No man could take a master's post at Greyfriars School, of over so temporary a nature, without his record being open to inspection, without the Head being thoroughly acquainted with his character and his antecedents.

Wharton's brain was racing. The utter impossibility of it staggered him. He heard Steele's voice like a fellow in a dream.

He was conscious of a faintly amused smile playing over the clear-cut face.

"I have heard a good account of you, Wharton, from your Form master," said Mr. Steele.

Wharton tried to clear his confused thoughts.

"You—you know Mr. Quelch, sir?"

The new master raised his eyebrows.

"Naturally!"

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

He knew Quelch—naturally he knew the master whom he was temporarily replacing as master of the Remove. Yet he was the man whom Wharton had described to Quelch, and whose description he had taken to the police station at Courtfield, on Quelch's instructions. Evidently Henry Samuel

—though perhaps I might have guessed," said Mr. Steele. "However, at that time I had not thought of coming to Greyfriars myself. Since, however, it has been decided for Mr. Quelch to take some weeks of well-earned leisure, and I am his unworthy substitute for that period"—Steele smiled again, and Wharton could not help thinking that he had a very pleasant smile—"I hope we shall be friends, my boy. Your Form master gave me a good account of you, and I shall expect your help as my head boy."

"Oh, certainly!" Wharton hardly knew what he was answering. The man was talking like a Form master; and

whist, when in doubt play a trump," said Mr. Steele, with his pleasant smile. "A great humorist, Mark Twain, amended the maxim to this: 'When in doubt, tell the truth!' My own suggestion would be: 'When in doubt, hold your tongue.'"

"Oh!"

"And now," said Mr. Steele, dismiss-



Wharton stopped dead as the new Remove master's glance turned on him. It was the man with the grey eyes and square jaw!

Quelch had not applied that description, in his own mind, to this man Steele!

"By the way, do you know my name, Wharton?"

"Yes—no!" Wharton stammered.

"Richard Steele," said the new master.

Wharton wondered whether it was his real name. Yet it must be his real name, as he had a post at Greyfriars. The Head would know the man's record as far back as his prep school.

But the Head did not, could not know, that Harry Wharton and Billy Bunter had seen him climbing the park wall of Hogben Grange on the night of the burglary there! What would the Head say, if he knew that?

"I think you have seen me before, Wharton," added the new master, in a casual tone.

Wharton gazed at him. Was he going to speak of that midnight incident at Hogben Grange? Wharton felt that nothing could have surprised him now.

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Wharton.

"I think you were one of a number of schoolboys skating on the river between Sankey Hall and Wimford, in the holidays?"

"Yes," gasped Wharton.

"You may have seen me on other occasions," remarked Mr. Steele, in the same casual manner and pleasant tone.

"Yes."

"I was not aware when I saw you before that you were a Greyfriars boy

he was a crackman—a man hunted by the police, unless Wharton was widely out in his reckoning.

"It is odd that we should have met before my coming here," said Mr. Steele. "Some of the circumstances were, perhaps, a little unusual—indeed, peculiar."

Wharton's heart almost stopped beating.

The man was alluding to the incident at Hogben Grange now, he knew. Was he going to ask the schoolboy to keep his guilty secret?

Even with that thought in his mind Wharton could not help realising that Steele did not look like a man with a guilty secret. He looked like anything but that.

"There is an old maxim," said Mr. Steele, "that one should not judge by appearances."

"Oh!"

"Appearances are often deceptive," said Mr. Steele.

He paused, as if for a reply. Wharton, not knowing what to say, stared at him, and managed to gasp:

"I—I suppose so, sir."

"The most unusual actions," said Mr. Steele, "may have a quite ordinary explanation, if one is only acquainted with it."

"I—I suppose so."

"One should not concern oneself unduly with matters, however peculiar, that do not concern oneself."

"N-no."

"It used to be said, in the game of

ing the matter as finished with, "you may sit down, Wharton, and we will have a talk over Form matters."

He waved the captain of the Remove into a chair.

What followed was something like a dream to Harry Wharton.

He tried to fix his attention on Form topics; but only the cool, incisive insistence of Mr. Steele kept his wandering mind to the subject.

No further hint was dropped by Steele on the matter of their previous encounters. That, apparently, was dismissed for good—with his very plain hint that Wharton would do well to hold his tongue about what he knew or suspected.

After a time, however, Wharton found himself giving more attention to the matter under discussion. He found himself looking on Richard Steele less as a suspected man than as his new Form master. The man's talk showed that he was a capable man who knew his business; and his cool, decided assumption that Wharton was receptive him purely and simply as a school-master somehow influenced the junior to do so.

In half an hour the Courtfield crackman had receded to the back of Wharton's mind; and Richard Steele was to him only the new master of the Remove.

When the new master dismissed him at last, however, and Wharton went out

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into Masters' passage, the extraordinary situation rushed into his mind with foal force.

He stood in the passage for some minutes, trying to think it all out before he went back to join his friends.

"My hat!" he ejaculated at last. Slowly, thoughtfully, he left Masters' passage. "When in doubt, hold your tongue," Richard Steele had said to him.

Was he in doubt?

He hardly knew.

But at least, it was judicious to think the matter over calmly and clearly before he talked, even to his nearest chums. Least said was soonest mended, and it might be, after all, that there was some innocent explanation of the strange and suspicious circumstances under which he had seen the man before.

One word on the subject, it was certain would set the whole Form in a buzz—and the whole school, for that matter. And if there was nothing in it Wharton would be pointed out as the fellow who had told an absurd cock-and-bull story, exceeding any yarn told by even Billy Bunter. His cheeks coloured at the thought.

And yet, if the man was a crackman why was he there, unless to carry out some scheme of robbery? And yet again, he was there, and could not have been there unless the headmaster knew his record, and knew that it was a clean one!

Wharton found his thoughts following a circle.

He shook his head impatiently at last. The matter required thinking out—hard thinking! And in the meantime, the captain of the Remove resolved to act on Mr. Steele's suggestion, and as long as he was in doubt, to hold his tongue.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

An Old Acquaintance of Bunter's!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Buzz off, Bunter!"
"But I say—"

Billy Bunter rolled into No. 1 Study, his little round eyes gleaming with excitement behind his big, round spectacles.

In No. 1 Study a feast of the gods was toward.

All the members of the Famous Five had brought back something in their boxes, and most of it had passed the inspection of the House dame. So that early supper in No. 1 Study was something like a spread.

Other members of the Remove had added their quota to the festive board. Vernon-Smith and Redwing, Peter Todd and Hazeldene, Mark Linley and Tom Brown and Squiff, were in the supper-party. The accommodation of the study was a little strained. No. 1 Study was a good size for a junior study; but a dozen fellows filled it completely.

Really, there was no room for Bunter, even had the company been yearning for the society of William George. As a matter of fact, nobody was yearning for it.

But Bunter rolled in.

"I say, you fellows, you'd never guess!" gasped Bunter.

Bunter, apparently, had news to impart.

"Oh, make room for the porpoise!" said Harry Wharton resignedly. "But shut up, Bunter, there's a good chap!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"The talkfulness of the esteemed Bunter is not a boonful blessing!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

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"Oh, really, Inky—"

"Esteemed speech is silvery, my worthy Bunter, but silence is the cracked pitcher that saves the bird in the bush from going longest to the well, as the English proverb remarks."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, have you seen that man, Steele—"

"What man, and what did he steal?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I don't mean that, ass. I mean have you seen that man Steele, the new beak—"

"Somebody stolen the new beak?" asked Bob.

"You silly ass! His name's Steele, and—"

"We've seen him, ass, of course. What about him?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Has he licked you for coming back to school with an unwashed neck?"

"Oh, really, Nugent—"

Harry Wharton started a little and fixed his eyes rather anxiously on the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter had been with him that night at Hogben Grange, when the suspected man had been seen climbing the park wall.

Bunter was short-sighted and unobservant, and the man had only been seen by starlight. It was likely that Bunter would never know him again.

But the excited face of the fat junior showed that he had something startling to tell.

If Bunter had remembered and recognised him it was not much use for Wharton to keep silent on the subject.

Bunter was not the fellow to keep such an exciting matter dark; he was the fellow to shout it from the house-tops.

Wharton did not speak. If Bunter knew, it was all coming out, and there was no stopping it. Wharton hardly knew whether he cared or not. For himself, he had decided to keep his own counsel for the present; but he had not yet decided what he would ultimately do. It looked as if the matter was going to be decided for him.

Bunter grabbed a cake from the well-spread table and proceeded to fill his capacious mouth—his usual preliminary to conversation when there was tuck about.

"The new beak looks a decent sort of man," remarked Vernon-Smith. "He's years younger than Quelch; but he's got a chin on him that looks as if he knows how to get his own way."

"Looks a bit of an athlete," said Tom Brown. "I dare say we shall see him in the footer. Quelch was too ancient for games."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bunter's bursting with something," said Johnny Bull. "Get it over, and give us a rest, Fatty!"

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"What about the new beak, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton impatiently. If it was all coming out he wanted to get it over.

"I know him!" said Bunter. "I mean, I've met him before. Twice."

"Old pal of yours?" asked the Bounder sarcastically.

"I mean, he gave me a lift to day in his taxi from Courtfield," said Bunter. "I never knew then that he was a new beak. I thought he was a visitor for the Head, or something."

"Oh! He's your friend with the Rolls Royce?" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter blinked for a moment. He had forgotten his description of the lift he had had from Courtfield to the school.

"I—I mean, it wasn't a Rolls, it—it was a taxi—" he stammered.

"Your Rolls generally turn out to be taxicabs," assented Bob.

"Beast! But I'd seen him before that," said Bunter. "You fellows remember when I was staying at Wharton Lodge over the hols—"

"Are we likely to forget it?" said Bob. "I shall never forget how I expected to see you burst all over Colonel Wharton's dining-room when you'd done stuffing the turkey—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean, you remember that day we went out skating on the river, and you left me behind and didn't care a straw whether I got drowned or not—"

"We knew you were all right, Fatty. There's a proverb that those who are born to be hanged cannot be drowned."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yah! Well, I told you that a man pulled me out of the water after the ice broke—"

"Must have been in want of something to do," said the Bounder. "Why the dickens couldn't he leave you alone?"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Some fellows can never let well alone," said Smithy, shaking his head. "It's that fellow's fault that Bunter is boring us now. Inconsiderate, I call it!"

"Beast! Well, the man who fished me out was this man, Steele," said Bunter. "Fancy that!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"What rot!" said Bob Cherry. "You've mixed him up with somebody else."

"I jolly well know him!" said Bunter.

"I've spoken to him about it. I dare say he fancies he's saved my life, and all that, but, as a matter of fact, the silly idiot jerked me about like a sack of coke, and made me lose my cap. My cap floated away under the ice—"

"Pity your head wasn't in it," sighed the Bounder.

"Well, he's the same man," said Bunter. "I recognised him in Courtfield to-day, and got a lift out of him by piling on the gratitude stuff. I didn't know he was the new beak then. I say, he was hanging about the Sankey Hall place in a jolly old suit of tweeds that day. Nobody would have taken him for a schoolmaster—"

"He doesn't look the usual beak, really," remarked Squiff. "There's something quite human about him."

"Funny thing is, that I've an idea I'd seen him somewhere before that," said Bunter. "I remember his face seemed sort of familiar that day, as if I'd seen it before."

Wharton was silent.

Bunter's memory of Richard Steele evidently extended back only as far as that day at Wharton Lodge. Beyond that was only a vague idea that he had seen the man before somewhere. As yet, at all events, the Owl of the Remove had not connected Steele with the mysterious man of that night at Hogben Grange last term.

That was all to the good. Wharton had time to think the matter over, and decide on his course of action, without having his hand forced by the chatter of the fat junior.

"But I say, you fellows, isn't it queer our new beak turning out to be the man who fished me out of the river?" said Bunter. "Made me jump when I saw him, I can tell you! I say, ain't it lucky?"

"How's that?" asked Nugent.

Bunter winked a fat wink.

"You're rather green, Nugent! I can jolly well tell you, this is going to be pie to me! Matter of fact, I should have got out all right if he'd left

(Continued on page 12.)

INSIDE INFORMATION



By
The "OLD
REF."

The services of "Old Ref" are at the disposal of every "Magnet" reader who comes across a knotty "footer" problem. So write to him to-day, c/o The Editor, "Magnet," and then look for your replies in this regular weekly feature.

OBVIOUSLY the duration of a football match is an important matter. A game should last an hour and a half, and if a referee stops a game short of that time, or allows it to go on beyond that time, the result of the contest may easily be affected.

Most referees use a special kind of watch which can be stopped and restarted easily, but arguments arise from time to time as to whether the referee has played the correct number of minutes.

A strange case in point recently tried by the Lancashire Football Association, and brought to my notice by one of my Lancashire readers, may be mentioned.

By some mischance the referee's watch went wrong, and when the interval came, the referee discovered that he had played eleven minutes over the allotted forty-five.

He was in a bit of a fix as to what should be done, but thought that the best way out—and the fairest for both sides—was to play eleven minutes extra in the second half. This the referee did. Now in the course of the extra eleven minutes of the second half one of the players did something which caused the referee to send him off the field. He was brought up before the Lancashire Football Association for misconduct, and in his own defence stated that, whatever the merits or demerits of the referee's decision in sending him off, there should be no punishment because the incident happened after the match should have been over—and when it would have been over if the referee had not played those extra minutes.

The Lancashire Football Association decided that the player must be punished in the ordinary way, but at the same time they punished the referee for playing eleven minutes over the allotted time in the first and second halves of the match.

As a matter of fact, referees should take precautions against their watches going wrong by checking them with the linesmen at the start of the game.

When this is done things work out right, even if the watch of the referee breaks down, because the linesmen can draw the attention of the chief official to the fact that time is up.

ARGUMENTS arise from time to time as to whether the referee has played too short or too long, but on this matter he is, of course, the final judge. There was a First Division match at Manchester this season in which it was suggested that the referee had played three minutes short, but the clubs did not appeal because they knew that the referee's decision as to the time would be upheld.

Now in regard to this timing business, an interesting question may be asked. When can the referee extend the time beyond the allowed ninety minutes? There is only one occasion in which he is ordered to do this by rule—when he has awarded a penalty kick at the end of a game he must extend the time to allow of the penalty kick being taken.

Over this, interesting points also arise. A reader wants to know

what should be the decision if, when the referee has allowed extra time for a penalty kick to be taken, the ball is sent against the goalkeeper and then goes into the net?

The decision in this case is a goal. A test case was raised one time ago, and the authorities ruled that in such an incident

as the ball going in off the goalkeeper from the penalty kick after time had expired a goal should be scored.

The same ruling would apply if the ball struck the goalpost or the cross-bar from a penalty kick and then went directly into the net. But suppose the ball kicked from the penalty spot in the circumstances I have mentioned—that is, during extended time—hits the goalpost, comes out, and is promptly put back into the net by another player. What should be the decision then? It should be "no goal." You see the time is only extended to enable the penalty kick to be taken, and if the taker of the penalty kick does not score at his first attempt, then the time is automatically up, and the match is finished.

WHILE on this question of keeping the time, there is another point which often arises in these mid-winter games when the light may be bad, which is not properly understood. If you read the papers you will often notice this sort of sentence: "The referee ordered the teams to turn round at half-time without leaving the field."

Now, as a matter of fact, the referee who "orders" players to turn round without leaving the field at half-time is exceeding his duties. He can ask the players to carry on right away if he likes, but if the players refuse he must, according to the rules, allow them five minutes interval but no more.

I remember some years ago watching a First Division match. At half-time the referee, forgetting his rule-book, ordered the players to turn round without any stoppage. The players of one team did so, but the captain of the other side, knowing the rules, took his men off for their five minutes' rest. And the others stood on the field waiting for their opponents to come back. It was very funny, and the referee said he would report the team which went off for disobeying his instructions. He carried out his threat—and was told that he should read the rules.

MENTION of five minutes interval being allowed at half-time, reminds me of a query which is to hand from a Putney reader. He says that at half-time in a recent game the Fulham players, being soaked through because it was a wet day, changed their jerseys at half-time, and this reader asks if they should be allowed to do so. The answer is this:

There is no rule against players having a complete change of apparel at the interval if they so desire.

What I think would rightly be objected to is any player going off in the middle of the first or second half to change his clothes because they were wet or muddy. A responsible referee would not allow this to be done, as it would be tantamount to giving the player a chance to have a rest and a rub-down, which he is not supposed to have in the course of play. If a player gets his shirt or trousers badly torn that is another matter.

This reader from Putney puts one other question. He wants to know if the referee could award a goal when the ball went into the net although he had previously blown for some infringement of the rules. The referee could not allow a goal in such circumstances. I have already explained that when the referee's whistle sounds the ball is "dead."

THE FORM-MASTER'S FAVOURITE!

(Continued from page 10.)

me alone, and very likely shouldn't have lost my cap. But I ain't going to tell him that. If he likes to fancy that he saved my life, I'm going to let him get on with it. Pull his leg, you know. Gratitude and all that—admiration, and so on. Bound to fetch him. What do you fellows think?"

"Well, I think you're a fat worm, old bean," said Bob.

"I think you're a frabjous scallywag," said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, you fellows! Don't you think he'll feel bucked when I go round telling the fellows that he plunged into an icy river to save my life at the risk of his own? Any man would like that."

"But did he plunge in?"

"Well, no. I don't believe he even got his feet wet. But, of course, piling it on won't do any harm. Bound to please him," argued Bunter. "Might get a fellow off classes sometimes—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I can jolly well tell you it's worth while to get in with a beak," said Bunter. "And nothing pleases a man so much as gratitude; it's so jolly rare, you know. Of course, if a fellow helps you out of a fix, you don't really feel grateful; you only feel waxy at having needed his help. That's human nature."

"The Bunter sort!" agreed Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry! That's why gratitude is so pleasant, because there isn't any really," explained Bunter. "Gammon goes down."

"Steele looks rather too downy for gammon," remarked Hazeldene.

Bunter grinned complacently.

"Leave it to me," he said. "I'm going to tell all Greyfriars what a splendid man he is, and how he risked his life to save mine, and all that. And after that, how can he rag a chap for letting prep slide, or coming in late for class? What?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Pass the cake, old chap. Don't be mean with the cake! I'm going to stand you fellows a topping spread when I unpack my box!"

"Why not unpack it now?"

"I've mislaid the key! I say, this is a decent cake—not like what I get at Bunter Court, of course, but really decent! I say, you fellows, I haven't told you yet about the festivities at Bunter Court. Two of the princes came—"

There was a roar.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Oh, really, you fellows—"

"Shut up!"

"But, I say—"

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," said Bob Cherry, "I move that if Bunter says another word we put his head in the coal-locker."

"I second that," said Nugent.

"Hear, hear!"

"Passed nem. con."

Bunter snorted. But he shut up, and devoted himself to the comestibles, and the chums of the Remove were left in blissful ignorance of the details of that princely gathering at Bunter Court.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Works the Oracle!

RICHARD STEELE took the Remove the next morning.

What sort of a beak he was going to turn out was a matter of interesting speculation to the Removes.

Most of the fellows had the impression that he was a man who knew his business, and was not to be trifled with.

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He looked it, at least.

Skinner, who had been considering a rag in the Form-room, eyed Mr. Steele very dubiously, and decided that rags were off.

Bolover major, who had told several fellows to listen how he was going to talk to Steele, fully intended to cheek the new master that morning, to the admiration of his friends. On second thoughts, proverbially the best, Bolover major did not cheek Steele. When Steele addressed him, the bully of the Remove answered "Yes, sir," as meekly as any fellow in the Form.

Richard Steele's countenance was not severe like Mr. Quelch's. He had a pleasant voice and a pleasant smile. But his grey eyes had a masterful glint in them, and his square chin was undoubtedly dominating.

He was quite a young man, probably only half Quelch's age. Some of the fellows, during the morning, suspected that he had not had a lot of experience as Form master. But if the work was new to him, he had "mugged" it up very carefully and cleverly. Certainly he was equal to it, and knew how to make his authority respected.

He treated Wharton exactly like any other member of the Remove, which surprised Harry, and yet was not really surprising. Nothing whatever in his manner indicated that there was any secret understanding between him and the captain of the Form.

Obviously, he had dismissed that incident of Hogben Grange as an incident settled and done with, and took it for granted that Wharton had done the same.

In the Form-room that morning Wharton was glad that he had taken the new master's advice and held his tongue.

Seeing Mr. Steele engaged in a calm and methodical way in a Form master's duties, it made it almost impossible to think of him as a secret criminal.

Wharton had thought the matter over, though without coming to any definite conclusion.

Reflection told him that Mr. Richard Steele's known record must be a clean one. The headmaster could not possibly have been deceived by an impostor.

If he was indeed a crackman, a criminal, that was a secret side of his life, and, while carrying on a lawless career, he had contrived to keep up appearances unquestioned.

Such a thing was possible, but—

But it was more probable, after all, that there was, as he had suggested, some innocent explanation of the circumstances that told against him.

It was difficult to imagine what the explanation could be. A man who climbed a park wall after midnight, in a place where a robbery took place the same night, had a great deal to explain.

Had the Courtfield crackman been captured, of course, that would have set the matter at rest. But the Courtfield crackman was still at large, his identity unknown and unsuspected.

Was Steele the man?

All that Wharton had known of him previously pointed to his being the man. Yet, looking at him in the Form-room, Wharton could not believe it.

He was glad that Bunter did not recognise the man of Hogben Grange—glad that he had himself decided to say nothing, even to his friends. Doubt lingered in his mind; but every word, every action, of the new master helped to dispel it.

Suspicious circumstances, after all, were only suspicious circumstances. Facts were facts and the undoubted fact was that the Head of Greyfriars was satisfied with the bona-fides of

Richard Steele. Wharton felt that he had to let it go at that.

So it came as rather a relief that Mr. Steele treated him exactly like the other fellows, and seemed unconscious of any secret knowledge existing between them.

Before the morning was over, all the Remove, or nearly all, knew that they had to deal with a man who, though younger and perhaps rather more agreeable than Mr. Quelch, was a man who knew his way about, was decidedly "downy," and was not to be trifled with.

Only William George Bunter—perhaps for the reason that fools rush in where angels fear to tread—held on to his great idea of "gammoning" the new master of the Remove.

Getting on the right side of a Form master was good business—if it could be worked. Favouritism, certainly, was not very popular at Greyfriars, in the Remove or any other Form; but Bunter had no objection to favouritism, so long as he was the favourite. That was the important point, and the only one that concerned William George Bunter.

Capper of the Fourth had his favourites, so it was said, and they had an easy time. Certainly Mr. Capper was very tolerant with Cecil Reginald Temple of that Form; and equally certainly, Capper had been asked to pay a visit to Sir Reginald Temple's stately home. These two circumstances might have been unconnected, of course; on the other hand, they mightn't. If Steele treated Bunter as Capper treated Temple, Bunter was going to be quite satisfied. As an inducement—a visit to a stately home being impracticable—Bunter was prepared to pull the new master's leg.

Everybody, Bunter argued, liked flattery. Everybody liked being held up to admiration. Bunter would have liked it himself immensely had it ever come his way.

Gratitude was a thing that touched any heart. It gave a fellow a very pleasant mellow sort of feeling if a fellow was grateful to him. It put him in the mood to hand out further favours.

Both flattery and gratitude Bunter was prepared to hand out, in any quantities that might be required.

Already the Owl of the Remove envisaged himself in the happy position of Form master's favourite; lounging in late to class and receiving only a mild reproof; passed over tactfully when there were any difficulties in construe; hardly ever given lines, and never asked to show them up when they were given.

It was quite a happy prospect for Bunter if he could work it; and he thought he could.

It was, Bunter considered, a clever scheme; and, of course, when Bunter was doing anything he considered clever, he could not keep it to himself. He had to tell the universe how clever he was.

A still tongue would have showed a wise head in such a matter, but Bunter's tongue was constitutionally incapable of keeping still.

In break that morning he told the fellows what to expect.

"Watch me!" said Bunter, with a fat grin. "I'm coming in late for third school, to try it on. Watch me pull it off!"

"Fathead!" said Bob Cherry. "I tell you that man Steele is a downy bird."

"The downfulness of that absurd bird is terrific my esteemed Bunter!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Leave it to me!" said Bunter, with a self-satisfied snirk. "If I don't pull

his leg a treat you can use my head for a football!"

"What's the good of a wooden football?" asked Bob.

"Yah!"

When the Remove went in for third school the fat Owl did not go in with them. He was trying it on.

Five minutes late for class, Bunter rolled in.

Mr. Steele was busy at the black-board, and he did not seem, for the moment, to observe Bunter's late entrance. The fat junior rolled to his place and sat down.

He grinned round the Form.

The other fellows waited rather expectantly. All the Form knew about Bunter's stunt, and wondered how it would turn out.

Richard Steele turned from the black-board, and his keen grey eye fixed on the Owl of the Remove.

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You are late for class."

"Sorry, sir," said Bunter. "But I was telling a Fourth Form man, sir, how you saved my life in the holidays, sir. He was so interested, sir, when I told him how you plunged into an icy river at the risk of your life, to save a perfect stranger, and—"

"I did nothing of the kind, Bunter!"

"Eh?"

"I pulled you out of a hole in the ice, after you had endangered yourself by your own folly and clumsiness."

"Oh, sir! I—I'm awfully grateful sir—"

"Nonsense!"

"Oh, really, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"I do not desire to be severe on my first day with this Form," said Mr. Steele. "But all my boys must understand that punctuality is required in the Remove. Do not let this occur again, Bunter."

"Oh, certainly not, sir; but this once, sir, I—I was so interested telling that chap about the heroic way you saved my life, sir—"

"That will do, Bunter."

"Yes, sir; only I can't help thinking about it, sir," said Bunter. "I've a very grateful nature, sir, and, seeing that you shaved my wife—I mean, saved my life—"

"Silence!"

Mr. Steele rapped out the word so sharply that Bunter realised that he had said enough—if not a little too much. So he let the subject drop.

But he bestowed a fat wink on the Form as soon as Richard Steele's back was turned.

Bunter was satisfied with results, so far! He had been late—and he had been let off! Steele had pretended it was because it was the first day; of course, he had to have some excuse. But the fact was that he wasn't going to be severe on a fellow who was singing his praises up and down Greyfriars. At least, Bunter was satisfied that that

was the fact. No doubt the wish was father to the thought.

Third school was quite happy for Bunter. The Form master's favourite was going to have an easy time that term; and Billy Bunter had no doubt that he was going to be the Form master's favourite.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Great Expectations!

"PREP!" said Peter Todd.

"Bosh!" said Bunter.

In Study No. 7 in the Remove that evening Peter Todd and Tom Dutton sat down to the table to preparation. Billy Bunter sat down in the armchair.

Bunter did not like prep.

anything, so that would have been all right.

Certainly, Bunter was not likely to discover his ideal school among all the scholastic establishments of Great Britain. He had to make the best he could of Greyfriars. But now that beast Quelch, who made a fellow work, was gone, and Bunter was going to be the new Form master's favourite, Greyfriars was going to be much better than of old. Work, at least, would be reduced to a minimum.

Bunter deposited his ample proportions in the study armchair and perched his feet on the mantelpiece. Then he regarded Toddy and Dutton with a patronising grin.

"Go it, Toddy!" he said. "Pile in! You can do enough for two! He, he, he!"



"I had a jolly narrow escape in the hols," said Bunter. "my life."

"Steele, our new Form master, saved

He had never liked it.

Prep, it was true, was rather necessary, if a fellow was to hand out a decent construe in class. But Bunter had no desire whatever to hand out a decent construe.

He did not desire to hand one out at all. The less Bunter learned of Latin the more he liked that classic language.

That school was a place where fellows learned things was a theory that Bunter had never countenanced.

Swots and saps, like Linley of the Remove or Wilkinson of the Fourth, might think so, but Bunter knew better.

School, according to Bunter's ideas, was a place where you dodged work all you could. Any means were justifiable to attain that great end. In fact, the end justified the means.

A school run according to Bunter's ideal would have been a school where the fellows spent most of their time in the tuckshop and the rest at the pictures. This would have suited Bunter down to the ground. At such an establishment he might not have learned much; but he did not want to learn

Peter looked at him over his books.

"You ass!" he said. "Steele's let you off once; you'd better not try it on again!"

"My dear chap, teach your grandmother!" answered Bunter. "I'm going to have him feeding from my hand."

"Fathead!" said Peter.

"Ass!" retorted Bunter.

And Bunter did no prep, sure of an easy time in the morning. When he was tired of watching his study-mates at work—even watching work made Bunter tired—he strolled out of the study, and rolled away down the stairs. During the time devoted to prep fellows were supposed not to be out of their studies; and Mr. Quelch had been quite severe in such matters. But Bunter was not expecting severity from Mr. Steele, if he encountered that gentleman in his walks abroad.

The door stood open, and the purring of an engine could be heard from without. The Head's car stood on the

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The INVISIBLE HEADMASTER!

By DICKY NOBENT

Look out, boys! Clevercove's invented
an invisibility apparatus
And now the Head's collared it!

A MAZING!
"Eggstraordinary!"
"It beats the giddy band!"
These eggscalamations and
a lot more of a similar natcher were
heard all over St. Sam's one bright and
frosty morning.

Clarence Clevercove's latest invention
was the cause of all the eggitement.

Clevercove was the inventor of the
Fourth. His nollidge of science, like
Oliver Twist's nollidge of Brighton, was
eggstensive and peculiar, and many a
time had he astonished his colleags with
his weerd and wonderful scientiffick
creations.

It was safe to say, however, that he
had never succeeded in astonishing them
quite so much as he had this time. What
scientist had dreamed of for hundreds
of years had at last come to pass in
the Fourth passidge at St. Sam's.

Clevercove had invented an in-
visibility apparatus.

It was amazing; it was unpres-
ented. But it was true! By sitting
in an electric-chair in Clevercove's study
and pulling the lever marked "ON!"
anybody could become invisible. By
simply pressing the nob marked
"OFF!" one could become visible again.
As Jack Jolly remarked, it beat the
band.

Jack Jolly & Co. were all in the
inventor's study having some rare old
lax on this bright and frosty morn-
ing. They were taking it in turns to
become invisible, and fairly burst their
sides with laughter at the humor of it
all. It was easy to see that they were
enjoying themselves—or, rather, it
wasn't easy, as our heroes couldn't be
seen at all; but they were enjoying
themselves, anyway.

Just as they had all become visible
again there was a thunderous rat-tat on
the door, and Dr. Birchmell, the
revered and majestic headmaster of St.
Sam's, poked his sinister dile round the
door.

"What cheer, boys!" he called out
"Having a good time?"

"Yes, rather!" replied Jack Jolly &
Co.

"Still going strong on the invisibility
machine, I see!" remarked the Head
genially, as he insinuated himself into
the Study. "Matter of fact, Clevercove,
between you and me and the gatepost,
that's what I've called about."

"You have?" ejaculated Clevercove.
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"I have—I has!" grinned the Head.
"I've been thinking—"

"What with?" inkwired Frank Fear-
less politely.

Dr. Birchmell skowled.
"Asking for a thick ear, Fearless?"
he queried.

"Nunno, sir!"
"Then don't indulge in pleznantries
at your headmaster's eggspence. To
proceed, I've been thinking about this
invention of yours, Clevercove. The con-
clusion I have arrived at is that the
apparatus is too dangerous a weppon
to be left in the hands of a meer junior
like yourself."

Clarence Clevercove frowned.
"I jolly well invented it, sir, anyway."

"That, Clevercove, is neither here nor
there," retorted the Head, indicating
here and there with his birchrod.
"Whether you invented it or not, the
fact remains that for a junior to possess
a machine for making himself invisible
is strictly against the time-honoured
laws of St. Sam's."

"Yes, but—"

"But me no 'buts,' Clevercove!" cried
the Head severely. "I haven't come
here to argue the toss with you. What
I have really come for, as a matter of
fact is, the invisibility machine itself!"

"Oh!" mermered the juniors, looking
at each other meaningly. Like a flash
they saw what the Head was driving
at. The eranty old codger had deter-
mined to confiscate Clevercove's master-
piece for himself.

"You—you—so you want it for your-
self, sir?" stammered Clevercove.

"Not at all, Clevercove! I meerly
want to look after it for you until the
end of the term!"

"Ratts!" broke in Jack Jolly, skorn-
fully. "If the truth is told, I eggspect
you want to make yourself invisible so
that you can take fellows' tuck-hampers
in safety!"

The Head turned as red as a pony.
"How dare you, Jolly!" he cried, his
voice horse with rage. "As if a gentle-
man occupying my eminent position
would demean himself by taking tuck-
hampers! I might absent-mindedly
snaffle a few jam-tarts, et settera, but
tuck-hampers—never! Besides, you
know yourself how heavv they are to
carry!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"What did you say, Merry?"

"I said 'and the mat'!" said Merry,
bastily

Dr. Birchmell grunted.

"Just as well for you you did! Now,
Clevercove, hand it over! I'm in a
hurry!"

"But—"

"Hand it over, or be birched black
and blue!" thundered the Head.

Clevercove hesitated for a brief
moment, then, with feelings that were
too deep for words, handed over the
electric-chair, complete with batteries,
jam-jars, cotton-reels, and all the other
electrical apparatus.

In less than a minnit the Head had
gracefully retired from the study, his
prize slung over his back like a sack
of potatoes.

To say that our heroes were annoyed
about the loss of Clevercove's master-
piece would be putting it far too mildly.
They simply boiled with rage.

"Well, this is a pretty kettle of fish,
and no mistake!" gasped Jack Jolly,
when he had recovered his breth.
"Mark my words, Clevercove, old chap,
the Head wants that chair for no good
purpose!"

"Hear, hear!"

"It's simply scandalous!" cried Frank
Fearless, hotly. "What are things
coming to, I should like to know, when
a fellow can't have an invisibility
apparatus in his study?"

"Goodness knows!" said Bright, with
a sad shake of his head. "Personally,
I think we ought to hold an indignation
meeting."

"Good wheeze!" eggscclaimed Jack
Jolly. "Call the fellows together at
once!"

Jack Jolly's word was law in the
Fourth. Hardly had the words left his
mouth before a seething crowd of
juniors had gathered in the Common-
room.

Loud cheers greeted the kaptin of the
Fourth as he entered and mounted the
platform. Jack Jolly didn't beat about
the bush. In his usual straightforward
way he got down to brass tax in no
time.

"Gentlemen, chaps and fellows!" he
yelled. "This is an indignation meet-
ing called to eggspress our disgust with
the Head."

"Hear, hear!"

"Speaking for myself I have always
thought that the Head ought to be sup-
pressed—"

(Loud cheers).

"And if I had my way, I'd give him
a special dose of his own birchrod—"

"You'd what?" roared a voice at that
moment.

Consternation rained immeately. For
the voice was the voice of the Head
himself.

"Oh, my hat!" muttered Jack Jolly.

"That's torn it!"

"So you thought you'd hold an in-
dignation meeting, did you?" thundered
Dr. Birchmell's voice. "You didn't

count on my turning up in an invisible state, did you?"

"G-g-grate pip!"

"Nevertheless, that is what I have done. Although you can't see me, I am undoubtedly here. Just to prove it I'll stamp on De Vere's feet—like this!"

"Yaroooo! Oh, bai Jove!" roared the Honorable Guy de Vere, dancing about in aggrony.

"Indignation meeting, indeed! Bah!" sneered the Head contemptibly. "If I had the time, I'd flog you all. As I haven't, I will let you off lightly. Take fifty thousand lines each!"

"Thank you, sir!" gasped the Fourth. "And now dismiss!"

The Fourth dismissed, feeling awfully disinayed. St. Sam's had suffered enuff before from the tyranny of the Head. What it was going to suffer, now that he could become invisible at will, hardly bore thinking about.

II.

"GOOD - AFTERNOON, Mr. Justiss!"

"How do, Mr. Lickham?" Mr. Justiss, the master of the Fifth, and Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth, passed in the Hall and raised their mortar-boats to each other. They often met at this spot after dinner and indulged in five minnits' learned and skollery conversation about League football, cigarette pictures, and their favourite film stars.

"Herd the latest?" asked Mr. Justiss, offering his colleg a paper bag from which Mr. Lickham greedily abstracted a duzen pea-nutts.

"Can't say I have," replied Mr. Lickham, filling his mouth with the tasty morsels. "Coff it up, old sport!"

Mr. Justiss lowered his voice. "The Head has collared Clevercove's new invention!" he said.

Mr. Lickham frowned. "Greedy rotter!" he eggscclaimed. "Clevercove is in my Form, and I had fully intended confiscating it for my own use. It's just like the Head to step in first and queer my pitch."

"I simperthrise with you, my dear Mr. Lickham!" mormored Mr. Justiss. "I am frequently being annoyed by the Head's goings-on, myself. F'rinstance, he has never paid me the ten bob he borrowed two terns ago. Then again, he is always dropping in to tea, uninvited, and scolling duzens of my scones."

"Just the same with me!" snorted Mr. Lickham. "The fact is, the man's a black-hearted villan!"

"In fact, a dubble-died scoundrell!" suggested Mr. Justiss.

"A mean, stingy, minky outsider!"

"A di-honourable, unprincipled—" Mr. Justiss was beginning to warm up to this descriptive work. If he had been allowed to go on, he would have made quite a long speech of it.

But circumstances nipped his efforts in the bud. Just as he reached the word "unprincipled," something happened to put a sudden stop to the two masters' friendly little chat.

That "something" was a pair of invisible hands reaching out and seering the two gossipers by the scruff of their respective necks.

The two learned gentlemen let out with yells of fear.

"What the thump—"

"Yaroooo! Ghost! Spook! Speck-ters!" roared Mr. Lickham; then his cries died away into steypled silence as the well-known voice of Dr. Bircham-all fell on his ears.

"So I'm a mean, stingy, minky outsider, am I? I'm dishonourable and unprincipled, am I? I'll learn you to take my name in vain behind my back!"

As the Head concluded, the invisible hands which had seized the two masters brought their heads together with a resounding thwack.

"Yoooooop!" yelled Messrs. Lickham and Justiss in corus; and they followed up that yell with at least a duzen others as the Head repeated his manoever again and again.

Lickham and Justiss found themselves released at last, and a sorry pair they looked as they rubbed their injured nappers.

"We mite have guessed it!" groaned Mr. Lickham, as they staggered back arm-in-arm to Masters' passidgo. "The Head has used Clevercove's invention to make himself invisible!"

"My hat! Of corse!" moaned Mr. Justiss. "Henceforth, we shall have to mind our 'P's' and 'Q's,' old chap. I don't like to be pessimistic, but now that the Head possesses this new weapon, it looks as if we're in for a high old time!"

And the events of the next few days showed that Mr. Justiss' prophecy was only too true. The Head used his new powers to the greatest possibl advantage, and St. Sam's faredly groaned under the new tyranny. Invisible hands knocked fellows' heads together, invisible ears listened to all kinds of private and confidential conversations, invisible feet aimed kicks at harmless passers-by, and so on and so fourth.

Of corse, nobody had any doubts about the eyedentity of the guilty party. It was always faredly easy to read the gilt in the Head's dila, and now the fellows could see through him more easily than ever.

Taking things all round, the Head gave St. Sam's a pretty warm time of it during the three or four days following his interview with Clevercove. But every cloud has its silver lining, and the old motter proved true in this instance.

The day arrived when the First

Eleven were dew to play one of the hardest matches of the year. This was their annual fixture with the St. Alf's men. St. Alf's were reckoned to be one of the strongest skool sides in the country, and although Burleigh and his merry men were ready to do or die, a good many fellows at St. Sam's eggspressed grave doubts about whether they were quite up to the St. Alf's standard.

About ten minnits before the grate match began the Head went down to the football pavilion and beckoned Burleigh on one side.

"Do you think you can stand an exceedingly plezzant surprise, Burleigh?" he asked.

The St. Sam's kaptin larked.

"I'll do my best, sir. Are you going to make me a present of half-a-crown? If so, it will be the most jenerous thing you've ever done in your life."

"Pray don't be personal, Burleigh!" eggscclaimed the Head, cullering up to the roots of his beard. "The plezzant surprise I kontemprate giving you will delite you even more than the gift of half-a-crown."

"Grate pip! What is it then, sir?" asked Burleigh, in astonishment.

"I will tell you. The fact is, I have decided to play for you against St. Alf's. Don't go too wild with delite."

Burleigh didn't. Far from going wild with delite he looked more like eggsploping with wrath.

"You—you—I'll take jolly good care you don't play against St. Alf's!" he cried at last.

The Head glared.

"Do you wish to be publicly flogged and eggspelled, Burleigh?" he inquired, plezzantly.

"Oh crikey! No, sir!"

"Then think carefully before you make your final decision. Are you going to play me or not?"

"Yes, rather!" gasped Burleigh, changing his mind with amazing suddenness.

"Good!" grinned the Head. "And now that you have done the decent (Continued on page 27.)"



Two invisible hands seerze Messrs. Lickham and Justiss and brought their heads together with a thwack!



THE FORM-MASTER'S FAVOURITE!

(Continued from page 13.)

drive, with Barnes, the Head's chauffeur, standing by it.

Bunter blinked curiously.

Somebody was going out in the Head's car—not the Head, or it would have been at Dr. Locke's private door. Quelch had often used the Head's car, and Bunter wondered whether that privilege had descended to his successor.

He rolled out on to the steps, and blinked at Barnes.

Bunter did not like Barnes much. More than once Barnes had declined to give Bunter a lift in the headmaster's car, which Bunter regarded as cheek. Barnes was considered at Greyfriars a very superior young man indeed, and there was a rumour that he was an ex-officer—founded probably on his looks, for Barnes never said anything on the subject. If the man had been an officer, and thought more of himself on that account, Bunter was just the fellow to put him in his place. Bunter rather liked putting people in their places.

Barnes did not touch his cap to Bunter; did not even appear to see him. That, of course, was cheek.

"Waiting for somebody, Barnes?" asked Bunter.

Barnes, thus forced to recognise Bunter's existence, touched his cap, in the quiet, respectful way he had.

"Yes, sir."

"Who?" asked Bunter. As it did not concern Bunter in the very least, he naturally asked the question.

"Mr. Steele, sir."

"Our beak," said Bunter. "Borrowing the Head's car just like old Quelch used to."

Barnes made no comment on that. Perhaps he was not so deeply concerned as Bunter in the business of other people.

"I've never given you away, Barnes," said Bunter patronisingly.

Barnes gave him an expressionless look. If a glint came into his quiet eyes, the Owl of the Remove did not notice it.

"You haven't forgotten, Barnes?" grinned Bunter.

"I do not seem to recall what you allude to, sir."

"Don't you?" grinned Bunter. "I'll jolly well remind you, then. That night at Wharton Lodge, when the Beak was staying with Wharton's people, and you had your governor's car out on a joy-ride nearly all night."

"I had quite forgotten the incident, sir."

"You've got a jolly bad memory when you like, haven't you, Barnes?" grinned Bunter. "It was the night of the burglary at Sankey Hall."

"Indeed, sir."

"Still, you mayn't have heard of that, as the Head left Wharton Lodge next day, before we got the news," remarked Bunter.

"No, sir."

"It was a big affair—a lot of jewels stolen," said Bunter. "They never got the man. I—"

"Excuse me sir; here comes Mr. Steele," said Barnes.

Bunter blinked round. The athletic

figure of Richard Steele appeared in the doorway, and his keen grey eyes fixed on Bunter.

"As I was saying, Barnes," went on the Owl of the Remove calmly, and loud enough for Mr. Steele to hear, "I had a jolly narrow escape in the hols. Steele, that's our new Form master, saved my life when I was sinking through the ice of the river. Such wonderful bravery—"

"Bunter!"

"Oh! Yes, sir?" said Bunter, appearing to see Mr. Steele for the first time. "I was just telling Barnes, sir, how you saved my life at awful danger to yourself, sir—"

"What are you doing out of your study, Bunter?"

"N-n-nothing, sir."

"You should be doing something, Bunter, at this hour. Go back to your study at once for your preparation."

"Oh! Certainly, sir!"

Bunter rolled into the House again, and Steele's keen eyes followed him up the stairs.

He rolled cheerfully into Study No. 7.

"Come back to work?" asked Peter Todd sarcastically, glancing up from his books.

"What do you think?" chuckled Bunter.

"You'd better—"

"Gammon! I've just seen Steele!" grinned Bunter. "I let him hear me piling it on about his jolly old bravery in the hols. I started telling Barnes, see, as he came out to the car. Neat, what?"

"And what did Steele do?" asked Peter curiously.

Bunter gave a fat chuckle.

"Oh, he told me to get back to prep—he had to do that, of course. But it's all serene."

"No lines?"

"Not likely!"

"And you're not going to do any prep?"

"No fear!"

"Suppose Steele picks you in Form?"

Another fat chuckle from Bunter.

"He won't! Leave it to me! If he does, I shall say I didn't do much prep because I was telling a man about the way he saved my life in the hols. He, he, he!" Bunter chuckled. "Gammon goes down, you know! Bunter's the thing! Give 'em plenty of butter, and they'll feed out of your hand! I know a thing or two, Peter!"

"And how long do you think you're going to get away with this sort of thing?" asked Toddy, with interest.

"All the term," said Bunter coolly.

"I shouldn't wonder if Steele makes me head of the Form, in Wharton's place. That wouldn't be favouritism—only bare justice. If I have to give out the marks any time, Toddy, you can depend on getting plenty from a pal."

"Thanks!" said Peter dryly.

"I'll make some of 'em sit up, though," said Bunter. "But to a pal I shall be all right. Wharton could make a lot out of being head of the Form if he had my brains. When Quelch trusted him to mark the papers, Frinssance, he could have scored off the fellows he didn't like—but he never thought of it."

"That's the kind of thing you would think of, though!" said Peter Todd, with a withering sarcasm that was wholly lost on Bunter.

"You bet!" said Bunter. "I've got brains! Then he could have made fellows stand him tea in the study, and all that. Give him things, and so on. But he never had the gumption to think of it. I can tell you, Toddy, that I shall make a jolly good thing out of it, one way or another, if Steele makes me head of the Form."

"You frabjous chump!" said Peter. "Can't you see that Quelch trusted Wharton because he was trustworthy, and that a blind man wouldn't trust you with a bad ha'penny?"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Shut up, anyhow!" said Peter.

"I've got work to do if you haven't!"

"Get on with it!" grinned Bunter.

"No prep for me! And I can tell you this, Toddy—you'd better be civil in this study, or I may make you sit up when I'm head of the Form! Bear that in mind!"

"You're not head of the Form yet, Fatty."

"It's coming," said Bunter complacently, "and you'd better mind your p's and q's, Toddy—I'm warning you as a friend. I shan't stand any cheek! I shall put you in your place, same as the others. I—I say, Toddy, what are you going to do with that cushion?"

"Guess!" said Toddy.

"Whiz!"

It was easy enough for Bunter to guess what Toddy was going to do with the cushion. It whizzed across the study and smote Bunter on his ample waistcoat.

"Varoooooh!"

Bump!

Bunter sat down.

"Ow! Beast! Wow! Groooooogh!" spluttered Bunter.

"Now shut up!" suggested Peter.

"Ow!" Billy Bunter scrambled to his feet and gave Toddy a deadly blink through his big spectacles. "Ow! You wait till I'm head of the Form, you beast! I'll make you squirm! Ow!"

And Bunter rolled out of the study, tenderly caressing his waistcoat, postponing vengeance on Toddy till he was head of the Form—when the vials of wrath were to be poured out on Toddy's devoted head.

Still, Bunter was not head of the Form yet.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Carry On!

CLANG! Clang!

It was a cold morning. In January a fellow naturally expected it to be cold, and made up his mind to it. As it couldn't be cured, it had to be endured; and grousing was a useless expenditure of energy. That was how most of the Removites looked at it when they turned out in the grey winter morning at the clang of the rising-bell.

That, however, was not how W. G. Bunter looked at it. Bunter put a fat little nose over the top edge of his blankets, sniffed, and grunted.

"It's c-c-cold," was his remark.

And he withdrew the fat little nose, like a tortoise pulling its head back into the shell.

"It's c-c-cold," agreed Bob Cherry. "But we've got to tut-tut-turn out, old man."

"You can if you like," came a muffled voice from under Bunter's blankets. "Not me."

"Fathead! Roll out!"

"Rats!"

The clanging of the bell died away, and by that time most of the Removites were out of bed and busy. It was useless to slack about on a cold morning and get colder; and out of the question to remain in bed, tempting as were the warm blankets.

Bunter resumed his musical snore. Apparently he had gone to sleep again. If so, he was drawn suddenly from the land of dreams by a damp sponge that was squeezed upon his fat features. He woke with a yell.

"Yaroooh!"
 "Time to roll out, old fat man!" said Peter Todd kindly.

"Beast!"
 "You'll be late down," said Peter.
 "Mind your own business."
 "You fat chump!" exclaimed Toddy.

"You know you'll get lines if you cut prayers! Turn out!"
 "Leave me alone!" roared Bunter.
 "I'm not coming down till brekker. I suppose I can chance it if I like."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Peter.
 "Are you thinking that you'll get off by giving Steele some more butter?"

Bunter's frowning fat face relaxed into a grin. Evidently that was the idea that was working in his podgy brain.

"Look here, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "Turn out, you fathead! You're quite mistaken about Steele being a favourite-monger—"

"That's all you know!"
 "And it's mean, anyhow, even if you were right. Can't you see that?" demanded the captain of the Remove.

Bunter sneered a fat sneer.
 "I don't want you to teach me anything, Wharton. If you were as high-minded a chap as I am you'd do."

"Oh, Christopher Columbus!"
 "I'm going to sleep!" said Bunter defiantly. "You fellows keep quiet. Not so much jaw! Shut the door quietly! Don't tramp about. See?"

"Any more orders?" asked Bob Cherry, staring at the Owl of the Remove. "Don't forget to mention anything you want."

"Well, shut up all round," said Bunter, settling his head on the pillow again. "Go down as soon as you can, and go quietly. I'm staying in. I've got a pull with the beak. You haven't. That makes all the difference. Now let a fellow get a snooze!"

Bunter closed his eyes again.
 They remained closed, and Bunter reposed luxuriously for about the thousandth part of a second. After that brief space of time they opened again, and Bunter's repose was shattered by the bedclothes being jerked off him in a bundle.

Bunter started up with a roar.
 "Ow! Beast! Wharrer you up to? Lemmy bedclothes alone! Beast! Gimme those blankets!"

Bob Cherry chuckled, and strewed the bedclothes across another bed, out of Billy Bunter's reach.

"Out you come!" he remarked.
 "Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Hand me that water-jug, Franky!"
 "Here you are!"
 "Yaroooh!"

Bunter rolled off his bed as if it had become suddenly red-hot. He groped for his spectacles, jammed them on his nose, and glared at Bob with a glare that almost cracked them.

"Look here, you silly chump, can't you mind your own business?" bawled Bunter. "You wait till I'm head of the Form! I'll make you cringe!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Remove.
 "You can cackle!" hooted Bunter.

"You just wait! Steele will make me head of the Form before the week's out, and then you look out for squalls. Now gimme those blankets, Cherry, you beast!"

"I'll give you a bolster instead," said Bob cheerily. "I'm saving you from getting lines, fatty."

"I tell you Steele won't give me any lines, you idiot! If he does he won't ask for them."

"Then I'm saving you from being favoured, which is ever so much worse than getting lines," said Bob. "Here's the bolster."

"Whoop!"
 Bunter got only one end of the bolster, the other end being retained by Bob. But the end he got, he got hard.

"Ow! Leave off, you beast! Ow! I'm going to get up! I d-d-don't really want to stay in bed! I'm going to dress! Wow! Chuck it!"

"Go ahead, then!" grinned Bob.
 "It's too much to expect you to wash, but you can dress. Get on with it!"

Bunter got on with it.
 He frowned with deep wrath as he did so.

His assumption of the position of Form master's favourite did not seem to be adding to his popularity in his Form. Certainly, if it turned out as Bunter anticipated, it was likely to make him the most unpopular fellow in the school. It was not uncommon for favouritism, in the long run, to lead to more kicks than ha'pence, so to speak. Bunter was, as it were, getting some of the kicks in advance, without having as yet touched the ha'pence.

Anyhow, whether he was a favourite or not, it was clear that he was not going to frown in bed after the rest of the Form had turned out. Every man in the Remove was ready to see to that.

Bunter went down with the Form, in a very discontented mood. It was a drawback to the position of favourite if cheeky fellows butted in and spoiled the thing like this.

Bunter had counted on an extra half-hour in bed, while the other fellows shivered at prayers. He had had no doubt that Steele would let him off. But the Remove fellows would not let him off; so that was that!

Steele breakfasted with his Form, as Mr. Quelch had always done. Some of the masters breakfasted in Common-room; but Richard Steele turned up fresh and good-humoured at the Remove table in hall.

His pleasant smile at the head of the table was quite cheering after the accustomed severe countenance of Quelch. Quelch was quite a good man, and his Form respected him; but his greatest admirer would never have said that he was merry and bright in the morning, especially on a cold morning.

Richard Steele had the advantage of being only half Mr. Quelch's age; and a quarter of a century or so made a lot of difference to a man on a misty winter's morning.

On such a morning Quelch was liable to certain rheumatic twinges, or a touch of neuralgia; and though no consideration whatever would have made Quelch unjust, there was no doubt that he handed out strict justice with a firm hand when he had those twinges. Steele had not yet reached the age of twinges.

Many of the Removeites had the impression that they had made a change for the better. They had already learned that Steele was going to make them work, just like Quelch. But, as Skinner remarked, at least he was less like a gargoyle to look at.

In the Form-room that morning most of the fellows were on the look-out to see what happened to Bunter.

So far, he seemed to have had luck in his new wheeze of "sucking up" to the beak; and some of the fellows wondered whether there was anything in it. Men after men was called on to construe; by that time Steele had the names of all his Form packed in his memory, though it was rather a numerous Form. Bunter dozed comfortably at the back of the class, till he was suddenly called upon.

"Bunter!"

The Owl of the Remove started and blinked.
 "You will go on where Linley left off!"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.
 He had not been listening or paying any attention whatever, and he was quite unaware where Mark Linley had left off.

"I am waiting, Bunter."
 "I—I—I've lost the place!" stammered Bunter.

"Show Bunter the place, Wharton."
 Wharton showed Bunter the place. The fat junior blinked rather unhappily at P. Vergilius Maro.

Had Bunter prepared the lesson he would have handed out the worst translation in the Remove. As he had not prepared it, he was totally at a loss. But for his conviction that he was the Form master's favourite and could do no wrong, he would have felt very unhappy indeed. He thanked his lucky stars that he was not dealing with Quelch.

"Proceed, my boy," said Mr. Steele, quite kindly. He was a patient gentleman, and had probably observed long since that William George Bunter was not a bright particular star in the intellectual line. "Est in conspectu Tenedos—"

"Est in conspectu Tenedos—" stammered Bunter.

"Construe!" said Mr. Steele.

But that was exactly what Bunter couldn't do. He knew, of course, that Virgil must have meant something when he wrote that piffle—the whole Æneid being piffle in Bunter's valuable opinion. But what Virgil had meant was, so far as Bunter was concerned, a secret buried in the tomb of the great Mantuan.

What the thump the blighter could have meant by "Est in conspectu Tenedos, notissima fama insula, dives opum," and so on, Bunter didn't know, and didn't want to know; but he had to say something, so he made a shot at it. When Bunter made shots at things like this he was not a good marksman.

"Expecting a ten-pound note—" hazarded Bunter.

There was a moment's hush. Even Bunter had never equalled this before, weird as his construe often was.

Steele caved at him.

The hush was broken by a roar from the Remove. They could not help it.

"Ha, ha, ha!"
 "Silence, please!" said Mr. Steele, though his own face was twitching.

"Bunter, try again, and do not be so absurd!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" said Bunter. He tried again: "Suspecting that a ten-pound note was on the island, he dives for opium—"

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

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Mr. Steele. "One would suppose, Bunter, that you were totally unacquainted with the rudiments of the Latin language."

"And one would be right on the wicket!" murmured Bob Cherry, and there was a chuckle from the fellows near him.

"Bunter! You did not prepare this lesson!" said Mr. Steele severely.

"The—the fact is, sir—"

"I remember that you were out of your study last evening during the time for preparation," said the new master of the Remove. "Am I to understand, Bunter, that you did no work at all?"

"The fact is, sir, a fellow asked me about the time you saved my life in the hols, sir," explained Bunter. "I was telling him—"

"What?"

"All the fellows are so interested, sir,"

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hearing about the wonderful bravery of—

"Bunter!"

"The—marvellous pluck, sir, that—that you showed in saving my life, sir, in frightful danger—"

"Is this intended for impertinence, Bunter?"

Bunter jumped.

"Oh, no, sir! But—but I admire you so much, sir, and I'm so awfully grateful that I simply can't help telling the fellows, sir, what a splendid man you are, sir, and—and so—"

This was laying it on thick; but Bunter's view was that they liked it on thick, like butter on toast. The Remove listened and watched, wondering whether Bunter would get it home, so to speak.

"Bunter," said Mr. Steele, "I have already observed that you are a very obtuse boy. You must not make the mistake of supposing your Form master to be as obtuse as yourself."

"Oh, really, sir—"

"You are exaggerating the service I rendered you in the holidays, Bunter, in the most absurd manner!"

"Oh, no, sir! Such wonderful bravery—"

"If you mention the matter again in my presence, Bunter, I shall cane you!"

"Wha-a-a!"

"I mean what I say, Bunter! Let my words be a warning to you!"

Bunter blinked at him.

"You will take fifty lines for neglecting your preparation yesterday," said Mr. Steele. "I shall expect the lines at teatime. You may sit down, Bunter! Bolsover, you will go on."

Bunter sat down.

When the Form came out in break there were many grinning faces in the Remove. Bob Cherry clapped the fat Owl on the back.

"Time to chuck it, old fat bean," he advised. "Steele knows what you're after as well as we do, and it's getting his rag out. If you weren't as blind as an owl you'd have seen the danger-signal in his eye. Take a friend's advice and chuck it!"

Bunter sniffed.

"When I want your silly advice I'll ask for it!" he retorted. "It's working like a charm. Of course, he has to pretend to be modest about it, and all that; but I know human nature, old scout, and I tell you you can't lay it on too thick. He just rises to it."

"Fathead! You've got lines."

Bunter winked.

"I ain't going to do them," he said. "He won't ask me for them. He don't mean to. You'll see."

"You're heading for trouble, fat-head!"

"Rats!"

Every fellow in the Remove, with the exception of one, could see by this time that William George Bunter was heading for trouble. Unfortunately, the exception was W. G. Bunter himself.

Bunter was going on his happy way regardless. It only remained to be seen what would happen to him.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Bend Over, Bunter!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Done your lines?"

"No fear!"

After tea some of the Remove had gathered in the Rag, and Billy Bunter rolled into that apartment with a cheery countenance.

As Bunter's lines had to be handed in by tea-time, they were now overdue; but that circumstance did not worry the "Form master's favourite."

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He had dismissed that little matter of the imposition from his fat mind as a trifle light as air.

Convinced that he had buttered his greasy way into Steele's good graces, Bunter had no doubt that Steele had simply given him lines as a matter of form, and never intended to ask for them. Capper, the master of the Fourth, seldom or never asked Cecil Reginald Temple for his lines. Bunter was convinced that he was in the same enviable position in regard to his own Form master.

"Look here, you ass!" said Bob Cherry. "I keep on telling you that Steele isn't the ass you think him. It's you that's the ass!"

"You don't know a lot," said Bunter complacently. "A fellow who knows the ropes can always handle a Form master. Look at the way they diddle old Capper in the Fourth. One of them will say, 'Won't you tell us about your skiing, sir, at the winter sports place in Switzerland?' Or another of them will say, 'I was so interested, sir, in what you were telling me about when you were up at Oxford.' And that starts Capper off, and they get out of a whole class sometimes."

"Steele's a different sort of merchant from Capper."

"They're all much of a muchness," said Bunter sagely. "Give 'em butter, and lay it on thick, and they'll feed out of your hand. I know 'em."

Bunter chuckled.

"I've got away with it so far, at any rate!" he said. "I've been late for class, and I've cut prep; and I can jolly well tell you fellows that I'm going to do practically no work this term at all. Why, I can twist that silly fool Steele round my little finger as easy as pie by buttering him."

A sudden silence fell on the group of Removites standing round the fire in the Rag.

It was a silence of horror.

It was caused by the sudden apparition of the athletic figure of Richard Steele in the doorway.

Bunter, who had his back to the door, did not, of course, observe him. He had no eyes in the back of his head, and those in the front were not particularly useful.

In the sudden dead silence Bunter's cheery voice rattled on:

"Steele won't ask me for any lines! Leave it to me! Why, the silly ass just rises to it like a gudgeon when I hand out the butter. The thicker I pile it on the better he likes it. As a matter of fact, of course, he never did anything for me at all that time in the hols. I wasn't in danger, and he butted in without being asked, and dragged me about like a sack of coke, like a clumsy fat-head, and made me lose my cap. But he thinks I think him no end of a giddy hero. And I can tell you fellows it's pie to him, and he gloats over it. I say, what are you making that face at me for, Bob?"

Bunter blinked in surprise at Bob Cherry.

Bob's expression was rather extraordinary. As Mr. Steele was well within hearing, he could only try to sign to Bunter to shut up.

But Bunter, naturally, did not catch on. Bunter never was quick on the uptake.

Richard Steele stepped into the Rag.

If Bunter heard his footsteps he did not heed them. There were plenty of footsteps in the Rag.

"I've got that silly owl just where I want him," went on Bunter. "You fellows think he's as downy as Quelch. Bosh! I could pull his silly leg with

my eyes shut! I—I say, you fellows, what's up?"

Even Bunter realised at last that the deathly stillness in the Rag meant that something was wrong. He blinked round him in the direction in which the horrified juniors were gazing.

"Oh erikey!" gasped Bunter, as he discerned Mr. Steele.

His jaw dropped, and he gazed at the new master of the Remove open-mouthed. He was taken utterly aback.

"Ye gods!" murmured Bob, under his breath. "What's going to happen now?"

"Bunter!" said Mr. Steele quietly.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"You did not bring me your lines, Bunter, as directed."

"Oh!"

"I came here to speak to you on that subject, Bunter."

"Oh!"

"Quite inadvertently," said Mr. Steele. "I heard your remarks as I came in, Bunter."

"Oh!"

Bunter's vocabulary, generally ample, seemed very limited now. He could only gasp like a fish out of water.

"I am not surprised, Bunter, at what I heard," said Mr. Steele, with his pleasant smile—a smile that astonished the Removites, in the circumstances. Quelch, in those circumstances, would not have smiled; his expression would probably have resembled that of a tiger athirst for blood. But Richard Steele smiled quite pleasantly.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter again.

"I shall, of course, take no official notice of words overheard by accident," said Mr. Steele. "But I must remind you, Bunter, that your imposition has not been handed to me."

"Oh!"

"It is doubled," said Mr. Steele. "You will bring a hundred lines to my study before bed-time, Bunter."

"Oh!"

"That is all," said Mr. Steele.

And, with a slight nod to the staring Removites, he turned and walked out of the Rag.

There was a deep, deep gasp from the juniors. Bunter stood rooted to the floor.

"My hat!" murmured Bob. "Bunter's torn it now!"

"The tornfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"He's a sportsman!" said Harry Wharton. "My hat! Some masters would have given Bunter jip!"

"The esteemed fathead deserves the jipfulness!"

"If ever a silly idiot asked for it, Bunter did!" said Frank Nugent.

"Steele must be a jolly good-tempered man and a sportsman!"

Bunter gasped.

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"You've torn it, old fat bean," said Peter Todd. "Best thing you can do now is to get your impot done and shut up."

That was good advice, and Bunter might have acted on it, but for the fact that it implied work. Lines did not appeal to Bunter.

When the Remove went to their dormitory that night, Bunter's lines had not been written.

Hope springs eternal in the human breast. Apparently Bunter still nourished a hope that "butter" would see him through. The next morning, in the Form-room, Bunter was reminded of his lines.

"I—I haven't done them, sir!" stammered Bunter.

He blinked hopefully at Richard Steele.

"The—the fact is, sir—"

"Why have you not done your lines, Bunter?"

"The fact is, sir, I—I was telling a fellow about the gallant way you saved my life in the hole—"

"What?"

"How you rescued me, sir, at the risk of your life, sir," said Bunter hopefully.

"I can't help thinking, sir, that you ought to have a Victoria Cross, or something, sir, or a medal, or something—"

The Remove listened dumbfounded. That Bunter was every known kind of an ass his Form fellows, of course, knew. But that Bunter hoped to get away with this was really amazing.

Apparently he did. Mr. Steele was gazing at him in silence, and Bunter seemed to draw encouragement from his silence.

"I'm awfully sorry about the lines, sir; but the fact is, when I get on the subject of your wonderful bravery, sir, I forget things, because I'm so grateful, sir, and—"

"Your lines are doubled, Bunter."

"Oh!"

"This afternoon," said Mr. Steele, "is a half-holiday. You will remain in the Form-room and write out two hundred lines."

"Oh!"

"With regard to the other matter you mention," said Mr. Steele, "I have already warned you, Bunter, that if you referred to it again in my presence I should cane you."

"Oh!"

"Stand out before the Form, Bunter," Steele picked up Mr. Quelch's cane. "Bend over that desk, please!"

"Oh lor!"

"Bend over, Bunter!" rapped out Steele sharply. Bunter bent over.

Whack, whack, whack, whack, whack!

"Yow-ow-ow-ow-ow!"

"You may go to your place, Bunter," said Mr. Steele, laying down the cane.

"Yow! Ow! Woi!"

Bunter trailed back dismally to his place. His fat face was a study in dismay. He blinked dolorously at a grinning Remove.

That afternoon, Bunter sat in the Form-room and wrote lines. The "Form master's favourite" had fallen from his—imaginary—high estate, and great was the fall thereof. Evidently, Richard Steele was not built on the same lines as Capper, and gammon did not go down. Even Billy Bunter realised, at long last, that that was a chicken that would not fight.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Black Suspicion!

"SEEN the news, you men?" asked the Bounder, lounging into the Rag after prep one evening a few days later.

Smithy had an evening paper in his hand. Herbert Vernon-Smith was the only fellow in the Lower Fourth who got evening papers. The black sheep of the Remove tipped somebody to get him an evening paper on occasions when he was interested in the result of a race. Which made some of the smaller fry regard Smithy with awe and wonder, as a fellow who might be "bunked" any day.

"News?" repeated Bob Cherry, with a suspicion of a sniff.

He was aware of the kind of news for for which Smithy scanned the evening paper.

"What's won the Swindleton Steeplechase, and how much did you lose on it?" inquired Peter Todd satirically.

The Bounder laughed.

"I'm speaking of the news! The giddy burglar has been at work again—the jolly old Courtfield cracksmen."

Harry Wharton started.

"The Courtfield cracksmen?" he ejaculated.

"Safe broken open—" read out Toddy.

"Master hand—"

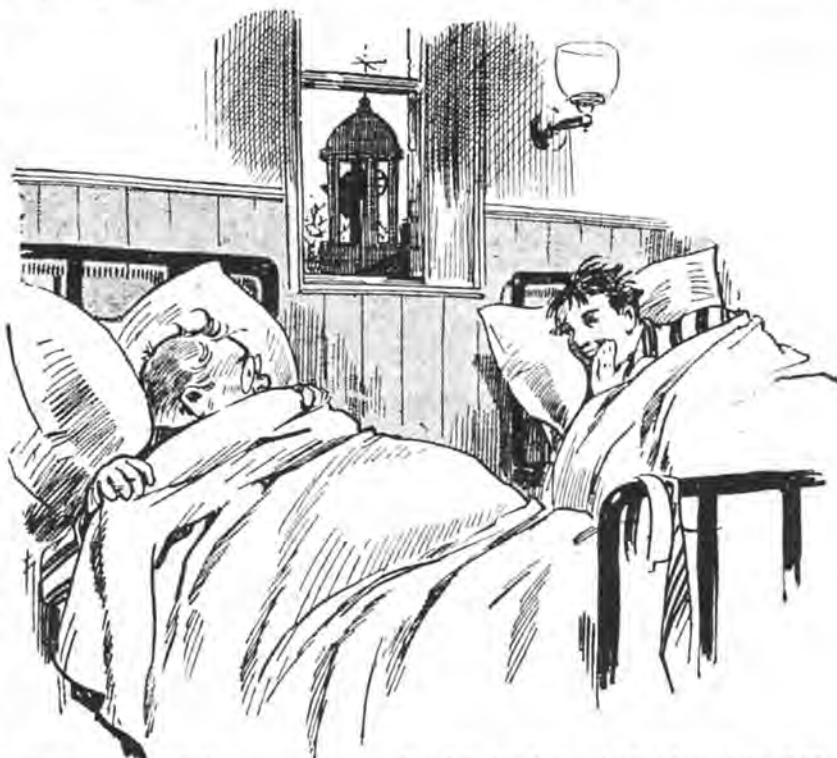
"Apparently the same unknown cracksmen—"

"Who has committed a series of daring—"

"Robberies in the same vicinity—"

"During the past few months—"

The fellows read it out in turns, with growing excitement. They had almost forgotten the excitement of last term; but it was revived in full force now, with the news that the daring criminal was at work again on his old beat.



Bunter put a fat little nose over the top edge of the blankets, sniffed and grunted: "It's c-c-cold!"

"So the paper says; and the police seem to think it's the same man. It's the first affair this term. I fancied the sportsman had cleared off to break fresh country. But he's at it again."

"Oh, my hat!"

There was a buzz of interest at once, and a crowd of fellows gathered round to read the report over one another's shoulders.

Last term, the succession of robberies in the neighbourhood of Greyfriars School had been a great topic; especially since the night when the mysterious cracksmen had made an attempt on the school itself.

But the Christmas holidays had intervened, and the matter had been largely forgotten.

Now it was revived by the news that the unknown marauder was still in the neighbourhood, and carrying on the old game.

A dozen fellows read the paragraph together. There was not much of it; it was late news. But it told that a burglary had occurred the previous night at the Three Fishers, an inn up the river a few miles from the school.

"The Three Fishers!" said Bob. "That's the shady place where they have the glove fights on the q.t. Plenty of tin there, I dare say, for the jolly old cracksmen, if he could get hold of it."

Harry Wharton contributed nothing to the discussion. He drew a little apart from the buzzing crowd of fellows, his face slightly pale, and a wrinkle of troubled thought in his brow.

A week of the new term had passed, and Wharton by that time had grown accustomed to the square-jawed gentleman as his Form master, and had indeed been gradually forgetting that he had ever associated Richard Steele in his mind with the Courtfield cracksmen.

Seeing Mr. Steele every day, day after day, occupied sedately and conscientiously in the duties of a Form master, had made that suspicion seem absurd, almost unthinkable.

Wharton, when he thought about it, was glad that he had said nothing on the subject, and almost smiled to remember the shock it had given him to find the square-jawed man the new master of the Remove.

But this news brought the lurking suspicion back to his mind more strongly and blackly than ever. The secret cracksmen was, after all, still in the vicinity; he had not left his "old beat" for new country; he was still at work within a few miles of the school. Who was he—and where was he? The inn had been robbed—three hundred pounds

in money had been taken. Where was the plunder? It made Wharton shudder to think that it might be within the walls of Greyfriars School.

Leaving his friends in eager discussion round Smithy's newspaper, the captain of the Remove quietly left the Rag.

He wanted to be alone, to think.

The troubling thought was in his mind that he was, perhaps, partly responsible for this fresh crime. For if his suspicion of Steele was well-founded, it was Steele who had committed the robbery; and Wharton's silence had left him free to do it.

And yet—and yet in his daily life the man seemed straight as a die—just, kind, honourable, above suspicion. Was it possible to believe such a man a thief?

Ought he to speak out now? Ought he, at least, to tell the Head that Richard Steele was the man he had seen at Hogben Grange that night last term?

Ought he to speak? "When in doubt, hold your tongue," was a good maxim. But was he any longer in doubt?

The captain of the Remove, as he went slowly towards the staircase, passed two masters standing in conversation—Prout, the master of the Fifth, and Steele, the new master of the Remove.

He glanced at them.

Steele was chatting amicably with the Fifth Form master; and, looking at his calm, pleasant face, it was impossible for Wharton to think that he had a guilty secret to keep. Prout's deep, fruity voice reached him. Prout had taken rather a liking to the new master. Prout was a gentleman whose flood of conversation overflowed its banks, as it were; it was said in the Fifth that Prout had solved the problem of perpetual motion with his chin. Other members of the staff dodged Prout and his inexhaustible stream of talk; but Steele had shown a disposition to listen patiently, and even with an air of interest. Prout considered him a young man of unusual intelligence.

"In my younger days," Prout was

saying—"in my younger days—not so very long ago—not so very!—in my younger days, I had the same tastes. I was a good walker—a very good walker. Twenty miles was a small thing to me. We must take a little ramble together one of these days, Steele."

"It will be a pleasure, sir," said Steele.

"But in the day-time—in the day-time," said Prout. "Your night walks would not be to my taste—in this weather, sir—in this weather. At your age you can defy a chill. What, what?"

Wharton stood quite still.

He did not mean to listen, but Prout's words struck him like a blow—with the thoughts that were in his mind.

"Last night, for instance, it was rainy," said Prout. "Rainy—misty—chilly! You felt no ill effects?"

"None, I am glad to say."

"Happy youth!" sighed Prout amicably. "I could say the same in the days when Plancus was consul—ha, ha! Console Plancus—ha, ha!" This was Prout's favourite tag. "But you must not overdo it, Steele—you must not overdo it! It was past two o'clock when I heard you coming to your room. Late hours, sir—late hours!" said Prout, shaking his head ponderously.

Wharton went almost blindly up the stairs and to his study in the Remove passage.

His brain was in a whirl.

Last night Steele had been out of the school till two in the morning, according to Prout; and last night the mysterious crackman had robbed the inn up the Sark!

Putting two and two together was easy arithmetic.

Was he in doubt now?

Was there any room left for doubt? To his own surprise, Wharton found that he still doubted. If there was anything in circumstantial evidence, Richard Steele was the Courtfield crackman. And yet, something in the junior's mind rejected it; he felt that it was so, and yet he could not believe it.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Back Up!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Scat!"

"I've been licked!"

"Good!"

"That beast Steele—"

"More power to his elbow!" said Bob Cherry heartily.

"Beast!"

There was a plentiful lack of sympathy for Billy Bunter. He blinked dolorously at the five juniors in Study No. 1.

Apparently Bunter had come there for sympathy. But if he sought it, he found it not.

"I say, you fellows, I want you to back me up!" said the Owl of the Remove. "That utter beast Steele licked me for nothing—"

"Gammon!"

"Absolutely nothing. He's got a town on me!" groaned Bunter. "He's always giving me lines. If I don't do 'em, he licks me. The fellow's a rotten outsider."

"Blow away, Bunter!"

"I've got a wheeze—"

"Go and boil it!"

"For making that beast Steele sit up—"

"The sit-upfulness is not the proper capor, my esteemed, fatheaded Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Inky! I was prepared to like that man!" said Bunter sorrowfully. "I was going to be his friend—"

"Fathead!"

"But he's ungrateful—an absolute beast! Now I'd like to lynch him!" said Bunter. "He's worse than Quelch! I expected to have an easy time this term. I've worked harder with that beast than with the other beast! But I've got it in for him!" Bunter's eyes gleamed ferociously behind his big glasses. "I say, you fellows, back me up, and we'll make that blighter fairly cringe!"

There was a chuckle from the Famous Five. Bunter on the warpath was rather entertaining.

Since he had failed so disastrously to pull off his great stunt of becoming the Form master's favourite, Bunter's feelings towards Steele had been quite bitter.

The beast made him work! Quelch, it was true, had expected Bunter to learn something in the Remove. But he had looked for better things from the new master. And he had been disappointed.

Compared with Quelch, perhaps, the new beast was no worse than the old beast. But compared with what Bunter had confidently anticipated, the present state of affairs was absolutely rotten. Gammon, after all, had not gone down; and Bunter was not getting the easy time he had expected.

"You can cackle!" said Bunter scornfully. "But I'm going to make him sit up! It's easy."

"I think I'd give him a mjest!" chuckled Johnny Bull. "Steele is rather too downy for you, Bunter."

"The beast will be sorry for himself when we get going," said Bunter.

"We?" queried Nugent.

"Yes; I expect my pals to back me up," said Bunter. "I've worked it out. He's going to have a surprise to-night. Did you fellows know he had changed his bed-room?"

"Has he?" ejaculated Wharton.

"Yes. He had Quelch's old room—next to Prout's, you know—but I find that he's changed his quarters for some reason. I found Trotter carrying some

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the rascal who baffled the police; and even a detective from Scotland Yard, for it was reported in the papers that one of the best men at the Yard had taken on the mysterious case?

Everything pointed to the man's guilt—not only what had happened before he arrived at the school in the role of Form master, but what had happened since. Wharton had no doubt that he left the House at night by the balcony from his window on a lower floor—unheard now by Prout. Why? If he was not engaged in nefarious work why those mysterious night-prowlings?

And yet to speak out—to make what amounted to an accusation of crime against a man who occupied the position of a master at Greyfriars—whose credentials had satisfied the Head!

Wharton's mind swayed in indecision; yet every day he dreaded to hear of another robbery—to hear that the marauder had been at work again, and to feel that it was his culpable silence that was giving the criminal a free hand.

The problem was not one that could be dismissed from his mind; and yet Wharton had to admit, after long and painful thought, that he could find no answer to it. He simply did not know what to do, for no satisfactory course was open to him.

It was strange enough that the solution of the difficulty—so far as it was a solution—came from Steele himself. He was quite as keen as Wharton had supposed—perhaps a little keener.

When the Remove were dismissed for "break," one morning, a day or two after the affair at the Three Fishers, the new master of the Remove called to Wharton as the juniors were filing out.

The captain of the Remove stopped at his desk as the other fellows left. None of the Remove took any notice of the incident; it was not uncommon for the Form master to have something to say to his head boy.

But Wharton's heart throbbed a little. It came into his mind forcibly that it was not upon matters connected with the Form that the new master was going to speak.

Mr. Steele's keen grey eyes rested on his face as he stood before the Form master's desk; and there was a slightly amused glimmer in them, though his face was serious.

"I am more than satisfied with you, Wharton," the new master began. "Mr. Quelch told me that I should find you a reliable head boy—and you have quite fulfilled my expectations."

"Thank you, sir!" stammered Wharton. He knew that there was something else to come.

"I have faith in you, my boy," resumed Steele, "and I believe you have faith in me."

Wharton coloured.

"But certain peculiar circumstances have somewhat troubled and distressed you, I think," remarked Steele, "especially since you caught the words Mr. Prout addressed to me the other evening."

Wharton started. He had been quite unaware that Steele had noticed him on that occasion. Certainly he had given no sign of it at the time. Undoubtedly, Richard Steele was a "downy" bird!

"I—I didn't mean to listen, sir—"

"I know that, Wharton. Neither was there any harm, if you had listened to talk carried on in an open corridor. In the circumstances, Wharton, it is much to your credit that you have shown discretion, instead of tattling, as many schoolboys would have done in your place."

"If I could be sure of that, sir—" muttered Wharton.

He broke off, realising that he was practically asking the man he suspected of crime, whether he had done right in keeping his suspicions secret! The situation was growing absurd!

Richard Steele smiled.

"I could clear your mind of all doubts, Wharton, but for certain reasons that make it impossible, or, at least, inadvisable, at the present time," he said. "Later on, no doubt, you will understand, but for the present nothing can be said. But—"

"But—" said Harry.

"You are acquainted, I think, with Inspector Grimes, of the Courtfield Police?"

Wharton looked steadily at the calm face before him.

"After a saw you that night at Hogben Grange, sir, I reported the matter to Mr. Quelch; and he sent me to Courtfield Police Station, to inform Inspector Grimes."

"A very proper proceeding on your part, and on Mr. Quelch's part," said Steele, with a nod. "Well, I desire you to pay another visit to Courtfield Police Station, Wharton."

"Oh!" ejaculated Harry.

SCOTS READER SCORES!

The following Greyfriars limerick, sent in by H. Fraser, Gayfield House, East London Street, Edinburgh, has been awarded one of this week's USEFUL LEATHER POCKET WALLETS.

As a beauty, well Bunter's no star,

There are others more handsome by far.

But his face, he don't mind it,

He's always behind it—

The fellows in front get the jar!

Don't be satisfied watching other fellows carrying off these prizes, chum, have a shot at winning one yourself. It's quite a simple matter, you'll find

"You will see Inspector Grimes, and you will tell him the doubt that is now troubling your mind."

Wharton could only stare.

"You will tell him that your new Form master is the man you saw at Hogben Grange, and of whom you gave him a description at the time."

"You—you mean that, sir?" gasped Harry.

"Quite! Inspector Grimes is an old acquaintance of mine—and he is a police official. If he answers for me will you be satisfied, and dismiss the matter from your mind?"

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Certainly, sir. But—but will Mr. Grimes—"

"I am prepared to leave it to him," said Steele, smiling. "Tell him all that is in your mind, and act upon his advice in the matter. You will feel reassured if an official police-detective answers for me?"

"Of course."

"Then you are excused for third school, Wharton. It is a fine day, and you will enjoy a bike ride to Courtfield. You may go."

Wharton did not move; he was too astonished to move or speak.

What became of his tormenting doubts

and suspicions, when the new master of the Remove referred him to the police-inspector who had in charge the investigation of the series of robberies in the Courtfield district?

Was it a bluff? If so, it was a bluff that was easily called, for Wharton intended to take Steele at his word.

"One word more," said the Remove master. "If Inspector Grimes gives you the necessary guarantee, Wharton, you will be satisfied?"

"Of course."

"And I can depend on your discretion to dismiss the matter from your mind, and not make it a topic in the Remove?" Steele smiled again. "Such a story in the school would be very awkward for me, Wharton."

"I have said nothing so far, sir—not even to my best pals," said Harry. "I shall just put it out of my mind—if Mr. Grimes tells me that he answers for you. Of course, I shall say nothing."

"Very good. Then go and take out your machine."

Wharton went slowly to the door.

His mind was in a whirl with astonishment, and he went slowly, half-expecting Steele to call him back, to make some pretext for countermanding his instructions.

But the Form master did not even glance after him.

When the captain of the Remove looked back from the door Steele was bending over a heap of papers on his desk, immersed in them, and giving no heed to the junior.

Wharton left the Form-room.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

INSPECTOR GRIMES smiled. A constable had shown the Greyfriars junior into Mr. Grimes' private room at Courtfield Police Station.

From the manner in which the inspector received him Wharton knew that his visit was expected; and he had no doubt that Steele had telephoned.

If so, it was clear that Steele and Grimes were on friendly—indeed, confidential—terms, in which case the official guarantee of Steele's bona-fides was complete. If, by some stretch of the imagination it could be supposed that a gentleman crackman had imposed on the Head of Greyfriars, it was impossible to imagine that he could also have imposed on a hard-headed police-inspector—the man, too, who was in official charge of the investigation of the Courtfield burglaries.

"Sit down, my boy! Now, you have something to tell me," said Mr. Grimes, with that amused smile on his lips.

"Yes, sir," said Harry, colouring—he did not like that amused look on the inspector's face.

"Speak out," said Mr. Grimes. "You gave me a description once of a suspicious character you had seen at Hogben Grange, in suspicious circumstances—quite right, sir, quite right! Your description reminded me of a man I knew, though I did not guess then that it actually was the description of an old acquaintance."

"You know Mr. Steele?"

"Fairly well," said the inspector—"fairly well."

"He is the man I saw at Hogben Grange that night," said Wharton bluntly.

"Quite so."

"You—you knew?"

"Not till this morning," said Mr. Grimes, smiling. "Steele told me so over the phone, when he told me you were coming to see me."



"Remember that your Form master is an acquaintance of mine," said Mr. Grimes, "and that I answer for him as a police-officer!"

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

He stared at the inspector's ruddy face, with a feeling that all the wind had been taken out of his sails.

"Naturally, it has worried you a little," said Mr. Grimes. "That was very natural. I am glad you have come to me. Now, give me all that you have on your mind. Master Wharton—tell me the whole story."

Wharton proceeded to do so fully, without leaving out a single detail that cast suspicion upon Richard Steele.

The inspector listened quietly, and again the smile lurked on his lips at the mention of Steele's change of rooms, and the balcony outside the window of his new room that made egress easy and secret.

"Mr. Steele told me to tell you everything I had in my mind, and I've told you, sir," said Harry. "Before I put the matter out of my mind I want you to tell me that there is nothing in it—speaking as a police officer."

"Speaking as a police officer," said Mr. Grimes, "there is nothing in it."

"You answer for Mr. Steele?"

"I do."

"He is known to you?"

"Quite well."

Wharton rose from his chair.

"Then I simply can't understand it," he said. "I can't help believing in Steele—he seems such a straight man. But if he is an innocent man, as you say, sir, he has a wonderful knack for getting himself into suspicious circumstances."

"That can scarcely be helped," remarked the inspector, rather enigmatically.

"I don't see—"

"Perhaps you will see some time, my boy," said Mr. Grimes. "In the meantime, remember that your Form-master is an acquaintance of mine, and that I

answer for him as a police-officer. That is good enough for you?"

"Quite," said Harry. "It takes a worry off my mind, Mr. Grimes."

"And remember, too, that a still tongue shows a wise head," added the Courtfield inspector.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I won't forget that, sir. I've said nothing so far and intend to say nothing. I'm glad you've relieved my mind like this—the responsibility is yours now—if there's anything wrong."

"My shoulders are broad enough to bear it," grinned the inspector. "Good-day to you, Master Wharton."

The captain of the Remove went back to his machine, and pedalled away to Greyfriars.

His heart was lighter now.

In spite of strange and suspicious circumstances, Steele was straight—unless it was to be imagined that a criminal was cunning enough to pull the wool over the eyes of the police-inspector. Such a theory as that did not enter Wharton's thoughts.

The matter remained as mysterious as ever, so far as that went; but if Steele was not the crackman, the mystery of his proceedings did not concern Wharton one jot or tittle.

The junior was only too glad to dismiss the matter from his mind, and that he could now do with a clear conscience.

The Remove were out of class when he came back to the school and put up his bike. Billy Bunter hailed him as he was going towards the House.

"I say Wharton—"

"Bow-wow!"

Wharton accelerated. Bunter rolled in pursuit, bawling:

"I say, old chap, hold on! I've got something to tell you—"

Wharton halted impatiently. Bunter was always full of news; but the cap-

tain of the Remove had no taste for the tattle of the passages.

"Cut it short, fatty!" he said.

"I say, it's important," said Bunter, blinking at the captain of the Remove through his big glasses with owlish seriousness. "I thought I'd speak to you first, old chap—I think you'd better advise me what to do. He might shoot me—"

Wharton jumped.

"Shoot you?"

"Well, burglars do shoot people, you know," said Bunter.

"Burglars!"

"Not that he looks dangerous," said Bunter; "and, after all, he wouldn't dare to use his automatic here—"

"He—who—what?"

Harry Wharton stared blankly at the Owl of the Remove. Billy Bunter's fat face was excited and his manner mysterious. He blinked round him, as if to ascertain that there was no one within hearing, before he spoke again, and when he spoke he lowered his voice mysteriously.

"I know him!" he breathed.

"Who?" shrieked Wharton.

"That burglar!"

"You frabjous ass, what burglar?"

"Steele!"

"Wha-a-n?"

Wharton almost staggered. As Bunter had not recognised the new master of the Remove as the man of Hogben Grange, it had passed from Wharton's mind that Bunter had been present on that occasion. It was brought back to him now, with a vengeance.

"You remember I told you I thought I'd seen the man before, when he got me out of the ice that day in the hole?" said Bunter.

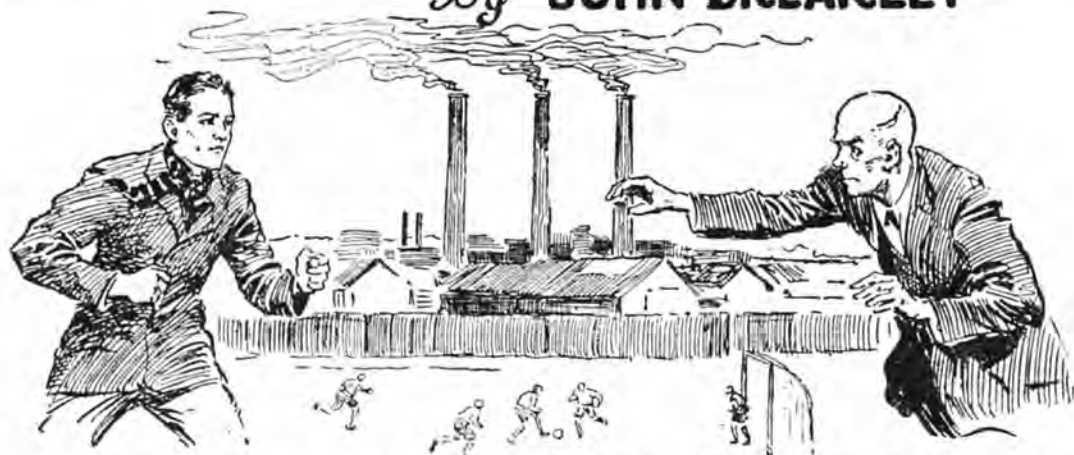
(Continued on page 27.)

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GET BUSY ON THIS FINE STORY, BOYS:

Peter Frazer-Ironmaster!

By JOHN BREARLEY



Fought to a Finish!

IT was the calculating schemes of Nesbit and McWilson, the Hornets' two master minds, that Peter feared most.

"Sling it about, lads!" he shouted encouragingly. "We'll run 'em off their legs!"

Like hounds unleashed the Works went into the fray. Jimmy Nesbit had the ball. Peter skipped it off his toe in a flash, skidded round another Hornet, and flicked the ball to Hammond. Tackled, the inside-right passed to Tim Osborne. Like a scytho, Tim, Hammond, and Baker whirled the ball right up to the Hornets' goal, and not even Cunningham himself could save Hammond's lightning drive!

"Goal! Goal! Goal!" shrieked the Foundrymen. And C-rrr-ump! B-rr-oom! went the lorry.

Jimmy Nesbit's face was one huge grin as Peter, standing not on ceremony, bundled him off the ball when he tried to dribble through from the re-

"Good old Peter!" roared the crowd as a long, smooth pass flew out to Baker on the wing. The winger got it on the run and raced past the Hornets' back. Over came the ball into the centre, and flipped off Tim's head straight for the corner of the net.

Just as every mouth opened wide, however, to cheer the goal, Cunningham's huge fist flashed up and punched it out.

"Bad luck, Timmy! Come again, lads!"

A Hornet half-back secured the ball and passed it to Jimmy Nesbit, who, in turn, tricked Peter and sped off. The speed of his crab-like run deceived Frazers' left-back, and, with the ball beautifully under control, he cut in towards goal. His muscular leg had swung back for a shot, and Sparrow had left his goal in a headlong charge, when up came Mullins in a desperate rush from nowhere and just reached the ball in a long, slithering glide.

Nesbit finished his shot somewhere on

Mullins' body, but it was doubtful if the tough little half-back felt it. Scrambling up, he found the ball at his toes, and kicked it clear.

"Well played, Mullins!" yelled the crowd, and the plucky half-back gripped Nesbit's hand to show there was no ill-feeling over the accidental kick he had received.

The Hornets were now beginning to show signs of wear. The pace was telling on them and the Foundrymen's attacks were getting more persistent. The Works were fighting hard to get level.

Again and again Tim came away with the ball, and each time his raid finished nearer to Cunningham. Great defender that McWilson was, as he said afterwards, "it was like tackling a shadow!" Swaying and swerving, Tim went through the celebrated defence like a knife through butter. If everything had come off, the Works must have won. But Cunningham, in the Hornets' goal, played surprisingly, and gave an exhibi-

tion that made Sparrow, the Works goalie, envious to show his worth. The result was what Peter had feared! Try as he did, he could not stop the little man from picking up some perfect passes, and twice within five minutes swerving cannon-ball shots left Sparrow helpless. Four goals to one, and the game as good as over!

But the Foundry were made of stern stuff. They hadn't hoped to win, but they meant to force a draw, if possible.

"Pace and weight, Frazers'!" ordered Peter, and his men bundled into the tiring Hornets in grand style. Raid after raid tore its way through their half-backs, and only McWilson and Cunningham staved off disaster.

Then a flashing run and shot by Tim was fisted out by the goalkeeper. The ball came out to Peter unmarked. Lengthening his stride, he timed the bounce and let fly!

"Goal!" shrieked the crowd.

"Oh, some shot, lad!" cried Jimmy Nesbit.

"Two more, Frazers'!" shouted a leather-lunged truckman, and Frazers' lined up on their toes.

"How long, sir?" breathed Peter to the referee.

"Only three minutes," replied that official, looking at his watch.

"Then we've got time to score two more, at any rate!" cried Frazers' captain. "Come on, lads!"

"We want two more!" chanted the ironmen all around the ropes.

And in the last minute of their famous game, Baker, the flying wingman, made his name.

A Hornet forward had the ball when Mullins charged him over and secured the leather. Without steadying himself the sturdy youngster booted it out to Baker like a bullet. And off went Baker!

He left his own forward line standing still. Whirling past the despairing half, he raced towards the crouching full-back, arms and legs whirling.

The full-back was dead tired, but he meant to stop Baker by using his brains. All through the game the winger had gone straight for the corner-flag, and now the experienced back waited for him to do it again and hook the ball away as he flew past.

Crang! Crack! C-rrr-ump!—go the rattles of Frazer's enthusiastic supporters every time their team bags a goal. But, alack, enthusiasm alone won't win a match!

bition that made Sparrow, the Works goalie, envious to show his worth.

"Well saved, sir!" cheered Jimmy Nesbit humorously as the great goalkeeper, by a magnificent leap, just turned one of Peter's long-range efforts over the bar.

Cunningham grinned at his little chum's remark, and replied:

"Let's see you do something! That chap Frazers' got you in his pocket!"

Jimmy laughed and winked at Peter, and, to prove that his friend was wrong, tried, a second later, to do a little solo run. A long leg shot out just at the right moment, and the next instant flaccidly, at outside-right, was off like a shot from a beautiful pass by Peter. A loud cackle broke out from the Hornets' goal, and Nesbit grinned ruefully.

The Works attack failed, and from the clearance the Hornets stirred themselves and put on pressure.

Their forwards gave up trying to dribble

But instead, Baker swerved. He went past on the inside of that bewildered back in a dizzy flash of speed. The manoeuvre left the other Hornet back standing, and brought the crowd to its toes. Baker raced on to within ten yards of Cunningham, the ball well under control. Baker shot.

No goalkeeper breathing could have saved his shot. The leather, with all the weight of Baker's long, muscular leg behind it, flashed into the net with a force that threatened to break the rigging.

The roar from the crowd that greeted this spectacular goal drowned the ref's whistle, which denoted the end of the game. Frazer had been defeated, but the score of 4-3 by no means disgraced them, and the players were congratulated by the Hornets on the splendid, sporting game they had played.

Another Step Forward!

DURING the next few days Sir James Fossett, the Mayor of Maxport, loomed dimly in Peter Frazer's mind as someone between a magician and a fairy god-mother, complete with wand. For, thanks to his direct and powerful influence, a goodly part of the city's order arrived almost at once, and within a week Frazer's Foundry had changed beyond recognition.

When the time came to tackle the contract Peter felt somewhat dubious and nervous. As he stared at the mass of figures and directions that Mr. Dimmock handed him, for five minutes he had the unpleasant feeling that he had bitten off more than he could chew!

But, characteristically, he shook off the feeling. And the way his men backed him up was magnificent.

There came first a crowd of new hands. Peter hunted men far and wide, and roped them in. Then an expert from a great Scottish firm joined Mr. Dimmock, and finally Moller, reinforced by promoted assistants, worked hard in the foundry.

Whereat, from a struggling Works, Frazer's Foundry grew into a fire-belching, smoke-screened, seething hive of industry.

Down in the heat-laden foundry, men in leather aprons and thick spectacles worked furiously in day and night shifts round the flashing, bubbling furnaces. They were contented men, too, for the most part, earning full money for the first time in years. And they knew why they were working, and to whom they owed their good fortune.

Above the foundry, tall and triumphant, all the great stacks smoked, grey clouds by day, tinted with fierce orange glares by night.

Then there came a fly in the ointment—a letter that called for a conference in the little office.

The city's order was safe! But Faulder's contract for the branch rails through their huge yards had raised a snag!

They were canny folk, the great ship-builders, and they had suffered from Frazer's Foundry in the past. And so, although Sir James' influence had softened their hearts, they were taking no chances.

For the making of their rails they already held tenders from two great firms farther north. Well, then, said they, if young Frazer means business, let him send his tender in, and if it's low we'll give him first chance! But we—

But it had to be in by the 20th! "And that, gentlemen," said Mr. Peter Frazer, tossing Faulder's letter

on to the table, "gives us just four new ropes looked trim and efficient.

days!" Mr. Dimmock shook his head. Masters, the expert, plucked at his lip, and Moller, as usual, betrayed no feelings in the matter whatever.

"It's a thumpin' big contract!" cried Peter. "And one we've got to get!"

Masters nodded slowly. "It means work," said he.

"Then, gentlemen," said Peter, "let us work!"

Four days to draw up the tender! Four days of deep calculation, long-sighted orders, page after page of figures and estimates!

They worked!

It was Wednesday when they started. On Saturday morning there was another meeting.

The office looked as though a tornado had struck it, and Masters, on whose shoulders most of the work had fallen, was hard-eyed from lack of sleep.

But on the table, a bulky package in its sealed envelope, lay the Faulder tender, complete.

The young ironmaster picked it up tenderly.

"Thank you, gentlemen, sincerely!" was all he said, and crossed to the safe. They stood around and watched him in silence as he laid the package on a shelf. Then he closed the massive door.

"There it will stay till Monday," said Peter. "And on Monday we'll give her to Faulder's—with love!"

Altogether, that Saturday was to be a memorable day for Frazer's Foundry.

In a couple of hours the Fourth-Round tie against Smithson's Colliery would start—the first time Frazer's had been drawn on their own ground.

After the match Sir James Fossett was to formally open Frazer's Sports Club.

In the corner of the yard nearest the river a big, ramshackle shed, formerly used as a store, had stood empty for years.

By Peter's orders, a gang of men had cleared it, and carpenters had patched it. Eager volunteers had distempered and lined the interior, a space had been marked for a boxing-ring, and from somewhere in the city Moller had procured some benches and fitted them up.

Fifteen minutes before kick-off that afternoon, Peter, with Sparrow, as usual, by his side, stood in the doorway and gave the place a final look over.

His eyes were shining. The boxing-ring had been fixed overnight, and its

INTRODUCTION.

Head and sole owner of Frazer's Iron Foundry, it is a strange prospect that lies before Peter Frazer, a cherry, strapping youngster of eighteen, when he arrives in the quiet industrial city of Maxport, to take over the great business left to him by his dead uncle. Peter soon realizes that his legacy has brought danger with it, for he is kidnapped on his way to his new home. Luckily he escapes, but with only one clue to the identity of his unknown enemy: the man is completely bald, with a terrible jagged scar running across the top of his head. At the works, Peter learns from his manager, Mr. Dimmock, that Frazer's Foundry is on the brink of ruin owing to the activities of a man named Granger and his gang.

Undismayed at the task before him, Peter begins a relentless campaign against his enemies, and slowly but surely the gang find themselves being driven to the wall. More than one attempt is made on the young ironmaster's life, but his pluck and resource foil the scoundrel's plots at every turn. Peter soon wins his men completely over to his side, and as a result business for the foundry begins to improve. Full of ambition and determination, Peter interviews Sir James Fossett, and secures huge contracts for Frazer's. The following day, the foundry footer team, as yet undefeated, meets the famous Maxport Hornets in a return match, and against a side that includes several internationals, Frazer's find themselves two goals down at half-time.

(Now read on.)

The benches had been placed in orderly array, and in the corner were huge cupboards containing gloves, single-sticks, clubs, and all the paraphernalia necessary for the club.

"It's cost something, Sparrow!" he murmured. "But it's going to be worth it."

"What's t' shelf for, sir?" asked Sparrow, curiously, pointing up to where a handsome shelf had been fixed to the back wall.

Peter grinned.

"For the Works Cup!" he explained. "If we win it!"

"Don't mak' me laugh!" grinned Sparrow. "It's as good as there!"

"Well, go and tell those chaps that first," chuckled Peter, pointing through the door. A charabanc had driven into the yard, and the Colliery team were piling out of it merrily, amid a storm of chaff from the iron-men. They were a strong, hard-looking lot.

They looked even harder as they lined up, facing Frazer's, and waited for the referee's whistle. Determination was written all over them, for by now Frazer's had earned themselves a big Cup reputation. Smithson's Colliery were out to spoil it!

Straight from the kick-off they swarmed towards Sparrow.

Their football was only kick-and-rush, but they knew how to play it, and, while they played cleanly and fairly, their methods were by no means half-hearted.

Peter had been forced to rest Hammond, who was suffering from a strain, and Jenkins had taken his place; but the young clerk was neither as clever nor as big as the foundryman, and he and Tim were fairly swept off their feet by the fast, hefty miners.

For twenty minutes Frazer's were penned in their own half. The Colliery forwards came in a series of battering-ram attacks.

And yet they never looked like scoring!

It was a triumph of team work the way Frazer's kept them out.

Under the heavy storm Mullins and Riley, the wing-halves, kept their heads nobly. They tackled fearlessly and never wasted a pass.

Behind them, a bit slow, but very, very sure, the McDonalds covered Sparrow like two huge shadows, their hefty clearances defeating the Miners time and again. In fact, during that terrific period, Sparrow only had to save three times—one a thrilling dive that drew roars of applause.

But the outstanding figure on that field was the tall, black-haired, lightning-centre-half in the green jersey.

Never flurried, seeming always to have oceans of time, his wonderful anticipation and clean tackling flurried the miners' inside men into silly mistakes.

They became wild; and presently Peter's accurate passing and tackling began to inspire the forwards, and slowly they began to exert pressure, and so give Frazer's defence a breather.

A wild boot by Smithson's centre-forward was trapped by Peter, who pushed it sideways to Mullins as two men charged him.

Cleanly the little half swung the ball to Baker. The outside-left was checked, but Milligan fastened on and sent him racing off again with a forward pass down the line.

Baker beat the full-back for speed, and, without hesitation, kicked the ball into the centre. Out came the goalie, caught the ball, and kicked, a fraction of a second after Jenkins jumped at

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Just as everybody was preparing to cheer for a goal, Cunningham's huge fist flashed up and punched the ball clear!

him. The ball caught the slim inside-right fairly between the shoulders.

As he pitched to earth, with all the breath knocked out of him, a terrific roar from the touch line and a thump on his sore back from Tim Osborne made him look up dizzily.

The ball had cannoned off his back over the keeper's head, and now lay easily in the corner of the net. Jenkins had scored just before the ref blew for half-time.

They were a grim, tense lot of miners who lined up for the second half, a goal to the bad. Neck or nothing was their motto, and they started accordingly!

The first attack brought the ball down to the ironmen's goal-mouth, and the resultant scrimmage lasted fully a minute.

When at last Peter charged his way through the scrum with the ball at his feet, the temper of both teams was thoroughly aroused. Properly on their mettle, Frazers' waded into their fiery opponents with battle in their eyes and joy in their hearts.

Clean and sporting, but fast and hard to the point of recklessness, play swerved from one goal to the other, and from wing to wing. One moment Sparrow had run out and scooped the ball from a forward at the point of shooting, and the next moment a swerving shot from Tim just missed the post, with Smithson's goalkeeper benten to the world.

Watching the game from a raised platform was Sir James Fossett, and with him was little Jimmy Nesbit, who had come down specially at Peter's invitation.

They watched the hefty young ironmaster nip into an attack, rob the centre-forward with a lightning tackle, dribble round two others, and send Baker flying off. Then Sir James spoke.

"What do you think of him, Jimmy?" The little man wagged his head, his eyes glued to the play.

"He's good!" he said simply. "He'll take this team into the Final. And himself into the English team in a couple of seasons!"

"And further than that. I wonder if—" murmured Sir James, half to himself.

Frazers' were swarming into the miners' hall now. Tim had the ball, and worming his way through until he

reached the penalty line, suddenly back-heeled the ball to Milligan. The inside-left took a rousing first-timer, which was punched out hard, but Tim, bobbing up, got his head to it squarely—thud!—and the ball flew into the net.

"Goal!"

"Well played, Timmy! Played, Osborne!" yelled the ironmen.

It was the deciding goal. Gallantly and fiercely the miners returned to the attack, but their fast football had gone. Peter & Co. had their measure.

As a consolation prize to gallant losers, the last kick of the match, a corking drive by the Colliery centre-forward, found Sparrow a fraction of a second too slow, and so the game ended and Frazers' were in the semi-final by 3-1.

At precisely seven o'clock that evening Sir James Fossett rose to declare Frazers' Sports Club open—and in all the foundry only the night shift and a few others were absent. All who could had secured seats early. The others had squeezed in, tried to chuck the early birds out, lost, and now huddled contentedly round the walls.

In honour of the occasion the men had donned their Sunday best, and they were in a happy, hilarious state. Peter Fraser's delighted grin grew wider every second.

With the aid of the local boxing club he had arranged an exciting programme, wherever possible matching the club boxers against his own men.

There were no speeches, just a brief word from the mayor, that earned him a hearty cheer, and another from little Jimmy Nesbit that set them laughing again. Then the contests started.

It is true that most of the ironmen fought as though they had never seen boxing-gloves or a ring before, and the local boxers danced around and scientifically took them apart, but when, in the fourth bout, an excitable and powerful truck loader rushed his man into the corner and put him down and out with two swings in exactly four seconds, the crowd rose as one man and nearly lifted the roof off!

Towards the close of the evening the ironmen became suddenly aware that one of Sir James Fossett's party, a modest, quiet-looking chap, was none other than Willie Mackenzie, a Maxport welter weight, who was rapidly coming into the limelight as a professional.

There followed a lot of mysterious whispering in one corner, and then arose a mighty and blackened furnaceman, who cried, in tones of brass:

"Hey, you Wullie!"

The stentorian bellow brought everything to a standstill. Willie Mackenzie raised his head inquiringly.

"Tha calls thasen' a boxer, don't 'ee? Get into t' ring wi' oor Peter now! He'll knock t' stuffin' oot of ye!"

The rollicking challenge won a storm of laughter and chaff. But, under cover, Willie Mackenzie leaned across to Peter, and whispered to him smilingly.

Peter sat up.

"Will you? By Jove, you're a sport! It'll wind the evening up with a bang. Come on, let's get out, chaps!" They began to push their way out.

Thus it came about that when the last match had been decided—a rather tame affair between two of the local lads, Sir James Fossett himself climbed into the ring as M.C. He lifted his hand for silence.

"Gentlemen, Willie Mackenzie, of Maxport v. Peter Fraser, of Frazers'. Three exhibition rounds!"

It seemed to Peter as he climbed through the ropes that his new gymnasium was rocking. A chortling, cheering crowd of ironmen roared again as Willie and Peter shook hands and slipped into position.

A moment later the professional had slipped one of Peter's left leads gracefully and lightly flicked his own into the youngster's face. A startled look of surprise leaped into his face as Peter awayed with the punch, and caught him left, right, and left again. A broad grin split his features, and he warmed to the exhibition with a will.

Within a minute or so he was all over Peter, of course; but still, the young ironmaster's left hand was fast enough to keep him on the jump, and the ironmen roared with delicious delight as "t' master" landed two in quick succession that made Mackenzie's head bob. In the thrill of a fast bout Mackenzie began unconsciously to put a little sting into his punches, and suddenly two lightning jabs had Peter on the ropes, wobbling dizzily.

Instantly the laughter and cheering in the big gym, died away. In its place, from all around the room, there came a low, ugly growl.

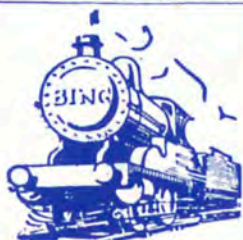
Willie's jaw had dropped in dismay. He lowered his hands and stepped towards Peter.

"Sorry—" he began.

But Peter, grinning painfully, stopped the ominous mutter with a wave of his hand. And so the bout was finished at top speed!

(Next week's splendid instalment of this powerful sporting serial kicks off with the greatest sensation ever, and will keep you thrilled from the first line to the last. Make sure you read it by ordering your copy well in advance!)

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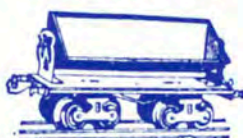
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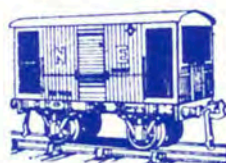
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