

Starts
To-day

"THE TEST MATCH HOPE!"

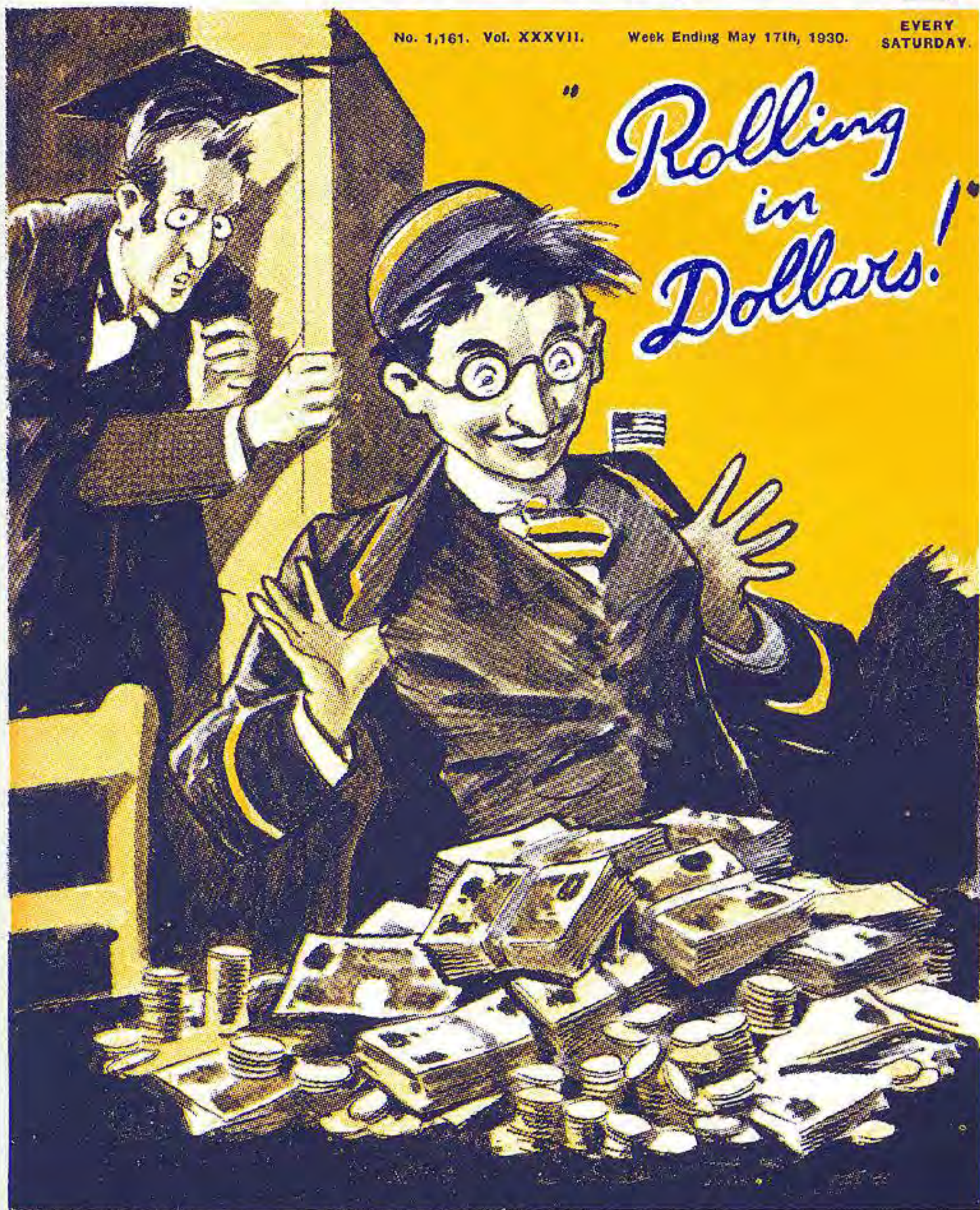
The greatest story of the
"Tests" ever written.

The **MAGNET** 2^D

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Week Ending May 17th, 1930.

EVERY
SATURDAY.



A FORTUNE FOR FISHER T. FISH!

(Read and enjoy the rollicking fine school yarn of Greyfriars inside.)

SAY, BO, EVER MET
FISHER T. FISH? NO? THEN . . .

. . . MEET THIS REAL LIVE
GUY FROM "NOO YARK." BELOW!



**A Rousing New Long Complete Story of Harry Wharton & Co., the Chums
of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.**

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

"Sh!"

"WINGATE!"

"Trot in!"

"Take a pew!"

"Nice to see you here,

Wingate!" said Harry Wharton.

"The niceness is terrific."

Five juniors made those remarks almost at the same time, and five separate and distinct welcoming smiles were turned upon George Wingate of the Sixth Form, captain of Greyfriars School.

Harry Wharton & Co. liked Wingate.

But that was not the whole and sole reason why they welcomed him so cordially as he appeared in the doorway of Study No. 1 in the Remove.

The Sixth Form prefect had a serious expression on his face and a cane under his arm.

Wingate, of course, was a welcome guest in any junior study when he honoured such a study with a visit. Still, a fellow naturally wished that when he visited he would leave his official cane in his own study. When a visit was intended to be wholly of a friendly and agreeable nature a cane could scarcely be needed.

And so the Famous Five put on their sweetest smiles and welcomed Wingate with a cordial chorus—partly because they liked old Wingate and partly as an inducement to that great man to keep the cane under his arm and not bring it into further evidence.

"Sit down, Wingate!" Wharton pulled out the best chair.

"I'll stand!" said Wingate.

"H'm!"

"I shan't stay a few minutes."

"Oh, do!" murmured Frank Nugent.

"If you could spare the time," said Wharton sweetly, "I'd like to hear your opinion about the Remove cricket team—"

"I'm not here to talk cricket."

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"Um!"

Wingate's face was grim.

It was clear that there was trouble of some sort in the air, though the chums of the Remove could not guess what or why.

So far as they could recall at the moment their youthful consciences were quite clear.

True, Bob Cherry had kicked Fisher T. Fish ten minutes ago, and there had been a fearful howl in the Remove passage. But that could scarcely have brought the head prefect there with that grim expression on his face.

"Warm this afternoon, Wingate?" ventured Johnny Bull. "We've got some ginger-beer here."

"Just going to open it when you blew in, Wingate," said Nugent. "You'll have some, won't you?"

"Thanks—no!"

"Um!"

Wingate slipped the cane down into his hand, his face growing grimmer. The chums of the Remove exchanged resigned glances. Evidently one of their number was "for it." It only remained to learn which was the happy man.

"Wharton?"

"Oh! Yes?"

"You're captain of the Remove and head boy of the Form."

"Certainly!" said Harry.

The juniors knew who the "happy man" was now. It was Wharton, and he had to answer for some sin of omission or commission. It was not all "beer and skittles" to be head boy of a Form at Greyfriars.

"Your Form master relies on you to a great extent," said Wingate.

"I hope so," said Harry.

"There are a lot of things that don't come under a Form master's eye, and which the prefects may not get wind of, but with which the head boy of a Form can and should deal," said Wingate.

"That's so," said Harry, puzzled. "I do my best, Wingate. I hope Quelch is satisfied."

Grunt—from Wingate.

"Well, what's the row?" asked Harry, rather anxious to get it over. "What have I done? I let Bunter off cricket practice yesterday; the fat bouncer said he had a pain—"

"Never mind that?"

"Well, what's the trouble?"

"Last term," said Wingate, "there was a suspicion that some fellow in the Remove was lending money at interest among the others."

"Oh!"

"I spoke to you about it, and understood that it was put a stop to."

"So it was," said Harry.

"And you've heard of nothing of the kind this term?"

"N-n-n-no!"

Wharton spoke rather uncertainly. He was conscious chiefly at that moment of a strong desire to get hold of the scraggy neck of Fisher T. Fish of the Remove and bang his head on the study wall. He had to admit that he had not given any attention to Fisher T. Fish since the school came back after the Easter holidays; and now that he came to think of it he had little doubt that Fishy had been up to his old tricks again.

"You see, there's been the cricket team—" said Wharton rather lamely.

"I know that."

"And—and—"

"Look here, we don't want a row in the school and an expulsion and a lot of cackle," said Wingate gruffly. "These things should be nipped in the bud. I've heard some things indirectly. I don't want to butt in as prefect and make the thing the talk of Greyfriars. The head boy of a Form is quite capable of dealing with such matters if he does his duty and doesn't give his whole time to cricket and skylarking."

"Yee-e-es—"

"What I've heard is rather indefinite, but it leaves no doubt in my mind. I don't want to take the matter up. It oughtn't to be there for me to take up."

You ought to be aware of it, and you ought to have put your foot down on it; and only if you couldn't deal with it you should have reported to me as head prefect."

"I—I know——"

"I'm leaving it in your hands," said Wingate. "But as a hint that you ought to have dealt with it before, and as another hint that you'd better lose no time in dealing with it now, I'm going to give you six."

"Oh crumbs!"

Wingate pointed with the cane to the chair that Wharton had pulled out for him. That chair was to have its use.

"Bend over," he said laconically.

"I—I say——"

"I'm waiting!"

Wharton drew a deep breath.

His chums gave him sympathetic glances. But, sympathetic as they were, they evidently did not regard him as an injured party. It was hard cheese; but head boy of the Form was head boy of the Form; and at Greyfriars head boys had certain specified duties they were expected to perform, and if a duty was left undone it was only natural for the chopper to come down.

Harry Wharton had plenty of other matters to occupy his attention without keeping his eye on the nefarious proceedings of Fisher T. Fish. Still, there it was! He had left undone that which he ought to have done, and he had to admit it.

Slowly he bent over the chair.

Whack!

"Six" at Greyfriars was a variable punishment. It was always called "six," but the number of whacks might vary from two or three to a dozen. And the severity of the punishment depended on the amount of beef that was put into it.

Wingate tucked the cane under his arm after a single whack. It was a very moderate and merciful "six."

"That's a tip!" he said.

And, with a nod to the juniors, the captain of Greyfriars walked out of the study.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Five on the Warpath!

HARRY WHARTON rose from the chair.

His face was crimson, and his eyes gleamed.

The punishment in itself was nothing; had it been a severe "six," Wharton could have borne it with equanimity; he was fairly tough. It was the fact that he had been punished at all for dereliction of duty that was intensely annoying and hurting.

"Hard cheese, old man," said Bob Cherry sympathetically.

"The hardness of the esteemed cheese is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Wingate's rather an ass!" grunted Nugent.

"That's rot!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, is it?" said Nugent, rather warmly.

"Utter rot!" said Johnny Bull. Johnny Bull was a plain speaker at all times, even at times when it would have been tactful to preserve a golden silence.

"What's the good of gammon? If that outsider Fishy has been up to his Shylock games again, Wharton ought to have stopped him."

"But has he?" said Nugent tartly.

"We don't know——"

"Wingate seems to know! He must have heard something. Anyhow, Wharton doesn't know whether he has or not."

"That's so; I don't know," said Harry.

"Well, old man, you ought to know; it's your place to know," said Johnny Bull. "If you don't do your job, you must expect to be called on the carpet."

"My esteemed and jawful Johnny!" murmured Hurree Singh.

"I suppose that rotter has been up to his rotten games again," said Harry slowly. "There's no stopping him, for long. We were going up the river this afternoon—but——"

He paused.

"Well, the fact is, I ought to have kept an eye open," he said. "I suppose some kid in the Third has been paying Fishy threepence a week on a loan of a bob, or something like that; and it's got jawed about. Well, I'm going to look into it."

"We'll help!" said Bob.

"Yes, rather."

"The ratherfulness is terrific."

Wharton compressed his lips.

"We'll look into it at once," he said. "If we find that Fishy has been playing tricks again, we'll give him a Form ragging. That will last him for a term."

"Hear, hear!"

"And the sooner the better," said Johnny Bull.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Talk of angels!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as a bony youth passed the open doorway of the study.

"Fishy—you're wanted!" called out Wharton.

Fisher T. Fish stopped, and looked into the study. But he did not enter No. 1. His keen, cute eye noted at once

20/- make £1.

4\$ make £1.

1,000\$, make Fisher T.
Fish the meanest chap in the
world!

the grim and hostile expression on the faces there.

"Shoot!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I'm in rather a hurry—I'm expecting a letter from my popper, and it may have come——"

"Never mind that now," said Harry. "I hear that you've been Shylocking again!"

"Aw, can it!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I ain't got a whole lot of time to waste chewing the rag."

"Have you been lending money among the fags?" demanded Wharton.

"If that young scallywag Tubb's been talking——"

"So it was Tubb of the Third, was it?" said Harry.

"I guess I can oblige a guy with a little loan if he wants," said Fisher T. Fish warmly. "If a guy comes to me and says he's hard up, and will I lend him half a dollar, I guess——"

"No harm in that, if you don't charge anything on the loan."

Fisher T. Fish laughed.

"I guess I ain't lending dollars for my health!" he answered. "What's it got to do with you guys, anyhow? I ain't asking you to borrow money from me, am I?"

"You'd get sacked from the school if the Head knew," said Bob.

"There's more'n one guy at Greyfriars would get the push, if the Head knew everything," said Fisher T. Fish composedly. "You guys ain't going telling tales to the Beak, I calculate. And I reckon you'd have to prove it, if you did."

"You admit it?" said Harry.

"Nope! I ain't admitting anything," said Fisher T. Fish cheerfully. "I reckon you want to mind your own

business. You galoots go and play cricket! That's your game!"

And the transatlantic junior turned away.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Wharton.

"I guess I'm pressed for time. I'm expecting a letter from Noo Yark——"

"We're going to your study."

"What?" Fisher T. Fish swung back. "What the great horned toad are you going to my study for?"

"To root out your things, and see whether you've got any moneylending papers—I O U's, and so on," said the captain of the Remove. "You'd better be present. Last term you kept a book with the names of fellows who owed you money, and the interest due, and so on. Well, if we find anything of the kind in your study, you're going to get it where the chicken got the chopper, see?"

Fisher T. Fish looked alarmed.

"Look here——" he began.

"If you want to be present, you'd better come along," said Wharton. "We're going to do the thing thoroughly."

"I—I guess——"

Fisher T. Fish broke off as the Famous Five made a movement towards the door. His sharp face had an alarmed and worried expression.

In many ways, Fisher T. Fish found that his lines were not cast in pleasant places at Greyfriars School.

Nobody at Greyfriars seemed to understand business, as understood in that great city which Fishy called Noo Yark.

Fishy prided himself upon his sharpness, his cuteness, and his spryness; but sharpness and cuteness and spryness seemed drugs in the market at Greyfriars.

Nobody appreciated his business gifts.

If some fellow in a hard-up moment sold him a ten-shilling "dic." for eighteenpence, and Fishy sold it back to him for seven-and-six later, this transaction was not admired as it should have been; nobody seemed to consider it clever of Fishy to annex a profit.

Fishy was a business man from the word go, as he expressed it; and he could not wait till he was grown up, and home in Noo Yark, before he set out on the trail of dollars.

He lived, and moved, and had his being in money and the thought of money; and money was so delightfully attractive to him, that Fishy was not very particular how he got hold of it, so long as he did get hold of it. Getting hold of it was the great point, with Fishy.

Naturally, in a place where fellows continually ran out of cash there was business to be done in the money-lending line. There were strict rules on that subject at Greyfriars—unwritten laws that were stricter than the written ones. Fishy regarded that as very hard lines. His Shylock transactions had to be kept dark. But for that difficulty, Fishy had no doubt that he would soon have had a flourishing business, with half Greyfriars paying him interest on loans, from the Sixth down to the Second.

Fishy was impervious to public opinion; so long as it did not take a practical and drastic form. Now that it was taking that form, he was rather alarmed. There were a lot of papers in his study that he did not desire strange eyes to see.

"Now, look here, you guys," said Fisher T. Fish uneasily. "You keep off the grass, see? You go and play cricket. You——"

"Come on, you men!" said Harry. Fisher T. Fish backed away from the door of Study No. 1. He spun round suddenly and ran.

He did not go towards the stairs. The expected letter from his "popper" had to wait, in the circumstances. He sprinted along the Remove passage to his own study, No. 14.

The Famous Five rushed after him. But Fisher T. Fish had a start; and he did the Remove passage in record time. He reached Study No. 14, darted in, and the door slammed behind him.

Harry Wharton & Co. came up with a rush. Wharton hurled himself at the door, just as the key turned in the lock. The door was fast.

Harry Wharton banged on the panels, angrily.

"Fishy! You silly ass! Let us in!" he shouted.

There was a breathless chuckle from within Study No. 14.

"Not to-day, thanks!" answered Fisher T. Fish.

"We'll scrag you!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Aw, can it!"

"You bony boulder!"

"Go and chop chips!" retorted Fisher T. Fish, from the safe side of the door. "I guess you guys make me tired! Just a few! Git!"

"Open this door!" roared Wharton. "Will you open this door, you bony rotter?"

"Nope!"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The thumping on the door only elicited a chuckle from the American junior within.

"Keep it up!" he said. "I guess that door will stand some thumping! You guys needn't mind me."

"We'll jolly well burst in the door!" roared Johnny Bull.

"I guess Quelch will get his mad up if you do!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish. "Forget it!"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

"Go it!" called out Fishy cheerily. "It amuses you, and it don't hurt me a whole lot! Fire away!"

Wharton ceased to pound on the door. Evidently Fisher T. Fish did not intend to unlock it. Within the study the American junior could be heard moving about, opening and shutting drawers and lids. There was no doubt that he was getting rid of, or carefully concealing, the written documents connected with his Shylock business in the Lower School. If the chopper was coming down on the schoolboy Shylock it was Fishy's intention that there should be no evidence against him.

"Will you open this door?" roared Wharton.

"Nope!"

"We jolly well know you're hiding your swindling papers, you worm! We'll root them out, all the same."

"The rootfulness will be terrific."

"Say, you're talking out of the backs of your necks," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I'm jest tidying the study. Them guys Field and Bull make it pesky untidy."

"Look here!" roared Johnny Bull. "This is my study, and I want to come in."

"I guess you can want."

"I'll spifficate you!"

"Forget it!"

And Fisher T. Fish began cheerily to whistle "Yankee Doodle," while the Famous Five banged and kicked on the door of No. 14 by way of accompaniment.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Amazing News!

BILLY BUNTER grunted.

Bunter was blinking at the letter-rack, drawn there by a faint, lingering hope that there might be a letter addressed to W. G. Bunter.

It was high time that a letter addressed to W. G. Bunter should be there. Billy Bunter had been expecting a postal-order for quite a long time.

But his anxious blink through his big spectacles was unrewarded. There was no letter addressed to W. G. Bunter.

Wherefor the fat junior grunted.

There were letters for other fellows, and some of the fellows were taking them out. Some of the letters remained in the rack, belonging to fellows who were not keen on their correspondence. Sometimes letters which were suspected of containing nothing more valuable than advice were left there quite a long time.

Billy Bunter blinked over them. There was nothing for Bunter, but he found a certain inquisitive satisfaction in blinking at other fellows' letters.

Thus it was that he observed a letter addressed to F. T. Fish.

That letter bore an American stamp, and it was addressed in a thin, spidery hand, which Bunter knew to be that of Hiram K. Fish, the "popper" of Fisher T. Bunter blinked at it, and took it down from the rack. Of late, he recalled, Fisher T. Fish had been talking, even more than was his wont, about the gigantic financial operations of his popper in New York, where, it appeared, Hiram K. was cornering something, and hoped to "skin" his fellow-citizens of their dollars, or "dullers" as Fishy called them. Bunter did not place much faith in it, for Fishy was accustomed to talk airily of millions and millions of "dullers" which never seemed to find their way to Greyfriars. It seemed that if Hiram K. made all those dollars he kept them carefully on his own side of the Atlantic.

Still, Bunter considered, you never know!

According to what he had read of that delightful country, American financial gentlemen were always skinning one another, or cornering some desirable article, and making their fellow-citizens pay through their transatlantic noses for it.

If Hiram K. Fish had, at long last, succeeded in skinning somebody, it was possible that some small part of the plunder might reach Fisher T. Fish in the form of a tip. In which case, there was a possibility—perhaps a remote possibility—that Fishy might lend a fellow something in advance on a postal-order he was expecting.

The hope was faint. But any hope was better than none. Bunter was hard up. The tuckshop called, and he had to pass its call unheeded. There might be a tip in Fishy's letter; and if he took it up to Fishy, Fishy might squeeze out a humble bob. It was rumoured in Greyfriars that Fishy had once lent a fellow something, apart from his private moneylending business. It did not seem probable, but the faintest chance appealed to Bunter in his present stony state. He disliked stairs, but he felt that even a faint chance of raising a loan was worth a walk upstairs.

So Bunter, with Fishy's letter in his fat hand, rolled away to the stairs and mounted slowly. He had to mount

slowly. His weight was not to be carried up with a rush.

He rolled into the Remove passage. A sound of kicking and banging greeted his ears as he arrived in the precincts sacred to the Lower Fourth.

Bunter blinked along the passage in surprise.

Five fellows were gathered outside Study No. 14, which belonged to Fisher T. Fish, Squiff, and Johnny Bull. And they seemed to be combining their efforts to kick the door in.

Bunter rolled along the passage. The Famous Five did not heed him. All of them were looking rather excited, and they kicked and banged at the study door with great vim.

"I say, you fellows—"

Bang! Bang! Thump! Thump! Bang!

"I say, you fellows, what's this game?" asked Bunter, blinking at the Famous Five. "Is Fishy in there?"

"Yes, fathead!"

"I say, I want to see Fishy!"

"So do we!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"The wantfulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter."

Bang! Bang! Thump!

"Aw, can it, you galoots!" came a nasal voice from the study. "You sure make me tired! Why don't you abscquatulate?"

"Open this door, you bony boulder."

"Forget it!"

"We're going to scalp you."

"Oh, hit the horizon, do!"

Bang! Bang! Bang!

"I say, you fellows—"

"Shut up, Bunter! Roll away!" said Harry Wharton. "Look here, you chaps, we've got to get hold of that rotter somehow."

"But I say, old chap—"

"Shut up!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter rolled away. Evidently there was to be no communication just then with Fisher T. Fish. That enterprising business man was not likely to open his study door while Five Removeites were raging outside.

Bunter rolled into Study No. 7. Peter Todd was there, finishing an impot. He gave Bunter an inquiring look.

"What's that row up the passage?" he asked.

"Some fellows ragging Fishy!"

"Good! I'll go and lend a hand."

And Peter went.

Billy Bunter sat down in the arm-chair with a grunt. He had no objection, in principle, to the ragging of Fishy; in fact, he rather liked the idea of Fishy being ragged. But it was very awkward at the present moment. If there was a remittance in that letter, and if Fishy could be induced to make a small advance to a fellow who had been disappointed about a postal-order, then this was no time for ragging Fishy. The thing itself was all right, but it was taking place at the wrong moment.

Bunter blinked at the letter in his hand.

He turned it over in his fat fingers. Bunter, in taking that letter from the rack, had had no idea of opening it. Inquisitive as he was, he kept his inquisitiveness short of that point. Moreover, there were certain penalties attached to such an action which Bunter did not desire to risk incurring.

But the circumstances were peculiar. If there was no remittance in the letter, it had no interest for Bunter. He could return it to the rack, and look for a little loan in some more likely place. He only wanted to know.

Back into Bunter's mind came a good



Fishy had prised up a floor-board, in readiness to conceal the books and papers, when suddenly the door flew open, and half-a-dozen Remove fellows entered and collared him.

"You got to celebrate this! My agent in London is sending you a thousand dollars! Whoop!

"Your popper,
"HIRAM K. FISH."

deal of Fishy's airy talk about his popper's financial transactions.

Hiram K. Fish, in conjunction with a group of other financial sportsmen, were "cornering" something; Bunter forgot what.

If the corner was a success, Hiram K. Fish would be rolling in booty; anybody in the United States who wanted to buy that particular commodity would have to pay Hiram's price for it, and the price would naturally be as high as Hiram could make it without losing trade—Hiram having no more scruples in such matters than his son Fisher.

Suppose the corner had come off! Such things did happen. Bunter had read of a financial gentleman who had once cornered wheat, and piled up mountains of dollars at the inconsiderable cost of reducing some tens of thousands of people to the verge of famine. Copper had been cornered and sold at fabulous prices; indeed, Bunter had heard his father, who was in the City, talking of the "copper corner," which, apparently, was going on at the present moment.

Suppose old Fish had cornered something and got away with it! Owing to the peculiar state of the law, he could not be put in "chokey" for doing it; he would be left at liberty to stack up money that did not belong to him. Surely some of it would come along to Fisher T.!

Bunter felt that he had to know what was in that letter. It really was important.

While he was considering the matter, he was fumbling with the letter;

fumbling and fumbling, and at last it came open.

Bunter had a wonderful gift of self-deception. He preferred to regard the letter as having come open by accident. Even to himself he did not like to admit that he had opened another fellow's letter.

But the letter having come open by accident, Bunter decided to glance at it.

He glanced at it.

The next moment his glance became a fixed stare! His eyes and his big spectacles were fairly glued on that letter.

He gasped.

"Oh crikey!"

With eager eyes, the Owl of the Remove read that letter. It was a very interesting epistle, certainly of the greatest interest to Fisher Tarleton Fish. It ran:

"Dear Fisher,—Great news! You want to believe that your popper's got away with it. Son, this is great! We've got them where we want them now; and they're squealing! I guess this corner is going to knock spots off any corner that was ever worked in New York before! I'll say we've got Wall Street gasping! Son, it's coming in! It's rolling! I'm telling you, your popper is going to make Rockefeller look like a cheap skate! He's going to make Harriman look like something the cat brought into the house. I'm telling you! Yes, sir! I'll say that every guy in this land is going to pay handsome for pork! Son, get up on your hind legs and whoop! Your popper's got by!

From the conversation of Fisher T. Fish, Bunter had learned a good deal of the American language, so he was able to construe that letter. Its meaning was clear to him.

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

Hiram K. Fish and his financial friends had, apparently, cornered pork! They commanded the whole supply of pork in the United States, and every free American citizen who wanted pork had to pay the price for it exacted by Hiram K. Fish.

There was a corner in pork, and Hiram K. Fish was rolling in dollars! And as a substantial proof of it, he was sending a thousand dollars to his son at Greyfriars.

A thousand dollars! Bunter was not good at arithmetic, but he could work that sum to pounds in his head. Two hundred pounds!

Two hundred pounds for a Remove fellow!

Bunter gasped and gasped.

Fisher T. Fish, the meanest man at Greyfriars, the fellow who almost broke down if he lost a halfpenny, was going to have two hundred pounds!

It was unbelievable!

Why, the Head wouldn't allow it! Still, it was clear that Hiram K. Fish hadn't told the Head, and it was pretty certain that Fisher T. wouldn't.

Fish would be rolling in filthy lucre! Two hundred pounds! Billy Bunter was absolutely dazzled.

There would be no holding Fishy when he knew this! Fishy would be walking on air, bursting with self-importance! Like the classic gentleman

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in Horace, he would strike the stars with his sublime head.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter. "Two hundred pounds! Oh dear, I wish my pater would corner pork or something!"

Fishy would be glad to get this letter. There was not exactly a remittance in it, but there was news of a remittance—of an enormous and unheard-of remittance.

Bunter jumped up.

Then he sat down again.

Fishy would be glad to get that letter, but probably not glad that Bunter had opened it and read it. Bunter realised that he was likely to be annoyed. Fellows never somehow seemed to like Bunter prying into their correspondence.

It would not be much use explaining to Fishy that the letter had come open by accident. Fishy was not one of those trusting fellows who took a fellow's word. He was quite the reverse of that.

The matter was too important for Bunter to run risks. Had there been ten dollars in the letter it wouldn't have mattered. But it would be madness to risk offending a fellow who was going to have a thousand dollars—two hundred pounds.

Bunter did not want to offend Fishy!

He realised that, in spite of all the things the fellows said about Fishy, Fishy had his good points—in fact, when that remittance arrived, he would have two hundred good points.

Fishy was rather mean, perhaps, rather given to swank, very close with money, and not particular how he got hold of it! Still, Bunter thought the fellows were too much down on Fishy—much too much! He began to see a certain charm in Fishy!

Taking him for all in all, Fishy was not a bad chap! He had his disagreeable ways—as who has not? Nobody

was perfect! He bragged about the United States, but, after all, he had been born there, and did not know any better. He made no secret of his derisive contempt for the poor little island in which he was now sojourning; he talked through his nose; he would have done down his best friend in a bargain. Still he had his good qualities. Bunter could not precisely think of them for the moment, but he had no doubt that Fishy had them.

The fellows were all down on Fishy. Some of the fellows were actually ragging him at the present moment. Well, Bunter was against all that. He was going to stand up for Fishy! Alone, braving public opinion Bunter was going to stand up for Fishy! He felt quite a glow of chivalrous devotion at the idea! If Fishy needed a friend, as certainly he did, Bunter was prepared to be his friend! Fellows could say what they liked—and do what they liked—Bunter was going to do what he thought right!

The Owl of the Remove carefully stowed that letter away in an inside pocket. There was no need, after all, to give it to Fishy; Fishy would know all about his good luck when that remittance arrived. And in the meantime, Bunter would be able to cultivate, without suspicion of ulterior motives, the friendship of a fellow whom he liked and esteemed.

Two hundred pounds!

It made Bunter feel giddy to think of such a munificent amount of money. And what he would do with such a sum if it were his! Still, he felt sure Fishy would stand by a friend.

Bunter, by this time, had no doubt that he liked and esteemed Fishy! There were two hundred good reasons why he should.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Fearful for Fishy!

"JERUSALEM crickets!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Collar him!" "Here, hands off, you galoots!" roared Fishy.

But it was a case of hands on.

Fisher T. Fish was in the hands of the Philistines.

More and more fellows had gathered outside Study No. 14 in the Remove passage. Half the Remove were there, at last, and in all the crowd, there was not one that sympathised with Fishy.

Sampson Quincy Imley Field, more generally known as Squiff, joined the crowd, and it was he who solved the difficulty of the locked door. No. 14 was his study as well as Fish's, and Squiff happened to have a key to the study door in his pocket.

Fishy, after locking the door, had taken no heed how the key was left in the lock. As it happened, it was left in a vertical position so that it could be knocked out by another key inserted from outside.

Squiff produced his key, pushed Fishy's key out, inserted his own, and unlocked the door. The door flew open.

It was quite a surprise for Fisher Tarleton Fish.

He was busy at the moment. He knew, of course, that he could not keep fellows out of a study for ever, and he was busily engaged in getting his business papers into a safe place.

It would be like these guys, if they had the chance, to burn all his business papers; including the little notes from his debtors, the acknowledgments of debt on which the schoolboy Shylock was accustomed to collect interest. Some of the debts, perhaps, were doubtful already; most of them would have become more or less dubious if the I.O.U's had been destroyed. Moreover, even Fishy's business brain could not have carried all the details by memory; his usurious operations had grown rather extensive in the Lower School. It was necessary for the business man of the Remove to preserve his business papers from reckless hands.

Fishy had prised up a loose board in a corner of the study, and made up a little stack of books and papers to be placed in concealment under it.

There they would be safe till this storm blew over, and these guys had something else to think about.

Unfortunately for Fishy, the door flew open while the floor-board was still up, and the business papers still in evidence.

Half a dozen Remove men collared him on all sides, and Fisher T. Fish roared and struggled.

"Leggo, you mugwumps! Hands off, you pesky scallywags!" he yelled. "I guess I'll make potato-scrappings of you! Let up! You hear me yaup! Let up!"

"Collar him!"

"Sit on him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish was bumped on the floor. There he was sat upon. He wriggled spasmodically under four or five Removites.

Johnny Bull sat on his chest. Nugent and Squiff sat on his bony legs. Peter Todd lodged on his head. The miserable Fishy squirmed, and wriggled, and yelped.

"Gooooogh! Gerroff! Ooooooo! Lemme up! Chuck it! Oh, Jerusalem crickets! Will you guys let up?" gurgled Fisher T. Fish. "Oh, gerroff my cabeza!"



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"You can let him get up!" said Harry Wharton laughing. "But hold him! Don't let him get away!"

Fishy was allowed to rise, gasping, to his feet. But his arms were pinioned, Johnny Bull on one side, Peter Todd on the other, held him fast.

But Fishy was not thinking for the moment of escape. He was anxious about his business records.

"If you guys touch them papers——" he gasped.

"Listen to me, you worm!" said the captain of the Remove. "It's got to Wingate's ears that you've been money-lending again in the lower Forms."

"Blow Wingate!"

"He says that I ought to have spotted you, and stopped you. I admit that he's right!" said Wharton. "He gave me six for letting it go on."

"I wish he'd given you sixty!"

"Now I'm taking the matter in hand. In the first place, all these papers are going to be burned."

"You—you—you all-fired jay——" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "You—you pesky slabsided mugwump——"

"Anybody got a match?" asked Harry.

"Here you are!"

Fisher T. Fish made a desperate effort to break loose. He was not, as a rule, a fighting man, but he was desperate now. His struggles were terrific, and for some moments Toddy and Johnny Bull had difficulty in holding him. But Bob Cherry grasped his collar, and Nugent and Squiff took an ear each, and he was held.

His precious business papers were piled in the grate, and a match applied to them. Fisher T. Fish gave a groan of anguish.

In a few moments those precious papers were in a flare. Fishy gave a howl as Wharton approached the grate with a large account-book in his hand, to add to the pile.

"Let up, you jay! That book cost me two shillings."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Headless of the bitter pang that shot through Fishy's transatlantic breast, Wharton rammed the account-book down into the fire, and stirred it there with the poker.

"Oh Jerusalem!" groaned Fisher T. Fish.

"That's done," said the captain of the Remove. "Now we've got to deal with Shylock! You've been warned before. Fish, and you've asked for it again."

"The askfulness was terrific."

"You're a disgrace to the Form, and to the school. You'd be jolly well sacked if the Head had seen those papers and that giddy account-book! You know that! And you ought to be sacked."

"Hear, hear!"

"I guess——"

"Wingate's left the matter in my hands. Still, if you'd rather go before the prefects, say the word! Or if you'd rather go before Quelch——"

"Oh, don't be a pesky all-fired jay!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. Evidently Fishy was not anxious to explain his business principles and practices to his Form master.

"Then it's up to me!" said the captain of the Remove. "You're going to have a Form-ragging, and be sent to Coventry for a week."

"I guess——"

"You men line up in the passage," said Harry Wharton. "Every man's got to kick Fishy as he passes——"

"Good egg!"

"I guess I won't stir a step!" looted Fisher T. Fish.

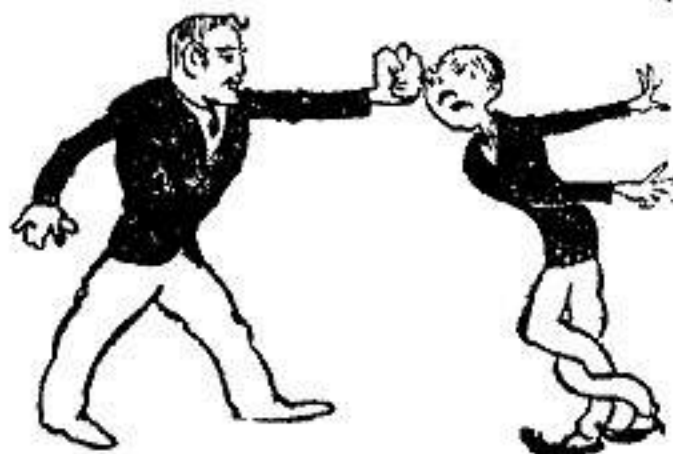
"I guess you will!" grinned Wharton. "I kinder guess and calculate and reckon that I'm going to start you with my boot. Line up, you men."

More and more of the Remove had arrived now. The passage was crowded. Outside the door of Study No. 14 was quite a jam.

Fisher T. Fish stared at them dismally and savagely. Every face wore a grin—but it was determined. Wharton's sentence was approved unanimously by the Remove. Every fellow there had had more or less experience of Fishy's business methods, and disliked them accordingly, but that was not all. This matter of moneylending had come out before, and fellows in other Forms had chipped the Removites about it. The Removites had been wrathful and indignant, but they could not get out of the fact that

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QUITE SIMPLE!

Mr. Winks (to Mr. Jones): "How can I get the shape of my nose altered?"

Mr. Jones: "Oh, that's quite simple. Just poke it into someone else's business!"

Get busy with pen and paper now, chum, and let me have your effort right away.

Fishy was a member of the Remove, and that disgrace had been brought on the Form. Now Fishy was "at it" again, and there was not a man in the Remove who was not anxious to let Fishy know what he thought of him.

Fellows who did not agree with Harry Wharton, as a rule, agreed with him now. Bolsover major, the bully of the Remove, was quite in accord with the Famous Five. Skinner, and Snoop, and Stott were keen enough to kick Fishy or anybody else who was down on his luck. In all the numerous crowd in the Remove passage, there was not a dissentient voice.

The juniors formed up in a long line along the passage, every fellow watchfully ready for Fishy to pass, every right foot in an attitude of expectancy.

Fisher T. Fish showed a natural reluctance to quit Study No. 14.

"Off!" said Wharton.

Fishy stood in the doorway. He looked along the line of expectant faces, and shuddered. Innumerable boots were waiting for him, and he was certain to have a wildly exciting time

before he reached the stairs at the other end of the passage. He was extremely reluctant to get off the mark.

"Start!" said Wharton.

"I—I guess——"

"This isn't a guessing competition! Beat it!"

"I—I calculate——"

Biff! Harry Wharton's boot smote, and Fishy hopped out of the study with a yell.

The fellow nearest kicked promptly, and Fishy yelled again. He hesitated no longer. He was for it now, and the sooner he got through, the better it was for Fisher Tarleton Fish.

He raced down the Remove passage. On all sides boots lunged at him and banged on him.

"Ow! Yarooooogh! Jerusalem crickets! Oh scissors!" howled Fishy, as he plunged desperately on.

"Go it!"

"Give him jip!"

"Here, give a fellow room!"

"Yarooooogh! Who're you kicking, you ass?"

"Wow! That is my leg, fathead!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish raced on. In their eagerness to get in an extra kick or two, some of the Removites landed in the wrong place, and Fishy did not capture all the kicks that were intended for him. Skinner, indeed, who was a sly youth, found an opportunity to give Bolsover major a hack; and Bolsover, enraged by the hack, kicked out angrily on all sides, amid yells of protest and anguish.

Still, Fisher T. Fish undoubtedly bagged the lion's share. By the time he reached the Remove staircase Fishy was feeling as if he had been through a mangle or under a lorry.

He did not stop on the landing. He bolted down the stairs, yelling. A roar of laughter followed him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Have some more, Fishy!"

A howl floated up the staircase, and Fisher Tarleton Fish vanished.

"That's done it!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Shylock will guess twice before he goes after his pound of flesh again!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The rotter's in Coventry for a week from to-day," said Wharton. "Remember that, you men! Nobody's to speak a word to the worm for a week!"

"I'll jolly well smash any fellow that speaks half a syllable to him!" roared Bolsover major.

"I say, you fellows——" Billy Bunter blinked out of Study No. 7.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! You never had your kick, Bunter! Why didn't you join up, fathead?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I say, you fellows, where's Fishy?"

"Gone from our gaze like a beautiful dream!" answered Bob.

"Well, I want to speak to him——"

"What the thump do you want to speak to Fishy for, fathead?"

"Well, I rather like him, you know."

"Wha-a-at?"

"You fat chump!"

"Fishy's in Coventry for a week," said Harry Wharton.

"Oh, really, you know——"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I tell you I'm going to speak to him——"

"Are you?" roared Bolsover major. "Well, this is a tip not to speak to him, see?" And Bolsover caught the

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Owl of the Remove by the collar, twirled him round, and landed a boot on his tight trousers.

"Whoooooop!"

Billy Bunter disappeared into Study No. 7 again, and collapsed in a heap there, roaring.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter's friendship with Fisher T. Fish was starting under rather inauspicious circumstances!

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

In Coventry!

JOHNNY BULL and Squiff came into Study No. 14 a few hours later, for prep. They had the honour—or otherwise—of sharing that study with Fisher T. Fish. Fishy was there, sitting at the table, and beginning prep. He was not looking merry or bright. He shifted rather uncomfortably in his chair. He was still feeling the effects of running the gauntlet in the Remove passage that afternoon. He frowned at the two juniors as they came in, and they smiled. But they did not speak to Fishy as they sat down to prep. They were never very anxious for his conversation; and now he was in Coventry.

Indeed, Fishy's sentence was more enthusiastically approved in his own study than elsewhere. Johnny Bull and Squiff were likely to have a restful week while Fishy was in Coventry.

Fishy was a great talker. He was an incessant talker. He "chewed the rag," as he would have described it, in season and out of season.

But extensive as his conversation was there was little variety in it. Money was his topic.

It was an unwritten law at Greyfriars that fellows never talked about money.

But Fishy, so far from heeding such a prohibition, could not even understand it. It was the subject of all others that lay nearest his heart.

It would have been as easy to stop Bob Cherry from talking about cricket as to prevent Fishy from talking about money.

So far as Fishy was concerned, life began and ended with money. Money is said to make the mare go; and certainly it made Fishy's tongue go.

How fellows could keep off that delightful topic was a mystery to Fisher T. Fish.

His thoughts ran on that subject; his tongue ran on it; indeed, he almost breathed money.

And if Fishy's conversation ever left that great topic, he had only one other; and that was, the vast superiority of the United States over every other country in the wide world.

This superiority was founded chiefly on the fact that there was more money there than in any other country.

Fishy really seemed to think that fellows liked, or ought to like, having the inferiority of their own country pointed out to them. About that inferiority Fishy had no doubts.

He never disguised the fact that England made him tired. There was absolutely nothing in the poor little island that Fishy approved of. In the

United States everything was bigger and better.

Fishy liked to enlarge on this subject; the sound of his own voice was music in his ears; and being the only fellow at Greyfriars with any horse-sense, he was willing to enlighten the others. It never even occurred to him that he was a portentous bore.

But even Fisher T. Fish, at the present moment, was disinclined for talk. He had a lot of aches and pains to occupy his mind.

It was not till prep was over in Study No. 14 that Fishy broke silence. He pushed his books away and rose from the table. He glanced at the grate, which was full of the charred remains of valuable business papers, and gave a snort.

"I guess this show makes a fellow tired!" said Fish. "Yep! I guess it sure does! It gets my goat!"

There was no reply to this observation, and Fishy gave his study-mates an angry stare.

"And that pesky letter I was expecting hasn't come!" he said. "I guess it's resting somewhere in your out-of-date post office. Why the guys in this country don't send for a real live American to run the show for them beats me! It surely does beat me to a frazzle."

"Done!" said Squiff, rising from the table. "Coming down, Bull?"

"I'm coming!" said Johnny.

"I guess there's going to be noos in



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that letter, when it comes," said Fisher T. Fish. "Yep! My popper is going it strong, I can tell you! I guess he's getting away with a corner in pork! Say, you guys know what a corner is?"

Johnny Bull and Squiff grinned, and moved to the door. Fisher T. Fish glared at them.

Hitherto he had been too occupied with his aches and pains to give much thought to the sentence of "Coventry." Now it came back into his mind.

"Say, can't you speak?" he demanded.

Whether the two juniors could speak or not, they didn't. They grinned, and that was all.

"Mean to say you're keeping up that pesky nonsense?" demanded Fish. "Making out that I'm in Coventry, what?"

No answer.

"Aw, go and chop chips!" growled Fish. "Who wants to speak to a set of boneheaded jays? Not this infant!"

"I say, you fellows."

A fat face and a large pair of spectacles appeared in the doorway. Billy Bunter blinked into the study.

"Fishy here?" he asked.

"Fishy's here, and he's in Coventry!" answered Johnny Bull. "Get out, Bunter."

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Get out, fatty!" said Squiff.

"You see, I want to speak to Fishy—"

"I tell you he's in Coventry, fat-head!"

"Yah! I say, Fishy—"

"I guess I've nothing to lend you, Bunter," said Fisher T. Fish ungratefully. "I calculate I ain't cashing that postal-order for you! Skip!"

"Why, you beast—" exclaimed Bunter indignantly.

"Oh, git!" snapped Fishy.

Fisher T. Fish had not yet realised what it was like in Coventry, and he did not foresee that the time might come when he would be grateful even for Bunter's conversation.

"You're talking to Fishy, Bunter!" said Johnny Bull.

"Well, I only called him a beast—"

"Mustn't call him a beast when he's in Coventry."

"Ow! Leggo!" roared Bunter.

Bang!

Bunter's bullet head tapped on the study door. Bunter's roar rang the length of the Remove passage.

"Whoooooop!"

"Now hook it!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter hooked it. Johnny Bull and Squiff followed him down the passage, and Fish was left alone in Study No. 14.

The American junior gave a contemptuous snort. If these guys calculated that they were going to get his goat by refusing to chew the rag, they could get on with it. That was Fishy's view, at present.

When his study-mates were gone Fishy sat down to the table again, with pen and ink and paper, and busied himself with accounts. This occupation, as it had to do with money, kept Fisher T. Fish happily engaged till bed-time. It was not till nearly time for dorm that Fishy left his study.

When he came into the Remove dormitory with the other fellows, however, Fishy was in a mood for talk. He was prepared to forget and forgive the ragging. Fishy did not bear malice; not so much

because he had a forgiving nature as because it was not business. Besides, he had to talk. He simply had to tell somebody how cutely his popper was cornering pork in Noo York.

But the rest of the Remove acted as if Fishy was not there. His remarks were unanswered; the juniors seemed unaware of his presence.

Fisher T. Fish breathed hard and deep.

Coventry, after all, was not a pleasant place; and this thing was beginning to get on his nerves.

Wingate of the Sixth came in to turn lights out. After he was gone and the dormitory in darkness, Fishy's voice was heard again.

"Say, you guys!"

No answer.

"Wharton, you pie-faced mugwump, do you calculate you're going to keep up this rot?" howled Fish.

Wharton did not state his calculations.

"Cherry, you bone-headed jay!"

Bob Cherry was silent.

"Nugent, you all-fired bonehead—"

There was a chuckle from Frank Nugent, but that was all.

"Oh, go and chop chips, the whole caboodle of you!" snorted Fisher T. Fish. "Who wants to hear you chew the rag? I don't!"

"I say, Fishy, old chap—" came a fat squeak,



"Ow! Yaroooooogh! Jerusalem crickets! Oh scissors!" howled Fishy as he plunged desperately on, kicks from the Removites raining on his person.

There was a roar.

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"I say, you fellows, I'm going to speak to Fishy if I like!" protested Billy Bunter.

"Yep! You get on with it, Bunter," said Fisher T. Fish. Already he had changed his views as to the value of Bunter's conversation. "Say, you're a fat clam, but you've got more hoss-sense than the whole caboodle of these pesky geeks!"

There was a sound of someone getting out of bed. The next moment there was a louder sound, of a bolster smiting, and a roar of anguish from William George Bunter.

"Ow! Wow! Stop it! Yarooooogh!"

Whack, whack, whack!

"There!" said Bob Cherry. "Is that enough, Bunter, or will you have a few more?"

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

Bob Cherry went back to bed. Billy Bunter addressed no more remarks to Fisher T. Fish. Fishy sat up in bed, and for several minutes told the Remove what he thought of them. But there was no reply to his observations; and Fishy put an indignant head on his pillow at last, and went to sleep.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

The Way of the Transgressor!

BILLY BUNTER grinned.

It was morning break the next day; and Bunter, as usual, blinked in the letter-rack to ascertain whether, by some miracle, his long-expected postal-order had arrived. It hadn't!

But the Owl of the Remove grinned as he saw Fisher T. Fish anxiously scanning the rack.

Fishy was puzzled and irritated by the non-arrival of his expected letter from New York. He was deeply anxious for news of his popper. His popper's last letter had informed him that the corner in pork was a practical certainty now—a cinch, as Mr. Fish called it. Fishy was expecting confirmation of that news by every post.

It did not occur to Fishy that the expected letter had arrived and had found a safe resting-place in Billy Bunter's pocket. And William George Bunter certainly did not intend to tell him so.

"Gol-darn it!" muttered Fisher T. Fish. "I guess the sleepy old Post Office in this sleepy old island is losing that letter. This country sure does make a galoot tired!"

Bunter blinked cautiously round. The other fellows had cleared off, and it was safe to speak to Fishy.

"Expecting a letter, old chap?" asked the fat junior.

"Yep!" snapped Fishy.

"Anything important?" asked Bunter blandly.

"You bet!"

Fisher T. Fish, as a rule, had very little politeness to waste on Bunter. He had no use for a gink who was always trying to touch a guy for a loan; and so far from paying interest on the loan, was extremely unlikely to return the principal.

But Bunter had his uses now. He was the only fellow in the Remove who would answer when Fisher T. Fish spoke to him.

So Fishy's manner changed from snappishness to geniality. He had not been in Coventry long, but he was already tired of that cold and inhospitable abode.

"I guess there's going to be big noos

in that letter, Bunter," he said confidently. "My popper's cornering pork. I guess he's getting busy with it! Popper's the head of the combine. And I'll say that if the combine get by with it, popper won't be able to count the dollars! I guess folks can't live without pork! And I guess they'll have to pay for it when popper's cornered the supply. Yep, sir; the combine are going to control the whole supply of pork in the Yew-nited States." Fishy's eyes glistened. "I'm telling you, bo, that the popper is going to make Rockefeller and Morgan look like pieces left on the counter! Yep!"

"Fine!" said Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish looked at him rather suspiciously.

He did not quite understand Bunter.

There were fellows of a chivalrous disposition, who would stand by a fellow who was down. But Bunter had never struck him as being that sort of fellow.

"Splendid!" said Bunter.

Fishy's own belief was that it was splendid. But he was far from expecting any Greyfriars man to see eye to eye with him.

Bunter surprised him more and more.

"Your pater must be an awfully clever chap, Fishy!" said Bunter.

"You've said it!" agreed Fishy.

"It's—it's magnificent, ain't it?" said Bunter.

"I guess so," agreed Fisher T. Fish. "I can tell you that if the popper pulls it off this infant will be rolling in dollars! Yep! If that dog-goned letter would only come—What are you grinning at, Bunter?"

"W-w-was I?" Bunter ceased to grin. "I say, Fishy, I think it's rather

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rotten for all the fellows to be down on you like this! I'm standing by you, old chap."

Fishy gave a grunt. He was glad to have somebody to speak to, but Billy Bunter was not exactly the fellow he would have selected, if he had had his choice. And he did not understand.

"Fellows ought to make allowances for a chap like you," said Bunter tactfully. "Tain't as if you had been brought up properly, is it, old fellow?"

"Eh?"

"I mean, you can't be expected to see things as we do," explained Bunter. "Being an American, you can't help being after money, and all that."

"Look here——"

"You can't help being mean, and stingy, and so on," said Bunter. "Fellows ought to make allowances. I make allowances for you, Fishy. You see, I quite understand that you can't help it."

"You fat clam!"

"Oh, really, Fishy——"

"Oh, go and chop chips!"

Fisher T. Fish seemed to have had enough of Bunter's conversation, though it was the only conversation available.

He sniffed, and walked out into the quad.

Bunter blinked after him.

"Cheeky cad!" he murmured. "Ungrateful beast! Wonder what he's got his back up for now?"

Fisher T. Fish stalked into the quad with a gloomy brow. He came on the Famous Five, and they turned aside to let him pass, and Fishy scowled after them. He came on Skinner and Snoop and Stott, and stopped to speak. They grinned at him. Skinner & Co. were not very scrupulous fellows themselves, so perhaps Fishy hoped that they would adopt a less severe attitude than the other fellows. But Skinner & Co., if they were not shocked at Fishy, at least had no intention of helping a lame dog over a stile; that was not their way at all.

"Say, you guys ain't keeping this up, are you?" said Fisher T. Fish, almost pleadingly.

"Nice morning, ain't it, Snoopey?" said Skinner.

"Fine!" said Snoop.

"I guess I was speaking to you, Skinner!"

"Good for the cricket, if this keeps up!" said Skinner.

"I guess——"

Skinner & Co. strolled away, without having taken any cognisance of Fishy's existence.

The hapless business man of the Remove breathed hard and deep.

He was feeling the effects of Coventry severely now.

Quite a large amount of conversation was, by this time, bottled up in Fisher Tarleton Fish, and he began to feel that he must either talk or burst.

He walked away, with a moody brow and a restless eye, seeking a victim. He caught sight of Lord Mauleverer, and bore down on him. Mauly was the most good-natured fellow in the school, and he hated hurting a fellow's feelings; he would not have hurt the feelings of a reptile if he could have helped it. He looked very uncomfortable as Fishy bore down on him.

"Say, Mauly!" said Fisher T. Fish hopefully. "You ain't in this, are you, old chap?"

"Yaas."

"Now, look here, Mauly——"

"You see, you're such a rank outsider, old bean!" said Mauleverer.

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"You are the horrid limit, you know. Do go away!"

"I guess——"

"I really can't talk to you, you know," said Lord Mauleverer. "You're in Coventry, you know. Do buzz off!"

"You ain't the galoot to take your orders from Wharton, old chap," urged Fisher T. Fish. "You ain't taking any notice of that gink."

"Yaas."

"You ain't down on me now, are you, Mauly?"

"Yaas."

"Look here, you pesky jay——"

Squiff of the Remove came up. He did not speak. He took Fisher T. Fish by the collar and twirled him away from Lord Mauleverer.

"Leggo!" roared Fish. "By the great horned toad, I guess I'll make potato-scrappings of you, you pesky geck!"

The Australian junior, with a swing of his powerful arm, sat Fishy down in the quad. He landed there with a bump and a howl. Squiff took Lord Mauleverer's arm and walked him off.

Fisher T. Fish rose sorrowfully to his feet. He drifted dismally round the quadrangle. This was getting awful. He came on Hazeldene of the Remove under the elms, and stopped. Only the day before Hazel had been trying to borrow money of him. Hazel was rather too doubtful a customer for a business man like Fishy, and Fishy had requested him to "forget it." But circumstances alter cases. Fishy was in the dreary shades of Coventry now, and he would have been glad for a fellow to speak to him, if only to ask him for a little loan.

"Look here, Hazel, I have been thinking about what you asked me yesterday," said Fisher T. Fish cheerily.

Hazel looked at him, turned his back, and walked away.

"You pesky jay!" howled Fish.

Hazel laughed, and walked on.

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!" groaned Fisher T. Fish. "This sure is getting my goat! Oh dear!"

"I say, old chap!"

Bunter rolled up.

It was a case of any port in a storm. Bunter was better than nobody. Fishy contrived to twist his thin, sharp features into a genial grin.

But it was not to be!

Bolsover major appeared in the offing.

He did not speak to Fishy; nor, for that matter, to Bunter. He let out a large boot.

There was a howl from Bunter, and he fled.

"Look here, Bolsover, you pie-faced gink!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

Bolsover walked away.

Fisher T. Fish drifted off again, alone and silent, his conversation still bottled up within him.

Coventry had lasted an evening and a morning; to Fishy it seemed already to have lasted centuries.

How was he going to live through day after day, without talking? Obviously it was impossible.

He must talk or burst.

When the bell rang for third school, Fisher T. Fish almost limped to the Form-room with the other fellows.

He was glad even when Mr. Quelch addressed him in class! There was no other voice to address him.

Undoubtedly it got Fishy's goat! It was more than a guy could stand. Even the knowledge that his popper was cornering pork in New York failed to comfort him now.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Great!

"FISH!"

Wingate of the Sixth called to Fishy some time after dinner.

It was a half-holiday that afternoon. Harry Wharton & Co., and the cricketers of the Remove, were playing the Fourth Form on Little Side, and had forgotten all about the existence of Fisher T. Fish.

Other fellows were watching the game; others had gone out of gates. But those with whom Fisher T. Fish came in contact were as standoffish as ever.

Only Bunter had spoken to him since morning school; and twice had Bunter been kicked by Remove fellows for doing so.

Bunter's attitude in the matter was surprising—as much to Fishy as to the other fellows.

Bunter as champion of the oppressed was rather a new Bunter. He had never liked Fishy—Fishy had never liked him. Neither, in fact, was he a very likeable fellow.

Yet Bunter, alone in the Remove, was standing by Fishy—risking perpetual kickings by defying the order of the Form.

Questioned on the subject, Bunter announced that Fishy was his pal, and that he wasn't the man to let a pal down.

This was extraordinary, for Fishy was not his pal; and, in addition, Bunter was just the man to let him down if he had been.

The line taken by Bunter would have puzzled the Removites very much had they tried to think out the problem. Instead of that, however, they contented themselves with kicking Bunter whenever he was seen in talk with the barred junior.

Heedless of kickings, Bunter stuck to his guns. He was going to be friendly with Fishy; he was going to stand by a pal who was down on his luck.

The astonished Fishy wondered what his game was.

Some fellows, in Fishy's position, would have supposed that it was a case of hitherto unsuspected friendship, of loyal devotion. But Fishy was not given to suppositions of that sort. He only wondered what Bunter's game was, and what axe he had to grind.

Still, he was glad that Bunter was taking this line. By this time Fishy had to talk or scream.

To Fishy's ears the music of the spheres was as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine, compared with the music of his own voice. He simply had to talk! So the devoted Bunter was a friend in need.

Once more Bunter had been kicked, and had given it up for a time; and Fishy was mooching dismally near the door of the House when Wingate of the Sixth came out and called to him.

Fishy was glad to be spoken to, even by a prefect, but he regarded Wingate very uneasily. He wondered whether the Greyfriars captain had noticed what was going on in the Remove and divined the cause.

"Yep!" he answered.

"Quelch wants you."

"Oh Jerusalem!" said Fishy. "I say, what does he want?"

"You!" said Wingate, and he walked on.

Fisher T. Fish went into the House very slowly. If his Form master had heard of the moneylending——

(Continued on page 12.)

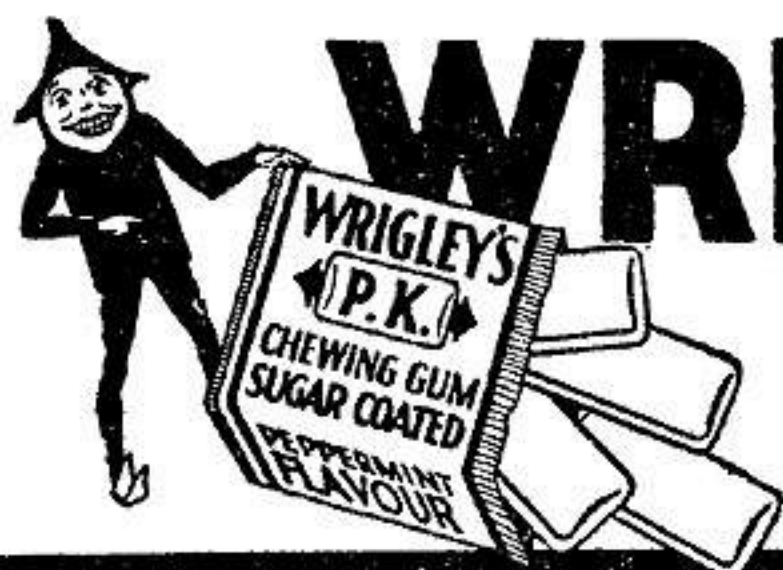
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ROLLING IN DOLLARS!

(Continued from page 10.)

It looked like it. Otherwise, why should Mr. Quelch send for him on a half-holiday? With a dismal face, the business-man of the Remove took his slow and reluctant way to the Remove master's study.

He knocked and entered.

Mr. Quelch was writing at his table, and he made Fishy a sign to wait. Fishy waited. He was relieved to see that Quelch was not looking "mad." Possibly it was not a row, after all.

The Form master finished writing, laid down his pen, and glanced at Fisher T. Fish.

"Ah! Um!" said Mr. Quelch. "I have sent for you, Fish; there is a letter for you—"

Fishy stared. If there was a letter for him, he did not see why it should not be placed in the rack as usual.

"A registered letter," added Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" said Fish.

His eyes brightened. A registered letter could hardly mean anything but a remittance. Nobody was likely to send him a remittance but his father—and only his father if the "corner" was in the full tide of success. If this meant that the Great Fish Combine had succeeded in cornering pork—

"I have signed for the letter," said Mr. Quelch. "I have sent for you to—ah—um—hand it to you, Fish."

"From New York, sir?" asked Fish eagerly.

Mr. Quelch frowned.

"I should prefer to hear you pronounce the name of that city as it is spelt, Fish," he remarked.

"Yep," said Fishy. "So I did, sir."

Mr. Quelch let that point pass. Instruction in pronunciation had as much effect on Fishy as water on a duck.

"Well, here is the letter," said Mr. Quelch. "It is not from New York; but, apparently, from London. You may take it, Fish. I have received a note from your father, informing me that he has instructed his agent in London to send you a remittance. So you may take the letter."

"Thank you, sir!" said Fish eagerly.

He almost grabbed the letter.

Mr. Quelch made him a sign to go, and he went gladly. He was feverishly anxious to see inside that letter.

It was one of Mr. Quelch's duties as Form master to see that generous and injudicious relatives did not send the boys larger sums than were for their good. This had sometimes rather worried Lord Mauleverer and Vernon-Smith.

But he did not consider it necessary to examine Fishy's remittance. He had met the elder Fish, and he knew how very improbable it was that a remittance from Hiram K. would err on the side of generosity.

Mr. Quelch, of course, knew nothing about the corner in pork. Probably he did not even know what a corner was; and, in the innocence of his heart, he would probably have supposed, had he heard of such things, that cornerers of foodstuffs were sent to prison.

So it did not occur to Mr. Quelch that, for the first time in history, Hiram K. Fish had erred on the side of liberality—and to an amazing extent.

He dismissed the matter from his mind.

Fisher T. Fish fairly scooted down Masters' passage; he scudded into the quad, and there he opened the letter.

His eyes were dancing; his thin fingers trembled with eagerness. He was feeling sure of the corner now.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,161.

There was a letter enfolding a slip of paper, which was partly printed and partly written. Fisher T. Fish gazed at it as he unfolded it.

He caught his breath.

It was a draft on the Courtfield Bank for two hundred pounds.

"Oh, great snakes!" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

He could scarcely believe his eyes.

A thousand dollars! Evidently the corner had come off! Only a wonderful and amazing rush of good fortune could have induced Hiram K. Fish to part with money to this tune.

"Oh Jerusalem!"

The letter with the draft stated that the London agent was forwarding a draft for the sum of £200 (two hundred pounds), on the instructions of Mr. H. K. Fish, acknowledgment of which in due course would oblige.

Fisher T. Fish did not give the letter more than a hasty glance. His attention was fixed on the draft.

Two hundred pounds!

"Oh, wake snakes and walk chalks!" trilled Fisher T. Fish. "Oh, this is the elephant's hind leg, this is! This sure is the grasshopper's whiskers!"

Skinner & Co., loafing under the elms, stared across at Fishy, wondering what was the matter with him.

Fishy walked across to them, and flourished the draft under Harold Skinner's nose.

"Look!" he grinned.

Skinner looked—and almost fell down.

"I—I—I say, is that genuine?" he gasped.

"Is it?" chuckled Fishy. "Yep! I rather reckon it is! Yep! I guess it is the goods! Oh, just a few!"

"Two hundred pounds!" stuttered Snoop.

"Sure!"

"How the thump—" ejaculated Stott.

"I guess my popper's cornered the stuff!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish. "Yep, sir! I guess there are some guys sitting up and squealing in the Yew-nited States jest now! You hear me yaup? Oh, this sure is the bee's knee!"

Fisher T. Fish walked off. He had forgotten Coventry. What did Coventry matter now? Fisher T. Fish wanted to walk down to Courtfield before the bank closed and cash that draft. He wanted to feel the rustling banknotes in his bony fingers.

Skinner & Co. looked at one another.

"Two hundred pounds!" said Snoop faintly.

"Old Man Fish must have brought off a fearful swindle to be able to chuck money about like that!" remarked Stott.

Skinner frowned.

"That's not the way to talk of Fishy's pater, Stott!"

"Eh?" ejaculated Stott.

"Fishy's pater is a big financial man, and, I believe, a very prominent citizen in his own country," said Skinner. "The least a fellow can do is to speak of him with decent respect."

Stott gazed at Skinner, open-mouthed. His brain worked more slowly than Skinner's.

"The fact is, I think the fellows have been rather rough on Fishy," said Skinner. "I never quite approved of it—"

"Why, you cut him dead only this morning—"

"Oh, dry up, Stott!" said Snoop, who was quicker to perceive Skinner's drift. "If Fishy is rolling in money the matter's different. I thought it was all gas."

"That's rather a rotten way of putting it, Snoopey," said Skinner reprovingly.

"I hope I shall never give a thought to a fellow's money!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Stott, getting hold of it at last, as it were. "That's it, is it?"

"Certainly not!" said Skinner. "But my opinion is that the fellows have been rather rough on Fishy; and I've thought so all along, only I didn't care to say so against all the Form. I think the time has come to speak out."

"Now Fishy's got two hundred pounds and—"

"No, you silly ass!" roared Skinner.

"Oh, shut up, Stott!" said Snoop. "You always were rather a fool. Fishy's not a bad sort, really."

"I've always thought him a pretty decent chap," said Skinner, "and I'll say so before anybody. I'm jolly well going to chuck this Coventry nonsense, too. Wharton's not going to bully me into harring a fellow I've always liked!"

"No fear!" agreed Snoop.

"Well, that's all very well," said Stott. "But Fishy's horribly mean, you know. How do you know he will whack it out?"

"Shut up, you dummy!" snapped Skinner.

"Yes, do shut up, Stott!" said Snoop.

"You can't open your mouth without saying something fatheaded!"

"I think Fishy's been hardly used," said Skinner, "and, thinking so, I hope I'm man enough to say so, and dash the consequences. And I'm jolly well going to speak to him now, and chance it!"

And Skinner cut across after Fisher T. Fish, and Snoop followed him, and Stott followed Snoop.

Hitherto, only Billy Bunter had realised that Fishy, in spite of appearances, was really a very fine fellow. Now the same enlightenment had come to Skinner & Co. Probably there would be more to follow when they learned of those two hundred excellent reasons for liking Fisher T. Fish.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Fishy Finds Friends!

"GINGER-POP!" said Bob Cherry.

"The ginger-popfulness is the proper caper!" agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Good egg!" said Frank Nugent.

The three were out, and Harry Wharton and Johnny Bull were at the wickets. Temple, Dabney & Co. of the Fourth were in the field. It was a warm afternoon, and after a hefty innings ginger-pop at the tuckshop seemed, as Hurree Singh said, the proper caper.

So the three juniors walked away to Mrs. Mumble's little shop behind the elms. The sound of a rat voice greeted them as they entered.

"I say, Fishy, old chap! I mentioned to you that I was expecting a postal-order. I think—"

"I guess you did, Bunter. Don't mention it any more."

"Oh, really, Fishy—"

"I guess you can have a ginger-pop, fatty, and put it down to me!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry, as he tramped in.

There were only Fisher T. Fish and Bunter in the shop at the moment. Both were busy with ginger-beer.

Fisher T. Fish seldom spent money at the tuckshop—or anywhere else, for that matter. He hated spending money, even on himself. The idea of spending it on anybody else made him shudder.

Evidently some sort of a change had come over Fishy now.

He was indulging in unusual extravagance. Not only had he stood himself a stone ginger, but there was a plate of Mrs. Mimble's best tarts before him. And he was standing treat to Bunter!

"Ginger for three, Mrs. Mimble, please!" said Bob Cherry, and then he turned to Bunter. "You fat bounder, you—"

"Oh, really, Cherry, I—"

"You're talking to Fishy, and you know he's in Coventry for the week! Where will you have it?"

"Look here! I'm going to talk to a pal, if I like!" said Bunter defiantly. "I'm sticking to Fishy! I like Fishy! I admire him! I've always liked him, and always admired him. You shut up!"

"Have some tarts, old fat bean," said Fisher T. Fish hospitably.

"Thanks, I will, old chap!"

"Fishy standing treat!" said Frank Nugent, in wonder. "Some ass said the age of miracles was past!"

"Aw, can it!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Yes, you shut up, Nugent," said Bunter, with his mouth full of tart. "Fishy's my pal—and as good a pal as a fellow could want!"

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob.

"Fishy's in Coventry, you fat frog, and you're going to be kicked!" said Nugent. "Here you are!"

"Yarcooh! Grooooooh! Ooooooch!" gurgled Bunter, as a considerable quantity of jam tart went down the wrong way.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! Ooooooh! Woooooch!"

Three fellows came into the tuckshop together. Skinner came over to the group by the counter, and Snoop and Stott followed him.

"You'd better chuck that, Nugent!" said Skinner.

"Eh, what?"

"I don't see that Bunter ought to be bullied," said Skinner.

"Wha-a-at?"

"Yes, let him alone!" said Snoop. "If Bunter chooses to speak to a friend, it's no bizney of yours!"

"Rotten shame, I call it!" said Stott, whose slow brain had now assimilated the new state of affairs. "Beastly bullying! Let the chap alone!"

Nugent stared at them blankly.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"You know that worm Fish is in Coventry, and any fellow speaking to him is to be kicked!"

"Grooooooch!"

"That's all very well," said Skinner. "But I think it's gone too far! Wharton's not going to dictate to me!"

"Nor to me!" said Sidney James Snoop. "Who's Wharton after all? Wharton can go and eat coke, and so can you fellows!"



"Look!" grinned Fishy, flourishing the draft under Harold Skinner's nose "I—I say, is that genuine?" gasped Skinner.

"I can jolly well tell you that I'm going to speak to Fishy, if I choose," said Skinner, "and you can tell Wharton to put that in his pipe and smoke it."

"You'll be jolly well kicked, if you do!" said Bob Cherry.

"The kickfulness will be terrific, my esteemed Skinner!"

"If there's any bullying, I shall appeal to a prefect!" said Skinner.

"I'm fed-up with you fellows trying to run the Remove!"

"It's too thick!" agreed Snoop.

"Why, you agreed with the rest! You were as keen on it as anybody!" exclaimed Bob. "What the thump do you mean?"

Skinner coughed. As a matter of fact, he had taken up the Coventry more keenly than most of the fellows, simply from an amiable propensity to give a fellow a kick when he was down. His sudden change of front really came a little awkwardly.

"Well, Wharton being captain of the Form, and so on, a fellow had to play up," said Skinner. "I'm sure Fish himself will understand that, and bear no malice."

"Sure!" said Fisher T. Fish with a grin.

Fishy was by no means blind to the cause of this sudden change in the attitude of Skinner & Co. But he saw his way out of Coventry now.

"But, so far as I'm concerned, it's at an end!" said Skinner.

"Same here!" said Snoop.

"Yes, rather!" agreed Stott.

"Going down to Courtfield this afternoon, Fishy?" asked Skinner. He had noted that the Courtfield Bank was mentioned on the draft; Fishy had flourished under his nose.

"Yep."

"Like a fellow to come?"

"Sure!"

"I say, you fellows—" Billy Bunter looked rather alarmed. He had marked out the heir of the corner in pork for himself. "I say, look here! Fishy's my pal—"

"We're all Fishy's pals, I hope," said Skinner, "and this is the time for Fishy's friends to rally round him, when a lot of rotters are down on him for nothing—practically nothing!"

"Well, my only summer bonnet!" ejaculated Bob Cherry, staring at Skinner & Co. in astonishment.

Bunter's attitude had been perplexing. Now three more fellows were taking up the same attitude. It really was puzzling. Good-natured fellows, like Lord Mauloverer, or Redwing, or Linley, or the Famous Five themselves, might have relented towards the wretched Fishy. But Skinner & Co. were not good-natured. They were the last fellows at Greyfriars to stand by a man who was unpopular. It really was mysterious.

"Look here! What's this game?" demanded Nugent. "Has Fishy come into a fortune, or what?"

"I treat that suggestion with the contempt it deserves," said Skinner loftily. "I'm standing by Fishy because I won't see a fellow persecuted. If I like a chap, I'm not afraid to say so!"

"Sure!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Have a ginger-pop, Skinner?"

"I don't mind, old chap," said Skinner.

"Well," said Bob Cherry slowly, "I don't catch on to this! But Fish is in Coventry by order of the Form, and Fishy's staying in Coventry, and any fellow who jabs to him is going to be jolly well kicked."

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,161.

SAVING SIR STILTON!

"RUN like ye wind, lads!"

"What-ho!"

The first remark proceeded from Launcelot de Broke of ye Remove at Grey Friars; ye second proceeded from his palles, Thomas Malypense and Fatty Bacon. And meanwhile both Launcelot and his merrie lads proceeded across a field like one o'clock.

The reason for their hurry was not hard to find. Charging after them at a distance of no more than an ell was a madde bull. Master Bull was in ye right royal rage, and seemed bent on giving our palles what for. On ye other hand Launcelot de Broke & Co., who had come out on a peaceful picnic, had no intention of being given what for. So they ran like ye merrie dickens.

They were hampered by their large tuck-basket containing doughcakes, Swiss rolls, and what not, whereon they hoped later on to feast. But our mediæval heroes were fleet of foot, despite their weighty burden, and ye madde bull had all his work cut out to keep up with them.

"Through ye giddy hedge!" panted Launcelot.

Crash!

Three flying figures hurtled through a narrow gap in the hedge, to land in the meadow beyond. With them crashed ye precious tuck-basket.

"Goode egg, lads!" chortled Fatty Bacon. "Methinks we're through now, and yon madde bull is what ye might call well dished!"

"And now for a feed!" said Thomas Malypense. "Open the basket and spread the cloth, Fatty!"

"Bet your doublet and hose I will!" grinned Fatty. And he got busy then and there.

It was an ideal day for ye picnic. The sun shone merrily o'erhead, little birds twittered in ye trees and ye greene grass grew all around. Ye world seemed quiet and peaceful, but for the fearsome yells and shrieks and the clash of arms from Sir Stilton Popper's castle near by, where a tourney was in progress. And trifles like tourneys didn't worry De Broke & Co. of ye Remove!

Fatty Bacon spread out a snow-white cloth on ye grass, and then opened ye basket and started turning out doughcakes, currant buns, lemon cheese tarts, and tins of sardines, his fat face beaming like a full moon the while.

When he had finished the three palles sat down to enjoy themselves. But scarce had they bitten into their first doughcake before there came a rustling in ye grass behind them, and three sour-visaged wights hove in sight.

"Sir Stilton Popper's henchmen!" exclaimed Thomas Malypense.

And Malypense was right. As the varlets drew nigh the Grey Friars scholars could see the badges they wore, whereon were stamped the picture of a unicorn standing on its head and



Launcelot de Broke and his merry chums are lads of mettle and spirit who fear naught—not even a fierce-faced knave armed with a battle-axe and breathing fire and slaughter!

making a long nose at a lion, this being the arms of Sir Stilton Popper, the lord of the manor.

Sir Stilton Popper's henchmen advanced with drawn swords, pulling faces at our heroes as they did so.

"Ho, varlets! What's ye big idea, trespassing on Sir Stilton's land?" roared one of ye henchmen.

"We're just having ye little picnic, thanks," responded Launcelot de Broke cheerfully. "Canst lend us thy tin-opener to get at these sardines?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three sour-visaged wights scowled and gnashed their teeth with rage at our palles' merrie laughter.

"Ods bodikins and malapert! Ye'll all be laughing the other side of your faces when ye're lying chained in our master's dungeon!" roared one of the knaves. "Comerlong of us, ye saucy varlets!"

"Not likely!"

"Not to-day, baker!" grinned Fatty Bacon.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The three henchmen stepped forth threateningly. Instantly our three heroes rose to meet them. Launcelot de Broke picked up his long staff. Thomas Malypense lifted a doughcake, and Fatty Bacon balanced a bottle of ginger-pop rather thoughtfully.

Sir Stilton's men paused dubiously.

"What's ye little game, numskulls?" growled the leader of the three.

"Breaking your pates if ye advance any farther!" answered Launcelot sweetly. "Of course ye're welcome—"

"Welcome as ye flowers in May!" grinned Fatty Bacon.

"But, all the same, if ye come any farther, we shall feel it our

bounden duty to do it! Coming?"

"Not on those terms, thank ye all the same!" replied the leader sarcastically. "But we'll return to our master, Sir Stilton, and report this; and if he doesn't give ye what for and then some then my name's not Walt Wotwilt! Come on, boys!"

And Sir Stilton's henchmen turned on their heels and strode away.

Launcelot de Broke & Co., laughing merrily, sat down again and resumed their interrupted feast. The thought of what would happen when the fiery-tempered Sir Stilton Popper got to know of their presence troubled them not a whit, for they were lads of mettle and spirit who feared naught.

All the same, they might have been excused for feeling a little nervous when Sir Stilton himself bounced into view a few minutes later. Ye cheery baronet was purple with rage, and fairly foamed at ye mouth as he advanced on them, brandishing his sword.

"What—what—what ye thump do ye think ye're playing at, trespassing on my privy domain, ye scholarly scum?" he yelled.

"Keep thy wool on, old bean!" replied Launcelot calmly. "At this rate thou'll burst in a minute, and

think what a nasty mess that would make!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You—you— Why, I'll slaughter ye! I'll put ye to torture in my dungeon and send ye home to your mothers in little pieces!" hooted the fiery baronet. "Trespass on my lands, forsooth! I'll—I'll— Oh, my giddy aunt!"

To the great surprise of our palles, Sir Stilton seemed to go quiet, all of a sudden. His face changed from purple to pink, then to green, then white. He lowered his sword, and his jaw dropped.

"What's the matter, Sir Stilton?" asked Fatty Bacon.

Sir Stilton groaned.

"Matter? Oh lor' I've just spied in the distance a varlet I don't want to see just now. It's ye villainous tax-collector—and I haven't paid my income-tax for the last five years!"

"Great pip!"

"If the wight spots me, it's all U.P.!" groaned the baronet, his fat knees beginning to knock together. "He'll take me to ye Tower, and I shall be hung, drawn, and quartered, and boiled in oil

all at the same time! Woe is me!"

"Half a jiffy, Sir Stilton!" said Launcelot, after a quick glance over his shoulder at ye distant figure of ye tax-collector. "We may be able to hide thee, if thou'lt remain quiet. What about spreading thyself out under our tablecloth?"

A gleam of hope came into ye baronet's eyes.

"By my halidom! That's a brainy wheeze!" he said. "Lift it up, lads, and I'll get under. And mind you don't breathe a word that you've seen me!"

"We won't!" promised Launcelot.

The three Grey Friars scholars, quite entering into the joke, lifted up their snow-white cloth and all the good things set out thereon, and Sir Stilton, breathing hard, crawled underneath.

When they set the cloth upon his ample form, ye picnic presented a somewhat bumpy appearance; but that didn't matter much, and they sat down and resumed their feast with great rejoicing.

Two minutes later a fierce-faced knave tramped upon the scene, breathing fire and slaughter.

"Hallo, knaves!" he bellowed. "Have ye seen Sir Stilton Popper hereabouts?"

II.

LAUNCELOT DE BROKE & CO. looked up with pretended starts of surprise.

"Ye gods and little fishes!" asked Launcelot. "What is it?"

"Can't be human!" declared Maly-pense, shaking his pate. "Look at its face!"

"Is it a face, then?"

Ye tax-collector flushed.

"Silence, saucy wights! Answer me this question, or I'll break your skulls! Have ye seen Sir Stilton Popper hereabouts?"

"Is that a conundrum?" asked Fatty Bacon reflectively.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Ye tax-collector flushed again, and his hand strayed towards the battle-axe that hung from his side.

"Ods bodikins! I'll cleave ye ail to thy respective chines if I have any more lip!" he growled. "Where's Sir Stilton?"

Launcelot, smiling, looked towards ye field where ye madde bull was wandering about.

"Come to think of it, we did see something moving about in yon field," he said. "A fat-looking thing, with red eyes and a fiery temper—"

"That's Sir Stilton!" shouted ye tax-collector. "Over in yon field, ye said?"

"Ay! Hasten, or thou'lt miss him."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Our three palles were almost doubled up with laughter as they watched ye tax-collector innocently turn on his heel and make for ye field at ye double. Launcelot hadn't told a lie about it, for there certainly was a fat-looking thing with red eyes and a fiery temper wandering about in ye field. If ye tax-collector chose to think that it was Sir Stilton Popper instead of a madde bull—well, that was his funeral!

Launcelot de Broke and his palles jumped to their feet again and rushed to ye gap in ye hedge to watch ye fun. Soon afterwards, the real Sir Stilton crawled from under the tablecloth and joined them.

"Get rid of him, lads?" he whispered.

"That we did, Sir Stilton! Look through ye hedge and ye may see something that will do thy eyes good!"

Sir Stilton looked.

An instant later there was a wild yell from ye middle of ye field.

"Yaroooooop! What ye merrie dickens— Whooooop!"

Then came a deep bellow and a thundering of bovine hoofs. Ye madde bull had spotted ye unfortunate tax-collector and was making for him with all speed!

The cheery spectators then saw something rather special in the way of quick motion. Ye tax-collector looked over

his shoulder and gave one brief glance at what was coming towards him.

That glance was evidently sufficient to satisfy him that the newcomer was not Sir Stilton Popper. With a howl ye unhappy tax-gatherer broke into a run.

"Go it, ye cripples!" yelled Maly-pense.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Whooooop! Keep!moff! Groooogh!" came a fiendish yell from ye perspiring tax-collector.

Sir Stilton Popper, watching from behind ye hedge, was fairly dancing with delight.

"He's making for ye stream, lads! Even if he escapes ye bull he'll get a bath!"

"But he won't escape that bull this afternoon, methinks!" chuckled Fatty Bacon.

And Fatty was right. About five ells from ye stream, ye madde beast caught up ye wretched fugitive. With a fearsome roar he lowered his head and charged.

"Yow-ooooop!" shrieked ye tax-collector, as he felt something pointed and forceful penetrate his pants. At ye same instant he left Mother Earth and went on a long and graceful tour through ye air.

"Hurrah! Ye scurvy knave will have his bath, after all!" roared Sir Stilton. "Told ye so!"

Splash!

With a terrific concussion ye aerial explorer smote ye water of ye stream, then disappeared from sight beneath a glittering shower of spray.

Ye madde bull, still bellowing, started wading into ye water after his victim. But ye tax-collector had had quite enough for one day, thank thes! Before ye bull could get anywhere near him he was scrambling towards ye other side, on which he emerged streaming with water and covered with mud. Meanwhile, ye far-off spectators behind ye hedge were laughing till their sides almost split.

"Ods bodikins! This is verily the cheeriest sight I have seen for many a long day!" roared Sir Stilton as he turned away once more. "Boys! I owe ye a rare lot for what ye've done for me to-day!"

"Art still thinking of putting us in thy dungeon?" asked Launcelot de Broke.

"Not as long as ye live!" chuckled the baronet. "Henceforth ye shall be my friends, boys. And, just to prove it, I insist on ye coming up to my castle and watching the jousting for the rest of the afternoon."

"But our picnic—" began Maly-pense.

"A plague on your picnic! Bother it! Blow it, in fact!" said the lord of the manor recklessly. "I'll give ye a feast up at the castle that will last ye for the rest of the month!"

"That settles it, then!" said Fatty Bacon. "Come on, you wights!"

The three palles linked arms and followed their host. And as they watched the jousting in ye courtyard and feasted on roast ox and venison and dough-cakes they had to confess they felt rather glad that they had taken a hand in saving Sir Stilton.

THE END.

(Look out for another "Magnet Talkie" in next week's bumper issue, entitled: "THE MAYOR OF EL TEXO!" It's a real thriller in five reels!)

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(Continued from page 13.)

"Hear, hear!" said Nugent.

"The hear-hearfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"We'll begin with Bunter—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Now, stand steady!" said Bob, drawing back his right foot. "Steady, and I'll see if I can lift you right out of the doorway with one kick."

"Yarooogh!"

Bunter rolled hurriedly out of the doorway, without waiting for the kick.

"Come back!" roared Bob. "I haven't kicked you yet, fathead!"

"Beast!"

Bunter's voice floated back, but not Bunter. Even his affection and admiration for Fishy could not draw him back into the tuckshop just then. He preferred to wait till the coast was clear.

"Now, Skinner—"

"Look here, I don't want a row with you, Cherry—" began Skinner uneasily. There were certain difficulties in Skinner's role of champion of the persecuted. He was no fighting-man.

"That's all right; you're going to get it without wanting it," said Bob cheerily. "Here goes!"

"Hands off, you rotter!" yelled Skinner.

He struggled frantically as he was whirled round in Bob's powerful grasp. But his struggles did not avail. A heavy foot landed behind him, and Skinner flew.

Meanwhile, Nugent was dealing with Stott in a similar manner. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh designed to pay the same attentions to Snoop; but Sidney James Snoop dodged hurriedly out of the tuckshop and vanished.

"Ow!" roared Skinner, as he sprawled.

"Ow!"

"Wow!" howled Stott. "Oh! Ow!"

"If you want any more, say the word, old beans!" said Bob Cherry cheerily.

"Come on, you men. Time we got back to the cricket."

Bob and his comrades walked back to the cricket field. Skinner and Stott picked themselves up, rather painfully. Stott scowled at Fisher T. Fish.

"Why the thump didn't you lend us a hand, you funk?" he snapped.

"Shut up, Stott!" said Skinner.

"Well, look here—"

"Oh, cheese it! Where's Snoop?"

Sidney James Snoop came back into the tuckshop. Fisher T. Fish finished his ginger-beer.

"Wal, I guess I'm off!" he remarked.

"You fellows coming?"

"Yes, rather, old chap!"

"It's a pleasure!"

"It is—it are!"

Skinner & Co. were in full agreement that they were pleased to go with Fishy. There were two hundred good reasons why they should be!

Fisher T. Fish walked down to Court-field, and his three new friends walked with him. They were too fond of Fishy now to part with him. Even kickings had no effect on the loyal friendship they felt for Fisher T. Fish. Fishy, once the despised outcast, was now the man they delighted to honour.

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THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Tea in Study No. 1!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Scat!"
"Old chaps—"
"Hook it!"

Cricket was over, and the Famous Five had gathered to a rather late tea in Study No. 1, in the Remove. The fat face of William George Bunter looked in at the doorway.

Bunter had a morose expression on his podgy features. He was feeling injured.

Bunter, alone in the school, had stood by Fishy! Bunter alone had been a loyal pal! Bunter, therefore, had the first claim on Fisher T. Fish! Yet three beasts had butted in and walked off Fishy. And Fishy, forgetful of his loyal and devoted Bunter, had let them walk him off.

Bunter was annoyed; and he was puzzled. He was not yet aware that Fishy's tremendous remittance had arrived; and he had been very careful to tell no one of the great news contained in the letter that was still in his pocket. So why Skinner & Co. were acting in this way was a mystery to him. True, Fishy had told everybody about his great expectations, but Fishy was always bragging about something or other, and Skinner & Co. were not likely to take his word for it. Yet they had walked off Fishy, and Bunter had looked for him in vain! It was very annoying!

"I say, you fellows, Toddy's gone out, and there isn't any tea in No. 7!" said Bunter, blinking into Study No. 1. "And I've been disappointed about a postal-order—"

"Which one?" asked Bob.

"Eh?"

"The one you were expecting last term, or the one you were expecting the term before?"

"Oh, really, Cherry! Look here, I expect to be in funds shortly," said the Owl of the Remove. "I haven't had my tea—"

"Tea in Hall!" suggested Harry Wharton.

"I've had tea in Hall, old chap!" Bunter rolled into the study. "Look here, don't be beasts! That looks a decent cake."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Oh, sit down, old fat man, and tuck in!"

"Right-ho, old chap!" said Bunter promptly, and he dragged a chair to the table. "I didn't really come here to tea, you know, but as you're so pressing—" He paused to fill his capacious mouth with cake. "I say, you fellows, do you know where Fishy's gone?"

"Blow Fishy!"

"Those rotters have got hold of him!" said Bunter, shaking his head. "That beast Skinner is jolly keen. I suppose he's scented it out somehow."

"Eh? What has Skinner scented out?" asked Bob.

"Oh, nothing!" said Bunter. "But it's queer that the three of them should be sucking up to Fishy, ain't it? Looks as if Skinner knows something."

The Famous Five regarded Bunter attentively. His remarkable friendship for the ostracised junior was puzzling. It was still more puzzling if Skinner & Co. were taking the same line.

"Look here, what's this game, Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton. "What are you greasing up to Fishy for?"

"Oh, really, Wharton! I hope I'm not the fellow to grease up to anybody!" said Bunter, with dignity. "I

suppose a fellow can stand by a friend when he's down!"

"Gammon, you fat ass!"

"Fishy must have come into a fortune," said Bob. "Skinner was fairly buttering him."

"The rotter!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "How the thump does he know anything about it?"

"About what?" asked Nugent.

"Oh, nothing!"

"There's some giddy mystery here!" said Bob. "Fishy was standing them ginger-pop this afternoon. Fishy never stands anybody anything. It's weird!"

"Well, he can afford to now," said Bunter. "That is, he will be able to afford it when his remittance comes."

"What remittance, ass?"

"Oh! I—I mean—"

"Well, what do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing!" said Bunter hurriedly. "Don't you fellows get the idea into your heads that I'm sticking to Fishy because his pater is sending him a thousand dollars. Nothing of the sort! I know nothing about it."

"A thousand dollars!" yelled Bob Cherry.

"Off your rocker?" asked Wharton in amazement. "A thousand dollars is two hundred pounds!"

"Well, what's that to old Fish?" said Bunter. "They make millions and millions by cornering things. Old Fish is rolling in dollars now he's cornered pork."

"Cornered pork?" repeated Wharton.

"Not that I know anything about it," said Bunter hastily. "Of course, I shouldn't make up to a fellow because his pater was sending him a tip—even a whacking tip, like a thousand dollars. I hope I'm incapable of it. You see, I like old Fishy! He's a—a—a good sort!"

"If Fishy's told you he's getting a tip of a thousand dollars from his pater, fathead, he beats George Washington at his own game," said Johnny Bull.

Bunter chuckled.

"He hasn't told me. He doesn't know yet himself."

"Eh? Then how do you know?"

"Oh, I—I don't!" said Bunter. "The fact is, I know nothing about it, of course! I hope you don't think I'm capable of reading a fellow's letter? I'd scorn such an action. I'm rather more honourable in such things than some fellows I could name."

"You've read a letter of Fishy's?" said Harry, staring at him.

"Certainly not! I've just said I haven't," said Bunter. "Besides, it came open by accident. Accidents will happen, you know!"

"You fat villain—"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"So that's the history of the giddy mystery!" said Bob Cherry, with a chuckle. "Bunter's got hold of a letter of Fishy's, and found out that his pater is sending him a tip! Hence this touching friendship!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But his father can't be sending him one thousand dollars!" said Nugent.

"It's impossible!"

"That's all you know!" sneered Bunter. "I can tell you, my pal Fishy will be rolling in dollars soon. Soaking in 'em! His pater's cornered pork, and he's raking it in. I—I mean—"

"Looks as if there's something in it!" said Bob. "Old Fish may have made a pile. They swindle one another on an enormous scale in the United States, I believe. Looks to me as if the jolly old remittance has arrived, from the way Skinner was carrying on—"

Billy Bunter jumped.

"Oh crikey! Suppose it came this

afternoon—oh dear! That's why those rotters have got hold of Fish! It's come!"

"You've got rivals, old fat bean!" chuckled Bob. "Skinner will love Fishy as much as you do—now!"

"The beast! Fancy a fellow being mean enough to make up to a chap for his money!" gasped Bunter. "That's Skinner all over!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Famous Five.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I call it rotten!" said Bunter hotly. "Fishy's my pal, you know—haven't I stuck to him through thick and thin—since—since—"

"Since you bagged his letter and read it!" chortled Bob. "Since you found out that he was going to roll in dollars and dimes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"It won't be easy to keep Fishy in Coventry if his pater's really sent him a thousand dollars!" said Bob. "Fishy will find a lot of friends—devoted pals like Bunter—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast! It must have come!" said Bunter. "I can jolly well see it all now! And those rotters have got hold of him—"

Billy Bunter rose from the study table. For the first time on record, Bunter was leaving a meal unfinished. However, he took a large chunk of cake in his hand.

"Not going, old bean?" asked Bob.

Bunter did not answer. He rolled out of the study hurriedly. Bunter saw it all now! The whacking remittance had come! He was anxious to find Fisher T. Fish. He had not time to waste on such small fry as the Famous Five. His voice floated back from the Remove passage.

"I say, Hazel! Seen Fishy?"

"Blow Fishy!"

"I say, Smithy! Seen Fishy?"

"Bless Fishy!"

"Yah!"

Bunter rolled away in search of his pal. Hazeldene looked in at the doorway of Study No. 1.

"What's up?" he asked. "What's that fat idiot so excited about? What does he want Fishy for?"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Fishy's a very attractive chap!" he explained. "Haven't you ever noticed what a splendid chap Fishy is?"

"Eh? Can't say I have!" answered Hazel. "What do you mean?"

"According to Bunter, his pater's sending him a thousand dollars," chortled Bob. "He's cornered pork, and rolling in loot, and he's sending some of the plunder to Fishy!"

"A thousand dollars?" gasped Hazel.

"So Bunter says, and he seems to have got hold of a letter from the Old Obadiah to the Young Obadiah!" said Bob. "Fishy will be up to his neck in filthy lucre—if it's true."

"It can't be true!" said Hazel, staring.

"Well, it looks as if it is!"

"A thousand dollars—why, that's two hundred pounds!" exclaimed Hazel breathlessly.

"Just that! Doesn't Fishy seem a rather attractive chap now?" asked Bob. "Don't you seem to see in him a lot of good qualities that you never noticed before?"

"Well, as a matter of fact, I never thought he was such a rotter as you fellows made out—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, rats!" said Hazel, and walked away.

"Another pal for Fishy!" said Bob.

"I can see that Fishy is going to be popular!"

"The popularity will be terrific!"

Really, it looked as if Fisher T. Fish would not linger much longer in the cold shades of Coventry.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Mysterious Message!

DR. LOCKE gazed at a slip of paper on his writing-table, passed his hand over his brow, and gazed again.

There was an expression of the deepest perplexity on the scholastic features of the Head of Greyfriars.

It was a cablegram that lay before him, and its arrival had considerably startled the Head. The Head disliked even the common or garden telegram, and a cable from foreign parts was altogether too much of a good thing. There was no hurry or hustle about the Head of Greyfriars, and he shrank from hurry and hustle in others. A visit to the school from Hiram K. Fish, some time ago, had left the Head in quite a breathless state, and he felt a little breathless whenever he thought of that hurrying, bustling, hustling, energetic gentleman.

It was just like the hustling Mr. Fish to send him a cable from New York. And it was just like him to word it in language that was totally incomprehensible to Dr. Locke. The learned headmaster knew many languages; Latin and Greek were merely pie to him. It was said that he could read the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam in the original. Had that cable been couched in French or German, Spanish or Italian or Portuguese, Latin or Greek, or even Persian, Dr. Locke could have dealt with it easily. But as it stood, it beat him to a frazzle, as Mr. Fish himself might have expressed it.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, gazing at the message from Hiram K. Fish. "Really—really—"

He read it again. Fisher T. Fish, had he been present, could have translated it easily enough. But it beat the Head hollow. It ran:

"Dr. Locke, Greyfriars School, England.

"Keep tabs on Fisher. Tough bunch aiming to cinch him.—FISH."

"Fisher," of course, was Fisher Tarleton Fish, of the Remove. The Head understood that. But why was he to keep "tabs" on Fisher, and what sort of tabs Mr. Fish desired him to keep on his son, and what purpose these tabs were to serve; all these things were mysteries to the headmaster. The rest

of the message was equally perplexing, the word "bunch" was associated in the Head's mind with such things as grapes or asparagus, but Mr. Fish could hardly be alluding to fruits or vegetables. And the verb to "cinch" was unknown to the Head. From the context, he could guess that it was a verb, but it was absurd to try to conjugate such a verb. "I cinch, thou cinchest, he

cinches"—it sounded absurd. And how could a bunch, whether of grapes or anything else "aim"? Aiming was associated with bows and arrows and firearms and things of the kind, not with bunches. The bare idea of a bunch of anything taking aim made the Head feel quite dizzy.

But according to that cable, a bunch of something—it could not possibly be grapes, the Head realised that—was taking aim, and the object was to "cinch"—whatever cinch might mean—and for that reason Dr. Locke was to "keep tabs" on Fisher T. Fish, the nature of the tabs not being specified. Books had tabs on them sometimes, and staff officers had red tabs, but the Head had never heard of a schoolboy with tabs on him.

His knowledge of many tongues was quite useless to him now. He was quite at a loss.

"Bless my soul!" said the Head, again.

He touched the bell, and when Trotter appeared, directed that youth to request Mr. Quelch to step to the study. The Remove master was Dr. Locke's right-hand man in many cases of difficulty, and this undoubtedly was a very difficult case.

For the matter was important. It must be important, or Hiram K. Fish would never have spent money on a cable.

Mr. Quelch entered the study in a few minutes. He came in with a pleasant smile on his face. Often, on half-holidays, the Head and the Form master spent a happy hour or two digging deep into the mysteries of Sophocles and Euripides, elucidating what those ancient gentlemen might possibly have meant in certain obscure passages which had baffled generations of commentators.

Mr. Quelch supposed that the Head had come on some specially knotty knot in the classics, and desired to compare notes with him. So the Remove master came promptly and willingly and cheerily. He was ready for the fray.

"Pray be seated, Mr. Quelch," said the Head. "I hope I have not interrupted you—"

"Not at all, sir."

"I am somewhat puzzled to understand some very curious, indeed, mysterious expressions, which are quite new to me," said Dr. Locke. "It is possible that you may be able to assist me, my dear Quelch."

"I am entirely at your service, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "And if you are referring to the 'Epta epi Thebas—'?"

"No, no! I am not speaking of Aeschylus," said the Head hastily. "It

(Continued on next page.)

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COZY-A-SKO-ES-QUA-RE-D-AN-CH

is not a point in the classics, Quelch—but—please look at this cablegram."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch.

He looked at the message from Mr. Fish.

Mr. Quelch was not so interested in modern languages as in ancient ones. And the language he had now to deal with was the most modern of all languages.

"Dear me!" said Mr. Quelch.

"The message is from Fish's father," said the Head. "It must be a matter of some importance, to cause him to cable from New York. The message must have a meaning. That is certain. But I fail to discern the meaning. I am completely puzzled."

Mr. Quelch looked rather puzzled, too.

"Probably some of these expressions are a kind of slang," he remarked. "Such colloquialisms are, I think, in common use on the other side of the Atlantic."

"There is a reference to keeping tabs on the boy," said the Head. "I cannot understand why Mr. Fish should desire tabs to be kept on his son, and he leaves me quite in the dark as to the nature, or colour, of the tabs in question, and what purpose they are to serve."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"I think I can elucidate that expression, sir! I have heard many strange and very odd expressions used by Fish, and this is one of them. Keeping tabs on a person is an Americanism, implying watch."

"Ah! Mr. Fish means that his son is to be kept under observation!" exclaimed the Head.

"I think so, sir."

"But for what reason? What has the boy been doing?" said the Head. "There is also a reference to a bunch. The word bunch—"

"That, I think, is an Americanism also, and implies a number of persons in association, such as a gang."

"Is it possible?" said the Head, with interest. "Bless my soul! What a very extraordinary expression! But a 'tough' bunch, Mr. Quelch—how could a number of persons in association be described as 'tough'? A bunch of asparagus might be tough—"

"Tough is an American expression, sir. It is to a certain extent equivalent to the English word 'rough.' A 'tough bunch' would be a rough, or lawless gang."

"Why, you are making the message quite comprehensible, my dear Quelch," said the Head gratefully. "Possibly you can let in some light on the word 'cinch,' which appears to be used as a verb. Is not a cinch some sort of a buckle, or fastener used on a strap, or something of the kind, in connection with the harness of horses—"

"I believe so, sir, and that probably indicates the derivation of the word as used by Mr. Fish. I imagine that to 'cinch' a person is to seize upon him, to get hold of him, perhaps to kidnap him."

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed the Head, startled.

"The word 'aim' is evidently used in the sense of to 'intend,' or to plan or scheme or design," said Mr. Quelch, just as if he were doing crosswords. "I have no doubt of that, sir."

Dr. Locke looked at the table again.

His face was very serious now.

Now that Mr. Quelch had succeeded in translating it, the meaning was clear, and it was rather alarming.

Rendered into English, the message implied: "Keep watch on Fisher, lawless gang intending to kidnap him!"

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"Upon my word!" said the Head.

Mr. Quelch pursed his lips.

"This cable, sir, is intended as a warning that the boy Fish is in danger of being kidnapped," he said.

"Mr. Quelch, I cannot thank you sufficiently for elucidating its meaning," said the Head. "The matter is serious."

"Quite serious, sir, if Mr. Fish is well-informed. And from what I know of that gentleman, he would scarcely go to the expense of cabling, unless he was sure of the correctness of his information."

"But—but what—why—why should the boy be in danger—for what imaginable reason should anyone seek to kidnap him?" exclaimed the Head, in perplexity. "The danger cannot be local, or Mr. Fish could not have heard of it. The rough—I mean the tough—bunch to which he alludes, must be a bunch—what a very odd expression—of American persons, or Mr. Fish would know nothing of them."

"Quite so."

"Is it possible, Mr. Quelch that an association of lawless American individuals design to cross the Atlantic to—to cinch—what a strange expression—a Greyfriars boy?"

"It would appear so, sir."

"Bless my soul!"

"I think I can let in a little light on this strange affair, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "I have recently heard from Mr. Fish; also, I have seen certain reports in the financial section of my newspaper. I gather that Mr. Fish has been engaged in certain financial operations, the exact nature of which I do not understand, but which have resulted in his making enormous profits—running, I believe, into millions of dollars."

"Dear me!" said the Head.

"Mr. Fish is now a millionaire—probably a millionaire several times over," said Mr. Quelch, "and in the United States, the kidnapping of the sons of millionaires, to be held to ransom, is something of an industry. Quite a large number of persons whom Mr. Fish would probably describe as tough bunches, are engaged in this industry."

"Is it possible?"

"I conclude, sir, that Mr. Fish has been warned that some lawless gang, or tough bunch, design to kidnap his son here, with the object of holding him to ransom. That is certainly the only meaning that I can deduce from the message."

"This is—is very disturbing," said the Head. "Fortunately, the boy will be in no danger here; now that we are on our guard, at all events, he had better be kept within gates."

"Undoubtedly."

"Forewarned is forearmed," said Dr. Locke. "The boy must be kept out of danger, though, doubtless it will be some time before this—this tough bunch arrive on this side of the ocean—"

"We cannot be sure of that, sir, they may be on this side already," said Mr. Quelch. "It is possible that Mr. Fish has heard that certain persons have crossed the Atlantic, and suspects their design. At all events, proper precautions had better be taken at once."

"Bless my soul! Yes, yes! How very fortunate that you were able to elucidate the meaning of Mr. Fish's message! Please take the matter in hand immediately, my dear Quelch, and see that Fish remains safe within gates. The—the tough bunch will scarcely venture to make any attempt to enter the school. So long as the boy remains within gates—"

"Quite!" said Mr. Quelch.

And the Remove master left Dr. Locke's study rather hastily, to give immediate instructions for Fisher T. Fish to remain within gates.

And when he learned that Fisher T. Fish had already gone out for the afternoon, he could only hope that the tough bunch were not yet on the spot and ready for business.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Great Surprise for Bunter!

"BEASTS!" said Billy Bunter, for the fifteenth time.

Bunter was tired, and he was cross. The afternoon was warm, and so was Bunter. The road across Courtfield Common was hot and dusty.

Bunter plodded along that hot, dusty road, in the worst of tempers.

His indignation was as deep as his wrath.

For Bunter saw it all now!

That whacking remittance must have arrived. That was the only possible explanation of Skinner & Co.'s proceedings.

They had not seen Mr. Fish's letter, which was still safe in Bunter's pocket. They were not likely to believe a word of Fishy's "gas." But seeing was believing!

Even Skinner, who rather prided himself upon never believing anybody or anything, would believe that Fishy was rolling in dollars, if he actually saw the dollars. And in an underhand way that Bunter could not sufficiently scorn, he was making up to Fishy for his money!

And Bunter was left out.

Skinner & Co. had walked off the golden youth almost under his fat nose—after his loyal friendship to Fishy in the hour of adversity! That loyal friendship looked like being a sheer waste, at this rate.

They had gone off together to Courtfield. Bunter had learned where they were gone; several fellows had seen them on the way. Hence Bunter's weary plodding along a hot and dusty road.

He could guess why Fishy had headed for Courtfield. He was going to the bank to cash a draft.

No doubt he had got through at the bank before this. But had not come back to the school. Very likely he was standing a spread at the bunshop—and Bunter left out of it! After the way he had stood by Fishy, and endured innumerable kickings in his cause! The ingratitude of Fishy was as shocking as the treachery of Skinner.

"Beasts!" said Bunter, for the sixteenth time.

A fellow would be bound to spread himself a little, with two hundred pounds in his pocket. Even Fishy would spend money, when he was in command of such resources. Bunter knew what he would do, himself, if he had two hundred pounds! He pictured a joyous party at the bun-shop, scoffing the best of everything in unlimited quantities! And Bunter left out!

"Beasts!" said Bunter, for the seventeenth time.

He plodded on.

It was hot; it was dusty. Several cars passed Bunter, and each one distributed dust over him, and a smell of petrol. If one of these beastly motorists would have given a fellow a lift—

A saloon car came along at a crawling pace.

Bunter glanced at it.

Two men were in it; one, a thin man



Three boots landed out at the same moment, and crashed together on the spare form of Fisher T. Fish. There was a fearful howl from Fishy. "Yarrrrrrrrrrg!"

with a hawkish nose and very bright sharp eyes, driving; the other a rather fat fellow, with horn-rimmed spectacles.

Bunter looked at them; and they looked at Bunter. They exchanged a few words in a low tone.

They were proceeding in the direction of Courtfield, though evidently not in a hurry to get there.

The fat junior debated in his mind whether to ask them for a lift. On a long, country road, good-natured motorists would often give a fellow a lift.

Bunter was hot and tired and streaming with perspiration. He pushed back his cap, and jerked out his handkerchief to mop his streaming forehead.

A paper fluttered in the air, and sailed away across the road.

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

It was Mr. Fish's letter.

Bunter had crammed it in his pocket, underneath his handkerchief, for safety. Really, it was not a very safe place for it; as in jerking out his handkerchief, he had jerked out the letter.

It fluttered into the road, and dropped close beside the car.

Bunter plunged after it.

The hawk-nosed man jammed on his brakes. The letter lay in the dust, almost under the car.

"I—I say—" gasped Bunter.

"You trying to commit suicide, sonny?" asked the hawk-nosed man, speaking with a strong nasal accent.

"I—I've dropped a letter—"

The man in the horn-rimmed glasses gave a sudden, convulsive start. He was in the seat on the side where the letter had fallen. He had glanced

down at it casually. But as his eyes fell on it, he gave a jump.

"Oh, great gophers!" he ejaculated.

He stared blankly at the letter. It lay there, folded in half, and considerably crumpled and soiled; half the first page full in view. The words "Dear Fisher!" stared the horn-rimmed man in the face.

"Barney, it's the guy!" he ejaculated.

"What you giving me, Slick?" asked the hawk-nosed man.

"The goods!" answered his companion.

He stepped from the car.

Bunter stooped and picked up the letter. He jammed it back into his pocket.

The hawk-nosed man gave his companion a startled look.

"That's the guy?" he exclaimed.

"You've said it, Barney!"

"He don't tally to the description."

"That's no odds; he's the guy! I guess I know Old Man Fish's fist; and I guess there ain't a lot of guys with a front name like Fisher, either. I'll say he's the guy we want."

"Sho!" said Barney.

"This is luck, Barney!"

"You've said it, Slick."

Billy Bunter blinked at them in surprise. The extraordinary colloquy perplexed him considerably.

"Say, you belong to Greyfriars School, I guess?" said Slick, turning his horn-rimmed glasses on Bunter searchingly.

"Yes," answered Bunter.

"You was going our way," said the horn-rimmed gentleman. "Like a lift in the car?"

"Yes, rather!" said Bunter promptly.

The strange remarks exchanged between the two Americans puzzled Bunter. But a lift was what he wanted; and he jumped at the chance.

"Son, you're welcome!" said Slick.

"Hop in!"

"You're going on to Courtfield?" asked Bunter.

"Sure!"

"I'll be jolly glad of a lift! Thanks!" said Bunter.

"Aw, don't mench! Hop in!"

Bunter hopped in.

The horn-rimmed man hopped in after him.

"Hit it like you was sent for Barney!" he said.

"You can search me, Slick Flick!" answered the hawk-nosed man. And Mr. Slick Flick had barely closed the door, when the car leaped into motion.

Its pace was in striking contrast to its former crawl. It fairly raced.

Bunter almost rolled over on his seat.

"I—I—I say, we—we're going jolly fast!" he gasped.

"You've said it!" agreed Slick Flick.

To Bunter's surprise, he pulled the blinds over the windows. Then, to Bunter's further surprise and great alarm, he jerked an automatic pistol out of a hip-pocket. Bunter blinked at that terrifying weapon, his eyes almost starting through his big spectacles.

"See that?" asked Slick genially.

"Eh? Oh! Yes! What—" stammered Bunter.

"Make a note of it!" said Slick, and he restored the weapon to his pocket. "Only putting you wise, sonny! You give a single yaup—you try to look out

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of the car—you call out to any galoot—and you get yours, sudden! I guess you won't know what hit you!"

Bunter blinked at him in utter horror.

His fat brain was in a whirl.

"I—I—I say—what—" he gurgled.

"Give me that letter!" said Slick.

"The—the letter—"

"Yep!"

Bunter passed over Mr. Fish's letter, with a trembling fat hand. What the horn-rimmed man's interest in that letter could be, was a mystery to Bunter.

But Mr. Slick Flick evidently found it very interesting. He read it through carefully, and then put it into his own pocket.

"I—I say—" stammered Bunter.

"You ain't no call to chew the rag, sonny!" answered Slick. "You're in safe hands. You're all right, you are! Say, did you know you was being looked for?"

"Nunno!"

"Your popper ain't put you wise."

"Nunno!"

"I'm sure s'prised," said Slick. "I kinder reckoned that the Old Man was wise to the game. But I guess this has made the stunt easier. We sure have moseyed in on the ground floor."

"I—I say—"

"You needn't chew the rag, bo."

"But I—I say we—we're not going to Courtfield!" gasped Bunter. "We—we're going the wrong way—"

"You don't say," grinned Slick.

"Waal, if it's the wrong way for you, sonny, it's the right way for us. You ring off."

"But—but I say, look here—"

"You looking for trouble?" asked the horn-rimmed man, with a sudden, ferocious scowl that made Bunter start back with a terrified squeak.

"Oh dear!"

"You shut up, bo!"

And Bunter shut up, and sat palpitating with terror, while the car, at a terrific speed, tore away for parts unknown.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Brief Friendship!

"WHAT about tea?" asked Skinner.

Skinner was looking a little restive. So was Sidney James Snoop. Stott had a rather sullen expression on his face.

Fisher T. Fish had a slightly worried look.

The four of them had just come out of Courtfield Picture Palace. Fishy had been standing treat at the pictures.

They had visited the bank; the draft had been cashed. Two hundred pounds in a variety of banknotes had been handed over to Fisher T. Fish.

The mere sight of that dazzling sum made the mouths of Skinner & Co. water. Even Lord Mauleverer and Vernon-Smith, who were wealthy, never handled such sums as this.

Indeed, it was plain that sudden riches had rather got into the head of Hiram K. Fish, or he would never have dispatched such a sum to a schoolboy.

Probably to Mr. Fish, now rolling in millions, a thousand dollars seemed a mere mite. To a schoolboy it was uncounted wealth.

"Better keep that dark, Fishy," Skinner had sagely remarked, as they left the bank. "The Beak would be wild if he knew. Quelchy would never let you keep a sum of money like that."

"I guess I ain't getting up on my hind legs and squealing to Quelchy," grinned Fisher T. Fish. "Not this infant."

"Besides, you're going to spend it, old chap," said Snoop. "It's a lot, but it won't last for ever."

Fisher T. Fish did not look enthusiastic.

Spending money was not in his line. He liked rolling in dollars, but not for purposes of expenditure. He liked to keep them to roll in.

Indeed, left entirely to his own devices, Fishy would probably have walked straight back to Greyfriars, and locked the money up in his study. Then he would have sat on it, and considered

ways and means of increasing it at somebody else's expense.

But he was not left to his own devices. Skinner & Co. were not devoted pals for nothing. Fishy allowed himself to be led to the picture house. His companions took it for granted that he would pay for admission. He paid, with an inward pang. But he firmly paid only for shilling seats. There was no seven-and-six swank about Fishy—not with his own money. Three shillings cost him three pangs. Still, he was glad to get out of Coventry. He paid.

After the pictures Skinner suggested tea. Fisher T. Fish shook his head dubiously. He was worried. He wanted to keep out of Coventry. He wanted to talk. But he did not want to spend money. Already his two hundred pounds had diminished to £199 16s. And he could see that Skinner & Co. were envisaging reckless expenditure.

"Better get back, I guess," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Too late for tea," said Skinner. "Better drop in at the bunshop, old bean. After all, you can afford to do yourself well."

"Yep. But—"

"This way, old fellow," said Skinner.

He slipped his arm through Fishy's, and led him down the High Street to the bunshop. Snoop and Stott followed them in. Fishy's evident unwillingness to spend had rather a depressing effect on his friends. But they were not going to give up hope yet.

The four juniors sat down round one of the little tables in the bunshop. Fisher T. Fish was not looking like a fellow who had his pockets stuffed with unexpected wealth. He looked worried; almost miserable.

He realised that he had the choice between expenditure and Coventry. He was on the horns of a dilemma.

Every nerve in his transatlantic body shrank from spending money. To spend on others seemed, to Fishy, not only supremely silly, but almost a crime. He was haunted by the thought that only £199 16s. remained in his wallet. It would have been even less, had he yielded to Skinner & Co's plain hints to buy chocolates in the cinema. Fortunately, he hadn't. His wealth might have been reduced to £199 12s. had he done so.

But he realised that he was fairly landed for tea at the bunshop. They had, so to speak, cinched him.

"You give the orders, old fellow," said Skinner, with an affectionate tone in his voice, but a far from affectionate glint in his eye.

He was getting rather fed-up with Fishy's stinginess. Getting anything out of Fishy was rather like extracting blood from a stone. And the game seemed hardly worth the candle.

"Oh, all right!" said Fisher T. Fish dispiritedly.

He gave the orders. He ordered four buns and a stone ginger.

Skinner & Co. exchanged eloquent glances.

They had not calculated on this. Mean they, of course, knew Fishy to be; but even a mean man might be expected to squeeze out a little treat for his friends when he was rolling in dollars.

They munched the buns with depressed faces. They whacked out the ginger-beer dismally.

"And now—" said Skinner.

Fisher T. Fish looked at the clock.

"Time we got back, I guess," he said.

"What about some doughnuts?" asked Snoop.

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"I—I guess doughnuts are dear," said Fishy.

"They have ripping plum cakes at this show," remarked Stott.

"I reckon they're frightfully expensive," said Fishy, shaking his head.

"The tea's good here," said Skinner.

"You can't drink tea after ginger-pop," said Fishy. "Bad for the inside, taken together. Must think of your health."

Skinner breathed hard and deep.

He was loth to give in. He had overcome his natural repugnance to Fishy's company. He had listened to Fishy's unending chin-wag on the subject of himself, and the wonderful country he came from. He had flattered Fishy; he had handed out any amount of soft sawder. He had never dreamed that Fishy would consider him adequately rewarded with a bob seat at the pictures, a bun, and a quarter of a bottle of ginger-beer. Fisher T. Fish was trying the patience of his friends hard. Friendship was trembling in the balance.

"Look here, Fishy, old bean," said Skinner, coming a little more out into the open, as it were, "you're rolling in money. It's up to you to stand a spread—see?"

"Any other fellow——" began Snoop. And Stott grunted.

Fisher T. Fish looked quite miserable. He did not want to lose his new friends. He had enjoyed his afternoon. His tongue had been in continual action. He had been listened to with respect and admiration. But he could not perform impossibilities. And it was impossible for Fishy to part with money.

He made an effort—a visible effort. Summoning up all his fortitude, screwing his courage to the sticking-point, he ordered three doughnuts.

"Three!" said Skinner.

"I—I guess I don't care for doughnuts, personally," mumbled Fisher T. Fish. Self-denial cost Fishy less than expenditure.

"Oh, my hat!" said Stott, with open disgust.

The three doughnuts vanished very quickly. Fisher T. Fish cast longing glances at the clock.

"They're good!" said Skinner. "Play up, Fishy! You're the giddy founder of the feast, you know."

Fisher T. Fish drew a deep, deep breath. This put the lid on. If these fellows thought he was going to throw dollars right and left, the sooner they found out their mistake the better.

He rose to his feet.

"I guess I'm beating it," he said.

"But we haven't finished tea," said Skinner.

"We have," said Fisher T. Fish, in a tone of finality.

Once more Skinner & Co. exchanged eloquent glances. Frederick Stott gave a snort. Snoop sneered; and Skinner compressed his lips.

Heedless of these demonstrations, Fisher T. Fish took his bill, and paid it at the desk. His mind was made up! Better Coventry than parting with money right and left.

Skinner & Co. followed him from the shop.

"What about a taxi back?" asked Skinner.

This was sheer sarcasm; he had no expectation whatever now of Fishy standing a taxi.

Fisher T. Fish caught his breath.

"A taxi! Why, you gink, that'd be four shillings!" he gasped.

"Awful—for a fellow with two hundred pounds in his pockets!" said Skinner sarcastically. "Walking it?"

"You bet!"

"Well, get off!" said Skinner.

Fisher T. Fish started. He was only too glad to start. The bare suggestion of a taxi, involving the expenditure of four shillings, gave him quite an unpleasant flutter about his heart.

Skinner made a sign to his companions. They lined up behind Fisher T. Fish. Each of them was thinking the same as the others; it was a case of three souls with but a single thought, three hearts that beat as one.

Three boots landed out at the same moment, and crashed together on the spare form of Fisher T. Fish.

There was a fearful howl from Fishy.

"Yarrrrrrrrg!"

He pitched over on his hands and knees. Skinner & Co. chuckled. Skinner stopped only to ram Fishy's cap down the back of his neck. Then he walked away with Snoop and Stott, leaving Fisher T. Fish to his own devices.

Fisher T. Fish scrambled to his feet.

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!" he gasped. "Oh, great gophers! Wake snakes! You pesky boneheaded gecks——"

He glared round. Skinner & Co. were strolling down the High Street, evidently done with Fishy. It was the end of a friendship.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Wrong Bird!

CRASH!

Crash! Bang!

It happened very suddenly.

Billy Bunter was sitting crouched in a corner of the car, in a state of terror and trepidation that made his fat brain quite dizzy.

Owing to pressure of space our "SPECIAL RHYMESTER" feature has been unavoidably held over. It will appear next week as usual.

Mr. Slick Flick sat by his side. The hawk-nosed man drove at a great rate. Where they were going Bunter had no idea, till he caught sight, through a chink in the window-blind, of a Red-clyffe motor-bus passing. Apparently, they were on the Redclyffe road, and going away from Greyfriars.

What was the meaning of it all was a horrible mystery to Bunter. He wondered whether it was some kind of a hideous practical joke, or whether he had fallen into the hands of lunatics.

Bunter, of course, knew nothing of a "tough bunch" who were aiming to "cinch" the son of the New York millionaire. He was quite unaware of the fact that since Hiram K. Fish had cornered pork, and gathered in countless dollars, and thereby entered the ranks of the millionaires, he had become the object of the attentions of a "tough bunch."

So he did not dream for a moment that these two transatlantic gentlemen were trailing Fisher T. Fish, and that they had got hold of him by a natural mistake. He did not connect the matter with Fisher T. Fish at all; or with Mr. Fish's letter which he had dropped under the eyes of the horn-rimmed man.

He could only wonder blankly what it all meant. Apparently he was being kidnapped; why, he could not imagine. He had not the faintest idea why Slick Flick had taken Mr. Fish's letter from him; he could not imagine why that

letter interested Mr. Flick. His fat brain was in a whirl.

The way of the transgressor is hard! Bunter had often suffered for his sins in the way of inquisitiveness and unscrupulousness. Now he was suffering for them once more.

Fisher T. Fish was, naturally, unknown by sight to these two enterprising gentlemen from New York. They had been haunting the neighbourhood of the school, looking for a chance to get into touch with the millionaire's son. The sight of Mr. Fish's letter had done it! Naturally, they did not guess that this fat fellow had a letter in his pocket that did not belong to him. They calculated that they had got hold of Fisher T. Fish, and already they were calculating the sum for which they were going to "touch" Hiram K. in the way of ransom.

And then, all of a sudden, the crash came!

Barney McCamm, the chief of the tough bunch, was, naturally, eager to get as far away from Greyfriars as possible in the shortest space of time. He let the car out.

He let it out not wisely, but too well. It was a case of more haste and less speed.

A country cart backed out of a gate into the road ahead, blocking the way. For an instant sudden destruction loomed over the racing car and all its occupants. Barney jammed on his brakes frantically, and turned into the grassy bank beside the road.

The next instant the car seemed to be jazzing.

Billy Bunter gave a wild howl. What was happening he did not know, unless it was several earthquakes rolled into one.

Crash, crash! Bang, bang! Crash! It seemed like the end of all things to William George Bunter.

But it was not so bad as that!

Barney had succeeded in avoiding a collision at the cost of wrecking his car. Billy Bunter found himself at a standstill at last. He discovered that he was standing on his head in an overturned car.

He reversed.

Mr. Flick was already out. Bunter scrambled out after him. He blinked round him. He had a glimpse of Barney, lying in the grass beside the road, where, apparently, he had been tossed. Mr. Flick was bending over him. Several people were arriving on the scene.

Bunter did not wait.

William George Bunter's fat brain did not always work quickly. But it worked now with great rapidity. This was his chance, and he took it. After one scared blink round him Bunter vanished through a gap in the hedge. He found himself in a field, and he did that field in record time. He thought he heard a shout behind him; but that sound only spurred him on to fresh efforts. Bunter flew.

"Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh!" gasped Bunter, as he fled. He gurgled for breath, but he did not pause.

His fat little legs fairly twinkled.

Fortunately, he knew where he was. The ground was familiar to him. The car, swift as it was, had not covered a great distance when the accident came. Bunter turned into a lane that led him back to Courtfield Common; and he did that lane as if he were on the cinder-path.

Whether he was pursued or not Bunter never knew. Probably Barney and Slick Flick were too busy with their wrecked car and their wrecked selves to think of pursuit.

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But Bunter was not taking chances. He plunged on desperately, streaming with perspiration, gasping for breath.

He did not venture to stop till he was on the main road over the common, from Courtfield to Greyfriars School, at no great distance from the spot where he had first encountered the kidnappers.

There, at last, he ventured to stop, and sat down in the grass by the road to rest and recover his breath.

He mopped his streaming brow, and gasped and gasped and gasped. He was still gasping, when a bony figure came along from the direction of Courtfield. Billy Bunter blinked at Fisher T. Fish. Fishy was on his way back to the school, and he was alone; apparently he had lost his new friends somewhere.

"I say, Fishy!" gasped Bunter.

Fisher T. Fish stared at him. Bunter crawled out of the grass, and joined him.

"I—I say, I've had an awful time, old chap!" gasped Bunter. "I—I came out to look for you, you know; and some beasts offered me a lift in a car, and took me away—kidnapped me, you know—"

"Can it!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"They did, you know!" gasped Bunter. "They'd have got me now, only the car turned over, and I—I hooked it, you know. I say, old chap, where's Skinner?"

"Dog-gone Skinner!" answered Fisher T. Fish crossly.

Bunter grinned. Apparently the course of friendship had not run smooth. Fisher T. Fish walked on to Greyfriars, and Bunter rolled along with him. Once more he had his dear friend all to himself, and it was a consolation for his misfortunes of the afternoon.

Skinner & Co. were in the quad when they came in. They had arrived at the school before their late lost friend. They bestowed sour glances on Fisher T. Fish.

"I say, Fishy old chap—" Bunter was saying as he passed Skinner & Co. with his transatlantic friend.

Skinner exchanged a word with his comrades, and they bore down on the Owl of the Remove.

"You're talking to that worm who's in Coventry, Bunter!" said Skinner.

Bunter blinked at him. This, in the circumstances, was rather cool from Skinner. But Harold Skinner's attitude was a changed one now.

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Kick him!" said Snoot.

"I say, you fellows— Yaroooop!" roared Bunter, as Skinner & Co. kicked together. "Ow! Beasts! Wow!"

Billy Bunter fled from three lunging boots, and dodged into the House. Once more he was separated from his dear old pal.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Terrible Blow!

HARRY WHARTON chuckled. The Co. echoed his chuckle. It was nearly time for calling-over, and the Famous Five were coming along the Remove passage to the staircase, to go down.

On the Remove landing, Fisher T. Fish stood, his hands in his pockets, an expression of iron resolution on his bony face, shaking his head. Hazeldene of the Remove was speaking to him, regardless of the fact that the schoolboy Shylock was in Coventry.

"Nope!" Fishy was answering, while Hazel was speaking. "Can't be did!"

Nix! Cut it out! Forget it! Nope!"

"A fiver!" murmured Hazel.

"Nope!" repeated Fisher T. Fish, with still more emphasis.

"It's an absolute cert!" said Hazel. "Practically straight from the horse's mouth. I can get six to one!"

"Nope!"

"Well, of all the mean rotters!" said Hazel. "Rolling in dollars, too! You're too mean to live, Fishy!"

"I guess I shouldn't be rolling in dollars long if I handed them over to every hard-up hobo that wants to roll in them!" grinned Fisher T. Fish. "Forget it!"

And he went down the stairs, leaving Hazel staring after him sullenly. A moment later Hazel uttered a fearful yell, as a boot landed on him; and he spun round and glared at the Famous Five.

"What the thump, you silly idiots!" he roared.

"Mustn't talk to a man in Coventry!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "Not even when he's rolling in dollars."

Hazel scowled, and stamped sulkily away. He had, indeed, no further desire to talk to Fisher T. Fish. It was clear that, even if Fishy was rolling in dollars, he was going to roll alone. Certainly he wanted to get out of

WELL DONE, CANADA!

The following Greyfriars limerick, sent in by Joe London, of 4,808, Clarke Street, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, has earned for its author one of this week's useful pocket wallets:

There's an adipose duffer
named Bunter,
Who's adjudged Greyfriars best
hunter.
He's a desperate gent
When he's on the scent
Of big game—that is, a tuck
hamper!

There's a chance for all of you
to win these useful prizes. Get
busy RIGHT AWAY!

Coventry, but he was not prepared to buy himself out, as it were.

On the next landing a fat figure interposed as Fishy was going down, and Bunter claimed his dear old friend.

"Hold on a minute, Fishy!"

"Shoot!" said Fisher T. Fish restively.

"I say, old fellow, you remember I mentioned that I was expecting a postal-order—"

"Give it a miss!"

"I suppose you could cash it for me, Fishy, old chap?"

"Yep—when it comes!"

"Oh, don't be an ass!" said Bunter peevishly. "I could cash it at the post office when it comes. What I mean is, you cash it for me now, and I'll hand it over to you when it comes. It will come to the same thing, old fellow!"

"Forget it!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"It's only for a couple of pounds!" urged Bunter.

"Only!" gasped Fishy.

"I—I mean only a pound!" amended Bunter. "Dash it all, you're rolling in dollars now, Fishy! You're not going to be mean with an old pal."

"Aw, can it!" said Fisher T. Fish.

As he moved across the landing towards the lower staircase, Bunter caught his arm.

"Now, look here, Fishy, after all I've done for you—"

"Give us a rest!"

"Standing by you, when all the fellows were down on you!" said Bunter indignantly. "There's such a thing as gratitude, Fishy. Look how I've stuck to you all along! I've been the only man in the Remove who would touch you with a barge-pole! I've overlooked you being a beastly cad and a sneaking moneylending swindler, out of pure friendship."

"You fat clam!"

"Oh, really, Fishy! One good turn deserves another!" said Bunter warmly. "Make it a pound!"

"Go to sleep and dream again!" suggested Fisher T. Fish.

Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles, with a blink of gathering wrath. Bunter was accustomed to ingratitude, but really this seemed the limit.

"What about ten bob?" he asked.

"Nothing about ten bob!" said Fisher T. Fish. "Nix about ten bob!"

"And you've got two hundred pounds!" booted Bunter.

"I've been spending money," said Fisher T. Fish, "and I guess I've spent all I'm going to spend. Can it!"

"You mean beast!" booted Bunter.

"Well, I'm done with you, Fishy! You can go and eat coke! You're in Coventry, you rotter, and you can stay there. Yahi!" Bunter breathed wrath and scorn. "After I've stood by you like a pal! I've been kicked for speaking to you—"

"And you're going to be kicked again!" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Yoooooop!"

"And again!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yow-ow-ow-ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

When the Remove went into Hall for calling-over, Fisher T. Fish stood like a stranger in his own Form. Hazel gave him a scowl, Skinner & Co. a sneer, and Bunter a glare of wrath; but, apart from those attentions, Fishy's existence was unheeded. The sentence of Coventry was still going strong—in fact, stronger than ever, for even the devoted Bunter was lost now. Devoted friendship having brought in nothing in the way of loaves and fishes, Bunter was fed up with it. Keenest of all now on the barring of Fishy was William George Bunter.

But Fisher T. Fish hardly heeded. A fellow who was rolling in dollars could afford to disregard even Coventry. In fact, Fishy was disregarding everything now, except his dollars, and his grim determination to stick to them. His bony face was bright; happy satisfaction gleamed in his sharp eyes, and if anything was worrying him, it was only the bitter recollection of the expenditure at the bunshop, which had reduced his capital to £199 13s. 6d. That, at the present moment, was the only fly in the ointment.

After call-over Fisher T. Fish went to his study in the Remove. He seemed to be walking on air as he went.

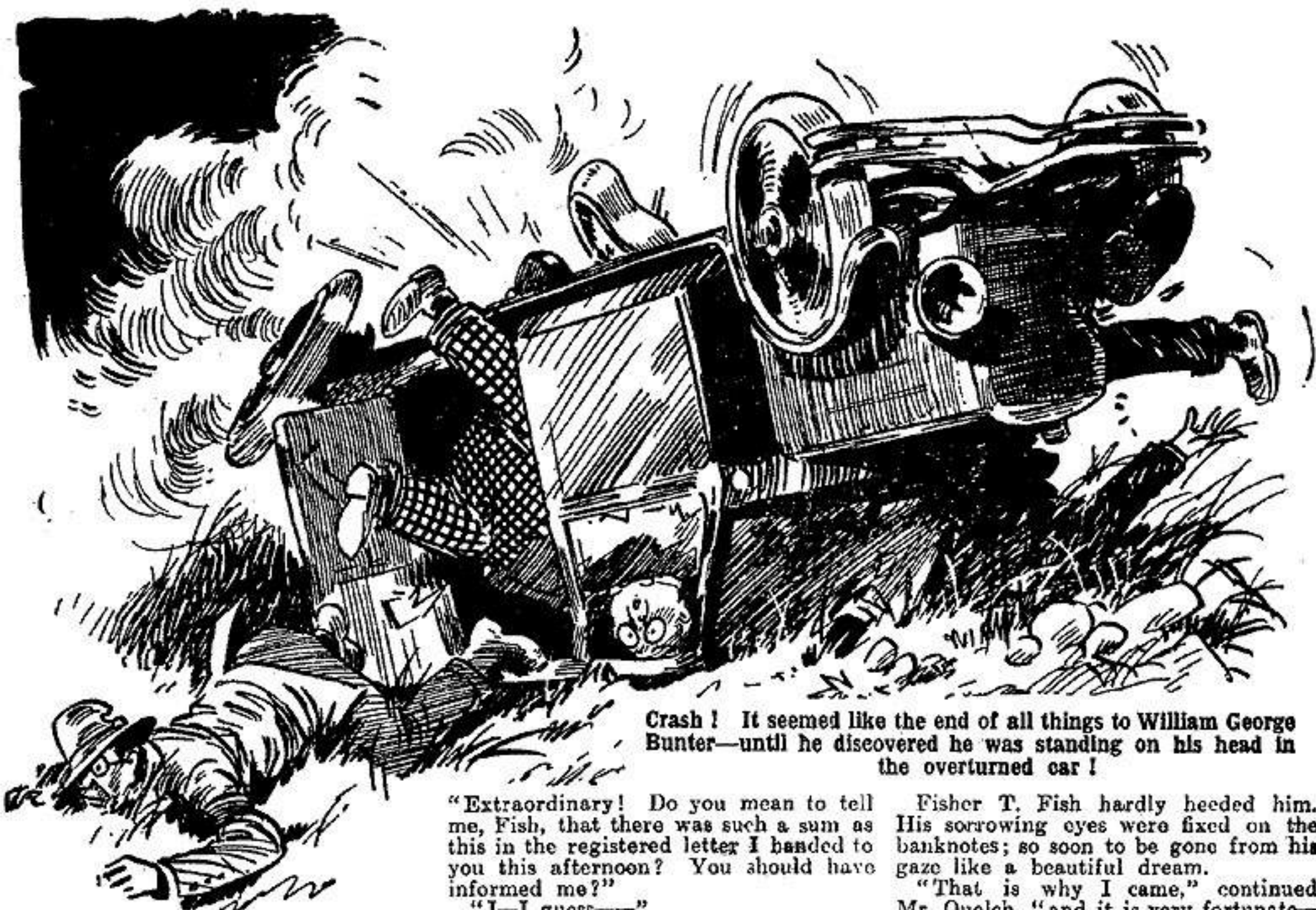
When Squiff and Johnny Bull came into No. 14 for prep, they found Fishy busy.

On the study table were spread a large number of banknotes.

There were little piles of fives, and a little pile of tens, and one fifty-pound note, and Fisher T. Fish was gloating over them.

It was a stupendous sum of money to be in the possession of a Remove fellow. Fisher T. Fish was counting it over and over again, and enjoyed the crisp rustle of the banknotes.

He grinned at his study-mates.



Crash! It seemed like the end of all things to William George Bunter—until he discovered he was standing on his head in the overturned car!

"Say, I guess you're ready to speak to a guy now, if he wants!" chuckled Fishy.

Apparently, however, his study-mates were not ready. They did not speak. "Keeping it up?" jeered Fishy. "Waal, keep it up as long as you like, you mugwumps!"

Squiff and Johnny Bull kept it up. They sat down to prep. But Fishy could not give his mind to prep. He sorted over his banknotes, and rustled them in his fingers, nothing doubting that the crisp rustle made his study-mates' mouths water.

Tap! The door opened.

Fisher T. Fish looked round with a grin. He had no doubt that the visitor to the study was some fellow who was interested in his thousand dollars.

He gave a jump as Mr. Quelch stepped into the study.

It was too late to conceal the banknotes! There they lay, full in view as the Form master entered.

Mr. Quelch started. He stared at the banknotes in amazement.

"What? What? What is all this money?" he exclaimed.

Johnny Bull and Squiff rose respectfully to their feet as the Form master came in. They exchanged a wink. The expression on Quelch's face, as he stared at Fishy's plunder, was worth a guinea a box.

"Bless my soul! What does this mean?" exclaimed the Remove master. "Whose is this money?"

"M—m—mine, sir!" stammered Fisher T. Fish.

"What does it mean? How could you have possibly have obtained such a sum of money, Fish?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I—I—I guess—I—I guess my—my popper sent it to me, sir!" mumbled Fisher T. Fish in dismay.

"Incredible!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch

"Extraordinary! Do you mean to tell me, Fish, that there was such a sum as this in the registered letter I handed to you this afternoon? You should have informed me?"

"I—I guess—"

"I cannot understand your father's action in sending you such a sum! It is amazing! He must know that it is a serious contravention of the rules of the school."

"You—you see, sir—"

"You cannot be allowed to retain this money, Fish! You cannot be allowed to retain a tithe of it!" said Mr. Quelch sternly. "You are aware of that, Fish, and I can only conclude that you intended to keep this matter secret from me."

"I—I—I guess—"

"What is the total?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"A—a—a thousand dollars, sir!" groaned Fishy.

"Absurb! Nonsensical! I cannot understand Mr. Fish's conduct. I shall write him a very pointed letter on the subject. At the same time I shall return this large sum of money to him."

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!"

"You may retain two pounds, Fish!"

"Ow!"

"The rest you will hand to me to return to your father."

"Wow!"

"And I shall make it very clear to Mr. Fish that such an action must not be repeated, unless he desires his son to be sent away from Greyfriars," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "It is amazing—shocking—in fact, scandalous! I have never heard of such a thing!"

Fisher T. Fish groaned.

"I came here," said Mr. Quelch "to speak to you, Fish, on the subject of a cable the Head has received from your father. Your father has reason to believe that certain bad characters design to kidnap you in order to extort money from him. For this reason, you will remain within gates until further notice. Not in any circumstances will you go outside the school precincts without special leave."

Fisher T. Fish hardly heeded him. His sorrowing eyes were fixed on the banknotes; so soon to be gone from his gaze like a beautiful dream.

"That is why I came," continued Mr. Quelch, "and it is very fortunate—very fortunate indeed—that I came at this moment, and made this discovery."

Fisher T. Fish groaned again. He could not see anything fortunate in it.

"You understand me, Fish—you are gated until further orders! Now make that money into a bundle and hand it to me."

"I—I—I guess—"

"Instantly!" rapped out Mr. Quelch.

The expression on Fisher T. Fish's face might have moved a heart of stone. There was no help for it. He almost wept as he handed over the bundle of banknotes to his Form master. Two pound notes remained to Fishy; the rest passed into possession of the Remove master, to be returned with a very sharp letter to Hiram K. Fish.

When Mr. Quelch quitted the study, Fishy's eyes followed him mournfully. He gave a deep groan. And Johnny Bull and Squiff, as they looked at him, ceased to grin. It was a moment of dire tragedy, and no time for grinning. For Fisher Tarleton Fish, life had lost its sweetness and light.

When Fisher T. Fish was seen in the Rag that evening, he looked the ghost of his former self.

Like Rachel of olden times, he mourned for that which was lost, and could not be comforted.

He hardly noticed whether he was still in Coventry; he cared not. Nothing mattered, now that he was no longer Rolling in Dollars.

The End.

(Next week's bumper issue of the MAGNET will contain another magnificent Greyfriars yarn, entitled: "GANOSTERS AT GREYFRIARS!" This is the kind of thriller you've all been waiting for, and it's the first of a series. See that you order your copy EARLY!)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,161.



THE TEST MATCH HOPE!

BY JOHN BREARLEY



THE FIRST CHAPTER

Lone John Murray!

AND now for action—at last!” John Murray leaned back in his chair and stared at the book before him with pensive eyes.

Outside in the cold darkness a mid-night gale was roaring over Severn City, and spatters of rain rattled like hail against the windows of his comfortable study. In a few minutes he would be battling his way through the storm on the most dangerous mission of his career; yet as he listened, his strong face was mask-like in its unconcern.

“Lone John Murray!” the police called him—John Murray, private detective. For many of his profession Scotland Yard has a very suspicious frown; him they trusted to the hilt, for, if his ways were secret, he gave no trouble and never interfered with official work in any way.

Nor did he appear to make a great income from his perilous calling. He played the game for its own sake, caring little for the size of the reward, or if he was rewarded at all. In their ceaseless war on crime the police knew they had a straightforward ally, who used his own methods, never asked for help—and always worked alone!

Quietly and patiently he would complete a case; and then, when every shred of evidence had been obtained, a long report would be sent in from the old house in Severn City where he lived with his two young sons when not “away on business.”

The police never argued or questioned. They knew the marvellous accuracy of Lone John’s reports, and without hesitation swooped and netted their birds—while John Murray, always in the background, went calmly away on some fresh trail, alone.

He stood up now, a tall man in the prime of life, and closed the book with a firm hand. It was his case-book, page upon page of thinnest paper covered with tiny writing.

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No one ever read it but himself, for he had never shown it to a soul. It was from this book that he made out his reports, posting his day’s adventures step by step in fullest detail long after Bill and Alec, his boys, had gone to bed and the house was quiet.

For the first time his grim mouth relaxed as his eyes fell on a desk photograph of the cheerful, boisterous lads; then, with a brisk movement, he thrust his hand beneath his ancient bureau.

Instantly a panel under the massive inkstand slid back. Two fat automatics lay in the shallow cavity below; and, taking one out, he laid the book in its place.

His record was written up to this very moment; but the last chapter in it was not yet complete. With luck he would finish it to-morrow—and the counterfeiters who had deluged Britain

The hope of England in the Tests! Get to know “Smiling” Bill Murray, of Severnshire County. His amazing bowling feat against the crack Australian Eleven sets all England a-talking!

and the Colonies with false notes for a year past would be swept away!

It was a queer trick of fate, he reflected, that had brought them almost to his own door. Yet it showed their cleverness, for staid old Severn City, sheltering beneath the great, wild Beacon Hills that sprawled across Severnshire, was scarcely the place in which to find international forgers.

However, Lone John Murray had found them.

A few minutes later, muffled to the chin, he strode into the night. The rain was driving down in solid sheets, and the wind plucked at his macintosh savagely.

But he was used to this work. Against his gloved right hand he could feel the comforting sleekness of his gun-butt; so, with a last look back towards his house, he hunched his shoulders and plunged sturdily forward.

And, as he did so, something crept out from the blackness of the wall and followed silently in his wake.

Severnshire’s New Stars!

MATCH cards! Close of innings—match cards!” On the pretty little Severnshire ground, by the bank of the broad river that flows through Severn City, only the shrill cries of the ground boys broke the tense silence as they moved about the thick crowd.

Not even the oldest member could recall when stands and banks had been so densely packed. Since lunch-time people had been flocking through the gates in droves, for it was the third afternoon of Severnshire’s match against the mighty Australians—Woodfull, “the Unbowlable”; Ponsford; Kippax—and Boy Bradman.

And Severnshire—“poor little Severnshire,” as the cricket world called them—had an even chance of winning!

It was always against Severnshire that the great touring teams opened their programme, whetting their teeth on the humble county after the long sea voyage, before tackling the stronger opponents. Usually the visitors annihilated them. Never before in the county history had there been the faintest hope of victory; yet this time, throughout the long three days, Severnshire had held their own; and now, on a crumbling wicket, Australia had to get 200 runs to win.

Two hundred runs—it seemed a ridiculous score to trouble such batsmen, bad wicket or not. Some of the pessimists on the ground fully expected the first three men to knock off the runs themselves, and they would have no chance of seeing perky Don Bradman or graceful Archie Jackson again.

But the optimists snorted and waved their match cards emphatically.

There it was in black and white—Severnshire, first innings, 198; second innings, 210. Australia, first innings, 209!

There you are; argue that away, they challenged! How it had been done, they did not know quite; but if young Bill Murray had taken seven wickets for 50 on a good wicket in the first innings, then he could do it again on a bad one in the second.

Came a rustle, an excited stir in the crowd, then the finest cheer Severnshire had received for many a long year. A line of men were filing slowly out of the pavilion—grim men, their brown faces set with determination.

All save one; and some of the crowd chuckled breathlessly, as they glued their eyes on the boy who came out last of all, a tall youngster, with shoulders on him like a young bull and the trim waist and clean legs of a runner. The broad smile on his pleasant, rugged face made a strong contrast to the sterner expressions of the older men. He was the only one, too, who did not wear the green Severnshire cap, for this was his first match for his county.

"He's the boy, young beggar!" chortled some of the crowd who knew him. "Never seen him without that grin!"

In one of the best pavilion seats an old man watched the players intently for a minute from beneath fierce white eyebrows, then turned vigorously to the man who sat beside him.

"And you had that lad kicking his heels on the ground staff all last year—and didn't play him!" he accused. "Your committee must be mad, sir!"

Ralph Jenkins, the Severnshire secretary, smiled politely. Mr. James Barr was an eccentric and irascible old chap. He was a South African millionaire who had recently bought a great estate and settled down in the county. He was a great sportsman, too, and keen as mustard on the county cricket club—the sort of patron in fact that poverty stricken little Severnshire needed and needed badly.

So the secretary's reply to the charge was the soft one that turneth away wrath.

"Quite true, Mr. Barr. But if he keeps this form up he's certain of a county cap this season!"

"County cap!" snorted the old man. "Son, I've watched cricket all my life, wherever it's been played, and if that kid doesn't get an England cap before the season's out, dash it, I—I'll go and watch croquet! That fifty he scored this morning was worth a pound a run!"

"Bit reckless, though!" murmured Jenkins.

"So was Jessop!" snapped the millionaire roughly.

The discussion was stopped next instant by a burst of clapping as two batsmen came out of the gate, Victor Richardson and the Cornstalk captain, W. M. Woodfull, each acknowledging the applause by a stolid jerk of his cap.

There was no nonsense about the Australian batsmen—there never is, even in the weakest matches. Severnshire's fine fight up till now had surprised them, and though they had no fear of losing the game, Woodfull, as he took guard, obviously meant business.

Gower, the Severnshire fast bowler, opened from the pavilion end. Like too many of the county side, he was something of a veteran now, but he could still put some power into it for a few overs, and his first few balls reared up awkwardly.

For all the imperturbable Australian cared, however, he might have been bowling with a soft bouncer. Woodfull has scarcely any back-lift, and very

little prettiness; yet he covers every inch of his wicket, and punches the ball sturdily with steel wrists and a straight bat.

Gower's first five were played back quietly. The last kicked sharply, and Woodfull stepped inside it and pushed it away past square leg. The batsmen ran a leisurely single, and Major Weaver, Severnshire's captain, tossed the ball to young Bill Murray.

Instantly the Severnshire cheers broke out all around the ground, and Woodfull looked thoughtfully at the well-worn wicket.

He had been run out in the first innings, but this hefty colt with the twinkling grey eyes and whip-like left arm had led him a pretty dance, and his wicket had had some narrow shaves. He guessed that if the lad kept his head and bowled to form, there would be trouble for the later batsmen, for the ball would "bite" now good and hard!

Quietly and promptly Bill set his field, three men close in on the left side for catches off his in-swing; three crouching in a crescent from point to slip for balls that broke away, and the rest in a wide deep ring round the boundaries.

He swung his arm round twice to loosen it. The long fine muscles were like elastic, and his fingers tingled to spin the ball.

For all his merry grin, there was iron purpose behind his bowling. Naturally, he took his profession seriously. Everything else was forgotten. There was the batsman who had to be beaten, and there were ten eager men to help him do it!

In dead silence he started his attack, just three dancing steps on tiptoe, and a quick, wristy flick of his left arm. The ball, singing with finger spin, curved slowly towards Woodfull's middle stump, then swerved wickedly out to leg in the last few yards of its flight. It was a nasty ball for a batsman to get at the start of an innings; but the finest defensive bat in the world spotted the danger and laid it dead on the pitch.

Bill picked up the ball and started again cheerfully. Having failed to surprise Woodfull with his first ball, he concentrated on getting his length and the "feel" of the wicket. A sharp burst of applause rewarded him at the end when he had bowled a maiden.

Gower's next over brought eight runs. Richardson, a much freer hitter than his captain, played carefully, but slashed the fourth and sixth past cover for boundaries. The field changed over quickly.

Bill began to open his box of tricks this time. He had all the natural bowler's perfect swing and high smooth action which made the ball nip off the turf furiously, and his long supple fingers made it break either way at lightning speed; yet each time Woodfull's dead straight bat met the leather squarely; but the fifth ball, slightly underpitched, was punched explosively past long-on for two.

The sixth. The young professional took a long deep breath—he had shortened that last ball on purpose, and as he danced up to the wicket again his heart was thumping heavily.

Without any change of action he sent down his last. It was exactly the same length and pace, and again it swerved out towards the three men lurking on the leg side.

Woodfull watched it, swung up his bat and whirled round to help it on its way past the wicket, and in doing

so realised, too late, that he was a beaten man!

The ball stopped swerving and pitched. Like a striking snake it flipped up from the turf, breaking back into the wicket. Woodfull's smashing bat missed it by a fraction of an inch. There was a slight click.

Victory!

FOR a long moment Severnshire did not realise what had happened.

Both bails were on the ground, and Wilson, the wicket-keeper stared at them with bulging eyes. After one brief glance behind, Woodfull, pulling off his gloves, began to walk away.

"A proper corkscrew!" he muttered. And then Severnshire's crowd went crazy. Woodfull—the Unbowlable—clean bowled by Murray for 3 runs. The bellows of applause still swelled and rolled when Billy Ponsford came slowly to the wicket.

"Well bowled, well bowled, Bill! Do it again, lad!"

Very steadily, Ponsford and Richardson set out to recover from the great disaster. Gower put all he knew into his bowling, but in a few overs he was tamed, and Nickalls, a medium-paced bowler with an off-break, went on. Runs came slowly, for both he and Bill kept a rigid length, and the crowd watched every ball with anxious eyes.

20 for 1—30 for 1. A slashing hook by Ponsford off Bill's short ball made it 34 for 1. Bill jerked his head quickly, and tried the same ball again. Ponsford made exactly the same shot—then out of the long field at top speed raced Newman, the county's opening batsman, got nicely under the dropping ball and held it with grateful hands.

34 for 2. In came young Jackson—not much older than Bill himself, and utterly strange to English turf.

He played the first two balls stylishly but gingerly, and scrambled the third. Summing him up quickly, Bill took a chance and slammed down an off-break nine inches outside the wicket. Such a ball would never have taken a wicket on Australian turf, but as young Jackson shaped to cut it hard he had the shock of his life when the ball broke back almost square and cracked in among his stumps.

Thirty-four for three—and the Severnshire ground sounded like Bedlam!

During the wait for the next man, old George Hammett, the senior professional, threw a great arm round Bill's neck and hugged the grinning youngster to him.

"Oh, lad, keep it up!" he cried. "Eighteen years I've played cricket, and if we beat the Aussies now I'll die happy!"

"Well bowled, laddie!" said a quiet voice behind them, and Victor Richardson smiled like the sportsman he was.

Now the cheers broke out afresh as the pavilion gate slammed and a sturdy, confident youth came striding in, twitching his bat briskly.

Bill studied him with glowing eyes—Don Bradman, holder of the world's record innings, and already one of Australia's greatest batsmen. As he passed, their glances met, and the two youngsters winked at each other like friendly swordsmen before a duel.

There was nothing slow or dogged about Bradman. Right from the start

he went after Bill, tossing his bat over his shoulder, and dancing on twinkling toes. Some of his shots streaked along the carpet like flashes of light—and yet always the tall lad with the cheery smile pegged away at him, while now and then some dangerous wobble in the ball made the batsman cover up hastily, amid a roar from the crowd.

There were times when Bill was hit sorely; but he had placed an air-tight field, and the experts noticed that, try how he liked, the "Boy" could only make orthodox shots off him, whereas against the others he seemed to place the ball just where he liked, no matter what they bowled.

However, in the next few overs, the young Australian showed what a genius he was. One by one, the Severnshire bowlers, except Bill, crumpled up before his flashing bat. Gower he hooked and cut, Nickall's off-break was patted past cover, and Alston, Roberts, and young Drummond, the Oxford Blue, could get nothing near him.

Gradually the afternoon wore on, and the score mounted. Richardson had gone, snapped behind the wicket off Gower, and Alec Kippax had fallen into Bill's leg-trap just as he looked dangerous.

But Bradman remained; and the other Australians defended grimly, letting him gather the runs. At 109 for five, Major Weaver took Bill off for a rest. A groan of disappointment came from the crowd, but the county skipper knew his job. If he tired his one dangerous bowler now, the Australians would romp home.

The major's genial face was radiant with delight, for he had fought the county committee tooth and nail to include young Bill in the side. They had objected that he was inexperienced—he had given them their answer now, and the skipper beamed as he patted the lad's broad back.

"Take it easy, young 'un—we'll get 'em yet!" he murmured; and Bill went off cheerily into the deep, where he fielded Bradman's crashing shots like a whirlwind and still kept up the battle between them.

Severnshire were on their toes with a vengeance. Poor little Severnshire, were they? With a match-winning bowler like young Bill among them at last, they'll give some of the other counties a run this year!

Their fielding was magnificent, and the cheering round the ground grew into a continuous roar as run after run was saved by blood-stirring sprints and desperate outflung arms.

Tea came at last, with the score at 137 for 6. The ground held a bigger crowd than ever when the teams came out again, and both sides were grim-eyed. At once, Major Weaver threw the ball to Bill, who spun it gaily.

There was no more attack for Australia after that—it became a question of weathering the nastiest bowling storm they had ever encountered!

Bill felt fit and ready to bowl for his life. His accuracy of pitch became uncanny, and on that worn wicket his spinners leapt and shot as though possessed of demons, coming off like bullets no matter how slowly they swung through the air.

Off break, leg-break, in-and-out swerver, and "floater"—he had practised all the wiles of his calling until he could do them automatically; and

now he shot them all at the remaining Australians in a desperate effort to smash his way past their bats.

It was a tight position for a colt in his first match, with the regular county bowling tamed and tired and only himself standing up to the fight; but he did it, and people never forgot Bill Murray's hefty figure that afternoon.

Not even Boy Bradman could take chances now. Twice in one over Bill beat him all the way, and Wilson snicked the bails off, only to have the umpire shake his head when he appealed.

Bradman smiled soberly when the field crossed over.

"Things are getting warm, old son!" he nodded.

Major Weaver came up and whispered to his new bowler.

"Try and get the other men, Bill—just keep Bradman quiet and we'll gather in the tail-enders!"

was a quiet-faced man who came in now—Bill Oldfield, prince of stumpers and tail-end batsmen.

Nothing could tempt him into a false move. Both to Gower's fast ones and Bill's spinners, he gave the dead bat. The game was like a breathless bout between tired but wary boxers. Every lead, every attacking move, on both sides was blocked. Bradman, restrained but still dangerous, Oldfield, watchful as a lynx, and Bill waiting his chance.

An unexpected off-break sang past Bradman's stumps by a hair's-breadth. He countered by clumping the next ball past cover-point for two. Then Oldfield played a tense maiden from Alston, and Bill faced his youthful foe again.



The ball curled round Bradman, skidded madly off the turf, and then chocked home into Wilson's gloves. The next moment the keeper had scattered the balls!

The strategy was passed round quickly, and Don Bradman found himself presented with easy singles to let Bill get at the weaker batsmen. The scheme paid well for a time. Fairfax gave no trouble, Wall was quickly stumped, and it was not until McCabe was neatly caught in the slips that the youthful star tumbled to the dodge. He winked wryly at Bill, and afterwards declined to take the singles—except at the end of an over!

Then little Clarence Grimmett played too soon at Bill's curly one, and short-leg jumped high and caught him with one hand.

One hundred and eighty for nine! It

There was not a sound on the ground. The click of the ball against the bat, the thud as it pitched on the wicket, even the whisper of Bill's strong fingers could be heard in the unnatural silence.

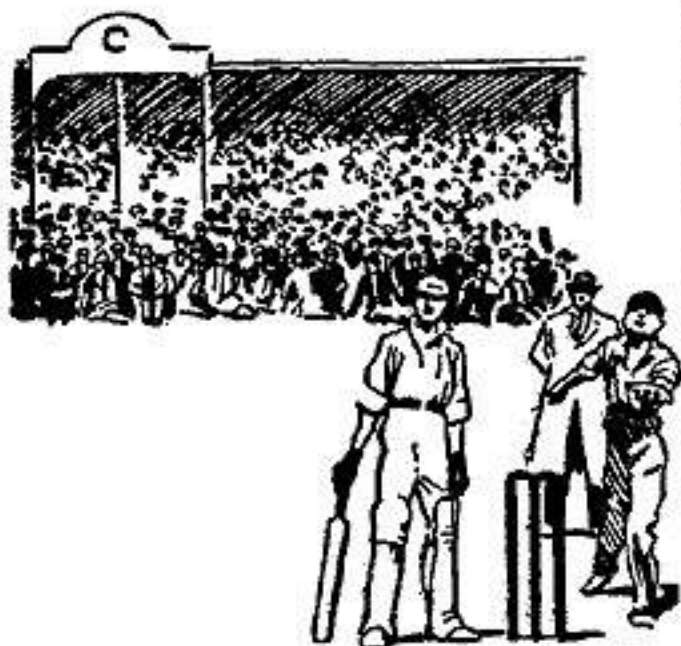
He was still swinging, although the shine had gone off the ball long ago. One, two, three, his bowling curled into the batsman's legs, rising sharply, so that he was forced to play it down carefully; and every time he did so, the three men on the leg side swayed forward like hounds on the leash.

Four! A half volley! Bradman had stepped in, swung his bat, and cover-point stretched himself on the grass, but was too late. A long sigh arose

as the umpire signalled the boundary. 186!

The tension was nerve-racking. Major Weaver could feel the sweat trickling down his temples, Hammett's florid face was stern, and in the pavilion Mr. James Barr, the millionaire, slowly twisted his match card into pulp. Of all the great crowd, only Bill and Don Bradman remained cool; but the Australian's eyes had narrowed to mere slits, and Bill had lost his smile at last.

He had one card left and played it. Wrapping his long fingers round the ball, he put every ounce of spin he



could get into it, and bowled a foot behind the bowling crease.

Don Bradman came down the pitch like a thunderbolt. He was on top at last; two half-volleys and the tall kid had blown up at the pinch. Steadying himself, he shaped to hoist the slow, high ball clean into the pavilion—

"Howzzat?"

It was not an appeal; it was a frantic, delirious yell. At the top of its flight the ball, laden with top spin, hung in the air for a second, then dipped steeply. Drawn right out of his ground, Bradman changed his stroke and tried to block it. Too late. The ball curled round him, skidded madly off the turf, and chocked home into Wilson's gloves. In one full sweep the stumper threw up his hands and scattered the bails high into the air.

Bradman was out. And Severnshire—poor little Severnshire—had beaten the Australians for the first time!

None of the tired men could speak again. A noise like the bursting of a great dam dinned in their ears. Some turned and began to stumble towards the pavilion; but from all points of the compass the Severnshire crowd bore down on them, and, one by one, Bill, Bradman, Oldfield—everybody, including the umpires—were borne into the stand on swaying shoulders.

Only one of the crowd stayed in his place—a little, dried-up man, who watched the scene, with a reflective glitter in his small, close-set eyes that turned presently to a sneering glare as he nodded to himself and turned away.

But the rest stayed and cheered themselves wild; and not until Bradman hauled Bill out on to the balcony for a speech was the ground cleared at last.

It was Severnshire's greatest day!

The Mystery of John Murray!

A LONG the winding road that leads from the Severnshire county ground out to the little village of Desford, Bill Murray, head down on the handlebars of a creaky old bike, scorched as hard as his muscular legs could drive the pedals.

There was no real need for him to hurry; but Bill always did things at top pace—except bowl—especially when he was bursting with excitement and aching to get home. Afternoon net practice on the ground had finished, and already the spring evening was drawing in.

It was the day after the great Australian match, and Severnshire was the most discussed cricket team in the world—and the most elated.

Every paper was full of their splendid victory over such mighty opponents, of their chances in the County Championship, and of Smiling Bill Murray—as they had christened him, much to Bill's loud disgust and the delight of the other players.

He grinned cheerily as he rode along. They were a happy crowd, Severnshire, despite season after season of defeat; and he patted the pocket of his shabby tweed coat tenderly.

The events of the past few days still seemed like a dream. In a single bound he had jumped from a county colt—a last-minute selection—into a strong Test match candidate.

A flaming poster stuck on a tree-trunk caught his eye as he raced along:

"SEVERNSHIRE'S NEW STAR!

'SMILING' BILL MURRAY A
TEST MATCH HOPE!"

Even though he was alone on a country road, Bill felt his face go scarlet.

"Asses!" he grunted. "Smiling Bill Murray—the chumps!"

He smiled the next moment as he realised the wonderful chance before him if he kept up his form. After all, the Australians had been beaten, and it was his howling and coolness chiefly that had turned the trick; lots of people already were sure he could do it again in the Test matches.

To-day Major Weaver had told him quietly that the English selectors, who had come down to watch Woodfull's team in their first match, had gone away delighted.

Gosh! Bill laughed outright and bent harder to his pedals.

The little cobbled street of Desford was full of children, who cheered him shrilly as he coasted through on the way to his little cottage, tucked away on the edge of a wood half a mile beyond.

Arrived there, he put up his bike and hurried into the tiny living-room.

"Hallo, Alec!"

A younger boy, busy laying the cloth for a meal, looked up eagerly.

"Hallo, old son! Had a good day?"

"Rather! How's dad?"

Alec Murray shrugged.

"Same as usual, Bill," he said softly.

Their eyes met, then turned to where a man sat before an old-fashioned bureau in the corner. The last rays of the sun flooding the room lit up his grey, weary face and the terrible scar that ran across his left temple, deeply-scored and livid.

Since the stormy night over three years ago when he had set out on his last case John Murray had not moved a muscle or spoken a word. All day he sat, helpless as a child, and only his eyes had a spark of life in them as they stared and stared hopelessly at the desk in front of him.

The mystery of his disaster had never been cleared; sometimes Bill and Alec thought it never would be. They knew now what their father had been, and why for weeks on end sometimes he had been away from home. It was known, too, that he had been on a big case right at hand in Severn City; yet what

or whom he was after no one could say. He was Lone John Murray, and he worked on his own.

Some quarrymen had found him lying limply among the rocks up in the Beacon Hills, soaked with rain and covered with mud. At first they thought he had slipped in the darkness, but a brief medical examination had quickly revealed the truth. The facts were only too plain.

John Murray had never known who had struck him down. Somewhere in the hills someone hidden by the storm had dropped him from behind by a single smash with a cudgel, or gun-butt; after that his body had been thrown aside and left for dead.

How he lived was a miracle of will power. Doctors had mended the broken head and brought him to life again; yet it was but a living death, for none of the local surgeons Bill tackled would take the responsibility of trying to lift the tiny fragment of bone or clot of blood that still pressed on the brain and left the once strong man dumb and paralysed.

It was too ticklish, too risky. To try it would be like signing John Murray's death-warrant. They had saved his life—it was all they could do. Perhaps Nature would heal him in time; meanwhile—they shrugged regretfully.

Bill, a sturdy lad of fifteen, stuck to them and refused to give up. Wasn't there any surgeon who would do the operation? he demanded.

The answer was hopeless. There was perhaps one famous man in London who might attempt it—and the cost of everything would be something like three hundred pounds—

At that, Bill thought for a moment, thrust out his jaw and went home without a word.

During the time that followed, his broad shoulders had taken most of the burden, for Alec Murray, although a stout comrade, was two years younger and nothing like so strong and hardy as his burly elder brother; nor had he Bill's gift of hiding his troubles behind a boisterous laugh.

Their father had never been a rich man, so the house in Severn City had been given up and the boys moved out to the little cottage where it was quieter—and cheaper.

Bill had turned his natural cricket talent to good account, working on the county ground in the summer and in a sports outfitters in the winter, while Alec tended the invalid and did small carpentry jobs and picture framing at home.

It had been a tough struggle sometimes; but they had come through it up till now, for both had an ambition. They rarely spoke of it, but each knew the other's mind.

Softly Bill laid a hand on his father's shoulder and the dull eyes turned to him for a moment before resuming their everlasting stare at the bureau. Next he pulled something from his pocket and dangled it before Alec's delighted face.

It was a new green Severnshire county cap!

Alec whooped and thumped him heartily.

"Good old Bill! A full-blown pro., at last! I knew you'd do it, you beggar!"

Bill nodded soberly.

"Major Weaver gave it to me at the nets to-day. Buck up with the grub, old son—I've got some news to talk over that'll give you the shock of your life!"

(What's the nature of this startling news that Bill's brought home with him? You'll know next week when you read the continuation of this sparkling story—and it'll startle you, too, boys!)



*"I'm goin' to ask my Dad to smoke
'Turf' Cigarettes. Then I'll get
good stamps like yours, Bill"*

***Genuine Foreign and Colonial Postage Stamps in every
packet of "Turf" Cigarettes**