

**"THE 'HOLD-UP' AT GREYFRIARS!"**

**Most Sensational School  
Story Ever Written!**

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# *The* **MAGNET** 2<sup>d</sup>



**QUELCHY COMES A PURLER!**



# Come Into the Office, Boys!

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

**P**ULL up your socks, chums, and prepare for something really exciting! And when I say really exciting, I mean it! I'm referring, of course, to our new series of **THRILLS!**

In this issue, you'll find the second yarn which deals with the adventures of "The Thrill Club!" a gathering which meets once a week and whose members have all knocked around the world and met with hair-raising adventures. At these weekly meetings they tell the other members of the greatest thrill they have had in their lives—and I'm passing on these thrillers to you. Don't forget to write and let me know what you think of them!

And now let me deal with

## THE GREATEST THRILL OF ALL!

Exactly fourteen years ago next Saturday, the greatest naval battle in the history of the world was fought—the Battle of Jutland! Never before had two modern, first-class fleets engaged in naval action as on that occasion, when the British Grand Fleet and the German High Sea Fleet came face to face.

It was the first time the German High Sea Fleet had ventured out of harbour, where they had been bottled up by us since the declaration of war. For years the German navy had drunk the toast of "DER TAG,"

but when it came, it sounded the knell of that navy for ever! The Germans had got wind that some of Admiral Beatty's squadrons were cruising about the North Sea, and they decided to come out and cut off some portion of those squadrons, which were battle-cruiser squadrons, and, of course, much lighter than the German ships.

The Germans managed to sight Beatty's ships and opened fire on them at once. As they had the heavier ships, they were able to sink two of our vessels in shortly over half an hour from the action commencing. But they had not counted upon the Grand Sea Fleet, under Admiral Jellicoe, being near the scene; and before long both fleets were engaged.

The action started between the battle cruisers at a quarter to four in the afternoon, and as time went on, a mist arose, which rendered accurate firing difficult. The Germans, under cover of the mist and the gathering darkness, turned and made for harbour, followed by the British, and for the main part of the night the battle continued. In the morning the British searched in vain for the Germans, who had succeeded in slipping into their defended harbour and did not come out again until they crossed the North Sea to surrender at the end of the war.

The losses on both sides were very heavy indeed, and it is almost impossible for anyone who has not taken part in a

naval encounter to realise how terrible the Battle of Jutland actually was.

**D**O you remember me giving you a list of things which are commonly called by misleading names? One of my Lancashire readers, J. Hobbs, of Blackpool, sends along another list of

## THINGS THAT AREN'T WHAT THEY SEEM.

For instance, he says, there is no kid in kid-gloves—they are made of lamb skin! Furthermore, there is no soda in soda-water, which is ordinary water that is charged with carbonic acid gas. Panama hats do not come from Panama, but from Ecuador; there is no cork in cork legs, which get their name because a doctor named Cork invented them; also, the coffee berry is not a berry but a seed! In fact, the number of things which we call by wrong names is legion!

After a bit of deep thinking, we deserve a little "light relief." So here is a funny yarn that has earned a MAGNET penknife for John Anido, of 69, Earl's Court Road, Kensington, W.8.



Smith: "Why don't you consult a doctor about your insomnia?"

Jones: "What! Increase my bill still more? It's precisely because I owe him money



that I can't sleep!"

I wonder where the word "limerick" comes from? Personally, I should think because someone in Limerick first started writing rhymes of this description, but I may be wrong. Anyway, here is another amusing limerick, for which Reginald Stokes, of 1, Council Houses, Scopwick, near Lincoln, gets a pocket wallet:

There's a Greyfriars fellow named Snoop,  
Who to caddish things often does stoop;  
For besides taking bets,  
The ass smokes cigarettes,  
And oft finds himself "in the soup."

I've got a pretty full post-bag this week, so if your query isn't answered here, don't get downhearted. I'll answer them all in due course. Meanwhile, here is a selection from this week's queries: Tom Macdonald, of Coatbridge, wants to know which is

## THE OLDEST RAILWAY ENGINE?

It may surprise him to know that a passenger railway engine which was built

in 1864—sixty-six years ago—is still in use! It is the "Ryde," the oldest passenger engine still in active service, and it runs on the service between Brading and Bembridge in the Isle of Wight. It has run more than 1,500,000 miles!

Have you ever wondered how far away the stars are? Jack Warren, of Plymouth, has, and he asks me to tell him the answer. Get a pencil and paper, Jack, I'm going to let you work it out for yourself!

Light travels at the speed of 186,000 miles per second. Now the light which we see coming from that constellation of stars known as the Great

Bear started on its journey to us two million years ago! So if you find out how many seconds there are in two million years, and multiply them by 186,000, you will get the number of miles which separate us from the Great Bear! I'm afraid I'm too busy to work it out myself!

**A**S you know, I am always willing to give advice to readers regarding their future careers, and this week I have heard from one of my chums who has chosen a rather unusual profession.

## HE WANTS TO BE A PILOT!

Now this is one of the most difficult professions to enter, and my chum will have to "pull up his socks" if he wants to succeed in his ambition. First of all he will have to go to sea as an apprentice—and he will have to serve some of his time on a sailing vessel. It will take him seven or eight years at least to become the captain of a merchant vessel—and he cannot even apply to have his name put down on the "waiting list" for a pilot's position until he has attained this! Then he may have to wait years before he gets the opportunity to go as a pilot's assistant, after which he must stick it until he can graduate as a pilot himself.

To obtain a "job" as an apprentice one must write direct to the various shipping companies and inquire if there are any vacancies. The addresses can be found in any shipping paper.

I am afraid those are all the questions I can answer this week, otherwise I won't have space to tell you what I have in store for you next week.

To begin with, we have a first-class super-feature, entitled:

## "CATCHING FISH!"

the next yarn in our grand new "thriller" series, dealing with the kidnapping of Fisher T. Fish. What Frank Richards doesn't know about producing just the kind of yarn to keep you interested, thrilled, and rib-tickled, isn't worth knowing!

Next comes another jolly fine instalment of our new serial:

## "THE TEST MATCH HOPE!"

which, in addition to being bang up-to-date and topical, is certainly one of the best cricket yarns which has ever been published in any boys' paper.

Then there are two shorter features. The first is our usual centre-page attraction, which will be another "Hal Smiles" yarn, entitled:

## "HEADMASTER SMILES,"

and the second is an adventure from "The Thrill Club!" On top of all this there is also an effusion from our Greyfriars rhymester, and my little chat.

Cheerio, chums!

YOUR EDITOR.

Send along your Joke or your Greyfriars Limerick—or both—and win our useful prizes of leather pocket wallets and Sheffield steel penknives. All efforts to be sent to: c/o "Magnet," 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

HERE'S A SCHOOL YARN WITH A REAL "THRILLER" SETTING!



# THE HOLD-UP AT GREYFRIARS!

Starring the World's Popular Schoolboy Characters, Harry Wharton & Co.

By FRANK RICHARDS.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### Something for Sammy!

**"T**ROT in, Sammy!" Sammy Bunter of the Second Form at Greyfriars blinked rather suspiciously at the juniors of Study No. 7.

There were six fellows in the study—Peter Todd, who belonged there, and the Famous Five, who had looked in to see Toddy.

Billy Bunter, who also belonged to Study No. 7 in the Remove, was conspicuous by his absence.

Bunter of the Remove, just then, was far from Greyfriars.

It was, in fact, to discuss the absence of Billy Bunter that Harry Wharton & Co. had come into Toddy's study.

The fact was that in Bunter's case absence made the heart grow fonder.

When Bunter was at Greyfriars it was quite customary for fellows to dodge his fascinating society. When Bunter talked it was quite usual for fellows to reply: "Shut up, Bunter!" Peter Todd made no secret of the fact that life would be more worth living if Billy Bunter changed into some other study. Every man in the Remove agreed that there was too much of Bunter—much too much.

But now, strange to relate, there was too little of him.

Fellows in the Remove were feeling quite concerned about Bunter. Peter Todd was wishing that he could see him sprawling once more in the study armchair. Harry Wharton would have been glad to hear his voice, if only to hear him asking for a loan on a postal-order that he was expecting. They did not exactly miss Bunter. But there was no doubt that they were feeling concerned about him.

Hence the chorus of welcome that

greeted his minor as Sammy's fat face and glimmering spectacles, so like his brother's, appeared in the doorway of Study No. 7.

The juniors took it for granted that the fat fag had come up to the Remove to ask whether there was any news of his major.

They took it for granted that Sammy was feeling worried and alarmed about William George.

Fellows who could not stand Bunter at any price had expressed concern about him now that he was missing from the school. So it was much more to be expected that Sammy would be cut up.

In such painful circumstances the chums of the Remove were prepared to sympathise. They did not, perhaps,

"I guess this ole school will need a noo 'eadmaster if you don't do wot I want!" said Slick Flick, the New York gunman. "I guess I'm going to count three!"

"One——"

"Two——"

And then the unexpected happened!

esteem Sammy very highly, personally. But as a minor mourning for his major he was entitled to kind sympathy.

"Roll in, Fatty!" said Bob Cherry.

Sammy paused in the doorway.

He blinked suspiciously.

Sammy of the Second was not accustomed to all this politeness from Remove men.

In fact, the last time Sammy had ventured into the Remove passage he had been kicked by a Removeite—not because he had done anything, but on the general principle that a kicking never did a fag any harm, and might do him good.

"I say, no larks!" said Sammy distrustfully.

"My dear kid——" said Frank Nugent.

"The larkfulness is not terrific, my esteemed fat Sammy," said Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh, shaking his dusky head. "The sympathise is great and preposterous."

Sammy of the Second grinned.

"Trot in," said Peter Todd; and Bunter minor, reassured, rolled into Study No. 7 and grunted.

The grunt was caused by shortness of breath. Sammy, in circumference and diameter, resembled his brother Billy, and in shortness of wind he resembled him also. Sammy had a lot of weight to carry up the Remove staircase, and it had told on him.

"Have you seen——" began Sammy, blinking at the assembly of juniors in Study No. 7.

"No," said Harry; "nobody's seen your major since he was at Highcliffe yesterday, Sammy. You know he came over there to see us play cricket."

"I know! I mean——"

"He was kidnapped at Highcliffe, or near Highcliffe," said Bob Cherry. "There's no doubt of it now."

"You see, Sammy, a gang of American crooks have been trying to kidnap Fish, of the Remove—you must have heard about that——"

"Oh, yes," said Sammy; "but——"

"Well, they must have got hold of Bunter by mistake—that's the only way of explaining it," said Wharton. "Fishy's here safe and sound—and your brother's missing."

"Yes. But have you seen——"

"Nobody's seen your major, kid," said Johnny Bull. "He was last seen at Highcliffe yesterday, on the cricket ground."

"Yes, yes," said Sammy; "but——"

"I wouldn't worry too much, kid," said Frank Nugent kindly. "There's THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,163.

no reason to suppose that Bunter will be hurt."

"Oh, no," said Wharton at once—"no reason at all. Those crooks were after Fishy, to kidnap him and hold him to ransom. I dare say you've heard that Fishy's pater has made millions of dollars, kid—"

"Oh, yes; but—"

"Well, they'll find out sooner or later that they've got the wrong pig by the ear," said Harry. "Then I fancy they'll let Bunter go. They couldn't want to keep him."

"Well, nobody could," remarked Johnny Bull; then, feeling that this remark was inappropriate in the painful circumstances, Johnny added hastily: "I mean, they won't want Bunter—Bunter's pater couldn't pay a ransom for him. It's Fisher T. Fish they want."

"But—" persisted Sammy.

"As likely as not they'll find out their mistake soon, and let him come back to Greyfriars," said Wharton soothingly. "In fact, I rather think we shall see him soon."

"The thoughtfulness is terrific," concurred Hurree Singh.

Sammy's fat face showed signs of impatience.

"Yes, yes; that's all very well," he said. "But have you seen—"

"Seen what?" asked Harry. "We haven't seen anything of the kidnappers, if that's what you mean. Nobody has—except your major. Their names are known—two of them—Flick and McCann. Fishy's pater wrote to the Head and warned him that they were after Fishy. And McCann phoned the Head yesterday and said that he'd got Fishy! He hadn't, of course—the silly ass had bagged the wrong man."

"Look here—"

"Depend on it, they won't hurt Billy," said Johnny Bull. "Why should they? You'll see your major back safe and sound before long, Sammy."

"Will you let a fellow speak?" shrieked Bunter minor.

"Eh? Oh, yes! Fire away!"

"Have you seen—" recommenced Sammy Bunter.

This time the juniors did not interrupt him. They realised that the fat fag was inquiring after something other than his missing major.

"A packet of toffee?" concluded Sammy, getting it out at last.

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at him.

"Toffee!" repeated Wharton.

"Yes, toffee!"

"Toffee!" said Bob Cherry. "My hat!"

Apparently Samuel Bunter was not worrying so much about his brother Billy as about something nearer and dearer.

"You see, this is how it is—if you'll give a fellow a chance to speak," said Sammy, rather resentfully. "Yesterday, Billy had a packet of toffee."

"Oh!"

"He was going to take it over to Highcliffe with him—"

"Oh!"

"But he didn't," said Sammy, "for I saw him when he was starting with you fellows, and he said he'd left it in the study, and asked me to cut back for it and run after him to the bus."

"Oh!"

"Well, I didn't," resumed Sammy, "and Billy couldn't cut back because he was afraid you men would leave him behind. So it stands to reason that the toffee is still in this study, unless somebody's scoffed it."

"Oh!" gasped the Removites.

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Evidently, it was not deep and affectionate concern for his missing major that had drawn Bunter minor to Study No. 7 in the Remove.

Sammy blinked at them through his big spectacles.

"So you see how it is," he said. "That toffee's here. Well, if Billy is kidnapped he won't want it, will he?"

"Oh, my hat!"

"So there's no reason why I shouldn't have it," said Sammy argumentatively. "Billy may come back soon. On the other hand, he mayn't. Those kidnappers may stick to him. You never know. I don't think that toffee ought to be wasted. Somebody will scoff it, if it hangs about—see?"

"You little fat villain—" began Peter Todd.

Sammy blinked at him.

"Eh! Look here, Todd, you're not going to scoff that toffee!"

"What?"

"It's mine, Billy being gone," said Sammy warmly. "Look here, you jolly well hand over that toffee! It's here all right—as Billy never came back. Well, where is it?"

Harry Wharton & Co. gazed at Sammy.

Family affection was not strongly developed in the Bunter clan. But in the opinion of the Remove men this was the limit.

"You little fat freak—" said Wharton.

"Oh, draw it mild!" said Sammy. "I think it's rather thick if you fellows have bagged that toffee."

Evidently, Sammy's fat mind was running wholly on the toffee. Possibly he was going to feel concerned about his major when he had eaten the toffee. But first things came first.

Peter Todd rose to his feet, and took a packet from the mantelpiece. Sammy Bunter's round eyes glistened through his spectacles.

"That's it!" he exclaimed. "Blessed if I didn't think you fellows had scoffed it, with all your jaw, and not letting a fellow get a word out."

"Hold his ears!" said Peter.

Sammy started back.

"Here, what—Yaroooh!"

Bob Cherry grasped the fat fag by his fat ears. Peter Todd rammed the packet of toffee down his back. Sammy roared.

"Now kick him out!" said Peter.

"Yoooop!"

Sammy Bunter travelled at express speed out of Study No. 7. A wild roar floated back from the Remove passage as Sammy departed.

The Remove men had supposed that Sammy was sorrowful when he came to the study. He hadn't been. But he was sorrowful when he left. So that was all right.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### A Call for Fishy!

**F**ISHY!

Loder of the Sixth shouted up the Remove staircase:

"Fish!"

Bob Cherry glanced down from the Remove landing, and shook his head.

"None to-day, thanks!" he called back.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Loder glared up at the humorous Bob. "What do you mean, you young idiot?" he demanded.

"I mean what I say! We don't want any fish to-day."

Loder breathed hard through his nose. He did not suppose that Bob had mistaken him for a fisherman calling his

wares. Bob was merely being playful. But Loder of the Sixth was not the fellow to select for a junior's little jokes.

"Take a hundred lines, Cherry. And tell Fish that he's wanted in his Form master's study."

And Loder of the Sixth stamped away.

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob. "Loder's got no sense of humour, you men. Wingate would have laughed. Johnny, old man, go and tell Fishy he's wanted. You keep the Fish in your study."

Johnny Bull tramped up the Remove passage, and kicked open the door of Study No. 14.

Fisher T. Fish was there.

The American junior was reading a letter, and his bony face was beaming over it. He looked up with a cheery grin.

"Say, bub, I guess the popper's got them by the short hairs!" he remarked. "This letter is from the popper. Say, they're sure squealing."

"Eh—who are squealing?" asked Johnny Bull.

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

"All the galoots who are up against the Pork Trust," he explained. "The popper's cornered pork. Say, you'll soon see a rise in the price of pork in this little island. Pork will rise all over the world, I guess. Yep, the price is going up. Pork means bacon. You'll have to pay more for your rashers. And I guess it will all go into the pockets of the popper. Say, this here is the bee's knee, this is. It's sure the elephant's whiskers."

And Fisher T. Fish chuckled gleefully.

Fishy was in high feather these days.

No fellow at Greyfriars could have felt prouder of his pater than Fisher T. Fish felt of his popper.

Dollars were rolling into the coffers of Hiram K. Fish in an uncounted flood. Hiram K. had cornered pork. The combine, of which he was the leading spirit, controlled the price of pork all over the United States. The guys who were in the combine were rolling in loot. The guys who were left out of the combine were, naturally, squealing. The fact that they were squealing added an extra zest to the satisfaction of Fisher T. Fish. Making money, of course, was the best thing in existence from Fishy's point of view; but making the other fellow feel bad about it was the next best thing.

There was only one fly in the ointment. Mr. Fish's millions had attracted the attention of Barney McCann's kidnapping gang. They had concentrated on Fisher T. Fish, with the object of kidnapping him, and holding him to ransom.

Fishy, in consequence, was kept within gates. He did not like that. Still, it was something to be remarked upon by all the school as the fellow who was the object of such attentions on account of his father's countless dollars. Taking it for all in all the position was, as Fishy expressed it in his weird and wonderful language, the bee's knee, the elephant's whiskers, and the grasshopper's hind leg.

He waved the letter at Johnny Bull.

"Say, I guess I'll tell you what the popper says."

"Oh, cut it out!" said Johnny Bull gruffly. "I can read the newspapers when I want to hear about a swindle."

Fisher T. Fish regarded him pityingly.

"You pesky piecan!" he said. "This ain't a swindle! This is business—business from the word go!"

"Is there any difference in the United States?" asked Johnny Bull.

"I guess—"



"Come on, you fellows!" yelled Bob Cherry. "We've got the rascal! Toddy's on his head, Squiff's on his tummy, and I'm on his legs! Turn on the light, Fishy, and let's see the scoundrel!" "Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Woooooooh!"

"Anyhow, Quelch wants you," said Johnny. "Loder's just howled up the stairs that you're wanted in his study." "Aw, blow Quelch!" said Fisher T. Fish. "I've got no use for Quelch."

But he left the study to obey the summons all the same. Mr. Quelch was not pleased when he was kept waiting by a junior, even if that junior was the son of a smart business man who had cornered pork, and was rolling in ill-gotten dollars.

Fisher T. Fish was looking very pleased with himself as he walked down Masters' Passage to Mr. Quelch's study. He did not like being gated; but he was rather amused by the efforts of Barney McCann & Co. to kidnap him. He did not intend to run any risks of being "cinched" by that lawless "bunch." And the fact that they had, apparently, cinched Billy Banter in mistake for him seemed a screaming joke to Fishy. He did not waste a lot of concern on the hapless Owl of the Remove.

"Come in, Fish!" said Mr. Quelch, as the American junior tapped at the door. "I sent for you, Fish, as someone has called you on the telephone."

"Me, sir!" said Fish, in surprise.

"Yes. He gives the name of Phineas G. Flook, and states that he is a friend of your father's and in England for a few days."

"I guess I know the name, sir," said Fish. "Flook's in the combine with the popper."

"You may take the call, Fish," said Mr. Quelch. "But in the present circumstances, you must not make any arrangements to go outside the school. If Mr. Flook desires to see you, on your father's behalf, he can, of course, come to the school."

"Yes, sir."

Fisher T. Fish crossed to the telephone, and picked up the receiver.

"Say!" he remarked.

"That Fisher speaking?" came a voice over the wires, with a strong American accent.

"Yep!"

"Flook speaking this end—Phineas G. Flook! I guess you know the name, Fisher."

"Sure!"

"I'm over here for a few days on business for the combine. Your popper wants me to give you the once-over while I'm around. You can get leave to run up to town?"

"I'm gated."

"Gated! What's that?"

"I ain't allowed outside the school gates, since Barney McCann and his bunch got busy," explained Fisher T. Fish.

"Waal, that's only wise; you sure want to keep shy of that big stiff, Fisher! Mebbe I could run down and meet you half-way, or suthin' like that! Hiram wants me to see you while I'm over."

"Say, Mr. Flook—"

"Shoot!"

"Did you get the picture-card I sent you last mail but one?"

"Sure—and I hadn't forgotten it, Fisher."

"I guess you'd like to see that picture of my school," said Fisher T. Fish.

"You've said it; and a fine-looking old place it is."

Fisher T. Fish chuckled.

His next remark made Mr. Quelch look up from his papers with a start.

"Good-bye, Barney McCann!" said Fisher T. Fish.

And he hung up the receiver.

Mr. Quelch stared at the American

junior, as he turned, grinning, away from the telephone.

"Fish!" he exclaimed.

"Yep! I mean, yes, sir."

"Is it possible that the man calling you on the telephone was the rascal McCann?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"I reckon so, sir."

"Upon my word! You are sure, Fish?"

"Bet my bottom dollar on it, sir."

"I fail to see—"

Fisher T. Fish grinned complacently.

"You see, sir, the popper's warned me to watch out for any guy that tries to get me on the phone. You heard me ask him if he'd got the picture postcard of Greyfriars that I sent him?"

"Yes."

"Well, sir, if he'd been Flook, he'd have said I never sent him one," said Fisher T. Fish cheerfully. "You see, sir, I never sent Phineas G. Flook any old postcard."

Mr. Quelch blinked at him.

"I was jest stringing that guy along, to see whether he was Flook!" said Fisher T. Fish. "When he said he'd had the card I never sent, sir, I opined that he couldn't be Flook!"

"Bless my soul!" ejaculated the astonished Remove master. "I—I—I am glad to see that you are so much upon your guard, Fish."

"I guess, sir, that there ain't a whole lot of flies on this baby!" said Fisher T. Fish complacently.

And Fisher Tarleton Fish left his Form master's study, feeling very pleased with himself. Barney McCann, as he left the telephone box at a town seventy miles away, was probably not feeling so pleased.

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## THE THIRD CHAPTER.

## The Caged Owl!

**B**ILLY BUNTER blinked round uneasily.

There were footsteps outside the locked door of the room in which the Owl of the Remove was a prisoner.

Bunter was seated—or, rather, sprawled—in a very easy chair, with his feet on another.

The kidnapped Owl was not feeling, on the whole, very dissatisfied.

He had been twenty-four hours in the hands of the kidnappers; but his lines, so far, had fallen in pleasant places.

He had a comfortable room, a comfortable bed, and plenty of "grub." It was true that he was a prisoner, which was not nice. On the other hand, he was getting out of classes, which was very nice indeed.

There was only one window to the room, which was covered by strong wooden shutters. There was only one door, which was locked, and which, when it was open, opened on the hall of the unknown house. And in the hall there was generally somebody to be heard, so escape seemed quite out of the question.

But for his doubts of the future, Billy Bunter would not have bothered his head much about escape.

He was quite comfortable where he was.

Exercise and fresh air had never had a strong appeal for William George Bunter. Frowning was more in his line. He could do with a lot of sleeping, and a lot of sitting down. And the more he missed lessons, the better he was pleased.

His chief anxiety had been about food. But the "bunch" were feeding

him well, so far. So long as that lasted, Billy Bunter realised that matters might have been worse.

But he was worried about the future.

He had told the kidnappers that he was not Fisher T. Fish; and they had not believed him. The fact that he had had a letter belonging to Fishy in his pocket had settled the matter for them. Bunter wished that for once he had been a little less inquisitive about other fellows' correspondence.

Sooner or later they were bound to discover that he was not Fish! That was certain. And Bunter was worried about what would happen then.

He was in desperate hands. The kidnappers would be angry and disappointed. By kidnapping Bunter they had, as it were, shown their hand, and made the task of kidnapping Fisher T. Fish much more difficult. Billy Bunter felt uneasy on that score.

So the sound of footsteps stopping at his door made him blink very uneasily, and he rose to his feet in some trepidation.

The key turned in the lock, and the door opened.

Barney McCann, the man with the hawkish nose, entered the room, followed by Slick Flick, the man in horn-rimmed glasses.

Both the crooks were scowling blackly.

Bunter, as he blinked at them, knew that they knew the truth now. They had not taken his word for it; but they had found out somehow.

"You dog-goned pesky scallywag!" said Slick Flick, with a black look at the fat schoolboy.

"I guess," said Barney McCann, between his teeth, "that I've a powerful

idea to twist that fat neck of yours, you jay."

Bunter backed away in alarm.

"I—I say, it wasn't my fault, you know!" he stammered. "I—I never asked you to bring me here, you know. I told you I wasn't Fish, and you wouldn't believe me."

"What was you doing with a letter from Fish's popper in your rags?" snarled Barney. "I guess what you said cut no ice. Fish would have said the same if we'd got him, if he guessed he could get by with it. Dog-gone you!"

Barney was evidently deeply annoyed. "There ain't no doubt about it now, Barney," said Mr. Flick.

"Nary a doubt! It's known all over the place now that the boy who's missing is named Bunter," growled Barney; "and I got on the phone to the school and talked to Fish himself. I gave Flock's name, and got him to speak—but he tumbled to it somehow that I wasn't Flock! He's spry, that kid! Fish is at the school now, safe and sound; and we're landed with that fat clam that we don't want."

"Dog-gone him!" grunted Mr. Flick.

"It means a lot more trouble. We've given it away that we're around, and the police are looking for this fat jay, of course."

"Aw, the police!" jeered Slick Flick. "I guess the British police won't keep me awake at nights."

"You've said it," agreed Barney. "I guess we could phone them our address, and then they wouldn't find us. I ain't worrying a lot about cops. But—"

"I—I say!" stammered Bunter. "Now you know I'm not Fish, you can let me go, you know."

"To tell the cops what's happened to you and give them our descriptions!" said McCann unpleasantly. "You guess you're talking to two boneheads, dog-gone you!"

"I—I say, I—I can't stay here, you know," said Bunter, in dismay.

"Can't you?" said McCann. "I guess you can, sonny; I guess you're staying till we tote along that guy Fish to keep you company."

"Sure!" said Mr. Flick.

"And I reckon it won't be long, either!" said McCann. "This bunch is going to cinch old Hiram's boy, or know the reason why. And I guess we got some use for you, too. Somebody's got to get into the school and cinch the kid, and I reckon you can put us wise to the lie of the land. You've got your uses."

"Sure!" said Mr. Flick again.

Billy Bunter blinked at them. McCann sat down at the table, laid a sheet of paper before him, and took up a pen. He fixed his sharp, menacing eyes on Bunter.

"You're going to put me wise, you get that?" he snapped.

"Look here, I'm not going to tell you anything to help you to get hold of Fishy!" exclaimed Bunter indignantly. "You can't expect it."

"You object—hay?"

"I jolly well do," said Bunter. "Tain't playing the game! Of course, you wouldn't understand that. But I can't help you."

"The guy's sure spilled a mouthful," said Slick Flick. "He sure does not know the brand of galoot he's talking to."

"He'll learn," said McCann grimly. "Now, you, Bunter, you got to give me details of the house at Greyfriars—where the kids sleep, and how they're fixed; passages and stairs, and so on. You get me?"

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"Well, I jolly well won't!" said Bunter.

Barney, pen in hand, gave Mr. Flick a look. Slick Flick reached to his hip-pocket, and drew into view an ugly-looking automatic.

Bunter gasped.

The automatic was lifted to a level, bearing full on Billy Bunter's fat, terrified face. The horn-rimmed eyes gleamed over it.

"I—I say, turn that thing another way!" howled Bunter. "It—it might go off!"

"You've said it, sonny! I guess that little popgun is powerful likely to go off, if you don't jump to orders!" chuckled Flick. "I calculate you'll be less trouble if I drill a hole through your cabeza and bury you neat in the back garden!"

"Ow!"

"You talking?" snarled McCann.

"Ow! Yes! Of—of course! I—I'll tell you anything you like!" gasped Bunter, in dire terror. "I—I want to, really!"

"Mebbe I'd better plug the guy and save trouble!" said Slick Flick thoughtfully.

"Yarooogh! I—I say, I—I'll tell you anything you like!" howled Bunter. "Tut-tut—turn that thing another way, will you?"

"Keep a line on the guy with that gun, Slick, and plug him instanter if he doesn't open out!" said McCann.

"You bet!"

"Now, then, you jay!"

Bunter was not of the stuff of which heroes are made, and to save his fat skin he didn't think twice about giving the kidnappers all the information they required.

For the next hour Billy Bunter was kept busy. All that he could tell the crooks of the interior arrangements of the House at Greyfriars was told, and carefully noted down by Barney McCann.

After which the kidnappers left him, and Bunter was locked in again.

"Oh crikey!" gasped the Owl of the Remove.

He dropped into the armchair, palpitating. Whatever nerve Billy Bunter had, had been shaken by that ugly-looking automatic in the hand of the horn-rimmed man. The Owl of the Remove palpitated with terror.

He blinked round the room in the electric light. Outside, it was not yet quite dark, but the shutters at the window shut out the daylight. Escape was now Bunter's chief thought. The recollection of that awful automatic made him shudder. He had to get away somehow.

But how?

From somewhere outside the house he heard the buzzing of a car. Apparently one, or both, of the kidnappers was leaving. But Bunter knew that there was always a man left on guard in the lonely house. The red-headed man who brought in his meals was always there. And that man—Mike, as the crooks called him—was a powerful, hefty six-footer, who could have dealt easily with Bunter with one hand; indeed, with a couple of fingers. And he was generally in the hall outside Bunter's locked door. Escape was impossible.

But the recollection of the automatic spurred Bunter on. His fat wits were set to work as they had never worked before. Somehow or other, he had to get out of the hands of the desperate gang; and for the first time in his fat career William George Bunter did some really hard thinking.

## THE FOURTH CHAPTER

### An Alarm in the Night

"HALLO, hallo, hallo! Still here, Fishy?" chuckled Bob Cherry.

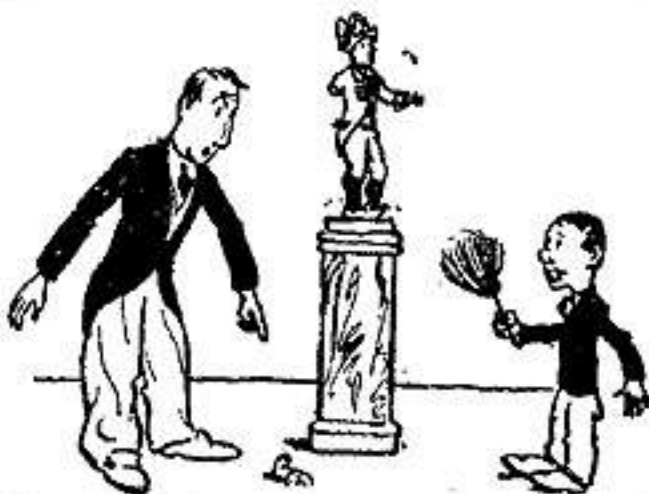
Fisher T. Fish grinned.

The Removites were on their way to their dormitory, and many eyes turned on Fisher Tarleton Fish as he joined his Form fellows.

Fish was an object of great interest all through the school these days. The news that kidnappers were after him had caused him to leap into unaccustomed limelight. And the kidnapping of Bunter, which proved that the danger was real, intensified the general interest in Fisher T. Fish.

Fish was now the object of special care on the part of the school authorities. Beside the regular roll-calls, Fish had to report himself to his Form master at frequent intervals. He was "gated"; and he was not likely to run the risk of going out of gates, since it

SPIN A GOOD YARN AND WIN A POCKET KNIFE, like Donald Moulden, of 191, Abbotsbury Road, Weymouth. IT'S EVER SO SIMPLE!



Vendor of chinaware (to clumsy youngster): "Look what you've been and done now. You've knocked the arm off me Duke o' Wellington." Quok-witted Cockney: "Garn, it don't matter. Knock 'is blooming eye out an' call 'im Lord Nelson!"

I'LL EXPECT YOUR EFFORT BY THE NEXT POST, CHUM!

had been made clear that Barney McCann and his bunch were "around." But the Head seemed to envisage the possibility that the desperadoes might attempt to get hold of him within the precincts of the school. So every imaginable precaution was now taken.

"Still here, old bean?" said Frank Nugent. "Shouldn't be surprised to miss you any minute, Fishy."

"One of these times he will vanish away like a jolly old Boojum!" grinned Squiff.

"And there will be dry eyes in the Remove," remarked Skinner.

"Oh, shut up, Skinner!" said several voices.

Fisher T. Fish could not exactly be called popular in his Form. His ways were hardly the ways of Greyfriars men. But the fact that he was in danger made a difference. Every fellow was glad to see that he was still safe, and hoped that he would remain safe.

"I guess they'll have to get up very early in the morning to cinch this baby," said Fisher T. Fish complacently.

There was no doubt that Fishy was rather enjoying his unique position.

"Fish here?" said Wingate of the Sixth, when he came to the Remove dormitory to see lights out.

"Yep!"

"Oh, all right!" Wingate laughed. "We've got to make sure of you, Fish, as you're so much sought after."

At which little joke, coming from a prefect, the Remove dutifully laughed.

Wingate turned out the lights and left the dormitory. A few minutes after he was gone a bed creaked as a fellow got out.

Bob Cherry sat up.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Who's that?"

"Little me!" drawled Fisher T. Fish.

"You're not going out of the dorm?" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Don't be an ass, Fishy!"

"Sure not!"

"Fishy ain't the man to run risks," said Vernon-Smith, with a trace of a sneer. "Fishy will look after himself."

"You bet!" answered Fisher T. Fish coolly. "There ain't a guy in the wide world that I'm so fond of as I am of this particular baby!"

There was a glimmer of light. Fisher T. Fish had put a match to a candle-end. The Removites sat up in bed, staring at the American junior, and wondering what he was up to.

Fisher T. Fish collected two chairs and placed them on either side of the dormitory door, leaving a wide space between.

"What the thump——" said Peter Todd.

"What's that game, Fishy?" asked Wharton.

"I guess you'll see!" answered Fish.

From one chair to the other Fishy proceeded to run a cord at a height of six inches from the floor, and about six feet from the door.

"You get it?" asked Fishy. "Any guy coming into the dorm will sure trip over that cord, and if he don't come a cropper and damage his nose on the floor, you can call me a jay."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. "Do you really think they'll come after you inside the school, Fishy?"

"I sure do!"

"Rot!" said Bolsover major.

Fisher T. Fish sniffed.

"You guys ain't wise to Barney McCann," he said. "I tell you when that bunch cinched the Googengoomer kid in Noo Yark, they roped him out of the ancestral mansion on Riverside Drive under the noses of a dozen guys. Getting into Greyfriars would be just pie to Barney McCann. I shall sure be surprised if he don't mosey along soon one of these nights. Waal, if he moseys in here to-night, I reckon we shall hear his nose hit the floor."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish blew out the candle and went back to bed.

There was the usual buzz of talk from bed to bed, and it died away at last, and the Remove closed their eyes in slumber.

Fisher T. Fish slept as peacefully as any of the other fellows. Having taken his precautions, he was sure of being awakened if any surreptitious person entered the dormitory before morning.

There was a sound of steady breathing through the shadowy dormitory. The whole Form were fast asleep.

They did not waken at the sound of a light footstep outside the dormitory door.

Neither did they waken when the door was quietly opened, and a light glimmered in.

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But a few seconds later they awakened with a jump!

Crash!

Bump!

Bang!

"Whooooooooooooooooop!"

Every fellow in the Remove jumped into wide wakefulness at that sudden and terrific uproar.

Fellows started up in bed, rubbing their eyes, exclaiming in startled tones.

"What the thump—"

"Who's that?"

"Burglars—"

"Look out!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Oh, Jerusalem crickets!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. And in a twinkling Fishy was out of bed, and hiding underneath it.

Harry Wharton leaped out of bed. A dozen fellows followed his example. The dormitory was in darkness; but a faint smell told of a candle recently extinguished. In the darkness a shadowy figure rolled on the floor, gasping and spluttering.

"It's him!" yelled Bob Cherry, excitedly and ungrammatically.

"The kidnapper!"

"Collar him!"

"Jump on him!"

"Get hold of him!"

And like a tidal wave the excited Removites rushed on the sprawling figure, and collared it right and left.

## THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

### A Surprise for Quelch!

"GOOD-NIGHT, my dear Quelch!"

"Good-night, sir!"

Both the Head and the Remove master parted with regret at the door of Dr. Locke's study.

They had sat up rather late that night; the time had passed swiftly and happily. Mr. Quelch, who knew more Greek than most Greeks, had been giving the Head his opinion and advice on the subject of Dr. Locke's edition of Sophocles. With such an entrancing subject in hand, it was no wonder that time flew, and that the two old gentlemen unexpectedly found that it was midnight.

Reluctantly they left Sophocles. They parted at the door of the Head's study, Dr. Locke going up the corridor that led to his own house, Mr. Quelch heading for his own quarters.

The Head turned back.

"By the way, Quelch—"

Mr. Quelch turned back.

"The boy, Fish—" said the Head.

"Quite so!" agreed Mr. Quelch. "It is my intention to look in at the dormitory before going to bed."

"In the present extraordinary circumstances, one cannot be too careful!" said Dr. Locke.

"Perfectly so, sir!"

"Good-night, Quelch!"

"Good-night, sir!"

They parted a second time, and this time, so to speak, they got away with it.

Mr. Quelch took his candle and proceeded to the Remove dormitory. At that hour of the night he did not desire to switch on electric lights all over the House. Neither did he desire to disturb the Remove by flooding their dormitory with illumination. The candle sufficed for a glance at Fisher T. Fish, to ascertain that he was safe, before Mr. Quelch dismissed him from mind for the night.

Mr. Quelch opened the door of the

Remove dormitory. All was dark and silent within, save for the regular breathing of many sleepers.

Holding up the candlestick, Mr. Quelch advanced quietly into the dormitory, stepping towards Fish's bed.

He did not take many steps! A few seconds later Mr. Quelch had the surprise of his life.

Something caught in his leg. He did not know what it was, but it was utterly unexpected, and, naturally, it tripped him up.

Before he knew what was happening the Form master was flying over. He bumped on the floor, and the candlestick, flying from his hand, crashed and banged somewhere.

In a dazed and bewildered state the Remove master sprawled and gasped, utterly confounded for the moment, and unable to realise what had happened.

In those seconds the dormitory was filled with excited voices. Shadowy figures loomed on all sides, and it seemed as if the Remove were all shouting at once.

Mr. Quelch, spluttering for breath, felt a sea of hands laid on him; he was grasped on all sides, clutched, gripped, grabbed.

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Ow! Woooooooooooooh!"

"Got him!" roared a triumphant voice.

"Sit on him!"

"Squash him!"

"Sit on his head!"

"Don't let him get away!"

"Hurrah!"

"Somebody get a light."

"We've got the beast!"

It seemed to Mr. Quelch that he was in the midst of pandemonium. It was like some awful dream.

He, Henry Samuel Quelch, M.A., master of the Greyfriars Remove, had been tripped up, and he was struggling and wriggling under an attack of his whole Form!

It was unbelievable! But it was happening! That was the worst of it; incredible as it was, it was actually happening, and very painfully. Fists smote Mr. Quelch's majestic ribs, hands grasped his scanty locks and held on, somebody had grabbed even his nose, and as he opened his mouth to roar somebody else sat on his face. The roar died into an agonised gurgle.

Evidently—to Mr. Quelch—the Remove had suddenly gone mad!

He struggled and wriggled and gurgled!

"Keep still, you scoundrel!" roared Bob Cherry. "We've got you! Keep him down, you men!"

"Look out for his gun! He may have a gun!"

"Pin him down!"

"Keep still, you villain! You hear? Bang his head on the floor if he won't keep still."

"I'm sitting on his head—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Grooooooh!" came from the unhappy victim. "Ooooooooooh! Woooooooooh! Gug-gug-gug-gug!"

"Get a light, somebody!" shouted Harry Wharton. "We've got him safe."

"Stick on his napper, Toddy!"

"That's all right. I'm sticking!"

"Mind his gun!" came a howl from under Fisher T. Fish's bed. "Look out for his gun! Barney always carries a gun!"

"We've got him! Come and lend a hand, you funk!" roared Bolsover major.

"You sure got him?" gasped Fish.

"We're sitting on him! Toddy's on

his head, and Squiff's on his tummy, and I'm on his legs!" chortled Bob Cherry. "We've got him squashed as flat as a pancake. Turn on the light, Fishy, and let's see the scoundrel!"

"Sure!" gasped Fishy.

Assured now that the midnight intruder was safely held, Fisher T. Fish crawled out from under the bed where he had taken refuge.

He cut across to the door, where the switch was, and turned it on, and the dormitory was flooded with light.

"Mmmmmmmmm!" came in an anguished moan from the squashed and breathless figure sprawling and wriggling under the Removites.

"Now let's get a look at him!" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Get off his face, Toddy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors blinked in the sudden light. They blinked at the wriggling figure, of which only glimpses were to be had, under the swarm of victorious juniors. Harry Wharton uttered a surprised exclamation. A rumpled gown was clinging to the wriggling figure. A sudden misgiving smote the captain of the Remove. The next moment, as Peter Todd removed himself from the face of the wretched victim, the dreadful truth was revealed.

It was not the face of an American crook, not the face of a desperate kidnapper, that blinked and glared up at the juniors.

It was a face they knew!

Wharton gasped with horror.

"Quelchy!"

"Great pip!" yelled Bob Cherry. He got off Mr. Quelch's chest as if that chest had suddenly become red-hot.

"Quelch!" yelled Squiff.

"Quelch! Great Christopher Columbus!" gasped Bolsover major.

"The Quelch-fulness is terrific!"

"Oh dear!"

Mr. Quelch sprawled and blinked dizzily in the light, fully revealed now to the horrified eyes of his Form.

"Waal, carry me home to die!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Who'd have thought it? Say, this surely does get my goat!"

Mr. Quelch sat up.

His face was crimson, he gasped for breath, his eyes glared. Only too obviously Quelch was in a bad temper.

The juniors gazed at him. Horror held them silent. It was Quelch—Henry Samuel Quelch—their Form master, who had tripped over Fishy's cord, and had been collared and captured by the Remove! The situation was really awful—it was overwhelming.

Mr. Quelch found his voice at last. His first remark was:

"Grooooooh!"

"L-l-l-let me help you up, sir!" stutted Wharton.

"Oh, let's help you, sir!" groaned Bob Cherry.

They seized Mr. Quelch's arms and helped him to his feet. He stood swaying, gasping, spluttering, the expression on his speaking countenance growing more and more awful.

"Boys!" he gasped at last. "How—how dare you! You—you shall be flogged—the whole Form—you shall be expelled! Bless my soul! Dear me! How dare you? I repeat, how dare you attack your Form master—"

"We—we didn't, sir—" gasped Wharton.

"What?" roared Mr. Quelch.

"I—I mean, we never meant—"

"We—we thought you were a burglar, sir—"

"A kidnapper, sir—"

"Barney McCann, sir!" gurgled Fisher T. Fish. "We figured that it



"Keep where you are!" came a voice apparently from under the bed, with a nasal accent. "I've got a gun, and I'll shoot!" As Mike, revolver in hand, looked under the bed to investigate, Bunter made a leap for the door.

was that fire-bug coming to cinch me, sir."

"What? What? Absurd! I fell over something; I caught my feet and tripped over something—" Mr. Quelch glared round him, and spotted the two chairs and the cord. The chairs had been knocked over in the excitement, but the connecting cord was still there, and Mr. Quelch understood over what he had tripped. "This—this was a trick—a deliberate trap—"

"You—you see, sir—" groaned Wharton.

"I see only too well, Wharton! The whole Form is concerned in this outrage!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "The ringleaders shall be expelled! The rest shall be flogged! In all my career as a schoolmaster I have never heard of such an outrage!"

"But, sir—"

"Enough! Go back to bed! The headmaster will deal with you in the morning! Enough!"

"B-b-b-but, sir—"

"Silence! I will hear nothing!" hooted Mr. Quelch. "Go back to bed! This was a deliberate outrage—a trick—a trap—"

"But, sir," gasped Wharton. "We woke up and found somebody in the dorm, in the dark. How were we to know—"

"If you'd had a light, sir—" said Nugent.

"I had a light!" boomed Mr. Quelch. "The candle was extinguished when I fell—over this cord that was deliberately placed—"

"Yes, sir, but we couldn't see you!" gasped Bob. "We—we can't see in the dark, sir—"

"We're not cats, sir!" ventured

Vernon-Smith. It was like the Bounder to be cheeky, even at such an awful moment.

"What? What? Take care, Vernon-Smith! Wharton, am I to understand that you did not know that it was your Form master you were attacking?" Mr. Quelch was calming down a little. He realised how highly improbable it was that any Form at Greyfriars would mob their Form master in that manner if they knew it.

"Of—of course we didn't know, sir!" gasped Wharton. "But—"

"But that cord was placed there to trip me up!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir! We never knew you were coming in after lights out."

"Oh, indeed!" Mr. Quelch realised the justice of that observation. "But the trap was laid for someone."

"It was for the kidnapper, sir—"

"The kidnapper?" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. Fishy thought the kidnapper might come here after him, and so—so—" Wharton broke off. It was for Fishy to own up that he had fixed up that trap that had proved so deadly.

Fisher T. Fish, however, was silent. Owning up was not in his line.

Mr. Quelch comprehended at last.

He was hurt, he was breathless, he was damaged; but it was a relief to learn that his Form had not suddenly run amok like a lot of mad Malays.

"Absurd!" he snapped. "Anyone coming in might have tripped over that cord, as I did!"

"Well, sir, we didn't expect anybody after lights out," said Nugent.

"Oh, that—that is so, of course! I came to see that Fish was safe, and—and—" Mr. Quelch gasped. "Only a

very foolish and thoughtless boy would have arranged such a trap for the unwary! The boy who laid that trap will come to my study after prayers to-morrow morning."

Mr. Quelch took his candlestick, which Nugent picked up for him. He lighted the candle.

"Go back to bed! I will deal with this matter further in the morning. Go back to bed at once!"

The Removites obediently went back to bed. Mr. Quelch turned out the electric light and stepped from the dormitory. He was feeling very shaken and very damaged, also a little ridiculous, and he was anxious to get away from his Form.

"Good-night, sir!" said a number of meek voices.

Mr. Quelch coughed.

"Good-night, my boys."

The door closed.

"Well, my only hat!" said Bob Cherry, with a deep breath. "What a go!"

"The go-fulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The esteemed Quelch is infuriated."

"He'll be all right in the morning," said Harry. "He will know it wasn't our fault, when he thinks it over. Of course, he feels rather sore now—"

"The sorefulness must be—"

"Terrific!" chuckled Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fancy sitting on Quelch's face!" gasped Peter Todd. "My hat! If I'd known, I'd rather have sat on a red-hot poker."

There was a creaking of a bed. Fisher T. Fish was getting out again. Harry Wharton sat up.

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"That you, Fishy?"

"Yep!"

"What are you up to?" demanded Wharton.

"I guess I'm fixing that cord again, in case the kidnapper moseys in," answered Fisher T. Fish.

"You—you—you—" gasped Wharton.

"After what's happened—"

"I guess that cuts no ice."

"You thumping idiot!" roared Wharton. "You may catch the Head next if he has a fancy for looking in to see if you're safe. Get back to bed!"

"Forget it!" answered Fisher T. Fish.

Evidently Fishy was bent on fixing up that trap again for the kidnapper. But, not unnaturally, the other Removeites had had enough of Fishy's strategic arrangements. Five or six fellows turned out of bed, thoughtfully taking their pillows with them.

There was a sudden howl from Fisher T. Fish. Half a dozen pillows smote him at once.

"Whoop!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

"What the great horned toad—"

Thump, thump, thump—bang!

"Yarooogh! Quit!" yelled Fisher T. Fish.

"Let up, you galoots! Yow-ow-ow!"

"You getting back to bed?" chuckled Bob Cherry.

"Nope! I guess— Yarooogh! Stoppit! I guess I'll get back to bed.

Oh, Jerusalem crickets! Stoppit! I'm quitting! Yarooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Fisher T. Fish plunged headlong into bed.

And the Greyfriars Remove, at last, settled down once more to balmy slumber.

## THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter's Escape!

**B**ILLY BUNTER gave a little fat cough.

Bunter, sitting in the armchair in the shuttered room in the lonely house, had been thinking hard.

And there had been results.

Thinking, on Bunter's part, was rather an unaccustomed exercise. Indeed, there were men in the Remove who doubted whether he could do it. They suspected that he lacked the necessary apparatus.

This, however, was an injustice to Bunter. It was true that he seldom did think, but he could think, and now his fat brain had been working, so to speak, on its highest gear.

And the glimmer in the little round eyes behind Bunter's big, round spectacles hinted that an idea had been evolved by that laborious and unaccustomed effort.

Hence the little fat cough.

Any man in the Remove would have known what the fat little cough meant. It always preceded any ventriloquial effort of the Greyfriars ventriloquist.

Bunter, who could do nothing else, could ventriloquise. His gift in that line was weird and wonderful. It was not, perhaps, clever, for had it required brains obviously Bunter could not have done it. That weird gift was not popular in the Remove. Fellows were liable to kick Bunter when he played ventriloquial tricks. He could imitate any fellow's voice without effort, and fellows did not seem to like it. His weird gift had earned the Owl of the Remove more kicks than ha'pence, as it were.

But the idea had come into Bunter's fat brain that that weird gift, so little valued by his Form-fellows, might come in useful now. It was well known in

the school. It was, of course, quite unknown in the headquarters of the kidnapping gang. Bunter certainly was a little nervous about "trying it on." Barney McCann & Co. were rather unpleasant gentlemen to trifle with. But anything was better than remaining a prisoner in the hands of the crooks. The recollection of that ugly-looking automatic in the hand of Slick Flick thrilled Bunter with terror. His fat mind was concentrated on the thought of escape.

That little fat cough cleared Bunter's podgy throat for ventriloquism. It was what the Remove fellows sometimes called his atmospheric.

Bunter could hear the man Mike moving in the hall outside his door. The other two, he believed, had gone in the car. At all events, he had heard no sound of voices in the house since he had heard the car departing. He realised that his chances were best while there was only one man on guard, and he resolved to try it on.

He crept to the door, and stooped at the keyhole and blinked through. The hall was lighted, and he could see the red-headed man, sitting on a rocking-chair and smoking. He was reading a paper, and occasionally rocking in the rocker. As he sat he was facing Bunter's door. Locked as that door was, Mike's eyes were seldom off it.

Bunter stepped back from the door.

If he could get the man to unlock it, and leave it open—if he could get him looking for somebody who wasn't there, there certainly was a chance, while McCann and Flick were absent.

Bunter's fat heart beat rather quickly. But he had made up his mind, and he proceeded to carry out the little scheme he had evolved after so much hard thinking.

The hour was late. Bunter had had his supper, and Mike probably supposed that he had gone to bed. But the fat junior was thinking of anything but bed.

He gave another little fat cough. His heart was beating quite unpleasantly, but he went ahead.

"Hallo! Who are you?" he shouted suddenly.

He heard the crash of the rocker in the hall, as Mike suddenly jumped out of it.

The man had heard Bunter's shout, and no doubt it surprised him. Bunter heard his footsteps approaching the locked door.

"How did you get in here?" went on Bunter. "You woke me up! Who are you? How did you get in?"

"Silence!"

Mike, outside the door, fairly jumped at the sound of the deep, growling voice that uttered the word "silence."

He did not know that he had to deal with a ventriloquist. Nobody, certainly, could have guessed from the voice that Bunter was taking both parts in a duologue.

The key turned quickly in the lock. The door flew open, and the big, red-headed man appeared in the doorway, with a startled face. Mike Clancy stared at Bunter, and stared round the room, evidently in the expectation of seeing someone there as well as the fat school-boy.

"Look out!" gasped Bunter. "He's got a pistol!"

He hurried over to Mike as if for protection.

"Who is it?—What—" gasped Clancy. "Begorra, and how did he get in intirely? Where is he?"

"Under the bed!" gasped Bunter. "He—he nipped under the bed when

you unlocked the door. He's got a pistol!"

Mike Clancy's staring eyes turned on the bed in a corner of the room. He was utterly astonished.

"Keep where you are!" came a voice apparently from under the bed, with a nasal accent. "I've got a gun, and I'll shoot!"

"Faith, and will ye intirely!" roared the Irish-American, and he grabbed a revolver from his hip-pocket and jumped towards the bed. "Now come out, ye thafe of the world, whoever ye are, or I'll fill ye full of holes!"

It was Bunter's chance.

He had hardly dared to hope that it would work out like this; but fortune seemed to smile on him.

Mike, revolver in hand, was stooping beside the bed. In one second more he would discover that there was nobody there.

But one second was enough for Bunter.

Bunter seldom moved quickly; now he moved like lightning. He whipped out of the room, grabbed the door shut after him, and turned the key in the lock.

The next moment there was a roar in the room. It was a roar of rage from Mike.

He had discovered that there was nobody under the bed, and he had discovered at the same moment that he was locked in the room, and was now a prisoner in Bunter's place.

He leaped frantically to the door and dragged at the handle. But the door did not budge. It was a thick, strong door, with a big, strong lock on it, designed to keep a prisoner safe. It was keeping the red-headed man safe now.

Bunter, outside the door, trembled.

Bang, bang! came Mike's heavy fists on the door.

"You spalpeen!" roared Mike. "Open the door, wid ye! Faith, and I'll smash ye! Open the door, then!"

Bunter was not likely to open the door.

He was listening in terror for sounds from some other part of the house. If he had been mistaken in supposing that the other two members of the "bunch" were gone—

But he had not been mistaken. There was no sound in the lonely house save the roaring and banging of the Irish-American in the locked room. Mike seemed to be in a perfectly frantic state. He roared and banged, and banged and roared, uttering blood-curdling threats.

Bunter crossed the hall with swift steps to the outer door. It was locked, and there was no key visible. That, no doubt, was an added precaution, in case the prisoner should succeed in getting out of his room—as he had now, indeed, done. Bunter hastily tried the other doors on the hall. One, that led by a passage to the kitchen of the house, opened to his fat hand, and he bolted down the passage.

"Open the dure, wid ye!" came the roar of the enraged Mike. "Faith, and I'll break ivery bone in yere body!"

Thump, thump, thump!

But the din only spurred Bunter on. He fairly scudded down the passage to the kitchen quarters.

Bang!

It was the roar of a firearm from the locked room. The infuriated man had fired at the lock of the door, in the hope of smashing it open. If Billy Bunter had needed spurring, that ringing report, echoing like thunder through the lonely house, would have done it. He flew.

(Continued on page 12.)

## The LIVING ARM!

Each week members of the Famous "Thrill Club" forgather, and many are the sensational stories they have to tell. This week, in accordance with the rules, Mr. Harvey Baxter, a journalistic member, tells of his most thrilling experience.

**"G**ENTLEMEN!" The chairman of the Thrill Club let his eyes stray around the ranks of the members, who were waiting for his announcement as to who was to speak that evening and give the story of the greatest thrill of his life. "To-night you'll hear what happened to one of our journalistic members. Let me introduce to you Mr. Harvey Baxter, now chief reporter of the 'Morning Mail.'"

He sat down, and Harvey Baxter stood up. Baxter was one of the youngest members of the club, but, during his time as a reporter of the famous newspaper, he had run across many adventures, the strangest of which he was now about to relate.

I was a cub reporter at the time, and we heard a yarn at the office regarding an old scientist, who it was stated, had invented a new method of grafting on limbs in place of those which had been amputated. No one took Professor Patterson seriously, but it promised to be a good "stunt" story, so I was sent off to interview the old gentleman about his idea.

He lived in a rambling old house on the outskirts of an industrial town and had one servant—an old soldier, who had been with him for years.

I rang the house bell and waited. The professor himself opened the door and demanded what I wanted. I explained that I had come to interview him on the subject of his new discoveries, and I was asked to enter.

I did so, and was shown to a room on the ground floor. "Your new discoveries have caused some little sensation," I said. "I would like you to give me an interview—in non-technical language—"

The old man interrupted me.

"A sensation, yes!" he said. "Simply because I say that a limb can be grafted on to a human body, people imagine me to be mad."

"But," I protested, "when a limb is cut off it dies."

"Supposing we could keep a limb alive!" he said. "Look, I will show you!"

He rose to his feet and drew back a curtain—a curtain which shut off his study from his laboratory.

Inside here was a plant-pot, and in it had been planted a brown thing which looked like a thin, strange plant. It was jerking convulsively—horribly!

"Do not be afraid," said the professor. "This is only the leg of a frog. Look for yourself!"

I did so, and a cry came to my lips. For it was, actually, a frog's leg, planted in the pot, and jerking and kicking most horribly, as though it was in the most excruciating pain. To prove that it was indeed only a leg, the professor plucked it from the earth.

Then something happened. Whether it was the curious stifling atmosphere of the place, or the sheer terror of the thoughts that were stealing over me—or whether the professor had hypnotised me, I don't know. But the fact remains, that I dropped to the floor in a dead faint!

When I came back to my senses I found that I was bound hand and foot. I was in a chair, and, as I opened my eyes, I saw the professor standing by something on the table—something that was covered with a dark cloth. He turned as I attempted to move, and fixed his eyes upon me.

"It is good that you came here alone," he said. "You must help me with my experiment!"

I strained at the bonds which held me to the chair.

"How can I help you when I am tied up here?" I demanded.

"Excellently," answered the professor. "For I am going to prove my words by grafting a new limb on to you. I am going to cut off one of your arms, and give you, in return—this!"

As he spoke he whipped off the cover from the thing on the table, and I gave a cry of horror. For there, in a large plant-pot, was planted an arm—a human arm!



It was alive! It writhed and shook; the fist clenching and unclenching. Sick with horror, I watched its movements with fascinated fear.

"That arm is alive!" said the professor. "So far I have succeeded. I can amputate and keep the arm alive. But now I must see if I can graft it on to a living body and still keep it alive. Had you not come I would have had no one upon whom to experiment, for my old servant was too old—he died under the anæsthetic. I did not mean to kill him. Do not be afraid. I shall not kill you, for I shall not administer an anæsthetic!"

He turned again to the arm. I also looked at it, and it seemed that the arm was threatening him. Then the professor took up the instruments he needed to perform the amputation on my arm, and then moved the living arm across nearer to me.

"Look at your new arm!" he gloated. "And think—you will be the first to undergo this! You will be the pioneer!"

Horried, I watched him come nearer. In a moment he would begin to amputate my arm. I struggled desperately, but I could not break my bonds. The professor leaned over me, and there came a stabbing pain in my arm, and for a moment I was forced to close my eyes.

As I did so a terrible, nerve-wracking scream rang out. But it was not I who had screamed. It was the professor, and, as I opened my eyes and saw what had happened, I gasped with horror.

For, in approaching me, the professor had passed close—too close—to the living arm! In a flash the jerking clenching fist had closed around his throat!

There was a tinkle as the instruments dropped from his hand to the floor. The professor's screams changed to a choking gurgle. He was being strangled by the living arm of the old servant he had murdered!

Then, while the professor tore with nerveless fingers at the fist which had clenched around his throat, and was crushing his windpipe as though it were tissue-paper, he reeled backward, taking with him the arm—still tightly fastened around his neck.

Crash!

The plant-pot was dragged from the table, and the arm, just like a plant that is pulled up from the roots, parted with the soil in which it had been planted. But its hold did not relax, and, through a mist of horror, I saw the arm give a last convulsive shudder and then hang limp!

But the grip stiffened in the throes of death, and the professor dropped to the floor—dead—as I, with a super-human effort, burst the bonds which had held me fast in the chair, and rushed like a madman from that room of terror!

Harvey Baxter ceased talking and sat down.

"That, gentlemen," he said, "was the greatest thrill I have ever experienced in my life!"

(Look out for another thrilling narrative next week.)

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## THE HOLD-UP AT GREYFRIARS!

(Continued from page 10.)

The kitchen door, at the back of the house, was on the latch. Bunter tore it open and dashed out.

The summer night was fine; a host of stars gleamed in a dark-blue sky. Bunter saw the distant fence that surrounded the grounds in which the lonely house stood, topped by tall poplars. He discerned a gravel path that ran down to a back gate, and he raced down the path.

The night wind blew fresh on his fat face. Hope was high in his breast now. Once outside the walls, the first pedestrian, or the first motorist, meant help and rescue. From the house behind him came the roar of the pistol again. Mike was utterly reckless now in his efforts to break out of the locked room. He knew that the prisoner was out of the house and escaping.

Bunter arrived, panting, at the gate. He clambered breathlessly over it and rolled into the lane outside.

He picked himself up and ran.

Where he was, the Owl of the Remove had no idea, except that he was certain that he was many a long mile from Greyfriars. But he gave no thought to that; his only thought was to put a safe distance between himself and the house of the kidnappers. Gasping and panting, puffing and blowing like a grampus, Bunter sped along the lane. It led him into a country road, and the Owl of the Remove turned into the road and ran—and ran till his fat limbs refused to run any farther.

## THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Bad Luck for Barney!

**"D**EAR me!" said Mr. Quelch. He very nearly said "Confound it!"

Such expressions, however, were not fitting for a Form master, even in the privacy of his bed-room.

Really, it was annoying.

The Remove fellows had gone to sleep quite peacefully after the wild and uproarious scene in their dormitory.

But Mr. Quelch could not go to sleep.

Between fifteen and fifty there was a great gulf fixed. A rough-and-tumble did not produce any lasting effects on the merry Removites. But it had shaken the Remove master very considerably.

Sleep was impossible.

Having turned over, and over again, and over and over, Henry Samuel Quelch finally gave up the attempt to get to sleep.

He sat up, switched on his bedside lamp, and looked round him for a book. Reading in bed was a bad habit, which Mr. Quelch certainly never would have allowed in his Form. But for an elderly gentleman who could not sleep it was the only resource. Mr. Quelch had tried counting sheep; he had tried mathematical problems in his head; and it was no use. He was sore, and shaken, and irritable, and could not sleep. Euripides was his resource now. If Euripides could not send a man to sleep, the case was hopeless.

But it is well said that it never rains but it pours. Generally there was a classical volume by Mr. Quelch's bedside, in readiness for such emergencies. Now there wasn't! Mr. Quelch, glancing round with a gleaming eye for Euripides, remembered that he had taken the volume down with him that morning to his study.

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"Dear me!" he said, in a tone that sounded as if he were saying something much more expressive than "dear me!"

He sat and blinked in the soft light of the shaded lamp. There was nothing in the room to read. His watch told him that it was half-past twelve. He was disinclined to turn out and go downstairs for a book. He was also disinclined to sit there sleepless. So he said "Dear me!" twice again, in expressive tones.

Finally he turned out, put on his dressing-gown and slippers, and prepared to go down.

He had made up his mind to fetch Euripides.

In this case, obviously, the mountain would not come to Mahomet, so Mahomet had to go to the mountain.

Mr. Quelch's expression, at that moment, was not amiable. Had he had to deal with his Form just then for their riotous outbreak, it was probable that he would not have spared the rod. Fortunately, for the Remove, he was not going to deal with them till the morning.

He opened his door and stepped quietly out.

He was careful to make no noise. He did not want to wake anybody at that hour of the night. Neither did he need a light, as every inch of the way was familiar to him.

He stepped softly along the corridor and reached the stairs. In a few minutes he was gliding along Masters' Passage to his study.

Click!

Mr. Quelch stopped suddenly.

There was a window in Masters' Passage, shaded by an ancient elm, of which the branches brushed the panes. The sudden, sharp click came from that window.

The Remove master stood quite still, his heart beating faster.

An ancient building like Greyfriars had many eerie sounds in the silence of the night. Old wainscots would creak, the wind would moan in old chimneys. But that sharp, sudden click was nothing of this kind. Mr. Quelch knew what it was. It was the movement of a window-catch, forced back.

Mr. Quelch stood still and listened.

Faintly, from the window, not more than a dozen feet from him, came a sound of a sash slowly and cautiously raised.

In ordinary circumstances Mr. Quelch might have suspected that some Greyfriars man, who had been surreptitiously out of bounds, was getting back into the House in this secret way. But now the thought of Fisher T. Fish and the kidnappers rushed immediately into his mind.

Mr. Quelch's lips set in a hard line.

He listened for some moments to the sound from the passage window. Then he stirred. Silently he stepped into his study. He was not looking for Euripides now. He stooped over the fender and picked up the poker—a large, heavy poker, excellently designed for dealing with midnight intruders.

With the poker grasped in his hand, Mr. Quelch stepped back into the passage. From the direction of the window came a cold draught of air.

The window-sash was fully raised now, and in the dim glimmer of the starlight a figure could be seen, climbing silently in.

There was nothing like fear in the Remove master's breast. He was extremely angry, and very determined. The expression on his face, had it been seen, might have daunted any kidnapper. Mr. Quelch, in fact, was in

a mood to "pitch into" somebody. That shadowy person in the window was, had he known it, the right man in the right place.

Softly Mr. Quelch stepped along the passage towards the open window, invisible in the darkness.

There was a faint whisper from without. Someone standing below the window was speaking to the man half-way in, who was listening and peering in the shadows.

"All clear, Barney?"

"I guess so!"

Mr. Quelch set his lips hard. That whisper, which came clearly to his ears in the silence, told him who the intruder was. It was Barney McCann who was crouching in the window, about to step down inside the House. The kidnappers, with almost incredible effrontery, were entering the School-House of Greyfriars, in search of Fisher T. Fish.

"I guess it's jest pie, Slick!" breathed Barney McCann. "I sure reckon we're getting the goods this time."

"You've said it, Barney!"

Barney McCann dropped silently within. The plumper form of Slick Flick clambered on the sill to follow.

A sudden bright beam of light shot through the darkness. McCann had turned on an electric torch.

He had no expectation of seeing anyone in the passage. He was only making sure that the coast was clear.

But the next moment he gave a startled gasp.

That bright beam of light showed him a tall, angular figure, draped in a dressing-gown, a grim face, and a hand clutching a big poker.

Barney had only one glimpse.

The next moment the poker had established contact with Barney's head, and a fearful yell awoke the echoes of Greyfriars.

"Ooooooooooh!"

"Great gophers!" gasped Slick Flick. "What—"

"Scoundrel!" said Mr. Quelch between his teeth.

The poker swiped again, but this time the dazed Barney dodged it, and the swipe barely missed him. He plunged back at the open window.

Slick Flick dropped back to the ground instantly. Obviously now it was not going to be "pie" for the kidnappers.

Crash! Clatter!

The poker barely missed Barney McCann again as the kidnapper plunged headlong through the window to escape. It landed on the window and smashed a pane with a terrific clatter. Fragments of glass rained down on the upturned face of Slick Flick.

"Beat it!" he panted. And Slick promptly set the example, racing away into the darkness.

Barney McCann dropped to the ground, gasping and howling. Mr. Quelch leaned from the window and swiped again with the poker, and Barney gave a fearful yell as he caught it with the back of his neck. The next moment he was vanishing after Slick. Hurried footsteps died away in the night.

"Bless my soul!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

There were voices, footsteps, flashing lights all over Greyfriars now. Barney's yells had alarmed the whole House. From the distance the snort of a car was heard. The kidnappers were gone.

Once more they had failed. But it may be doubted whether this would have been the case had not Fishy's burglar alarm set moving the chain of incidents that led up to it.

# THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

## Bunter Gets a Lift I

"O H 'crikey!'" groaned Billy Bunter.

The Owl of the Remove sat on a grassy bank by the roadside and groaned.

He had run till he could run no more, and he was sure that he was at least half a mile from the headquarters of the kidnappers.

He sat down to rest and gasp for breath.

Round him was the dark, lonely countryside, silent and solitary with the silence and solitude of the small hours. No building was to be seen, though as all lights were naturally out at that hour a building might have been within a dozen yards without Bunter seeing it. Not a car had passed on the road, but cars were naturally few and far between at half-past one o'clock.

Bunter could not even guess where he was. He was sure that when the kidnappers had carried him off he had been taken a long distance from Greyfriars, but in what direction he had no idea. He was on a lonely country road, that was all he knew. The darkness prevented him from discovering anything else; though as the darkness also screened him from a pursuer, he was thankful for it. If Mike had got out of the locked room, he was certain to be in pursuit, and Bunter listened with painful intentness for the sound of footsteps on the road.

But there was no sound of footsteps.

He was utterly alone.

He sat and breathed hard. There was a hedge at the top of the grassy bank by the roadside, and Bunter was ready to crawl through the hedge and hide at the sound of a footstep. But there was no sound in the heavy silence. After all, he was a good distance from the kidnappers' den now; and Mike, if he got out of the locked room, would not know in which direction he had fled. The fat junior realised that he was in little danger from Mike now, and he sat and rested and tried to think out a plan of action.

As soon as he had had a good rest he would tramp on, he decided; he was bound to arrive somewhere some time. And if a car passed he would ask for a lift; any motorist would be willing to help a fellow who was escaping from kidnappers. And there was bound to be a car sooner or later.

The Owl of the Remove picked himself up at last and tramped on. He was tired and sleepy; but the grass was damp with dew, and he was not disposed to sleep there. He plodded on wearily.

Still no car appeared on the road. Bunter reflected bitterly that if he hadn't wanted to see a car he would have had to hop out of the way of a dozen or so. Now he wanted to see one, there was not one to be seen. It was just his beastly luck.

He plodded on.

"Oh, good!" he ejaculated suddenly.

Far in the distance two bright headlights appeared.

A car was approaching.

"Thank goodness!" gasped Bunter.

He stood in the middle of the road and blinked at the approaching headlights.

The car was still at a considerable distance, but it was coming towards him. Bunter's only fear was that it might turned off into some side-road before it reached him.

But it came straight on at a great speed. The brilliant headlights rushed down on him like the eyes of some great beast in the darkness.



Mr. Quelch leaned from the window and swiped with the poker. Barney McCann gave a fearful yell as he caught it with the back of his neck!

Bunter waved his hand and shouted.

"Hi! Stop!"

Then he jumped aside, in case the motorist didn't stop. But he continued to wave and shout as the glare of the headlights showed him up standing there by the roadside.

There was a sudden crash of brakes. Evidently the motorist had seen him, and he jammed on his brakes as he saw him. The car glided to a stop almost abreast of Bunter.

It was a dark saloon car, with two men in it. Both of them were staring at Bunter.

"I—I say—" Bunter rolled towards the halted car. "I say, give me a lift, will you? I've been kidnapped. I've got away in the middle of the night. I'm a Greyfriars man. For goodness' sake, give me a lift to a police station!"

One of the men jumped down.

"Great gophers!" he ejaculated.

Bunter's jaw dropped.

He knew that voice.

"Ow!" he gasped.

Too late, the hapless Owl of the Remove made a jump to escape. The steel-like grip of Barney McCann closed on his fat shoulder.

"You!" hissed Barney.

"Ow!"

Bunter gasped with dismay. McCann and Flick had been absent; that had given him his chance to befool Mike and get away. Bunter had suspected that they had gone to Greyfriars School to make an attempt on Fisher T. Fish, and he was sure that Greyfriars was at least fifty miles away. Not for an instant had he dreamed of falling in with them. But it was the unexpected that had happened.

"It's the kid!" said Slick Flick from the car.

"Sure! How did he get here?"

"You can search me!"

"You young scallywag!" Barney McCann's grip on his shoulder closed like a vice and forced a howl from Bunter. "What does this mean? How did you get out? Say!"

"Yaroooh!"

"You dog-goned pie-faced gink—" "Can it, Barney!" said Flick hurriedly. "Get him back to the house—he'll keep. We're on a public road here—"

"You've said it!" agreed Barney.

He lifted the fat junior into the car, (Continued on page 16.)



The first time Dr. Birchmall swiped at the golf-ball he missed it!

The second time he hit it in the same place!

I.

"Is everybody hear?"

Dr. Birchmall wrapped out that question, as his shifty eyes swept the Masters' Common-room (which had not been swept for months!)

"Here, here!" came a respectful chorus.

The masters were "all there"—with the exception of Mr. Looney, the maths master, who had been sent to a home for the mentally efficient. Pouring over figgers for a long period had made Mr. Looney—figgeratively speaking—a bit potty. So he had gone to a nanny for his sannity.

But the other masters were mustard together at the Common-room table. There was Mr. Justiss, with his somewhat peppery manner; Mr. Lickham, who regarded himself as the salt of the earth; Mr. Swishingham, with his vinnygary smile; and, to compleat the cruet of Form masters, there was Mr. Chas Tyser.

Herr Guggenheimer, the German master, and Monsure Froggay, the French master, sat scowling at each other across the table, like the implacable enemies they were. Mr. Noyes, the music master, who played second fiddle to the rest of the staff, was drumming his fingers on the table; and Mr. Larking, the games master, sat in a corner, nonchallantly sucking a golf-ball.

"Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows!" bawled Dr. Birchmall, with that quiet diggnity which sat upon him like a cloke. "There is no need for me to make a long-winded speech—"

"Loud cheers!" mermered Mr. Lickham.

"What did you say, Lickham?" fashed the Head, like lightning.

"Nun-nun-nothing, sir!" said Mr. Lickham hastily. "I—I meerly coffered, sir."

"Suck a pastel, then, and be quiet!" snapped the Head. "As I was about to say, gentlemen, we are met together on this suspicious occasion to discuss the fourthcoming Golf Tornyment. As you are aware, Sir Frederick Funguss, that pompous old ass—I mean, our worthy and respected Chairman of the Bored of Guvvners—is awarding a hansom Gold Cup to the master who wins the Tornyment."

"Dot vos goot!" muttered Guggenheimer, in his guttural tones.

"We, we!" assented Monsure Froggay.

"A hansom Gold Cup," said Mr. Lickham.

Justiss, with a sudden sneeze which gave Dr. Birchmall a shower-bath, "is not to be sneezed at—'Shoo! 'Shum!'"

Dr. Birchmall mopped his face with a not overclean hankercheef.

"Don't sneeze in my face, Justiss!" he snarled. "Don't you know your manners? Sneeze in Lickham's!"

Mr. Justiss showed signs of eggsplooding again; and the other masters, backing their chairs away, gave him a wide birth. The threatened sneeze, however, was strangled at berth.

"A Gold Cup," said Mr. Lickham, with a dreemy look in his eyes, "is just what I have been anchoring after for a long time. I will clear a space for it on my study mantlepiece—"

Dr. Birchmall broke into a guffaw.

"Ho, ho, ho! That's the richest joak—and the poorest—that I've heard this term!" he chortled. "Licky, old man, you are a scooper-optimist! What you don't know about golf would fill hole vollumes!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm in good company, anyway!" growled Mr. Lickham. "You're not eggactly a world-beater yourself, sir."

"No?" said the Head eggactly. "What are you saying of? Why, I was winning golf championships before you were breached! In my youth I played golf for Aston Villa—"

"My hat!" gasped Mr. Justiss.

"And I scored a sentury in overy match!" said the Head impressively.

"Grate pip!"

"In fact, I was the finest three-quarter stand-off half in the land, bar none!" said Dr. Birchmall.

The masters gaped and blinked. Mr. Larking was so astonished that he nearly swallowed the golf-ball he was sucking.

Dr. Birchmall seemed to be a bit befogged on the subject of golf. According to his statements, it was a sort of composite game of Socker, Kricket, and Rugger. Unlike Sam Weller's nollidge of London, Dr. Birchmall's nollidge of golf was not eggstensive; but it was certainly peculiar!

"Are you a plus-four man, sir?" inkwired Mr. Swishingham, suppressing a chuckle.

"Of corse," said the Head. "I wear plus-fours every Satterday! I look very becoming in them, too! My photograph was in all the comic papers last week."

The masters chuckled. But their chuckles dyed away when Dr. Birchmall continued:

"I want to put up a propersition to

you jents. In a nutshell, it is this. As I am such a wonderful golfer, it is a sheer waist of time for any of you to compeat against me. So I suggest that you all stand down from the Tornyment—"

"And give you a walk-over?" said Mr. Justiss. "No jolly fear!"

"You vos talking out of your hat, ain't it?" growled Herr Guggenheimer.

Dr. Birchmall glared.

"If you won't stand down I'll jolly well make you sit up!" he roared.

"We shouldn't dream of standing down—any of us!" said Mr. Lickham firmly. "I can see your game, sir, and, with all dew respect, you are an artful old codger!"

"What! What!" gasped the Head.

"You want to collar the Gold Cup without having to make an eggshhibition of yourself on the golf-lynx," said Mr. Lickham. "And such goings-on are not coming off—not if we know it!"

"Here, here!"

"The Tornyment will be conducted on the nock-out prinsiple," said Mr. Lickham, "and the players will be drawn in pears, in the usual way."

"I, I!" said Mr. Justiss.

"We, we!" said Monsure Froggay.

Dr. Birchmall pulled savidgely at his beard.

"All right—have it your own way," he said. "The nock-out rounds will be a farce, with only one possible ending. I shall vindicate my prowess as a golfer, and emerge from the Tornyment with flying cullers, baring my blushing onners thick upon me. Don't say I never warned you! And now for the draw!"

So saying, Dr. Birchmall drew a grubby peace of paper from his pocket, and proseeded to cut it into small oblong squares. On each square he scribbled a master's name. Then, borrowing Herr Guggenheimer's bowler hat, the Head turned his back to his audience, and put the slips of paper in.

Facing the masters again, Dr. Birchmall invited Mr. Lickham and Mr. Justiss to draw out the names in pears, each taking one slip.

"I have nothing up my sleeve!" said the Head. "Everything is fare and square and above-board."

The eggstement in the Masters' Common-room was so intense that you could have heard an acid drop.

The names were duly drawn, and the masters found themselves pared as under:

"Mr. Justiss v. Mr. Lickham.  
Mr. Swishingham v. Mr. Chas. Tyser.

Herr Guggenheimer v. Monsure Froggay.

Mr. Noyes v. M. Larking.

A Bye—Dr. Birchmall.

The luck of the draw was certainly with the Head. It has been trooly said that every man makes his own luck, and the Head had certainly made his. The slip of paper baring his name had been discreetly lodged in the lining of the hat, so that it could not be drawn until last. Consekwently, the Head had made sure of drawing a bye.

Mr. Lickham and Mr. Justiss had per-sevred the wangle, but they were too astonished to make a seen about it. They let it go; contenting themselves with the reflection that Dr. Birchmall would never win the Golf Tornyment, even if he drew a bye in every subsekwent draw—which he artfully did!

To cut a long story short, the Head reached the Final without having played in a single match!

He found himself pitied against Mr. Lickham; and when the grate day of the Final dorned, St. Sam's was all agog with eggitement. Sir Frederick Funguss had come down to see the match and prezzent the gold bawbq; and the famus golf-lynx at Muggleton were beseeged by a hussling, bussling, jossling, frantiek crowd!

## II.

"CADDY!" bellowed Dr. Birchmall. "Prepare my tea!"

Jack Jolly of the Fourth, with a bag of golf-clubs slung over his shoulder, blinked at the Head in perpleximent.

"Your—your tea, sir?" he stuttered. "Surely you won't have your tea till after the match?"

The Head stared at Jack Jolly more in anger than in sorrow.

"Fool! Dolt! Imbesile!" he stormed. "I don't mean the sort of tea that you mean! I mean my golf tea—the little mound of earth from which I shall drive my ball over yonder bunker, and at the same time drive Mr. Lickham to distraction!"

Jack Jolly gave a comprehending grin, and stooped down to prepare the Head's tea. He was watched by hundreds of hungry eyes.

"Now," said Dr. Birchmall grimly, "the game begins!"

So saying, he strode up to Mr. Lickham, and, gratefully to the serprize of that gentleman and all beholders, proceeded to claw his face!

"Ow-ow-ow! Hold on—I mean, leggo!" spluttered Mr. Lickham.

"What on earth are you doing, sir? Are you mad?"

"Not at all!" said the Head, clawing away viggerusly. "I understand that I am to start at scratch—so here goes!"

But for the timely intervention of Mr. Justiss and Mr. Larking, the face of Mr. Lickham might have been torn to ribbons. Certainly he would have been unable to play golf. He would have been a case for the ambulance!

Dr. Birchmall was dragged away from his victim, Mr. Justiss soothingly pointing out that "starting at scratch" did not mean committing assault and battery on one's opponent!

Frank Fearless, who was acting as Mr. Lickham's caddy, produced a quantity of stamp-edging, which he stuck over the Form master's damaged face, giving him quite a loodicrus appearance.

Mr. Lickham then drove off from his tea, amid loud cheers.

Dr. Birchmall was not so suxxessful in getting the ball away. The first time he hit it he missed it; and the second time he hit it in the same place.

But at the third attempt—by a wonderful stroke of luck—the Head smote the ball hard and true, fare and square, good and proper. It went wizzing through space like a cannon-ball from a mashine-gun.

"Grate shot, sir—grate shot!" cried Dr. Birchmall, riggling round and clapping himself on the back. "Did you see that, Jolly? There would have been a big noise about that, if Braid or Duncan had made such a drive!"

"There'll be a big noise about it now, sir, I'm thinking," said Jack Jolly, with a grin. "It's hit Sir Frederick Funguss on the head!"

"Oh, my hat!"

The Head's face fell. And before he had time to pick it up, Sir Frederick Funguss, pink with rage and pail with pashun, came stamping on the seen.

"Fowl!" he cried, tenderly rubbing his forrid, where a big bump was slowly forming. "That was a fowl stroke! Birchmall, you—you clumsy loonatick! You might have braned me!"

"Impossible!" said the Head gravely. "You cannot brane the braneless. Anyway, it was your own fault, for being in the line of fire. Didn't you here me shout 'Four'?"

"I thought it was an ass braying!" said Sir Frederick, "and was coming across to investigate, when your ball smote me on the forrid. If concussion or brane-fever soopervenues, I shall soo you for dammages! You ought not to be let loose on a golf-lynx! Yah!"

Saying which, Sir Frederick poked out his tung at the Head, and stamped away, still caressing his forrid.

After this plezzent diversion, the game proceeded in grim Ernest. And Dr. Birchmall, in spite of his wonderful start, and his boast that he would wipe Mr. Lickham off the earth, soon found that he had met his match, if not his master.

Mr. Lickham, despite his dammaged fizz, played with stern rezzerlution. Every muscle was braced; every nerve was taught; and "Victory" was written all over Mr. Lickham's face—only the stamp-edging hid it from view.

Mr. Lickham having taken the first three holes, Dr. Birchmall decided it was high time he pulled up his sox. He had meant to win the match by fare means if possible, and not to resort to fowl tatticks unless the need arose.

But the need had arisen now, and the Head got busy. When nobody was looking, he picked his ball out of a bunker, and carried it on to the green.

Mr. Lickham saw this mancoover, and protested angrily.

"You are fowling, sir! You are not playing the game!"

"On the contrary, Lickham, I am playing the game of my life!" said the Head, with a grin.

They were at the last hole now, and the game hung in the balance. But for the Head's shady tatticks, Mr. Lickham would have enjoyed an easy victory. As it was, he found himself fighting a neck-and-neck finish with Dr. Birchmall.

It was a drammatick moment. Mr.

Lickham's face was as white as putty as he putted his last putt.

The ball glided over the green, straight as a dio for the hole. Dr. Birchmall watched it with aggernisod eyes. Would it stop short in front of the hole, or would it travel beyond it?

Neither! The ball had just the right pace on it. In another second, it would have plopped into the hole, to give Mr. Lickham the match.

But Dr. Birchmall was not letting a Gold Cup slip through his fingers so easily as that. Dropping on all fours over the hole, he faced the slowly advancing ball, and blew with all his might.

Mr. Lickham's ball stopped dead on the very lip of the hole.

"Fowl! Fowl!" cried Mr. Lickham eggstiedly. "You breathed on my ball, sir!"

"No, I never! I was watching it breathlessly!" said the Head. "Tuff luck, Lickham! Another toeny, weeny fraction of an inch, and— By the way, where's my ball?"

The Head's ball was lying on the out-skirts of the green.



Dr. Birchmall faced the slowly advancing ball and blew against it with all his might!

"Gimme my putter, Jolly!" he said. "I'll soon settle Lickham's hash!"

Dr. Birchmall finished the game in a trooly remarkable way. All the rules and cannons of golf were thrown to the winds. Instead of playing one stroke only, the Head made a series of chops and stabs at the ball, bringing it nearer and nearer to the hole. At last, he farely dragged it in, and planted his heal on top of it.

"Hooray!" roared Dr. Birchmall. "Hip, hip, hip, hoo-giddy-ray!"

That was the only cheer which ekkoed over the golf-lynx.

"Me for the gold pot!" chortled the Head, dancing a jig in his eggitement. "Come and give me your congratters, Lickham!"

But it was Mr. Lickham, and not the Head, who reseved the congrattulations after that memmorable match. For Sir Frederick Funguss—who had not forgiven the Head for hitting him on the forrid—desided that Dr. Birchmall should be disqualified for fowling.

The Gold Cup, therefore, was prezzented to Mr. Lickham, amid the frenzid cheers of St. Sam's and the frantiek jeers of the Head, who tottered away from the golf-lynx with feelings too deep for words!

## THE END.

(Next week's MAGNET will contain another topping "Hal Smiles" yarn by Bob Cherry, entitled: "HEAD-MASTER SMILES!" Be sure and read it, whatever you do!)

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## THE HOLD-UP AT GREYFRIARS!

(Continued from page 13.)

and followed him in. Slick Flick drove on.

Bunter collapsed on the floor of the car. Barney McCann bent over him, his eyes glittering. There was a big bruise on McCann's head, and it had not improved his temper.

"Just one yaup from you, and you get yours, you fat scallywag!" he hissed. "You watch out!"

But Bunter did not venture to "yaup." He collapsed on the floor of the car in a state of utter terror and dismay. McCann threw a heavy rug over him, and Bunter remained quivering and palpitating under the rug while the car ran swiftly on.

He was in the hands of the kidnappers again! He was going back to the lonely house, to face the enraged Mike. Bunter had a strong disinclination to have anything further to do with Mike. He mumbled dismally as he lay under the enveloping rug.

He heard Slick Flick get down and open a gate, and the car drove up the gravel drive to the house and stopped. Barney McCann stepped out, and hooked Bunter after him.

From the interior of the house came a sound of thudding and thumping. Mike, apparently, was still in the locked room, and still trying to get out.

"What the thunder does it mean?" growled McCann. "Has Mike gone mad, or got drunk—or what?"

"Search me!" answered Flick.

He inserted a latch-key in the door, and opened it. Bunter was hustled in, and the door closed.

Thump, thump! Bang, thud! came from the locked door across the hall. Barney McCann strode across to it.

"Say, Mike, you gink!" he shouted. The thumping within stopped.

"Aw, is that you, Barney?"

"Yop! What the thunder—" McCann turned back the key in the lock, and kicked the door open. "What's happened, you pie-faced geck?"

"He's got away!" gasped Mike. "The kid's got away! He—holly smake!" He broke off as his eyes fell on Bunter. "You've got him?"

McCann's savage face broke into a grin.

"I guess he asked us for a lift on the road!" he said.

"Carry me home to die!" ejaculated Mike.

"We've got him!" said Slick Flick. "He's safe. But what you mean by letting him loose, you gol-darned geck?"

Mike gave Bunter a glare. The Owl of Greyfriars promptly backed behind Mr. McCann. He did not like Mike's look.

"There was somebody in the room," said Mike. "Leastways, I heard a voice in the room, and looked in, sorr. And I'll swear he called out from under the bed, and while I was looking, that scallywag dodged out of the room and locked me in. There was sure somebody; but I couldn't find nobody; and it beat me to a frazzle!"

"You was drunk!" snapped Slick Flick.

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"And by the same token I had only one whisky, while I was sitting up waiting for you to come back!" protested Mike. "And I'm telling you, sorr, that I heard somebody in the room. The kid saw him, too!"

"Guff!" snapped McCann. "How could there be anybody in the room, you dog-goned gink! Wasn't the door locked, and the shutters fastened, and could a rat get down the chimney? You was dreaming!"

"But the kid said—"

"Wouldn't he say anything to fool you, and get out!" snarled McCann. "Leave the juice alone after this, you fool! If the kid had got away, we'd have had to close down this shebang and start fresh somewhere else. Get into your room you piecan," he added, turning savagely to Bunter.

Bunter fairly jumped into the room. He was only too glad to be locked in, out of reach of Mike. The key turned on Billy Bunter again.

In the hall, there was a muttering of angry voices for a long time. Matters were not going so well with Barney McCann & Co., as was usual with the operations of the "bunch." The peculiar business of kidnapping seemed to present more difficulties, somehow, on this side of the Atlantic. But Billy Bunter did not heed the angry voices on the other side of his door. He rolled on the bed and went to sleep. And presently, all was silent in the lonely house, save the deep and resonant snore of Billy Bunter.

## THE NINTH CHAPTER.

### A Very Unusual Visitor!

"SAY, is this Greyfriars?"

Gosling, standing in the old gateway, slowly turned his head as he was addressed.

It was the afternoon of the following day.

The alarm in the night had quite thrilled the school. Mr. Quelch's adventure with the midnight intruders was a thrilling topic all through Greyfriars. The Removites were quite proud of their Form master. The kidnappers had come, and Quelch had handled them—like Coriolanus, alone he did it! The broken window in Masters passage remained as a memento of the combat, till the builder's man came from Courtfield to put in a new pane. The Remove agreed that Quelch had shown uncommon pluck; and wondered whether the kidnappers had had enough, or whether they would be heard of again.

Fisher T. Fish was sure that they would be heard of again.

He told the Remove men that Barney McCann's bunch never backed down. Indeed, troublesome as the "bunch" were to Fishy, it was evident that he rather admired them for their pertinacity. He pointed out that such a "bunch" was a product of the great Yew-nited States, and of the Yew-nited States alone. In crooks, as in everything else, the Yew-nited States could "lay over" any other country in the wide world. Fishy calculated that a native crook in this poor little island was a "poor fish" in comparison with an American crook.

Harry Wharton & Co. were sauntering down to the gates after class, when the stranger stopped and addressed Gosling. Gosling, as the man spoke, gave him a rather suspicious look. In the present unusual circumstances at the school, any stranger with an American accent was likely to awaken suspicion. And the man who spoke to

Gosling was evidently, from his nasal accent, an American.

"This 'ere is Greyfriars!" Gosling answered coldly.

"Then I guess I've called to see the Big Bug," said the stranger cheerfully. "I'll say I've got noos for him."

"Eh?" said Gosling.

"The headmaster, bo!" said the visitor, and he walked in at the gates, glanced round him, and strolled towards the House.

Harry Wharton & Co. glanced at him, with some interest. Gosling watched him rather dubiously, as if in doubt whether to admit him within the precincts. However, the transatlantic gentleman had settled that matter for himself. He was a plump, well-fed looking man, with horn-rimmed spectacles; and on his looks might have been a "drummer," or American commercial traveller. He was rather well-dressed; his Homburg hat was set a little on one side of his head; his goatee beard was neatly trimmed; a straggling moustache almost hid his mouth; and he wore, rather than smoked, a cigar in one corner of his mouth.

"News for the Head!" said Bob Cherry. The juniors had caught the stranger's words to Gosling. "He's a Yank! I wonder if he's got any news of poor old Bunter."

"One of the gang, perhaps, come to arrange about the ransom!" suggested Frank Nugent.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton. "He would want a lot of nerve to walk into Greyfriars to do that."

"Well, that bunch has plenty of nerve," said Bob. "Still, they can't be holding Bunter to ransom. He isn't a gold-fish like Fishy."

The horn-rimmed man passed the group of juniors, and gave them a cheery nod, and paused.

"Say, bub, where does your Big Bug hang out?" he asked.

Harry Wharton & Co. smiled. They could guess that that extraordinary title was applied to the Head.

"He's in his study now in the School House," said Harry.

"And which is the School House?" asked the horn-rimmed gentleman, glancing round at the ancient buildings that almost closed in the quadrangle on all sides. "Put me wise, sonny!"

"I'll show you the way!" answered the captain of the Remove.

And he led the stranger to the House, and called Trotter. Trotter, the House page, took the American gentleman's card to the Head, in his study. Harry Wharton & Co. strolled in the quad again.

Dr. Locke was busy with Greek papers for the Sixth, when the visitor's card was brought in to him.

He glanced at it, and read "Mr. Cato R. Hooger." Under the name was written in pencil, "important business."

"You may show him in, Trotter," said the Head.

Mr. Cato R. Hooger was shown into the study.

Had Billy Bunter been back at Greyfriars, he would have been able to tell the Head that Mr. Hooger was better known by the name of Slick Flick—though as a matter of fact, the addition of a moustache and a goatee beard made Mr. Hooger look rather unlike Mr. Flick. But William George Bunter was still safe in a locked room far away; and it was not likely to occur to the Head that a member of the "bunch" would have the effrontery to walk into Greyfriars in broad daylight and ask for an interview.

The Head rather feared that he had been caught by a commercial traveller,

who would try to sell him a typewriter or a calculating machine or a reaper and binder or an electric sweeper. But he rose to his feet very courteously as the American was shown in. Even a commercial traveller never wore out the Head's old-fashioned courtesy.

"Eh—Mr. Hooger," said the Head, glancing at the card.

"You've said it, sir!" said the caller.

"Dr. Locke, I guess?"

"Quite so. I am afraid, sir, that I can spare but a few minutes," said the Head politely.

"I guess I won't keep you long, sir," said Mr. Hooger. He glanced round the study. Trotter had drawn the door shut when he left him there. The window was high from the ground, and partly concealed by curtains. One glance showed the visitor that there was no danger of being observed from outside the study.

"I guess I've called on business, sir!" he said.

"Pray be seated!" said the Head.

But Mr. Hooger did not sit down. There was a strange glitter in his light grey eyes as he fixed them on the Head.

"You've got a boy in this school named Fish, sir?"

"Quite so," said the Head. He gave Mr. Hooger a puzzled glance over his glasses. "Does your call refer to the boy Fish?"

"I'll say it does, sir!" answered Mr. Hooger, with emphasis. "Yep! I'll surely say it does, sir! I've called for him."

The Head gave quite a jump.

"You—you have called for Fish?" he ejaculated.

"You get me, sir."

"I—I do not think I quite understand," said the Head, bewildered. "If you have authority from Fish's parents to see the boy, I can arrange for you to see him, if that is what you mean."

"You don't understand United States sir?" asked Mr. Hooger. "When I say I've called for him, I mean I've called for him. I'm going to take him for a little walk, sir."

"I fear that I cannot allow anything of the kind, Mr. Hooger," said the Head. "The present circumstances are peculiar. The boy Fish is in danger of being kidnapped by certain lawless persons—one of whom is named McCann. He is never allowed outside school gates."

"Sho!" said Mr. Hooger.

"If, however, you have written authority from Fish's father, of course—" said the Head, hesitating.

"I guess not, sir! But I got better authority than that."

"Indeed! To what do you allude?"

"Jest this, sir!" said Mr. Hooger.

His fat hand slid into his hip-pocket, and came out again, with an automatic in it. Dr. Locke fairly jumped.

Mr. Hooger lifted the pistol, so that the muzzle bore upon the startled and amazed headmaster.

Dr. Locke sat back suddenly in his chair. He stared at Mr. Hooger with his mouth open, in his bewildered amazement.

"You don't want to get excited, sir, or to reach out to that bell, nor yet to the telephone," said Mr. Hooger, in quite a casual tone. "For if you do, sir, this here school will want a noo headmaster all of a sudden. There's seven little bullets in this little pop-gun, and I can sure place them all in the same spot in less'n that number of seconds. You wouldn't make any great shakes of a headmaster, sir, with seven

holes through the middle of your cabeza! You get me?"

The Head gasped.

"Bless my soul!"

And there was silence in the study.

## THE TENTH CHAPTER.

### The Hold-Up!

**D**R. LOCKE wondered whether he was dreaming.

Sitting in his pleasant study, in the summer afternoon, with a pile of Greek papers on his desk, and the sound of boyish voices floating from the distance in at his window, it seemed incredible that he really was looking at a loaded revolver in the hand of a desperate and ruthless crook.

But it was no dream. It was terribly real.

For all his cool and casual manner, Slick Flick's face was hard and ruthless, his eyes glinted like steel; and the automatic in his hand never wavered as it was aimed at the bewildered headmaster of Greyfriars.

Dr. Locke gazed at him dumb-founded.

Since the "bunch" had got after Fisher T. Fish, the Head had had some

Our POCKET WALLET which we award for Greyfriars Limericks, are WELL WORTH WINNING! See if you can equal this effort which has been sent in by J. L. Clifton, 10, Thayer Street, London, W.1.

A Greyfriars Governor named Popper,  
Went out in a shining new "topper";  
But a lad with a brick,  
Knocked it off in a tick,  
And the shining headpiece came a cropper!

Don't get downhearted if you fail to win a prize at the first attempt, but try again!

rather rude jolts. A breath of crime from the underworld had invaded and tainted the scholastic calm of his existence. It was really rather hard for him to believe in the existence of such persons as Barney McCann; but he had been forced to realise that they were very real. He had heard McCann's voice on the telephone more than once, and only last night his Remove master had cracked Barney's head with a poker.

But all this had not prepared the Head for actual contact with desperate crooks. He had read of "hold-ups" in the papers; but the idea of being "held up" by a man with a gun, in his own study at Greyfriars, would have seemed fantastic if it ever had occurred to him. It never had! And now it had happened.

"Bless my soul!" repeated the Head feebly.

He gazed at the horn-rimmed man as he might have gazed at an escaped tiger that had got into his study.

"Keep cool, bo!" said the horn-rimmed man easily. "This here gun ain't going off unless you give trouble. Now, I'm going to put you wise. I'm in this game with Barney; I reckon you've heard my name before, and so I don't mind telling you it's Flick! Slick Flick they call me back in Noo Yark; and I'll say I'm as slick as the next

guy, and a few over. It was Barney's idea to cinch that young gold-bug, Fish, last night—and he slipped up on it. I guess Barney's got a lump on his cabeza now that you couldn't put your hat on. Some guy sold him a sockdolager with a poker or suthin'. Barney's sitting to home and nursing his head. Waal, sir, this here is my big idee; and I guess I'm getting by with it. I'm here for young Fish! You get me?"

"Bless my soul!" repeated the Head.

He made a movement.

"If you tetch that bell, sir, it'll be the last thing you'll ever do on this side of Jordan!" said Mr. Flick.

The Head withdrew his hand rather hastily.

"That's better!" agreed Mr. Flick.

"Now let's be sensible and talk business, sir! You've lost a boy—a fat guy named Bunter. He was cinched in mistake for the gold-bug. I guess we're keeping him in cold storage, to keep his mouth shut. But as soon as we get Fish you can have your Bunter back; he's no earthly use to Barney and me. Exchange no robbery, what?" Mr. Slick Flick grinned. "I'm here for Fish! Catch that?"

"You—you—you rascal!" articulated the head. "Do you imagine, for one moment, that you will be allowed to take a Greyfriars boy away from this school by violence?"

Mr. Flick nodded.

"That's jest what I was banking on, bub," he answered. "My idee is that you're going to ring for Fish to be sent to you. He'll amble in here, and I'm going to cinch him proper. You're going to tell him to walk with me. Waal, we walk out together, and that's all. Simple as falling off a ten-storey roof. You get me?"

The Head drew a deep breath. He was still in a state of amazement; but he was recovering himself by this time.

His glance was fixed on Mr. Flick with cold contempt.

Mr. Flick, no doubt, had had plenty of experience in the hold-up line, on the other side of the ocean. He was used to seeing "guys" jump to orders when a gun was trained on them. Bank cashiers had handed out bags of money under the persuasion of Mr. Flick's automatic with his finger on the trigger, and his cold, steely eyes gleaming through his horn-rimmed glasses.

Obviously, he had not the slightest expectation of resistance from this schoolmaster—a man of peace and sedentary life. Indeed, he was rather surprised that the schoolmaster was not crouching in his chair and trembling with fear. But he anticipated no trouble from him—none whatever. The schoolmaster was unarmed; and probably would not have known how to use a weapon had he been armed. It was "pie" to Slick Flick. All that was needed for such a raid was nerve; and Slick Flick had carried out much more desperate raids in his time.

But slick as he was, Mr. Flick was wholly mistaken in his estimate of the schoolmaster.

Bank cashiers and railway conductors had jumped to orders under Mr. Flick's automatic. But the Head of Greyfriars would not have jumped to orders under a battery of machine-guns. In the slender frame of the silver-haired old gentleman was a calm and unbending courage that a man like Slick Flick could not suspect or understand.

He waited for the Head's reply; but Dr. Locke did not speak. He sat very upright, his eyes fixed on the malefactor; his glance expressing only cold scorn.

"I guess you ain't deaf?" said Mr. Flick, rather perplexed. "You hear me toot, I reckon? I've mapped out your game for you. You playing up?"

"I scarcely believe that you can be in earnest, sir!" said the Head, with icy contempt. "Certainly I shall do nothing of the kind."

"You ain't sending for Fish?" asked Mr. Flick, his eyes glittering through his horn-rimmed spectacles.

"Certainly not."

"You ain't ordering him to walk out with me?"

"Most assuredly not."

"You're tired of life, are you, my buck?" asked the crook, with deadly menace in look and tone. "You figure that you can play this on me? You reckon that your schoolboys and schoolmasters can give me any trouble? Why, dog-gone you, as soon as not, I'd wade in and clean up the whole caboodle. I guess if I get loose with this gun, there ain't anybody in this outfit that will stop me."

The Head's lip curled.

"I doubt whether you will venture to indulge in reckless bloodshed on this side of the Atlantic," he said coldly. "You are not in the United States now, and we have a very different way of dealing with malefactors in this country. You cannot inspire me with fear, sir, by the display of a lethal weapon."

"Say, you've sure spilled a mouthful!" said Flick.

"And you must have a very strange idea of an English schoolmaster," added the Head contemptuously. "If you imagine for one moment that you can induce me to place in your lawless hands a boy for whom I am responsible to his parents."

Mr. Flick stared at him.

"You sure do chew the rag a whole lot!" he said.

He came a little nearer, and the muzzle of the automatic looked Dr. Locke in the face, only a yard distant. Over it the eyes of the crook gleamed menacingly through the horn-rimmed glasses. Not a quiver showed in the headmaster's calm face. It was white, but steady.

"Say, you've got a nerve for a schoolmaster guy!" said Flick, with reluctant admiration. "I guess you're the first galoot that's ever looked at this gun like it was a peashooter!"

The Head made no rejoinder. Whether the ruffian was bluffing, or whether death stared him in the face, the Head could not tell. In either case, his resolution was fixed.

"I guess," said Slick Flick, slowly and menacingly, "I'm going to count three! If you ain't played up when I've counted three this school will want a noo headmaster! 'One—'"

No sign from the Head.

"Two!" hissed Flick. "This gun goes off at three, dog-gone you!"

The ruffian's eyes blazed over the automatic. A slight quiver ran through the Head. But he did not speak or move. The silence in the study was tense, as the lips of the desperado moved to utter the word "three."

## THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

### Bowled and Caught!

**W**HIZZZZZ!  
Bump!

Harry Wharton was coming downstairs in rather a hurry.

Whenever a junior was coming downstairs in a hurry, the broad, smooth oak banister tempted him.

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It was a solid banister, of ancient black oak, worn smoother and smoother by generations of schoolboys who had slid down it.

It was very tempting. Nevertheless, it was a dangerous practice to slide down that long, curving banister, especially in a sitting position; to jump off at the bottom. And it was strictly forbidden. Harry Wharton, as head boy of his Form, certainly ought to have known better. But even model head boys are only human.

Wharton had cut in to fetch a cricket-ball from his study. There was time to knock the ball about a little while before tea, and his friends were waiting for him outside the House. Wharton had gone up the stairs two at a time, bagged the ball out of Study No. 1, and was coming back. And the banisters tempted him—and he fell.

He fell—literally!

For, just as he reached the lowest curve, sitting on the banisters and swooping down, Mr. Quelch appeared in the offing.

It was very unfortunate.

Mr. Quelch glared up at the junior swooping down towards him. His glare was wrathful.

It cramped Wharton's style, so to speak. Instead of shooting down to the end of the banister and jumping neatly off the end, as he would otherwise have done, Wharton tried to stop. But it was quite impossible to stop. He shot onward irresistibly, and the only result of his effort to check himself in mid-career was that he tumbled clumsily off the end, and sprawled. And the cricket-ball he was carrying in his hand naturally flew from him, and as Mr. Quelch was standing in the way, it naturally bumped on the Remove master.

"Oh!" ejaculated Mr. Quelch.

A bang on the knee from a cricket-ball was neither grateful nor comforting. The ball dropped at Mr. Quelch's feet, and lay there. Wharton also lay there, sprawling, bumped, and breathless.

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eye transfixed him.

"Wharton!" he rumbled.

"Oh! Yes, sir!" gasped Harry.

"Are you hurt?"

"N-n-not much, sir! A—a little."

"You deserve it, Wharton!"

"Oh! Yes, sir!" Wharton staggered to his feet.

"You might have broken bones!" said Mr. Quelch. "I have been struck by the cricket-ball you dropped, Wharton!"

"I—I'm so sorry, sir!"

"No doubt!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Wharton, you are head boy of my Form."

"Yes, sir!"

"You are bound to set an example of good order, of obedience to the rules, to the other boys in the Remove."

Wharton suppressed a groan. He knew that he was "for it," and he wished that Mr. Quelch would cut it short.

"You are aware that it is strictly forbidden for boys to slide down the banisters, Wharton?"

"Ye-e-es, sir," stammered Harry.

"I—I was in a hurry, sir."

"Do you mean to imply that when you are in a hurry, you feel yourself at liberty to disregard the rules of the House?"

"Oh! No, sir!"

"Then what do you mean?" snapped Mr. Quelch.

"N-n-nothing, sir!"

"I have received a painful blow!"

said Mr. Quelch. "Still more serious, you might have injured yourself by this fall, Wharton. If you were any other but the head boy, Wharton, I should cane you for this reckless and flagrant dereliction of discipline."

Wharton brightened a little. If this meant that he was let off the caning he was rather glad that he was head of the Remove.

"As you are head boy, Wharton, I shall not cane you."

"T-t-thank you, sir!"

"I shall send you to the Head!"

"Oh!" The brightness faded out of the junior's countenance. Quelch was coming down heavy. No doubt the pain in his knee had an exasperating effect on Quelch, as well as the reckless and flagrant dereliction of discipline.

"Take up that cricket-ball, Wharton."

Wharton picked up the ball.

"Go to the Head's study immediately," said Mr. Quelch severely, "and give him this message—that you are sent to him for a flagrant disregard of the rules of the House, which has led to an injury being inflicted on your Form master!"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Wharton.

"Go!" said Mr. Quelch.

"But—b-b-but, sir—" stammered Harry, in dismay.

"You have heard me, Wharton! Go at once!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" came a roar from the doorway, as Bob Cherry looked in. "Are you going to be all night getting that ball, Wharton? Where are you, fathead?"

"Cherry!"

"Oh lor'! I—I mean, I didn't see you, sir!" gasped Bob.

"You are perfectly well aware, Cherry, that juniors are not allowed to bawl into the House in that manner!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" mumbled Bob.

Quelch was not in a good temper that day. It was clear that his elderly bones had not yet recovered from the bumping and thumping in the Remove dormitory the previous night. Quelch was still feeling very shaken, and his temper, perhaps, the most shaken of all.

"You will take a hundred lines, Cherry!"

"Very well, sir!" said Bob meekly.

"You, Wharton, will go to the Head's study at once."

"Very well, sir."

Mr. Quelch whisked away. The two juniors exchanged a half-comical, half-forlorn glance, and Wharton started for the Head's study. Bob Cherry rejoined his chums in the quad, to warn them in cautious tones to give Quelch a wide berth, because the old scout was in a rare bait.

With slow and reluctant steps, Harry Wharton went down the corridor to the Head's door. It was quite true that he was to blame; but sending him to the Head was an unusually severe punishment, and certainly would not have happened, but for that unhappy mistake in the Remove dormitory the night before. Until Mr. Quelch recovered fully from that wild and whirling experience, it behoved the Remove to walk warily.

Harry Wharton reached the Head's study, and was about to tap, when he remembered that the Head had a visitor there—it was only a short time since Trotter had shown in the horn-rimmed gentleman.

He hesitated.

But Mr. Quelch's order had been explicit—he had to go in to the Head at once, visitor or no visitor. He could



As Wharton tumbled off the end of the banister the cricket-ball he was holding flew from his hand and smote Mr. Quelch on the knee. "Ow!" ejaculated the Remove Form master.

only hope that the presence of a stranger within the gates would cause the Head to lay it on a little more lightly.

He raised his hand to tap—his left hand—the offending cricket-ball being still in his right. He tapped, opened the door, and stepped in.

The next instant he wondered whether he was in a dream. The Head was sitting in his chair, and the horn-rimmed man was bending over him, with a pistol levelled at his face. Wharton doubted the evidence of his eyes for a second.

Slick Flick turned his head, with an oath. The automatic, which had been threatening the headmaster, whirled round towards the junior. Flick's eyes burned over it through the horn-rimmed glasses.

"Silence!" he snarled. "Come into the room—I'll blow your brains out if you call out a word! Come in! Shut the door—"

The Head found his voice.

"Obey, Wharton! You must not imperil your life!"

Wharton dazedly shut the study door and turned again towards the crook. His right hand was behind him now, gripping the cricket-ball almost convulsively.

"Stand against that wall, bub!" said the crook, indicating with the revolver. "And not a sound!"

"Do so, Wharton," said the Head faintly.

Fearless for himself, the Head was terribly alarmed for the schoolboy, in the presence of an armed and desperate crook.

Wharton backed to the wall, his right hand still behind him. His heart was beating fast, but his head was perfectly cool.

Flick glared at him through the horn-rimmed glasses.

"You young Fish?" he asked.

"No; I'm Wharton."

"Stand where you are, then, and keep in mind that if you give one yaup I'll blow your brains over that wall like plaster!"

And Flick turned back to the headmaster.

As he did so Wharton's arm jerked forward.

Never had he bowled more surely at the wickets; though now, at such a close range, he could scarcely have missed.

Crack!

The cricket-ball, whizzing with almost the force of a bullet, crashed on the side of the crook's head and struck him like a blow from a hammer.

Slick Flick gave one startled and anguished yelp as he crashed headlong over, half-stunned by that crashing blow. The automatic flew from his hand as he spun, knocking over a chair as he fell. With a leap Harry Wharton bounded forward, snatched up the pistol, and tossed it out of the window. The next instant he was on the sprawling crook, landing on him with both feet as Flick strove dazedly to rise.

Slick Flick sprawled again, gasping and gurgling.

"Help!" roared Wharton.

The Head was on his feet now, ringing the bell violently. He tore open the study door and shouted:

"Help!"

Slick Flick, dazed and dizzy, grasped Wharton, and the junior struggled with him desperately.

Had the desperado still possessed the automatic, undoubtedly he would have used it then. But his weapon was gone, and with his head reeling from a stunning blow he was no more than a match for the strong and sturdy schoolboy.

They rolled on the floor of the Head's study, struggling fiercely; but it was

only for a few moments that Wharton had to deal with the ruffian unaided.

There was a rush of feet in the corridor, the study was crowded, and hands grasped at Slick Flick on all sides. Still resisting savagely, the crook was overwhelmed by numbers and made a prisoner.

Barney McCann had lost one of his bunch!

## THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

### Now or Never!

**B**ILLY BUNTER moved restlessly about the locked room in the lonely house, and shivered at the sound of angry voices from beyond the locked door.

Another day had passed for the kidnapped Owl; another night was drawing near.

Bunter was in a dismal mood.

He had been treated well, very well indeed, on first falling into the hands of the bunch, in the belief that he was the millionaire's son, and worth a small fortune to them. But since they had learned that he was not the "gold-bug," as they called Fisher T. Fish, the kidnappers had not treated him so well, and his attempt at escape had, so to speak, put the lid on. He had seen none of them since except Mike; and Mike glared at him savagely when he brought his meals in, and uttered no word except by way of a threat.

And the meals were not what they had been at first. The gold-bug the kidnappers would have fed generously, but canned beef and such dreadful stuff

was considered good enough for Bunter. And even of that there was not too much.

Bunter, in fact, was nothing but an annoyance and an irritation to the bunch. They had cinched him by mistake; they did not want him; and they only kept him a prisoner to keep his mouth shut. In such circumstances they were not likely to be ceremonious in dealing with the Owl of the Remove.

Bunter's terrors grew hourly.

Now, as he moved restlessly about, unable to rest, he could hear voices speaking in the hall outside his room, and the voices were angry and excited. The bunch seemed anxious, Bunter thought, and worried about something. He did not care what it was so long as their irritation did not turn on him.

But it might! Mike's threats had almost curdled his blood, and he was in a state of incessant trepidation. His fat thoughts ran continually on escape. But unless his ventriloquism could help him out, there was no escape for him. He stopped at last by the door, and put his fat ear to the keyhole, to learn what it was the kidnappers were discussing.

Barney McCann was moving about the hall with restless strides. Mike had not heard his voice since the morning.

Obviously, McCann was in an uneasy and troubled mood, not wholly caused by the painful bump on his head.

"More'n time he was back," Bunter heard him say—"more'n time! He should have been back long ago! Suthin's up."

"Slick's a slick man!" said Mike.

McCann uttered an oath.

"This here dog-goned country is different from the States," he grunted. "Hold-ups is a different game here. Slick was dead set on trying it on—but I ain't banking on it."

"I guess it's a cinch, sorr!" said Clancy. "What'll the schoolmaster do wid Slick's gun staring him in the face? I'll bet it's the fust time he ever looked at a gun. If he don't faint I guess he'll jump to do what Slick tells him."

"That's what Slick allowed," said McCann, "and I allow it ought to work."

"I guess Slick's got them like a flock of sheep," said Mike confidently.

"Yep! But why ain't he back?" growled McCann. "If he's pulled it off, why ain't he back with the gold-bug?"

"P'r'aps trouble wid the car, sorr—"

"Guff!" grunted McCann. "He went in the little Austin and nothing's gone awry with that car—it's not that! I'm telling you, Mike, Slick has slipped up on it somehow. This hold-up game ain't good medicine on this side of the pond. I let Slick have his way, but I never was banking on his getting by with it; and now it looks as if he's fooled it somehow."

McCann moved restlessly about.

"Oh! My cabeza!" he groaned, pressing both hands to his head. "Say, I got hold of one sockdolager last night! I guess the guy that slugged me must have been handling a poker or suthin'. I'll say he nearly cracked my think-box! Ow!"

There was a string of oaths.

"This here game don't work according to schedule in this darned country," he went on. "I guess mebbe we made a mistake in coming over here. Look how easy we cinched the Googen-goomer kid in Noo Yark! And look at all the trouble we're having with this kid Fish!"

He flung himself into the rocker, and lighted a cigar.

"Oh crikey!" murmured Bunter, to himself.

He knew where Flick was now, evidently carrying out a raid on Greyfriars with a gun, in the approved American style.

Bunter wondered what was happening at the school. In theory, no doubt, a desperate man with a gun should have been able to carry all before him, in a place where there were no deadly weapons, and no thought of using such things. But theory and practice did not always coincide. Bunter did not believe that the hold-up man would "get by," as McCann expressed it, with such a raid. And Slick's failure to return certainly looked as if he had not got by with it.

McCann smoked in angry silence for some time. Then Bunter heard his voice again.

"Say, Mike, get the Napier ready for me! If Slick ain't back by seven, I guess I'm going to mosey around and see what's happened to him."

"Yis, sorr!"

Bunter heard the red-headed man moving away. McCann sat and smoked, occasionally muttering a curse. Between anxiety for his confederate, and the ache in his bruised head, the chief of the bunch was in a far from amiable temper.

Billy Bunter stepped back from the door.

It was not far from seven o'clock now, and McCann would soon be gone. Then he would be alone in the house again with Mike.

Billy Bunter had been thinking it out all day. His fat brain had evolved a little scheme, though he had not ventured to try it on so long as McCann was in the house.

He heard McCann leave the hall at last, and concluded that he had gone out to the car. Then Bunter got busy.

He stepped to the bed, and with the help of a rug, a coat, and some other articles, made up a dummy sleeper in the bed.

Over it he carefully placed the blankets, and blinked at his handiwork, and was satisfied with it.

Anyone entering the room, and glancing round, would naturally have supposed, if he did not see Bunter there, that the fat junior had gone to bed.

Bunter's idea was to stand behind the door, so that it would conceal him when it opened, when Mike brought his supper in. That was about seven o'clock; hitherto, so McCann's departure was well-timed to leave the coast clear for Bunter.

Not seeing Bunter, and seeing a sleeper's form in the bed, it was probable that Mike would come into the room to place his tray on the table, his back, naturally, to the door.

Then Bunter would slip out.

Bunter had thought it over and over all day, and the scheme seemed a good one, the only difficulty being that it required some nerve to carry it out, and Bunter was not greatly gifted with nerve.

But the dread of what might happen to him if he remained in the hands of the bunch, spurred Bunter on. He had screwed up his courage to the sticking-point, and he was going to try it on.

When his watch told him that it was a quarter past seven, he heard Mike moving in the hall. A peep through the keyhole showed him the big, red-headed man, with a small tray in his right hand.

Bunter drew a deep, quivering breath. For a moment his fat heart misgavo



## Boy Scouts *versus* Slave Traders

Through the perilous Congo jungle tramp three fearless Boy Scouts and their two native servants. Danger dogs their very footsteps. On the tramp, too, is Zirafi, the slave-trader, and his rascals. In a lonely trail the Scouts come face to face with them. What happens? Read how they fare, in the topping long complete story of adventure in

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him. But he took a grip on himself, as it were.

It was now or never!

Mike approached the locked door. Bunter flattened himself against the wall behind it.

The key turned—and was drawn out of the lock. Mike was not taking any chances of being locked in the room again.

The door opened.

The big, heavy-footed man clumped in, glancing round the room for Bunter as he came.

His glance rested on the bed.

"Say, you gone to bed, you fat gink?" growled Mike, as he slammed the tray on the table.

Bunter's fat heart thumped.

He had calculated on whipping out of the room and turning the key on Mike, as he had done before. But the key was in Mike's hand now.

"Say, you getting up for your eats?" growled Mike, staring towards the figure in the bed.

Snore!

It was an inspiration of the Greyfriars ventriloquist.

That rumbling snore from the direction of the bed was convincing. Mike's back was to Bunter, as he stood by the table staring across at the bed in the corner.

The fat junior tiptoed from behind the door, and tiptoed through the doorway.

In a second he was outside the room.

"Say, you sure can sleep some, you fat geck!" said Mike. "I guess your eats is here, if you want it. Please yourself, you pesky clam."

Mike turned to the door again, leaving the tray on the table.

Bunter, with his heart thumping wildly, was tiptoeing down the passage to the kitchen quarters.

He hardly breathed, his heart beat in great throbs, but he kept on swiftly and silently.

Behind him, he heard the sound of a closing door and a turning key.

Mike had come out of the room, and locked the door behind him, nothing doubting that he had locked Bunter in again.

Had he returned immediately to the kitchen, Bunter might yet have been discovered. But Mike stopped in the hall to light his pipe.

Bunter's fat hand was on the latch of the kitchen door.

Silently he opened it, slipped out, and closed and latched the door behind him.

He was free!

## THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Another Lift for Bunter!

**B**ILLY BUNTER blinked round him.

Near the back door was a belt of shrubbery, and Bunter promptly placed it between himself and the house.

The grounds that surrounded the lonely building were glowing in the light of the summer sunset. Except for the tall poplars that lined the distant fence, there were few trees, and the whole wide space was commanded by the windows.

Bunter remained for several minutes in the cover of the laurels, breathing in gasps.

He was outside the house now, and Mike evidently believed that he was still safely locked in his room. His weird ventriloquism had saved him—so far! But in the broad daylight, a glance from the kitchen window would reveal him, if

## GREYFRIARS CELEBRITIES!

This week the MAGNET rhymester tells a few home truths about Fisher T. Fish, the guy from "Noo Yark."



"I GUESS I'll walk you off your legs!"

Was Fisher's first bright greeting.

He thought them merely soft-boiled eggs,

These chaps that came to meet him. This noble son of old Noo Yark

Was full of pep and bustle. But soon he *learnt* the way to walk—

In fact, they made him *hustle*!

But Fish was not at all dismayed, His skin's as tough as lino!

The greatest swank he soon displayed— He's thick-skinned as a rhino.

He boasted he was "champ" at sport, Nor cared he one iota

When at his bragging he was caught— He couldn't box a bloater—

Nor kick a goal, nor catch a ball— In fact, he was a muffer.

He couldn't do a thing at all, He was the Perfect Duffer.

But Fishy's brain is keen and strong At anything he fancies;

It didn't take the "cute guy" long To turn to high finances.

He "cornered" tuck, and lent out "dough,"

And other forms of swindling. But still he couldn't make a "go,"

And soon his stocks were dwindling. He found the raw "slap-sided jays"

Were not to be bamboozled; And thus it was, in many ways,

That he himself was fozzled.

He's optimistic to the bone, And simply lives for dollars;

To lose a ha'penny of his own, Brings forth the loudest hollers.

He's full of what he's going to do When roused to angry feeling:

He'll simply make of each of you A mere potato peeling!

The truth makes all Greyfriars smile At what they just delight in:

They know young Fish would run a mile

To dodge the chance of fighting. But Uncle Sam has sent him here,

So give the chap a toasting, And raise a very hearty cheer

To drown young Fishy's boasting!

Mike was there, and Bunter had no hope of winning a foot race against the red-headed man. And the sound of a clatter from the kitchen told him that Mike was there now, probably getting his own supper. Bunter realised that he dared not scud across the grounds, at the risk of Mike's eye falling on him from the window.

But as Mike was at the back of the house, the coast was clear in the front. Bunter moved at last. He dropped on his fat hands and knees, and crept along the shrubbery to the corner of the building.

Here he was out of sight of the back windows. He rose to his feet, and crept along the side of the house.

At a short distance from the house, on this side, stood the garage, a detached building of corrugated iron. The door of the garage was wide open, and Bunter was passing it, when all of a sudden the sound of footsteps grinding on gravel startled his ears.

He stopped.

Mike, he knew, was in the kitchen of the house. McCann had said that he was going at seven, and Bunter had taken it for granted that he was gone. But somebody, evidently, was pacing on the gravel drive in the front of the house.

Bunter's fat heart gave a sickening jump.

A few more steps, and he would have passed the corner of the building, and revealed himself to the unknown person who was pacing the gravel. Fortunately he had heard the footsteps in time, and stopped.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter. He stood quaking.

Somebody was there! Either McCann had not gone yet, or there was another member of the bunch whom Bunter had not yet seen.

Billy Bunter suppressed a groan.

He had been lucky so far—amazingly lucky. But it looked as if his luck had failed him now.

If that beast who was pacing in front of the house looked round the corner, it—

At that thought Bunter backed into the open doorway of the garage.

As soon as he was within the corrugated iron building he had proof that McCann was not yet gone. The Napier saloon car stood there.

"Oh crikey!" murmured Bunter. The perspiration was thick on his fat brow.

McCann was at the front of the house, Mike at the back; in either direction Bunter could not scuttle without the risk—or, rather, the certainty—of being spotted. The fence at the side of the enclosure was a good thirty yards away, and it was impossible to reach it without appearing in view of the man on the gravel drive. Bunter had no chance whatever in a race.

He blinked round the garage for a hiding-place.

If he could hide till McCann was gone the coast would be clear. But there was no hiding-place.

The interior of the building was bare. "Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter.

He blinked from the doorway. To creep back to the laurels and hide there till he heard the car go was his idea now.

But it was too late. The footsteps on the gravel drive were approaching the corner of the house. Bunter could hear them coming nearer.

He backed into the garage again, blinking round him wildly. McCann at last had apparently made up his mind

to start; certainly he was coming towards the garage. If he was coming for the car, Bunter's number was up. The moment he entered he would see the wretched Owl.

Bunter groaned.

There was nothing in the garage that would hide a rabbit. The game was up!

But Billy Bunter's fat brain was working at full pressure now. The case was desperate.

Discovery was at hand, and in that terrible moment Bunter had another inspiration. There was no place of concealment in the garage—but there was the car!

Bunter fairly jumped to the car, opened the door, and slid inside, shutting the door after him.

There was a wild hope in his podgy breast that, by crouching low in the interior of the car, he might escape observation. And then fortune, that had persecuted the Owl of the Remove, favoured him once more. On the floor of the car lay the great rug in which Bunter had been rolled when the "bunch" carried him off.

Bunter wriggled under the rug.

He squashed himself as flat as he could on the floor of the car, with the rug over him.

Then he lay still.

A minute passed—like a century to Bunter. Then he heard footsteps in the garage.

The footsteps approached the car.

Bunter's fat heart seemed to miss a beat. There was a brushing sound as of someone leaning on the car. Bunter heard a match scratch. The strong scent of a cigar penetrated even the thick folds of the rug that enveloped him. McCann was leaning on the car and smoking, not three feet from the hapless Owl.

Bunter could have groaned aloud, but he dared make no sound. He lay still, hardly venturing to breathe.

How long a time passed he never knew. It seemed like centuries, if not dozens of them. A sound of voices came to his ears at last. Mike had come from the house, apparently.

"You're going, sorr?"

Bunter heard McCann's voice rap out an oath.

"I guess so. Suthin's happened to Slick. That's a cert now. He's slipped up on it, dog-gone him! I got to find out what's happened, and help him if I can. But—"

McCann broke off, with another oath.

He was evidently in a troubled and uncertain frame of mind, sorely perplexed by the situation.

"I guess I better go," he said at last.

"I got to know what's happened to Slick. I jest got to know."

Bunter heard the front door of the car open and McCann step in. He dropped into the driving-seat, with a grunt.

"Keep tabs on that fat geck, Mike!" he rapped out.

Bunter's heart stood still again. For one dreadful moment he fancied that McCann knew that he was in the car.

"Yis, sorr," answered Clancy. "He's safe."

"If he gets loose again, Mike, you watch out, for I'll sure beat you up more'n a few!" growled McCann.

"He's sure safe locked in, sorr, and I lift him fast aslape," said Mike; "and by the same token, the door ain't going to be unlocked agin. You don't want to worry none about that fat geck, sorr."

"Git the gate open!" grunted McCann.

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The heavy-footed Mike sludge away.

The whirr of the engine filled the garage with sound. Billy Bunter was glad of it; he was afraid that even his breathing under the thick, heavy rug might reach the ears of the man in the driver's seat.

He wondered fearfully whether McCann had looked into the interior of the car. But if he had, only the big, rumpled rug was there to meet his eyes; he could scarcely have a suspicion that anybody was hidden under the rug. The car got into motion.

Bunter felt a thrill.

It was to hide from discovery that he had crawled under the heavy folds of the travelling-rug that lay in the car. Nothing further had entered his fat mind at the moment. Now it dawned upon him that, to get out of the kidnappers' den, all he had to do was to lie still. The car backed out of the garage. Bunter heard the grinding of the tyres on the gravel. The Napier saloon ran lightly down the drive to the gate, which Mike was holding open.

The car glided out, and the gate clanged behind.

Bunter gasped with suppressed excitement.

He was feeling cramped, breathless, suffocated, but he did not venture to stretch one fat limb. If McCann discovered him in the car—

His blood almost ran cold at the thought. Mike's savage threats came back to his mind; the bitter, evil expression of McCann's face haunted him. If he was discovered he felt that he would have reason to wish himself safe back in the locked room.

Yet, close as he was to the desperate man who had kidnapped him, Bunter was really in little danger. McCann did not look over his shoulder once—he had no reason to do so. He was driving at a great speed, now that he had finally made up his doubtful mind to start, as if his restlessness found relief in covering the ground rapidly. And his thoughts, so far as they were not on driving, were on Slick Flick and the almost certainty that some disaster had overtaken his confederate.

It was impossible for Bunter to see where he was going, to catch even the remotest glimpse of his surroundings. He was only too thankful not to be glimpsed himself.

But he knew one thing, at least, from the talk of the crooks—Barney McCann was driving to Greyfriars. Slick Flick was there, and McCann wanted to know what had happened to him.

On and on and on the car raced.

Bunter had no means of telling how many miles it covered, but he felt sure that the car had covered fifty or sixty when at last it came to a halt.

He listened intently, as the throbbing of the engine ceased. He heard McCann descend from the car, and then there was silence.

If he looked in the car—under the rug—but why should he? It was not likely; but Bunter lay in a perspiration of uneasiness.

Minute after minute—and silence!

Slowly and cautiously, Bunter rolled the big rug aside, and rose to his knees.

Tall trees loomed over the car. It had been backed into a narrow, shady lane. Dark as it was, that deep lane, with its line of tall, branching oaks, was familiar to Bunter's eyes. It bordered Courtfield Common, leading from the main road to Popper Court, by the river.

Bunter's heart thumped.

He grasped the handle, and threw the

door open. A moment more, and he had scrambled out of the car.

The next moment he regretted that he had not waited longer. There was a red spot in the gloom, about three yards away. Barney McCann was leaning against a tree there, smoking one of his incessant cigars—doubtless ruminating on the steps he should take to ascertain the fate of Mr. Flick. Just as Bunter spotted the crimson end of the cigar, the crook spotted Bunter.

In his amazement, the cigar dropped from his mouth.

"Thunder!"

Bunter heard his startled exclamation.

He did not wait to hear more.

With a yelp of terror, Bunter made a wild leap for the roadside, and bolted across the dark common. Like a frightened rabbit, he vanished into the night.

## THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

### A Surprise!

"WHARTON!"

"Yes, sir!"

"You will go to the Head's study."

"Oh, very well, sir!"

Mr. Quelch turned away; and Harry Wharton looked at his chums, and they looked at him. Wharton cast a rather expressive glance after his Form master, and looked at the Co. again.

"Rotten!" he remarked.

"The rottenfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh sympathetically.

"Dash it all, that's rather thick, after what you've done, old man!" said Bob Cherry indignantly.

"Well, I suppose biffing that fellow with the cricket ball doesn't alter the fact that I had biffed Quelchy with it!" remarked the captain of the Remove. "Quelchy's still feeling sore—he didn't enjoy that rag in the dormitory last night a little bit."

"All the same——" said Nugent.

"Can't be helped!" said Wharton, as philosophically as he could; and he started for the Head's study.

After the capture of Mr. Slick Flick, the Head, of course, had been too busily occupied to deal with an offending junior. Indeed, he was unaware of the reason that had brought Wharton to his study so opportunely.

In the excitement that had followed, Wharton had judiciously faded away, as it were; and he had nourished a hope that in the general excitement he would be forgotten. He had gone to the Head's study, as commanded; but he did not consider that he was bound to go a second time without receiving fresh instructions so to do.

The excitement in the school had been intense. Slick Flick, overpowered by numbers, his hands bound together with dusters, had been locked in a room, while the Head telephoned to the police station at Courtfield.

Inspector Grimes had come over as fast as a fast car would carry him, to find the school thrilling with the sensation of the "hold-up."

All Greyfriars had gathered to see Flick—with the handcuffs on his wrists now—driven away in the car, with the inspector sitting on one side of him and a constable on the other.

After which, the whole school discussed the amazing happening till they were quite breathless.

The Famous Five were discussing it, among others, when Mr. Quelch bore



Crack! The cricket-ball left Wharton's hand and, whizzing with almost the force of a bullet, crashed on the side of Slick Flick's head like a blow from a hammer!

down on them and ordered Wharton to the Head's study. With reluctant steps the captain of the Remove approached that dreaded apartment. Really, in the circumstances, he felt that Quelch might have let the matter drop. Goodness only knew what would have happened to the Head, had not Wharton bowled the crook so neatly. Wharton, without being disposed to brag of his performance, could not help feeling that he had fairly earned his pardon for what was, after all, an accident.

However, there was no gainsaying his Form master's order, so he arrived at the Head's study, tapped, and entered.

Dr. Locke glanced at him.

"Ah! Come in, Wharton!" said the Head.

There was a rather pale and worn look on the headmaster's face. The stress of that wild scene with Slick Flick had told on the old gentleman.

"You sent for me, sir!" said Harry.

"Quite so, Wharton! I have been, as you know, very much occupied, and have not had time to send for you before," said the Head, "but I cannot pass over your conduct without remark."

"I'm sorry, sir," said Wharton.

"Eh?"

"It was really an accident, sir."

"An—an accident?" repeated the Head, blinking at Wharton over his glasses. "What do you mean, Wharton?"

"I mean, the cricket ball slipped from my hand, sir," said Wharton. "I had no idea that it would hit anybody!"

"Bless my soul! I hardly understand you, Wharton! I certainly had the impression that you hurled the cricket ball intentionally."

"Oh, no, sir!" exclaimed Wharton. "I wouldn't have done such a thing. I am sure Mr. Quelch does not think that, sir. It was entirely an accident, from beginning to end."

"Bless my soul!" repeated the Head, looking very much puzzled. "If it was an accident, as you say, Wharton, it was a very fortunate one."

Wharton jumped.

"W-w-was it, sir?"

Mr. Quelch, certainly, had not taken the view that the accident on the staircase was a fortunate one. He had seemed remarkably ratty about it.

"Certainly it was," said the Head.

"I really cannot understand how it was, as you say, an accident, Wharton. In any case, the outcome was decidedly fortunate for all concerned—except," the Head added, with a smile, "the rascal who was struck by the ball."

Wharton almost staggered in his astonishment.

"The—the rascal?" he stammered.

"Yes, Wharton! Accident or not, I am very pleased with you. I thank you, Wharton."

"D-d-d-do you, sir?" gasped Wharton.

He had certainly not expected to be thanked for biffing his Form master with a cricket-ball.

"Yes, Wharton! You have your headmaster's thanks," said the Head.

"I sent for you to tell you so. You may go, my boy."

"Then—then I'm not going to be licked?" stuttered Wharton.

"What?"

"I—I mean—thank you, sir!" gasped Wharton, wondering whether he was on his head or his heels; and he turned to the door.

It seemed rather a good idea to get away while the Head was in this remarkable frame of mind.

"One moment, Wharton! I do not understand you," said the Head. "You surely did not imagine, for one moment, that you were sent for to be punished?"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"I do not comprehend you. Why should you suppose that I should punish you for having acted as you did?"

"Well, sir, the ball gave him a rather nasty knock on the knee—"

"On the head, you mean."

"No, sir—on the knee."

"My dear boy, what do you mean? The ball struck him on the head and partially stunned him!"

"Oh, no, sir!" exclaimed Wharton eagerly. "It wasn't so bad as that, sir!"

It hit him on the knee and made him limp a little, sir, and he sent me to you—"

Wharton stopped, further speech checked by the amazed expression on the Head's face.

"In the name of goodness, Wharton, what are you talking about?" exclaimed Dr. Locke.

"The—the accident to Mr. Quelch, sir—"

"Mr. Quelch?"

"Yes, sir," stammered Wharton blankly.

"Has there been an accident to Mr. Quelch? I do not understand! Explain yourself."

"I—I'd cut in to fetch a cricket-ball, sir, and—and was sliding down the banisters, and—and Mr. Quelch turned up, and—and I fell off and dropped the cricket ball, sir, and it banged on his knee," stuttered Wharton. "And—and he sent me to you—"

"Bless my soul! Was that how you came to enter my study with a cricket ball in your hand?"

"Ye-e-es, sir."

"I was unaware of it," said the Head. "Mr. Quelch has not mentioned the matter to me."

"Oh!" gasped Wharton. "Then how—why— Why did you send for me, sir?"

"I requested your Form master to send you to my study, to thank you for what you did, when I was threatened by that armed ruffian—"

"Oh!" gasped Harry. "I—I—I thought—"

He realised that there had been a misunderstanding. Dr. Locke stared at him in perplexity for a moment, and then smiled.

"I think you have misapprehended me, Wharton. I was not referring to any accident to Mr. Quelch, of which I

know nothing, and which I am sure he will overlook in view of your subsequent conduct."

"Oh!"

"I was referring to your intervention in this study, which led to that ruffian being secured—"

"Oh, I—I see, sir!" gasped Wharton. "That wasn't an accident, sir! I—I thought you were speaking of Mr. Quelch."

"Not at all," said the Head, with a smile. "It appears that when you came to my study you were sent here for punishment?"

"Yes, sir! You see—"

"I quite see. As Mr. Quelch has not referred to the matter, I have no doubt that he desires to let it drop. I thank you once more, Wharton, for the courage and presence of mind you displayed. You may go."

And Wharton went—with a very cheerful face, leaving the Head smiling.

"Licked?" asked the Co. as he joined them.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"No fear! I thought it was a licking, but it turned out to be a pat on the back! I'm let off for biffing Quelch's knee, on account of having biffed Slick Flick's napper."

"Good!"

"The goodness is terrific!"

"Flick and his jolly old napper came in very useful, as it turned out," chuckled Bob Cherry. "I fancy the Flick-bird is sorry by this time that he tried to hold up Greyfriars with a gun! Now he's safe in chokey, the other rotter may chuck up the game and let Bunter go. I'd be jolly glad to see the fat old duffer back again."

"Same here," said Harry. "I'd be jolly glad to see Bunter safe back, bothering ass as he is."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Harry Wharton jumped.

"Why—what—who—"

"Great pip!"

"What the thump—"

"My only summer hat!"

The Famous Five fairly spun round at the sound of that old familiar voice. Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles and grinned.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Bunter!"

"I say—"

"BUNTER!"

"Yes. I say, you fellows, I'm hungry!"

## THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

### Bunter in the Limelight!

"BUNTER!" gasped five amazed juniors together.

"Bunter!" shouted a dozen voices.

Fellows rushed up from all sides.

"Bunter—as large as life!" gasped Peter Todd. "How the thump—"

"Bunter!" yelled Fisher T. Fish.

"The Bunterfulness is terrific!"

"Bunter—great pip! Bunter!"

Billy Bunter grinned. He was hungry, as he had stated; but he was enjoying the sensation his unexpected appearance at Greyfriars had caused. The news spread like wildfire that the missing Owl had returned, and fellows crowded from far and near. Prep was over, and most of the juniors had been in the Rag. In thirty seconds the Rag was left untenanted. Fellows of all Forms simply swarmed round Bunter. For once in his fat career, the Owl of the Remove was the cynosure of all eyes.

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"How did you get here?" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Walked in," said Bunter. "The door was open, so I walked in, old chap! I say, you fellows, where's Quelch? I think I'd better tell Quelch I've come back. He must be frightfully anxious about me."

"Oh, frightfully!" said Skinner. "Terribly anxious, I believe, in case you came back—"

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"Quelch's gone out for his trot in the quad," said Squiff. "He left the door open. But how—"

"How the thump—"

"How the dickens—"

"Did they let you go, Bunter?"

"No fear!" answered Bunter. "The fact is, I've had a fearfully exciting time. I dodged that beast on Courtfield Common. You see, it was dark, and he couldn't find me in the dark. And I ran all the way here. And you should have seen Gosling's face when I rang him out of his lodge, and he came down to let me in. He nearly fell down."

"But how—"

"I escaped," explained Bunter. "There was a red-headed man watching me—a huge villain, six feet high at least. Well, I knocked him spinning!"

"You—you knocked a man six feet high spinning?" stuttered Wharton.

"Yes. He fell at my feet with a sickening thud," said Bunter. "Leaving him there, I walked out of the place as—cool as anything."

"And—and he didn't get up again?" ejaculated Bob.

"No. I fancy he was stunned. You know my straight lefts."

"Oh crumbs!"

"I left him for dead, as it were," said Bunter. "Walking out of the place, I found the other villain just starting up the car. Fixing him with my eye, I ordered him to drive me away from the place. I gave him one of my looks. It was enough for him. He could see that I wasn't to be trifled with. He did as I told him."

"He—he—he did as you told him?"

"Like a lamb," said Bunter.

"Great Scott!"

"Barney McCann did!" yelled Fisher T. Fish.

"Yes. He drove me as far as Courtfield Common, and then I—I decided to leave the car. I walked the rest, and here I am. I say, you fellows, I'm hungry!"

"But you said you dodged somebody in the dark on Courtfield Common."

Bunter started a little.

"D-d-did I? I—I meant, he dodged me. That was what I really meant to say. He was white with fear."

"Barney McCann was?" gasped Fisher T. Fish.

"Absolutely pallid," said Bunter. "His knees knocked together like concertinas—I mean castanets. Giving him a glance of contempt, I turned my back on him, and walked away."

"Oh crikey!"

"These American crooks aren't much trouble to handle," said Bunter negligently. "I mean, to a fellow like me, of course. I dare say you fellows would have been scared."

"And you weren't?" chuckled Bob.

"Not at all. I handled him all right," said Bunter. "And here I am. I suppose Quelch will tell Mrs. Kebble to give me a good supper, after what I've been through. "I'm frightfully hungry."

"You knocked down a six-foot man, and you made McCann drive you home

by the terror of your glance!" gasped Wharton.

"Exactly!"

"You're going to tell Quelch that?"

"Certainly! It's the truth."

"Oh, my hat!"

"I dare say it seems rather wonderful to you fellows," said Bunter patronisingly. "But it wasn't much to me. You see—"

"Hullo! Hullo! Hullo! Here's Quelch!" exclaimed Bob Cherry. "Now let's hear you tell him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Bunter.

Mr. Quelch came in from the dusky quadrangle. He glanced round in surprise at the excited crowd of fellows; then, as his eyes fell on Bunter, he gave a jump.

"Bunter!"

"Yes, sir. I—I've come back," said Bunter.

"Bless my soul! The police have been searching for you, Bunter, but—Dear me! I am very glad to see you safe again, my boy! Very glad, indeed! You have been in the hands of kidnappers—"

"Yes, sir."

"Did they release you?"

"Nunno, sir."

"You escaped from them?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir. I—I—"

Bunter paused. The crowd of juniors watched him with grinning faces. Bunter had told them how he had escaped. But they doubted whether he would have the nerve to spin the same yarn to Mr. Quelch.

They were right. He hadn't. There was something in Mr. Quelch's gimlet-eye that discouraged Bunter's fortifled flights of fancy.

"I am delighted to see you safe, Bunter! How did you escape from those ruffians?" asked Mr. Quelch.

Bunter told him.

The juniors listened, grinning. Under his Form master's gimlet-eye something impelled Bunter to keep to the facts. So his second version contained no references to knocking down six-foot ruffians, or to fixing desperate crooks with his glittering eye. It was a plain unvarnished tale he told Mr. Quelch.

"Bless my soul!" said Mr. Quelch, when he had finished. "You have been very fortunate, Bunter. And I am bound to say that you showed considerable resource. I will inform the Head. And Inspector Grimes, no doubt, will wish to see you before you go to bed. In the meantime—"

"I'm hungry, sir."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"In the meantime, you may have supper, Bunter."

And Bunter smiled, too.

The next day Billy Bunter told his story again, and again, and yet again. Every time he told it, it grew more fearful and wonderful. In the intervals of classes, fellows would gather round Bunter to ask him to relate his wild adventures, and greet the narrative with roars of laughter, which was very annoying to Bunter, for by that time he almost believed the story himself, and had quite forgotten that he had been in a blue funk all the while he was held by the enemy.

THE END.

(Next week's yarn of the Chums of Greyfriars: "CATCHING FISH!" is the real goods. You can only make sure of reading it, chums, by ordering your copy WELL IN ADVANCE!)



(Introduction on next page.)

# THE TEST MATCH HOPE!

**BY JOHN BREARLEY**



**Captain Monty Sinclair!**

**"W**ELL played, Bill! Well bowled, well bowled!"

"Another eight points in the bag, Bill!"

"What price 'poor little Severnshire' now?"

Out in the centre of Severnshire's pretty ground Luckes, the Somerset wicket-keeper, took one rueful glance at his shattered wicket, and began to walk sorrowfully away.

For the last half-hour he and Frank Lee had been making a dogged last-wicket stand in an effort to force a draw and save their side from an overwhelming defeat.

Up to a point they had succeeded, for during that time Bill Murray, the deadly spearhead of the Severnshire attack, the smiling colt whose long left arm brought him fresh laurels with every match he played, had been enjoying a well-earned rest in the long field. The Somerset batsmen had dealt sturdily enough with the other Severnshire bowlers, Gower Nickalls & Co., and not even the new express merchant, Hall, had been able to shift them. But at twenty minutes past six, just when the crowd was beginning to wonder anxiously if Severnshire was to be robbed of her fourth victory in five matches, Major Weaver tossed the leather to Bill again.

"Never saw it after it pitched!" grunted Luckes two balls later, jabbing the grinning youngster in the ribs as the two teams strolled off the field together. "Another few minutes and we'd have done the trick!"

"Excuse my laughter!" chuckled Bill; and the other Severnshire players took up the chaff gaily. Within a few minutes, however, they had reached the double line of enthusiasts waiting in front of the pavilion, and, hunching his shoulders protectively, the young county star ran the gauntlet. A storm of well-meant but somewhat painful blows descended on his broad back, and by the time he struggled into the changing-room at last he tingled all over.

Still, it was all in the game, and he was getting used to it now. In the previous match against Yorkshire at Leeds it had taken a strong cordon of police all their time to get him safely off the field, for no one appreciates wonder-cricket more than a Tyke, and the Yorkshiremen had swarmed desperately in an effort to chair the youngster who had fought their own powerful team to a standstill, and sent Severnshire away with first-innings points for the first time for twenty years.

As fast as they could fight their way through, the other pro's tumbled into the room. Nickalls and Alston fell upon Bill at once and rough-housed him joyously; while old George Hammett beamed like a full moon upon all and sundry, until someone barged into him, and then he quietly picked up a bat in a ham-like fist and waded in manfully.

**£250 IF HE PLAYS IN ALL FIVE TEST MATCHES!**

**WILL "SMILING" BILL MURRAY CLICK?**

"Young rips!" he puffed, when peace was eventually restored. "Just because we're top of the table! Wait till September's over before you crow! I remember—"

"You can remember when cricketers wore top hats, can't you, grandpa?" interrupted the breathless Nickalls cheerfully.

"Yes, and I can remember that last time you got a wicket!" flashed the veteran, to the tune of a roar at the younger player's expense.

In the midst of it all the door burst open and Mr. James Barr strode in briskly, followed by another man, his fierce old face purple with excitement.

The pro's stopped ragging at once and grinned a warm welcome. Although they had known him but a short time, the irascible but sporting old millionaire was already a firm favourite with them all, for he bubbled over with enthusiasm and was as keen on the

club's successes as any schoolboy in Severn City.

In a few seconds he had shaken Hammett's hand, scolded Roberts for dropping a catch, pulled Bill's ear, and fervently blessed the whole team. After that he spun round violently in search of his friend.

"Hey, Monty! Lemme introduce you—dash it, where—oh, there you are! Hang it, what are you sitting down for?"

"Tired, dear old thing!" sighed a languid voice from a chair, and Mr. Barr snorted ferociously as the Severnshire players turned surprised but twinkling eyes on an exquisite young man who beamed sleepily up at them through a gold-rimmed monocle.

He was perfectly dressed in a tweed suit and a regimental tie, and his pale, somewhat girlish face and natty black moustache looked strangely out of place beside the brown faces of the cricketers.

When Mr. Barr introduced him as Captain Monty Sinclair, he rose lazily and shook hands all round—but with a surprisingly powerful grip for such an elegant person.

"So you're the great Bill Murray!" he smiled pleasantly as Bill held out his long, lean paw. "How d'ye do? Been watching you all the afternoon—"

"When you weren't sleeping!" interrupted Mr. Barr, butting in and clapping Bill on the shoulder. "Yes, this is our coming Test player, Monty! Don't forget, young Murray! Bill, if you don't collar all five of those cheques of mine, I—I'll skin you!"

Bill's smiling lips hardened for a second. He was not likely to forget James Barr's offer, although he never referred to it these days. Then catching Captain Monty Sinclair's eyes weighing him up quietly, he blushed and went hurriedly back to his changing.

He dressed quickly, for he was in a hurry to get home to the little cottage in Desford. Calling a cheery good-

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bye to the still-gossiping crowd around the millionaire, he ran hastily down the stairs to the little shed at the back of the pavilion, where he always parked his ancient bicycle.

To his surprise, the back tyre was flat. At first he thought he had picked up a slow puncture, and unclipped his pump, but on spinning the wheel round he received another shock. The valve had been taken completely out by some unknown hand and although he looked around the shed it was nowhere to be seen. He frowned and ruffled his crisp hair in annoyance.

"Someone playin' little jokes, old fruit?" drawled a quiet voice behind him, and there in the doorway stood Captain Sinclair again, staring in with lazy interest. He offered no explanation as to why he had followed Bill, but met his puzzled eyes with a gentle half-smile.

Bill's face split in a rueful grin. "I suppose so!" he replied. "Silly asses! I shall have to walk home now!"

The captain waved a deprecatory hand.

"Not to be thought of, dear boy!" he protested airily. "Look here, I've got my car outside. I'll give you a lift!"

"Oh, but—"

"My dear chap, a positive pleasure!" insisted the dandy, and before Bill could object further he lounged away to the gates where a smart little two-seater stood by the roadside.

Bill packed himself in reluctantly, for he disliked being under an obligation, even to such an amiable and harmless person as Captain Sinclair appeared to be. But as soon as the car started he forgot everything in the excitement of the next few minutes.

However snail-like the captain was in the ordinary way, he certainly believed that cars were made for speed, and the way he took winding corners almost on two wheels and yet chatted casually and calmly while he did so made even the iron-nerved Bill gasp. The young cricketer's eyes held a gleam of respectful admiration when the car drew up finally before the little cottage.

"Thanks very much, sir!" he chuckled. "That was some drive!"

He broke off, for the simple reason that Captain Monty was not listening. Instead, he was staring interestedly past Bill and, following the direction of his eyes, the youngster saw he was looking through the window of the brightly lit cottage where Alec could be seen bustling about a well-laden table.

"I say," murmured the captain, heaving himself into the road, "as that tea your brother is making there? By gad, invite me in, will you, Murray? I'm dying for a cup!"

The peculiar request from such a man made Bill glance at him quickly, and as he did so, for some strange reason, a vague uneasiness began to lay hold of him. Captain Sinclair looked the last person in the world who would be really keen on drinking tea in a country cottage with two boys, but, of course, it would be churlish to make any objection, apart from the fact that the captain was obviously a bosom friend of Mr. Barr.

And yet—suddenly Bill found himself positive that it was not tea the captain wanted so much as to come inside the cottage—although, for what reason,

he could not guess. But he had caught a queer, eager gleam in the other's sleepy eyes, and hesitated, shuffling uncomfortably.

"I should like to, sir!" he muttered, flushing. "Only we don't have—many visitors. You see, dad—"

The captain nodded.

"I know," he said quietly. "Your father was a great detective once, wasn't he? And now he's a cripple!"

Bill looked at him again. "This Captain Sinclair was full of surprises."

"Yes!" he replied. "That's the reason we—oh, but come along in, sir, and welcome!"

"Thank you, Bill!" said the other, and another little thrill ran through the youngster, for the laziness had died clean out of the man's voice and his words were crisp.

A few minutes later, lounging gracefully in an old-fashioned rocker, the queer guest was sipping the steaming cup Alec had handed him, while Bill himself wired into his supper with the healthy appetite of one who has been in the open air all day.

His uneasiness, though, was steadily growing, and with every minute that passed he was becoming more and more certain that the man in the rocking-chair was not all the foppish idler he pretended to be. Although his manner was as affected and inane as ever, Bill noticed that never for a second did his eyes leave the grim figure of John Murray, sitting silent at his bureau in the corner.

There was something strange afoot. Not for the world would Bill show that he suspected anything, but under his cheery, smiling manner he was keyed up to his fullest extent and watching the visitor closely, at the same time calling himself an ass.

Even so, however, he was not prepared for the next move when it came. Slowly replacing his cup on the table the captain was silent for a moment, and then he turned squarely to the brothers.

"And I suppose you've never found any clue to that?" he asked softly, with a significant nod of his head.

Alec's eyes widened, but Bill's narrowed grimly. It was some seconds before he replied.

"You seem interested in my father," he said, at length.

The captain smiled.

"Do I? Perhaps I am."

"Yet you're not a Severnshire man,"

#### INTRODUCTION.

"SMILING" BILL MURRAY, a Severnshire County colt, causes a stir in the cricket world by performing an amazing bowling feat which enables his county to gain a surprising victory over a crack Australian touring side. In consequence of this he is hailed on all sides as the hope of England in the Tests, and promised fifty pounds for every match he plays in by a millionaire named Barr. "Smiling" Bill is more than elated at his success, for he has a fixed purpose in life—to earn the wherewithal to pay for an operation to cure his paralysed father. Years before, Lone John Murray had been "outed" when about to expose a coining gang in Severn City, and has been unable to speak since. Fearing the possible consequences should John Murray regain his memory, Luke Thurston and his rascally associate, Joe Necker, John Murray's assailants, determine to injure Bill and thereby ensure that the old man will not regain his power of speech.

"I'll see to it, Luke," says Necker, otherwise known as the Weasel. "Perhaps—after all—'Smiling' Bill Murray will never play for England!"

(Now read on.)

hinted Bill, with the ghost of a challenge in his voice. "And my father had few friends."

Again the smiling reply.

"Correct, Bill! And still I'm interested. And you haven't answered my question yet."

Alec broke in eagerly.

"No, we've never found any clues at all. We're always wondering who the hound could have been?"

"And so are we," murmured Sinclair absently. Then, catching the boys' startled looks, he recovered himself coolly. "Mr. Barr and myself, I mean," he smiled.

Bill did not answer. It was quite obvious to him now that, for reasons he knew best, Captain Sinclair had deliberately engineered all this, and was pumping Alec and himself hard. He felt like ordering the man out of the cottage straight away, and might have done so, too, had Captain Sinclair not been a friend of the kindly old millionaire.

To his surprise the captain guessed his thoughts exactly.

"I suppose you're wondering whether to sling me out on my neck for my cheek, aren't you?" he asked amiably. "Well, don't, please. Believe me, I'm a friend of yours. And, as for my interest in your father—well, I'll tell you the reason one day, perhaps."

Before the utterly-astonished brothers could reply he was off on another tack, quite unperturbed.

"Does your father ever recognise things, or people?" he asked.

"Y-yes—at least, sometimes he seems to," stammered Alec eagerly. "But the doctors said his brain was dead. We touch his shoulder occasionally, and then he raises his eyes. But—"

"Ah!"

In a flash the captain was out of his seat, and striding towards the paralysed man in the corner; and just as quickly Bill's hefty body appeared at his elbow. But if the captain noticed this precaution, he took no notice. In the gentlest possible manner he reached out and tapped John Murray's arm.

The boys held their breath. Very slowly their father raised his sunken eyes, and stared dully at the eager face held on a level with his own. The lamplight shone full on Captain Sinclair's pallid, clear-cut features, and a silence fell on the little cottage, broken only by the heavy ticking of a clock.

The spell was shattered at last by a strangled exclamation from Alec, checked immediately by a peremptory motion of the captain's hand. He had lost all his languid pose, and quivered like an excited terrier.

Gradually, painfully, but unmistakably, a gleam of some emotion was dawning in John Murray's eyes; first bewilderment then recognition, and last of all—memory!

For the first time for nearly four years the paralysed detective seemed aware of himself. It was a thrilling moment for the boys, for their father was trying, striving desperately to tell Captain Sinclair something—to say something, to warn him—of what?

Even as they all bent eagerly forward the gleam of life spent itself. Once more the eyes clouded into dullness again. It was like watching blinds being drawn across two bright windows.

Sick with disappointment Bill and Alec turned away, but immediately

"Smiling" Bill Murray brought his suit-case down with all his force, full in the gunman's face!



afterwards a firm hand on their shoulder made each look up. Captain Monty Sinclair was beside them glancing from one to the other with keen encouragement.

"I've found out what I came for," he told them simply. "John Murray's brain and memory still live. And one day—"

Bill whirled, and caught his arm in a grip of steel.

"What does it mean?" he demanded hoarsely. "Never before had dad looked like that. Who are you? And why did he recognise you?"

The captain did not answer straight away. Instead, he shook off Bill's grip, and the next moment was through the cottage door. His voice drifted back to them clearly.

"Keep smiling, Bill; you'll win!" it said.

And then came the hum of his engine, slowly dying away as the little car flashed back towards Severn City.

Captain Monty Sinclair had gone. And back in the cottage the two brothers stared at each other in utter and fascinated astonishment. What on earth did it all mean?

### The Attack in the Train!

**M**EANWHILE, the cricket season grew older.

As usual when the Australians are over here, the County Championship had taken a back seat, for all eyes were on the formidable visitors. After their first defeat by Severnshire, the Cornstalks had settled down quickly into a fine side, a

tough mixture of veteran steadiness and youthful brilliance. Woodfull was still "the Unbowable," and Don Bradman made hay of county bowlers up and down the country. And the Test Matches were drawing near.

But there was one other side that fairly shared the limelight—little Severnshire. A wonderful confidence seemed to have gripped every player until they could scarcely do wrong. Not for many seasons had the batting been so solid, for all the batsmen had run into their best form, and in match after match, at least two of the first four, Hammett the plodder, the stylish Newman, Major Weaver, or Jameson were sure to give the team a great start. After which, the Severnshire attack, headed by Bill Murray and backed by Hall, Nickalls, and Alston, pounded the opposition batsmen for all they were worth.

Leaving Severn City for a fortnight's tour, they beat Northants and Essex in succession, and then came a match against Kent, which was ruined by rain. Hampshire were the next opponents, and for two days the game was hard-fought and even, but at breakfast-time on the third, a letter arrived, inviting Bill to play in the Test trial at Lords the following week. That morning he and Hall between them skittled out the Hampshire batsmen before lunch for 98, and Severnshire wound up with an abrupt and crushing victory by nine wickets.

With the afternoon free, Bill, as he always did, made tracks for Severn City and the little cottage in Desford. Not wishing to be hampered by his big cricket bag, he had left it to come

on with the other baggage, and borrowed a suit-case from the sporting landlord of their hotel; after which, he wired the great news home to Alce and just caught the afternoon express to Severnsmouth, the bustling port at the mouth of the river, 30 miles below Severn City.

Sprawling comfortably in a corner seat, the young cricket star grinned contentedly. It was fine to be able to take things easy for a few hours after the hard work of the past fourteen days, and, chin in hand, he sat staring across the changing countryside, while he thought of the Test trial, Hampshire's sensational collapse that morning, and Captain Monty Sinclair.

Particularly of Captain Monty! It was nearly three weeks now since the night Mr. James Barr's extraordinary friend had lounged so dramatically into the boy's lives for an exciting half-hour, and then vanished completely. Neither Bill nor Alce had set eyes on him again, and it looked as though he had left Severn City, for when Bill casually mentioned his name to James Barr one day, the millionaire only grunted and changed the subject.

And yet, both Bill and Alce felt sure they had not seen the last of the one man who had been able to bring their father back to life and memory again, if only for a few seconds.

So deeply did Bill lose himself in the mystery, that the arrival of the express in Severnsmouth brought him to earth with a bump. Grabbing his case, he ran across to the other platform where the local train to the city was waiting, and

as there were few travellers to the quiet old place at this time of day, he found an empty carriage in the front of the train.

At the last moment, however, Bill's luck changed, and he grinned ruefully as three other men piled in just when the train began to move.

They were not particularly inviting-looking specimens either, he thought. Two of the men were young and flashily-dressed, while the third was a little dried-up fellow with pale, hard eyes and a crooked mouth. Bill put them down as typical race course followers; but beyond wondering idly why they were travelling to such a place as Severn City, soon forgot all about them. They, in turn, pulled out a pack of cards and began a three-handed game of nap.

The train was beginning to enter the deep cuttings through the Beacon Hills when a harsh voice suddenly broke in on Bill's thoughts.

"Keep your feet to yerself, can't yer!" it snarled spitefully, and looking up, the youngster saw the little man glaring at him, while the others laid down their cards grimly.

"I'm sorry—" Bill began politely, then glancing down instinctively, saw that the little man's feet were nowhere near his own.

His hefty body stiffened slightly. "Making a mistake, aren't you?" he asked coldly. "My legs aren't long enough to reach over there!"

Instantly the sturdier of the younger men slammed down his cards.

"Don't you call my pal a liar!" he flamed angrily, and the next moment all three were on their feet.

Bill rose quickly, too. He was no fool, and the slick, deliberate way the quarrel had been started was unmistakable. He had no idea why the men had picked on him; but at the same time he had no intention of scrapping with train bullies a week or two before the Trial Match. Without a second's hesitation he reached for the communication cord.

He did not pull it. Instead, he froze into a statue, arm half-raised, for, in a blur of speed, the second man's hand flashed beneath his coat and Bill found himself staring squarely into the muzzle of a flat automatic held in a firm, expert hand.

"Stick 'em up and come away from that cord!"

Obediently, Bill raised his hands high until he felt them bump against the suit-case on the rack above his head. His face was a perfect blank, only his eyes gleamed dangerously.

"I suppose this isn't a joke!" he said quietly. "But—"

The little man made a savage movement.

"Stow yer gab!" he spat. "You move afore we've done with yer, and ye'll get a bullet through your shoulder-joint!"

A mocking virtuous gleam came into his eyes.

"Who're you to go kicking respectable folks and picking quarrels, I

should like ter know?" he asked indignantly. "You need a lesson, me lad!"

There was an electric pause after that. All three seemed to be waiting for something, and Bill wondered what. He knew next moment, for the carriage light snapped on, and with a rush and a roar the train dived into the long tunnel beneath the Beacon Hills.

Then—

"Nobble him, chaps!"

Quick as lightning the man with the gun slid one leg on to the seat to let the others past. As he did so, however, the sway of the train unsteadied him slightly, and just for a second the gun wavered.

It was the one chance Bill was looking for.

Grabbing the handle of his suit case, he yanked it desperately out of the rack and brought it down with all his force full in the gunman's face. Down went the man like a log just as the others leapt in with furious oaths.

They ran straight into a burly athlete who was fighting mad. A terrific right crashed into the little man's ear and threw him against his companion, jamming them together in the narrow space. Then Bill threw himself upon them, hitting and barging with every ounce of strength.

(It looks a hundred to one chance against "Smiling" Bill Murray getting the better of this rascally trio, who are out to crock him, but the fight's not over yet as you'll learn when you read next week's gripping instalment.)

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