

"BOLD BAD BUNTER!" This week's humorous school yarn of
Harry Wharton & Co. at Greyfriars!

The **MAGNET**^{2D}



Billy Bunter's Blunder!



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., The Fleetway
House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

I DARE say you know that Esquimos eat candles, which are looked upon as great delicacies round about the North Pole. But have you ever eaten a candle yourself? Sounds pretty awful, doesn't it? But at a party I attended the other evening, one bright youngster gave us a shock when he came into the room with a lighted candle. He blew it out quickly, and then stuffed the candle into his mouth and began to eat it with every sign of enjoyment!

Yes, you're right! There was "a catch in it!" And if you want to catch your chums in the same way, here's the way to do it.

Get a large apple and cut a cylindrical piece out of it, as long as you can manage to make it, and the thickness of an ordinary candle. Then slice a small piece of nut until it looks like a piece of wick, and stick it in where the wick would be. When you've done that you will have a fake that looks exactly like a candle.

You can light the nut, and it will remain alight for a little while, because of the oils which nuts contain. Consequently, the illusion is complete, and your chums will wonder how you can possibly manage to stomach a lighted candle! Try it at the next party you visit.

Here's a query which has been sent in by Tom Hargeaves, of Belfast. Tom wants to know how sailors are able

TO TELL THE DEPTH OF THE SEA.

At one time there was only one way of doing this, which was to unreel a long line with a weight on the end, but there were several drawbacks to this method. The ship had to stop to begin with, otherwise the line would not have dropped straight to the bottom, but would have dragged behind. Also it was possible for the weight to drop upon a narrow reef, and give only the depth of the reef and not of the water alongside it. Then, of course, as the ocean is over 32,000 feet deep in some places, you can see that it was "some" job to lower a sounding line.

Nowadays a ship sends signals from its keel, and these cause sound waves to travel to the bottom of the sea. The sea bed reflects these sound waves back again, and a delicate apparatus on the bottom of the ship picks them up again. The rate at which the sound waves travel is known, and therefore the time between the waves being sent out and being picked up again is halved, and gives a quick calculation of the depth of the water in that spot.

YOU all know, of course, that the Panama Canal runs from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. But here is

A PANAMA CANAL PUZZLER

which has been put up to me by G. H., of Chelmsford. He asks me: "Which

is the eastern end of the Panama Canal?" Nine people out of ten would say that the Atlantic end was—and they would be wrong! Actually the Pacific end of the canal is farther East than the Atlantic end! That is because the Panama Canal does not run from East to West, as many people suppose, but from north-west to south-east! In fact, in one part of the country round there it is possible to see the sun rise in the Pacific and set in the Atlantic! You'd hardly believe it—but it's true!

When you were making out your New Year's resolutions, I wonder if you made one the same as W. J. Hall, of 46, Burmah Street, Ormeau Road, Belfast, did? He resolved to get one of our topping prizes, and I have just had the pleasure of sending it off to him! He got it for sending along this rib-tickling joke:



Teacher: "Tommy, what is a kipper?"

Tommy: "Please, sir, it's a bloater with its waistcoat undone!"



I've got plenty of other prizes to hand out to readers, so take my tip and have a shot at winning one.

Talking about

THINGS YOU'D HARDLY BELIEVE,

here is another selection of interesting items:

Diamonds are sometimes showered out of the skies! Precious stones have been discovered in meteors which have hurtled down from the sky. Diamond dust is frequently found in meteoric stones, and genuine diamonds have also been discovered in them!

A frog can only breathe with its mouth shut! If you could hold a frog's mouth open for a few minutes the creature would die, because of this!

A creature that walks on its ribs! Having no legs, the snake is forced to walk upon the ends of its ribs, and its mode of progression is managed by moving its ribs backwards and forwards as we use our legs!

An insect that keeps' pets! The only living things—except men—who keep pets are ants! Insects which are useless to the ants for anything else are kept penned up in the ants' nests to serve as pets!

The floating city of China! At Canton there is a whole city floating in the river! It has its own roads, markets, and even theatres, all built over the boats which form the foundations of this curious city!

Creatures that live in snow and ice! Ice worms are found in snow and ice. The formation of their skin allows them to draw heat from the light of the moon!

That's enough to be going on with, chums—but there are hundreds of similar almost unbelievable things jotted down in my notebook. I'll let you have some more later!

In the meanwhile, what do you think of this Greyfriars limerick, which comes from G. H. Degg, of 11, All Saints Road, Burton-on-Trent?

If all the great school there's none thinner Than that lanky lean scrag named Skinner.

But, though he's so thin, At the gong's welcome din He's first in with Bunter for dinner!

He gets a splendid real leather pocket wallet for it—and you can get one, too, by sending along a similar limerick!

I DARE SAY that many of you know that a blind-worm is neither a worm, nor is it blind. It is really a lizard, which has two eyes, and can see its way perfectly well—and can move at a rapid pace, too! But have you ever heard of

A GLASS SNAKE?

Needless to say, it is not made of glass, and, like the blind-worm, it is really a lizard. It gets its curious name because it snaps into pieces at the slightest touch, just as though it were really made of glass. I was talking to a fellow the other day who had often tried to catch a perfect specimen, but who had always failed because the reptile, when alarmed, contracts its tail and snaps it off. He tells me that the English blind-worm can do the same thing, and that the discarded tail will still hop around for some minutes after its owner has thrown it off. In due course it grows another, and all is well!

HERE'S another interesting question which comes from Tom Harvey, of Gateshead-on-Tyne.

HOW FAR CAN A FISH FLY?

Tom means a flying fish, of course. Well, it can fly a distance of 150 yards, which, considering that it is only about eight inches in length, is no mean achievement! Incidentally, there are some very curious creatures in the ocean, and Tom might be interested to hear about them. A sperm whale, for instance, is a champion jumper, and, although it often weighs more than 100 tons, it can jump clean out of the water! Another curious ocean-dweller is the barnacle, which glues its head on a ship or a whale, and shovels floating atoms of food into its mouth with its feet! Then there is the Japanese spider crab, which has claws six feet in length! Those claws can cut through anything except metal.

Look out for next week's MAGNET, chums! There's a real treat in store for you in Frank Richards' next complete yarn of the chums of Greyfriars. It's entitled:

"THE SCHOOLMASTER CRACKS-MAN!"

and it's just packed full of amusing and thrilling incidents that will hold your interest until the very last line.

Next comes the final instalment of our super-serial, "Oom, the Terrible," and, of course, a "full-of-smiles" issue of the "Greyfriars Herald." Footer fans will find plenty to interest them in our special Soccer article, and there will be shorter features as usual.

YOUR EDITOR.



A Magnificent New Long Complete Yarn of HARRY WHARTON & CO. at Greyfriars.
By FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Deep!

"WHAT the jolly old dickens—" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

The Famous Five, of the Greyfriars Remove, stared at Billy Bunter in astonishment.

It was time—in fact, past time—for prep to begin in the Remove studies. Most of the Removites had gone to their studies and were at work, but Harry Wharton & Co., in a group on the Remove landing, were talking football—a topic they had found so interesting that they had rather forgotten prep.

But they forgot football, too, at the sight of Billy Bunter coming out of the Remove passage on to the landing, weary and heavy laden.

Billy Bunter was carrying a large pail. The pail was full of water. It was a good weight, and Bunter puffed and blew as he negotiated it. He placed it on the landing near the balustrade with a grunt.

"What on earth—" asked Frank Nugent.

Billy Bunter blinked at them through his big spectacles. A grin wreathed his fat face.

"I say, you fellows, it's time for prep!" he said. "Time you were in your studies, you know! Better cut off!"

"What the dickens have you brought that pail of water here for, you fat chump?" demanded Johnny Bull.

"He, he, he!"

"Not going to wash?" asked Bob

Cherry. "A change is good for a fellow, but a sudden change like that—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Well, what's the game, you ass?"

Billy Bunter's grin widened until his extensive mouth stretched almost from ear to ear.

"That's for Walker!" he said.

"Walker?" repeated the Famous Five blankly.

"Walker of the Sixth! He's going to get that over his napper!" said

Revenge is sweet, thinks Billy Bunter. But the sweetness turns to bitterness when a scheme of revenge he puts into operation brings him—a flogging!

Bunter. "I hope he'll like it! He, he, he!"

"Oh, my hat!"

Harry Wharton glanced over the oaken balustrade down the curve of the staircase. Walker of the Sixth was the prefect on duty that evening—his duty being to see that the juniors stayed in their studies during prep, instead of larking in the passages, as they were only too likely to do if left to their own devices. But there was no sign of James Walker yet. Billy Bunter, apparently, had prepared a surprise for James Walker when that dutiful youth looked in on the Remove.

"You—you—you're thinking of

mopping that pail of water over Walker's napper?" ejaculated Bob Cherry, staring at Bunter.

"Don't yell!" said Bunter peevishly. "You don't want to give the beast the tip, you ass!"

"You howling ass!" exclaimed Nugent. "What's going to happen to you afterwards?"

Bunter chuckled.

"Nothing!" he answered. "I've got it all cut and dried! Safe as houses! I'm pretty wide, you know."

"The widefulness of the esteemed Bunter is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The broadfulness is as great as the longfulness!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't be an ass, Inky," said Bunter. "I'm too jolly wide to let Walker spot me. I'm going to tip that pail of water over him as he comes up the stairs."

"Without being spotted?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"I'm going to turn out the light," explained Bunter.

"And how do you know Walker will come up?" asked Harry Wharton. "He doesn't always."

"Sure to when he sees that the light's turned out!" grinned Bunter. "He will think that something is up, see?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Pretty deep, what?" asked Bunter, with considerable satisfaction.

"The deepfulness is preposterous!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Really, it was rather deep of Bunter. Almost certainly the turning out of the light on the Remove landing would make the prefect on duty suspicious that something was going on in the Remove.

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He would come up and see what it was, and that self-same turning out of the light would enable Bunter to "mop" the pail of water over him undiscovered! Really, it was very deep—awfully deep, in fact! Evidently there were hitherto unsuspected depths of astuteness in the fat Owl of the Remove.

"Mind, keep it dark!" added Bunter. "Walker will be frightfully wild at getting it! I shall be in my study at prep long before he gets up here—after he's had the water mopped over him, you know! Not a word when he begins inquiring about it. Keep it dark."

"But what has Walker done, you ass?" asked Harry.

"He's a beast! He reported me to Quelch to-day—making out that I was going down to the pantry. Just because he caught me on the kitchen stairs, you know. Suspicious beast! I told him I knew nothing whatever about a pie being in the pantry—I gave him my word that I hadn't even heard of it. He refused to take my word."

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Now, I wonder why he refused to take Bunter's word, you men?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" "Blessed if I can see anything to cackle at—making out that a fellow was after a pie!" said Bunter warmly. "And I never got the pie, after all, owing to that beast spotting me! He actually reported me to Quelch, and Quelch gave me a hundred lines! Fancy that!"

"Well, you fat chump, you'd better do the hundred lines for Quelch, instead of mopping a pail of water over Walker!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"I've not had time to do the lines!" said Bunter. "Quelch said that they were to be handed in before prep, too—as if a fellow has time for lines! He jaws fellows about wasting time, and then gives a fellow lines! That's a Form master all over! Silly owls, you know! But, I say, you fellows, cut off! I'm going to turn out the light."

"Look here, you ass—" said Harry. "Buzz off, old fellow, and don't jaw! You're like a sheep's head, you know—nearly all jaw—"

"My esteemed, idiotic Bunter—" "For goodness' sake, cut off!" said Bunter impatiently. "Anyhow, I'm going to turn out the light."

"But, look here— Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Wharton, as the light was switched off, leaving the juniors in darkness on the landing. "Look here, Bunter, you'd better chuck it—"

"Rats!" "There'll be a row—" "Yah!"

"Well, it's your funeral, old fat man!" said the captain of the Remove, and the Famous Five groped their way from the dark landing and went to their studies.

A subdued chuckle followed them from the darkness of the landing.

From the window over the staircase the palest glimmer of light came from the stars glinting in the wintry sky.

Billy Bunter heaved the pail of water up to the top of the oaken balustrade. He held it there, balanced on the oak, ready to tilt over at the sound of a footstep on the stairs. He grinned gleefully in the dark, but he refrained from chuckling aloud. He did not want to warn Walker, when he came, that someone was waiting there for him in the dark. In such an affair as this it was necessary to be cautious—very cautious indeed. Ragging a Sixth Form prefect

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was an awfully serious matter. Discovery meant condign punishment.

But the astute Owl had taken his measures against discovery. Anyone coming up had to pass the turn of the staircase below the balustrade where Bunter stood ready with the pail of water. He could not fail to get what was coming to him. And such a surprise was certain to delay him—long enough for Bunter to escape. Really, the fat Owl was displaying amazing astuteness.

There was a footstep below! Billy Bunter's eyes glistened behind his spectacles, and he breathed hard.

Footsteps ascended the staircase.

Bunter's fat heart thumped.

For a moment, perhaps, he hesitated. A moment more, and the destined victim would be just under the waiting pail. But the fat Owl's hesitation was brief. Walker of the Sixth was an absolute beast; he had prevented Bunter from annexing a pie! And he had reported Bunter, and got him an imposition. The impot Bunter could have forgiven. Even a licking he could have tolerated; but depriving a fellow of a pie was a serious matter. A lioness robbed of her cubs, a politician deprived of a salary, felt like Bunter done out of a pie. If ever an absolute beast had asked for it, James Walker had. And Walker was going to get that for which he had asked!

The footsteps were just below.

Bunter tilted over the pail!

The contents shot downwards over the staircase.

Swooooooh!

"Hoooooooooh!" came a gasping gurgle from below, as someone unseen by Bunter got the stream.

Bump!

It sounded as if the recipient of the painful of water had tumbled over. But Bunter did not stay to listen. He bolted.

From the darkness behind him, as he fled, came strange, weird sounds from the staircase.

"Hoooh! Groooh! Gug-gug-gug! Ugh! Ooooooh!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

MR. HENRY SAMUEL QUELCH, the master of the Remove Form at Greyfriars, had often been surprised. Life, indeed, was full of surprises. Often and often it was the unexpected that happened. But never had Mr. Quelch been so surprised—never had anything so utterly unexpected happened—as on this occasion.

It was, in fact, almost incredible!

It was so incredible that Mr. Quelch really would not have believed that such a thing could have happened—had he not been so very wet! The wetness left no doubt on the subject.

For it was not Walker of the Sixth who had come up the Remove staircase in the dark. Walker of the Sixth, no doubt, would have come sooner or later. But apparently he was coming later; and it was the Remove master who had come sooner!

Finding the light turned out above, and the Remove staircase and landing in darkness, Mr. Quelch had immediately become grimly suspicious that something was going on in the Remove quarters—just as Bunter had astutely calculated that Walker would! He was coming up to inquire why Bunter had not handed in his lines, due before prep, and had thoughtfully slipped a cane under his arm.

And then—

It seemed to Mr. Quelch, for the moment, that the skies were falling, or that the ancient roofs of Greyfriars were tumbling in on him.

From the darkness above, water smote him in a flood, soaking him, drenching him from head to foot.

He staggered and stumbled and rolled and bumped on the stairs. He bumped again—and yet again! A stream of water rolled down the stairs, and along with it rolled Mr. Quelch.

Bump! Bump! Bump!

"Ooooooh! Bless my soul! Groooh! Oh, goodness gracious! Whoooh!" gurgled Mr. Quelch. "Gug-gug-gug! What—what— Ooooooh! Groooh!"

He clutched at banisters and stopped his downward way. He sprawled on the stairs, dizzy, dazed, feeling as if he were in the grip of a nightmare.

The lower landing was lighted. Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, was chatting with some Fifth Form men at the door of the games-study, across that landing. Mr. Prout spun round in amazement at the strange, weird sounds that came from the Remove staircase.

"What—what—" ejaculated Mr. Prout.

"Ooooooh! Woooooh! Bless my soul! Ooooooh!"

"Upon my word!" ejaculated Prout.

He rushed across the landing, followed by some of the Fifth, all surprised and interested.

Mr. Quelch sat up.

Drenched and dripping, gasping and spluttering, Mr. Quelch sat on the stairs and blinked dizzily at Mr. Prout.

Mr. Prout blinked back at him.

"Quelch!" gasped Prout.

"Ooooooooooh!"

"What has happened, my dear Quelch?"

"Woooooooooh!"

"Have you fallen downstairs?" exclaimed Mr. Prout, with friendly concern.

Really, the question was superfluous. Obviously, Quelch had fallen down the stairs. He could not have been suspected of putting up acrobatic performances at his time of life.

"Woooooooooh! Ooooooooh!" was all the answer that came from the hapless master of the Lower Fourth.

"You are wet, Quelch!" exclaimed Mr. Prout. "You are soaked with water! You are drenched—absolutely drenched!"

Mr. Quelch was only too well aware of it!

"Pray, allow me to assist you, my dear Quelch!" Mr. Prout gave the Remove master a hand and helped him up. "Who has done this? This—this is an outrage—"

"Ooooooh!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Someone—some young rascal—has thrown water over me! Bless my soul! Ooooooh! Atchooooooh—chooh—chooh!"

Mr. Quelch sneezed.

"Dear me! You are catching cold and—"

"Atchooooooh!" sneezed Mr. Quelch. "Ooooooh! Atchooooooh!"

A crowd was gathering on the landing now. Fifth Form men came out of their studies and gazed at Quelch, some of them grinning. Three or four of the Sixth came up the lower staircase. Walker of the Sixth was the first. After him came Wingate and Gwynne and two or three others. All eyes were fixed on the drenched and dripping Form master in amazement.

Mr. Quelch strove to pull himself together. His cheeks crimsoned under the general stare.

"What—what has happened, sir?" exclaimed Walker.

"Can you not see what has happened?" snapped Mr. Quelch, "or are you blind, Walker?" Quelch's temper seemed to have suffered. "Someone has turned out the light on the landing above, and I have been drenched with water!"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Walker. "I have dropped my cane. Someone kindly find my cane——"

"Here it is, sir!" said Wingate.

Mr. Quelch gripped the cane.

He had recovered a little from the shock now, but his temper was at boiling-point.

"My dear Quelch!" exclaimed Mr. Prout, as the Form master turned to the Remove staircase again. "You are wet—very wet——"

"I am aware of that, Mr. Prout!"

"Had you not better go at once and

seeking what he might devour. But there was nobody to devour. The landing and the passage were deserted. All the Remove were in their studies.

Mr. Quelch strode into the passage.

As a matter of fact, he would have done well to take Mr. Prout's advice. Cold water had soaked him to the skin, and he was already sneezing; and it would have been wise to postpone vengeance until he had dried himself and changed his dripping clothes. But Mr. Quelch—perhaps naturally—was thinking chiefly of getting hold of the person or persons unknown, who had up-ended a pail of water over him, and using his cane with great vigour on that person or those persons!

There was no sign of the delinquent. He had had plenty of time to make good his escape.

"What——" gasped Nugent.

"Atchooooo!"

"Oh, sir!" gasped Wharton.

"Atchooooo!" whooped Mr. Quelch.

"Whooh! Atchoo! Wharton—groogh! I have been the victim of a—Atchooooooh!"

"Have you, sir?" gasped Wharton.

"Someone, some young—whoop!—some young rascal has drenched me with—atchooooooh!—water. I intend to make the strictest investigation. Every boy in the—atchooooooh!—every boy in the Remove will be questioned until I discover the——Choooooop!"

"Oh crikey!" gurgled Nugent.

The two juniors exchanged a startled glance. They understood now. Bunter had got going with his pail of water. But evidently—only too dreadfully



Wharton and Nugent jumped up in amazement as Mr. Quelch, drenched and wild-eyed, entered the study. "What——" Wharton gasped. "Atchooo!" whooped Mr. Quelch. "Some young rascal—whoop!—has drenched me with—atchoo!—water!"

change your—your attire, sir?" advised Mr. Prout. "You appear to be catching a cold! You are sneezing——"

"Atchooooooh!"

"Leave this matter in my hands, sir," said Mr. Prout. "Go and change your clothes at once, and I will deal with this matter."

"I am perfectly capable, sir, of dealing with matters pertaining to my own Form!" snapped Mr. Quelch. And, with that, he whisked up the stairs.

"Oh!" said Mr. Prout, very much offended. "Oh! Indeed! Very good, sir! Very good, indeed, sir!"

And Mr. Prout rolled away, snorting. Heedless of the Fifth Form master, Mr. Quelch whisked up the Remove staircase. But he could not be quite heedless of the subdued chuckle that followed him from the crowd of seniors. It added, if possible, to the deadly wrath in the breast of Henry Samuel Quelch. He reached the Remove landing, switched on the light, and glared round him, cane in hand, not unlike a lion,

Mr. Quelch hurled open the door of the first study—No. 1 in the Remove. Generally, Mr. Quelch tapped at a door before opening it, but he did not tap now. He hurled the door of Study No. 1 open with a crash.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Harry Wharton.

He jumped up from the table. Frank Nugent jumped up. The two juniors stared in amazement at the dripping and dishevelled figure in the doorway. They were at prep, but they had been rather expecting a row when—and if—Billy Bunter mopped that pail of water over Walker of the Sixth. But they were not expecting a visit from their Form master—especially in this drenched and dishevelled and wild-eyed state. They simply stared.

"Mr. Quelch!" Wharton found his voice. "What——"

Mr. Quelch opened his lips to speak, but a gargantuan sneeze seized on him the same moment.

"Atchooooo!"

evidently—it was not Walker who had bagged it.

"Wharton, if you had a——Choop!"

"A—a what, sir?"

"If you had a hand in this——"

"Oh, sir! No, sir!" gasped Harry.

Mr. Quelch gave the two dismayed juniors a wet and watery glare. Some Remove boy had done this dreadful thing, and he was prepared to suspect the whole Remove.

"Nugent, if you had a—whoooooop!—a hand in this——"

"Certainly not, sir!"

Mr. Quelch whisked on. A terrific sneeze floated back as he disappeared from the study doorway. Wharton and Nugent gazed at one another.

"Oh crikey!" breathed Nugent.

"That fat idiot——"

"He got Quelch! Oh, my hat!"

"There'll be a fearful row!"

"Atchoooo! Whooooop! Chooooop!" came ringing from the passage. There was a fearful row already.

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THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Fad for Bunter!

BILLY BUNTER grinned. The sound of Gargantuan sneezing from the passage seemed to amuse Bunter.

His study-mates did not grin. There were three of them in Study No. 7—Bunter and Peter Todd and Tom Dutton. Billy Bunter had bolted into the study after delivering the pail of water at the wrong address, shoved the empty pail out of sight in the cupboard, and sat down to prep. Bunter had counted on having time to make his escape, and he had had ample time. The sound of sneezing from the passage wreathed his fat visage with a happy grin. He was not yet aware of the identity of the sneezer.

Peter was looking rather grave. Tom Dutton went unconcernedly on with his prep. Dutton was deaf, and he did not hear the sneezing.

"He, he, he!" cachinnated Bunter, "That sounds as if Walker's caught a cold, Peter. He, he, he!"

"Sounds like it," agreed Peter. "And I fancy you're going to catch something, too, you fat duffer!"

"He, he, he! How's he going to know?" grinned Bunter. "I can tell you, I was jolly deep, Toddy!"

A banging of doors accompanied the sneezing along the Remove passage. It seemed that the sneezer was looking into study after study as he progressed up the passage, no doubt in search of the culprit.

Bunter grinned cheerfully.

Outside Study No. 7 sounded a loud, prolonged, agonised sneeze. The sneezer had arrived. Tom Dutton glanced up from his work. That terrific sneeze

seemed to have penetrated even to the hearing of the deaf junior.

"What's that?" asked Dutton.

"Only Walker," chuckled Bunter.

"Eh? What rot!" said Dutton. "I can't hear a talker. It sounded more like a squib to me. Anybody letting off fireworks?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The door was hurled open. Mr. Quelch, gasping after that huge sneeze, stared into the study, with panting breath and watery eyes. He was, indeed, in a towering rage!

"Atchoooh! Todd! Bunter! Dutton! Atchoochoop!"

The juniors jumped to attention at the sight of their Form master. They gazed at him, as the occupants of every study visited by Mr. Quelch had gazed at him, in wonder and alarm.

"Todd—atchoooh!—do you know anything of—whoop!—of this outrage? I have been drenched!"

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He fairly goggled at the Remove master through his big spectacles. Horror rooted him to the floor.

He realised that he had not caught Walker; he realised that those fearful sneezes had not proceeded from the prefect. He had caught Quelch! Bunter's eyes almost bulged through his spectacles.

"The author of this outrage will be taken before the Head, flogged, and expelled from the—Choooooop!"

Bunter quaked.

"If you had a hand in this, Todd—"

"Oh, no, sir!"

"If you had a hand in it, Bunter—"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I never dreamed—"

"If you had a hand in it, Dutton—"

"Did you speak, sir?" asked Dutton.

The deaf Removeite was regarding Mr.

Quelch with amazement, but he did not hear what he said. He could see that the Form master had been drenched with water, that he was struggling in the throes of a coming cold, but that was all.

"I did, Dutton. Some boy in the Remove has been guilty of this—atchoooh!—I mean, guilty of this—chooooo! If you had anything to do with it, I order you to say—Groooooooh!"

"I didn't catch that, sir," said Dutton, putting his hand to his ear.

"I have been drenched with water!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

Dutton started and stared. As usual, he caught part of what was said, and misunderstood the same.

"Have you, sir?"

"I have!" hooted Mr. Quelch.

"I didn't know you were married, sir."

"What?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"But I suppose you must be, sir, if you have a daughter."

"A—a—a daughter?" stuttered Mr. Quelch. "Is the boy mad? Bless my—chooooo! Atchoooh!—bless my soul! I did not say daughter, Dutton! I said water—water, you stupid boy! I have been drenched with water and caused to fall down on the stairs!"

"I hope she's not hurt, sir," said Dutton.

"What—what?"

"Didn't you say your daughter fell down on the stairs, sir?"

"Goodness gracious! Water!" shrieked Mr. Quelch. "Water! Some Remove boy threw water—atchooh!—threw water over me—water!"

"Oh, sir, impossible! No Remove chap would throw your daughter over, sir!" gasped Dutton. "It would be frightfully bad manners, I think, sir. I—it wasn't me, sir. I never even knew you had a daughter, sir. I—I thought you were a single man, sir."

"Bless my soul! I must really say—whooooop! Chooooop!—I must really say, that your deafness is most provoking. Atchooh!"

"I shouldn't call it joking, sir," said Dutton. "I should call it rotten bad manners to throw your daughter over."

"Boy! I repeat—"

Mr. Quelch broke off suddenly. His eyes fixed on Bunter. His eyes were watering, but they seemed as keen as ever.

"Bunter!" he roared.

Bunter jumped.

"Oh! Yes, sir! It wasn't me, sir!"

"Your jacket is wet, Bunter!"

"Is—is it, sir?" stammered the fat Owl.

"Have you been handling water recently, Bunter?"

"Oh, no, sir! Not since I washed this morning, sir!" gasped Bunter.

Mr. Quelch made a step towards him. Watery as his eyes were, they glinted like those of the fabled basilisk. Bunter trembled in every fat limb. He had been deep—awfully deep! The deed had been done in the dark, and Bunter had got clear away!

No doubt it was because the deed had been done in the dark, that Bunter had not noticed that the water had slopped over from the pail, when he heaved it up on the landing balustrade. His jacket was splashed with water! Only keen eyes would have noticed it, but Quelch's eyes had often been compared, by his pupils, to gimlets, for their penetrating qualities. Like gimlets they seemed to bore into the hapless Owl now.

"Bunter! It was you!"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I wasn't there, sir!" gasped Bunter. "You—you can ask



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Wharton and his friends, sir, if I was there! They know I wasn't, sir! They saw me—

"They saw you?"

"I—I mean they saw I wasn't there, sir! I—I never knew anything about it, sir!"

"Your jacket is wet, Bunter!"

"That—that's ink, sir!" groaned Bunter. "I—I upset the ink—"

"How dare you tell me such falsehoods, Bunter?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"I—I mean, it's tea, sir—just tea! I upset my tea—"

"You are speaking untruthfully, Bunter!"

"N-n-not at all, sir! I—I don't think I could if I tut-tut-ried, sir! I—I don't know how my jacket got wet, sir! It—it—it's a mystery, sir!"

Mr. Quelch gave Bunter a watery glare! Apparently it was not a mystery to him.

"Bunter! If you cannot explain at once, and without prevarication, how your jacket became wet—"

"Oh, yes, sir! I—I spilled the kettle on it, sir—I've just remembered—I upset the kettle!"

"Bunter! You have made three different explanations in as many minutes! You are guilty of this—choooooo—this outrage!"

"I—I assure you, sir! I—I—"

Having made three explanations, none of which had proved satisfactory, Billy Bunter cudgelled his fat brains for a fourth, which he hoped would have better luck. "The—the—the fact is, sir, I—I—got my jacket wet when I was filling the kettle at the tap, sir—the tap at the end of the passage, where I filled the pail—I mean, where I didn't fill the pail—"

"Silence! I will listen to no further prevarication! Bunter, you are guilty! I have found the culprit—and it is you, Bunter! It was you who dared to—choooooo! Whooooo! Snooooo!" A terrific fit of sneezing seized on Mr. Quelch. "Whooooo! Atchooooo!" Bunter, I shall not—whoooo—deal with you now—grooooo—I shall take you before the headmaster to be expelled—snooooo—whooooo—when I have changed—yooooooop!"

Mr. Quelch—having discovered the delinquent, and doubtless realising that it was high time that he got dried—whisked out of the study, and sneezed his way down the Remove staircase. The three juniors in Study No. 7 remained staring at one another. Peter Todd whistled.

"What was the matter with Quelchy, you chaps?" asked Dutton, puzzled. "He looked all wet! And what did he mean about his daughter, Toddy? I don't believe he's got a daughter!"

Peter did not answer. His eyes were fixed on Bunter.

"Well," said Toddy, with a deep breath. "You fat ass, you've done it now!"

Bunter collapsed into the study arm-chair.

"Oh lor'!" he gurgled. "I—I say, you fellows—oh crikey! I—I say, oh crumbs!"

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Flip Wants to Know!

FLIP of the Second Form came up the Remove staircase.

Prep was over.

The House was in a buzz.

Every man at Greyfriars, by this time, had heard of what had happened. A Form master had been waylaid in the dark, and drenched with a pail of water, on the stairs. It was an

unheard of happening—a most exciting happening—an amazing happening. Prout, in Common-room, told the other members of the staff that it was unprecedented, and the staff agreed that it was. Sixth and Fifth Form men discussed it; Shell and Fourth and Remove buzzed with it; fags of the Third and Second chortled over it—their youthful minds not realising the awful seriousness of it.

Flip of the Second Form, in fact, was the only fag who did not chortle. And he did not chortle because it was rumoured that the culprit was Billy Bunter of the Remove—and Flip was deeply concerned about Bunter.

The one-time waif of Puggins' Alley owed the fact that he was now a Greyfriars man, to Billy Bunter! It was all through Bunter that the tattered outcast, the wretched little "pincher" and pickpocket, who had

SPIN A YARN and ROPE IN A POCKET-KNIFE

like Walter Read, of 36. Beauchamp Road, Forest Gate, E.7, who submitted the following rousing rib-tickler:



Teacher: "Surely, Tommy, you know what that word on the blackboard spells! Suppose I put my hand in your pocket and took out a penny—what should I be?"

Scholar: "A conjurer, sir!"

Finished laughing? Right! Then set to work RIGHT NOW and win one of these magnificent prizes yourself!

lived in dread of the "coppers," had seen a new and wonderful life open before him: It was no wonder that he was grateful to Bunter—no wonder that he was devoted to the fat Owl—and so far, closer acquaintance with Bunter had hardly diminished his gratitude and devotion.

Flip's chubby, grubby little face was worried as he came into the Remove passage. Whoever had drenched Quelch, was going to be sacked—everybody said so. Flip wanted to know whether that awful fate impended over his podgy patron.

The Remove passage was deserted. Most of the fellows had gone down to the Rag after prep. But Flip had looked into the Rag for Bunter without finding him there. And he came along the Remove passage, a fat voice, in tones of woo, apprised him where Bunter was. That fat, dolorous voice proceeded from the open doorway of Study No. 1.

"I say, you fellows! This is awful!

I say, that beast Quelch thinks I mopped the water over him! I say, he said I'm to be taken to the beak to be sacked! Oh crikey!"

Flip paused.

Harry Wharton & Co. were in the study—he had noticed that they were not in the Rag. Apparently Bunter was consulting with the Famous Five in this awful extremity. The fag hesitated to butt in.

"You fearful idiot!" said Harry Wharton. "You unspeakable ass! What the thump did you mop the water over Quelch for?"

"Of course, I thought it was Walker!" groaned Bunter. "I was expecting Walker—I wasn't expecting Quelch!"

"It was the jolly old unexpected that happened!" said Bob Cherry. "You're for it now, old fat man!"

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"You might have guessed that Quelch might come up after your lines, as he told you to hand them in before prep!" said Nugent.

"I—I wasn't thinking about Quelch!" groaned Bunter. "The silly old ass had to butt in, of course! Fancy his spotting that my jacket was wet, and fancying that that was evidence against a chap! Why, any fellow's jacket might be wet! I told him it was ink—"

"You benighted ass, do you think he couldn't see that it wasn't ink?" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Well, I told him it was tea—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Then I told him it was water from the kettle! That was a jolly good explanation, you know! Any fellow might upset water over his jacket filling the kettle. But—but he didn't believe me—"

"Oh crikey! Didn't he?" gasped Bob.

"No! Making out a fellow to be a liar, you know!"

"Great Christopher Columbus!"

"It shows a rotten, suspicious mind, doubting a fellow's word, you know! It's up to a beak to trust a fellow! Trust on both sides, you know—and all that! Why, you might turn a fellow into a liar by doubting his word!" said Bunter indignantly. "Not me, of course—but fellows like you chaps—"

"Oh, help!"

"I say, you fellows, he's caught a fearful cold, and that will make his temper worse! What did he expect, going about in wet clothes, I'd like to know? But he will blame me!" said Bunter bitterly. "I've not the slightest doubt that he will blame me, you fellows!"

"The doubtfulness is not terrific," agreed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I—I say, what's going to be done?" groaned Bunter.

"You are, old fat bean!" said Johnny Bull. "Brown!"

"The brownfulness will be preposterous!"

Bunter groaned.

Harry Wharton & Co. looked serious. It was a serious matter. Billy Bunter, apparently, expected help from the Famous Five, in this dire and dismaying posture of affairs. They were willing to help, if they could, but they did not see how. Bunter had mopped a pail of water over his Form master, and Quelch knew that he had—and that was that! What help Bunter expected from the chums of the Remove, was a mystery to them. But it seemed that he did expect it.

"I say, you fellows, Quelch hasn't gone to the Head yet!" recommenced Bunter. "I—I hear that he's gone to

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his room, and is sneezing and coughing and snorting like a—a—a grampus! I heard a chap say the doctor had been phoned for, and he's seen Quelch. If— if he's going to be seriously ill, he—he may forget about me! What do you fellows think?" asked Bunter, blinking round hopefully at the Famous Five. "Think he's likely to be laid up with a long, serious illness?"

Evidently Bunter saw a gleam of hope in that happy possibility.

"The worse he is, the less he is likely to forget who made him ill, I fancy," said Bob. "You'd better hope that he's well, old fat man."

"Look here, Bunter," said Harry Wharton. "You'll have to see the Head, and you'd better explain to him quick that you meant that idiotic trick for Walker of the Sixth. That will make it easier. Ragging a Form master means the sack, but the beak will only flog you for ragging Walker—"

Yelp from Bunter.

"You silly ass, I don't want to be flogged!"

"Quelch won't insist on the sack when he knows that it was a mistake," said Harry. "We can testify that you meant it for Walker, if you like. Of course, you'll get a beak's flogging—"

"Oh dear! I say, you fellows, I—I think this a time for a fellow's pals to stand by him!" said Bunter. "You see that?"

"What can we do, ass?"

"Well, look here, after all I've done for you—"

"Kick him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Beast! I—I think if a fellow went to the Head and—owned up in a— a frank and manly way, you know, the— the beak might go easy. You can tell him you meant it for Walker, Wharton—"

"I!" yelled Wharton.

"Yes, old chap! In fact, you can tell him you meant it for a Remove man; just a rag on a Remove chap, you know! Tell him how horrified you were when you found that Quelch had got it! Pile it on, you know! The beaks like it piled on thick. Tell him—"

"You burbling bandersnatch!" roared the captain of the Remove. "How can I own up to doing it when I never did it?"

"I wish you wouldn't wander from the point, Wharton!" said Bunter peevishly. "That's just like you, wasting time; like Nebuchadnezzar fiddling while Constantinople was burning! I think it's up to you, after all I've done for you! Besides, the Head will take your word if you say you meant it for a Remove chap. He—he might not take my word. He's doubted my word before!" said Bunter sorrowfully.

"You pernicious porpoise—" gasped Wharton.

"After all, it's only a licking!" said Bunter. "Don't be afraid of a licking. You may not even get a licking if you make the Head believe it was a rag on a junior. Might be only detention, or something."

"I'm to go to the Head and tell him a pack of lies just to get detention, or something?" gasped Wharton. "Ask next door!"

"I—I say, Bob, old chap, you're not such a selfish beast as Wharton—"

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"Just!" he answered. "Worse, in fact!"

"I say, Inky—"

"My own esteemed worstfulness is

also terrific!" chuckled the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Billy Bunter groaned. The Famous Five grinned. They comprehended now the help that Bunter wanted. It was not help that he was likely to receive from Study No. 1.

But outside, in the Remove passage, a strange expression came over the grubby face of Flip of the Second. Without showing himself in the doorway the fag turned and trod quietly away to the stairs. He disappeared down the Remove staircase without the fellows in Study No. 1 becoming aware that he had been there at all. The last sound he heard as he went was a deep and dismal groan from Billy Bunter.

"Buck up, old fat bean," said Bob kindly. "The Head's sure to believe you if you tell the truth. He knows when a fellow is telling the truth, you know! You won't be sacked when they know it was a mistake in the dark; you'll get off with a flogging—"

"Beast!"

"And cheap at the price!" said Johnny Bull. "Dash it all, you've drenched Quelch and given him a fearful cold! He may be laid up with that cold for days."

"Only for goodness' sake, Bunter, tell the Head the truth," said Harry Wharton. "If you tell your usual whoppers he will take it for granted that you mopped that pail of water over Quelch on purpose, and that means the sack."

"Of—of course, I shall tell the truth," said Bunter. "I—I hope I'm not a fellow to tell untruths. Not like some chaps I could name. The—the fact is, you fellows, I—I never did it."

"What?" roared the Famous Five.

"Oh, really, you fellows! Don't yell at a chap—"

"Look here, Bunter—"

"Beast! Being perfectly innocent, I'm bound to tell the Head so. And I think you fellows ought to back me up. You can all come with me to the Head," said Bunter hopefully. "Tell him you were on the spot at the time—"

"We weren't on the spot at the time!" shrieked Bob Cherry.

"For goodness' sake keep to the point! You wander from the point just like Wharton! You can tell the Head that you were on the spot at the time, and that you know it wasn't me—"

"But we know it was you!" roared Johnny Bull.

"The knowfulness is terrific!"

"Look here, if you keep on wandering from the point—" hooted Bunter.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Let's wander from Bunter, at any rate!" he said. And the Famous Five walked out of the study.

"I say, you fellows—" howled Bunter.

But the chums of the Remove were gone. Billy Bunter rolled back to his own study, where, in a state of dire apprehension, he waited for the expected summons to the headmaster.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Culprit!

"MY dear Quelch—" "Atchoooooooh!" "You appear to have a cold, my dear Quelch!" said the Head.

"Chooooooop!"

Dr. Locke was looking quite concerned.

Mr. Quelch appeared to have a cold,

that was certain. And in this case appearances were not deceptive. He had a cold!

He was sitting up in bed, tucked in blankets. The doctor had been—and gone! Mr. Quelch had been extremely unwilling to see the doctor. But he realised that it was only judicious. He had stayed too long—much too long—in his drenched clothes.

Mr. Quelch had reached a time of life when a man needed to be careful in such matters, and there was no doubt that he had been very careless. The result was a cold—a bad cold—a fearful cold—a real corker of a cold; though Mr. Quelch, of course, would not have called it a corker!

Days of sneezing and snorting lay before Mr. Quelch, during which time goodness only knew what would happen to his Form. Sitting up in bed, with streaming eyes and nose, Mr. Quelch—in the intervals of sneezing—thought of the fatuous youth who had brought this disaster on him, and his thoughts were bitter—very bitter.

He was glad to see the Head. It was kind of that gentleman to take the trouble to visit him when he was laid on his beam-ends. There was sympathy in the Head's kind face; and sympathy was grateful and comforting. Also Mr. Quelch wanted to see the Head about Bunter.

Dr. Locke sat on a chair by the bedside—not too close! He was deeply sympathetic, but he did not want to catch the cold.

"A—a slight cold, sir!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "But I desire very much to— Chooooooop!"

"You desire—" questioned the Head.

"I desire to— Whooooop! Atchoooooooop!"

Sneezing interrupted the hapless Form master for some moments. The Head waited sympathetically till he found his voice again. Mr. Quelch recovered and restarted after the interval.

"I desire very much to see you about that foolish, that reckless, that rascally junior, sir, who has done this."

"Quite!" said the Head. "That is why I am here, Quelch! The boy has come to me and confessed his action, and his punishment rests in your hands. Your wish shall be my law in this matter."

"Such an assault upon a member of your staff, sir, can only be followed by—Atchooh! Atchooh!—by the expulsion of the offender."

"If that is your wish, Quelch—"

"Undoubtedly!"

"Taking the extreme youth of the offender into consideration—"

"He is no younger than other boys in—Atchooh!—the same Form—choop!—I presume."

"Oh, quite, quite!" said the Head. "I should mention that the boy has stated that he did not intend the water to be thrown over you, my dear Quelch. He was unaware of your identity in the dark. So he states, at all events. I gather that he threw the water over the staircase with utterly thoughtless recklessness, not thinking that it might fall on a Form master."

Snort—from Mr. Quelch.

"I have spoken to Mr. Twigg," said the Head, "and he speaks well of the boy."

Mr. Quelch stared.

"May I ask what Mr. Twigg has to do with the matter, sir?" he inquired very acidly. "I see no reason why the master of the Second Form should offer an opinion at all."



"You young ass, Flip!" said Wharton. "What do you mean by telling the Head that you mopped Quelch when you know it was Bunter?" "Don't you worrit," answered Flip, with a wink. "All you've got to do is to 'old your row, see?"

"Eh? As the boy's Form master, Quelch—"

"His Form master?" repeated Mr. Quelch blankly.

"Certainly! The boy is in the Second Form—"

"There seems to be a misapprehension," said Mr. Quelch. "I have not been able to report the matter to you, sir, and doubtless you have heard it incorrectly. It was not Bunter minor of the Second Form who was guilty of this outrage, but Bunter major of the Remove, sir—my Form!"

"Bunter!" repeated the Head.

"So if you were speaking of Bunter minor, sir, in Mr. Twigg's Form—"

"But I was not," said the puzzled Head; "I was speaking of the boy who threw the water over you, Quelch."

"That was Bunter of the Remove, sir."

"Bless my soul! There is evidently some strange mistake somewhere," said the Head. "I presume that you did not see the culprit at the time—"

"I cannot see in the dark, sir!" stated Mr. Quelch.

The Head coughed.

"No, no! Quite, quite! Then may I ask what gave you the impression that Bunter of the Remove was the guilty party?"

"I found him with a wet jacket, sir, in his study, and his explanation was rambling, confused—in fact, obviously false—"

"No doubt the boy was confused—perhaps frightened," suggested the Head. "Possibly you may have looked—ahem!—a little angry—"

"Quite possibly!" said Mr. Quelch. "But there is no doubt in my mind. Moreover, did you not say that the guilty person has come to you and confessed?"

"Quite so! But that was not Bunter."

"N-n-not Bunter?"

"Certainly not. I have not seen Bunter."

"Then I cannot— Atchoooh! Chooop! I cannot understand this, sir! Who has—chooop, chooop!—confessed?"

"The boy named Flip—the new boy in the Second Form," said the Head. "He came to my study and made a full confession."

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch in astonishment.

"He has expressed deep contrition," said the Head. "He has stated that he had no intention whatever of throwing the water over you. It was what the foolish boy calls a lark, I conclude. This boy, my dear Quelch, is not, of course, like other Greyfriars boys. He has had a strange training—or, rather, no training at all. You are aware that he was a—vagrant in some miserable slum in London; and that he was placed here by Lord Mauleverer's uncle, Mauleverer having very kindly taken an interest in him. He is not, perhaps, to be judged so severely as others. I admit I believe his statement that he is sorry that you received the—the drenching."

"I was absolutely certain that it was Bunter—"

"It appears, nevertheless, that that was an error," said the Head gently. "The boy Flip has confessed to the action."

"I—I am quite astonished!" said Mr. Quelch. "If an error was made, and if the culprit had no intention, sir, of assaulting a member of your staff, I should certainly not demand expulsion as a punishment. If indeed it was this boy, this—this Flip—"

"The matter is in your hands, Quelch, as I have said. But in view of the offender's extreme youth—a Second Form boy—"

"Then I can only say— Choooop, chooop! Snooop! I can only say— Atchooooooh! I can only say, sir, that a severe flogging will, no doubt, meet the case—a very severe flogging—"

"I am glad to hear you say so, my

dear Quelch. You may rely upon it that the punishment will be exemplary," said the Head. "Such unthinking recklessness as this boy has been guilty of cannot be too severely reprimanded. A public flogging will be administered in Hall after prayers to-morrow morning."

The Head rose.

"I fear, Quelch, that you will be unable to attend to your duties for some days—for some time—"

"I fear not, sir."

"I shall make arrangements; do not allow that to trouble you," said the Head. "The usual agency will supply me with a temporary master to take the Remove until you are well enough to resume your duties."

And after a few more words of sympathy and condolence the Head took his leave of that hapless member of his staff and retired, followed by a sneeze as he went.

With a very thoughtful brow Dr. Locke returned to his study.

Flip of the Second Form was waiting for him there.

He eyed the headmaster timidly as he came in. Dr. Locke's gaze rested on him gravely.

"Flip," he said, "I have seen Mr. Quelch. I have informed him of your confession. You may thank him for escaping the sentence of expulsion from this school."

Flip drew a deep, deep breath.

He had taken his fate in his hands, as he well knew, when he went to the Head to "confess." Whatever the result, Flip was prepared to face it—for the sake of that kind and generous youth, William George Bunter! The fact that his confession was false, that he had told the headmaster untruths, weighed lightly on poor Flip's conscience. In Puggins' Alley he had not been brought up in the ways of truthfulness. He was only concerned about Bunter.

"You will be flogged," said the Head

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in a deep voice—"and I warn you that the flogging will be very severe!"

"Yessir!" said Flip humbly.

"Your action," said the Head, "was so utterly reckless, so utterly unthinking—and the harm you have done is so great—"

"I'm sorry for Mr. Quelch, sir," murmured Flip. "I wouldn't go for to hurt him for anything, sir."

"You may go," said the Head. "You will receive a flogging in Hall after prayers in the morning. You may go."

And Flip went.

His face was humble and contrite until the Head's door closed on him; then he grinned.

"That's blooming orlright!" murmured Flip in the English he had not learned at Greyfriars. "That's corking, that is! Master Bunter won't ear any more about it. And what's a walloping?"

Flip chuckled softly.

Many a "walloping" had come his way in the old days in Puggins' Alley. A Head's flogging was undoubtedly a thing to make any fellow sit up and take notice, but Flip had been through tougher experiences.

"I dessay the old cove will lay it on 'ard!" murmured Flip, as he went down the passage. "But, bless his blooming buttons, it won't be like what I got the time Jimmy the One lost his temper and laid into me with a belt! No fear! I can stand it!"

And Flip strolled away quite cheerfully to the Second Form quarters, not looking in the least like a fellow who was "up" for a beak's flogging in the morning.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Something Like a Surprise!

WINGATE of the Sixth put his head in at the doorway of the Rag. Billy Bunter's squeak fell on his ears as he did so.

"I say, you fellows, it wasn't me!"

"Of course, it wasn't!" said Skinner. "You were somewhere else all the time when you did it, weren't you?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yes, old chap! I mean—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here's jolly old Wingate!" yawned Bob Cherry.

Billy Bunter blinked round in alarm. It was Wingate's duty to see lights out for the Remove that night, but Bunter was not thinking of that. He was thinking of the expected and dreaded summons to his headmaster—which had not yet reached him.

"I say, Wingate, it wasn't me!" he squeaked. "Look here, I'm jolly well not going to the Head! I never did it, Wingate!"

Wingate stared at him.

"You never did what, fathead? Have you been after that pie again?" he demanded.

"Oh, really, Wingate! I never went after that pie at all. I told Walker at the time I didn't know there was a pie in the pantry. I told him I hadn't seen it through the window—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"As for mopping that water over Quelch, I never did!" wailed Bunter. "I—I wish you'd tell the Head so, Wingate. You see, you being head prefect, and captain of the school, and all that, the beak would take a lot of notice of what you said, and, being perfectly innocent—"

"You young ass!" said the captain of Greyfriars, laughing. "You're all right. They've got the man who droned Quelch!"

Bunter jumped.

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"They—they—they've got him?" he gasped. His eyes almost bolted through his spectacles as he blinked at Wingate. How they could have got the man without getting his fat and fatuous self was a mystery to Billy Bunter.

"Yes, that's all right. Now get off to the dorm, you fags!"

There was a buzz of excitement in the Rag. Harry Wharton & Co. and Peter Todd knew that Bunter had "mopped" the pail of water over Quelch, and the other fellows had no doubt of it. Wingate's statement therefore caused rather a sensation. Instead of making a move for the dormitory, the Removites stared at Wingate.

"Did—did—did you say they've got the man?" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Yes. Now get a move on!"

"B—but who?" stammered Bob Cherry.

"A kid in the Second Form. That weird new kid that's called Flip. The young ass seems to have done it for a lark, so far as one can make out."

"Oh crumbs!" exclaimed Johnny Bull. "But—but what makes them think that Flip did it, Wingate?"

"He's owned up."

"Owned up?" yelled the juniors.

"Yes. The young ass seems to have gone to the Head and confessed as soon as he found out what he'd really done."

"Confessed!" gasped Wharton. "But—but—"

"I'm waiting!" said Wingate.

The Removites, in great amazement, cleared out of the Rag. The expression on Billy Bunter's fat face was extraordinary.

He had wondered why the summons to the Head had been delayed. Now he knew. It was not coming at all! He was exonerated—out of danger—no longer suspected—safe as houses! Flip of the Second Form had owned up to what he certainly had not done! Why he had owned up was a deep mystery to Billy Bunter. But he had, and that was that! A heavy weight rolled from Bunter's fat mind. He was feeling quite a new Bunter now!

The Remove turned in, greatly amazed. Every man in the Form knew—or, at least, felt sure—that Bunter had done it, and a Second Form fag had owned up. It was amazing! It was as amazing to Billy Bunter as to anyone else. But Harry Wharton & Co., after the first shock of astonishment, were not long in guessing how matters stood. They were well aware of the loyal devotion of the queer little waif to the fat patron whom he regarded with unbounded admiration.

"What are they going to do to Flip, Wingate?" asked Harry Wharton, before the prefect extinguished the light.

"Flogging after prayers in the morning," answered Wingate. "He makes out that he never meant it for Quelch. And I suppose the Head believes him, or it would be the sack. Good-night!"

The light was put out, and Wingate left the dormitory. A buzz of excited voices followed his departure.

"Who'd have thought it?" said Skinner. "I was sure it was Bunter. Why, Bunter said that it wasn't! Isn't that good evidence that it was?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, really, Skinner—"

"It jolly well was Bunter!" roared Bob Cherry. "We jolly well know it was!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Oh gadi!" said Lord Manleverer. "It couldn't have been Bunter, dear man, if Flip's owed up to it."

"It jolly well was Bunter!" said Peter Todd. "Quelch spotted him. That

Second Form kid must be off his rocker. It was Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Toddy—"

"Well," said Vernon-Smith, "if it was Bunter, that kid Flip must be potty. Was it you, Bunter?"

"Oh, really, Smithy! I keep on telling you fellows that I never knew anything about it! I shouldn't even have been suspected if I hadn't upset some of the water over my jacket."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Then it was you?" exclaimed the Bounder.

"Certainly not! I keep on telling you it wasn't! Besides, it was all Quelch's fault," said Bunter indignantly, "butting in when a fellow expected Walker."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here, 'Bunter," exclaimed Harry Wharton, "that silly kid's gone to the Head and told him whoppers to save your fat bacon. You'll have to own up and get him out of it, see?"

"Don't be an ass, Wharton! How can I own up to a thing I never did? I hope I'm truthful!"

"You hope—what?" gurgled the captain of the Remove.

"He—he—he hopes he's truthful!" sobbed Bob Cherry. "Oh, my only bowler hat! My only Sunday topper! Ye gods!"

"You fat villain!" roared Johnny Bull.

"If Flip's owned up to it," said Bunter, "I dare say he knows whether he did it or not. I'm not going to give him away to the Head if he's been pulling the beak's leg. That wouldn't be cricket. If he's told the beak he did it when he didn't, he's told whoppers. Well, of course, I can't approve of a fellow telling such whoppers—"

"Oh crikey!"

"But I couldn't give a man away! Not me!" said Bunter. "Loyal and true, and all that—that's me! I'm rather more particular in such things than you fellows."

"Why, you—you—you—"

"If Flip's been telling the Head whoppers," said Bunter, "I shall speak to him rather severely. I shall tell him that that sort of thing won't do for Greyfriars, but I shan't give him away! No fear!"

"You pernicious porpoise—"

"I say, you fellows, don't keep on jawing. A fellow wants to go to sleep. Let the matter drop. The fact is, I'm tired of the subject."

"You'll have to own up!" roared Johnny Bull.

Snore!

"Do you hear, you rascally rhinoceros?"

Snore!

Many remarks were addressed to Billy Bunter up and down the row of beds. But, like the gladiator of old, Bunter heard, but he heeded not. He snored.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Willing Scapegoat!

YOU young ass!"

"You terrific fathead!"

Flip of the Second Form stared at the Famous Five.

"Wot's a-biting of you?" he inquired.

It was early morning, prayers not yet quite due. Generally, fellows were none too early for prayers. Some, indeed, bolted in at the latest moment with a button or two still to fasten. Billy Bunter had been known to rush in late in a frightfully unbuttoned condition. But for once some of the Remove were down very early, and the Famous Five

(Continued on page 12.)

FOOTBALL FAVOURITES!

No. 14.
W. H.
WALKER,
the famous
International
inside-left
of Aston Villa.



A Gamble That Came Off!

ASTON VILLA is one of the two clubs belonging to the First Division who have never played in any other section. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine—unthinkable almost—the wearers of the famous claret-and-blue colours playing in other than the top class of football. But there have been times when the Villa were not at the top of the tree—when the future status of the club was in doubt.

I remember one such time. It was just after the War—in the season of 1919-20, which was the first normal campaign after the conclusion of the big fight. The Villa were in the doldrums—nearly at the bottom of the League. Something desperate had to be done. On the Villa's books at the time was William Henry Walker, still young and not sufficiently experienced, really, to be raised to first-class football.

I asked a director of the club, mid-way through the season, what they were going to do about the parlous state in which the team was found in the League. "We are going to take a gamble at centre-forward," he said. "If it comes off, everything will probably work out right; if it doesn't, then we shall find a ready-made centre-forward."

And the boy with whom the Villa took the gamble was Billy Walker. He was put into the side at centre-forward. Immediately the name of the Villa began to climb by steady steps up the League ladder, and before the end of the season they had worked into quite a good position. They did rather more than that, however. At the end of that season the Villa had taken the Cup back home once more, and Billy Walker had played his part at centre-forward for the team in the final tie.

A Collector of "Caps."

MIND you, it was no easy matter to go into the Villa team at the time Walker was promoted. The Villa had been famed down the years for their centre-forwards, and immediately in front of Walker was one Harry Hampton, one of the best and most prolific—in the scoring sense—that the game has known. So it was, as the director put it, a gamble to promote Walker. But it came off, and from that time till now Billy, as everybody calls him, has not only been one of the most popular figures in football but one of the most successful as well. He has a cupboard full of International caps, almost.

I have run on rather ahead of the story of Walker's career, however, so must now switch back. Actually, it was no wonder that Walker became a footballer, because his father was a "pro" player, figuring at full-back mostly for Wolverhampton Wanderers. His father has told me how, when little Billy was a tot of four or five years of age, he used to beat the other boys of his street in the Midlands town dribbling about with a threepenny rubber ball. As a matter of fact, that is very good training for a would-be footballer. If you can dribble with a threepenny rubber ball you can dribble with a larger one.

To school in the ordinary way went Billy, and then came the time when he had to think about the serious business of what he was going to do in life. "I want to be a footballer," he said to his father one day. Now father Walker had other ideas for the boy; he wanted him to do something else. There was even a sort of ultimatum from the parent. "You are not going to follow in my footsteps and play football as a professional," said Walker senior. And the father went on to tell the boy what a life it was. "I warn you, Bill," he said. "It's a game of hard knocks, with more kicks than ha'pennies associated

with it. Try farming if you like, go to sea if you prefer it, but for goodness' sake don't be a footballer!"

'Gainst Father's Advice!

AFTER the boy left Kingshill School he was sent to a nut and bolt factory at Darlaston. But nuts and bolts—if I may be allowed to misquote—do not a prison make. With the works' team Billy continued to play football, and one day, just after the War had broken out, he joined Hednesford Town as an amateur. It was no use the father trying to hold him back from football any longer, and, indeed, I happen to know—although Walker senior would never confess it openly—that he taught the boy a few tricks. What is even more, the father was the proudest man in England when, after the Cup Final of 1920, Billy showed him the Cup-winners' medal.

"Well done, lad!" said the father; and Billy looked up, winked a knowing wink, and then said in his kindly way: "I am waiting for you to say once more that I mustn't play football."

Billy Walker had only played in three games for Hednesford Town when he was noticed by a Villa scout, and was duly signed on. The War prevented him from progressing very quickly, but, as Billy himself says, that was probably a blessing. He had not been long with the Villa when he was chosen to play at centre-forward for England.

"I have won all the honours which are to be had from the game," he told me not long ago, "and as skipper of the Villa side I am quite content to let other and younger players get some of the honours which are now going around."

Control of the Ball!

THAT statement was typical of Walker—always a thought for the lads coming on. Not long ago I had a chat with Houghton—a young player who had just come into the Villa side at outside-left, being partner to Walker. Houghton made rapid progress in the game. "I owe that to my partner, Billy," he said. "What luck to have such a fellow to play with. During my first game with the Villa I made a mistake or two. But Billy never said a word which was not of encouragement; it was just 'don't bother your head, keep on trying your best.'"

Many another lad who has gone into the Villa side during the ten years in which Walker has played for them—he has known no other professional club—has been encouraged in the same way. The secret of Walker's success on the field, in the individual sense, has been due to his wonderful ball control. That was the solid foundation on which his play was based. Like all the best footballers—so it seems—Billy Walker is what is called "Tosy"—that is, when running, he turns the toes of each boot inwards a little.

To support his skill as a dribbler Walker has the quick-thinking brain of the real footballer. He gets the ball, beats an opponent or two, and then makes a pass in an unexpected direction. In these days he does not score so many goals as he used to do, for he plays at inside-left, but he carries on making openings for others, and that suits him down to the ground.

The present centre-forward of the Villa owes a lot of his success to the scheming of Walker. "I know that when I am free of the backs the ball will come to me in a way which makes it easy to take," said Waring.

There is one other pastime which Walker loves just as much as football, and that is golf. He can play the Royal and Ancient game, too. And in his spare time he has scored centuries at cricket with clubs in the Midlands. An all-round sportsman, and a jolly good sport is Walker.

BOLD BAD BUNTER!

(Continued from page 10.)

caught Flip and proceeded to address him with more emphasis than politeness. "What do you mean by it?" demanded Wharton.

"Which?" asked Flip.

"Making out that you mopped Quelch," grunted Johnny Bull.

"So I blooming well did!" answered Flip.

"You young ass! We know it was Bunter of our Form," said the captain of the Remove. "You've been telling the Head whoppers!"

"Ave I?" said Flip, with an aggressive look. "Well, that needn't worrit you. And all you've got to do is to 'old your row, see?"

"Don't you know it's wrong to tell lies?" growled Johnny Bull.

Flip winked.

"I wish I 'ad a 'arf-crown for every one I've told!" he remarked. "I'd be a blinking millionaire."

"Oh, my hat!"

The Famous Five gazed at Flip. He grinned. Truthfulness, it was obvious, had never been inculcated in the waif in Puggins' Alley.

"But you'll get flogged!" said Wharton, after a pause.

"So the old bloke told me!" assented Flip. "I can stand it! I'd stand more'n that for Master Bunter, what's been so good to me. I know it was Mauly's uncle what brought me 'ere—and a kind old cove he is—but it was Master Bunter did it all in the first place, and the Head can take the skin off my back if he likes, so long as he don't 'urt Bunter, see?"

"A Head's flogging is no joke, kid!" said Frank Nugent.

Flip laughed.

"The old covey won't hurt me much, arter what I've been used to in our alley," he said. "You coves ever been larruped with a leather belt with a brass buckle on it?"

"Great pip! Not quite!"

"Well, I 'ave," said Flip. "You should 'ave seen my back arter Jimmy the One laid into me once! Raw beef it was like, if you like! I don't reckon the old covey will lay it on like that. He wouldn't."

"Who on earth is Jimmy the One?" asked Harry Wharton blankly.

"Bloke I knowed in our alley," said Flip cheerfully. "Gentleman, he was—not a rough bloke like me—reg'lar swell! But a temper! My word! Tip-top toff I can tell you! He used to come to the alley to see a fence what lived there—"

"A—a—a what?"

"Fence—bloke what buys the swag!" explained Flip. "Many a time I've seen Jimmy the One bring a pocketful of diamonds and stuff for old Isaacs. One day he dropped a necklace on the stairs and I picked it up. That's why he laid into me. My word! It 'urt!"

Flip gave a reminiscent wriggle.

"You poor little beggar," said Harry, with a soft note in his voice. "I hope the police have got hold of the rotter by this time!"

"Not in your lifetime!" said Flip derisively. "They won't never get their 'ands on Jimmy the One! No fear! He's too deep for the coppers! Gentleman he is, an' looks it; you'd never guess what he was from lookin' at him. They called him Jimmy the One because he was the one and only. The coppers don't know him, they don't! Why, I've 'eard he's been secretary to a blooming

Member of Parliament—and a school-master—and all sorts! My word, he was a coughdrop, he was!"

In spite of his remembrance of the "walloping," it was evident that the waif retained a great admiration for the "gentleman" who was called by the peculiar name of Jimmy the One! No doubt Jimmy the One had deeply impressed his youthful imagination in his days in Puggins' Alley.

"Well, never mind Jimmy the One!" said Harry. "But look here, Flip, you can't keep this up, you know! You've told the beak whoppers—"

"What's the odds?" asked Flip.

"Oh dear! You see, we know it was Bunter."

"Then 'old your row!" said Flip. "No business of yours! And it wasn't Bunter neither; it was me!"

"You weren't anywhere near the Remove landing—"

"I was," said Flip. "I was jest there. I come up to speak to Master Bunter afore prep—that's 'ow I 'appened to be there. And, being there, I'm ready to swear that Bunter wasn't there, see?"

"You mean you're ready to roll out any number of lies to keep Bunter from getting what he's asked for?" growled Johnny Bull.

"Ave it as you like!" said Flip.

"Only 'old your row!"

And with that the queer fag cut off, leaving the Famous Five staring.

"Poor little beast!" said Bob Cherry. "He's jolly plucky—and I suppose he doesn't know that a fellow isn't supposed to tell lies. That fat villain Bunter ought to own up."

"I'm going to speak to him about it!" said Wharton, frowning. "Even Bunter can't be worm enough to let that kid take his flogging."

"We'll jolly well kick him if he does!" said Nugent.

"The kickfulness will be terrific!"

Bunter, as usual, was late for prayers; he squeezed in at the last moment, buttoning his waistcoat. Mr. Quelch was not present, as usual, at that function; he was not down at all. From what the juniors had heard, he was not likely to be down that day, or for many days. Indeed, there was a rumour that Quelch's cold had taken a serious turn, and that he was to be removed into sanny. It was pretty certain, at all events, that he would not be taking the Remove again for some time to come, and there was some speculation among the juniors as to who would take his place.

Many glances were turned on Billy Bunter, and many of them were expressive.

A Head's flogging was not attractive; but there were few fellows at Greyfriars who would have allowed their own punishment to fall on the wrong shoulders.

Bunter, apparently, was one of the few. Harry Wharton spoke to him after prayers, and the fat junior waved an impatient fat hand to him.

"Look here," said Bunter, "chuck it! I've told you I'm fed-up with the sub-ject! Just chuck it, see?"

"You can't let that kid—"

"For goodness' sake dry up!"

"You can't—"

"Chuck it, I tell you!"

Wharton set his lips.

"Look here, you fat frump!" he said. "If you don't choose to own up, that silly kid will get your flogging, and we can't help it, as we can't give you away to the beaks. But we'll jolly well kick you afterwards from one end of Greyfriars to the other, see?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"And we'll send you to Coventry for the rest of the term—"

"Beast!"

"It's up to you, Bunter!" said Bob Cherry. "Can't you see that it is?"

"Beast!"

"Well, look out for the kicking of your life!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"There's a limit, you know," said Nugent. "Own up like a man!"

"I—I say, you fellows, being innocent, you know—"

"Fathead!"

"Look here, you rotters—"

"Own up!"

"Beasts!"

"Well, you know what to expect if you let that kid bag your flogging!" said the captain of the Remove.

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

"What the thump do you want to butt in for? Of course, I'd own up like a shot, if I'd done it; but as I never did it, I—I can't, you know! Besides, I meant it for Walker. And I never asked Flip to own up, did I? If—if he's told the Head whoppers, it—it's frightfully wrong of him, and—and he ought to be whopped for it, see? I—I think very likely he did it—I—I really think he must have, you know. At any rate, it wasn't me! I wasn't there at all when I did it—I mean when I didn't do it—"

"Are you going to own up?"

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

"Well, look out for squalls if you don't!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter's fat face was dismal. Evidently there was trouble to come if he did not own up! There was trouble to come if he did! There was trouble either way! There seemed to be nothing but trouble; it was a troublesome world altogether, really hardly good enough for so excellent a fellow as William George Bunter to live in at all!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Up to Bunter!

"THE whole bag of tricks!" said Skinner.

Skinner could afford to be airy and flippant. Skinner was not going to get the flogging.

But it was, as Skinner said, the "whole bag of tricks." Floggings were rare at Greyfriars, and when they happened they usually happened in the Head's study.

Only on very special and important occasions was the school assembled for the purpose, only when there was an example to be made of some very serious offender—and then there was what Skinner described as the "whole bag of tricks." Evidently Flip of the Second Form was regarded as a very serious offender.

The Head's face was grim. Gosling, the old porter, was in attendance, to "hoist" the culprit; for that ancient method was adhered to when the "whole bag of tricks" was brought into play. Every boy in the school was present, and every master—unless unavoidably kept away, as Mr. Quelch was in the present instance. Quelch's presence, with a series of explosive sneezes, would certainly not have added to the gravity of the proceedings.

Flip was in his place in the ranks of the Second—rather a hero in his Form, for once. It was extremely uncommon for a fag to be flogged; especially a public flogging. The Second felt that it was rather a distinction, though they did not envy the chief performer.

Dicky Nugent, and his friends Gatty and Myers, gave Flip encouraging nods and grimaces, though as a rule they were not very pally with the peculiar new fag.

All the Second Form admitted freely that Flip was showing pluck. He seemed quite unmoved by the awful prospect before him. No doubt the little waif had been through worse experiences in his time; still, a Head's flogging was far from a jest!

In the ranks of the Remove Harry Wharton gave Bunter a grim glance. Bunter gave him an indignant blink in return.

Why these fellows could not mind their own business was a mystery to Bunter. But it seemed that they couldn't; and the prospect of being kicked up and down the Remove and

he was flogged, it fell upon himself. Billy Bunter would gladly have handed the trouble over to the old folks at home, had it been possible.

"Go it, Bunter!" whispered the Bounder, with a grin.

"Beast!" hissed Bunter.

"Not much time left, Bunter!" breathed Peter Todd.

"Beast!"

Bunter had not made up his fat mind yet; in fact, it swayed to and fro, like a leaf in the wind. When he looked at the Removites he felt that a flogging was better than a kicking; when he looked at the Head he felt that a kicking was better than a flogging. One or the other was inevitable, and the choice was frightfully unattractive. On an occasion when Bunter had been asked whether he would have pie or pudding,

respectful, but quite cool and self-possessed.

"Gosling!" came the Head's deep voice.

"Sir!" said Gosling.

"Take up that boy!"

"Yessir!"

In dead silence Flip, of the Second, was "hoisted." Bob Cherry squeezed Bunter's fat arm.

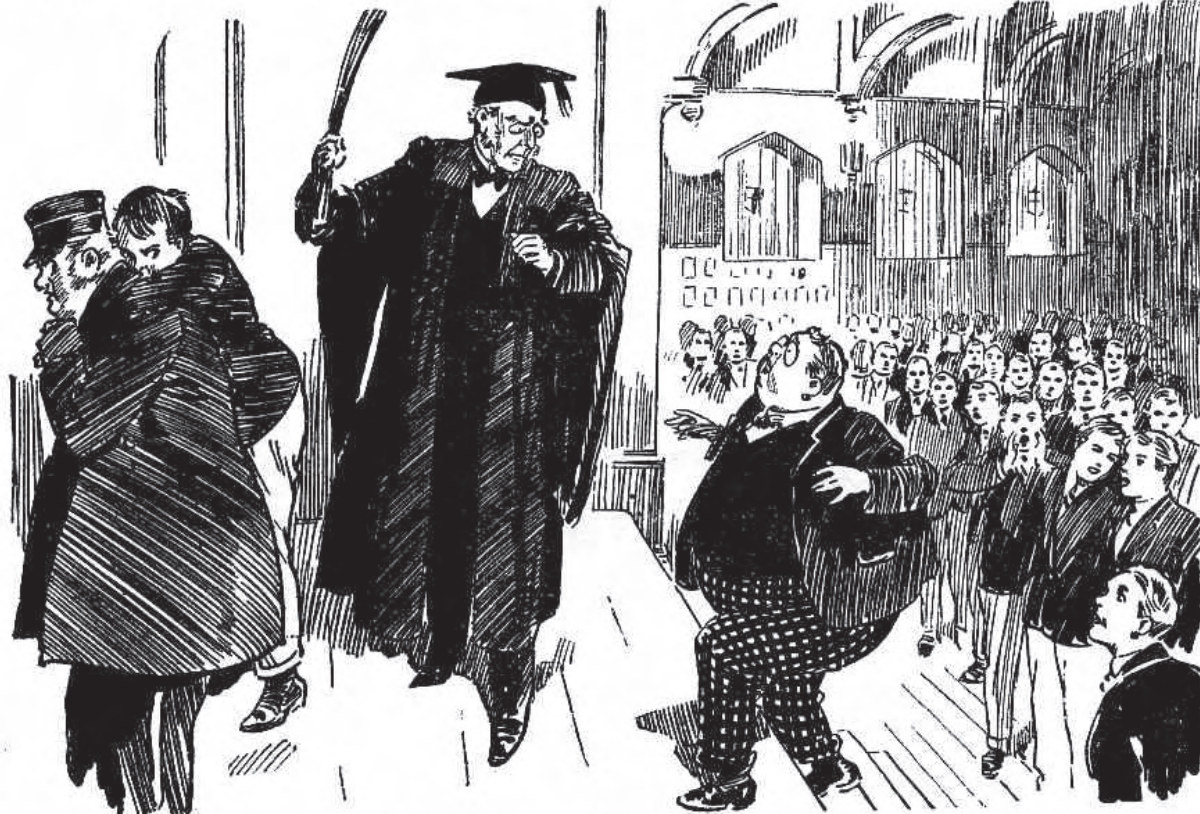
"Last time of asking!" he breathed.

"Oh lor'!"

Perhaps even Bunter felt a qualm as he saw the fag hoisted for the flogging. Perhaps even his fat conscience stirred—for Bunter had a conscience, though it was a very easy-going one.

He cast a haggard blink round at the grim faces of the Removites. He gasped.

"I—I say, you fellows——"



As Gosling "hoisted" Flip, Bunter plucked up courage and pushed his way to the dais where the majestic Head stood, birch in hand. "It—it was me, sir!" gasped the fat Removite. "It was me who mopped old Quelch!" "Wha-a-at?" There was a buzz in Hall.

sent to Coventry afterwards, was a distinctly unpleasant one. Bunter did not like that prospect at all; in fact, he hated it. Bob Cherry made a motion with his foot as Bunter blinked at him. Billy Bunter had felt the weight of that foot before, and the recollection had no pleasure for him whatever.

Really, a flogging from the Head was not likely to be worse than a kicking from Bob Cherry, whose size in boots was large and whose energy was unlimited. And all the other fellows were going to have a hand—or, at least, a foot—in the kicking. It was borne in on Bunter's fat mind that owning up and taking his licking was the easier proposition of the two.

It was not much comfort to Bunter that the Head was sure, when he learned that Quelch had been "mopped" by mistake in the dark, to flog him instead of expelling him. Bunter would almost rather have been "bunked." After all, when a fellow was bunked the trouble fell chiefly on his people. When

he had answered "Both." On the present occasion he would gladly have answered "Neither." But it was either a licking or a kicking—and that was that.

The Head was speaking. Bunter was not listening—he was not interested in Dr. Locke's remarks. He was thinking of that awful problem, a licking or a kicking—like an ancient seaman between Scylla and Charybdis.

"You fat villain, go it!" came Bob Cherry's whisper from behind.

"Beast!"

"Silence there!" called out Wingate, with a frown. A solemn occasion like this was not an occasion for whispering among the juniors.

The Remove was silent, but many eyes were concentrated on Bunter. Mr. Twigg was speaking now; he was directing Flip, of his Form, to stand out. Under a sea of eyes the little fag advanced up the hall towards the Head, whose stately hand had taken up the birch. Flip's manner was quiet and

"Buck up, old man!"

"Do the right thing, old bean! Don't disgrace the Form!"

"Go it!"

"I—I—I'm going to!" gasped Bunter. "I—I meant to all along, of course! I—I—I'm just going to! Oh lor'!"

"Go it, then!" hissed Bob.

"I—I'm just going to——" groaned Bunter.

His fat mind was made up. But his fat legs refused to move! He was going—but he did not go!

The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak!

At that crucial moment Bob Cherry gave first-aid, so to speak. He administered a powerful shove, which sent Bunter tottering out of the ranks of the Remove.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter.

Two or three prefects glared round. The Head, birch in hand, paused, at

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(Continued from page 13.)

the sudden disturbance in the silent Hall.

"Quiet, there!" snapped Walker of the Sixth.

"Be quiet, Bunter!" muttered Wingate.

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter.

He blinked at the Removites. Duty called him towards the Head—inclination moved him back to the safe shelter of the Lower Fourth. It was inclination that he followed. But Bob Cherry, with a glare, lifted his boot, and Bunter backed promptly off.

"What the dickens is going on there?" exclaimed Walker, with an angry stare at the Remove.

"Go it, Bunter!"

"Oh lor'!"

Bunter "went" it. At last—at long last—his fat mind was made up. His fat courage was screwed to the sticking-point. He rolled up the Hall, with all eyes on him. Voices called on several sides, ordering him back. He did not heed. Masters stared at him, prefects called to him, the Head fixed a stony glare on him, a sea of eyes watched him in wonder!

Bunter did not heed. Like the deep and dark blue ocean in the poem, he rolled on. Loder of the Sixth made a stride after him, and a grab; Bunter fairly ran for it, and arrived at the dais where the majestic Head stood, birch in hand, with a positively terrifying expression on his face.

"Bunter!" gasped the Head.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.

"How dare you—"

"Oh dear! It—it was me, sir!"

Bunter blurted it out in a hurry. He knew that if he hesitated he was lost. He got it out before he could stop himself, as it were.

"What?" ejaculated the Head.

"What? What do you mean? Is this boy in his right senses? What do you mean, boy?"

"It—it—it was me, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"What was you, you absurd boy?"

"Mopped old Quelch, sir!"

"Wha-a-at?"

There was a buzz in Hall—a buzz of amazed voices. From the Remove came a shout in a voice that could only have belonged to Bob Cherry, or to Stentor, of ancient times, or a megaphone:

"Bravo, Bunter!"

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

For It!

"SILENCE!"

The buzz died away.

Billy Bunter, crimson, breathless, stood before the Head, goggling at him through his big spectacles. All eyes were on Bunter.

Flip, already hoisted on Gosling's back for the flogging, twisted his head round to look at the fat Owl.

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It was Flip who broke the silence.

"Oh, sir, you needn't 'ave spoke! You 'old your row, sir!"

"Silence!" exclaimed the Head.

He fixed his gaze on Billy Bunter.

"Bunter! What do you mean? Why have you dared to interrupt me? Do you mean to imply that you are the guilty party, and that this boy—"

"Oh dear! Yes, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"It was all a mistake, sir! I—I never meant it for Quelch, sir!"

"It was you, Bunter—you who threw the pail of water over your Form master, on the Remove staircase yesterday evening?"

"Oh lor'! Yes, sir!" gurgled Bunter.

"Bless my soul!"

Dr. Locke made a sign to Gosling. Flip of the Second Form was set on his feet. The Head turned his attention to the fag.

"Boy! You have heard what Bunter says! Is this true?"

"I s'pose Master Bunter knows, sir," said Flip. "I wish he'd 'old his row. There was no call for 'im to say nothing. Only I s'pose it's just like 'im—'im being such a splendid chap!"

"Am I to understand that the confession you made to me was a deception?" exclaimed the Head in amazement.

"I was stuffing you, sir!" admitted Flip.

"You were what—what?"

"Stuffing you, sir!"

"Bless my soul! You—you came to my study and—made a false statement to me?" ejaculated the Head. "Is that your meaning?"

"I s'pose so, sir."

"And for what reason did you do this?"

"I wanted to see Master Bunter clear, sir!" said Flip simply. "You was bound to wallop somebody, sir, so I was going to let you wallop me, instead of 'im, sir."

"Goodness gracious!" said the Head.

There was tense silence in Hall now. Everybody wanted to hear what Flip had to say.

The Head seemed rather at a loss. But he had laid down the birch. He gazed in perplexity at Flip. The waif of Puggins' Alley was a now experience—a quite new experience—for the headmaster of Greyfriars School.

"I never meant no 'arm, sir!" mumbled Flip. "But Master Bunter 'aving been so kind and generous to a bloke, sir—"

"Oh!" ejaculated the Head.

"Only, I might have knowed, sir, that he wouldn't let me get away with it," said Flip. "I never thought of that. But I might have knowed it, I s'pose, 'im being such a splendid feller!"

"Dear me!" said the Head.

He gazed at Flip.

"I—I hardly know how to deal with you," he said at length. "I—I shall take time to—to consider the matter. As it appears that you are not the delinquent in the outrage of yesterday evening you may go back to your place. I will deal with you later. Go!"

"Yessir!" mumbled Flip.

He backed away, and the stare of innumerable eyes followed him to the Second Form, where he disappeared among the fags.

Billy Bunter would have been glad to disappear also. But there was no disappearance possible for Bunter. He quaked under the eyes of the beak.

"Bunter!" The Head's voice was deep. "Bunter! You confess that it was you who assaulted Mr. Quelch?"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I—I mean, I never meant it for Quelch, sir! I hadn't the faintest idea that he

was coming up to the Remove. I thought it was another beast—"

"What?"

"I—I mean, I thought it was Walker, sir—"

"Walker?" repeated the Head, while James Walker of the Sixth Form gave a sort of convulsive start. "You had planned to commit such an assault upon a Sixth Form prefect, Bunter?"

"Oh! No! I—I mean, I meant it for a—Remove chap, sir!" gasped Bunter. "That—that's what I really meant to say, sir. I—I like Walker."

"What?"

"He—he's so—so nice, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence! Bunter, it appears, so far as I can gather any meaning at all from your rambling statements, that you had planned to assault a Sixth Form prefect, and assaulted your Form master in error."

"Oh lor'!"

"It appears that Mr. Quelch was, after all, correct in supposing that you were the culprit, Bunter. A foolish boy, by an untruthful statement, has very nearly caused a serious miscarriage of justice. I shall accept your statement, Bunter, that you did not intend to assault your Form master, and I shall not expel you. But—"

"Ow!"

"I am glad to see, Bunter, that you have had the manliness to admit your delinquency," said the Head—a remark that caused smiles in the Remove—"I give you full credit for that, Bunter, and I shall, in consequence, deal with you as leniently as possible."

Bunter brightened up.

"Oh! Thank you, sir! C-c-can I go now, sir?"

"But your foolish prank has caused your Form master great discomfort—indeed, actual illness—and it was your intention, on your own confession, to assault a Sixth Form boy, invested with the authority of a prefect! I have no alternative but to flog you, Bunter."

"Yaroooooh!"

"Gosling!"

"Yessir!"

"Take this boy up!"

"Yessir!"

"Oh crumbs! I—I say, sir, it wasn't me!" yelled Bunter.

"What?" roared the Head.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I didn't—I—I wasn't—I never!" gasped Bunter. "I—I wasn't there, sir! I—I was miles away—"

"Bunter!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Silence!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled all Greyfriars, for once deaf to the voice of the majestic Head.

They really could not help it. Evidently Bunter's courage had come unstuck! The near approach of the flogging was too much for the fat Owl. All other considerations were thrown to the winds, and he was thinking only of escaping the flogging, by hook or by crook. In his terror and confusion, the hapless Owl did not realise that it was rather too late for that.

"Silence! Silence!" shouted the prefects.

"Bunter!" gasped the Head. "You—you extraordinary boy! You—"

"I didn't!" howled Bunter. "I wasn't there. I was nowhere near the landing at the time. You can ask Wharton, sir."

"Wharton? What does Wharton know about this?"

"He saw me there, sir."

"He—he—he saw you there?"

"I—I mean, he didn't see me there,

sir!" gasped Bunter. "That—that's what I meant to say, sir."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I was at prep, sir!" gasped Bunter. "Toddy knows. It—it was all a mistake, sir! I—I never dreamed that Quelch was coming up! I—I wouldn't have mopped Quelch for—anything, sir! Or—or Walker, either. I—I like Walker, sir! Besides, it was all his fault, making out that a chap was after a pie! I—I wasn't after the pie, sir! I told Walker I wasn't, and he wouldn't take my word, sir! I—I—" "Silence!" thundered the Head.

"Ow!"

"Gosling, take that boy up immediately!"

"Whoooooop!"

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

"Yaroooooh! Whooop! Help! Yaroooooop!"

Swish! Swish! Swish!

It was not, after all, a severe flogging. Perhaps the Head felt that Bunter ought to be dealt with leniently for having owned up. Perhaps he felt that special consideration was due to a fellow with Bunter's remarkable intellect. Anyhow, the whacks fell lightly.

But if the Head had been using a rod of iron, or a whip of scorpions, with a hand as heavy as a steam-hammer, Billy Bunter could not have made more noise. He wriggled and he squirmed, and he roared, and he yelled. He awoke all the echoes of the ancient hall of Greyfriars, and many echoes beyond its limits.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Whooop! Yaroooooh! Yooooooop!"

The Head laid down the birch. Gosling set Bunter down.

"Bunter—"

"Yaroooooh—"

"Silence!"

"Whooooooop!"

"Boy!"

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

"Bless my soul! Bunter, I—"

"Whooo-hooooop!"

It was the Head who had to give in! The school was dismissed, the Head left the Hall, and Bunter was still roaring.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Too Good to Last!

"POOR old Quelch!"

"Poor old bean!"

"I'm going to cry!" sighed Skinner.

Matters were not going on as usual in the Remove that day. Mr. Quelch, instead of taking his Form, was conspicuous by his absence. It was learned that Henry Samuel Quelch was now in the school sanatorium, where the humorous Skinner expressed a hope that he was having a good time.

It was pretty certain that Quelch was having a bad time—a very bad time—and all the Remove were sorry—or nearly all. At the same time, they could not help feeling that, in the Form-room, Quelch's absence was rather a change for the better. So they were sorry for Quelch, and pleased for themselves—which was rather a mixed state of feeling.

Wingate of the Sixth took the class that morning, and there was no doubt that he had a lighter hand than Quelch. Extra French with Monsieur Charpentier filled up vacant work hours; and as fellows did pretty much as they liked in the French sets, they did not grumble.

If things went on like this, the Remove would hardly need consoling for the absence of their respected Form master. The only cloud on the horizon

was a rumour that they might be taken by Mr. Lascelles for extra maths. But until that dreadful rumour was confirmed, the Removites were not going to worry about it.

"Poor old Quelch!" said Bob Cherry, for the sixth or seventh time, when the Remove gathered at the door of their Form-room that afternoon. "That idiot Bunter ought to be scragged!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—" "Gentlemen, chaps, and fellows," said Skinner, "I propose a vote of thanks to our esteemed fellow-citizen, W. G. Bunter! We're all sorry for Quelch—in fact, I'm going to cry if somebody will lend me a hanky—but it would have been Latin prose this afternoon! I've learned as much Latin as I want—"

"Hear, hear!"

"I hear that Walker of the Sixth is taking a turn with us. You know Walker! He will bring a novel in with him, and set us some papers to do while he reads it—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"For once," said Skinner, "Bunter has been the right man in the right place! I propose a vote of thanks!"

"I say, you fellows, I really think you might thank a chap!" said Billy Bunter. "I've done the whole Form a good turn! Quelch may be laid up for days and days. Why, it might even turn to pneumonia or something!" added Bunter brightly. "Think of that! Weeks, perhaps—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Might not see him again for the rest of the term!" said Bunter blissfully. "I'm jolly glad, now I come to think of it, that he got that mopping instead of Walker. It's turned out all right, hasn't it?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"If they let the prefects take us, one after another, while he's laid up, it looks like being an easy time," said Bunter. "Even if we get extra maths, that's not much worse than Quelch with Latin prose, really. And they can't give us maths all the time. I don't mind French with Mossco; he lets a man go to sleep. I can jolly well tell you fellows that you owe me a lot."

"The lotfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Fathead!" said Harry Wharton. "The Head will get a temporary man in Quelch's place. I bet he's telephoned to the school agency already—first thing this morning, most likely. Man may be here to-day."

Bunter's fat face fell.

He had not thought of that probability—or, rather, certainty. For it was certain that if Quelch was going to be laid up for a long time, the headmaster would not think of carrying on without a master for the Lower Fourth. A temporary master was easy enough to obtain—indeed, it required only a phone call to the usual scholastic agency. And the juniors had little doubt that the headmaster had lost no time in putting through that call.

"I say, you fellows, that's rotten!" said Bunter. "Why, we might get another beast like Quelch! Lot of good Quelch being laid up in sanny if we're going to get another beast like him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Walker of the Sixth came along the passage—five minutes late for class. He had a book under his arm—Walker was a great novel reader—and a genial expression on his face. There was Greek with the Head in the Sixth Form room that afternoon, and there was no doubt that Walker preferred a novel in the Remove-room.

"Now, then!" said Walker.

And the Removites went to their places, in happy anticipation of an easy time—an anticipation that was soon realised.

"What were you doing this afternoon, Wharton?" asked Walker.

"Latin prose, Walker!" answered the head boy of the Remove.

"H'm! Well, look here, there's not going to be any idling or slacking in this Form because your Form master's laid up!" said Walker. "I'm going to keep you up to the mark—right up to it! As you're head boy, Wharton, I take it that you know how to set a Latin paper?"

"Certainly!" said Harry, with a grin.

"Get on with it, then!" said Walker.

"I've got you for an hour—set a paper for an hour's work! I shall expect all of you to work hard—h'm—stick to it, and all that! No talking or ragging, or you'll hear from me! Just work!"

With that Walker sat down in Mr. Quelch's chair and opened his novel. During the following hour he hardly looked up from it.

Even when a snore was heard from the back of the class, telling the world that Billy Bunter had gone to sleep, Walker took no heed.

It was a happy hour.

There was a tacit understanding that, so long as the Remove did not worry Walker, Walker was not going to worry the Remove.

So the juniors lounged at the desks and talked in whispers, while Walker perused the thrilling adventures of Bandog Chummond.

There was no ragging. Ragging would have roused Walker. But nearly every paper in the Remove was a beautiful blank at the end of the hour. One or two fellows, like Mark Linley, who held the uncommon view that they came to school to learn things, worked. Harry Wharton, as head of the Form, felt that he was called upon to show an example of industry—which he did for about five minutes, then being drawn into a discussion of a forthcoming match with Highcliffe.

When the hour had expired Bunter was snoring, the rest of the fellows talking, and Walker deep in his novel, and the door opened to admit Monsieur Charpentier.

Mossco glanced round the Form-room

(Continued on next page.)



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in surprise. Walker jumped up, and hastily closed his novel.

"Good-afternoon, sir!" said Walker. "Time—what? Wharton, you will collect the papers!"

"Yes, Walker!" said Harry.

He collected the papers—mostly blank! But that did not matter; Walker did not stay to look at them. He strolled out of the Form-room, and left the Remove to Monsieur Charpentier.

Bunter snored on, regardless.

Mossoo let him snore

Three or four fellows who took a little interest in French gave Mossoo a little attention. The rest gave him a very little—a very, very little. Mossoo was a very easy gentleman; he was only too glad to escape ragging when he was dealing with a Form like the Remove. The remainder of the afternoon passed peacefully and pleasantly. Billy Bunter did not wake up till the Form was dismissed.

Indeed, he might have been left in the Form-room, still snoring, had not Bob Cherry given him a shake.

"Ow! Beast!" grunted Bunter. "Lemme alone! 'Tain't rising-bell!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh!" Bunter rubbed his eyes, blinked round, and yawned. "I say, you fellows, I've been asleep!"

"Go hon!" chuckled Bob.

"Ze Form is dismiss!" said Monsieur Charpentier.

And the cheery Removites streamed out, Bunter still rubbing his eyes.

No doubt the Remove sympathised with the hapless Form master laid up in sanny, but it could not be denied that this sort of thing was a great improvement on Quelch. There was a rumour at tea-time that a new man had been engaged to take the Remove, and that he would be at Greyfriars that day. The Removites could only hope that that rumour was unfounded. Billy Bunter hoped so from the bottom of his fat heart. He had quite enjoyed the afternoon. If a new beak was coming, it would, as Bunter remarked, spoil the whole thing; it would be as bad as Quelch getting well!

"He's coming, all right, fathead!" said Peter Todd. "I've asked Wingate, and he told me. Man named Lagden, and he will be here after tea. Wingate had it from the Head."

"Oh, rotten!" grunted Bunter. He blinked out into the misty quad. "I say, Peter, it's rather foggy."

"What about that, fathead?"

"Well, railway accidents happen in fogs—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"Of course, I shouldn't like the man to be crocked in a railway accident!" said Bunter hastily. "But—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Peter.

Evidently Billy Bunter was still hoping that the chapter of accidents might befriend the Remove and save them from a new beak. But no doubt the hope was faint. That good time in the Remove was too good to last!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Tea in Study No. 1.

"I SAY, you fellows!"

"Man named Lagden—" Bob Cherry was saying, in Study No. 1, when Billy Bunter inserted a fat face and a large pair of spectacles into the doorway of that celebrated apartment.

"I say—"

"I hear that he's come!" went on

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Bob. "I know that there was a taxi, and Trotter showed a man in to see the Head."

"Well, let's hope that he's all right," said Frank Nugent. "I'd rather have kept on with Walker. Walker's a nerve-rest after Quelch—"

"I say, you fellows—" bawled Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Seen the new man, Bunter?"

"Blow the new man!" said Bunter morosely. "I think it's pretty sickening of the Head to bung a new man on us so quick as all this! I've a jolly good mind to tell him so, too!"

"Yes; I can hear you telling him so!" chuckled Bob. "What did the new man say to the Head, Bunter?"

"Eh! How should I know?"

"Don't you know?" demanded Bob.

"No, you ass! How could I?" howled Bunter.

"Isn't there still a keyhole to the Head's study door?" asked Bob, with a puzzled expression.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I haven't come here to listen to rotten jokes! I say, what about tea? Look here, I've been disappointed about a postal order. I believe I mentioned to you chaps that I was expecting a postal order—"

"I believe you did!" chuckled Wharton.

"The believefulness is terrific."

"Well," said Bunter, "it hasn't come! I say, you fellows, I had a flogging this morning! I'm still suffering fearful pains! Agony, in fact. I think a fellow's pals might sympathise with him when he's suffering awful anguish. What about tea?"

"The beak only flicked you, you fat villain!"

"I can tell you I'm suffering awful agony," said Bunter. "I haven't mentioned it before; I'm not the fellow to make a fuss, I hope. Still, a fellow expects a little sympathy. After all, you owe it to me that we were shut of Quelch for a whole day, even if we're getting a new beak to-morrow. Ten to one he won't be such a beast as Quelch; in fact, I don't see how he could be! I don't expect you fellows to thank a chap; still, after all I've done for you, you know—"

"Are you wound up?" asked Johnny Bull.

"And there's that kid Flip, too," said Bunter. "He would have got my flogging for me if I hadn't owned up in a manly way, as the Head put it. You heard the Head say that, I hope—"

"The Head didn't know you were going to be kicked if you didn't."

"I'm going to ask Flip to tea as a reward, you know," said Bunter. "He meant well, you know. Well, if you want to reward a chap, you can't do better than stand him a feed—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Look here, you fellows, I've asked Flip to tea and my postal order hasn't come! I told Toddy, and what do you think he said? Told me to go and eat coke."

"And so say all of us!" said Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry! I say, you fellows, I think you might stand by a pal when he's suffering fearful agony from a flogging," urged Bunter. "I think it's up to you to stand the spread, in the—the circumstances. Of course, I don't know what you've got in the study. I didn't see you getting the stuff at the tuckshop, Wharton."

"You fat sweep!" said the captain of the Remove, laughing. "You know jolly well we've got a spread, and that's why you've rolled in. But you can butt in if you like."

"If you put it like that, Wharton, I can scarcely accept your invitation to tea!" said Bunter, with a great deal of dignity.

"Well, I do put it like that!"

"He, he, he! I don't mind your little jokes, old fellow! Look here, I'll get tea if you like! You fellows needn't wait! I dare say you'd rather take a stroll—"

"Would there be any spread when we came back?" asked Wharton.

"Oh, really, old chap—"

"The spreadfulness would not be preposterous!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"You can call Flip, fathead," said Harry. "The fact is, we were going to ask the kid. Go and fetch him."

There had been a remittance that day, and the spread in Study No. 1 was of unusual magnitude. Billy Bunter's eyes glistened behind his big spectacles when the good things were displayed to view. Flip of the Second Form came into the study with a cheery grin on his chubby, grubby face. Flip had learned to wash regularly since he had been at Greyfriars, but his face always, somehow, seemed more or less grubby.

Harry Wharton & Co. gave him a cheery welcome. With all his weird ways they liked the queer little fag; and there was something touching, to their minds, in his devotion to such an object of admiration as William George Bunter.

Most idols have feet of clay; but, considered as an idol, Billy Bunter was really all clay, or nearly all. But Flip either could not see, or was determined not to see, any flaw in his idol. Bunter had been kind to him; Bunter had been the indirect means, at least, of saving him from his old life in Puggins' Alley, and his gratitude was unbounded, as his actions had shown. And though the juniors could hardly approve of his methods, they could admire his pluck and devotion in offering himself as a scape-goat for his fat patron's sake.

"Swipes!" said Flip, as he beamed over the festive board. "This 'ere is prime! This 'ere is different from Puggins' Alley, s'elp me!"

"Have you been licked for pulling the beak's leg, you young ass?" asked Bob. Flip chuckled.

"I been jawed," he answered. "Twigg jawed me! Ten minutes at least. But, bless your 'eart, I didn't mind! Let 'im jaw!"

"Did he mention that it was wrong to tell lies?" grunted Johnny Bull.

"He jolly well did; but I knowed that afore he told me!" answered Flip cheerfully. "I told 'im I was sorry—and so I was sorry that Master Bunter got the wallop. I 'oped I'd get it instead. But I might 'ave knowed that Master Bunter wouldn't stand for it; I might have knowed he would own up and take it, knowing 'im as I do."

"Oh!" said the Famous Five.

Tactfully, they did not mention why Bunter had owned up. Bunter, apparently, had forgotten it already. He gave the juniors a complacent blink.

"Well, of course, I couldn't let you take the licking, Flip!" he said. "Lots of fellows would have kept mum. Not me."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Bob.

"Don't I know it, sir?" said Flip loyally. "And I blooming well punched young Nugent's 'ead for saying the



Walker, deeply engrossed in his novel, paid no heed to Billy Bunter's rumbling snores, or to the fact that the rest of the juniors lounged at their desks and talked. It was the easiest "lesson" the Remove had ever had, for they did anything but work!

other coves must 'ave made you do it, sir."

"Scrapping with my minor again?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Oh, I forgot he was your brother, sir, when I spoke," said Flip, abashed. "Sorry, sir! But I ain't going to 'ave nobody running down Master Bunter in the Second, sir! No fear!"

"Quite right, kid!" said Bunter. "Don't you forget all I've done for you, Flip!"

"I ain't likely to, sir!" said Flip. "But I wish you 'adn't spoke up, sir. A wallopping ain't nothing to me—not what you call a wallopping 'ere. My word! You should 'ave seen my back arter Jimmy the One had done with me!"

"Who the dickens is Jimmy the One?" ejaculated Bunter.

Flip explained with considerable gusto.

"Not that Jimmy's a bad sort," he concluded. "He gave me beans for trying to pinch that necklace what he dropped when he was coming to see old Isaacs in our alley. But another time he gave me a 'ole pound note! It was easy come and easy go with Jimmy the One."

"Well, you can thank goodness that you will never see that bright particular star again!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Ain't likely to," said Flip cheerfully. "He was a knut, he was! Handsome as you like, and a real gent!"

"Must have been!" grinned Bob. "Though I believe that pinching diamond necklaces isn't done in the best circles."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, he was a pincher, and no error," admitted Flip. "But so was I afore Master Bunter took me up. 'Tain't for me to be down on 'im for that; though, of course, you blokes think different."

The door of Study No. 1 opened, and the Bounder looked in.

"You fellows heard?" he asked.

"What and which?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"The new beak's here—man named Lagden. The Head's bringin' him up here," said the Bounder. "Goin' to introduce him into the menagerie! I'm givin' the tip along the passage in case any of the men have any smokes about."

"Fathead!" answered Wharton.

The Bounder laughed and withdrew. There were not likely to be any smokes about in Study No. 1, but there were one or two studies in the Remove where such a warning might be useful when beaks were coming.

"I say, you fellows, the man's really come, then!" said Billy Bunter dismally. "I thought it was too good to last! I wonder if he's a beast like Quelch?"

"The wonderfulness is terrific," grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"It's been jolly to-day," sighed Bunter. "I really think the Head might have waited till Quelch got well. Fat lot of good a Form master being ill if the Head phones for another beak to take his place!"

"Shut up, ass! Here they come!" said Harry.

There were footsteps in the passage. They stopped at the door of Study No. 1. There was a tap at the door, and Wharton opened it. All the juniors were on their feet, with their best smiles on, ready to meet the eyes of their new Form master, whom the Head was introducing into the "menagerie," as Smithy expressed it. Flip backed behind the Removites, perhaps rather conscious of grubby smudges on his face and jam on his fingers.

In the doorway appeared the majestic figure of the Head of Greyfriars. By his side was a rather slim, handsome

young man with a pair of very keen, dark eyes that took in the whole study and its occupants at a glance. This evidently was Mr. Lagden, the new and temporary master of the Lower Fourth—and at first sight the juniors liked his looks. He was a young man—a good twenty years younger than Quelch. He was undoubtedly good-looking; he had a pleasant expression; and slim as he was, he looked athletic. In silence the Removites waited for the Head to speak.

The silence was suddenly broken—by Flip!

In tones of amazement, of stupefaction, Flip ejaculated:

"Oh swipes!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Mysterious!

"O H swipes!" Flip of the Second Form gasped out that rather inelegant ejaculation, his starting eyes fixed on the handsome face of the new master.

It drew the general attention on the little fag.

The Head, who was about to speak, glanced at Flip, with a frown that was positively terrific. Greyfriars men were not supposed to use such expressions as "Swipes!"—neither were they supposed to speak at all until spoken to in the presence of their headmaster.

All eyes turned on Flip, but he did not heed. His own gaze was fixed as if glued on Mr. Lagden.

The new master looked at him with the rest. He gave a slight start. All the juniors noticed it and concluded that Mr. Lagden had observed that Flip was not precisely like other Greyfriars

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fellows, and perhaps wondered what he was doing there.

"Boy!" said the Head sternly.

"Quiet, you young ass!" whispered Bob.

"This boy, Mr. Lagden, is not a boy in your Form," said the Head, evidently perturbed and annoyed. "Wharton, what is this Second Form boy doing here?"

"We—we asked him to tea, sir," stammered Wharton.

"I think he had better go," said the Head.

He stepped aside from the doorway for Flip to leave the study. The waif of Greyfriars moved to the door and went into the passage, his eyes never leaving the handsome face of Mr. Lagden as he went. His gaze seemed glued on that handsome face, as if mesmerised.

"Go!" snapped the Head.

"Oh! Yessir!" gasped Flip.

As if with an effort, he turned away, detaching his mesmerised stare from the new master, and went towards the stairs. He went down the Remove staircase with a dazed expression on his face, like a fellow in a dream.

The Head frowned after him; Mr. Lagden cast a very curious glance after him, smiling faintly.

As for Harry Wharton & Co., they were simply amazed. Why the sight of the new master should have produced such a startling effect on Flip was beyond their comprehension.

"A very odd boy, Mr. Lagden," the Head was saying. "He was placed here under somewhat—hem!—peculiar circumstances. His training has been—hem!—peculiar. Pray take no notice of his bad manners."

"Not at all, sir!" said Mr. Lagden in a pleasant voice. "Not in the least! These boys are in my Form?"

His smiling glance turned on Harry Wharton & Co. The hapless Flip was dismissed from mind.

"Yes, Mr. Lagden. This is Wharton, the head boy of your Form. Wharton, this is Mr. Lagden, the new master of the Remove, who will take charge of the Form until Mr. Quelch is able to resume his duties."

"We shall be better acquainted soon,"

said Mr. Lagden, with his pleasant smile. "I should like to see my head boy in my study presently—say, in an hour's time."

"Certainly, sir!" said Harry.

The Head and the new master progressed up the Remove passage. The juniors exchanged glances when they were gone.

"Doesn't look a bad sort," said Bob.

"The badfulness of the sort does not seem terrific," agreed the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I say, you fellows, he doesn't look such a beast as Quelch," said Billy Bunter, with considerable satisfaction. "Of course, beaks are all beasts. But there are beasts and beasts, you know!"

"So long as he doesn't make Bunter work he's all right," remarked Johnny Bull with sarcasm.

"That's just it!" agreed Bunter, deaf to sarcasm. "That's rather important, old chap. I fancy it's going to turn out lucky for us that I mopped that water over Quelch."

"But what was the matter with that kid Flip?" asked Nugent. "He was staring at Lagden as if the man was a ghost."

"Looked as if he'd seen him before," said Bob. "But I suppose he can't have. Lagden's not likely to be on visiting terms in Puggins' Alley."

"Ha, ha! Not likely!"

"That kid's got jolly bad manners!" said Bunter, frowning. "I've done my best for him; I've told him to model his manners on mine, you know—"

"That's what's done it!" said Johnny Bull.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter resumed his seat at the tea-table. There were still eatables there uneaten, and Bunter was not the man to leave anything uneaten. The Famous Five, however, left the study and joined the Removites who were in the passage. All the Form were naturally interested in the new man, in whose charge they were to be till Quelch came back—except Bunter, who was interested in more important matters.

There was a buzz of discussion in the passage when Mr. Lagden at last went down the Remove staircase with the

Head. The new master had made rather a favourable impression on his Form.

Harry Wharton fully shared the general impression, and it was in a cheerful mood that he took his way to master's passage when the time came for him to see Mr. Lagden in his study. Rather to his surprise, he found Flip of the Second hanging about the end of that passage.

He tapped the fag on the shoulder, and Flip started and looked round, catching his breath.

"Oh, you!" he exclaimed. "I thought—"

He broke off without stating what he had thought.

The captain of the Remove looked at him very curiously.

"What's up with you, kid?" he asked.

"Nothin'!" muttered Flip.

"Have you seen Lagden before?"

"Lagden," repeated Flip, with a strange look at Wharton. "No, I ain't never seen nobody named Lagden afore, sir."

"He seemed to make you jump when he came into my study," said Harry. "Anything the matter, kid? You look bothered about something."

"It's all right," muttered Flip. "But I say, I s'pose that cove has got Quelch's old study, ain't he?"

"I suppose so," said Harry. "I'm going there now, to see him."

"Oh! You goin' there now? I'll be off, then!" said Flip; and he walked away before Wharton could speak again.

Wharton stared after him, not understanding. What Flip's interest in Mr. Lagden could possibly be was a mystery to the captain of the Remove. As master of the Remove, Lagden was not likely to come into contact with Flip—hardly likely, indeed, to get to know Second Form fags by sight during his brief stay at the school. Yet it seemed that Flip had been intending—though hesitating—to go to Lagden's study, and had given up that intention when he found that Wharton was going there.

Considerably puzzled, the captain of the Remove went on his way and tapped at the door of the study that had been Mr. Quelch's.

"Come in!" said an agreeable voice. Wharton entered.

Mr. Lagden was unpacking books and arranging them, but he turned to greet the junior with a pleasant smile.

"Ah, my head boy!" he said. "I am glad to see you, Wharton! I want a little talk with you. I am not likely to be at Greyfriars long, but I hope we shall be good friends while I am here."

"I'm sure of that, sir!" said Harry.

"Sit down, my boy."

Wharton sat down, and Mr. Lagden sat in Mr. Quelch's armchair, crossing one elegantly trousered leg over the other. The talk that followed dealt with school and Form matters, and from it Wharton picked up the information that this was not the first time that Mr. Lagden had served as a temporary master. Certainly he showed a thorough knowledge of his work, and very considerable experience, young as he looked.

A talk with a beak was not always an enjoyable function, but Wharton quite liked that chat with the agreeable new master of the Remove. Much as he respected Mr. Quelch he could not help contrasting that gentleman's dry and severe aspect with the kind smile and engaging manners of his substitute.

It was not till Wharton was about to take his leave that Mr. Lagden referred to another matter—which, apparently, had just recurred to his mind.

"By the way, that little lad who was



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in your study, Wharton—what is his name?"

"He's called Flip, sir."

"That is an odd name."

"Well, I suppose it's not a name, really," said Harry. "But he has always been called Flip, it seems."

"A rather odd boy to be found at a school like this," said Mr. Lagden. "I was a little—hem!—surprised. As the boy is not in my Form, his oddity does not really concern me at all. But I confess to a little curiosity. Who and what is he?"

"He's really a good kid, sir," said Harry. "I suppose you must have thought his manners rather bad. But he's all right, really. He was a—sort of vagrant, and some of us came in touch with him while staying with Maulover for Christmas, last hols, and Mauleverer's uncle took him up and sent him here. Of course, he's rather like a fish out of water at Greyfriars, but—"

"Very odd indeed," said Mr. Lagden. "Where did the boy come from, in the first place?"

"Some place called Puggins' Alley, in London, sir. He seems to have had a rather rough time there, and—and we rather make allowances for him, sir," said Harry.

"Oh, quite," said Mr. Lagden. "And he is called—what did you say he was called?"

"Flip, sir?"

"How very odd," said Mr. Lagden; and with a nod and a smile he dismissed the captain of the Remove and turned back to arranging his books.

But when the door had closed on the junior Mr. Lagden gave no further attention to his books. He stood with a disregarded volume in his hand, his brows knitted in deep and apparently troubled thought. For a long time he stood still, silent, his handsome face growing blacker and blacker, his lips set in a tight line.

Finally, he gave a shrug of the shoulders, and resumed the arrangement of his books. But every now and then his glance turned to the study door, as if in expectation of another visitor. Harry Wharton would have been astonished could he have known that the visitor Mr. Lagden expected was Flip, of the Second Form. But that, certainly, the captain of the Remove was not likely to guess.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

What Flip Knew!

"PRECIOUS young ass!" said Dicky Nugent.

"Plucky, though!" said Gatty.

"And jolly decent, in a way," said Myers.

"Well, it was telling lies," said Nugent minor.

"And you've never told any," said Gatty.

"Look here, Gatty—"

"Well, I say it was plucky, though the kid is a silly ass, if you like," said Gatty, "and I'm going to ask him to join up, so there."

Richard Nugent, cock of the walk in the Second Form, grunted.

"I don't care! Ask him if you like—if you want to see him eat with his fingers."

"Blow his fingers!" said Gatty. "He's a bit of a coughdrop, but he's plucky, and you can't get out of it."

A feast was toward in the Second Form room. Fags at Greyfriars had no studies. They were allowed, if they liked, to congregate in the Rag, but in



OF laws and lawyers, plights and pleas,
Of misdemeanours, briefs, and fees—

("Pay six-and-eightpence, if you please")—

And such-like learned things as these
Our Peter fondly dreams;

And so we recognise the fact
That lawyers naturally attract

All Toddy's eloquence and tact
(Within the meaning of the Act),

And figure in his dreams;
His hero is Sir Phineas Phinn,

K.C., who lives in Lincoln's Inn.

Sir Phineas is a counsel wise
Whose words are lucid and concise,

While trying to monopolise
The Court at Quarterly Assize,

King's Bench, or Common Pleas;
To browbeat witnesses he'll try,

And catch them hopping, on the sly;
"Then you admit, sir, that's a lie?"

The witness mutters, "Oh, my eye!"
And trembles at the knees;

And after that, of course, he'll fetch
A full confession from the wretch.

But when he talks to juries—Oh,
His tones are very sweet and low;

He pays them compliments, and so
The jury wag their heads, and grow

Contented with their lot;

the Rag they were overshadowed by the Remove and the Fourth, and certainly their ghastly feasts would not have been likely to proceed there without interruption from playful juniors. They preferred the Form-room as a gathering-place, and between classes and prep they had that apartment to themselves, and were monarchs of all they surveyed till Mr. Twigg came to take them in preparation.

Feasts in the fag Form-room were fearful and wonderful. Sammy Bunter, the minor of the great William George, was now engaged in cooking herrings over the Form-room fire. Legge was making toast—at all events, he was blackening huge slices of bread and getting a complexion that matched a newly boiled beetroot. Myers opened a pot of jam. Gatty dealt with a tin of condensed milk, jabbing it resolutely with a pocket-knife, a tin-opener being lacking, at imminent risk of cutting off several of his fingers. Other fags were similarly engaged, and there were cheerful faces round the Form-room fire.

There was a good and wholesome tea in Hall, but every man in the Second Form preferred a feed in the Form-room when funds ran to it.

Flip, of the Second, was taking no part in these festive preparations. He was seated at a little distance, leaning his elbows on a desk, with a troubled and harassed expression on his grubby face.

GREYFRIARS HEROES.

No. 17.

ALONZO TODD.

Peter Todd's ambitions lie in the direction of the Law, so it is not surprising that HIS hero should be a learned gentleman in a counsel's wig and gown. The Greyfriars Rhymester, therefore, duly obliges with a "jingle" to fill the bill!

Says he, "My client stands this day
Quite innocent of wrong, I say;
The Prosecuting Counsel may
Attempt to swear his life away,
But Guilty he is NOT";
And so, "Not Guilty!" they reply,
(Which, in their opinion, is no lie).

Sir Phineas, as we said before,
Old Toddy worships more and more;
For Peter always sets great store
By what amount of legal lore
His lawyer hero knows.

He hopes to handle many a crime
Within our legal pantomime;
But, as these verses, four a time,
Are rather difficult to rhyme,

We'll bring them to a close,
By saying that Sir Peter Todd
May yet get Bunter put in quod.



Generally, Flip was left very much to himself in the Greyfriars Second. His ways were not Greyfriars ways; even Sammy Bunter was not so grubby as Flip, and nobody else in the Form dropped his "H's." Moreover, he had had several scraps with Richard Nugent, and Richard, to his great surprise and annoyance, had not succeeded in whopping the waif from Puggins' Alley. In fact, it had been rather the other way about, which was very exasperating to Dicky. Neither was Flip a very peaceable youth—he was always ready for a row if anyone looked for trouble.

Altogether, most of the Second Form preferred to leave him alone. But what had happened that morning had rather raised the waif in the estimation of the fags.

No doubt he was a young ass, and there was still less doubt that he was an awful fibber; still, a man who was willing to take a beak's flogging, due to another man, was plucky. Nobody in the Second had ever heard of such a thing before. And at the present moment he was looking frightfully down on his luck, and George Gatty's heart softened towards him.

Seldom indeed did Flip look down on his luck. He had a cheerful nature, and though he was not liked in the Second he certainly found the Second very agreeable after Puggins' Alley.

Seeing him looking so forlorn Gatty

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concluded that he was feeling the effects of the royal jaw Twigg had given him. And, heedless of Dicky Nugent's grunt, Gatty walked over to the new fag to invite him to the feast.

Flip buried in deep thought, did not even observe him. Leaning his elbows on the desk, he stared at the oak with a fixed gaze, his mind evidently far away.

Gatty tapped him on the shoulder.

"Wake up, old bean!" he said.

Flip started, coming out of his deep reverie with a jump. He gave Gatty a lowering look.

"Let a bloke alone!" he grunted.

"Look here!" said Gatty warmly.

"Let a bloke alone, I tell you!" snapped Flip. "Always worriting a bloke!"

George Gatty breathed hard and deep.

"You miserable little tick—" he ejaculated.

"Oh, 'old your row!" said Flip rudely.

Evidently the waif misunderstood Gatty's hospitable intentions. There was a giggle from Nugent minor.

"I've a jolly good mind," said Gatty, in concentrated tones, "to bang your cheeky head on that desk!"

"Go and fry your face!" retorted Flip.

He rose from the Form, with knitted brows. Gatty, anticipating war, put up his hands. But the waif moved away to the door of the Form-room.

Gatty rejoined his friends round the fire, his hospitable intentions quite abandoned now. Flip walked out of the Form-room, leaving the other fags laughing and Gatty frowning.

But the waif was not thinking of the "men" of his Form. There was a deep trouble on his mind; he was up against a problem of which Dicky Nugent & Co. could hardly have dreamed.

He moved slowly away. He had been thinking hard, and the result of his cogitations was a decision to seek Bunter of the Remove. Bunter, his patron and benefactor, was the fellow to advise him; and he was sorely in need of counsel.

He came on Billy Bunter near the door of the Rag. His clouded face brightened.

"Scuse me, sir," said Flip, as he came up to the fat Owl. "I been looking for you, sir."

Billy Bunter gave him a patronising nod.

"I wanted to ask you something, sir," said Flip.

"Oh!" said Bunter.

His blink became suspicious. Benevolent benefactor as he was, Bunter did not believe in lending money to fags. He did not believe in lending money to anybody. Borrowing, of course, was quite a different matter. Cash was one of those things which it was more blessed to receive than to give. If this little tick wanted to borrow money of Bunter, he had to learn that a line had to be drawn somewhere. And it sounded like it—to Bunter.

"I ain't nobody to ask but you, sir," said Flip, a little discouraged by a growing severity in Bunter's fat countenance. "But you're the bloke to 'elp me, sir."

"Help you!" repeated Bunter.

"Yes, sir! You see—"

Bunter had no further doubts.

"Sorry, I've got to see a man!" he said hastily, and he rolled away. Flip stared after him.

"I—I say, sir"—he pursued Bunter

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"—I—I'd like to speak to you, sir, p'r'aps later—"

"For goodness' sake don't bother a man!" exclaimed Bunter irritably.

"I've really no time to spare! I've got to see Quelch—I mean, I've got to see Wingate—"

"P'r'aps after prep, sir—"

"I shall be very busy after prep!"

"But, sir—"

"Oh, cut off!" said Bunter. "I've got to see Coker of the Fifth, and I've not a minute to spare—not a second!"

And he rolled off again—this time unpursued. Flip turned away with a clouded, discouraged face.

He remained standing near the door of the Rag, unconscious of curious glances cast at him by several fellows who passed. A heavy hand clapped him on the shoulder suddenly, and a cheery voice hailed him:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Flip looked up at Bob Cherry's cheery, ruddy face.

"Up against it?" asked Bob.

"What's the row, kid? Scrapping in your jolly old Form again?"

"No," said Flip. "It ain't nothing, sir!"

He moved away quickly. Bob glanced after him curiously, and went into the Rag. Flip, after long hesitation, took the direction of masters' passage.

He arrived at the door of the study that had been Mr. Quelch's. But for a long time he hesitated to knock. His heart was beating fast.

He knocked at last. A pleasant voice called from the study:

"Come in!"

Flip opened the door.

Mr. Lagden was seated in Mr. Quelch's armchair. He rose to his feet, and his dark, handsome eyes fixed on the waif. There was a glint like cold steel in them.

"You!" he said.

"Me!" muttered Flip.

"Come into the room."

Flip hesitated in the doorway. It might have seemed that he had some fear of entrusting himself in the study with the new master of the Remove.

"Come in!" repeated Mr. Lagden quietly, but with a note of command in his voice that seemed to enforce obedience.

Flip stepped in slowly.

"Shut the door!"

Flip did not heed that order.

Mr. Lagden strode past him and carefully closed the door. Then he turned on the Greyfriars waif. There was a brief silence while their eyes met. Flip broke the silence.

"What are you doin' here, Jimmy—Jimmy the One?"

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Orders to Quit!

JIMMY THE ONE!

It was a strange name to be spoken in a Form master's study at Greyfriars School. But it did not seem to surprise Mr. Lagden, the new master of the Remove.

He did not answer immediately, but the gaze of his dark, glinting eyes on the fag's face was intense.

"Jimmy the One!" repeated Flip. "I knowed you the minute I saw you come along with the Ead! What are you doin' 'ere, Jimmy?"

The tenseness in the new master's face relaxed, and he laughed slightly.

"I knew you, too!" he said. "You were surprised, but not so surprised, I

think, as I was. A vagrant and pick-pocket, from the slums, at Greyfriars School! I've had some surprises in my life, but never one like that before. What are you doing here, Flip?"

"No 'arm!" said Flip.

Lagden laughed again.

"The old game?" he asked. "Pinching?"

"I ain't a pincher now," said Flip. "I ain't never pinched since I promised Master Bunter I wouldn't."

"Who the dickens is Bunter?"

"Bloke what took me up, and was a good friend to me," said Flip. "He fixed it up for me to come 'ere. I ain't pinching at this 'ere school, Jimmy, and you—"

He paused.

"And I—" sneered Jimmy the One.

"You ain't pinching neither," said Flip desperately. "I know what you're 'ere for, Jimmy—the same old game—and I ain't standing for it, so there."

"You a schoolboy—and I a school-master!" grinned Jimmy the One.

"This would make them stare in the alley, Flip."

"You been a schoolmaster afore," said Flip. "I know your game! I 'eard plenty of talk in the old days, Jimmy."

Your game is to get into places and make it an inside job. I knows. You been a secretary to a M.P. you 'ave, and the silver was missing while you was there. You was in a titled 'ouse once, and you sold her ladyship's diamonds to old Isaacs afterwards. But your long suit is playing schoolmaster—and well I know it."

"Quite!" agreed Jimmy the One pleasantly. "You see, you benighted little ignoramus, I am a schoolmaster—my first job after I came down from Oxford was that of a Form master in a Public school, and I have excellent testimonials from the headmaster, and my name is down at one of the best scholastic agencies in London. It has never suited me to take a permanent post."

He grinned. "But these temporary posts are just in my line."

"I know!" muttered Flip.

"I expected to see you," said Lagden.

"I fancied you would come to my study to renew our old acquaintance. I need not ask you if you've talked—you always knew how to keep your mouth shut."

"I ain't said nothing yet!" said Flip.

"Yet!" repeated Mr. Lagden. "Does that mean that you're thinking of talking about what doesn't concern you, Flip? Better think twice."

"I ain't standing for it!" said Flip stubbornly. "You get your job at some other school, Jimmy. They've been kind to me 'ere—the old bloke in the gown and all. You got to chuck it, Jimmy."

"That's likely!"

"You got to!" persisted Flip. "I wouldn't go for to give you away if I could 'elp it; but you ain't playing your game 'ere!"

"You little fool!" said Mr. Lagden contemptuously. "Do you think you would be listened to, if you told such a wild tale?"

"I could tell them that you was Jimmy the One!" said Flip, staring at him. "You got a new name 'ere, but it won't wash!"

"I have not got a new name, you young idiot! My name is Lagden—though it was never mentioned in Puggins' Alley. I have a spotless record and an excellent reputation; my record is known from the day I left Oxford. If I have lived two lives—one in the open and the other behind the scenes—do you think that I have told the world about it?"



"You've got me where you want me, Flip!" said Jimmy the One. "I've got to go!" "You've got to, Jimmy!" said Flip. "But if you crack the school safe, you won't go without the coppers arter you!"

He laughed.

"You'd find it hard to convince Dr. Locke, Flip, that Rupert Lagden, Master of Arts, was ever called Jimmy the One in another world of which he knows nothing!"

Flip stood silent, staring.

"Tell this silly story, if you like," said Lagden, "it will only be laughed at, and you will be turned out of the school!"

"Oh swipes!" said Flip.

"But," said Lagden, coming a step nearer to the fag, "it does not suit me for you to tell such a story, Flip! It would not be believed, for a single moment—I do not fear that. But it would draw attention upon me—which I do not want. It would be remembered after I have left Greyfriars—if anything was missing at the same time! You will hold your tongue, Flip!"

"Who's going to make me?" said Flip.

The fag's face set hard. He was afraid of the crook—he did not attempt to disguise his fear of him. Mingled with his fear, was his old admiration of the cunning and desperate breaker of the law. But Flip of the Second Form at Greyfriars was not the same as the waif of Puggins' Alley. Many new ideas had filtered into his mind since he had been at the school. Even from Bunter he had learned something—from the rest of his surroundings, more.

It had been borne in upon his untutored mind that "pinching," once a matter of course with him, was a base and disgraceful thing; and it was not only his promise that kept him straight now, but a sense of rectitude that had been gradually sinking into his mind. He feared Jimmy the One; his lurking admiration of the gentleman crook was still there, but he was determined that the crooked game should not be played at Greyfriars.

His lips tightened, and his eyes gleamed at the crook. His hands were clenched.

Lagden scanned him, apparently rather with amusement than any other feeling. He seemed to have no doubt of his influence over the little waif.

"You've chucked pinching, Flip?" he asked.

"Honest-to-goodness I 'ave!" said Flip.

"All the better for you," said Lagden, with a nod. "It's a rotten game, and a mug's game, and can only lead, in the long run, to one place—the stone jug!"

Flip stared.

"You ain't chucked it!" he said. "I'm different—crooked in the grain," said Jimmy the One coolly. "My advice is none the less good, because I don't act on it myself, Flip. I know what the end must be—I shall give them a long run, but the bracelets will click at the finish! But they're not going to click just yet—and through you, Flip! You're not a copper's nark!"

Flip flushed crimson.

"I wouldn't give you away, Jimmy, not if I could 'elp it!" he exclaimed, earnestly. "Swipes! I wouldn't! You had a 'eavy 'and with a belt, but I ain't forgot you give me a pound note once when I was down and out. Not that I'd touch it now, knowing how you got it! But I ain't agin you, Jimmy—not if you leave this 'ere place alone!"

"I'm here!" said Lagden.

"You got to go!"

"Not until it suits me, Flip!" Lagden looked hard at the waif, and the amusement died out of his face. Fear mingled with a lurking admiration and liking in Flip's looks, but there was stubborn resolution, too. The crook realised that the danger was nearer than he had believed.

"It's got to suit you, Jimmy!" said Flip. "P'raps it's a cheek for me to

talk to you like this, but I ain't 'olding my tongue and seeing the old gent in the gownd robbed. S'elp me. I ain't! You say he won't believe me! Mebbe he won't! But if you don't 'ook it, Jimmy, I'm taking the chance!"

Rupert Lagden drew a deep breath.

"You mean that, Flip?"

"I mean every blooming word!" said Flip. "It ain't good enough, I tell you; I ain't standing for it! You got to go!"

The gentleman crook stood silent, looking at him. He realised—that he had not realised at first—that Flip was in deadly earnest, that he was unwilling to betray the acquaintance of other days, but that he would not tolerate the crook's game at Greyfriars.

Rupert Lagden had played a difficult and a dangerous game during the years that he had led a double life, but he had never been up against an obstacle like this before. He was ordered to go—by a little vagrant, whom he had regarded with amused contempt; a wretched little waif whose existence he had not remembered till he had seen him that day in a Remove study.

Black and bitter grew the face of Jimmy the One, and Flip involuntarily backed a step or two away from him. Still he did not falter, his face remained set and determined.

In spite of the suppressed fury that was burning in his breast, the crook's voice was calm and quiet as he spoke again.

"You'll stand in with me, Flip! Stand in, and—"

"Cut it out!" said Flip. "I was a pincher in the alley, but I ain't a pincher 'ere, and I'd cut my 'and off sooner!"

Again the crook stood silent. Flip felt a thrill at his heart, as he saw Jimmy the One's hand glide back

towards his hip. He knew what Jimmy carried in his hip-pocket.

"That ain't good enough, Jimmy," said Flip, though there was a shake in his voice. "Ow'd you get away arter?"

Lagden laughed—a hard laugh.

"Quite!" he agreed. "It would be difficult to explain as an accident. Lucky for you, you snipe!"

He paused.

Flip waited. The black look cleared from Lagden's face—the smile re-appeared. It was a pleasant and disarming smile.

"You've got me, Flip!" he said. "Got me where you want me, by gad! Coppers and copper's narks have never been able to beat Jimmy the One, and you've got him beat! I've got to go!"

"You got to, Jimmy!" said Flip, almost pleadingly. "You got to!"

"That's that!" said Lagden. "I'm going! I know when a thing's not good enough, Flip! I'll fix up a telegram to-morrow—and get!"

Flip nodded slowly.

"That's all right," he said. "If—"

"If?" repeated Lagden.

"If nothing don't 'appen to-night," said Flip stubbornly. "You ain't cracking the safe afore you get, Jimmy. If you do, you won't go with-out the coppers arter you!"

"Nothing will happen to-night, Flip! Leave it at that—and you'll hold your tongue when I'm gone."

There was a tap at the door. It opened, and the portly form and majestic countenance of the Head appeared in view.

"Ah, you are here, Mr Lagden! I —" Dr. Locke paused, as his surprised glance fell on Flip. No doubt he was astonished to see a Second Form fag in the new Remove master's study.

"Pray come in, sir!" said Mr. Lagden easily. "Flip—I think your name is Flip—you may go! I am glad you came to apologize for your rudeness, but I assure you I had quite forgotten the matter. It was really of no moment. You may go, my boy!"

Flip, speechless, crept past the Head and vanished. The Head smiled genially. Lagden, with easy assurance, had explained Flip's presence in the study in those few words. The door closed on Flip, and the fag hurried away.

In prep, a little later, Flip gave but scanty attention to Mr. Twigg. Jimmy the One had agreed to go, and he had no choice about going—yet there was a lingering doubt at the back of the fag's mind. Until Jimmy the One had gone, he could not feel easy.

Mr. Lagden dined with the Head that evening. Upon both the Head and Mrs. Locke he made an excellent impression. They would have been astonished, could they have divined the thoughts hidden behind Mr. Lagden's agreeable smile. For the new master of the Remove had no intention of going—till he had carried out his purpose at Greyfriars—but how he was to remain, in spite of Flip of the Second Form, and what he knew, was a problem as difficult as any that Jimmy the One had ever had to tackle.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Wrong Man Again!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Prep, fathead!"
"No need to bother about prep to-night," said Billy Bunter cheerfully. "We've got a new
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beak, you know, and he's bound to go easy the first day. You can cut prep."

"Ass!" said Wharton and Nugent together.

"Don't be silly idiots!" urged Bunter. "This is a chance to cut prep, though you wouldn't have thought of it yourselves. I thought of it!"

"You would!" grinned Nugent.

"Well, chuck it!" said Bunter, coming into Study No. 1. "I've got something a bit more important on than prep, and I want my pals to help."

"Go and ask them!" suggested Wharton.

"Oh, really, old chap, look here!"

"What on earth's that?" demanded the captain of the Remove.

Bunter held up a large garden syringe for inspection. Drops of red were trickling from it. The fat junior grinned.

"I bagged that from Gosling's woodshed before lock-up," he explained. "It's full of red ink! I bagged that from the Form-room cupboard."

"What the thump for?" yelled Wharton.

"Walker of the Sixth!"

"Walker of the Sixth?" gasped the two juniors together.

Bunter nodded and grinned.

Wharton and Nugent stared at him

A USEFUL LEATHER POCKET WALLET

goes to G. Prentice, Jr., of 136, Bury Street, Lower Edmonton, N.9, who submitted the following Greyfriars limerick:

"Hurrah!" shouted Bunter, with glee.

"Here's a registered letter for me!"

Then "Beast!" he yelled,
For that letter held

Bessie's photo, but no "£ s. d."

Try your skill at writing these limericks, boys! It's a fascinating pastime and the prizes offered for winning efforts are well worth having!

blankly. After Billy Bunter's late experiences on the trail of vengeance, they had supposed that even the fat and fatuous Owl had had enough. Apparently he hadn't!

"You — you — you unspeakable chump!" gasped Wharton. "You got Quelch last night with a pail of water! Are you going to get the Head this time?"

"I've got it all cut and dried," said Bunter complacently. "It was all Quelch's fault last night—butting in where he wasn't wanted. Well, he can't butt in again, now he's in sanny sneezing his head off! This time Walker is going to get it!"

"Oh crumbs!" said Nugent.

"I've had a flogging all through Walker!" said Bunter. "I'm still suffering fearful agony, though I'm not the fellow to say a word about it—not like some chaps. It's safe as houses, you fellows. I'm going to turn out the light on the landing—"

"You—you're going to turn out the light on the landing—" gasped Wharton.

"And Walker will come up—"

"Wa-a-alker will come up—"

"He's on duty to-night, you know. He will come up to see what's on, and then—"

"Great Christopher Columbus!" gurgled Nugent.

Evidently one experience was not enough for William George Bunter. Bunter was a stickler.

"You potty porpoise!" roared Wharton. "After you've landed yourself once, playing the goat, are you thinking of trying the same game on again? Do you think that all Greyfriars won't know it was you?"

"I wish you'd let a fellow speak!" said Bunter peevishly. "You jaw such a lot, old chap! All jaw, like a sheep's head! Of course, I know I should be suspected at once—after what happened last night."

"Well, then, you howling ass, do you want another flogging?"

"Do let a chap speak! I'm going to be in my study at the time. Toddy and Dutton will be able to swear to it—that's an alibi, you know. They won't suspect you."

"Me!" gasped Wharton.

"Yes, old chap. You're going to do it."

"I—I—I'm going to do it?" stuttered Wharton.

"That's the idea. They'll suspect me, and I shall jolly well prove that I never did it!" grinned Bunter. "They won't suspect you. Why should they? Safe as houses—see?"

"You—you—you—" gurgled Wharton. "I'm to squirt red ink over a Sixth Form prefect because he reported you for trying to pinch a pie from the pantry! I—I—I—"

Words failed the captain of the Remove.

"That's it, old chap! Don't be funky, you know."

"Funky!" roared Wharton.

"Yes. Have a little pluck—like me, you know! Fancy Walker's face when he gets the red ink!" Bunter chuckled. "Of course, he will think it was me, and I shall jolly well prove that it wasn't! I shan't get licked this time. That's all right."

That, evidently, was the most important consideration, to Billy Bunter's fat mind.

"And it doesn't matter if I get licked?" gasped Wharton.

"Well, after all, what's a licking?" said Bunter. "Besides, they won't know it was you. You can swear you never left your study—"

"Wha-a-at?"

"And Nugent can back you up. He can swear you were here all the time, can't you, Franky?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Nugent.

"You see, it's perfectly safe. For goodness' sake, old chap, don't be funky and spoil the whole thing after I've worked it out and got it all cut and dried!" urged Bunter. "Have a little pluck, you know!"

"You howling ass!" roared Wharton. "I've a jolly good mind to take that squirt and swish the stuff all over you!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Roll away, fathead!"

"I say, Franky, you're not such a rotten funk as Wharton!" said Bunter, turning his spectacles on the grinning Nugent. "You're going to back me up, ain't you, old chap?"

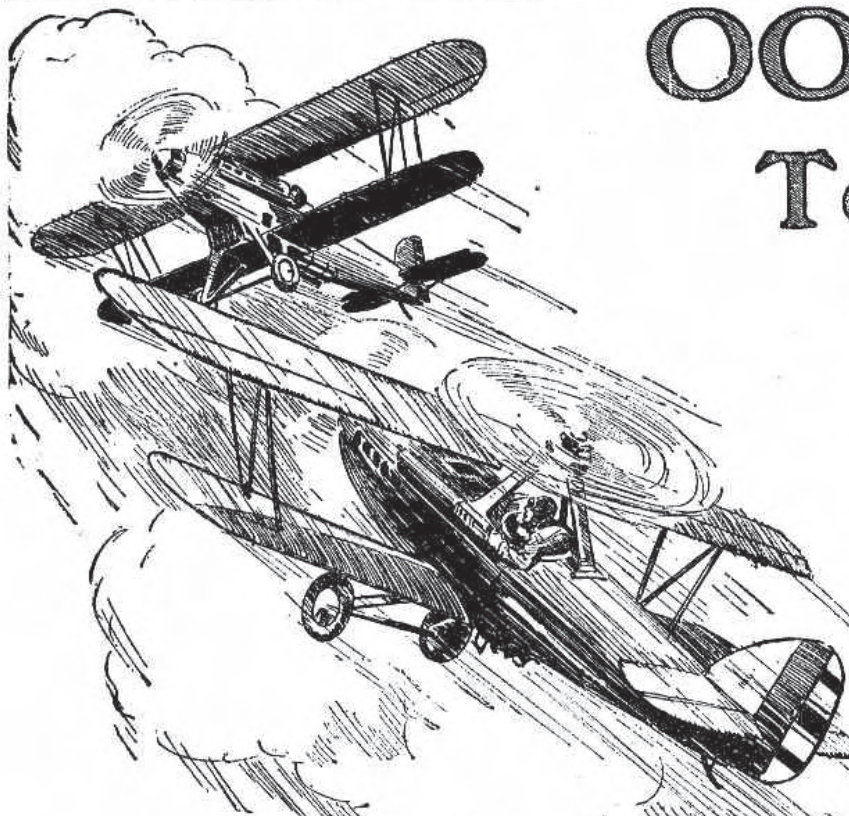
"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Look here, I'll turn out the light on the landing, and the light in the passage, too. That'll make it perfectly safe."

"There was a mistake in the dark last time," said Nugent, chuckling. "Suppose there's another mistake in the dark?"

(Continued on page 28.)

OOM, the Terrible!



Rick's Ruse!

AS the first streaks of dawn showed in the Eastern sky a large and rawboned mule stumbled wearily into the courtyard of the Casa del Texado, and the rider dismounted painfully and limped towards the door.

There were patches over his left eye, a strip of plaster down one cheek, a huge bandage was wound around his head, and his left arm was in a sling. Altogether the rider looked as if he had been recently very much in the wars, and it was small wonder that the sleepy-looking peon who opened the door should stare at him in suspicion.

"What do you want?" he snapped.

"The Master!" was the response, spoken through stiff, swollen lips, apparently, by a tongue that was in bad need of refreshment.

"The Master!"

"Yes, Oom!" boomed the apparition. "Oom or—my—brother—Don Monte—Pedrillo!"

"Your—" the man gazed at the battered face in astonishment, then gave a glad cry of surprise. "Why—if it is not the little Gonzalez—the little Manuel, home after all these years! Welcome, camarado, amigo mio, welcome. All our friends would be glad to see thee. Why—but for that bandage and the plaster on thy face—I should have known thee anywhere!"

"That's a blessing, then!" muttered the disguised Rick, whilst the servant hobbled off to find his master. "Let's hope they'll all say the same thing—specially Oom!"

In a few minutes the Flying-Bandit entered the room, and not in a very good temper apparently. He stood and looked at the battered figure in

a way which made Rick Dare feel somewhat uncomfortable.

"What the teufel have you been doing to yourself?" demanded Oom, in his thick, guttural voice. "How did you get in this state? Why—I shouldn't have known you!"

"Si, senor; but it was in de-defence of the st-strongholds, senor." Rick stuttered, speaking in the singsong whine of the Spanish operator, with the thickened speech of a man who had survived a battering in addition. "When the wireless plane came down in the square and those cursed Gringos descended, I did all I could to repel them before I wirelessly you. As I told you—it was my cousin Nachez, who fired the—"

"Ja, ja, you told me that!" snapped Oom impatiently. "What happened after?"

"Ah, senor, it was a gr-r-r-at struggle!" exclaimed Rick dramatically. "But our men didn't have a chance, for the Inglese concealed themselves behind rocks and fired upon our brave hombres from ambush. Though I say it, Manuel Gonzalez showed the stuff he was made of in that glor-r-ious fight!"

Oom, the Terrible, is a Flying-Bandit who aims to be master of the world. He finds two formidable foes in Tom Dare and his brother Rick. After a series of exciting adventures Tom wrecks the special wireless apparatus which controls Oom's aeroplanes and sets up an even more powerful one himself. The Flying-Bandit, however, succeeds in making a getaway. Later comes the startling news that Beryl Merger, daughter of Silas Merger, the boys' millionaire friend, has been kidnapped. Tom is hot on the trail when he falls into the hands of Oom.

(Now read on.)

"Tonnerre und blitzten—I should never have thought it! Manuel, I have wronged you!" murmured the Flying-Bandit, eyeing the dilapidated and slender form as if it were some rare specimen of insect. "I must say I always looked upon you as a sneaking little coward."

Rick lifted a protesting hand as if pained.

"Ah, senor; I was not born with the great brave heart of you or my brother Monte, but there comes a time when those feelings of devotion and gratitude lend a man courage, and I would fight to the death the enemies that threaten my master."

"Well—I must say it's a great surprise to me!" said Oom candidly. "But if you have had a rough time you shall have a chance for revenge. I take it that the brothers Dare were in the attacking party?"

"Only—only the younger one of the two," Rick replied, thinking rapidly. He had had no message from Tom apparently. This man was talking about a chance for "revenge." Was it possible that Tom—"But perhaps you have some good news for me, senor? Is it possible that these brothers have been foolish enough to follow you here in their mad attempt to capture my chief?"

"One of 'em!" chuckled Oom. "Tom, the elder! He must have been at the Lakeside House when your brother kidnapped Beryl Merger—what was that you said, Manuel?"

Rick bit on his tongue, for he had let out an exclamation at finding how closely Oom had followed the true course of events. So Beryl had been brought here and Tom had followed her? Good old sportsman!

"This Gringo, this Tomasso Dare, he also assault me behind my back, senor, and for that I would have r-r-revenge! Is it possible that I may see him that I may spit in his face?"

Oom chuckled. There was a latent spark of cruelty in his make-up, and it amused him to think of Tom Dare, bound, being insulted and spat upon by this little squirt of a Spanish half-breed.

"The Inglese is not my own prisoner, but I dare say we can obtain

permission for you to see him," he said grinning. "As a matter of fact, it is probably the last time you will see him, for after the wedding at midnight we take him up to your brother's retreat, when we can deal with him at our leisure."

"Pardon, senior, you said, 'after the wedding!' Who is the happy bride and bridegroom?"

Oom laughed aloud as if at some secret joke of his own.

"So far as has been arranged at present the bride is Beryl Merger, the bridegroom is Christoforo Texado. But there may be a change of bridegrooms—if things come out as I wish!"

"By gad—if the stiff isn't thinkin' of gettin' spliced to dear old Beryl himself!" Rick muttered under his breath. Then to Oom: "Meantime, senior, if I might be allowed to see the Gringo? I owe him ver' much! Ha, ha!"

"Well, I see no objection. Don Sebastian has not yet risen, but the men know me. Si, come this way, Manuel!"

Rick's quick eyes were everywhere, noting everything, missing nothing. As he walked with the Flying-Bandit across the plaza the first thing he saw was the great granite slab about which Tom had told him. He made no remark about it, but mentally took a picture of the hacienda and its surroundings for future use.

In front of a small stone building which was used as a sort of cold storage place Oom halted and nodded to a sentry who ambled up and down with a rifle over his shoulder.

The man was only too glad to have someone to speak to after the monotonous hours of sentry-go, and touched his ragged straw hat respectfully. Then, turning, he gave Rick a curious glance, and suddenly his face beamed in smiles.

"Why, if it be not the little Manuello! Have you forgotten your old friend Esteban Garcia, your brother's old comrade?"

"Esteban! Ha, but you have changed a great deal, amigo, since the old days!" cried Rick, flourishing his hands as if in enthusiasm, but really to keep off the man who showed signs of an inclination to kiss him. "Ah, me, as the years pass we all change, is it not so? And I should not have known you, but for your voice which sounds like a creaking door-hinge and the scar of your old wound—you still bear that, I see?"

The man's face flushed crimson.

"Si, I still wear it, and I still bear the grudge for him who gave it me. Caramba! Every time I see the Don Texado my blood boils—some day—your pardon, senior—he is a friend of yours?"

"The Don is my host for the moment, but his private quarrels are nothing to me," shrugged Oom. "Our friend Manuel would like a glimpse of the prisoner, Esteban, is it permitted?"

"Si, senior, of a certainty!"

The stone cold-storage room made

an ideal prison, for the only opening, besides the heavy door, was a narrow barred window, high up, with a grating below to allow a current of air to run through. There was a central support for the roof in the shape of a hardwood tree stump, and to this Tom Dare was securely bound.

His eyes narrowed at the sight of Oom and his companion.

"Hullo! Come to have a quiet gloat, Oom, the Horrible?" he jeered. "I see you've got one of your tame worms back with you, though he looks a bit the worse for wear. What's up, Gonzalez? Been fighting with a puss-cat and got the worst of it?"

"Nay, with a dog—your dog of a brother—but it was he that did have the worst! You cursed, impudent Gringo!" snarled Rick, going close to the other and spitting the words out. "But if I have received wounds—you should see him! Ha! Mille gracias, he will nevaire walk straight again—nevaire!"

"You're a thundering liar, little insect!" replied Tom calmly. "As a matter of fact, I had a message from him only this morning, and he was never better. Tell us a better one, skeeter!"

"I tell you I have make hees face so that you would not know eet, even if he come as close to you as I do now, pah!"

He shoved his face close to Tom's,

then in a whisper which Oom could not hear, said:

"It's all right, old Tom, it's Rick!"

Tom gave no sign of the intense surprise he felt, but answered calmly:

"Not quite so close, Gonzalez—you've been eatin' garlic with your frijoles again, and you smell like the polecat you are!"

"Inglese, I veel cut out your liver!" snarled Rick—and he drew his knife, flourishing it under his brother's nose. "Where's Beryl?" he whispered.

"Aw, go and chase yourself, greaser!" responded Tom, adding under his breath: "Room over veranda—last window, bar's broken!"

"Put that knife away, Manuel!" Oom ordered, though he had stood grinning malevolently during this curious interview.

"Si, senior, since you wish eet!" said Rick, giving an exaggerated bow with his hand behind his back. "But if you knew—if you but knew how hatred for these Gringos r-runs through my veins likea fire! But my time veel come, and zen—"

He made the motion of returning the knife to its sheath, but instead palmed it to his brother, and then strutted after Oom as if he had done something very brave.

"Come hither, Manuel! There is something I would like to discuss and which you may as well know since your brother is to have a hand in the affair."

Oom had apparently changed his opinion of the once cowardly Gonzalez. In a manner this was understandable, for the Flying-Bandit had survived several great shocks.

For the first time in his life he had come very close to complete defeat and capture, and here he was amongst more or less strangers without one of his band around him, a good part of his great fortune of loot gone, and no prospect of returning to his stronghold and his scientific machines.

In fact, he was as near being an outcast as he had ever been, and this one humble follower seemed faithful and devoted, and not such a coward after all.

He took Rick's arm and led him across the piazza, just opposite the big granite plinth.

"I need not tell you that this is entirely secret!" he whispered. "I have had the plan in mind for some time, but I had first to win over your brother Monte to my way of thinking. At the Don's orders he was to kidnap Beryl Merger, bring her here, and she was to be married to Christoforo Texado at midnight to-night."

"It seems that some years ago Merger did the Don a bad turn, and this was to be his revenge."

"As you know, I attempted to kidnap the girl myself, but was foiled by that young snip Rick Dare—curse him! However, the present arrange-

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"You cursed, impudent Gringo!" snarled Rick, shoving his face close to his brother's. Then, in a whisper: "It's all right, Tom, it's Rick! Tell me where Beryl Merger is—quick!"



ment suits me, for I take Christoforo's place. In this way I shall have such a pull over old Merger that he will pay me any price to keep quiet and out of the way!"

"And Monte is willing to aid you in this?" asked Rick.

"Of course," was the confident reply. "His men will be concealed in the secret passage at midnight, and when all is ready for the ceremony they will rush out and secure the Texados, and the priest—who is one of your brother's creatures—will perform the ceremony for me!"

"A brilliant plan!" grinned the pretended Gonzalez. "Worthy of the great brain—Ahem!"

"But there is another thing, Manuel," Oom went on. "The Don is possessed of a great store of jewels, which I have determined shall be mine. You, your brother, and his men, will wait in the secret passage to take Beryl to your brother's moun-

tain retreat after the ceremony, where she will be held until I arrive. You see?"

Rick affected to consider for a moment.

"Would this not be a better plan, senor?" he said. "You have your plane here, have you not?"

"I have the one belonging to the brothers Dare!" grinned Oom. "Si, it is in the secret passage, all waiting. But what of that? I cannot fly it myself, as I wish to have a free hand to collect the jewels and then get out of the way quickly."

"I do not altogether trust Monte, though I hate to say such a thing of a brother!" said Rick virtuously. "He would sell you as quickly as he would sell Don Texado, given sufficient inducement. Would it not be better if I had the plane in readiness and take Senorita Merger in it to some place we can arrange and you join us later?"

"You? Then you can fly?" cried Oom incredulously.

"Si, senor. I am sorry to have deceived you, but if you had known that I could fly a machine I should have been kept a prisoner at the stronghold. As it was, I allowed you and everyone else to think me a fool!"

"Donnerwetter, but you certainly have deceived me!" cried Oom, with an astonished stare at his simple-looking subordinate. "I can hardly believe it even now!"

"It is easily proved, senor!" said Rick innocently. "If you would condescend to allow me a trial—I think I should astonish you!"

(Next week's MAGNET will contain the concluding chapters of this thrill-packed story, and no reader should miss them. There's another "extra special" yarn in store for you all, of which full particulars will be given in our next number. Order your MAGNET early, boys.)

