

6 MORE PICTURE-STAMPS FREE INSIDE

The **MAGNET**

2^d



**HARRY WHARTON
HAPPY RESCUE!**



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.

SHIPS, Locomotives, Dogs, Aeroplanes, Rough-Riders and Self-Defence! You'll be experts on all these subjects soon, chums—just as soon as you complete your collection of the 144 picture stamps which I am giving away in conjunction with the "Magnet," "Ranger" and "Modern Boy." What do you think of this week's splendid set of pictures—just grand, aren't they?

In these days of motor—and other—bandits, the Hand-Grip Throw, which appears on one of this week's stamps, is very useful to know. The next time you're tackled by a suspicious character don't forget to offer to shake hands with him! And get your grip in first!

You will find two locomotives pictured in this week's stamps—both of which are giants of the metals. The "Garratt" type is the biggest working engine in Britain, while the "Mikado" is a powerful passenger loco. Have you ever wondered

WHY ENGINES HAVE NAMES?

It is because in the early days of "the iron road" the carriages were merely a kind of stage coach. Stage coaches were always known by certain names, and the railway carriages which replaced the stage coaches carried on the tradition. Every carriage had a different name at first, but as their numbers increased this became confusing, and only the engines were given names.

SEVERAL readers have asked me what the group of figures called the "wheel arrangement" of an engine mean. Well, the wheels of an engine are divided into three classes: guiding wheels, driving wheels, and trailing wheels. The figures 4-6-4, for instance, would mean that the engine had four guiding wheels, six driving wheels, and four trailing wheels.

The Patagonian Indian, who appears as No. 8 of our "Rough-Riders" series, belongs to a race which is rapidly dwindling and who may become extinct. They are men of great stature, and most of them are between 6 ft. and 6 ft. 4 in. in height. They are intrepid horsemen, and their favourite weapon is the bolas, an implement consisting of two heavy spheres, connected together with a length of cord. They are remarkably skilful with the bolas, and can bring down horses, cattle or men at a great distance by slinging the weapon in such a manner that the spheres wind the cord tightly around the victim.

The words

CUTTY SARK

in the name of the Sarc Cutty Sark Amphibian may puzzle some of you. The Cutty Sark was perhaps the most famous of all the old-time sailing cutters, and her name is always remembered with affection by old sailing men. She was the fastest

—and prettiest—craft on the water at one time. The Cutty Sark and all her companions are, alas, no more to be seen racing home over the waves; but, as you see, she has been honoured by having this famous amphibian aeroplane named after her.

How would you like a Dutch Keeshond for a pet? You'll find any amount of them in Holland, for there are thousands of barges in that country of canals, and nearly every one of them has a Keeshond aboard. That is how they get their name, for "Keeshond" really means "Barge Dog."

WHILE we are talking about dogs, here is a query which comes from Jack Canard, of North Circular Road, N.18. Jack wants to know which is

THE LARGEST DOG IN THE WORLD?

He thinks the Great Dane earns this distinction, but that is not so. The largest, strongest and tallest dog in the world is the Tibetan mastiff, which is very much like a sour-faced, heavy-eared Newfoundland dog; but, of course, much larger in size. However, a Tibetan mastiff is very rarely seen in this country. It may interest you to know that the Great Dane (of whom you will all get a picture stamp shortly) is also known as the German mastiff, or boarhound.

Do you know how many types of dogs there are? The Kennel Club registers sixty-two varieties, but actually there are no fewer than one hundred and eighty-five varieties differentiated by naturalists! The most curious of them all is the Chinese crested dog. It is practically hairless, with a mottled, fleshy skin, and it carries on its forehead a topknot or crest of long bristly hair.

Don't forget that there will be six more splendid free picture stamps in next week's issue.

Don't miss them, chums. They're well worth having, I can tell you! And

SOMETHING ELSE WORTH HAVING

are those magnificent Annuals which are now on sale, "The Holiday Annual" and "The Popular Book of Boys' Stories." At 6s. and 2s. 6d. respectively, they provide the finest value of all boys' books. You'll meet all your old chums in "The Holiday Annual," which is packed full of wonderful school yarns and articles concerning Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars, Tom Merry & Co. of St. Jim's, and Jimmy Silver & Co. of Rookwood, as well as many adventure stories; while "The Popular Book of Boys' Stories" features tales of sport, fun and adventure.

Ask your newsagent to let you have a peep at these tip-top books—and ask him, too, for particulars of his Christmas club scheme which makes it possible for every

boy to become the owner of these bonzer books!

One of my chums writes to me from Bognor to tell me that he is

AN UNFORTUNATE READER!

Not having placed an order in advance for his copy of "The Modern Boy," he missed the splendid album for mounting his picture stamps. What is he going to do about it? he asks.

Well, if he turns to page 26 of this issue, he will learn that I had already foreseen this difficulty, and have evolved a method by which any one of you who missed this magnificent album can remedy the matter at once!

A query concerning

FOOTBALL AT GREYFRIARS

comes from "Magnetite," of Wolverhampton. He thinks it would be a good idea if our centre pages were devoted to descriptions of the current week's football (or cricket). Harry Wharton could write the description of the Remove's matches, while Wingate could provide the report of the First XI matches.

What do my other readers think? I am always pleased to carry out readers' suggestions—but I like to make sure first of all that they fit in with the desires of the majority.

I DON'T seem to have very much space left, but I think I can just manage to squeeze in a reply to Harry Curtiss, of Stroud, who wants to know

WHERE THE SCOTS CAME FROM.

The inhabitants of Scotland really came from a fusion of four distinct races—the Picts, the Scots, the Britons, and the Angles. The origin of the Picts is still a matter of dispute, but the Scots came from Ireland and settled in the neighbourhood of Argyllshire and the islands off the coast. The Britons occupied the valley of the Clyde, and the Angles settled south of the Firth of Forth. The original colonisation of Scotland is said to have commenced as early as 800 B.C.

Now for next week's top-notch issue, chums!

Frank Richards will keep you chuckling and enthralled with

"THE GLORIOUS 'FIFTH' AT GREYFRIARS!"

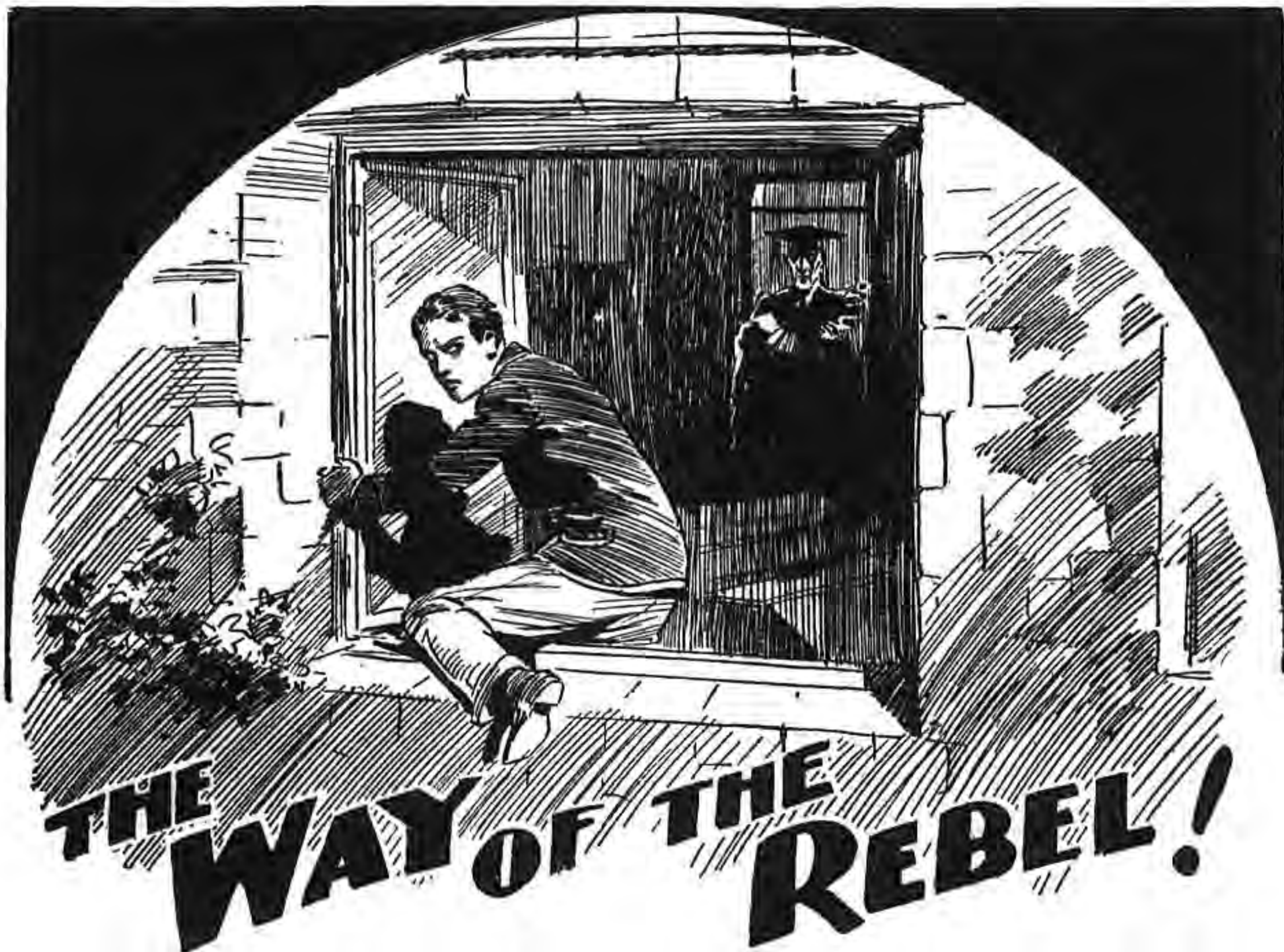
which is the title of his next long complete school yarn. It's fairly brimming over with big bangs and surprises, and all your popular favourites take a prominent part in it. Bunter, of course, pokes his nose in as usual, and the sparks begin to fly with a vengeance! But you'll read all about it yourselves, chums—I don't want to spoil your enjoyment of such a ripping story by telling you too much about it!

There'll be another gripping instalment of our great highwayman yarn: "The Red Falcon!" too, and the edition of the "Greyfriars Herald" will be better than ever.

And don't forget that I'm still awarding pocket-knives for jokes and real leather pocket wallets for limericks! As I am also giving away magnificent picture stamps each week to every one of you fellows, there is no doubt that MAGNET readers are in for a jolly good time!

YOUR EDITOR.

This issue of The MAGNET contains 6 WONDERFUL PICTURE STAMPS. FREE!



THE WAY OF THE REBEL!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

The Last Chance!

LORD MAULEVERER of the Greyfriars Remove stood in the doorway of Study No. 12 with a thoughtful and rather worried expression on his amiable face.

From the adjoining study, No. 13, came a buzz of voices.

Study No. 13 was Bob Cherry's study, which he shared with Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, Mark Linley, and little Wun Lung. But there were a good many more than four fellows in Study No. 13 at the present moment.

Several fellows seemed to be speaking at once. Some of them sounded rather excited. Mauleverer did not hear what was said; but he was aware that an extremely animated discussion was going on in Bob Cherry's study. Bob's voice, which was the most powerful in the Remove, came clearly through the buzz every now and then.

"Soccer's Soccer!"

Mauly smiled as he heard that from Bob Cherry, in emphatic tones. It was an undeniable statement. The buzz of voices followed.

Evidently the meeting in Study No. 13 dealt with the important subject of football. It was not very important to Mauly, who never played footer if he could help it. Footer was a form of exertion; and exertion did not appeal to his lazy lordship. But it was very important to most of the Remove. To the crowded meeting in Study No. 13, it was, at the moment, the one thing that mattered.

"I say, Mauly! They're going it!" Billy Bunter rolled up the Remove

passage, and grinned at Lord Mauleverer. "They're going to turn Wharton out! He, he, he!"

Mauly gazed thoughtfully at the fat Owl of the Remove without replying.

"They're all there," grinned Bunter. "All Wharton's old pals, who've turned him down—Cherry and Bull and Nugent and Inky! And Smithy and Toddy and Brown and Squiff and—"

Lord Mauleverer detached himself from his doorway and walked along the Remove passage towards the stairs.

When all hope of ever regaining his old footing at Greyfriars seems lost, luck comes Harry Wharton's way—but only splendid pluck enables the rebel of the Remove to take advantage of it!

Billy Bunter remained where he was, listening to the buzz from Study No. 13, and grinning all over his fat face. Bunter, at least, seemed to find something amusing in the circumstance that all Harry Wharton's old friends had gathered with the object of "turning him out."

Mauly, evidently, did not share the fat Owl's amusement. His face was clouded.

He progressed slowly along the passage as far as Study No. 1, where he came to a halt.

There he paused for a few moments

before he tapped at the door of the study and entered.

There was one junior in the study—Harry Wharton, the captain of the Remove.

Wharton was seated at the table writing lines. Lines came often Harry Wharton's way this unlucky term. Mr. Quelch, his Form master, was down on him with a very heavy down, and the slightest fault on his part was sure to be visited with punishment. His face was dark as he sat writing Latin verses from the *Æneid*. But he looked up as Mauly entered, and smiled a cheery smile that was like the sun coming through heavy clouds.

"Trot in, old bean!"

Lord Mauleverer trotted in.

"Lines?" he asked, glancing at Wharton's task.

"Yes; a hundred for Quelch," said Harry, with a curl of the lip. "The dear man hasn't forgotten me."

"You've rubbed him the wrong way, old man," murmured Mauleverer. "But what is the impot for this time?"

"Kicking a footer over the banisters."

"Well, that's awfully against the rules, you know."

"Quite!" agreed Wharton. "It was Skinner who kicked the ball over the banisters; but that's immaterial."

Mauleverer's face became very grave. "Quelch must have thought it was you, old bean," he said.

"Yes; he wanted to!" said Wharton, with a laugh that was not very pleasant to hear. "He found me on the landing after Skinner had cut. That was enough for him."

"Look here, Wharton, if you'd told him—"

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Wharton shrugged his shoulders. "What's the good? He would have given me lines for something else. Let him rip!"

"Um!" said Lord Mauleverer.

He was silent for a minute or two. Wharton rose from the table and stretched himself.

"I came in to say somethin'," said Mauly, at last. "There's a meetin' of some sort goin' on in Bob's study."

"Whose? Cherry's?"

Bob Cherry, it appeared, was no longer "Bob" to the captain of the Remove.

"Yaaa. Look here, old chap, a fellow doesn't want to butt in," said Lord Mauleverer. "But I'm your friend, I hope—"

"The only one I have left, I think," said Harry, with a smile. "Barge on."

"Well, look here, it's rotten to see you on rotten terms with your old pals. Can't somethin' be done?"

"That's not my fault!"

"Well, it is, to some extent—"

"What?"

"To some extent, old chap," said Lord Mauleverer placidly. "You needn't glare at me, old fellow—I'm goin' on, right to the end, unless you turf me out of the study."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"When there's trouble," went on his lordship, "there's always faults on both sides. Nobody's quite good, and nobody's quite bad, see? Now, if a fellow's in fault, he ought to be sorry for it. If the other fellow's in fault, he ought to forgive him, and wash it all out. Start fresh, and all that!"

"Not so easy!" said Harry.

"Easy enough, if you make up your mind to it. You've got as good pals as any fellow ever had—and you think they haven't played up! Well, you may be wrong. But if you're right, make allowance for human weakness, you know, and give 'em another chance. What?"

Wharton was silent.

"Remember last vac," asked Mauly, "when we were all together in jolly old Egypt? All jolly good pals then, what? Is it worth while chuckin' it all away just for the sake of pride?"

Wharton's face softened. Mauleverer was considered rather an ass in the Remove. But he had touched the right chord.

"But—" Harry spoke slowly. "You're a good chap, Mauly, but—"

"Wash out the butts!" suggested Mauleverer. "Buts are no earthly use. Leave butting to the billy-goats."

"I mean—" Wharton paused again.

"You mean you're too jolly proud and stiff-necked to take the first step?" asked Mauly.

Wharton coloured. Really, that was what he did mean, though certainly he would not have put it like that.

"Well, they've made the first step, and the second, and you gave them the marble eye," said Mauly. "They've given it up now! You make the third. See? It's up to you!"

"I—I dare say you're right, Mauly! But—"

"Never mind the butts! Walk along to Bob's study, walk in, and act just as if there's never been any trouble at all. Put it all on the jolly old footin'. And if they don't play up, you can use my head for a football! I jolly well know they will."

There was a long pause. Pride and stubbornness struggled in Harry Wharton's breast against his better sense.

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which urged him to follow the excellent advice of Mauly. His better sense won.

"You're right, Mauly! I'll do it, and put my pride in my pocket! If they don't play up—"

"They will!" said Mauleverer, with calm conviction. "Take it from me! I know they'll be glad."

"I'll try it on!"

"That's right, old bean," said Lord Mauleverer, greatly relieved. "Go in and win, old fellow! And go at once! Strike the jolly old iron while it's hot, you know! Come on!"

Wharton might have hesitated, even with his resolution taken; but the schoolboy earl caught his arm, and led him out of the study. He gave him a push in the direction of Study No. 13.

"Go it!" he said.

Harry Wharton nodded, and went up the passage. And Lord Mauleverer, the clouds gone from his noble brow, strolled down the Remove staircase, with a cheery smile on his face.

Wharton went slowly up the passage.

His mind was made up.

Billy Bunter was still there, and he gave the captain of the Remove a fat grin as he came along. Wharton did not heed him. He stopped at the door of Study No. 13, from which the buzz of voices came as vociferously as ever. For a moment, then, he hesitated.

It is well said that he who hesitates is lost.

In that moment of hesitation Bob Cherry's powerful voice came clearly from the buzz in the crowded study.

"We're done with Wharton—done with him for good! It's no good talking—we're done with him, and that's that!"

Wharton stood quite still.

He did not touch the door.

Those words, from the study, seemed to strike him like a blow.

His face whitened.

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter. The Owl of the Remove had heard also.

Wharton did not heed, or even hear, that unmusical cachinnation. He stood still, with a surge of bitterness in his heart that was too deep for words, and then turned and walked back to his own study, his face hardening like iron as he went.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Putting It Plain!

BOB CHERRY thumped on the table in Study No. 13 to lend emphasis to his remarks—which were emphatic enough.

There was a murmur of assent from most of the fellows in the study, ten or twelve in number. Study No. 13 was crowded—all the leading spirits of the Form were there, excepting its captain. Most of them were in agreement with Bob; indeed, if there was one face that expressed doubt, there was only one—that of Frank Nugent.

"We're done with Wharton!" repeated Bob Cherry. "What's the good of beating about the bush?"

"None at all!" said Herbert Vernon-Smith, with a nod.

"The beatfulness about the esteemed bush is not the proper caper," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "So far as the absurd game of football is concerned, we are donefully finished with the ludicrous Wharton."

"That's what I mean, of course!" grunted Bob. "We're talking football, ain't we? This meeting isn't here to discuss our private rows."

"Hardly!" grinned the Bounder.

"We're not pally with Wharton now," went on Bob. "But if we were still the

best pals in the world, I should say the same. Wharton's gated for the whole term, for punching Loder of the Sixth in the eye. He can't get to any match that's played away—half the fixtures! He can't even play in matches at home, unless Quelch goes easy with him about detention. And as he spends most of his time in ragging Quelch, and getting his jolly old back up, Quelch isn't likely even to let him out of the Form-room for home matches. In fact, as Wharton's too proud to ask, Quelch won't! That's that."

"Quite!" said the Bounder, with another nod.

"A football captain who doesn't play in any of the matches isn't the football captain we want!" said Bob. "The thing's silly on the face of it."

"We're all agreed about that," said Frank Nugent. "But if Wharton was let off somehow—"

"That's rot, Frank! He doesn't even want to be let off; he won't take favours from Quelch. He's got his back up and wants to keep it up! Far as I can see, he doesn't care twopence about the matches, so long as he can get on with his feud against Quelch."

Frank Nugent sighed. He had to admit that it was true; his wayward chum had taken the bit between his teeth.

"We've got to get a new captain!" went on Bob. "What's the good of gammoning about it? I hope no fellow here thinks I'm saying this because Wharton's rowed with me. He's rowed with all his friends except old Mauly—and that's because, I suppose, a fellow simply can't row with Mauly. With Wharton kept out of every match, whether it's his own fault or not, we've got to make up our minds to elect a new skipper."

"Hear, hear!" said Peter Todd.

"Nobody here is down on Wharton," said the Bounder smoothly. "He's rather a hot-headed ass; but he's had injustice, and it sticks. My belief is that he was more than justified in punching Loder that time. But that's neither here nor there. Right or wrong, he's out of all the matches, and for a fellow to keep out of all the matches, and carry on as captain of football, is not sense."

"I should think Wharton would see that!" remarked Squiff.

"He's offered to resign!" said Frank Nugent quickly.

"Well, yes! But—"

"Nobody wanted him to resign, so long as there was a chance of getting him in the games," said Johnny Bull. "He doesn't speak to me now, but I'd vote for him for skipper all the same, if he was free to carry on. But he's not—and so long as he chooses to keep on his feud with Quelch, he won't be! We've got to face it."

"Grasp the jolly old nettle!" said the Bounder. There was a gleam in Smithy's eyes. More than one fellow was aware, or at least guessed, that the Bounder was ready to stand forward as Wharton's successor, if the present captain of the Remove was dropped.

But that was an ambition that was not likely to be realised. Herbert Vernon-Smith had had his chance once in the captaincy; and had made, as he had confessed himself, an "unholy muck" of the job. Very few of the Remove were disposed to give him another trial.

"Well, if we're agreed about it—" said Bob, glancing round.

"We are!" said Peter Todd.

"Nothing else in it!"

"I think—" said Nugent. He paused. "Look here, I think Wharton

ought to have another chance! If he's dropped, we shan't get as good a Form captain anywhere else."

"There are other pebbles on the jolly old beach!" drawled the Bounder.

"Rot!" said Bob. "Franky's right there! Wharton's our man, whether he's got his back up with his old pals or not, if he was free to play."

"Well, then, if he could square it somehow with Quelch, it would be all right," said Frank.

The Bounder laughed.

"That's likely!" he said.

"The likeliness is not terrific," remarked Hurree Singh, with a shake of his dusky head.

"Give him the chance," said Frank.

"Wharton knows as well as we do, that

"Come on, then!" he exclaimed. "Let's go to Wharton in a body and put it to him. One fellow had better be spokesman. Smithy, as vice-captain—"

"Smithy's pretty sure to put his back up," said Johnny Bull. "Linley's a tactful chap."

Mark Linley grinned ruefully.

"I'm head boy of the Remove now, in Wharton's place," he said. "I'm afraid he doesn't like it—I'd better not speak to him."

"Oh, rats!" growled Peter Todd. "Leave it to me, then—I'll put it to him. Anyhow, let's get on with it."

The meeting broke up, and crowded into the passage.

Billy Bunter grinned at them as they came crowding out.

His face was calm and hard, and there was a glint like cold steel in his eyes.

The words he had heard at the door of Study No. 13 were still echoing in his mind—and his heart! He did not know—he could not know—that Bob Cherry had been speaking of him only and solely in connection with football matters. That did not even cross his mind.

He had told himself that he had been a fool to listen to Mauleverer—a well-meaning ass! He had been a fool to think of bridging the gulf that had opened between him and his former friends. They were done with him—he had Bob's words for that—and he was done with them! It was in this mood that the Removites found him.



"You're the right man, Toddy," said Bunter. "You've simply got to put up for the captaincy, and you'll get in. Looks ain't everything, old chap." "What!" cried Peter Todd. "You may be a bit of a freak in some ways," continued the fat junior, "but a Form captain ain't elected on his looks, Toddy. Don't you mind that!"

he can't carry on as skipper under permanent detention. If we put it to him, he may chuck up his feud with Quelch."

Bob Cherry rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"Blessed if I like talking to him at present," he said. "More likely to get one's head snapped off than anything else."

"Well, we want to keep him if we can—"

"Right as rain!" agreed Bob. "If there's a chance that the chap may see sense, and stop playing the giddy ox, I'm ready to jump at it. I don't think there is—I think, as I've said, that we're done with Wharton, so far as football is concerned. But let's try it on, if you like."

The Bounder smiled sarcastically, and was silent. But all the other fellows in the study assented at once.

Bob Cherry jumped up.

"I say, you fellows—" he began.

But nobody had any time to waste on Bunter. They marched along the Remove passage towards Study No. 1, leaving the fat Owl grinning.

The door of Study No. 1 was closed. Frank Nugent opened it, and the numerous deputation crowded in the doorway and round it. Harry Wharton was finishing the imposition that Lord Mauleverer had interrupted. He went on writing, his head bent; and the crowd of Removites had a view of the top of his head across the table. He did not raise it.

Some of the fellows frowned. This sort of contemptuous treatment was not likely to placate them. Wharton, obviously, knew they were there, but did not appear to think them worthy of notice.

"Harry—" began Frank Nugent.

The captain of the Remove looked up.

"Did you speak to me, Nugent?" he asked very distinctly.

"You know I did," said Frank, flushing.

"I'm Harry to my friends!" said Wharton pointedly.

Nugent's flush deepened to crimson, and he stood silent. Even his kind and patient temper was not proof against this. But he checked the angry words that rose to his lips, and said nothing.

Johnny Bull gave an expressive snort. "If that's the sort of thing we've come here for—" he began.

"Leave the talkfulness to the esteemed Toddy, my idiotic Johnny!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

Johnny Bull gave another snort, and then was silent. Peter Todd took up the tale.

"We've come here, Wharton—" he commenced.

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"I can see that!"
 "To put it to you plain! You're captain of the Remove—which means captain of football! You're standing out of all the matches. We can't carry on, on those lines."

"You see that, old bean," said Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior, amicably. "We don't want to lose you—but—"

"Quite!" assented Wharton.

"Get right with Quelch, and we'll all be glad for you to carry on," said Toddy. "Quelch isn't a bad old bean; though you seem to think, this term, that he's a sort of jolly old demon out of a pantomime. If you choose to toe the line like any other chap, he v'll come round. Stop ragging Quelch—stop cheeking the prefects—stop playing the goat generally—and you'll get off detention, and—"

"And everything will be gardenfully lovely!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh solemnly.

"I see!" said Wharton calmly. "This is a deputation of the Form to put it to me. You want an answer?"

"Sort of!" agreed Toddy.

"Well, I see as well as you do that a man who doesn't play in the games can't carry on as football captain. I've offered to resign."

"Nobody wants that!" said Squiff. "We want you to play."

"That's impossible! I'm detained for the term! If Quelch would let me off, for a single word, I wouldn't speak a single word," said Harry Wharton deliberately. "Quelch is down on me this term, for no reason—"

"That's rot!"

"Possibly! But that's my opinion! I'm up against Quelch, and I'm going to give him all the trouble I can! He's set out to get me sacked from Greyfriars—and I've set out to stop him, and to make him sorry for himself! I won't give in an inch, to Quelch, the Head, the prefects, or anybody else! I know you've been pow-wow-ing in Cherry's study—and I can see that you've made up your minds! Well, I'm not kicking! I resign!"

"If you'd do the sensible thing—"

said Bob.

"Shut the door after you, Cherry."

"Wha-a-t!"

"Shut the door!"

"Is that all you've got to say?" asked Bob Cherry, breathing hard and deep. "Well, no! Get on the other side of it first."

Bob Cherry looked at him. The expression on his face was so extremely expressive, that Mark Linley quietly took hold of his arm and pulled him out of the doorway. The rest of the fellows exchanged glances. There were few of them who were not intensely angry with the captain of the Remove at that moment.

"I have some lines to finish!" said Wharton carelessly. "If you fellows have done—"

"I'm done, for one!" said Toddy shortly.

"My esteemed and idiotic Wharton—" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Wharton recommenced writing Latin lines.

"Let's have this clear, Wharton," said Vernon-Smith. "You've resigned from the captaincy?"

"I've said so!"

"Well, that's that, then!" said the Bounder.

"That's that!" agreed Wharton. "Go in and win, Smithy! Or Linley—dear old Quelch would be pleased to see his dear head boy captain of the Form! I think Cherry may be rather keen on it, too! Squiff's the best man for the job, if you want my opinion—which, of course, you don't! Anyhow, I'm done with it—and I want to finish my lines!"

His pen scratched again.

Nothing more was said. The juniors withdrew from the study, and Wharton was left to finish his lines.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Bunter's Bright Idea!

"YOU'RE the man, Toddy!"

Billy Bunter spoke with enthusiasm.

Peter Todd, sitting on the study table in Study No. 7, had a thoughtful look. It was settled now that there was to be a new election in the Remove; and Peter Todd was of opinion that if the Form wanted a new captain, and a really good one, they need not look much farther than Study No. 7 in the Remove. He was thinking it over when Bunter butted in. Bunter, apparently, guessed what was occupying Peter's mind.

"Eh?" said Toddy, looking up.

"The very man!" said Bunter, with conviction. "Wharton was no good really—anyhow, he's chucked! Toddy, old man, I'm going to vote for you, and if the fellows don't notice, I'll put up both hands and count two for you, old chap."

"You fat sweep!" said Toddy ungratefully.

"Oh, really, Toddy! A fellow can stretch a point for a pal—and such a pal as you! You see, you've simply got to put up, Toddy, and got to get in! Can't you see that you're cut out for the job?"

Peter Todd stared at his fat study-mate. He was quite of Bunter's opinion, as a matter of fact. But he was surprised to hear all this enthusiasm from the fat Owl. He had never noticed before that William George Bunter admired him so much. He had never respected Bunter's opinion on any subject before—now he could not help thinking that W. G. B., after all, was not such a fool as he looked.

"You're the man!" said Bunter. "Take it from me, Toddy! I fancy

all the fellows will think so, too. You're a real prize-packet, Toddy! Looks ain't everything, old chap."

"What?"

"You may be a bit of a freak in some ways," continued Bunter. "But a Form captain ain't elected on his looks, Toddy! Don't you mind that."

Peter gazed still more fixedly at Bunter.

Bunter, evidently, was bent on ingratiating himself with Toddy. He had his own inimitable way of doing it.

"I'm going to work hard to get you in, Toddy," went on Bunter. "I shall use all my influence in the Form! I'm backing you up through thick and thin. Dash it all, I can stand by a pal who stands by me. We'll talk it over, after I've done my lines, old chap, what? You'll lend me a hand with the lines, won't you, Toddy? Only fifty, and I'll do ten myself! There!"

"You fat villain!" said Peter Todd, in measured tones. He understood now the cause of Billy Bunter's enthusiasm. "You can write your lines yourself, and go and eat coco."

"Oh, really, Toddy! I say, Quelch told me to take them in at six, and it's a quarter to now. Lend me a hand—"

"I'll lend you a foot!" said Peter, slipping from the table.

Billy Bunter retreated to the door. A foot was not what he wanted, though no doubt what he deserved.

"I—I say, Toddy, if you don't back me up, you can't expect me to back you up, you know," expostulated Bunter. "Here, keep off, you beast!" Bunter backed out of the study. "Look here, you rotter, if you think I'm going to back you up in the election, you're jolly well mistaken, see? What would be the good? Think anybody would vote for a weird freak like you, Toddy? Yah!"

Bunter departed hastily without waiting for an answer. He slammed the door and rolled up the passage.

"Beast!" he murmured.

Bunter was rather in a fix. Fifty lines had to be handed in to Mr. Quelch by six. There was barely time to get them done, if Bunter had thought of doing them. But he had not thought of that resource.

After a little cogitation, the fat junior rolled to Study No. 4, opened the door, and blinked in. He heard the Bounder's voice as he opened the door.

"Wharton's down and out now! Look here, Reddy, I'm jolly well going to pull it off somehow. I've got a good chance, I think."

"Quite good, Smithy," answered Tom Redwing. "A good many fellows will vote for you, I'm sure of that. Little me, for one."

"I say, you fellows—"

"Cut!" said the Bounder briefly.

"I say, I've just looked in to tell you I'm going to vote for you in the Form election, Smithy," said Bunter. "You're the man, you know—the very man we want. I thought I'd tell you."

"Thanks. Cut!"

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Shut the door!"

"Look here, Smithy, if you can't be civil to a chap, you can't expect a chap's vote! I say, I've got some lines—"

"The election won't be till the end of the week," said Vernon-Smith coolly, "and when it comes off, I'll tip you a currant bun to vote for me."

"Why, you beast—"

"Now cut!"

"Well, you rotter!" gasped Bunter, while Tom Redwing chuckled. "I can tell you this, Smithy—if you don't help

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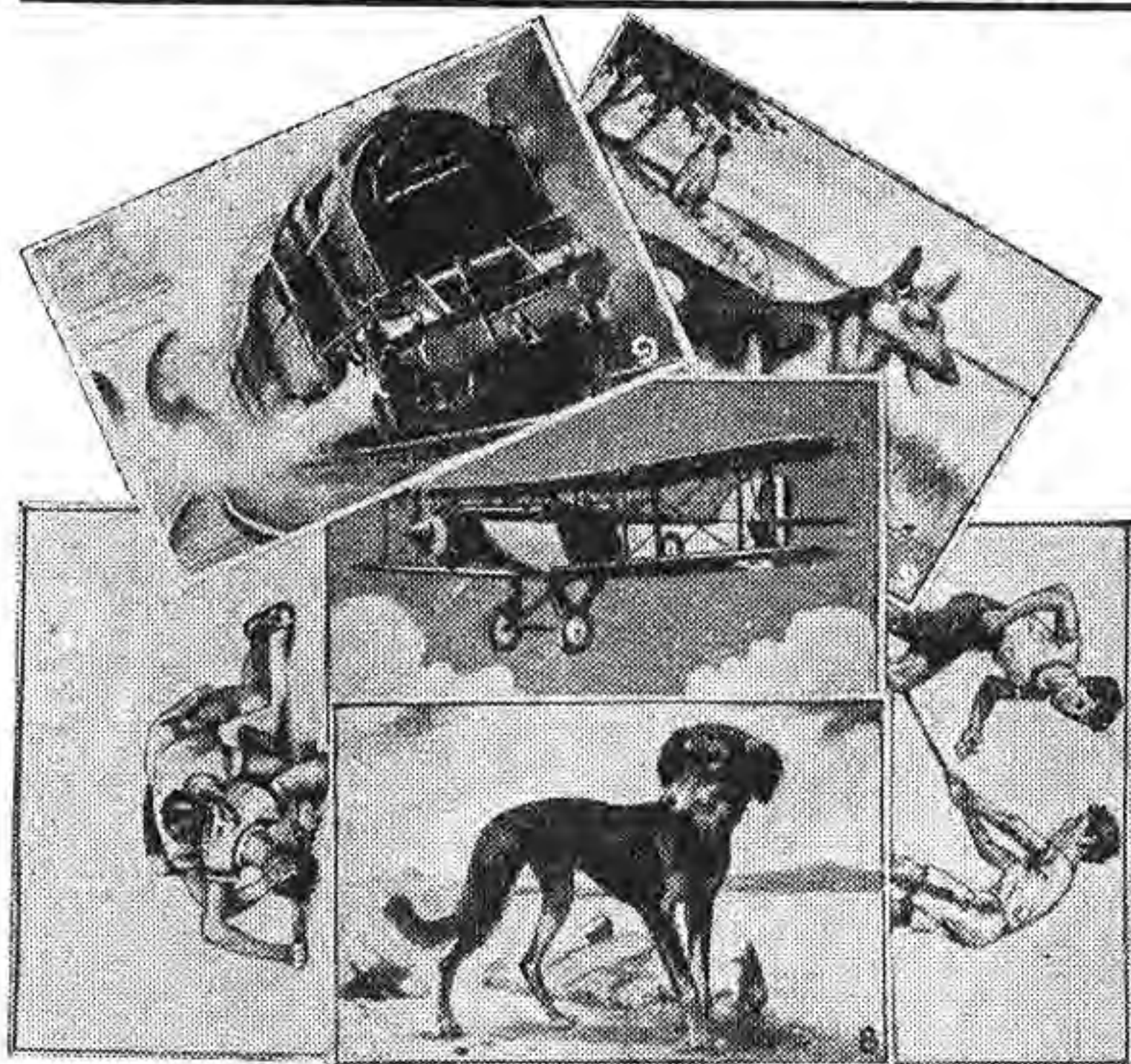
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me out with my lines, I jolly well shan't vote for you. I mean that!"

"Not for a currant bun?" grinned the Bounder.

"No!" roared Bunter.

"Then I'll make it a doughnut!"

"You cheeky ass—"

"Shut that door after you."

"That does it!" snorted Bunter. "I can tell you, we don't want a smoky blighter for Form captain—fellow who breaks bounds, and backs horses like Loder of the Sixth! I shall turn you down, Smithy! Can't expect a decent chap to vote for you."

And Bunter slammed the door of Study No. 4, and went.

He dropped in next at Study No. 14. That study belonged to Johnny Bull, Squiff, and Fisher T. Fish. Squiff was there, and Sampson Quincy Ifley Field, of New South Wales, was the man Bunter wanted to see.

"Squiff, old bean," said Bunter affably. "You heard what Wharton said when the fellows saw him in his study?—he said you were the best man for the job. I'm going to vote for you in the election."

"I don't mind," said Squiff cheerily. "If I put up, you can roll up and vote if you like! Don't mind me!"

"Oh, really, Field! Look here, I've got some lines to do for Quelch—"

"Better go and do them!" suggested the Australian junior.

"I want a fellow to help me out! Look here, old chap, one good turn deserves another. If I vote for you in the election, I think you ought to help me out, what?"

"Pleased!" answered Squiff.

He made a stride across the study, caught the fat Owl by his collar, and, with a swing of his muscular arm, swept him into the passage.

Bump!

Bunter sat down there with a loud concussion.

"Ooooh!" he gasped. "You silly idiot! Wharrer you up to?"

"Helping you out!" answered Squiff.

"Didn't you ask me to help you out?"

"You silly chump!" gasped Bunter.

"I didn't mean that—"

"I did!" answered Squiff, and he went back into Study No. 14, and closed the door.

The fat junior staggered up.

"Beast!" he roared, through the key-hole. "I jolly well won't vote for you now, see? Yah! Go and eat coke! Yah! Beast!"

After which, Bunter rolled away rather hastily down the passage. He stopped at the door of Study No. 3, which was open, catching sight of Robert Donald Ogilvy in the study.

"I say, Ogilvy, old fellow—" he began. "I say, there's going to be a Form election this week. Take my tip, and put up. I'll vote for you. You're the man—the very man! What we really want in the Remove is a Scotchman for captain. You see that?"

Ogilvy stared.

"I mean it!" declared Bunter. "I say, old chap, I've got some lines to do. Lend me a hand with my lines, and I'll use all my influence to get you elected on Saturday—I—I say—wharrer you going to do with that poker, you beast—"

Without delaying to ascertain precisely what Ogilvy intended to do with the poker, Bunter rolled away. The first stroke of six sounded from the distance, and the Owl of the Remove gave a snort. It was too late now for the lines to be done; and Bunter had to repair to his Form master's study with an excuse instead of an impot—which was likely to result in the lines being doubled.

"Beasts!" groaned Bunter.

He rolled away down the stairs, and repaired to Masters' Studies. On his way to Mr. Quelch, Bunter revolved in his fat mind whether he should tell that

gentleman that he had been working so hard at Latin grammar that he had had no time for lines, or whether he had done the lines and his study-mate had inadvertently used them to light the fire with. He was prepared to make either statement—or any other—if there was a chance of getting away with it. But Henry Samuel Quelch was rather a suspicious man—where Bunter was concerned, at least. Bunter doubted whether he would take a fellow's word—rotten as it was to doubt a fellow's word. He had not made up his fat mind by the time he arrived at Quelch's study.

He tapped, and entered, and found the study vacant. Quelch was not there. Bunter grunted angrily. Quelch's absence would not have mattered had he had his lines with him, he would only have had to leave them on Quelch's desk. But he could not, of course, leave an excuse on Quelch's desk.

"Beast?" murmured Bunter.

He decided to wait for Quelch. Blinking about the study with his usual inquisitiveness, he discerned a paper lying on the desk, with which Mr. Quelch had evidently been recently engaged. It was not an interesting paper—to Bunter. It was an exercise in Latin deponent verbs—a specially prepared exercise—and a very stiff one. It almost made Bunter's head ache to look at it. But he grinned. He knew what it was—a detention task prepared for Harry Wharton. Wharton was under detention for the term—and every half-holiday a special task was set him, to keep him usefully occupied in the Form-room from half-past two until five. That was Harry Wharton's punishment for having punched Loder of the Sixth—a light punishment in the opinion of the masters, though heavy enough from the point of view of a schoolboy.

"Oh crumbs!" murmured Bunter, as he blinked at the paper. "The old

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bean's making him sit up, and no mistake."

There was no doubt that Mr. Quelch had a very bitter antipathy towards the rebel of his Form. Probably, however, he was unconscious of the fact that it caused him to set the detained junior unusually difficult tasks. That paper could have been dealt with by few fellows in the Remove—only one, Mark Linley, would have found it fairly easy. Wharton was equal to it, but he would have to go "all out" to deal with it satisfactorily.

"Poor old Wharton!" murmured Bunter. "Fancy grinding at that muck while the other fellows are playing footer! Must be an ass to keep on asking for it. I'll bet Quelch is trying to catch him—I'll bet he can't do that paper, and he will get extra detention if he makes a hash of it. I'll bet it took the old bean a jolly long time to make up that putrid paper."

Bunter gave a sudden snigger. A bright idea had flashed into his podgy brain.

Taking the Latin paper from the table, he slipped it under the cushion on the Form master's chair.

Quelch could hunt for that paper, before he handed it over to Harry Wharton on the morrow.

Serve him right, for giving Bunter lines.

Bunter chuckled.

Bunter was not a bright youth; but he was bright enough to know that, having played that brilliant trick on his Form master, he had better not let his Form master know that he had been in the study.

He waited no longer for Quelch!

After a cautious blink into the passage, to see that the coast was clear, the fat Owl rolled away.

He was grinning when he rolled into the Rag. Some of the Remove were there, and Skinner called to him:

"Hallo, fatty! What's the jolly old joke?"

"Oh! Nothing!" said Bunter promptly. "I haven't been playing any trick on old Quelch, Skinner."

"Oh, my hat!" said Skinner.

"I haven't been to his study, so I couldn't, could I?" added Bunter astutely.

Skinner chortled.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Called on the Carpet!

HARRY WHARTON had rather a tired look when he came down from Study No. 1 in the Remove, with his finished imposition in his hand. Lines, of late, had fallen on him thick as leaves in Vallombrosa of old, and they occupied a great deal of his leisure time.

Most of the fellows in the Remove took the view that he asked for what came to him; and there was no doubt that he was a thorn in the side of Henry Samuel Quelch. But Wharton, at least, seemed satisfied with the way he was going, and his friends had long given up offering sage counsel on the subject.

He had had several interruptions, but

his lines were finished at last, past the time when they should have been handed in. It was more than a quarter past six when he arrived at Mr. Quelch's study, and he, like Bunter, had been told to take in his lines at six. Likely enough, Quelch would make that a pretext for giving him more lines—in these days, the Remove master only needed a pretext; or so, at least, it seemed to Wharton.

It was rather a relief to find that Quelch was not there. Wharton smiled rather sarcastically as he laid his lines on the Form master's desk.

Quelch would find them there when he came in, and even Quelch could not guess that they had been taken in late.

Wharton left the study rather quickly, and went along to the Rag.

Bob Cherry and Johnny Bull, Frank Nugent, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were standing in a group by the fire, talking, and though they saw him come in they did not glance at him. Neither did Wharton glance at them.

All was over now between Harry Wharton and the fellows who had been his best friends. Twice the Co. had tried to bridge the gulf, and had been repulsed; and they were not trying again. And they knew nothing of Wharton's own essay that very afternoon; which was not likely to be repeated.

The breaking of an old friendship came hard to them; but there was no help for it, and that was that! And they had made up their minds to it. And Wharton also had made up his mind, with a cool and bitter determination.

He strolled across the Rag to a seat by the window, and a few minutes later Lord Mauleverer joined him there. Mauly was looking concerned. He had had a cheery conviction that the gulf had been bridged; and had rather congratulated himself on his success as a peacemaker. He could see now, however, that it was a case of "no change."

"Old bean!" murmured Mauly.

"Well?"

"Didn't it work, old chap?"

"No!"

Lord Mauleverer rubbed his nose thoughtfully.

"A fellow doesn't want to butt in, of course," he said. "But—"

"Don't, then!" said Harry Wharton quietly. "I know you mean well, Mauly; but I'd rather you steered clear! If we're going to remain friends, you'll have to let that subject drop."

Mauly looked at him.

"If you want to remain friends, that is," added Wharton bitterly. "Probably you don't. It won't do any fellow good to be friends with a chap who's got the beaks and the prefects down on him!"

"No!" said Mauly reflectively. "I suppose it won't!"

"You can chuck me as soon as you like!"

"You're not an easy man to be friends with, are you, old bean?" remarked his lordship placidly.

"Perhaps not! I'm not asking you to take the trouble."

"Too jolly proud to ask anybody anythin', ain't you?" said Mauly cheerfully. "I'm stickin' to you, all the same, old fat-head—stickin' to you like glue, or like Bunter to a

doughnut. But I'll hike off now before you row with me—never could stand rowin'."

And Lord Mauleverer ambled away, leaving Wharton frowning.

Loder of the Sixth looked in at the doorway of the Rag a little later. He glanced over the juniors, evidently in search of someone.

Skinner winked at Snoop.

"Wharton again!" he murmured.

"Ten to one, old bean!"

Skinner was right!

"Is Wharton here?" called out Loder.

"Here!" answered Wharton, rising from the window seat.

"You're wanted in your Form master's study."

"Thanks!" said Wharton sarcastically.

He sauntered to the door. Many glances followed him. Frank Nugent's lips set.

"What on earth's he done now?" he muttered.

"Asking for more!" granted Johnny Bull.

"Looks like it!" muttered Bob Cherry uneasily. "Why the dickens can't he chuck ragging old Quelch?"

"Echo answers that the whyfulness is preposterous!" sighed the Nabob of Bhanipur.

Harry Wharton left the Rag and walked along to Masters' Studies. Why he was sent for was a mystery to him this time. He was continually in trouble these unlucky days; and he did not deny that he asked for a great deal of it. But on this occasion his conscience was quite clear.

His lines had been taken in; they had been carefully written, and Quelch could not possibly know that he had been a quarter of an hour late with them. He reflected bitterly that the man who wanted to see him "sacked" from the school would not be at a loss to find some pretext for calling him on the carpet.

Skinner had declared that Quelch sat up o' nights, with a wet towel round his head, trying to think out ways of catching Wharton!

The junior's face was hard, his eyes defiant, as he entered his Form master's study. Mr. Quelch, standing by his desk, fixed a grim gimlet eye on him.

"You sent for me, sir!"

"I sent for you, Wharton, to ask you what you have done with the Latin paper I left on this desk!" said Mr. Quelch sternly.

Wharton stared at him.

"What Latin paper?" he asked.

"You can hardly have failed to see it, Wharton, as you have laid your lines on the very spot where I left it."

"There was no paper there when I placed my lines on your desk, sir."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"Wharton! I had prepared your task for your detention to-morrow afternoon. I left it here when I went to speak to Dr. Locke in his study. I returned to find your lines in the place of it!"

"Did you, sir?" said Wharton indifferently.

"I did!" said Mr. Quelch, raising his voice a little. "And I demand to know what you have done with the detention-paper!"

"I have not seen it."

"That is impossible, Wharton! You could not possibly have come to this desk to lay down your imposition without seeing it."

Wharton's lip curled.

"Very well, sir! If you do not believe me it is useless for me to say anything more."

"Did you remove that paper, Wharton?"

"No, sir."

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"Was it your intention to give me the trouble of preparing it over again by destroying it?"

"Not at all, sir."

"I cannot believe you, Wharton, as the paper is no longer here."

"Very well, sir! Is that all?" asked Wharton coolly.

"That is not all, Wharton! Will you confess what you have done with the detention paper?"

"Nothing!"

"No one else, so far as I can ascertain, has been to the study," said Mr. Quelch. "Two other boys have lines, but neither Bunter nor Vernon-Smith have brought them here. You appear to be the only boy who has been to this study during my absence, Wharton."

"Indeed, sir!" said Wharton, with cool impertinence.

"For the last time, Wharton, what have you done with the detention paper?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, his eyes glinting with anger.

"Nothing at all, sir."

Mr. Quelch picked up the cane from his table.

"Very well, Wharton!" he said, in tones of concentrated anger. "You are well aware that I cannot believe such a statement, and I am only amazed at your effrontery in making it. I shall cane you severely for destroying the detention paper and for uttering falsehoods!"

Harry Wharton stood, looking quietly and steadily at the Remove master. His face was pale with anger and indignation. Mr. Quelch pointed to a chair with the cane. Master and pupil were equally exasperated; but the idea of disobedience to a direct command on the junior's part had not crossed the master's mind. Neither did it cross Wharton's, till it came suddenly, passionately—and, without stopping to think, he turned his back on his Form master and walked out of the study.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Smithy's Tip!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH started and stared, and came quickly towards Harry Wharton.

Wharton had come away from Masters' Studies, walking quickly, his face white, his eyes burning; and the look on his face was more than enough to startle the Bounder. He was passing Smithy unseeing when the Bounder caught him by the arm.

"Wharton! For goodness' sake what's up?"

"Let me go!" muttered Harry.

He shook off the Bounder's hand and tramped on, and Vernon-Smith stared after him blankly. Then he followed.

The Bounder was not, perhaps, a very kind-hearted fellow, or much concerned about others, as a rule; and he had watched Harry Wharton's downhill progress that term rather with cynical amusement than any other feeling. He was rather concerned now, however, and he hurried after Wharton and caught his arm again.

"Look here, old bean, what's up?" he asked, in a low voice. "What the thump are you looking like that for? Is it the sack?"

There was something unusually friendly in the Bounder's tone and manner, and it had its effect on Wharton. He stopped.

"I shouldn't wonder," he answered. His voice was almost husky with passion. "I'm standing no more from Quelch—I know that! I've got to the limit—and I'm standing no more!"

"But what—is it a licking?" asked the Bounder, mystified. "Look here, man, tell a fellow what's up! Perhaps I can help—I'm cooler than you are—"

"I've refused to be licked!"

"Oh, Jemima!" ejaculated Vernon-Smith. "Wharton, old man, don't play the goat—for your own sake! Quelch is on the watch for a chance at you—every man in the Form knows that! You've got his rag out, and he's fed with you! He's watching like a tiger for a chance! Give him a chance like that, and you're done for here!"

"I don't care!"

"Take a tip from me," said Smithy earnestly. "We're not exactly pals—but I'm speaking like a pal now! Go back and take your medicine before it's too late!"

"Never," said Wharton, between his teeth.

"It's madness!"

"I don't care! I'm standing no more, I tell you!"

The Bounder looked at him. He could read the pale, passionate indignation

ANOTHER WALLET WINNER!

John Bawden, of 343, Bexhill Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea, Sussex, has been awarded a handsome pocket wallet for the following winning Greyfriars limerick:

Said Bunter: "I'm handsome, I am.
My figure is just like a ham.
I am brainy and plump,
Though Bob Cherry, the chump,
Insults me and calls me a
'clam'!"

Have you sent in your limerick yet? Follow John's example, and win a wallet!

in Wharton's face. There had been injustice—or Wharton believed that there had! Quelch was a just man—strictly and severely just—but it was possible enough that his deep prejudice against the rebel of his Form had led him into error. But resistance to authority was not a practicable proposition. The Bounder's head was cooler than Wharton's.

"You can't get away with it," he said quietly. "Have some sense, old man—don't play into the man's hands like that."

"I'm standing no more from him! I've done nothing—nothing—"

"What doe' he think you've done, then?"

"Some rot about a detention-paper taken from his study—any excuse is good enough for a tyrant like that."

"You haven't—"

"No, you ass! If I had—"

"Quite! If you haven't done what he thinks—"

"Can't you take my word?" Wharton's eyes glittered. "Are you going to call me a liar, like Quelch?"

"Keep cool!" said Smithy. "Let a fellow speak! If you haven't done what he thinks, Quelch is makin' a bloomer! Cut off to the Head!"

"The Head?" repeated Wharton.

"Yes, the Head! You've a right to appeal to the Head. If you're sure that Quelch is barking up the wrong tree—"

"Of course I'm sure, you fathead! I suppose I know whether I touched his

rotten detention-paper or not!" snapped Wharton.

"Well, then, cut off to the Head! If you didn't do it there, can't be any proof that you did; and if he's punishing you on suspicion you've got him on toast if you put it to the beak."

Wharton stared at the Bounder for a moment. Then, as he realised the excellence of Smithy's advice, he nodded and turned away. At a quickened pace he hurried away to Dr. Locke's study, and the Bounder looked after him with a grin. Smithy was a good deal of a rebel himself, though a far more cautious and wary one than Wharton. There was something entertaining to his mind in the idea of "dishing" Quelch with the beak!

There was a hurried step, and the rustle of a gown, and Smithy looked round at Mr. Quelch.

"Vernon-Smith! Has Wharton passed you?"

"Wharton! Did you say Wharton, sir?" repeated the Bounder, to gain time.

"Yes, yes! Where has he gone?"

"I'm afraid I couldn't tell you exactly, sir—"

Mr. Quelch rustled on, and the Bounder winked into space. He hoped that Wharton would have time to get to the Head before Quelch "snuffed" him.

It did not take Mr. Quelch long, however, to learn where Wharton had gone. Several fellows had seen him on his way to Dr. Locke's study. The Remove master rustled off in that direction, pale with anger. Never before had a Remove fellow, told to bend over in Quelch's study, turned his back on his Form master and walked out of the room. It had happened for the first time—and Mr. Quelch was determined that it should also be for the last time. Why Wharton had gone to the Head's study he could not imagine. But he followed him there without delay.

The Head's door was half-open; Wharton was already there. Mr. Quelch heard his voice as he rustled up.

"I have a right to appeal to you, sir, for justice!"

Mr. Quelch's lips set hard as he heard that.

Dr. Locke's voice came sharply in reply:

"Wharton! What do you mean? Do you imply—"

Mr. Quelch stepped in. It was only with a tremendous effort that he controlled his wrath, even in the majestic presence of the Head. Dr. Locke broke off with quite a startled look at the Remove master's face. Seldom or never had he seen such an expression on it before.

"I will tell you, Dr. Locke!" Mr. Quelch spoke before Wharton could utter another word. "I will tell you what this mutinous, disrespectful boy means—what he implies. I was about to punish him, sir, for destroying a detention-paper in my study, and he walked out of the study, sir—and I find that he has come to you. Apparently he indulges some extraordinary hope that his headmaster will uphold him in rebellion."

"Wharton!" Dr. Locke raised his hand. "You will return immediately to your Form master's study and submit to any punishment he may deem it suitable to inflict!"

"I've done nothing, sir," said Harry stubbornly. "Mr. Quelch says I have destroyed a detention-paper which I have never even seen."

"That is absurd, Wharton."

"It is true, sir."

"It is an untruth," said Mr. Quelch. "Wharton, be silent!"

"I will not be silent!" broke out Wharton. "Dr. Locke, I've a right to justice—every fellow has! There was no detention-paper on Mr. Quelch's desk when I went to his study to take my lines! I've never set eyes on it—I know nothing about it—nothing!"

Dr. Locke gave the junior a very penetrating look. He paused a moment or two before answering.

"Wharton! Leave my study while I speak to your Form master."

"Very well, sir!"

Wharton left the study, and shut the door. He heard Mr. Quelch's voice in acid tones, louder than usual, through the shut door.

"Not the slightest doubt—not the slightest—"

The gentler murmur of the Head's voice followed. Wharton walked down the passage. He had no desire to listen to what was said in the Head's study. Expecting, however, to be recalled, he waited at the corner of the passage. Three or four fellows came along and joined him there, among them the Bounder.

"What's the giddy verdict?" murmured Smithy.

"I don't know yet! I believe the Head thinks that Quelch has made a bloomer—he looked like it."

"Here he comes!" murmured Squiff.

The Head's door opened along the passage, and Mr. Quelch came out. He came down the passage with thunderous brow. He did not look at Wharton; he called to Squiff in passing.

"Field! Call Linley and tell him to assemble the Remove in the Form-room immediately, and to call over the names."

"Yes, sir!" said Squiff.

Mr. Quelch swept on, black as thunder, still taking no notice of Harry Wharton. The Bounder whistled softly.

"The beak's put a spoke in his wheel!" he whispered. "That looks like an inquiry."

"Looks like it," agreed Harry. "You gave me a good tip, Smithy—thanks!"

"Sure you didn't do it?" grinned the Bounder.

"Don't be an ass!"

"Well, if you didn't you've got Quelch on toast! The Head's a downy bird—I'll give you ten to one in doughnuts that he roots out the jolly old facts. And if you pull out clear you've got Quelch on toast!"

And the Bounder chuckled as he walked away towards the Form-room, greatly entertained by the prospect of any fellow getting Quelch "on toast!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

On Toast!

"I SAY, you fellows, it wasn't me, you know!" said Billy Bunter, in alarm.

"What wasn't you, ass?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Nothing—I mean, anything! I say, you fellows, do you think that beast Coker of the Fifth has told the beak about the cake?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Mark Linley, head boy of the Remove, had rounded the Form up into the Form-room, according to instructions conveyed to him from his Form master. He called over the names, and every Remove man answered. Lock-up was early in the winter term, and all the Form were in the House. They gathered in some excitement. All the fellows knew that it was Harry Wharton who was "up";

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but Billy Bunter, at least, had too many sins on his fat conscience to feel easy in his mind.

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at," grunted Bunter. "I say, Toddy, do you think Coker has said anything about that cake?"

"You podgy, pilling porpoise," answered Peter Todd. "Do you think they'd call the Form together about a silly cake?"

"Well, Coker made out that I had it, you know, because he saw it under my arm," said Bunter. "You know what a suspicious beast Coker is."

"Oh, my hat!" said Peter.

"I never had it, old chap; never even knew Coker had a cake! Besides, he kicked me, and I thought I'd jolly well snaffle his cake to make him sit up. See? If it isn't that, what are the beaks up to, Peter?"

"After Wharton, as usual, fathead!"

"Oh, that's all right, then, if you're sure!" said Bunter in great relief. "It doesn't matter about Wharton."

"Fathead!"

Billy Bunter was still not quite easy in his mind when Mr. Quelch and the Head entered the Form-room together. The trick he had played in Quelch's study had quite gone from his fat remembrance. But he was worried on the subject of the cake that was missing from a Fifth Form study. Bunter knew from sad experience how people jumped to the conclusion that he, W. G. Bunter, had had it, if tuck was missing.

Nobody else, however, was likely to suppose that the thunder in Quelch's brow, and the deep gravity that sat on the Head's, were caused by a cake being missed by Coker of the Fifth!

Plenty of fellows could see that Quelch found it hard to curb his impatience. The Head's word was law; and Quelch had a great respect for his chief. But on this occasion he was intensely exasperated by Dr. Locke taking a hand in the affair. Every Greyfriars man had a right of appeal to the Head, though it was a right seldom exercised; the headmaster upheld his staff as a matter of course. If the appeal failed, the punishment was certain to be more severe. The beak's time was not to be wasted for nothing. Most of the Remove thought that, in appealing to the Head, Wharton had simply exchanged a master's caning for a Head's flogging.

"All are here?" asked Dr. Locke, glancing over the expectant Form.

"Yes, sir!" said Mark Linley.

"Every boy who has been to Mr. Quelch's study since class will stand forward!" said Dr. Locke.

Harry Wharton stepped out before the Form. No one followed him. But Billy Bunter, in his place, quaked.

It began to dawn on his fat mind what the trouble was about. Quelch was kicking up all this fuss over a rotten detention paper which Billy Bunter had already forgotten.

Dr. Locke waited a full minute, but Harry Wharton stood alone before the Form. Mr. Quelch smiled grimly. He did not expect anyone else to step out. There was a tense silence.

"Has any other boy, beside Wharton, entered Mr. Quelch's study since class, for any reason whatsoever?" asked the Head.

There was no answer. Skinner, remembering what Bunter had said in the Rag, gave the fat Owl a quick look. Bunter gave no sign.

"You are satisfied, Mr. Quelch, that no other boy in your Form went to your study during your absence?"

"Quite, sir! No boy had any reason for doing so."

"Wharton, I understand, went there to take an imposition?"

"That is the case."

"Had any other boy in the Form lines to take in?"

"Two, sir; but they did not come to the study. I found no lines there, but Wharton's."

"Who were the boys?"

"Vernon-Smith and Bunter," said Mr. Quelch, barely able to suppress visible signs of his impatience.

"At what hour, Mr. Quelch, were the lines to be taken in?"

"At six o'clock, sir."

"Then these two boys have failed to do as directed?"

"Certainly. I shall deal with them later, sir. At the present moment we are concerned with Wharton."

"Naturally, sir, you will deal with them," said the Head urbanely. "That is a matter out of my province. But I will question the boys. Vernon-Smith!"

"Here, sir!" said the Bounder.

"You did not take your lines to your Form master's study, as directed, at six o'clock."

"No, sir; I hadn't finished them. We had a meeting in Cherry's study after class, and—"

"Your reasons may be explained to your Form master, Vernon-Smith, when Mr. Quelch deals with the matter. I am now ascertaining the facts. You did not go to the study, either to take your lines, or to proffer any excuse for not doing so."

"No, sir!"

"Very good! Bunter!"

"Oh lor'!"

"What? What did you say, Bunter?"

"N-n-nothing, sir."

"You did not take your lines to your Form master's study, Bunter?"

"N-no, sir! That beast Toddy wouldn't help me out with them! I—I mean, I never asked him—"

"Did you go to your Form master's study to offer any excuse?"

"Oh dear!" groaned Bunter.

There was a movement of quick interest in the Remove now. Mr. Quelch was observed to give a slight start. A fellow who did not take in his lines at the hour prescribed was very likely to turn up with an excuse, if he knew what was good for him. The reckless Bounder had not taken the trouble, but it was quite probable that Bunter had. Dr. Locke, who was well known at Greyfriars to be a "downy bird," had put his finger on a possibility of which Mr. Quelch had not thought. Doubtless he might have thought of it, but for his deep and bitter prejudice against the rebel of his Form. But he had not.

"I am waiting for your answer, Bunter."

"Oh crikey!"

"Stand out before the Form!"

Billy Bunter rolled out, slowly and dismally. It was absolutely rotten to be snaffled like this for a trifling thing he had forgotten, and by the beak in person!

"Did you go to Mr. Quelch's study, Bunter?" asked the Head inexorably.

"Well, sir, I—I—I thought I—I'd better explain that—that I wrote the lines, and—and Toddy used them to light the study fire with!" stammered Bunter. "Toddy's very careless in such things."

"Oh, my hat!" murmured Peter.

"You went to your Form master's study, Bunter, it appears?"

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

"Mr. Quelch was absent?"



"Wharton," said Mr. Quelch, picking up his cane, "I am going to cane you severely for destroying the detention paper and for uttering falsehoods. Bend over that chair!" Without stopping to think, Wharton turned his back on his Form-master and walked out of the study.

"I—I think so, sir, as—as he wasn't there."

Dr. Locke turned to Mr. Quelch, the expression on whose face was growing extraordinary. He did not look at Wharton, but he was conscious of the junior's sarcastic smile. It was clear now that another Removite, as well as Wharton, had been in the Form master's study during his absence.

"Mr. Quelch, it appears that Bunter as well as Wharton entered your study while it was vacant. He has admitted as much."

"Quite so, sir," Mr. Quelch spoke through closed lips. "I was not aware of it, neither do I attach any importance to the circumstance. Bunter could have had no object in destroying a detention paper intended for Wharton."

"I will question him, however. Bunter, did you see a detention paper lying on your Form master's desk?"

"I—I couldn't help seeing it, sir!" gasped Bunter. "It was right under my eyes, sir. I wasn't looking round at things, or—or anything—"

"Did you destroy it?"

"Oh crikey! No, sir!" exclaimed Bunter. "I—I—I shouldn't have had the nerve, sir. I—I wouldn't, sir."

"Did you touch it at all?"

"I—I—I might have touched it, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"Did you remove it from the desk?"

"I—I—I might have—have moved it a—little way, sir!" groaned the wretched Owl. "I—the fact is, sir, I—I thought it might—might blow away, and—and I thought I—I'd put it under something for—for safety! I—I wasn't going to hide it for a joke on Mr. Quelch, sir. I—I wouldn't dream of anything of the kind."

"What did you place it under, Bunter?"

"The—the cushion on Mr. Quelch's chair, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"Bless my soul! Do you mean that you hid the detention-paper in Mr. Quelch's own study, and that it is there now?" exclaimed the Head.

"I—I suppose so, sir, unless—unless Mr. Quelch has—has found it—"

"Linley, go to your Form master's study and bring any paper that you may find concealed under the cushion on Mr. Quelch's chair!"

Mark Linley left the Form-room. There was breathless excitement in the Remove now. The Bouncer winked at Wharton, who smiled. Mr. Quelch's face was growing redder and redder, till it was as red as a freshly boiled beetroot. The Remove master knew now that he had made a mistake; that he had condemned the boy he disliked, hurriedly and unjustly.

There was a tense silence till Mark Linley came back. He came with a Latin paper in his hand which he handed to Dr. Locke.

"Is this the detention task, Mr. Quelch? Please look at it," said the Head, in a low, quiet voice.

Mr. Quelch hardly needed to look at it; he knew what it was. But he looked, and nodded.

"That is it, sir!" he said, almost inaudibly.

"You found this under the cushion on Mr. Quelch's chair in his study, Linley?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where it was placed by this foolish boy, Bunter, for an absurd practical joke," said the Head, with a stern glance at the dismayed Owl. "It

appears, Mr. Quelch, that Wharton is exonerated?"

Mr. Quelch gasped.

"Yes, sir. It—it certainly appears so."

There was a brief pause. Dr. Locke was far too tactful a headmaster to call a master over the coals in the presence of his boys. But nobody in the Remove doubted that it was to come later. Quelch had made a mistake—such a mistake as a Form master was expected not to make. Obviously he had been hurried into it by his prejudice against a certain member of his Form.

"So far as Wharton is concerned, therefore, I think we may regard the matter as being at an end, Mr. Quelch?" said the Head, at length.

"I—I think so, sir," said Mr. Quelch, in a stifled voice.

"I should recommend dealing with this foolish boy, Bunter, with some severity. But that is a matter entirely in your hands, sir. I think the Form may be dismissed now."

The Form was dismissed. At a sign from Dr. Locke the Remove master walked back to his study with him. What Mr. Quelch was to listen to there, the juniors did not know; but they guessed that he would not enjoy it. But if Mr. Quelch did not enjoy his interview with the Head, still less did Billy Bunter enjoy his interview with Quelch, which followed. Seldom had the Remove master laid it on so hard; and for long, long afterwards, deep groans were heard proceeding from No. 7 in the Remove, where the fat Owl mourned and could not be comforted.

"Well," said Skinner, in the Rag, "you've had Quelch on toast, Wharton—you've done him, and done him brown. But if I'd been in your shoes I'd rather have taken the licking. He will take it out of you somehow."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Pon Causes Trouble!

"GREYFRIARS cads!" murmured Cecil Ponsonby, of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe School. "I'm goin' to make 'em jump!"

"Chuck it, you ass!" breathed Gadsby. "That's old Popper with them."

"Make him jump, too!"

"Chuck it, I tell you!" whispered Monson.

"I'm goin' to chuck it—at that crowd!" grinned Pon.

It was Wednesday afternoon, which was a half-holiday at Highcliffe as at Greyfriars. Pon & Co. were taking a walk abroad, chiefly occupied in looking for the mischief which Satan finds for idle hands to do.

The Fifth of November was close at hand; which was no doubt the reason why Pon was in possession of a "jumping" cracker; one of those fearsome contrivances which bang and bang and bang when once touched off.

The festive Pon wanted to make the very best use of that cracker—which to Pon meant startling some unguarded person out of his wits with it. His friends had barely restrained him from exploding it under a horse's nose on the Courtfield road—a proceeding which, if Pon had carried it out, might have made him acquainted with the inside of Courtfield Police Station.

Now Pon saw a chance to put that cracker to the very best possible use. Gadsby and Monson objected in vain.

The three Highcliffians had been sauntering down Oak Lane, between Courtfield Common and the lands of Popper Court, when they sighted four Greyfriars fellows coming along, and promptly dodged out of sight behind trees and bushes. The four were Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, Hurree Singh, and Frank Nugent. Had there been only one or two of them, Pon & Co. would have enjoyed a rag; but they did not want to risk a rag with the odds against them. So they took cover.

The Greyfriars fellows stopped in the lane, where a path branched off through Sir Hilton Popper's estate, and evidently they were considering whether to take that path. It was rather a dubious proceeding, for Sir Hilton Popper disliked trespassers on his land, and refused to recognise the ancient right-of-way which had existed from time immemorial. And as Sir Hilton was a governor of Greyfriars School, he had to be given his head, like an obstinate horse.

The four were debating the point, while Pon & Co. watched them through the bushes, when there was a clatter of hoofs on the path, and a horseman came trotting along towards the lane. And as they recognised the lord of Popper Court, the Greyfriars fellows were rather glad that they had not stepped over the forbidden border.

Sir Hilton gave them a suspicious glance from under his shaggy, grizzled brows. He pulled in his horse—not without some difficulty, for the animal was fresh, and it was Sir Hilton's way to use his riding-whip not wisely but too well. With a clatter and a jingle,

he pulled in; and the Greyfriars fellows capped him respectfully. But their respectful salute did not banish the frown from Sir Hilton's brow. He suspected—more than suspected—that they had been about to step on his land, when he came up. And Sir Hilton's land was absolutely sacred, and not to be stepped upon by common mortals. As the juniors had not yet committed that dire offence, even the irascible old baronet could hardly call them to account for it. Still, he was suspicious and irritated.

"What are you doing here?" he grunted.

"Taking a little walk, sir," answered Bob Cherry affably. "Nice afternoon for a walk, sir, for the time of year, I mean."

"The niceness is truly terrific, honoured sahib!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh solemnly.

"Huh!" grunted Sir Hilton.

He gave his reins a jerk, and his horse gave a jump. The four Greyfriars fellows backed away a little. There was no doubt that that horse was very fresh, and its rider did not seem to have it in very good control.

It was at this precise moment that the brilliant idea occurred to Cecil Ponsonby to make the Greyfriars fellows jump with his repeating cracker, and the old baronet jump along with them.

Behind the bushes, unseen and unsuspected there, Pon drew the firework from his pocket with one hand, and a box of wax vestas with the other.

Gadsby caught his arm.

"You silly ass!" he whispered. "Chuck it, I tell you! They'll be after us like a shot."

"We can get away fast enough, fat-head! Let go my arm!"

"If old Popper sees us—"

"He won't see us! I fancy he'll have trouble enough with that gee, when the cracker goes off, without worrying about us!" chuckled Pon. "Old Popper fancies himself on a gee, but he can't ride for toffee, really."

"Look here, it's too risky!" muttered Monson.

"Oh, rats!"

Ponsonby was not to be dissuaded.

It seemed to him safe enough. The bushes screened the three from sight; the common was behind them, and they could cut off at top speed immediately the cracker was thrown. And any malicious trick was good enough for Pon so long as it was safe.

He scratched the vesta, and touched it to the fuse of the firework. There was a sputter of sparks.

"Huh!" Sir Hilton was grunting. "I've no doubt—no doubt whatever, by gad, that you were going to trespass here! Take care! Huh!"

There was a circling of sparks in the air as the cracker flew from beyond the bushes.

It landed on the ground between the Greyfriars fellows and the lord of Popper Court, fizzing.

"What the thump—" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

Bang!

"Good gad!" gasped Sir Hilton.

"What—good gad!"

Bang, bang!

The Greyfriars fellows jumped, as Pon had expected. The sudden explosion, almost at their feet, was enough to make them jump. Sir Hilton jumped, too, and lost his stirrups. And the horse jumped—which was the most serious of all. Pon, perhaps, had not thought of that. Or perhaps he did not care, for he was a reckless young rascal. The horse jumped wildly, almost unseating his rider.

"Great Scott!" gasped Johnny Bull. "Look out, you fellows!"

The juniors crowded back from the wildly curvetting horse and the lashing hoofs. Sir Hilton dragged fiercely on the reins.

Bang, bang!

The cracker jumped as it exploded, as jumping crackers are wont to do. It jumped under the horse, and banged again and again. There was a shrill squeal of affright from Sir Hilton's horse, and it dashed away at a wild gallop. The tossing head tore the reins from the baronet's hands, and he clung on to the saddle frantically.

Bang, bang! The cracker roared behind the frantic horse. With a terrific clatter of hoofs, it tore away down the lane towards the Courtfield road.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob. "After him!"

The Greyfriars fellows rushed down the lane after the runaway horse. Sir Hilton was tossing and swaying in the saddle, in danger every moment of being tossed from the horse's back. Bob Cherry & Co. rushed after him, to lend aid when he landed. They hoped he would land before he reached the high road, for it was blood-curdling to think of what might happen if the runaway horse got out on the Courtfield road among the motor-cars.

From the screen of bushes the Highcliffe trio stared with white faces. Gadsby and Monson were thoroughly frightened, and even Ponsonby realised that his malicious recklessness might have terrible results.

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Gadsby. "You've done it now, Pon, you fool! That old ass will break a leg as likely as not."

"Or his neck," said Monson, between his chattering teeth.

Ponsonby set his lips.

"Cut off!" he said. "We can't help—Cut off! Don't stand gabbling there, you funky duffers! Get away while the goin's good! Nobody's seen us!"

"But—but old Popper—"

"Cut off, you fool!" snarled Ponsonby.

And Ponsonby set the example, streaking away across the common at top speed; and his comrades followed him fast. As Pon said, they could not help. And if there was a serious accident, they could only hope that their part in it would not come to light.

Meanwhile, Bob Cherry & Co. raced down the lane after the runaway horse. Sir Hilton, swaying wildly, was still clinging on, and fast as the juniors ran they were left rapidly behind by the galloping animal. It was from a distance in the rear that they saw the horse shoot out into the Courtfield road, utterly out of control, and taking no heed whatever of the frantic rider on its back.

A car came roaring along from Courtfield, and the juniors held their breath as they looked. The car honked and slowed, and the galloping horse swung in the other direction, and tore away along the road towards Greyfriars. It was gone from their sight in another moment or two.

"Well, my hat!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Poor old Popper—"

"He shouldn't ride, if he can't handle a horse!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Fathead! It was that cracker did it!"

"But who?" exclaimed Nugent.

"Goodness knows! Some dangerous
(Continued at foot of next page.)

"LINESMAN CALLING!"



Our Soccer expert is at the service of all "Magnetites." If you've a footer problem wants solving, write to him at the Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4, and then watch for his reply in the MAGNET.

IN the season before last, West Bromwich Albion won promotion and won the English Cup as well. Attention has been focused upon them again this season because they have done so well in their First Division games. Some of my readers have been watching the Albion very closely, too.

"I went to see West Bromwich play the other day," writes a boy from the Midlands, "and it struck me that some of their methods were different from those of other teams I have seen. Can you give us some views on the Albion's methods?"

I always find the story of football tactics interesting, and am glad to respond to the suggestion that I should say a few things about the match-winning methods of the Albion. These "Throatles" are particularly intriguing from a tactical point of view, because, as my watchful reader suggests, their ideas differ from the majority of the first-class teams.

A NEW METHOD OF DEFENCE!

The essential difference boils down to this:

The wing half-backs of the Albion pay special attention to the doings of the outside wing men of the other side, whereas, in most teams, the wing half-backs tackle, mostly, the inside wing opponents and leave the outside men to the full-back.

There are lots of people who say that the Albion's method is all wrong, but the fact remains that the Albion methods have proved quite successful. Personally, I think that for the majority of teams the general method of defensive covering is the better, but tactics depend on the players who carry them out, and Albion's players have carried out their tactical ideas well. Their officials argue that in these days attacks are apt to develop most quickly, and most frequently, along the wings. Therefore, if the wing half-backs are sent to tackle the outside wing

men they are in a good position to scotch the attacks before they have reached the dangerous stage.

Again, the Albion tactics mean that the full-backs keep nearer to goal, and it is undoubtedly true that opponents find it very difficult to find the way to the net guarded by the Albion goalkeeper.

COLOUR CLASHING!

ISN'T it strange that, generally speaking, there is so little variety in the colours of the shirts worn by the players of the big football clubs? There are several teams which play in white shirts; several have adopted red as their colour; but very few have real novelty.

One would have imagined that as clubs have to change when their colours clash with those of opponents that an effort would be made to have such distinctive shirts that no clashing would occur.

Perhaps the real reason why there is so little variety lies in the fact that there is a lot of superstition attached to a football club's colours. There is a deep-rooted idea that it is unlucky to change, and, of course, most of the clubs wear the colours which have been theirs for years and years.

By way of example, Notts Forest and Arsenal are two clubs whose players wear red shirts. In the old days when the Arsenal club was founded the Notts Forest club gave the original Arsenal players some cast-off jerseys. So Arsenal, like Notts Forest, have worn red ever since. An idea has been put forward that the best way out of this colour clashing question would be for the home teams always to wear one colour of jersey, and the visiting team another colour—say, red for the home teams and blue for the away teams always. The clubs in general, however, have never shown any willingness to make such a big colour change.

ONE NEVER KNOWS?

WHILE we are talking about colours, I was rather amused the other day to learn that the Darwen players are this season wearing the same sort of stockings as those worn by the players of the Arsenal club. You may remember that last season Darwen did very well in the Cup competition, and, eventually getting through the qualifying rounds, were lucky enough to be drawn against Arsenal at Highbury.

Out of that match the Darwen club made what was for them a lot of money, and out of the money they have bought fancy stockings of the same pattern as those worn by the Arsenal.

I don't suppose you think that stockings make the footballer. But evidently there is an idea that the stockings may prove an inspiration to Darwen to follow in Arsenal's footsteps.

I often have the feeling that the big football clubs do not encourage the young players of their localities as much as they might do. Hence, I was very much interested to hear of an arrangement which they have at Ayr. Every Wednesday evening the ground and gymnasium of the Ayr United club is given over to young local players. Those who apply can turn up for football training and instruction once a week, and the club trainer is there to see that they do the things which are likely to benefit them in the football sense. The fact that they have such an arrangement at Ayr may be partly responsible for the fairly large number of players of that district who have gained fame on the football field. The lads of a district are worth some little attention from the big club of that district.

PERFECTLY IN ORDER!

"In a recent match," writes one of my readers, "the referee gave us a free kick in our opponents' penalty area for dangerous play. We thought the referee was wrong, and that he should have given a penalty kick."

The referee was not necessarily wrong on this occasion. He can give a free kick in the penalty area for dangerous play, and dangerous play may be different from foul play. Suppose a full-back kicks at the ball when it is bouncing near an opponent's face. The full-back does not foul the opponent, but his action can be construed as dangerous play, and for this "offence" the referee can give a free kick to the other side—not a penalty kick although the incident happened in the penalty area.

lunatic playing fool tricks! I'd go back and smash him; but we'd better get after old Popper. He may come a cropper any minute."

"Come on!" said Frank.

At a run the four juniors turned into the high road, and started in the direction of the school. But the runaway horse was far out of sight by that time, and they could only keep their eyes open—in the direful expectation of seeing Sir Hilton Popper sprawling, with broken limbs, somewhere along the roadside.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Fed-Up!

HARRY WHARTON lifted his head from his task in the Remove Form-room, and laid down his pen.

He was tired of deponent verbs. Perhaps, unintentionally, Mr. Quelch

had made that paper a very stiff one—very stiff indeed. To deal with it satisfactorily meant hard work during every minute of the junior's detention, from half-past two till five o'clock. And even then, Wharton was by no means sure of giving satisfaction. A fellow could only do his best. And Mr. Quelch was only too likely, at present, to consider Wharton's best his second best or third best, unless the paper was perfect. And the bitter reflection came into the junior's mind that if he was to be found fault with, anyhow, he need not slog over the thing. It was as well to be hung for a sheep as for a lamb, according to the old saying.

It was a golden autumn afternoon, and the Form-room was dusky and dismal. For more than an hour the junior had been at work there, while the rest of Greyfriars spent the half-holiday in their own ways. Mr. Quelch had given him a look in once—

perhaps to see how he was getting on, perhaps to make sure that he had not "cut." Wharton had a suspicion that Quelch would not have been sorry to discover that he had cut.

However, he was still there, and the Remove master frowned and left him to it. As he came with his coat and hat, Wharton was aware that Quelch was going out. After he had gone Wharton resumed work, but not for long. He gave it up at last, and rose from his desk and walked about the Form-room. He had given up the idea entirely of attempting to finish his task.

"Mooching" about the Form-room was a change from deponent verbs, but it was a bore all the same. He went to the window and looked out.

The quad was deserted.

A football match on Big Side was going on—Wingate's eleven playing a

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visiting team from St. Jude's. There was a big crowd round the field, and shouting voices reached Wharton from the distance.

Close at hand hardly a fellow was to be seen.

His old enemy, Loder of the Sixth, was out of gates. He had seen him go with his pal, Carne. For once Loder's eye was not open for him.

Wharton was strongly tempted to drop from the Form-room window and scud. Never had the open air called to him so strongly. Merely to get out of doors seemed a delightful idea after that long, long hour in the solitary Form-room.

But he paused.

Breaking detention, if he was found out, meant placing himself at Quelch's mercy, and he knew how little mercy he had to expect from that quarter.

Whether it was Wharton's fault, or his Form master's fault, or whether there were faults and misunderstandings on both sides, it was absolutely certain that Quelch's feeling towards him was bitterness itself.

Since he had had Quelch on "toast," as the Bounder expressed it, that bitterness had intensified.

It was unpleasant enough for the Remove master to realise that his dislike of this junior had led him into injustice; for Mr. Quelch was a just man, and a conscientious one. Yet it was the fact, and he had to admit it to himself. It was perhaps natural that he should lay the blame on Wharton.

The Head had ascertained the facts in that matter, and exonerated Wharton; but Mr. Quelch believed that he himself would have ascertained them, and never made such a mistake, had not the rebel of the Remove irritated and exasperated him by habitual hostility and half-concealed defiance. If he had hastily condemned the junior, it was the junior's own fault.

And nothing could alter the fact that Wharton, ordered to "bend over," had turned his back and walked out of Quelch's study. When he was exonerated, that, of course, had to be passed over, which meant that the Remove rebel had "got away" with an act of deliberate defiance.

There was, perhaps, a grain of truth at the bottom of Skinner's jest that Quelch sat up o' nights with a wet towel round his head, thinking out ways to catch Wharton.

Knowing how intensely glad the Form master would be to have adequate grounds for reporting him for a flogging, Wharton stood long at the open window, hesitating.

Carrying on a "feud" with a master was a dangerous game; and if he was to be successful, he had to take care not to give the enemy an opening. Breaking detention was really handing himself over, bound hand and

foot, to the man who wanted to catch him out.

Still, Quelch had gone out, and there was nobody at hand. A trot in the quad, and then a climb back into the Form-room window seemed safe enough. So long as he was there when Quelch came back it would be all right. His task would be unfinished, in any case, so that did not matter. Weariness of the stuffy Form-room won the day, and Wharton dropped from the window to the ground.

He scudded away at once.

Two or three juniors sighted him, and grinned. Temple of the Fourth, strolling with Dabney and Fry, winked at those youths.

"There goes Wharton—askin' for more!" remarked Cecil Reginald Temple. "Jewver see a man keep on askin' for it like he does?"

"Lucky there's no prefects about!" yawned Fry.

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

From juniors, of course, the truant had nothing to fear. But if a prefect's eye had fallen on him the game would have been up. Luckily, there were no prefects to be seen.

"I say, Wharton!" Billy Bunter squeaked loudly, as he caught sight of him. "I say, what are you doing out of the Form-room? 'Tain't five yet by a long shot! I say—"

Wharton scudded on without stopping to kick the fatuous Owl, as he was tempted to do.

He disappeared into the Cloisters.

In that rather solitary quarter he was fairly safe. Nobody was likely to be hanging about there on a half-holiday.

He sauntered about for a time, enjoying his freedom, and then climbed the wall where it overlooked the high road. Tall trees screened the wall at the spot he had selected, and he sat there in cover, looking down into the road. He debated in his mind whether to take a further run. Dropping from the wall, and scudding across into the coppice, was easy and safe.

He was in a reckless mood. But some remnant of caution restrained him. Outside the school walls he might run into a master or a Sixth Form prefect at every step. He shook his head, and remained where he was. Motor-cars came whizzing along the road, to and from Courtfield; cyclists and farmer's carts passed below him, and he watched them idly. It was not an exhilarating way of spending a half-holiday, but there was no doubt that it was much more entertaining than the dusky Form-room and deponent verbs.

Sitting on the top of the wall, his back against a tree-trunk that arched over, he watched the passing traffic, and disposed of a packet of toffee. Four o'clock boomed out, and he began to consider whether he had better not cut back to the House. He was thinking of it, when the sound of clattering, galloping hoofs in the distance drew his attention along the road in the direction of Courtfield.

He grinned at the sight that met his eyes.

A horseman was coming along the road at a wild gallop, and he recognised Sir Hilton Popper.

The baronet looked in a parlous state. He had lost his hat and his whip, and his reins, and was clinging to the saddle, swaying and swinging wildly. The reins were tossing round the horse's head as he galloped. Obviously Sir Hilton had lost control of his steed, and was being run away with. Every moment he looked as if he would shoot from the horse's back like a pip from an orange.

Sir Hilton, in his normal state, was an exceedingly dignified gentleman. In his present state he looked anything but dignified. Dignity had been thrown to the winds—it had gone with his hat and his whip! Wharton grinned—the change in the stiff old gentleman, from his usual aspect, was rather comic.

But the grin died off his face as the galloping horse came nearer and he saw the rider's face more clearly. Sir Hilton was white as chalk, and his eyes stared with terror. It flashed into Wharton's mind that the baronet was in danger—in terrible danger! The horse was utterly out of control, tearing along a road where cars and motor-bikes passed every few minutes. It seemed almost a miracle that there had been no terrible accident already. But the lord of Popper Court was still clinging on, though his breath was gone, his strength almost spent, and he had lost all hope.

Wharton caught his breath.

He did not like Sir Hilton—nobody at Greyfriars did! But he did not think of that now.

An elderly man was in terrible danger of injury and death—nothing could save Sir Hilton, unless the horse was stopped. Stopping the frantic runaway was a task from which even a brave man might have shrunk. And Wharton had little time to think.

The horse was coming on at a fearful speed—it was only a matter of moments before he would be past. It was without thinking about it that Harry Wharton made a leap down into the road from the top of the wall.

He landed on his feet, stumbled, and picked himself up swiftly. The runaway came clattering down on him, and he stood in the road, his face set, steady as a rock.

He knew the danger, but it did not daunt him. As the galloping horse rushed him down, he made a spring, and caught the dangling reins close to the bit.

Had he missed his grasp he would have gone down under the crashing hoofs. But he did not miss it. He caught hold, and held on, and the next instant he felt as if he had been plucked from his feet by a giant's hand.

He was in the air, dragged along by the frantic rush of the horse. But he was holding on, and the wildly tossing head was dragged down by his weight, and his feet touched the ground again. And still he held, with a grasp of iron, though it seemed to him that his arms were being torn from their sockets.

It was only seconds, but it seemed centuries, before the foaming animal was dragged to a halt, snorting and panting, and Harry Wharton, dazed and dizzy, but still steady, was standing at his head holding him at a standstill.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Caught!

"GOOD gad!" spluttered Sir Hilton Popper.

Sir Hilton hardly seemed to realise what had happened.

The horse was standing quiet at last, the Greyfriars junior holding his head. Sir Hilton, reins and stirrups lost, bunched on the saddle, not wholly unlike a monkey on a stick, panted, gurgled, and blinked, and did not quite seem to know whether he was on his head or his heels. The horse, still nervous, shied at a passing car, and Sir Hilton nearly fell off; but Wharton held the animal firmly, and kept him at a halt.

Waking up, as it were, to the situation, Sir Hilton Popper clambered off the horse, still gasping and confused

and dizzy. He tottered to the roadside, and stood leaning on the nearest tree, blinking at Wharton.

"Hold him!" he gasped at last. Sir Hilton was beginning to get his wits back.

"I'm holding him, sir!" answered Harry.

The rush of the horse, before Wharton succeeded in stopping him, had carried the junior some distance along the road. He had shot past the gates of the school, and stopped in Friardale Lane, out of sight of the gates. Wharton was rather glad of the latter circumstance. He was not only out of detention now, but out of school bounds, and he did not want Gosling to spot him from his lodge. He was rather anxious to get back, but he could not release the restive horse until Sir Hilton was prepared to take charge of the animal.

Sir Hilton puffed and blew.

He had had the time of his life on the runaway horse. For many, many perilous minutes he had looked every instant for serious injury or sudden death. He was naturally very much shaken.

Leaning on the tree, he groped for his eyeglass. His hat and whip were strewn somewhere along the Courtfield road—but his eyeglass was hanging at the end of its cord, and he secured it and jammed it into his eye, and stared at his rescuer.

"Oh! You are Wharton, I think, a Greyfriars boy?" he ejaculated.

"Yes, sir!" said Harry.

He smiled faintly, and Sir Hilton grunted. It was their first meeting that term; but last term they had met, and it had been on Sir Hilton's land—a dire offence! Trespassing, as he chose to call it, was one of the seven deadly sins, in Sir Hilton's estimation. Still, even the crusty old lord of Popper Court was not disposed to recall past offences at the present moment.

Sir Hilton was not a very bright old gentleman; but he was bright enough to realise what the schoolboy had saved him from, and to understand also the terrible risk the schoolboy had run.

He grunted. But his look was growing almost gracious. As he recovered his breath a little he ceased to puff and blow so spasmodically.

"Keep him safe!" he said. "I'll take him in a minute. I'm rather—groogh—short of breath. Urrrggh!"

Wharton cast a glance up and down the lane. He was more than willing to oblige Sir Hilton; but he wanted to go.

The old baronet observed his uneasiness, and grunted again a little more emphatically.

"Huh! You are in a hurry to get away, what—what? Hold that horse a minute or two! Huh!"

"Oh, certainly!" said Harry. "But the fact is, sir, I'm out of bounds, and I don't want to be caught out."

Snort from Sir Hilton.

"Out of bounds! Young rascal! I ought to report you to your headmaster, but I suppose I cannot in the circumstances! Huh!"

Two or three grunts in succession followed.

"Out of bounds! Huh! Young rascal—but a plucky young rascal! Huh! You might have been knocked over—trampled on! Huh! Did you think of that?"

"I'm afraid I didn't stop to think a lot," said Harry, laughing. "There wasn't much time for thinking, Sir Hilton."

"No! Huh! No! Plucky young rascal!" said Sir Hilton. "You've saved me from serious damage, boy—very serious indeed! Might have been killed, by gad! The horse was quite out of

hand! Frightened by fireworks, by gad! Some reckless young scoundrel threw a cracker! By Jove, if I knew who it was, I'd have him arrested and charged! I'd send him to prison for three months, by gad! Might have caused a fatal accident! Huh!"

Sir Hilton knitted his brows and glared. He would have been very glad indeed to lay hands on the reckless young rascal who had thrown the cracker. But there was no hope of that. The runaway had carried him over a mile from the scene of Pon's exploit.

"The horse seems quiet enough now, sir!" hinted Wharton.

Grunt from Sir Hilton.

"Hold him! Hold his head! I'm out of breath! I'll speak a word for you if you're found out of bounds! I'm a governor of the school! Young rascal! But it was lucky for me you were out of bounds—what—what?"

"It was on your account, sir," said Harry, with a smile. "I was sitting on top of the school wall when you came along, and jumped down."

"Oh! I didn't see you! I wondered where you had sprung from all of a sudden! I see! Well, if you got out of

horse home, instead of remounting him. Gladly the junior handed the animal over.

"I'm much obliged to you, Wharton!" said Sir Hilton gruffly. "You're a plucky lad—very plucky! You're not hurt?" It seemed to occur to him rather late that his rescuer might have been hurt!

"Only a bit of a shake, sir," said Harry. Which was rather an understatement, for he had been severely shaken, and his arms were aching from wrist to shoulder.

"Well, well, that's good! Might have been trampled under hoof, by gad! Go back to your school now—but don't be under any apprehension—I shall explain the matter to your headmaster, and he will certainly excuse you. Go back at once!" added Sir Hilton, in a bark.

And he led the horse away, leaving Wharton standing in the lane.

Wharton turned in the direction of Greyfriars, and lost no time. Sir Hilton, with his horse, was taking a path through the wood, and was out of sight at once. Wharton followed the road back towards the school. Although it was probable that Sir Hilton's explanation to his headmaster would see him through, he considered it judicious to get back to the Remove-room, if he could, before Mr. Quelch discovered his absence. Saving Sir Hilton from injury was certainly an excuse for going out of school bounds in spite of being "gated"; but there was nothing to excuse his having left the detention-room in the first place. It was more judicious to let Mr. Quelch find him there when he came back.

Keeping out of sight of the gates, Wharton climbed back into the school precincts and cut across to the House. Three or four fellows saw him dodge under the Form-room window, and grinned. Billy Bunter blinked at him through his big spectacles, and chuckled.

"I say, Wharton," he yelled. "Quelch has come in!"

Wharton did not heed. He made a jump to the high sill and clambered in at the Form-room window.

The early dusk was falling; and it was very dim in the Remove-room. The junior did not observe, for a moment, that there was someone in the room. He cut across to his desk and dropped into his seat.

Then he became aware of the fact that the Form-room door was open, and that a tall, angular figure stood within, with a pair of gimlet eyes fixed on him.

"So you have returned!"

Mr. Quelch spoke quietly and bitterly. Wharton rose from the form again. He was caught! Bunter had warned him that Quelch had come in; and evidently the Remove master had lost no time in visiting the Form-room, to ascertain whether the detained junior was still there. And he had found the room empty.

"Yes, sir!" said Harry.

"I discovered your absence," said Mr. Quelch, "only a few minutes ago. But I have no doubt that you have been long absent. I have no doubt that you left the Form-room immediately my back was turned."

Wharton made no reply to that.

"Had I returned a little later," continued Mr. Quelch, in the same acid tone, "you would doubtless have left me to suppose that you had remained in detention, as I should not then have discovered your absence."

No answer.

"This," said Mr. Quelch, "is the climax! You were sentenced to a term's detention, Wharton, for the serious offence of striking a prefect of THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,289.

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bounds on my account, Wharton, you may be sure your headmaster will not blame you when I tell him what has happened. Certainly I shall tell him. But— isn't to-day a holiday at Greyfriars? I saw a number of other Greyfriars boys on the common—your friends, I believe? Do you mean you were under detention, then?"

"Yes," said Harry.

"Huh! Young rascal!" said Sir Hilton. "Still, your headmaster will agree that you were justified in breaking bounds, to save a man from injury—by gad, possibly from death! I shall explain the matter to him and see you through. You need be under no apprehension, my boy. Dr. Locke will certainly take my view of the matter, you can rely on that."

Wharton had no doubt that Dr. Locke would agree with the old baronet on that point; but he was not so sure of Mr. Quelch! And it was of Mr. Quelch that he was thinking.

He wished from the bottom of his heart, that Sir Hilton would take the horse from him and let him go.

To his great relief, the lord of Popper Court detached himself from the tree-trunk at last, and stepped back into the road. He took the bridle from the schoolboy, sagely deciding to lead the

the Sixth Form—an offence for which you might justly have been expelled from the school. It appears that you cannot be trusted to remain in detention. The alternative is expulsion! I shall place my view of the matter before Dr. Locke, and you will be called before your headmaster in due course."

With that, and without waiting for a reply, Mr. Quelch rustled out of the Form-room.

Wharton stood looking grimly after him.

It was Mr. Quelch's chance at last—and he was not losing it! Evidently he intended to make the most of it. The rebel of the Remove had played into his hands, and there was no mercy for him! He had asked for it once too often; and now it was coming to him!

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Something Like a Yarn!

"I SAY, you fellows! Wharton's for it!"

Billy Bunter greeted the Co. with that cheery information as they came in.

As the Co. were no longer friendly with Wharton, and, indeed, no longer on speaking terms with him, it might have been supposed that the news would pass them by like the idle wind which they regarded not.

But that was not the case by any means. Evidently, friendly or not, they were still concerned for their wayward chum.

"What's that?" growled Johnny Bull.

"Gassing again, you fat frump?" grunted Bob Cherry. "What's up—if anything is?"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"What's up, you fat duffer?" snapped Nugent.

The juniors had come in, thinking about Sir Hilton Popper, and wondering what had happened to him. But they forgot the lord of Popper Court on the spot.

"I say, you fellows, Quelch has got him this time!" grinned Bunter. "He got out of detention and Quelch spotted him."

"The silly ass!" grunted Johnny Bull. "Asking for it! As if he didn't know that Quelch was watching for a chance."

"The watchfulness was terrific," groaned the Nabob of Bhanipur, "Now the absurd game is up for the ridiculous Wharton."

"Quelch was waiting for him in the Form-room when he got back by the window!" grinned Bunter. "He, he, he! Fairly snaffled him! Poor old Wharton! I say, Frank, old chap, if he's bunked this time, I'll tell you what—I'll come back to Study No. 1. What? Rather a pleasant change after an ill-tempered, sarcastic beast like Wharton! I suppose you'll be glad to see the last of him! Look here, old fellow, I say—Yarooop!"

Billy Bunter never knew why Frank Nugent kicked him. But he knew that he kicked him—hard! He was left in no doubt whatever about that! Leaving Bunter waking the echoes, Frank went up to the Remove passage and looked into Study No. 1. Harry Wharton was there; his detention was over at last. His occupation was rather surprising to Nugent. He had his jacket off, his sleeves rolled up, and was rubbing his arms with embrocation.

He glanced up as Frank appeared in the doorway; but did not speak.

Nugent watched him for a moment or two in silence.

"Had an accident?" he asked at last.

"No!"

"I hear that Quelch caught you out of detention?"

"You've heard that, have you?" said Harry indifferently.

"Bunter says so. Is it so?"

"Yes."

"It means trouble," said Nugent.

"Quite!" agreed Wharton.

"What's the matter with your fins?"

"Nothing much—a bit of a strain, that's all."

Wharton volunteered no information, and his manner, though civil, was dryness itself. Nugent lingered a moment or two longer, then, with a faint flush in his cheeks, walked away. If he was distressed by the new trouble that had fallen on his former chum, Wharton did not seem to see it, or, perhaps, care to see it. It was one more ineffectual attempt to break the ice, and it failed. Nugent left him to himself.

He heard the voices of the Co. in the passage, but they did not look in. They went along to Study No. 13 to tea. Wharton went on rubbing his arms. The strain on them had been more severe than he had realised at the time, and his limbs were aching and stiff. They were still aching when he put the embrocation away and put on his jacket.

Vernon-Smith looked in.

"For it again, I hear?" he said, with a grin. "It's Quelch's turn to have you on toast, old bean, what?"

"Perhaps!" agreed Wharton. "Still, I'm not sacked yet! You never know your luck, you know."

"You were rather an ass to chance it," said the Bouncer, shaking his head. "It's Quelch's chance, and he will rub it in. I hear that he was waitin' for you in the Form-room when you got back?"

"Yes; kind of him, wasn't it?"

The Bouncer laughed.

"Well, you've got a nerve!" he said. "Been up before the beak yet?"

"Not yet; that's a pleasure to come."

"Of course, they never sack a man for cutting detention," said Vernon-Smith.

"But you're rather a special case. You got detention for the term, instead of bunking, for punching Loder in the eye. I don't think Quelch liked it."

"I know he didn't."

"You've given him a chance to put it to the Head that detention's no good, and that he had better make it a bunking, after all."

"Yes; the good man told me that much!" drawled Wharton. "I fancy he is going to use all his eloquence to make the beak see it like that."

The Bouncer gave him a keen look.

"You don't think Quelch will get by with it?" he asked.

"I'm not sure—but I think not."

"You mean that you've got a card to play?"

"Well, yes."

"Blessed if I see it," said the Bouncer, puzzled. "So far as I can make out, you haven't a leg to stand on. You've fairly handed yourself over to Quelch—right into his claws."

"Somebody might put in a word for me!" suggested Wharton.

"Who the dickens?" exclaimed Vernon-Smith, in astonishment. "All the beaks have a marble eye on you—all the prefects are down on you—you've put up plenty of backs this term, Wharton! Who the jolly old dooce is goin' to put in a word for you?"

"Well, one of the governors might."

"Oh! Your uncle, Colonel Wharton—he's a governor! My hat! Have you got nunky on the phone, or what?"

Wharton's eyes glinted.

"No, you ass! I'm not likely to ask Colonel Wharton anything. Not that he'd take any notice if I did. He warned me not to expect anything from him if I got into trouble again—not that I'd ask him."

"Then who—"

"What about Sir Hilton Popper?" said Harry, with a laugh.

"Pulling my leg?" asked Vernon-Smith, more puzzled than ever. "I can see old Popper putting in a word for anybody—I don't think! He was on your track last term, too, for setting foot on his jolly old property! From what I hear, too, old Popper's as likely as not a hospital case now."

"How's that?"

"I've heard it from Cherry—they were in Oak Lane, when some potty sweep frightened old Popper's horse with fireworks, and it ran away with the old bean. They followed on to pick up the pieces, but never found any. The next they expect to hear of Popper is that he's been picked up in a number of small pieces, scattered along the King's highway."

"Poor old Popper!" said Wharton, laughing.

"Anyhow, why should he put in a word for you, even if he's still in one piece?" asked the Bouncer.

"Well, he might. I'm rather a nice chap, you know, and old Popper may think so!" suggested Wharton.

"If he does, he won't find a lot of people to agree with him," said the Bouncer. "I hope you'll pull through—I'd like to see Quelch dished again; but it looks to me as if you're for it. Best of luck, anyhow."

"Thanks!"

The Bouncer joined Tom Redwing and went on to Study No. 4 to tea. Harry Wharton came out of his study to go down to Hall for that meal. Skinner & Co., on the landing, grinned at him.

"Looks like the chopper this time, old bean," said Skinner affably.

"Yes, doesn't it?" agreed Wharton.

"But appearances are deceptive sometimes, Skinner. Don't bank too much on seeing the last of me."



**"The Sixth-Former's
SECRET"**

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There was a circling of sparks in the air, as the cracker flew from beyond the bushes and landed on the ground between the Greyfriars fellows and the lord of Popper Court, sizzling. "What the thump!" ejaculated Bob Cherry. Bang, bang, bang! "Good gad!" gasped Sir Hilton. "What—good gad!"

He went down the Remove staircase, humming a tune. Skinner stared after him, perplexed.

"What the dickens has he got up his sleeve?" he asked. "He has no end of luck, one way and another; but Quelch has got him this time—got him fairly by the neck! He doesn't seem to care, though."

A good many fellows who saw Wharton on his way to Hall wondered at his careless look. Everyone knew by this time what had happened in the Form-room, and the general belief was that the rebel of the Remove was "for it!" But certainly he seemed cool and careless enough about it.

Loder of the Sixth had come in, and he had heard—with great satisfaction—that the rebel of the Remove was up for trouble again. He called to Wharton in the passage.

"Here, Wharton!"

"Yes, Loder!" said Harry politely.

"I hear that you cut detention this afternoon, and were caught at it! What yarn are you going to spin the Head this time?" asked Loder derisively. "I've no doubt you've got a yarn ready."

"Certainly," answered Wharton. "I'm to be called before the Head after tea, so naturally I've got a yarn ready. I'm going to tell him I saved a man's life while I was out of detention."

"What?" yelled Loder.

"You young ass!" exclaimed Carne of the Sixth.

A dozen fellows heard Wharton's words, and they all looked round at him. Some of them laughed.

"You're going to tell the Head—

what?" ejaculated Wingate, the captain of Greyfriars, coming towards Wharton. "You cheeky young ass! What do you mean?"

"Only what I say?" answered Wharton meekly. "I hope the Head will believe me, Wingate. He may."

"Believe you!" repeated Wingate, staring at him. "Are you out of your senses?"

"No. Are you?"

"Wha-a-at? Look here, you young sweep—"

"I'm looking!" said Wharton calmly.

"I'd give you six for your impudence, if you weren't up for enough already!" said the Greyfriars captain grimly. "You'd better be careful what you say to the Head. You're not far off the sack, though you don't seem to understand it."

"But I do understand it," said Harry. "That's why I'm going to tell the Head that I saved a man's life while I was out of detention. Of course, that's not an excuse for cutting detention—but it's a sort of set-off. A make-weight, if you know what I mean. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, if it happened," said Wingate. "But you can't be idiot enough to expect the Head to believe such a thing!"

"Well," said Wharton, with an air of simplicity, "I hope the Head will take my word. He generally takes a fellow's word."

And Wharton walked on to Hall, leaving a crowd of fellows staring.

At tea in Hall Wharton was the recipient of a good deal of attention. Fellows glanced at him, stared at him,

on all sides. Fellows who did not usually tea in Hall, came in specially, to give him the once-over, as Fisher T. Fish expressed it. Of late the rebel of the Remove had been very much in the public eye. He had been getting much more limelight than, in the opinion of all the seniors, should have fallen to any Lower boy. But he was getting more than ever now.

Billy Bunter rolled in, his little round eyes fairly ablaze behind his big round spectacles. He poked Wharton in the ribs with a fat thumb.

"I say, old chap!" gasped Bunter. "You're not really going to tell the Head—not really, you know—what? The fellows are saying that you're going to tell the Head that you shaved a man's wife—I mean, saved a man's life—you haven't really got the nerve, what?"

"I think I have, Bunter," answered Harry.

"But—but—but—" Bunter fairly goggled at him. "Old chap, don't be a silly ass, you know! Make it a bit more probable, you know. When you're telling lies to a beak you ought to make it sound a bit probable."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Thanks for the tip," he answered. "You've had more experience in telling lies to beaks than I've had, of course. Thanks."

"Well, a fellow stretches it a bit at times," said Bunter. "But there's a limit, you know—you ought to keep inside the limit. The Head's a simple old duck, but it's no good piling it on too thick. I'm advising you as a pal,

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old chap! Tell him something he might believe. Look here, tell him you thought the house was on fire, and that's why you got out, see?"

"Think he'd believe that?"

"Well, it's steep, but not so steep as your yarn," said Bunter. "How's he going to believe that a fellow walked out of a Form-room to save a man's life? He can't, you know! Give the old bean a chance!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'm not going to tell him I walked out of the Form-room to save a man's life, Bunter," he said, apparently unconscious of the fact that fifty ears were drinking in every word. "That would be rather too steep, of course. I'm going to say that I saw a man in danger after I was out, and so it happened that I saved his life."

"Well, that's better, of course," said Bunter thoughtfully, with a nod. William George Bunter had had immense experience in telling "whoppers" of all sorts and sizes, and might justly be regarded as an expert in such matters. "If you're sticking to the yarn, that's the best way to put it, perhaps. But it's frightfully steep, even put like that."

"Steep!" grinned Temple of the Fourth. "I should call it hilly! In fact, mountainous!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Wharton glanced round.

"Don't you believe it, Temple?" he asked.

"Believe it!" repeated Cecil Reginald, with a stare. "What? Believe it! Oh, my only winter toque! No! Not quite!"

"I hope the Head will be a little more trusting," said Harry.

"What a hopeful nature!" remarked Fry.

"Oh, rather!" chuckled Dabney.

"But, look here, old chap," urged Bunter, really concerned for a fellow who seemed to be taking up, as an amateur, a business in which Bunter was practically a professional—"look here, better think it out before you see the Head. The Head's sure to ask for details. How are you going to say you saved the man's life? You'll have to have that ready."

"What about a runaway horse?" asked Harry.

"Not good enough," said Bunter, shaking his head. "Too thin altogether. I'd make it a motor-car if I were you. Make the man fall down in front of the car, see? You jumped in and pulled him aside just in time. I don't say the Head will swallow it, but it's better than the other."

"You think so?" asked Wharton, with an air of deep reflection.

"Sure of it, old chap," said Bunter. "And look here, the man was a bit injured, and the motorist gave him a lift, see—that will account for not being able to call on him to back up your yarn."

"You know the game, and no mistake," said Harry. "Still, I think I'll stick to the runaway horse."

"Well, you're an ass if you do," said Bunter. "You have to give a beak a chance when you're pulling his leg. But if you're sticking to the runaway horse, better make up your mind how you did it—you don't want to have to think that out with the beak's eye on you. My system is to have it all ready before I begin, you know."

"Quite a good system," agreed Wharton, laughing. "I've got it all ready."

"Well, was the man on the horse or did

he fall under a horse, or what?" asked Bunter. "It doesn't matter which you say, but whichever you say, you'll have to stick to the same thing all through. It's rather important to remember that."

"I'll remember it," said Wharton gravely. "The man was on the horse. The horse was running away with him."

"That's all right as far as it goes," agreed Bunter. "The horse was frightened by a car, I suppose—that sounds all right! One of those road hogs, you know, doing sixty-five and honking like mad! He frightened the horse, and it bolted! Yes, that sounds probable enough. Or a dog might have jumped at him and started him off. That's probable, too! Either will do, Wharton, but whichever one you select, stick to it! Don't get mixed at the last minute, when you're handing it out to the Head."

"Ha, ha, ha!" came in a ripple along the table. Billy Bunter, as an exponent of the art of fabricating, seemed to be causing entertainment.

"I've been there, you know," explained Bunter. "I've sometimes got mixed—the beak's eye rather upsets a fellow. Whatever you do, don't get mixed. Make it a car or a dog that frightened the horse—either will do quite well, but don't get mixed, and say a car one minute and a dog the next. See?"

"I see!" chuckled Wharton.

"You can't be too careful. You see, the yarn's frightfully steep, to begin with," said Bunter. "The steeper the yarn, the more careful you have to be about the details. You can take it from me."

"A Daniel come to judgment!" said Wharton gravely. "I'm sure that a chap who was setting up as a champion liar, couldn't have a better adviser than you, Bunter. You know the game from the kick-off to the final whistle."

"Well, I'm fairly wide, you know," said Bunter complacently. "I fancy I know how to pull a beak's leg. But there's one jolly important point you seem to have forgotten, poor old chap."

"What's that?"

"Well, the man himself," said Bunter. "If you saved his life, and all that, he would be bound to come forward and say so, to see you through. Well, as you never did it, and there never was a man, he can't, of course. You'd better make him a stranger in the locality—man you'd never seen before, and don't know the name of. He was so upset that he cleared off without mentioning his name or anything. That's where it would be better to make it a car accident. You see, a man riding a horse would naturally belong to the district, and a motorist might come from anywhere. If you'll take my tip, Wharton, you'll cut out the runaway horse entirely, and make it a car accident."

"BUNTER!"

"Oh lor'!" gasped Wharton's expert adviser, spinning round like a fat humming-top at the voice of his Form master.

Mr. Quelch had come in.

As he entered, he heard Bunter's fat voice; and what Bunter was saying seemed to have a petrifying effect on the Remove master.

He stood for some moments staring at the back of Bunter's bullet head, and listening to the words of wisdom from the fat Owl.

Then he strode towards Bunter, and rapped out his name like a bullet.

Bunter spun round and blinked at him in dismay.

"Oh! Oh lor'! Oh dear! I—I—I wasn't—I—I didn't—" gasped Bunter,

"I—I—I wasn't saying anything to Wharton, sir—"

"I heard what you were saying, Bunter!"

"Oh crikey!"

"Wharton!"

"Yes, sir!"

Wharton stood up.

"I am here," said Mr. Quelch, his voice trembling with anger and scorn, "to take you to your headmaster. I have already heard bandied about the House an extraordinary statement that you have prepared some false and foolish story to tell your headmaster—some lying story that you have concocted as an excuse for breaking detention to-day. It seems to be the talk of the House."

"Indeed, sir!" said Wharton calmly.

"Low as you have fallen in my opinion, Wharton, I was unwilling to believe this—I could scarcely credit that you, even you, would be so unscrupulous. But what I have just heard is confirmation of it. I find you actually in consultation with the most untruthful boy in the Form, preparing a lying story for your headmaster's ears."

"Not at all, sir! I was not consulting Bunter. He was talking nonsense, as usual, and I let him run on!" answered Wharton cheerfully.

"I can believe my own ears," said Mr. Quelch, "and in the event of your having the audacity, the impudence, to tell any such lying story to your headmaster, I shall not fail to enlighten him as to the facts. Now you will follow me."

"Very well, sir!"

Mr. Quelch stalked away, and Wharton followed him. The fellows at the Hall table exchanged glances.

"My only Aunt Selina Ann!" murmured Temple of the Fourth. "The jolly old fat's in the jolly old fire now! What?"

"Oh, rather!" said Dabney.

"That idiot Bunter—" said Wibley.

"Oh lor'!" said Bunter.

It was a great relief to Bunter that all Mr. Quelch's wrath and indignation seemed to be concentrated on Wharton. He had marched Wharton off, taking no further notice of the fatuous Owl.

"Fuf-fuf-fancy that old ass butting in suddenly like that!" gasped Bunter. "It's spoiled the whole thing! It's no use Wharton spinning that yarn now—not now Quelch knows! Poor old Wharton! He might have got away with it if he'd taken my advice, but he hasn't an earthly now! Still, I dare say he would have made a hash of it anyway—that runaway horse was no good—simply no good at all!"

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Wharton's Last Card!

HARRY WHARTON stood before his headmaster in Dr. Locke's study, his head up, and his face calm.

He was well aware that his fate was in the balance—that it was "touch and go." But he was perfectly cool and collected. Likely enough, the gates of Greyfriars School were to close behind him that very day—which was the unconcealed desire of the Form master who was fed-up with the rebel of his Form. He knew that he had only one card to play—and that was doubtful. Still, it was a good card.

The House was humming with comment on the amazing yarn which Wharton was supposed to have concocted to tell the Head. But it was in fact true that he had saved the life of Sir Hilton

Popper—and Sir Hilton was a governor of the school, and a very important gentleman in every way. What had happened while he was out of detention, was not an excuse for having broken detention in the first place, certainly.

Nevertheless, had he not broken detention, Sir Hilton would have broken his neck—or, at least, some of his important limbs. Sir Hilton, at least, was sure to take the view that his lordly neck was more important than any other consideration whatsoever. And the testy old gentleman had stated positively that he would acquaint the headmaster of Greyfriars with what had happened. If he forgot, he could be reminded. There was at least a chance of pulling through, and Wharton considered that it was a very good chance.

Dr. Locke regarded him with grave sternness. He had listened to all that Mr. Quelch had to say on the subject of this troublesome boy—which was a great deal.

He had not forgotten that on more than one occasion the Remove master's deep prejudice against this boy had led him into hasty injustice.

But such a prejudice, on the part of a man whom he knew to be just, could not be without cause. Much of the blame, at least, lay at Wharton's door.

And it was fresh in the Head's mind that this was the boy who had struck a Sixth Form prefect; knocked him down in the quad in sight of the headmaster's study windows!

After much deep and painful cogitation Dr. Locke had come to the conclusion that he could not but accede

to the Remove master's formal request; that this boy, who seemed determined to set himself implacably against all authority, should be sent away from the school.

Having come to that weighty decision, it only remained to tell the delinquent so and finish the matter.

"Wharton," said the Head, slowly and impressively, "you know why you are before me. You are aware that your sentence of detention for the term was imposed, as an alternative to expulsion, at the earnest intercession of your uncle and guardian, Colonel Wharton."

"Yes, sir!" said Harry, quietly and respectfully.

"On that occasion I told Colonel Wharton plainly that in the event of any further act of rebellion I could listen to no further intercession. Neither do I think that Colonel Wharton would intervene again."

"I am sure of that, sir!" said Wharton bitterly. "He told me so himself when he came here."

"Had you submitted patiently to what was, in effect, a light punishment, I should have had hopes of you," continued the Head. "But it appears that you are lost to all sense of discipline. You left the detention-room to-day during your Form master's absence."

"Yes, sir."

"Have you any excuse whatever to offer?"

Wharton had the excuse, satisfactory to himself at least, that he regarded his punishment as unjust. But it would not have been of much use to offer that to the Head.

He stood silent.

"Mr. Quelch considers that, as you obstinately refuse to submit to the sentence passed on you, the alternative sentence of expulsion should be reverted to," said the Head. "That is only just, and indeed you can scarcely have expected anything else."

"Not from Mr. Quelch, certainly," said Wharton.

The Head's face grew sterner.

"That remark is a reflection on your Form master, Wharton," he said. "You have exhausted your Form master's patience, and he desires that you should leave the school. I have now definitely decided—"

"If I may speak, sir—"

"You may speak if you have anything to say that is not disrespectful to Mr. Quelch!" said the Head sternly.

"As it happened, sir, I had the chance of saving a man from danger while I was out of detention. I think I can say that I saved his life; at least, I am certain that I prevented him from receiving serious injuries. I know that this is not a reason for breaking detention. I, of course, knew nothing about him when I left the Form-room. But—"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head. "That is a very strange and unexpected statement, Wharton."

Mr. Quelch's face paled with anger, and his eyes glinted. Taking no heed of his black and bitter look, Wharton went calmly on.

"Had I remained in detention, sir, the man I speak of would have been killed, or, at least, badly hurt. I think

(Continued on next page.)



Goal !!!

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E.M. 33.

you might take that into consideration, sir."

"Certainly I should," said the Head, staring at him blankly. "Such a very fortunate outcome of your reckless disobedience, Wharton, would not be an excuse, but it would naturally weigh with me very much. But—"

"But, sir," broke in Mr. Quelch in a grinding voice; "but, sir, this boy's statement is a barefaced falsehood, sir. He did not do what he states."

"Is that certain, Mr. Quelch? Certainly the statement is a startling one, and requires proof. But—"

"It is known throughout the House, sir, that Wharton intended to make this statement to you. He announced it himself; I may say boasted of it. The whole House is aware that he intended to deceive you by a lying story."

"Upon my word!" said the Head.

"I may add, sir, that when I went to Hall to bring this boy to you, I found him in consultation with Bunter, the most untruthful boy in my experience, and heard them actually concocting the story together; Bunter, indeed, suggesting the alteration of some details in order to render it more convincing."

The Head's brow darkened.

"This passes all patience," he said. "Wharton, I will not endeavour to express my disgust, my indignation—"

"Mr. Quelch is mistaken, sir," said Harry, with the utmost calmness. "Bunter was only talking foolishly because he did not believe the story himself, and fancied that it was made up to tell you."

"Do you dare to say that it was not made up to tell Dr. Locke?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, almost furiously.

"Quite!" answered Wharton. "I say that it is true, and I am sure that Dr. Locke will listen to me."

"It is not true—not a syllable—"

"I will, however, hear the boy, Mr. Quelch," said the Head. "If he is venturing to tell palpable falsehoods it will be easy enough to ascertain the truth. His statement is surprising, but not impossible. Let him proceed."

Mr. Quelch set his lips like a vice.

Wharton proceeded.

"I got out of detention, sir, intending to take a little walk and then return to my task in the Form-room. I should have returned before Mr. Quelch came in, had I not gone to the assistance of the man who was in danger. Had I left him to it Mr. Quelch would never have found out that I had been absent at all. I think you might consider that, sir."

"Most assuredly, if your story is true. But—"

"I was sitting on the wall, sir, near the end of the Cloisters, when a horseman came galloping along the road; a runaway horse with an elderly man clinging to his back—"

"The very story I heard him concocting, sir!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, unable to control his angry impatience. "Bunter, sir, suggested to him that he should say that it was a car accident, as a more probable fabrication."

"Nevertheless, I will hear the boy through, Mr. Quelch. You say that you saw an elderly man on a runaway horse, Wharton—"

"Yes, sir!"

"And what did you do?"

"I jumped down from the wall, caught hold of the horse, and, after being dragged along some distance, succeeded in stopping him."

There was a sniff from Mr. Quelch, and a very dubious look from the Head. Yet Wharton's calm coolness made an

impression on the latter gentleman, at least.

"I held the horse for some time, sir, until the old gentleman had recovered a little," went on Harry. "Then he led the horse away through the wood, and I came back to the school. I had intended to get back to the Form-room earlier, but owing to the delay Mr. Quelch came in first."

"Do you attach any credence whatever to this story, Mr. Quelch?"

"None whatever, sir," said the Remove master contemptuously. "You will observe that Wharton gives no indication of the supposed person's identity. No doubt this endangered man was a man he had never seen before!" added Mr. Quelch, with biting scorn.

"I have seen him before, sir," said Harry.

It did not occur to Mr. Quelch that the junior was deliberately keeping back the name. The rebel of the Remove was at that moment "playing" Henry Samuel Quelch like a fish!

The more contemptuously and emphatically Mr. Quelch scorned the story, the more he would be overwhelmed with confusion when its truth was proved; as it had to be on reference to the lord of Popper Court.

Mr. Quelch was all unconsciously weakening his own position and strengthening Wharton's, which was the young rascal's object.

"Oh," said the Head, "you have seen him before, Wharton! He was not a stranger to you?"

"I've often seen him riding about the neighbourhood, sir," answered Harry.

"Do you mean that the man is a local resident?"

"Oh, yes, sir!"

"This boy," said Mr. Quelch bitterly, "is now condemned out of his own mouth. Let him give the name of the local resident he speaks of. A local resident may be called in to substantiate his statement, or to disprove it."

"Undoubtedly," said the Head. "If you are aware of the man's name, Wharton—"

"I know his name, certainly, sir."

"Give me the name, then."

Wharton appeared to hesitate. With a cool maliciousness that was in keeping with the Bounder's character, but was very unlike Wharton himself, he was bent on "drawing" Mr. Quelch to the very limit.

"The—the fact is, sir," he said at last, very slowly, "I can give you the name, of course, but—"

"But," said Mr. Quelch, with almost savage bitterness, falling blindly into the trap he did not see—"but you dare not give the name of any man who could be called upon to refute your unscrupulous falsehoods."

"That is not my reason, sir," said Wharton. "I am sure, of course, that the old gentleman would bear out every word I have said. But I did him a service, and he was kind enough to say that what I did was plucky. I don't want to appear to be making a boast of it. That's not the Greyfriars way. I shouldn't like that old gentleman to think I was bragging of having helped him."

"Very proper indeed—if true!" said Mr. Quelch, with bitter satire. "But your headmaster will scarcely allow you to escape with such a very palpable prevarication."

"If your statement is true, Wharton, give the man's name at once!" rapped out the Head. He was quite of Mr. Quelch's opinion by this time.

"If you order me to give the name, sir—"

"I have done so!"

"Very well," The old gentleman's name was— Wharton hesitated again, for Mr. Quelch's benefit, but he got it out at last. "His name was Popper, sir!"

"Popper!" repeated the Head. "Do you mean Sir Hilton Popper?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Bless my soul!"

"You—you—you dare to say that you refer to Sir Hilton Popper—a governor of the school—a gentleman who can be referred to on the instant?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch, almost dazedly.

"Yes, sir."

"Dr. Locke! This impudence—this unparalleled effrontery—"

Mr. Quelch seemed about to choke.

There was a tap at the door, and Trotter, the page, brought in a card. Wharton, who had heard the sound of a car in the quad, wondered whether it was Sir Hilton Popper. He soon knew.

"Dear me!" said the Head, glancing at the card. "By a very odd coincidence, Mr. Quelch, Sir Hilton Popper has called, and desires to see me. Trotter, you will show Sir Hilton in at once!"

"Yessir!"

Mr. Quelch drew a deep breath.

"I am glad Sir Hilton has called, sir. Now there need be no delay in disproving this boy's wild inventions—if, indeed, he has the effrontery to repeat them in Sir Hilton's presence. I think, however, that even his unheard-of audacity will stop short of that!"

"Are you prepared, Wharton, to face Sir Hilton Popper in my presence?" demanded the Head sternly.

"Certainly, sir! I expected him to call some time to-day—it is not really a coincidence, sir. He told me that he would inform you of what had happened, as I mentioned to him that I was out of bounds when I stopped his horse."

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "This passes all bounds—it passes all belief! This boy is maintaining his impudent fiction to the very latest moment. Wretched boy, here is Sir Hilton!"

Sir Hilton Popper entered the study.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Pluck—and Luck!

SIR HILTON POPPER bowed stiffly to the Head and Mr. Quelch.

The old baronet looked very different now from the breathless and dilapidated old gentleman whom Wharton had rescued. He was newly swept and garnished, as it were—stiff as a ramrod and in full possession of all his dignity. But his crusty, mastiff-face relaxed as his eyeglass turned on Wharton, and he smiled—a genial smile. And to the surprise of the Head, and the stupefaction of Mr. Quelch, he stepped to the junior and shook hands with him.

A handshake from the lord of Popper Court was an honour and a distinction for which any common mortal should have been immensely grateful. Wharton received that tremendous honour with due modesty.

"Huh!" grunted Sir Hilton. "Not hurt—what? Not feeling any ill effects, eh? What?"

"Only a bit of strain on my arms, sir," answered Harry. "But I've rubbed them with embrocation, and they're nearly all right again."

"Dr. Locke! I've called to speak to you about this lad," said Sir Hilton. "As I find him in your presence I seem



Chairs were knocked right and left, and books and papers and a streaming inkpot were strewn on the floor as Harry Wharton and Bob Cherry went at it hammer and tongs. "Go it, Bob!" shouted a score of voices from the doorway. In the midst of the havoc the two juniors trampled and panted and hammered.

to have called at an opportune moment, by gad! What? Don't mistake me, sir—I disapprove strongly of indiscipline—I've always said so. A boy who breaks bounds is all the better for a flogging—a stiff flogging, sir—what—what? But in the circumstances, sir—"

"In what circumstances?" gasped the Head.

Mr. Quelch stood dumb.

"Eh? What? If this lad is being called on the carpet, sir, for having broken bounds, I suppose he has told you. But for this schoolboy, sir, this plucky lad, I should be lying in the hospital at the present moment—perhaps a dead man, sir. This boy, sir, saved me from a terrible accident. Good gad! He saved my life, sir—saved my life, by gad! He might have been killed—might have been smashed and trampled, sir—"

"Bless my soul!" said the Head of Greyfriars faintly.

Mr. Quelch was still dumb. His face was a study.

"I had to lay a complaint before you, sir, only last term, of this very boy," said Sir Hilton. "A cheeky young rascal! That is neither here nor there! He saved my life to-day! He ran a fearful risk in doing so. Dr. Locke, this boy—Wharton, I think his name is—Wharton—is a credit to my old school, sir! I am proud to have belonged to a school that turns out such lads! By gad, sir!"

Evidently, since the rescue, Sir Hilton had put in some reflection on the matter, and realised to the full the extent of the service Wharton had done him, and the risk he had taken. Sir Hilton's lordly

brain was rather slow on the uptake. But now that he had got it clear, he was the man to acknowledge it. And he acknowledged it handsomely.

"I am here, sir, to ask you a favour," pursued Sir Hilton, his manner indicating that he considered it a distinction to any man to be asked a favour by Sir Hilton Popper, of Popper Court. "This boy told me he was under detention to-day, and he got out of school bounds to save my neck. I beg you, sir, to excuse him in view of what he has done. Saving a man's life is not an everyday performance, by gad, sir! What?"

"Then—it is true!" gasped the Head. "You—you were in danger, Sir Hilton—"

"My horse was frightened by some scoundrel letting off fireworks, sir!" boomed Sir Hilton. "He bolted, sir! A fresh horse—a young hunter I was trying! Bolted, sir! I lost my stirrups and my reins! Bolted, sir, on a road thick with cars! And this boy—"

"Dear me!"

"Jumped at his head, sir, and, by gad, held him till he stopped! Might have been trampled under hoof, by Jove! Never seen such a plucky lad! May I take it, sir, that he is pardoned for a breach of discipline—serious enough, I admit—very serious, indeed—but, after all—"

"In—in view of what you tell me, Sir Hilton—"

"Exactly, sir—I expected as much of you, sir! Mr. Squech"—Sir Hilton turned to the Remove master, who was still afflicted with dumbness—"Mr. Squech, I think your name is Squech, sir—"

"Quelch," murmured the Head mildly—"Mr. Quelch—"

"Quite—quite! Mr. Quelch, you are this brave lad's Form master, I believe—yes, yes! You should be proud of him, sir! He does you credit, sir. I congratulate you, sir, on your Form, which includes such boys as—Wharton. He reflects credit on your training, Mr. Squech—that is, Welsh—he is a boy to be proud of, Mr. Welsh!"

An inarticulate sound came from Mr. Quelch. Wharton hardly dared to look at him at that moment.

"Wharton," said the Head hastily, "you may leave my study!"

Wharton left the study.

He walked down the corridor with his hands in his pockets and a cool smile on his face. Obviously, it was all right now. When a governor of the school made a special plea in his favour the headmaster could hardly deal harshly with him. Neither was the Head likely to think of dealing harshly with a boy who had risked his life to save an elderly man from injury, governor of the school or not. What Mr. Quelch thought was another matter; but so long as the Head stood by him the Remove rebel did not care two straws what Mr. Quelch thought!

At the end of the corridor he found a crowd gathered. Excitement was high and interest intense—all the more intense since Sir Hilton had been shown into the Head's study. Fifty voices hailed Wharton as he came swinging carelessly along.

"Sacked?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Do I look sacked?" he asked.

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"Did old Popper put in a word for you, as you fancied he would?" asked the Bounder.

"He did!"

"I say, you fellows, Wharton's got away with it, after all!" gasped Billy Bunter. "Did you spin the Head that yarn, Wharton?"

"Certainly!"

"Did he swallow it?" shrieked Skinner.

"Not at first—but he got it down at the finish," answered Wharton.

"Well, my only hat!"

"Did you make it a motor-car or a runaway horse?" inquired Billy Bunter, with keen interest.

"Ha, ha! I stuck to the runaway horse, old fat man."

"Well, a runaway car would have been better—still, if you've got away with it, all right," said Bunter. "Sure you've got away with it?"

"Quite!"

"Well," said Bunter, "you're jolly lucky. I'm a better hand at it than you are—I've got brains—but I don't always get away with it."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gratters, old man," said Lord Mauleverer. "What frightfully good luck that you had the chance. That jolly old runaway horse was a stroke of luck, old bean!"

"You ass!" yelled Skinner. "You don't believe it, do you?"

Mauleverer stared at him.

"Eh? Yaas. Wharton's said so, hasn't he?"

"Thanks, old chap," said Harry.

"Wharton could keep on saying it till he was black in the face, but I shouldn't believe it," said Skinner.

Lord Mauleverer nodded.

"You wouldn't," he agreed. "Sorry for you, old chap."

"Eh? What are you sorry for me for, you born idiot?" demanded Skinner.

"Well, it must be rather rotten to be such a fearful liar that you can't take another chap's word," said Lord Mauleverer innocently.

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

"You silly chump—" gasped Skinner.

"But—it's not really true, is it?" exclaimed the Bounder. "You didn't save a man on a runaway horse, Wharton, did you?"

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"Fathead!" said Lord Mauleverer. "Think the Head would have believed it if it wasn't true? You're an ass, Smithy!"

"But—but—who was it, then?" gasped the Bounder.

"Old Popper!" answered Harry.

"Popper?" shouted a dozen fellows.

"Just Popper!"

"Oh!" ejaculated Smithy. "Now I catch on! Those fellows saw him going all out on a runaway gee on Courtfield Common—then he must have come along this way—and you—"

Harry Wharton laughed, and walked away, leaving the crowd of fellows buzzing. Wharton's supposed "yarn" had astonished them; but they were still more astonished, apparently, to find that the yarn was the frozen truth.

The House was humming with it when Sir Hilton Popper was seen to leave and step into his car. Harry Wharton was standing near the steps, and the old baronet beckoned to him. Wharton came up with a rather demure respect. Fifty fellows, at least, stared on. They saw Sir Hilton Popper grasp the junior's hand in a lofty, patronising, but friendly grip.

"Wharton!" barked Sir Hilton. "I've

talked to your headmaster about you. It seems that you've been in trouble lately—kickin' over the traces, by gad—cheeky young rascal! What? Detention for the rest of the term—what, what? Well, you're a young rascal—a dashed young rascal, sir!"

"Thank you, Sir Hilton," said Wharton politely.

"Eh? What? Well, I've talked to Dr. Locke—he agrees with me, sir, that what you have done must be recognised—shall be recognised, by gad, if I've any influence as a governor of Greyfriars! By Jove! You're going to be rewarded."

"Nothing of the kind, sir!" said Harry.

"What? What? Don't contradict me, boy!" roared Sir Hilton. "I say that you are going to be rewarded, and your headmaster agrees—agrees most cordially, sir. Your sentence of detention is washed out—washed out, sir—as a reward for your pluck! I should have insisted upon it, but your headmaster was in full agreement with me—complete agreement."

"Oh!" gasped Wharton. His eyes danced.

"Mind you behave yourself after this!" barked Sir Hilton. "You're a mutinous young rascal, from what I hear, what, what? But pluck is pluck! Behave yourself, what? Start fresh, and don't make a fool of yourself any more. You understand me? What? Home, William!"

The baronet rolled away in his car.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Coming to Blows!

"**J**EVVER hear of such luck?" Skinner wanted to know.

That evening the Remove passage was thrilling with it—rather to the detriment of prep.

All the details were known now, and a good many fellows congratulated Wharton. His old friends rejoiced as much as anybody, or more; though they were not among those who offered "gratters."

Bob Cherry and the rest of the Co. had wondered what had happened to Sir Hilton Popper after they had lost sight of him on his runaway horse. Now they knew.

Wharton had been lucky! There was no doubt about his luck—but luck, after all, would have been useless without pluck. Luck had brought the chance Wharton's way; but only splendid pluck had enabled him to take advantage of it. But there it was—by luck and pluck he had saved the life of a governor of the school. Certainly, he had acted without giving the slightest thought to possible results for himself. But the result was that the sentence of a term's detention had been washed out! Sir Hilton was anxious to repay the obligation so far as he could—by exerting his influence as a governor of the school, he had done so. But, in point of fact, he had been met half-way, or more than half-way, by the headmaster.

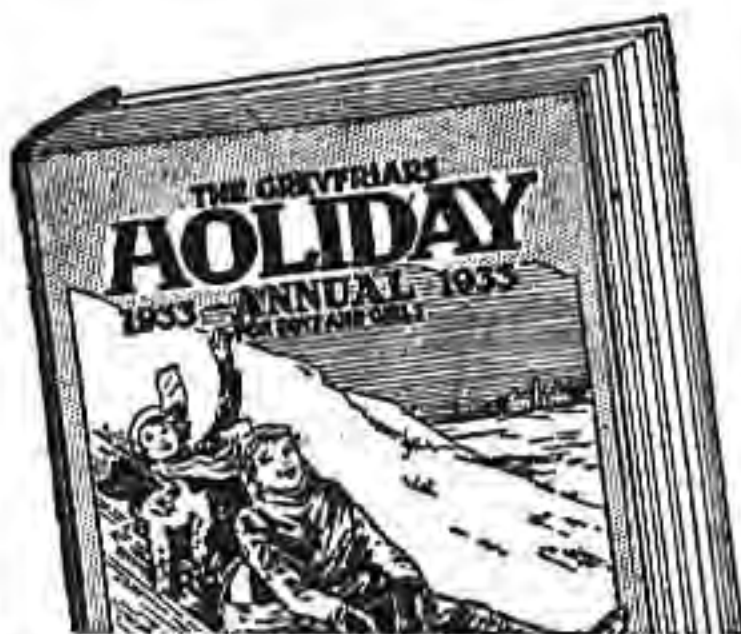
Wharton had offended, deeply, in many ways; his punishment had been just, in the opinion of the masters, if not in his own. But an act of unselfish heroism atoned for much. Willingly, indeed gladly, the Head had concurred in Sir Hilton's suggestion that the junior should be pardoned for all offences, as a reward for what he had done, and given a chance to start fresh with a clean slate.

Mr. Quelch had no choice but to

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concur. He could scarcely stand out against his chief and a governor of the school.

The outcome of the whole affair, therefore, was not that Wharton's punishment was changed for one more severe, but that it was washed out entirely; which was undoubtedly a bitter pill for Mr. Quelch to swallow.

To him, it was a defeat!

His authority had been set at naught, and the rebel had not only got away with it, but got away with it with colours flying, as it were!

That scene in the Head's study was a bitter memory to Mr. Quelch.

In some respects, he lacked the serene wisdom of the Head; but he was a much keener and sharper gentleman; and he knew very well that Wharton had been leading him on, "drawing" him, in fact, making a fool of him.

The young rascal had allowed him to believe, almost forced him to believe, that the story of the rescue was a fake, a spoof, a wild invention. All the time he had proof up his sleeve, ready to cover the unfortunate Form master with confusion.

Mr. Quelch realised that, in a contest of wits, he had been beaten by a school-boy, and, not only beaten, but absolutely put to rout!

Fellows who saw Mr. Quelch that evening, declared that he looked more like a gargoyle than ever; that he looked as if he wanted to bite somebody.

No doubt that was an exaggeration; but certainly Henry Samuel Quelch was feeling very sore. Certainly it was his intention to keep the sharpest of sharp eyes on the junior who had defeated him, and all the Remove knew that it behoved the rebel of the Form to walk warily.

Wharton worked alone in his study that evening. Since the break in the Co. Frank Nugent did his prep in Study No. 13 with Bob Cherry. Prep in an atmosphere of chilly silence was not grateful or comforting. After prep, there was a discussion in Study No. 13, followed by the Co. coming along to Study No. 1 in a body, with some others of the footballing fraternity.

Squiff opened the study door, and gave Wharton a cheery nod.

"Oh, here you are!" he said.

"Here I am," answered Wharton.

"We've come to speak about the captaincy," explained the Australian junior. "You resigned, which was all right while you were under detention for the term. Now that's washed out you can take it back, see?"

"We want you, old bean," said Peter Todd amicably.

"We all say the same," said Tom Brown.

"The samefulness is terrific!" declared Hurree Jamset Ram Singh solemnly.

"The election's been fixed for Saturday!" said Harry.

"No need of an election, if you take back your resignation," said Squiff. "We carry on as before, what?"

"Anyhow, if there's an election, we shall vote for you," said Bob Cherry. "So it comes to the same thing."

Wharton gave him an icy stare.

"I haven't asked you to vote for me, that I know of," he answered. "If there's an election, I'd rather you didn't!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bob.

"Oh, don't be a goat, Wharton, for goodness' sake!" exclaimed Squiff impatiently. "Can't you keep your silly temper for two minutes together?"

"If a majority of the fellows want me to take back my resignation, I'll take it back with pleasure, now that

I'm free to play in the matches," said Harry coolly. "But I don't want to hear anything from false friends."

"Why, you cheeky rotter—" gasped Bob.

"Here, I've had enough of this!" growled Johnny Bull. "I'll leave it to you men." And Johnny tramped away savagely.

"Harry—" exclaimed Nugent.

"I believe I told you once, Nugent, that I'm Harry to my friends. You're not one of them!"

Nugent set his lips.

"You'll soon have precious few friends left, at this rate," he said. "You can go and eat coke—I'm done with you!"

He walked away, and Hurree Singh followed him in silence, and then Bob Cherry. The other fellows exchanged rather uncertain looks. The rift in the

**CRACK A JOKE
AND
WIN A POCKET-KNIFE!**

One of this week's useful prizes goes to T. Doncaster, of 20, Cooper Street, Doncaster, who sent in the following rib-tickler.



Jim (to his pal who has just bought another car): "New car, old top?"

Bill (exasperated): "No, old car new top!"

Step in and win one of these topping prizes, chums!

Co. seemed to be turning into active enmity. Still, that was nothing to do with football, and football was the matter in hand.

"Well, look here," said Squiff uncomfortably. "We've nothing to do with your private rows! Are you going on as skipper—that's what we want to know?"

"I'll be glad to!"

"That's settled, then!"

And the juniors left the study, all of them dissatisfied with Wharton personally, but glad at least that they were not losing their captain, after all. Bob Cherry lingered by the study door after the others were gone. He was angry; but he was perplexed, too. Bob's honest, simple mind could not understand the bitterness in his former friend's look and tone. Pals could quarrel and part without all this rancour. After some minutes of thought

Bob put his mop of flaxen hair in at the study doorway again.

"Look here, Wharton—" he said.

"Shut the door, please!"

Bob's blue eyes glinted.

"You're asking for it!" he said.

"But I won't row with you. What the dickens is the matter with you, I'd like to know. We're not friends now; but that's not my fault!"

Wharton's lip curled. Fresh in his mind were the words he had heard at the door of Study No. 13 when he had gone there with the intention of putting his pride in his pocket and taking the first step towards a reconciliation. He could neither forget nor forgive.

"What's the good of this tosh?" he said scornfully. "You've done with me for good—you said so, and I suppose you know your own mind."

Bob stared at him.

"What's that? I never said so!"

"Oh, cut it out!"

"If any fellow's told you I said anything of the sort, he's a liar!" exclaimed Bob, raising his voice.

"Enough!" said Wharton, with savage sarcasm. "You said so yourself, and I heard you! Now clear!"

"You never heard me say anything of the sort," said Bob. "You're dreaming, or else fancying things to justify you in being a sulky fool. I'd like to know when and where you heard me say anything of the kind!"

"Oh, you didn't mean me to hear!" sneered Wharton. "But I happened to."

"Well, you got it wrong, somehow—"

"Cut it out, I tell you!" snapped Wharton. "I heard you, and that's enough."

"Well, they say that listeners never hear any good of themselves," said Bob angrily. "I suppose you caught something, and got it all wrong. I tell you I never said—"

"And I tell you it's a lie!"

"Do you want me to knock you across this study?" roared Bob Cherry, his eyes blazing and his fists clenched.

Wharton laughed mockingly.

"Yes; if you can do it!"

"You've called me a liar!" said Bob thickly.

"I call you one again! I'll repeat it as often as you like! I'll shout it out for all Greyfriars to hear, if you want me to!"

"I'll jolly soon stop you, then!" growled Bob; and he came across the study at Harry Wharton, with his fists up and his eyes flaming over them, and the next moment they were fighting.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Down and Out!

"A FIGHT!"

"They're scrapping!"

"I say, you fellows, they're going it in Study No. 1!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

There was a rush along the Remove passage.

Outside Study No. 1 the passage swarmed. Inside the study two mutually exasperated fellows were going it hammer and tongs.

"Bob!" shouted Nugent.

Bob did not heed. He needed all his attention for his adversary. The fight was a fierce and strenuous one.

The study table was dashed aside, chairs knocked over right and left, books and papers and a streaming ink-pot strewn on the floor. In the midst of the havoc the two juniors trampled and panted and hammered. The doorway

was packed. A sea of eyes stared on at the scene.

"Go it, Bob!" shouted a score of voices.

Not a man there doubted that Wharton was in the wrong in that sudden, fierce outbreak of hostilities. He knew it, and it added to his bitterness. He was not in the wrong—he was in the right—at least he was certain of it.

"I say, you fellows, Wharton's down!" squeaked Bunter.

Crash!

He was up again in a twinkling. His face was white and set and savage. Now he was fairly landed in the scrap he realised that he was not fit for it. The strain on his arms that day in the struggle with the runaway horse had told. He had forgotten it, but he had to remember now that he needed every ounce of his muscular energy.

Fierce determination might have carried the day against a more powerful adversary, but could not help against strained and aching muscles.

He went down again, crashing.

Bob Cherry stepped back.

"Chuck it!" he exclaimed. "Wharton, old man, chuck it! Look here, I'll give you best if you like—but chuck it!"

Wharton was on his feet with the spring of a tiger. To be pitied and spared was the last blow to his pride.

"You rotter! Come on, you rotter!" he panted.

He hurled himself at Bob.

"Care!" yelled Hazeldene from the passage.

"Oh crikey! I say, you fellows, it's Quelch!"

Mr. Quelch came striding up the passage, the crowded Removites made way for him, and he glared in at the doorway of the study.

"Cease this at once!"

The combatants dropped their hands and stepped back. The Remove master's gimlet eyes fixed on Wharton. His look was black and bitter. It would have been injustice to Mr. Quelch to say that he was glad to have caught the rebel of his Form in a new act of delinquency, so soon after his pardon by the Head. But undoubtedly Mr. Quelch's ears and eyes had been very much on the alert, and he had come up very swiftly at the sounds of uproarious disturbance from Wharton's study.

"Wharton! You unruly boy, what does this mean?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Wharton panted.

"You ask me what it means—you don't ask Cherry! I'm to blame, of course," he said between his teeth.

"I have not the slightest doubt that your unruly temper is to blame for this disturbance," said Mr. Quelch sternly. "Be silent! Cherry, what are you doing in this study?"

"I—I came to—to—" Bob stammered. "We—we had a row, sir; it's nothing. I'm really to blame. I struck the first blow, sir—"

"And why?"

Bob mumbled.

"Get it out," jeered Wharton. "It was because I called you a liar—which is what you are."

Bob Cherry breathed hard. But he made no rejoinder.

"I had no doubt that the provocation came from you, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch. "You have now admitted it. Leave the study, Cherry! Leave, all of you!"

"But, sir—" stammered Bob.

"Go!"

The Removites went. Mr. Quelch took the cane from under his arm.

"Wharton! Bend over that chair!"

Wharton looked at him. The intention to disobey was plain enough in his look. But Mr. Quelch, like the rebel of his Form, was at the end of patience. He had been defied, defeated, baited, by this mutinous boy, and a moment's hesitation to obey was more than enough for him. He made a stride at the junior, grasped him by the collar, and bent him over the chair. Then the cane rose and fell with loud and heavy swishes.

Swish, swish, swish, swish!

Fellows in the passage stared at one another, with bated breath, as they listened to the swishing of the cane.

"Quelch's going it!" breathed Skinner.

It ceased at last. Mr. Quelch tucked the cane under his arm and left the study—leaving a white-faced, panting junior staring after him with defiant burning eyes.

The Remove fellows went down to the Rag. Wharton was left alone—alone with his bitterness and passionate rebellion.

"It's rotten!" muttered Bob Cherry dismally, passing a hand over a bruised nose. "My fault, too—"

"Rot!" growled Johnny Bull. "He

knew that Quelch was watching for a chance—and he offered him one—"

"If—if I hadn't gone to the study—" muttered Bob miserably. "If I'd kept my temper; but—but I got rather wild when he called me a liar. Oh, it's rotten! What's come over the chap? He fancies that he heard me say that we were done with him for good—I never said so—"

"He, he, he!"

"Shut up, you fat villain!" bawled Johnny Bull, at that squeak from Billy Bunter.

"Oh, really, Bull! I don't think Cherry ought to tell whoppers—" said Bunter. "It's not a thing I'd do myself. I think—"

"What do you mean, you dummy?" growled Bob savagely.

"Well, I heard what you said, as well as Wharton," grinned Bunter. "I was outside your study when he came along, when you had the meeting on, you know. I don't know why he came, but he went back when he heard that."

"When he heard what?" yelled Bob.

"You said you were done with Wharton for good, and it was no use talking, and that was that," grinned Bunter. "I heard every word, and so did Wharton."

"You—you idiot! I was speaking about the football—I meant that we were done with Wharton as football captain, as he couldn't get out to play in the matches—"

"He, he, he!"

"So that's what he meant," said Bob blankly. "Of course, I thought he was fancying some rot or other. I never meant—you fellows know I never meant anything but the captaincy—if he'd heard a little more, he would have known that. I made it plain enough that—"

"He had to go off at the deep end, without finding out what a fellow really was talking about," grunted Johnny Bull. "Isn't that Wharton all over?"

"I'll go and speak to him," said Bob. "I can set that right."

He tramped out of the Rag, and hurried up to the Remove passage. The door of Study No. 1 was closed; he opened it and looked in.

Harry Wharton was leaning on the table, his face white as chalk. Bob felt a pang of compassion and remorse.

"Wharton, old man—" he said.

Wharton looked at him. He did not speak; but his eyes glittered.

"Look here, it was a rotten mistake—I've found out what you heard at my study door—I never meant—"

"Get out!"

"I was speaking about football—it was a football meeting—I meant we were done with you as footer captain, because of your detention—"

"Get out!"

"Won't you listen to me?" asked Bob.

"I tell you—I give you my word—"

"Will you get out of my study?"

"I want you to understand—"

But it was too late, and Bob realised it. The captain of the Remove came to wards him, with clenched fists, and glinting eyes from a white face.

"Get out, or I'll throw you out!"

Bob stepped back quickly, and shut the door. It was all over now, and he knew it only too clearly as he left Study No. 1. THE END.

(Now look out for next week's MAGNET and a ripping Guy Fawkes' yarn of Harry Wharton & Co., entitled: "THE GLORIOUS 'FIFTH' AT GREY-FRIARS!" It's full of big bangs and explosive surprises. And don't forget that this issue will contain six more FREE picture stamps to stick in your album.)

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STAMPS

THE RED FALCON!

By ARTHUR STEFFENS.

READ THIS FIRST.

Convicted of robbing the Earl of Huntford of a diamond star, Hal Lovett and Jerry McLean are conveyed to the convict hulk *Ethalion*, anchored at Woolwich. As the result of a prearranged plan, the convicts fire the ship, and Hal and Jerry escape. After a series of exciting adventures they pay a nocturnal visit to Huntford Hall, the home of their enemy. They are caught in the act, however, but thanks to the timely intervention of Isaac Quilt, who happens to be on the same lay, manage to evade capture. Acting on the advice of Quilt to make for the Grey Mill Inn, Epping, the two adventurers gallop off in the direction of Chading Wharf to catch the ferry for the Essex coast.

The Essex Crossing!

THE ride to Chading Wharf and the ferry which was to take them over to the Essex coast, was a long and hard one. No signposts showed the way. Jerry and Hal were careful in approaching toll-gates and in making inquiries, for travellers in the night were few.

At the tail of a London-bound coach they managed to pass one of the toll-bars on the main coast road.

Though their horses were conspicuously like those that had been owned by the Blackheath squire and the famous Bow Street officer, Martin Cosgrave, the tollkeeper failed to recognise them. Perhaps his eyes were dimmed with sleep.

Chading lay off the main road. They rode through narrow, muddy, rutted lanes trying to find it, and in the grey of dawn came upon a gaping rustic who put them right.

Day had broken when Jerry and Hal rode down to the wharf at Chading and asked for Charlie Marten.

A bearded and surly looking bargee directed them with a throw of a hand which held a discoloured clay pipe.

"You'll find Mr. Marten in the 'ouse," he said.

The house was a tarred brick building with a slated roof, flat-fronted, and ugly. Some fishing-nets were drying on the tarred brick walls. The door of the house stood open, and a smell of sizzling bacon emanated from the interior.

Jerry and Hal rode their horses right up to the door, dismounted, and looked in.

A fat, bearded man sat in his shirt-sleeves at a round table in a tiny room so littered with furniture and rubbish that he could scarcely move.

"Mr. Charlie Marten?" said Jerry, with a grin.

The man's grey eyes narrowed as he took stock of the strange horsemen.

"That's my name," he said. "And who may you be? Been fighting, by the looks of your bruised faces and your torn clothes."

It was a direct challenge.

Jerry cast a glance over his shoulder to make sure that the man with the clay pipe had not followed them, then crossed the threshold.

"Charlie," he said, in a friendly tone that made the fat-faced man smile and nod approvingly, "Isaac Quilt sent us to you. He said you would take us and our horses over to the Essex side."

"Did he?" answered Marten. "And what's it worth to you, my fine gentleman?"

Jerry planked a guinea on the round tabletop.

"That," he said, "and more if you deem that insufficient."

Charlie Marten pocketed the guinea without a word, then got slowly on to his feet. Pushing Jerry on one side first, he looked the horses over, then again took stock of the men. Then he pulled a piece of crumpled paper out of his pocket. It was covered with the neatest writing.

"You can read, I can't," he said. "What does that say?"

Jerry read the following:

"The man McLean is riding a fine bay hunter known as Galloper. The boy, Hal Lovett, rides a chestnut stolen from the Bow Street officer, Martin Cosgrave. These two men are convicts recently escaped from the burnt out hulk *Ethalion* under cover of a mutiny. It is thought likely that they might try to cross the Thames to the Essex coast."

This sentence at once caught Jerry's eyes, but there was much more of it, and this in particular, that the adventurers were wanted "Dead or alive!"

"Well?" queried Charlie Marten, with a grin, when Jerry had finished reading and handed the paper to Hal.

"You know what the paper says?" rejoined Jerry.

"I've had it read to me by a scholar," answered Marten. "Maybe those two it mentions are you and your friend."

"And what if they are?"

There was a long pause during which Marten looked at Jerry and Hal again. Then he took out the gold coin and examined it, turning it over and over in his palm.

"In that case, since Isaac Quilt sent you," he said, "I've a mind to ferry you across in the light barge. And as a labourer is worthy of his hire, I shan't mind taking your guinea. But, friends, we shall have to wait till dusk before we start. There are lots of prying eyes about here."

"For instance," said Jerry, jerking his thumb at the man with the clay pipe, who was going on with his smoking.

"Oh, you can trust old Jimmy!" said Charlie Marten. "He only acts under my orders."

He shrilled a whistle, and the man with the clay pipe ceased smoking, waved his hand, and whistled back an answer.

"All safe, Jimmy?" called Charlie Marten.

"Safe as you say, Charlie," drawled the man in answer, and he went on with his smoking.

Charlie Marten beckoned the travellers into the house.

"You can put up your horses in the old boathouse!" he cried. "I'll get Jimmy to bring 'em in a feed of hay and a drink o' water. You can groom 'em down after breakfast. You'd better

stay inside the house till sundown, though. It wouldn't do for you to be seen here. Anyone see you come along?"

"Only Jimmy, that I am aware of," replied Jerry.

The horses were eventually housed, and later fed and groomed. Jerry and Hal spent the day sleeping on rough beds just under the roof of the ferryman's quaint old house.

When the night shut in they took their horses along the wharf and down a bank, where some planks had been run to the waiting barge.

The horses were led on board, after which the planks were cast off, and the barge was pushed out into deeper water. Here she slowly drifted away on the tide, the helmsman swinging her about. Then the brown sails were run up to the rattle and squeak of a turning winch.

A breeze filled the flapping canvas and billowed it out, and soon the light craft was cutting up-river and heading across the Thames to where the low line of the Essex shore showed up grey in the hanging mist.

The tide was running out, and progress was slow. Lights gleamed upon the river, and twinkled here and there far inland as the craft drew near to the Essex shore.

The sail was half-lowered and the pace of the barge checked. She drifted slowly, ever so slowly in, whilst Jimmy, hanging over the side, took his soundings and called out hoarse directions.

Suddenly the stem grated on gravel, and the sail came down with a run. They were over.

Lights were flashed, and planks were run from the deck of the barge down to the shore. The horses were led gently down these. Then Jerry and Hal shook hands with Charlie Marten and thanked him and Jimmy. A shower of silver coins rewarded the latter.

Then Jerry and Hal led their horses up on to the grass bank. From there they looked back.

"All right, Charlie!" called Jerry McLean.

"All right, comrade," answered Marten, as he filled his pipe and handed his tobacco-pouch to Jimmy. "The barge will float off again when the tide runs in. She's almost due to turn now. Go straight on, and bear left after you've passed the railed end of the road half a mile away yonder. Mind you don't fall into the muddy creeks. There's scores of 'em about. When you get to the Grey Mill Inn give my kind regards to Simon Babbett."

Jerry called back a promise, and then led the horses on.

Soon they came to a rail, and, passing it, entered a weed-grown road. With

the reek of Thames mud in their nostrils they mounted and rode slowly onward, glad when the moon came up so that they could see their way.

An hour later they came to a highway. They passed a tollgate and found a direction-post. Then they began some hard riding. But it was after midnight when they at last came within sight of the Grey Mill Inn.

All around and about them was the glorious forest of Epping. The Grey Mill Inn nestled in a bower of oak-trees. Its doors were shut, and most of its windows in darkness when the travellers rode up. Jerry swung himself out of the saddle and led Galloper by the rein to a window from which a light gleamed.

Through this he peeped—and inside, to his blank amazement, he saw a man seated in the bar-parlour talking to a florid-looking, burly man clothed in brown, who, Jerry supposed, must be the landlord, Simon Babbett. But it was not Simon Babbett who attracted Jerry's attention, but the other man, the sight of whom made him whistle.

"Jerry," said Hal Lovett, as he flung himself out of the saddle and joined his friend, "what is it?"

"Come and look, Hal!" whispered Jerry McLean.

As he peered in through the diamond panes, Hal Lovett also recognised the man who was talking to the landlord of the Grey Mill Inn. He was Martin Cosgrave, chief of the Bow Street Runners, and the mortal enemy of the knights of the road!

Jerry McLean seized Hal by the arm, and their eyes met.

Cosgrave's ruddy face was stretched in a smile, and the two adventurers could see him emphasising his words with an emphatic shaking of his forefinger. They could not hear what he was saying, but his deep-chested laughter reached them outside.

"Martin Cosgrave here!" cried Hal

Lovett, with a dubious shake of his curly head. "From what Isaac Quilt and Charlie Marten said, we ought to have found friends instead. What's brought Cosgrave out so far from London, I wonder?"

"The answer, my boy, is that we are supposed to have friends here. And what sort of friends are we likely to run into, but highwaymen and house-breakers and thieves? That's our luck, boy. I've no doubt Cosgrave has received information. We must watch the inn. I don't suppose Cosgrave has come alone. We can't approach Simon Babbett until the Runners have gone. Let's go and snate! an hour's sleep. We'll keep watch on the Grey Mill Inn in the morning."

The two adventurers turned into the forest, sought a dry, sheltered spot, and tied up their horses in a grassy hollow. Then they threw themselves down on a bed of dry-leaves and slept.

The birds awakened them at day-break, and stretching themselves, they took the horses farther into the forest. Having done this, they went back to the fringe of the wood, hid themselves

among the trees, and fixed their eyes upon the Grey Mill Inn.

Market carts rumbled lazily along the road, and some humble horsemen rode by. A coach clattered along to the tune of a post horn, raced past the inn with a challenging fanfaronade, and then vanished round a bend with wheels spinning and dust flying. Some yokels strolled up to the inn and took their seats at the table which had been placed outside. A buggy and a curriculo arrived. Hens scratched about in the dirt, and the sign swung creaking on its hinges, adding its squeak to the medley of country sounds.

Later, a man wearing a three-cornered hat and a red waistcoat came out of the inn yard, looked up and down the road, and went back again. It was a Bow Street Runner, but not Martin Cosgrave.

About half an hour after that two Runners showed themselves, and stayed chatting in the bright sunshine. Then a third Bow Street officer led a couple of horses out. Martin Cosgrave appeared at the inn door, by which time a score of gaping rustics had gathered to blink at the celebrated thief-takers. Cosgrave had brought a patrol with him. Soon there were a dozen men and their horses grouped outside the inn. Jerry and Hal saw Cosgrave shake hands with the landlord and swing himself into his saddle, giving his hanger a hitch. His men ranged themselves behind him. Then a touch of hand to hat brim, a word of command, and round the whole lot swung to canter away and vanish round the bend which the coach had taken.

(Hal and Jerry have certainly had some narrow escapes, haven't they? What fate awaits them in the Grey Mill Inn? Look out for further exciting chapters of this grand highwayman yarn in next week's MAGNET, which will also contain six more FREE picture stamps to stick in your album.)

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No. 5 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

October 29th, 1932.

THE NEW Official Herald

EXTRA GOOD EDITION

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REASSURING:
 The suggestion that the dynamite stores in the school miniature rifle ranges are not safely protected can be dismissed as absurd. Why, when we mentioned it to Gosling, he simply exploded with laughter!

NEW KIDS READ THIS

PRESSMAN SOLVES "A.O.M.C." PUZZLE

MYSTIC RITES BEHIND LOCKED DOORS

The secret of the A.O.M.C. is out, lads (writes our Special Commissioner). I declared that I'd find out all about this mysterious secret society or bust, and by penetrating the strong-hold of the movement, I have been able to learn everything! As it was impossible to get past the door without a membership badge, I took the precaution of hiring Stolt, one of the leading members, into my study before the meeting. Having bound and gagged him, I annexed his membership badge, locked him in the study, and set off in a mood of optimism which was soon justified by my getting past the stowards on the box-room door without a challenge. The scenes I witnessed in the course of the following half-hour were simply staggering! First, the celebrated W. G. Bunter, who has been known for some time to be the head of the movement, entered to the strains of "See the Conquering Hero Comes." From a comb-and-paper band, Bunter, with great solemnity, then donned his robes of office and ceremonial jewelry, which consisted chiefly of an inverted saucapam on his head and a chain of cups, books, inkwells, old boots, and rolling-pins round his neck!

The members of the A.O.M.C. then performed a kind of war-dance round the throne on which Bunter had taken his seat. Headed by Snoop, they charged round and round for quite a long time, concluding with their secret ritual of two high kicks, a fist-shaking show, and the hurling of invisible objects at each other. This extraordinary performance, in which I had to join to escape suspicion, left me open-mouthed with surprise! When order had been restored



other members besides me have got the nerve to take our stuff down to old Solomon in Court-field and sell it, and you all jolly well know it!"

"Now what about sharing out last week's proceeds?" asked Tribb of the Third.

"I was just going to mention that," Bunter said. "Brothers of the Ancient Order of Missile Collectors—"

And that's how I learned what it was all about! The whole world can know now that "A.O.M.C." stands for "Ancient Order of Missile Collectors." The proceedings of the most dreary minutes left no doubts as to the aims and objects of the Order, and when Bunter, having failed to account satisfactorily for the proceeds of the Order's last "haul," went flying out of the box-room on his neck, I knew the whole thing from A to Z.

Let it be known, then, that the Ancient Order of Missile Collectors consists of fellows who are always having objects flung at them by exasperated colleagues. Instead of leaving those objects lying uselessly about, the members of the A.O.M.C. collect them and take them along to Bunter, who, in turn, takes them down to Courtfield and sells them!

It's staggering—it's almost incredible—but there you are! The "Greyfriars Herald," needless to say, intends to keep a very sharp eye on the A.O.M.C. in the future!

TEA ON TAP

Weird Wheeze That Went Wrong

Fisher T. Fish startled the Remove one day last week by staggering up the stairs carrying a tremendous burden of long metal pipes. Several lags were staggering after him with a collection of similar pipes, and one immense urn.

"What on earth is the giddy game?" demanded Johnny Bill.

"You ask no questions and I guess I'll tell you no terminology! Inexhaustible!" was Fishy's grinning reply.

That was all we could get out of him for the time being. We couldn't help wondering what he was up to. His preparations were most mysterious. He had the pipes along both sides of the Remove passage and connected them with a main pipe leading into his study. It was all very intriguing. Then, on the following



morning, he revealed the secret. His stunt was to supply tea from the top on the penny-in-the-slop principle to every study in the Remove! All we had to do, it seemed, was to open our study doors, insert a penny in the nearest slot, and hold a cup underneath the tap. Half a pint of tea, with

wouldn't work, and that Fishy ought to be sent to a mental home.

"Hard words break no bones, I guess!" grinned Fish. "You wait till tea-time to-day."

As it turned out, we didn't have to wait so long as that. Just as we were turning out from afternoon lessons, there was a terrific explosion from the direction of the Remove quarters. When we arrived an amazing sight met our eyes. The pipes had burst in half a dozen places, and boiling tea and steam was shooting out all over the passage! The hot tea promised by Fishy had evidently got a good deal too hot!

Mops and pads were hastily brought into use, and Fishy rushed to turn off the heat.

Quickly turned up in the middle of the pandemonium, Quelch has a magic gift for turning up at the wrong moment! Fishy's automatic tea-supplying apparatus has now been dismantled.

Fishy is at present squirming all round his study after a painful interview with the same Quelch.

AS OTHERS SEE THEM

What I Think of Lord Mauleverer by PERCY BOLSOVER

What's he, anyway? I could knock him into the middle of next week, if I felt like it! If all the slackers I ever knew, that blessed be! ever is the slackest! For instance, last night, instead of turning up his appointment to referee a flap in the gym, he fell fast asleep in his study! That's the kind of chump Mauleverer is!

I could understand the fellow snoozing his life away if he hadn't any money. But it simply beats me to see a chap who's rolling in gold wasting his days! Why, if I received half the pocket-money Mauleverer has, there'd be no holding me. I'd go to big fights and shows, have a hired car out every town road! But money means nothing to Mauleverer!

Of course, he's a good-hearted fellow and all that. I've borrowed many a half-crown from him—and paid it back, by the way! Why, I don't know, but there's something about him that makes me want to do it.

Perhaps it's because Mauleverer may not be such a sleepy-head after all. You

get a kind of idea, now and again, that underneath those half-closed lids of his he's eyeing you with a lot more interest than he shows openly! Whether it is so or not, I'm dashed if I can say. But I've often noticed when he does wake up and talk that he knows a thundering sight more about other chaps in the Remove than I know myself!

Still, the fact remains that he's a prize slacker who badly needs shaking up and kicking down the Remove passage. One of these days when I can spare time from my numerous fighting engagements, I'm going to do it!

(Don't miss Mauleverer giving out a few home-truths about Bolsover in next week's issue, chaps!—Ed.)

SEXTON LEE'S AMAZING METHODS

Sexton Leo, the great sleuth, dropped in at Greyfriars last week at a most opportune moment.

Vernon-Smith, after licking Angel of the Fourth, and rowing with Mr. Quelch, had completed a Trouble Trouble by getting accused of unbarfing a flag over the School House bearing the following words:

"Quelch's unjust from head to toes—One day I'll bust his blinking nose!"

None of the chaps believed it was his work really; but, when accused, he smiled a sneering smile and laughed mockingly. The heck awarded mirth a detention.

Sexton Leo, when approached, promptly agreed to investigate the mystery, and in less than five minutes was staggering us by his amazing methods.

Knitting his brows, he stopped Mr. Quelch as he was walking through the hall.

"You are quite sure that all the evidence in this flag affair points to Vernon-Smith's guilt, Mr. Quelch?" he asked.

"I don't know who you are, sir, but it undoubtedly does!"

"Then, obviously," smiled Sexton Leo, "Vernon-Smith is not the culprit. I have always found that the person against whom the evidence points is innocent, while the person whom nobody could suspect is guilty! Now, you are the last person on earth one could suspect of putting up the flag, are you not?"

"Bless my soul! I most certainly am!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

Sexton Leo laughed.

"In that case, you are undoubtedly the guilty party. Probably you did it while hypothesised, or during a fit of somnambulism. Glad to have been able to solve the mystery, sir! Call me in again when an innocent boy's name wants clearing!"

Sexton Leo then cleared off, leaving Quelch completely petrified!

Unfortunately he wasn't convinced. However, we're glad to say Vernon-Smith managed to prove his own innocence. He found a bill for the flag in Aubrey Angel's study, and after underlining Aubrey's name, sent it on to Quelch. So that was all right!

By the way, as we go to press, we learn that "Sexton Leo" was only Wibley, up to one of his weird japes!

Tonzy's Little Letters

Dear Editor—I am sorely perplexed by an impeded inhibitory condition occasioned by an inordinate increase in the membranous secretion of rhema appertaining to my nasal organ. The House Dame recommends atmospheric equability contemporaneously with the inhalation of encyclopaedias as an alternative measure against the catarrhal irritation.

Yours truly,
 ALONZO TODD.

(Take our advice, old bean, and go to bed with a wet towel round your nappy! Ed.)

DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM

A friend with a feed is a friend indeed, as I thought when Lord Mauleverer treated me in the Courtfield Banishment to get in conversation with the new young lord behind the counter!

Still, I think she ought to be warned he's been spoozy on all the other young ladies there. My advice to her is: Dough-nut trust him, gentle maiden!

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

