

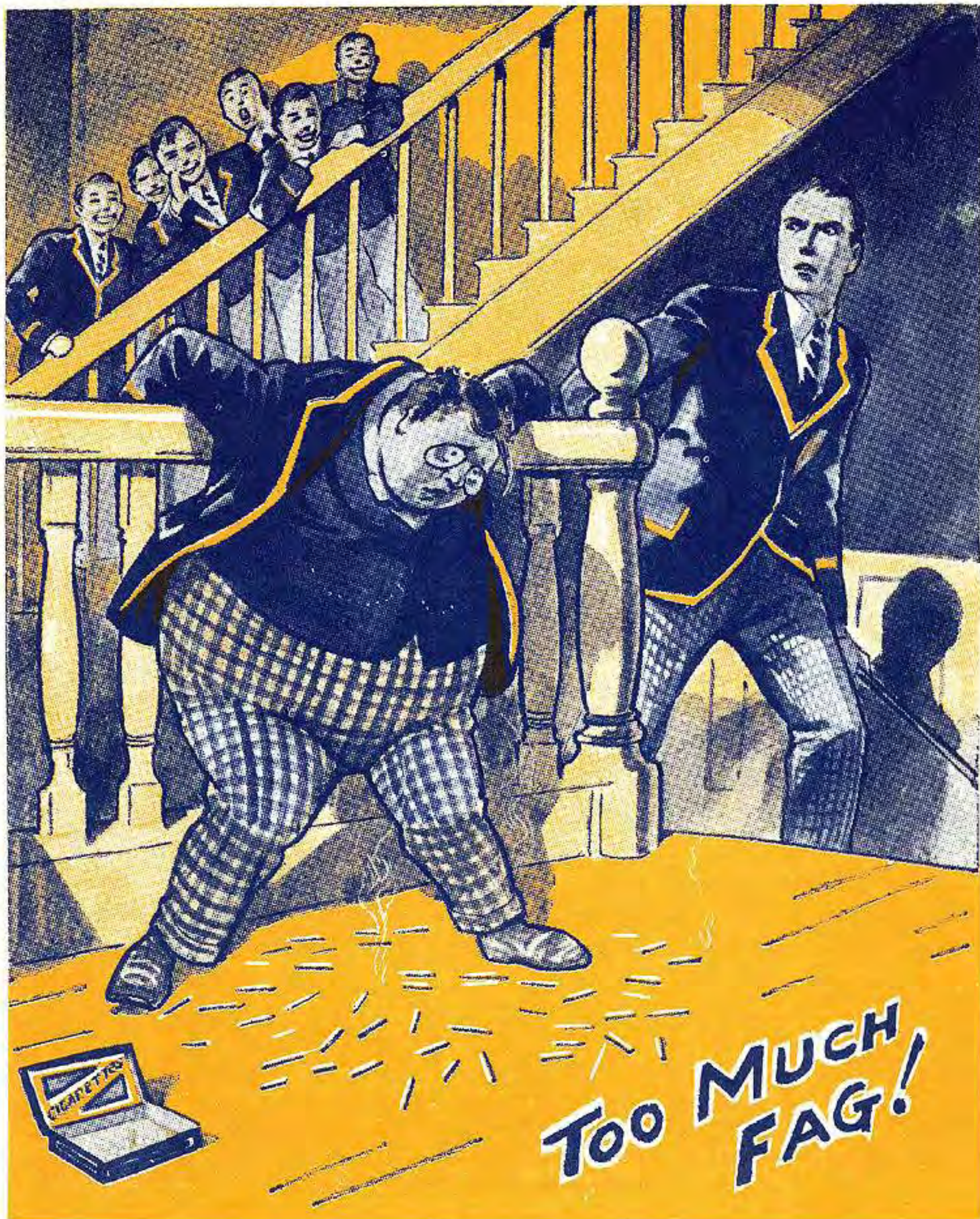
"WHO WALLOPED WINGATE?" This week's sensational story of
Harry Wharton & Co. of Greyfriars.

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A Wonderful Long Complete School Story of HARRY WHARTON & CO., the Famous Chums of Greyfriars.

BY FRANK RICHARDS.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Black Ingratitude!

"MY treat!" said Billy Bunter. Five fellows smiled all at once.

It was after class at Greyfriars School, and Harry Wharton & Co. had walked down to the tuckshop.

It happened—as it had happened before—that money was tight. Each member of the Famous Five, as it unluckily happened, was in the doleful, dismal state known as "stony." Each fellow, however, while only too painfully aware of his own stony state, was unaware of the stony state of his comrades. It was not till they arrived at the school shop and compared notes that the discovery was made. It was, as Bob Cherry mournfully remarked, a case of "I am stony, thou art stony, he is stony!"

Whereupon the Famous Five of the Remove left the tuckshop again without having sampled Mrs. Mimble's good things. Billy Bunter met them as they came out, blinked at them through his big spectacles, and stopped them with a wave of a fat hand.

Had any other Remove man stopped them and announced that it was "his treat," the chums of the Remove would have been interested. But such an announcement from Billy Bunter only made them smile. They knew Billy Bunter's treats of old! It was not much use accepting a treat from Billy Bunter unless a fellow had money in his pocket to foot the bill. And the Famous Five had none!

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"I mean it!" said Bunter impressively. "I say, you fellows, it's my treat—really!"

"Can't afford it!" said Johnny Bull, with a shake of the head.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Nothing doing!" said Frank Nugent. "You'll have to treat somebody else, Bunter; we're all stony!"

"The stoniffulness is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

That information, as a rule, would have caused Billy Bunter to roll away in search of fellows who were not stony. Now he did not roll away. He remained where he was, blinking indignantly at the chums of the Remove.

"I say, you fellows, I've said that I mean it! It's my treat, I tell you! You come along with me!"

"If you mean it—" said Harry Wharton, very doubtfully.

"I do, old chap! Come on! Fellows make out that I never stand a fellow anything!" said Bunter, more in sorrow than in anger. "They make out that I sponge on fellows, you know, and never stand my whack! Well, I'll show you! You come along with me, old beans!"

"Well, my hat!" ejaculated Bob Cherry.

Bunter seemed to be in earnest. The Famous Five exchanged glances. They were not very keen on a "treat" from Bunter, even if he was in earnest for once. Still, it would have been ungracious to decline.

"Let's!" said Harry.

And the stony quintet followed Billy Bunter. As he marched away from the tuckshop they expected him to head for the House. But he rolled in the direction of the Cloisters, and they followed

him in that direction. The treat, apparently, was to be handed out in that secluded spot. Why, was, so far, a mystery.

"Don't look round, you fellows!" murmured Bunter. "Wingate's got his eye on us, I believe."

"Eh?"

Harry Wharton glanced round. Wingate of the Sixth, the captain of Greyfriars, was in the quad, talking to Hilton of the Fifth. He did not seem to be paying any attention to the party of juniors, and Wharton could not see that it mattered if he did. There was no law, written or unwritten, against a feed in the Cloisters.

"Don't get his eye on us, you ass!" whispered Bunter.

"Why not?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

Bunter rolled on, and the juniors followed him under the old stone arches of the ancient Cloisters. Whether Wingate of the Sixth had his eye on them or not, they were out of his sight now.

"Here we are!" said Bunter, halting, and blinking through his big spectacles as if to make sure that the coast was clear.

"Yes, here we are!" agreed Bob. "But where's the feed?"

"I didn't say it was a feed."

"Eh? You said it was a treat!" said Bob, puzzled.

"So it is," said Bunter. "I'll explain if you'll listen for a moment instead of jawing, old chap! It would have been a feed, and a jolly good one, but for that beast Coker of the Fifth! He came along just when I was going into his study!"

"Wha-at?"

"He's had a hamper!" explained Bunter.

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter. They knew all about the wonderful hampers that Coker of the Fifth received from his Aunt Judy, though they were not so interested in those hampers as Bunter was. On the subject of hampers Billy Bunter was a Bolshevik. Bunter's trouble was not whether the hamper belonged to him, but whether he could get at it!

"You fat worm!" growled Johnny Bull. "Mean to say, you've been grub-raiding in Coker's study?"

"Oh, really, Bull, I told you the beast came along just when I was going into his study! You know what Coker's like—he would have fancied at once that I was after his hamper if he'd seen me!"

"And weren't you?" asked Frank.

"Oh, really, Nugent! Look here, as soon as I saw Coker coming, I dodged into the next study for cover—Hilton's study; Hilton and Price. See?"

"Blessed if I see!" said Harry Wharton, staring. "If you'd bagged Coker's tuck, and asked us here to wolf it, we'd scrag you! But if you haven't—"

"Will you let a fellow speak—or won't you let a fellow speak?" demanded the fat Owl of the Remove warmly.

"Oh, get on with it!"

"Well, I had to stick in Hilton's study till the coast was clear. They weren't there, you know, and I squinted round the study—"

"You would!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"And in the table drawer—"

"You looked in the table drawer?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Yes, old chap!"

"You fat scoundrel, what did you do that for?"

"Eh? To see what was in it, of course!" said Bunter, blinking. "There might have been a box of chocs or something."

"Oh, my hat!"

"There wasn't!" said Bunter sadly. "Those Fifth Form rotters don't buy chocs—they buy cigarettes! Now, it's strictly against the rules for any fellow at Greyfriars to smoke or keep smokes in his study, ain't it?"

"Tell us something we don't know!"

"If a master or a prefect spotted those smokes in Hilton's study, they'd be confiscated, and Hilton and Price would get into a fearful row!" went on Bunter. "In the circumstances, I took away the smokes!"

"You've pinched that ass Hilton's fags?" exclaimed Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Serve the silly ass right, if you come to that!" said Bob Cherry. "Have you chucked them away, or what?"

"Oh, don't be a silly ass!" said Bunter peevishly. "Catch me chucking away a half-crown box of cigarettes! That's the treat!"

"What?" gasped the Famous Five.

Billy Bunter groped under his jacket. He produced a cardboard box, adorned with gilt lettering. Harry Wharton & Co. stared at it blankly. Bunter opened the lid. The box was nearly full of cigarettes. The Famous Five gazed at them.

"They're jolly good!" said Bunter. "Better than the Bounder smokes—much better than Skinner's! Really good smokes, you fellows! We're safe enough here; nobody's likely to barge into the

Cloisters—see? Smokes all round, and as many as you like! Nothing mean about me, I hope! Help yourselves!"

Bunter selected a cigarette and inserted it into his large mouth. Stupefied, the Famous Five gazed at him. Billy Bunter certainly would never have spent his own money on smokes. Money was too valuable to be wasted like that. Still, Bunter rather fancied himself as a merry dog, and he would smoke a cigarette if he could get one for nothing. Now he had got quite a lot for nothing. Generously he was offering to stand treat to the Famous Five! This was Bunter's treat!

"Got a match, Wharton?" he asked.

"A—a—a match!" stuttered the captain of the Remove.

"Yes; give a fellow a light!"

"Couldn't you steal any matches while you were stealing the cigarettes?" hooted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull! If that's the way you thank a fellow for standing you a treat—an expensive treat—"

"You fat rotter!" roared Johnny. "Do you think we want to smoke Hilton's filthy cigarettes?"

"They're not filthy—they're jolly good! And I believe they're Price's, not Hilton's! Gimme a match!"

?

There never was a head prefect and "skipper" of a school with fewer enemies than George Wingate. But, despite that popularity, there dwells within the age-old walls of Greyfriars a bitter, implacable enemy who will stop at nothing in his desire for revenge.

?

"Gentlemen, chaps, and sportsmen!" said Bob Cherry. "Bunter has offered us a treat! We decline without thanks! Now I vote that we treat Bunter—as he deserves!"

"Hear, hear!"

"I say, you fellows!" roared Bunter. "Leggo! Grrroooooogh! Gurrgh!" Five pairs of hands grasped Bunter all at once, and the cigarette slipped into his mouth as he roared. It was rather fortunate for Bunter that he had not yet lighted it. "Gurrgh! Leggo! Urrgh! I'm chook-chook-choking—Urrgh!"

Johnny Bull grasped the box of cigarettes from the fat hand. He shoved it down Bunter's back. With one cigarette in his mouth and the rest down the back of his neck, the fat Owl of the Remove roared and wriggled and gurgled.

Bump!

Bunter sat on the hard, unsympathetic flagstones.

"If you want some more of the same, old fat bean," said Bob Cherry, "you've only to offer us another such treat!"

And the Famous Five walked back to the quad, leaving Billy Bunter gurgling wildly and making frantic efforts to extract a box of cigarettes from the back of his neck.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

The Way of the Transgressor!

"O O O O O-ER!"

That peculiar sound proceeded from Study No. 7 in the Remove passage. Two or three fellows in the passage heard it, and glanced towards the door of Study No. 7.

"Ooooo-er! Woooo-er! Gurrgh!"

It was tea-time, and Remove fellows were coming up to the studies to tea. Every fellow who passed the door of Study No. 7 heard that strange and horrid sound from within.

On a Channel steamer on a rough day that sound would not have been surprising. It was rather uncommon in the Remove passage at Greyfriars.

"I guess that fat clam Bunter sounds sort of sick!" remarked Fisher T. Fish, and he grinned and passed on his way.

"Grooogh-errr!"

Lord Mauleverer stopped and opened the door and glanced in. Mauly had a kind and sympathetic nature.

"Oh gad!" ejaculated his lordship at the sight of the interior of Study No. 7.

The atmosphere of that study was thick with smoke! On the table was a box of cigarettes. On the floor were several cigarette-stumps. In the arm-chair was Billy Bunter—leaning back, with a ghastly face.

Generally Bunter's complexion was rather like that of a ripe apple. Now it resembled wax.

His spectacles had slipped down his fat little nose. Over them he blinked dismally at Lord Mauleverer.

"You fat ass!" said Mauleverer. "Have you been smokin'?"

"Ooooo-er!"

"Anythin' a man can do for you?"

"Grooogh-errr!"

"Poor old bean!" said Mauly, and he ambled on. There was nothing he could do for Bunter! Bunter had to suffer for his sins.

The Owl of the Remove groaned dismally. Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, looked in.

"Anybody killing a pig here?" he asked.

Groan!

The Bounder sniffed at the smoke, glanced at the box of cigarettes, and stared at Bunter. Then he burst into a roar.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ooooo-er!" moaned Bunter. "Beast! Owl! Ooooooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Bounder, and he walked away, leaving Bunter to groan and gurgle and guggle.

Peter Todd and Tom Dutton, who had the pleasure—or otherwise—of sharing that study with Bunter, came in to tea, Peter with a parcel under his arm. They stared at the unhappy Owl.

"What the thump—" exclaimed Toddy.

"Oooo-er!"

"You've been smoking here!" roared Peter.

"Gurrgh!"

"You fat villain! Where did you get those smokes?" demanded Peter. "You never bought them! You've pinched them!"

"Wurrgh! I—I wish I'd never seen them!" moaned Bunter. "I—I've only smoked six—"

"Oh, my hat! Only six! You blithering fat owl—"

"I—I think I'm dying!" said Bunter feebly. "I say, old fellow, call Quelch, will you, and ask him to send for the doctor! Oooooogh!"

"Yes, you'd better let Quelch know that you've been smoking!" grinned Peter. "You'll get six from Quelch!"

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"I—I—I'm fearfully ill!"

"You look it!" agreed Peter. "Look here, we've got sosses for tea—"

Bunter shuddered.

That news at any other time would have brought him out of the armchair with a bound. Now it seemed only to make him feel worse. For once in his fat career Bunter did not want to eat! The mere mention of food horrified him. His fat interior was in the state of Vesuvius just before an eruption. He had a feeling as if the inner Bunter had got loose from its moorings and was floating about! Really, it was awful!

"I—I—I say, d-d-d-don't you cook sosses here!" groaned Bunter. "I—I—I couldn't s-s-stand it! Oooo-er!"

"Shall I cook them in the passage?" asked Toddy sarcastically.

"Beast!"

"Get up and grease the frying-pan for me!"

"Urrrrgh!"

"Smoky little beast!" said Tom Dutton. "You're not keeping this muck here!"

Dutton picked up the box of cigarettes and tossed it through the open doorway into the passage. Cigarettes scattered far and wide.

Bunter was too far gone to raise any objection to that drastic method of dealing with his property. From the bottom of his fat heart he wished that he had never snaffled those cigarettes from a Fifth Form study. He never wanted to see a cigarette again as long as he lived—and, indeed, he did not expect to live long! He felt as if he was expiring!

Peter Todd threw open the study window and waved a book about to clear off the smoke. Then he started frying sausages for tea.

Generally the scent of frying sausages would have drawn Bunter like a magnet. He would have snuffed that delightful scent like a warhorse snuffing the battle from afar. Now it drew a horrible groan from him, and he staggered out of the armchair.

"Beast!" he moaned.

And he tottered to the doorway. He tottered into the passage. There he leaned on the wall and moaned.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five came up the Remove staircase. They had come up to tea with Mauleverer; but they stopped at the sight of the suffering Owl.

"What on earth's the matter, Bunter?" exclaimed Harry Wharton.

"Wurrrrrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled Johnny Bull.

"He's been smoking those fags!"

"The smokefulness seems to have been terrific!"

"Poor old Bunter!" chuckled Frank Nugent.

"Urrrrgh!" moaned Bunter. "I say, you fellows, I'm dying! I—I say, go and tut-tut-tut—"

"Which?" asked Bob.

"Tut-tut-telephone for a dick-dock-doctor!" gurgled Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A crowd of fellows gathered round Bunter. His ghastly fat face might have moved a heart of stone. But there seemed to be a plentiful lack of sympathy among the Removites. The Bounder, standing in the doorway of Study No. 4, roared with laughter. Skinner and Snoop chortled. Every face wore a grin. Wibley of the Remove tapped Bunter on a fat shoulder.

"Brace up!" he said encouragingly. "I'll get you something for it, Bunter."

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"Eh? What?" asked Bunter, with a gleam of hope.

"A nice bit of fat bacon—"

"Grooooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"What about a chunk of lard?" asked Skinner.

"Wooooo—errr!"

"Or some cod-liver oil?" asked Kippa.

"Gurrrrrgh!"

Those cheery suggestions did not seem helpful to Bunter! He leaned on the wall, shuddered, and moaned.

"Will you kik-kik-call a did-did-doctor?" he gurgled. "I say, you fellows, I'm awfully ill—awful. I'm dud-dud-dying! Gurrrrrgh! Call Quelch—"

"You'll get over it, old fat man," said Harry Wharton. "Quelch will whop you for smoking! Better keep it dark."

"Beast!" moaned Bunter. "Grrgh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Billy Bunter tottered along to the Remove landing. There he clung to the banisters in a state of collapse. He groaned and moaned. He gurgled, and he goggled! The sounds that came from Bunter were really heartrending. There was a step on the lower stairs, and Wingate of the Sixth came up. He stopped on the lower landing and stared at the ghastly face over the banisters above. Then he came up quite hurriedly.

"Bunter! What's the matter with you?" he exclaimed.

"Gurrrgh!"

Wingate cast a glance round at a grinning crowd.

"It isn't a laughing matter, if this kid's ill!" he exclaimed angrily.

"What's the matter with him?"

Then the prefect's eye spotted scattered cigarettes in the Remove passage.

"You young ass!" he exclaimed.

"Have you been smoking?"

"Yurrrrrgh!"

"Vernon-Smith!" rapped Wingate.

"Hallo!" drawled the Bounder.

"Are these cigarettes yours?"

"Not guilty, my lord!" grinned Smithy.

"Are they yours, Skinner?"

"Never seen them before, Wingate!" answered Skinner.

"Where did you get them, Bunter?"

"Groooooogh!"

"Answer me!" snorted the captain of Greyfriars. "What have you got to say for yourself, you smoky little sweep?"

"Oooooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well," said Wingate, "you're not in a state to be whopped now! I'll whop you presently. Come to my study when you feel better."

"Oh crikey! Groooogh! Oh lor! Woooooogh!"

Wingate, frowning, tramped away down the stairs, and the Removites, chuckling, dispersed to the studies to tea. Bunter was left clinging to the banisters, moaning and groaning. Probably for the first time on record Billy Bunter did not want any tea.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Between Good and Evil!

STEPHEN PRICE, of the Fifth Form, scowled.

Price of the Fifth was lounging in the window-seat in his study. Two other Fifth Form men were there—Hilton, his study-mate, and Blundell, the captain of the Form. Hilton and Blundell were talking football, and both of them seemed to have forgotten the existence of Price. Footballing fellows never took much account

of Price, who played no games, out of doors, at all events. Billiards was Price's game, which he could not play at Greyfriars. He listened to the talk between the other two, with a deepening scowl on his rather thin face.

"Well, look here, I'm jolly glad of this!" Blundell was saying. "Wingate asked me to come along and speak to you, Hilton, and I'm glad I did. You can play a good game if you like, and I'll put you down for the Form match with pleasure. You've got a jolly good chance of a place in the First Eleven if you show up well—which I fancy is a bit better than sneaking out of bounds and playing the giddy ox, what?"

"Oh quite!" said Cedric Hilton, in his soft, drawling tones. "Rely on me for Wednesday, old bean."

"It's a go!" agreed the captain of the Fifth.

"There's something you've forgotten," said Price, breaking into the talk at last.

Blundell glanced round. He gave the black sheep of the Fifth a far from pleasant look.

"What's that?" he snapped.

"Speakin' to Hilton!" answered Price. "You seem to be forgettin', Cedric, that you're booked already for Wednesday afternoon."

Blundell's brow contracted.

"If you're booked for Wednesday afternoon with Price, Hilton, you can wash it out!" he said.

"It's nothin' particular," said Hilton. "That's all right, Blundell. You can rely on me, as I've said."

Blundell nodded, and left the study. Price rose from the window-seat and kicked the door shut after him. Then he turned and faced his friend.

"We'd better have this out, Cedric," he said sourly. "This isn't the first time this term that you've let me down! Wingate's been givin' you pi-jaw all the term, and now Blundell and his crew have taken you up. Last term you never bothered your head about Soccer."

"Last term isn't this term!" said Hilton. "What's the good of going on playing the goat, Pricey? Both of us were heading for the sack, and we've had some narrow shaves. If you'll take my advice, you'll do exactly as I'm doing—"

"I'll watch it!" sneered Price.

"Well, then, let's agree to differ!" drawled Hilton. "No need to row about it, old bean!"

"If you're throwing me over—" snarled Price.

"Not exactly! But if I can get my colours, I rather think I'd prefer that to losing quids on the billiards-table at the Cross Keys!" Hilton laughed. "What's the good of playing the goat, Pricey? It's a mug's game! You fancy yourself at spotting winners—but you nearly always lose! And the Head—"

"Bother the Head!"

"Well, he has had an eye on us! And I really don't want to be turfed out of Greyfriars. I'd rather play Soccer."

"Gettin' funky?" sneered Price.

Hilton shrugged his shoulders.

"If there's a funk in this study, it isn't little me!" he answered.

Price gave him a savage look. The dandy of the Fifth had always been a reckless scapegrace—wanting many qualities, but not wanting courage. Price lacked that very quality, and the fact was well known to both of them.

This was not the first time that the handsome scapegrace of the Fifth had turned over a new leaf. He was easy going and easily influenced—almost as easily influenced by a good fellow as by a bad one.

Now he was under the influence of the games-men, Blundell and his friends had given him a warm welcome—Wingate of the Sixth had gone out of his way to give him encouragement. Price, who had always been his evil genius, saw his own influence fading away to vanishing point.

He did not expect it to last! He knew Hilton's vacillating character too well for that; but it looked like lasting the whole term—which did not suit Price's book at all. A wealthy and reckless friend was very useful to Price, who was poor and had expensive tastes.

"Hold on," he said, as Hilton made a move towards the door. "Where are you goin'?"

"No. I won't!"
"You've done so often enough before."

"I know that! And I was a fool for my pains!" snapped Hilton angrily. "A precious show I should put up on Wednesday if I got ready for the game by smoking cigarettes. I haven't smoked this term, and I'm certainly not going to begin now. Give a fellow a rest."

Price groped in the table drawer, and then bent his head to stare into it. The box of cigarettes was not there.

"Have you had the smokes?" he asked.

"Don't be an ass!"

"You're more than welcome, if you

and the other pi-merchants! Do you think you can take me in?"

Hilton faced him, with a gleam in his eyes.

"I've told you that I know nothing about your rotten smokes," he said. "And you're calling me a liar! Well, now, I'll tell you this—I've put up with your filthy smoking in this study all this term, and I'll put up with it no longer. Bring any more smokes into this study, and I'll chuck them out of the room, see?"

"Will you?" said Price, between his teeth.

"Yes, and you after them, if you don't keep a civil tongue in your head!" snapped Hilton.



Billy Bunter groped under his jacket, produced a cardboard box, and opened the lid. "These are good smokes, you fellows," he said. "We're safe enough here—nobody's likely to barge into the Cloisters. See? Smokes all round, and as many as you like. Help yourselves!" "You fat rotter!" roared Bull. "Do you think we want to smoke Hilton's filthy cigarettes?"

"Staggorin' along to the games-study," answered Hilton. "I want to talk to some of the men there."

"About Soccer?" sneered Price.

"Why not?" demanded Hilton impatiently. "I'm playing for the Fifth on Wednesday. If you want to go to the Lantham races, you can easily find a fellow to go with—Loder of the Sixth, or Carne—"

"I don't want Loder or Carne," said Price sourly, "and I don't like bein' thrown over. I want my own pal."

Hilton hesitated, and did not leave the study. He sat on the edge of the table, swinging his elegant legs.

Price went to the table drawer and opened it. The fellow sitting on the table frowned. He knew what Price kept there.

"Look here, Pricey, if you're going to smoke, I'll get out," he said. "You don't want me here to watch you."

"You won't have a fag along with me?" sneered Price.

wanted them! I was only askin' you!" snapped Price. "They're gone!"

"What rot! How could they be gone?"

"Look for yourself."

Hilton slipped from the end of the table and impatiently came round to the end where the drawer was. Price had pulled it out to full length; and among the many articles it contained, nothing was to be seen of a box of cigarettes. Hilton stared into the drawer; and Price, standing back, gave him a bitter look.

"So that's it!" he sneered. "I fancied your pi-jaw was a bit thin! You make out that you've chucked smokin'—"

"You know I have!"

"Where are my smokes, then?" sneered Price. "I left a dozen at least in the box, and they're gone, box and all. For goodness' sake, chuck up trying to pull my leg. Cedric—you can keep all that for Wingate and Blundell,

"You cheeky cad!" yelled Price, his bitter temper breaking out. "You've had my smokes, and you want to make out—"

"I've told you I haven't had them!" "Liar!"

"That's enough!" Hilton made a stride across to his weedy study-mate, his eyes blazing.

Stephen Price made a backward jump. He was feeling savagely angry enough to have knocked his erstwhile pal headlong across the study; but anger could not supply the place of courage; and the blaze in Cedric Hilton's eyes daunted him. The colour wavered in his face as he jumped away, and backed against the wall.

"Hands off!" he stammered.

Hilton burst into a contemptuous laugh.

"You'd better screw up a little more pluck from somewhere, Pricey, before you start calling a fellow fancy names!"

he said, and he turned scornfully away and walked to the door.

Price's eyes followed him, glittering like a snake's. At that moment, the blackest sheep in Greyfriars hated his former friend more than any other fellow in the school. Hilton, taking no further notice of him, laid his hand on the door handle—and at the same moment there came a sharp rap on the door from without, and it opened.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER

Called on the Carpet!

"I SAY, you fellows!"
"Feeling better?" grinned Bob Cherry.
"Nunno! Worse!" said Bunter.

Bunter looked better, at all events. It was after tea, and Harry Wharton & Co. were going down. Now that the days were drawing out, there was light enough to punt a footer about after tea. Billy Bunter met them on the Remove landing, with a rather worried expression on his fat face. He seemed to have recovered a good deal from the internal convulsions caused by the snaffled smokes; but he was worried. Wingate had told him to come to his study when he felt better. Bunter knew what to expect when he got there. He was not anxious to go.

"I say, you fellows, I'm feeling worse—frightfully worse!" said the fat Owl of the Remove. "If you're going down, will you drop in on Wingate, and tell him so. Tell him I'm suffering fearfully, will you?"

"What are we to tell Wingate lies for?" inquired Harry Wharton politely, and his comrades chuckled.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Can't you run along and tell them yourself?" asked the captain of the Remove. "You're a better hand at it than I am! You've had more practice."

"Beast! I mean, look here, old chap, Wingate mightn't believe I am worse, if he saw me!" argued Bunter. "He's going to whop me for smoking, and I wasn't smoking, you know! Never touched a cigarette in my life."

"Oh, my hat!"

"But—but, Wingate mightn't believe that!" added Bunter.

"He mightn't!" chuckled Frank Nugent. "As he saw our giddy smokes all over the floor, and you as sick as a boiled owl, he mightn't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, if you tell him I'm fearfully ill, he may let the matter drop!" urged Bunter. "Tell him I'm practically lying at death's door! Tell him I'm lying—"

"No need to tell him that!" interrupted Johnny Bull. "He can guess that you are lying!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter. "I mean—"

"Better go to Wingate and get it over," advised the captain of the Remove. "You're booked for six! What's the good of putting it off?"

"You see, I don't want to be whopped!" explained Bunter. "It was bad enough to be made ill by Price's filthy cigarettes! Not that I smoked them, you know! I wouldn't! I took them away from his study just to give him a lesson—sort of joke on him, you know! But—"

Kipps of the Remove came up the stairs.

"Bunter here?" he called out. "Here,

Bunter, Wingate wants you! You're to go to his study at once!"

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

And he went! He did not want to go; very much indeed he did not want to call on the captain of Greyfriars; but there was no choice in the matter when he received an order from the head-prefect, and he rolled away dismally to the Sixth.

Wingate was in his study talking to Gwynne and Sykes of the Sixth. The door was half-open, and Bunter heard the Greyfriars captain's voice as he rolled up.

"Blundell says that Hilton is playing on Wednesday! I'm jolly glad of it—he's a good man at Soccer when he chooses."

"When?" remarked Sykes dryly.

"Well, he's all right when that shady sweep Price isn't leading him by the nose!" said Wingate. "That fellow would have been turfed out of the school before now, if he hadn't been as deep as a well. He will go too far one of these days, and there will be a crash. I shouldn't like to see Hilton come a mucker along with him."

Billy Bunter, in other circumstances, would probably have lingered at the door to listen, and learn details to be reported up and down the passages later; but he was too worried now even to indulge in his favourite entertainment of eavesdropping. He tapped on the door, and rolled into the study. The three Sixth-Form prefects glanced at him, and Wingate reached out to an ashplant that lay on the table.

"Oh, here you are, you young rascal!" said Wingate. "I told you to come here as soon as you felt better—"

"I—I'm feeling worse, Wingate!" groaned Bunter.

"You soon will be, at any rate!" said Wingate genially, swishing the cane in the air. "Bend over that chair!"

"I—I say, Wingate—"

"Bend over!" rapped the Greyfriars captain.

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter. Dismally he bent over the chair. The way of the transgressor is hard! Bunter had suffered internally for his sins! Now he was going to suffer externally.

Whack! Whack! Whack!

"Yow-ow-ow!" howled the Owl of the Remove.

"You needn't get up yet, Bunter," remarked Wingate. "I want to know where you got those smokes! I'm going to whop you till you tell me."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "I—I—I bought them, Wingate!"

"Where?" rapped Wingate.

"I—I mean, I found them!"

"Exactly! I want to know where."

"In—in the meadows—" stammered Bunter. "I—I was walking along by the river bank when I suddenly saw that box of cigarettes, and—yarooooh!"

Whack!

"Try again!" suggested Wingate, and Gwynne and Sykes grinned.

"Ow! Wow! I got them in a Fifth-Form study!" howled Bunter. "Wow! Ow! Oh scissors! Wow!"

"You mean to say that a senior gave smokes to a kid like you?" demanded the Greyfriars captain angrily.

"H—he—he didn't exactly give them to me," groaned Bunter. "I—I happened to be in the study, and I—I happened to squint into the table drawer and—and I happened to see them, and—and I took them away because—because it's against the rules to have smokes in the studies, you know—"

"Whose study?"

Billy Bunter blinked up at the captain of Greyfriars through his big spectacles. Bunter, with all his faults, was not a sneak, if he could help it. Wingate, as



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head prefect, was doing his bounden duty in investigating this matter. Bunter, on the other hand, was well aware that it was up to him not to inform against any fellow. But the ashplant was swishing in the air, and it had an unnerving effect on the fat Owl of the Remove.

"I—I—I say, Wingate, I—I'd rather not tell you!" gasped Bunter, "I shouldn't mind Hilton so much, but that beast Price would take it out of me afterwards. He's got a rotten temper!"

Wingate looked at him long and hard. He laid the ashplant on the table.

"You can cut!" he said curtly.

"Oh! Good!" gasped Bunter. And fairly flew from the study. Gwynne and Sykes exchanged a rather peculiar glance, and Wingate rose to his feet, his face grim.

"I think I'd better go along to Hilton's study!" he remarked, and he picked up the ashplant again, slipped it under his arm, and walked out.

Gwynne gave a whistle.

"Is the old bean going to hand out whoppings in the Fifth?" he murmured.

"Why not?" said Sykes, shrugging his shoulders.

"Well, it isn't done, you know."

"Time it was—in that study!"

Wingate's brow wore a dark frown as he tramped up to the Fifth Form passage. He had done his best to win Cedric Hilton to better ways, and taken a great deal of trouble to that end. He thought that he had succeeded. But if the dandy of the Fifth was pulling his leg, and carrying on the same as usual in secret, Wingate was the fellow to come down with a heavy hand. In theory, Fifth Form seniors could be whopped by a prefect, like any other fellows at Greyfriars School. In practice, it was extremely uncommon for a senior to be whopped, unless specially called up at a Prefects' Meeting. Wingate, on this occasion, was going to make practice square with theory! He was taking his ashplant to the Fifth to be used there!

He rapped sharply on the door of Hilton's study, and opened it, just as the dandy of the Fifth was coming out.

Hilton stepped back at the sight of him.

Wingate stepped in.

"Want anything, Wingate?" asked Hilton, in surprise.

"Yes!" said the Greyfriars captain tersely.

He shut the door behind him, put his back to it, and stood with his eyes fixed grimly on the two Fifth Formers.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

"Ben Over!"

GEORGE WINGATE slipped a hand into his pocket and drew out a cardboard box. It was a cigarette box, and Price started at the sight of it; Hilton glancing at it in careless surprise. Wingate tossed it on the study table.

"Is that yours, Hilton?" he asked.

"No!"

"Is it yours, Price?"

"No!"

"It belongs to this study!" said Wingate, "I picked it up in the Remove passage this afternoon; it had been taken there by Bunter of the Remove, who smoked some of the cigarettes it contained, and made himself sick."

"Silly little ass!" remarked Hilton.

He glanced at Price, with a grin. The missing box from the table-drawer was accounted for now.

"Bunter has let out that he got it from this study!" said Wingate quietly,

"I've whopped him for smoking! I'm going to whop the fellow who has been smoking here, too! There's not going to be two weights and two measures! I want to know whose cigarettes they were."

Hilton's handsome face darkened, and his eyes glinted. Price breathed hard.

"Very likely the young scoundrel was lying, Wingate!" he suggested, "so far as I know, there have been no cigarettes in this study."

"We shall see! You've given me your word, Hilton, that you've chucked that dingy foolery!" said Wingate.

"I've kept it!" said Hilton curtly.

RHYMES OF THE REMOVE.

No. 5.



This week our clever Greyfriars Rhymester contributes a snappy poem entitled: **GOOD LITTLE BUNTER.**

Billy Bunter had a parcel
As a special birthday treat;
It was sent from Bunter Castle,
Bunter's uncle's country seat,
(At any rate, he told us so,
And doubtless Bunter ought to know).

Bunter thought of tarts and sherbet,
So he chirruped: "This is luck!
In the past my Uncle Herbert
Always sent me gifts of tuck!"
("Never mind the past!" we cried;
"That's the present; what's inside?")

Bunter said: "I'll have an orgy!"
But he had a shock instead:
'Twas a book: "Good Little Georgie,"
Bound in leathered, coloured red.
(This sort of volume makes me grin:
It's "red" outside, but never in.)

The hero of this charming story,
Georgie Green, a model youth,
With a view to fame and glory,
Always, always told the truth.
(Especially, I have no doubt,
When he was bowling others out.)

Every page saw Georgie stammer
To his master, pleadingly,
Full of truth (if not of grammar):
"If you please, sir, it was me!"
The master patted Georgie's head:
"Well done, my boy!" the old ass said.

Though the book was rather "soppy"
(As Bunter called it, with a grunt),
Billy thought he'd try to copy
Georgie's frank confession stunt;
Then Quelch would pat his head, and
cough:
"Well done, my boy! I'll let you off!"

Bunter tried it on next morning.
Quelch asked him to construe;
Bunter answered, falsehood scorning:
"Can't! I did no prep! That's true!"
(I thought old Quelch would go mad;
And Bunter shortly wished he had.)

Quelch grabbed his cane up madly;
Bunter turned a trifle pale.
"Come out here!" bawled Quelch, and
sadly
Bunter went. Let's draw the veil!
As for Georgie, he was dropped
In the dustbin—where he stopped!

"I hope so! But I've got to get to the bottom of this! If smoking is going on in this study, there's going to be a prefect's whopping in this study, too! Once more, Price, were those cigarettes yours?"

"Certainly not!" answered Price coolly.

"Bunter found them in this study, as I've said."

"Hardly! He was pulling your leg, old man."

"Very well!" said Wingate. "You deny it, and Hilton denies it! The matter will have to go before Dr. Locko then! It's between you two, and the Head will sift it out."

He turned to the door.

"I'm ready to go before the Head, as soon as you like!" said Hilton contemptuously.

"Hold on, Wingate!" muttered Price. His sallow face was pale. Price of the Fifth did not want to go before the Head. Price had too many shady secrets to keep, for that. Investigation once started might unearth other things more serious than smoking in the study! A fellow who continually, and with cynical indifference, broke all the rules of the school had to be careful.

Wingate looked round.

"Hold on?" he repeated. "What for?"

Price gasped a little.

"Look here, suppose a fellow had a box of cigarettes in his study?" he muttered. "No need to make a song and a dance about it. I daresay you could scare up a few in the Sixth, if you looked."

"Possibly!" said Wingate. "If I find any in the Sixth, there will be trouble, same as if I find them in the Fifth! I've got certain duties to do, as a prefect, and I'm going to get them done. Were the cigarettes yours—yes or no?"

"Yes!" muttered Price.

"That's enough then! I've whopped a junior for smoking—if I let a senior off, I should be a rotter! You'll bend over the table, Price."

Stephen Price stood facing him, his hands clenched. Price was a senior, a Fifth Form man, and it was almost unheard of for a senior to be told to bend over like a junior! He knew, too, that had Hilton received that order, he would have resisted with utter disregard of the consequences. The humiliation of it was almost more than Price could bear.

"You can't whop me, Wingate!" he muttered thickly. "You know you can't! A Fifth Form man—"

"Will you bend over the table?"

"You can call a Prefects' Meeting, and have me up!" muttered Price. "I'll stand for that! But—"

"You'll bend over that table, and take six, just as if you were a sneaking smoky little tick in the Second Form!" said Wingate coolly. "And if you don't do it, this instant, I'll take you to the Head, and leave it to him. If you'd rather be sacked, you've got the choice."

Price gave him a long look.

Then, white as a sheet with rage and humiliation, he bent over the table.

Hilton winced. Nothing would have induced him to do as Price was doing, if the penalty had been the sack on the spot!

"Wingate—" he muttered.

"Nothing for you to say!" interrupted the Greyfriars captain, and he swished the ashplant in the air. It came down with a loud whack on Stephen Price's trousers.

A gasp came from Price. Hilton, with a set face, left the study. He could not intervene, and he would not witness his whilom friend's humiliation. As he

closed the door, the sound of the whacking ashplant followed him.

Six strokes fell; six of the best. Price remained motionless, bent over the table, his face colourless with fury. He tried his hardest to keep back a sound—it was too bitterly humiliating to yell like a fag under the cane! But hard as he was by nature, he was not tough physically, and he could not bear pain. In spite of himself, he gave a yell at the fourth swipe, and a ringing howl at the fifth.

The door opened, and Coker looked in.

"What's this howling row about?" asked Coker of the Fifth, staring.

"Why—what—what—"

"Get out!" snapped Wingate.

"Oh, my only hat!" gasped Horace Coker, and he got out—and went back to his study in a state of dazed amazement, to tell Potter and Greene that Wingate was whopping a Fifth Form man.

Whack! The last swipe fell followed by a howl from Price. Wingate tucked the ashplant under his arm.

"That's a tip!" he said grimly. "I've had my eye on you a long time, Price—and I know whose fault it is that Hilton's played the goat so often. Now he's going straight, you're not going to get him playing the fool again if I can prevent it! You've got off with a whopping this time—next time you'll go before the Head, and you know what that means."

Wingate left the study without waiting for an answer.

Price stood and stared after him.

His face was drained of colour. He was hurt, and he wriggled painfully. But that was not the worst.

He had been "whopped" like a fag—he, a Fifth Form man, a senior! Coker—that ass, Coker—had actually beheld the whopping, and would be talking of it up and down the passages and studies. All Greyfriars would know about it under an hour.

Price clenched his hands with fury.

He had not dared to resist. The penalty for "punching a prefect" was the sack, short and sharp. Neither would it have helped him, for the stalwart captain of Greyfriars could have handled the weedy slacker of the Fifth almost like an infant. He dared not even think of standing up to Wingate in the gym with the gloves on; he could not have hoped to get the better in a scrap, and he hated getting hurt. There was nothing he could do—nothing—but swallow his rage and humiliation, and "mind his step" in the future.

When Hilton came back to the study an hour later it was dark. He turned on the light, and started at the sight of a white face looking at him from the armchair.

"Oh! You, Price!" he ejaculated.

He smiled faintly.

"No good nursing it, old man," he said. "Better chuck it right out of your mind. After all, you asked for it."

"Same as you did last term," muttered Price.

"Oh, let that drop!" said Hilton irritably.

"I'll make him sorry for it," muttered Price, between his teeth. "The rotten bully! He's always been down on me, and he's taken advantage of his position as a prefect!"

"That's rot!" said Hilton. "If those smokes had been mine, he would have told me to bend over, and you know it."

"Would you have done it?"

Hilton shrugged his shoulders.

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"No; I'd rather be sacked! But you wouldn't, and you had your choice, Pricey. What's the good of brooding over it?"

"I'll get even with the brute, somehow!"

"Rot!"

"There are ways——"

"You'd better not tell me, then," interrupted Hilton. "And the sooner you forget all about it, the better. That's my advice."

"Keep it, you rotter!"

"Oh, all right! You're not agreeable company just now. I'll trot along and tea with Fitzgerald; he's asked me."

Cedric Hilton left the study again. Price was left alone with his bitter and revengeful reflections—rage and hatred and all uncharitableness running riot in his breast. He hardly knew just then whether he hated Hilton or Wingate more; his feelings towards both were black and bitter.

Gladly he would have revenged himself on both of them, but both seemed safely out of the reach of his vengeance. But it came into his bitter mind that there was one fellow, at least, upon whom his rage could be wreaked—the fat and fatuous Bunter, who had caused all the trouble by snaffling the cigarettes from the study. And having by that time recovered from the effects of the ashplant, Stephen Price left the study, and went to look for Billy Bunter.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Painful for Bunter!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH, the Bounder of Greyfriars, glanced over the balustrade of the Remove landing, and grinned.

What seemed to Smithy an amusing scene, met his gaze on the staircase below.

A fat figure was bounding up the stairs. After it came a much taller and rather thin and weedy figure.

The first was William George Bunter, the Owl of the Remove. The second was Stephen Price, the blackest sheep in the Fifth Form.

Bunter, as a rule, negotiated a staircase slowly and with care. He had a lot of weight to carry up with him. Now, however, he looked as if he had taken the hare instead of the tortoise as a model. He fairly flew.

His fat face was crimson. His little round eyes almost popped through his big, round spectacles. He puffed and he panted and he blew. But he did the stairs at wonderful speed. Price of the Fifth, grabbing after him as he flew, missed again and again, Bunter somehow miraculously keeping ahead. But it seemed unlikely that he would get so far as the Remove landing ungrabbed. Breath was fast failing Bunter.

Vernon-Smith grinned at the sight of the chase. But he was rather puzzled, too. If it had been Coker of the Fifth barging up to the Remove after a fleeing junior, it would not have been surprising. Horace Coker was born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. But Price of the Fifth was a quiet fellow, as a rule—quiet, sly, sharp as a needle, suspected of all sorts of "rotten" ways, but seldom, or never, losing his temper, in public, at least. It was quite a new thing for Stephen Price to be breaking out like this.

Smithy watched over the balustrade. Price evidently was on the trail of vengeance, and Smithy had little doubt that there was cause for it. Nevertheless, Fifth Form men were not allowed

to throw their weight about in the Remove quarters; and the Bounder was more than ready to chip in. Bunter came across the lower landing like a flash, and leaped up the Remove staircase. After him shot Price, and on the Remove staircase the Fifth Form sportsman grabbed a fat ankle.

Bump!

Bunter came down on the stairs in a heap with a fearful roar.

"Whooooop!"

That was enough for Smithy.

"Back up, you men!" he shouted, to some fellows in the Remove passage. "Fifth Form cads, back up!"

And the Bounder rushed down the stairs. After him ran Bob Cherry, Johnny Bull, Redwing, Ogilvy, Peter Todd, and two or three more of the Remove.

The Bounder was first on the scene. He arrived, fortunately for Bunter.

That fat youth was sprawling on the stairs, gurgling for breath, and Price's hand was rising and falling.

Smack, smack, smack!

"Yaroooh! Yooop! Rescue! Help! Fire! I say, you fellows—Yarooop!" roared Billy Bunter.

"You fat scoundrel!" panted Price.

"Take that, and that——"

"Yaroooh!"

"And that——"

"Whooooop!"

Then the Bounder jumped in. He grabbed Price by the collar, and rolled him over on the stairs. It was Price's turn to roar, and he did.

"Ow! Leggo!" yelled the Fifth Form man. "You cheeky young rotter—Yoooh!"

"Back up!" yelled the Bounder.

"Coming!" roared Bob Cherry; and he came.

He did the last three stairs in one jump, landing on Price's sprawling legs. There was a fiendish howl from Price.

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter sat up, gasping. "I say, help! Collar him! Pitching into a chap for nothing, you know! Urrrrgh! I say, wallop him!"

"Let go!" shrieked Price, struggling wildly.

But the Remove men did not let go. Price went over on his back on the middle landing, and the grinning Bounder sat on his chest.

"Got him!" remarked Smithy.

"Lemme gerrup!" gasped Price. "I tell you——"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Fifth Form men ain't allowed to barge up here!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Roll him down, you men! First kick to me!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hold on a minute, you fellows!" Harry Wharton hurried down the Remove staircase. "Let's see what the man was after. If Bunter has been grub-raiding again——"

"I haven't!" yelled Bunter.

"Looks as if he has," remarked Toddy.

"I've told you I haven't!" roared Bunter.

"Yes; that's why it looks as if you have."

"Beast!"

"Give the fellow a chance to speak!" said the captain of the Remove. "What were you after Bunter for, Price?"

"Whatever it was, he's going through it!" declared the Bounder. "We're not taking swank from the Fifth!"

"Hear, hear!"

"Let him speak, all the same," said Harry. "If that fat burglar has got hold of a cake or anything——"



As Bunter leapt up the Remove staircase, Price, the sportsman of the Fifth, grabbed a fat ankle. Bump! "Whooooop!" roared Bunter, as he came down in a heap. That was enough for Smitty. "Back up, you men!" he shouted, to some fellows in the Remove passage. "Fifth-Form cads! Back up!" And the Bounder led the rush.

"He's been pilfering in my study!" gasped Price.

"Well, what has he bagged?" demanded Wharton. "If he's got anything of yours, we'll jolly soon make him hand it over."

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Shut up, Bunter!"

"Beast!"

"Give it a name, Pricey!" grinned Bob Cherry. "I fancy I can guess what it is. Have you missed any smokes?"

"Oh, my hat!" exclaimed Wharton. He remembered the "treat" offered by Billy Bunter that afternoon. "Is that it?"

"I tell you he's been pilfering—" panted Price.

"What has he pilfered?" grinned Bob.

"Anything you can report to a prefect?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Price did not answer that question. He would have been glad enough to report Bunter for pilfering, and get him a flogging or the "sack." But the loss of a box of cigarettes was not a matter that Price wished to bring to the notice of his headmaster.

"I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "It's all gammon! I haven't been near Price's study! I never bagged his smokes! You fellows can bear witness to that! I offered you some—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Let me go!" gasped Price. "I'll let the matter drop! Get off my chest, Vernon-Smith, you young hooligan!"

"It was the smokes, of course," said Peter Todd. "Pricey won't report that to Prout or the Head! Hardly! He says he's willing to let the matter drop. Well, one good turn deserves another—let's let Price drop, too!"

"Good egg!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

A dozen pairs of hands grasped Price of the Fifth, and hooked him up from the landing. Then he was dropped—on the lower stairs!

Bump!

As he picked himself up, panting with fury, the Bounder let out a foot. Price went down the lower stairs in a nose dive. A roar of laughter followed him—answered by a roar from Price as he landed.

"He, he, he!" gasped Billy Bunter. "Serve the beast right! I say, you fellows—"

"Now give Bunter some!" said the captain of the Remove.

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"All you fellows kick together! Wait a tick, Bunter!"

Bunter did not wait a fraction of a tick! He did the Remove staircase like lightning, and vanished.

Plenty of fellows were taking notice of Price.

His usual friend and companion, Hilton, was not with him. During that term they had been seen less and less together, and now it looked as if there was quite a break.

Price had other friends—fellows with whom nobody else was very keen to be friendly. There were black sheep in the flock at Greyfriars, as everywhere else, and Price's friends were of that shady variety. Hilton, reckless scapegrace, as he had been, was a fellow of a very different cut, and his friendship had meant a good deal to Price. It helped to keep his head above water, as it were, in the "swim" at Greyfriars. Price was a "rotter," and did not, in fact, want to be anything else; but he did not like being barred by all the decent crowd.

What had happened the previous day had given the black sheep of the Fifth the finishing touch. A whopping from a prefect was almost unheard-of in the Fifth, and it caused great annoyance in that Form—all the men in the Fifth Form games study agreed that it was a disgrace to the Fifth. Yet they could not deny that it had been deserved; that Wingate of the Sixth was not only acting within his rights, but doing his duty. So all their annoyance was concentrated on Price, who had let the Form down by incurring that whopping.

Every man in the Fifth told Price what he thought of him, not once, but over and over again. Had Price been a fighting man, he would have had a dozen scraps on his hands that day.

"Whopped!" said Coker, for the third time, raising his bull-voice so that the

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Rubbing It In!

HORACE COKER snorted.

"Whopped!" he said contemptuously.

Potter and Greene grinned.

"Whopped!" repeated Coker. "A Fifth Form man! Told to bend over, like a fag in the Remove! What?"

And Coker snorted again, in great scorn.

It was the following day, and Coker's remarks were called forth at the sight of Price of the Fifth in the quad.

wretched Price had to hear it. "Disgraceful, I call it! I'd like to see a Sixth Form man whop me!"

Potter winked at Greene! As a matter of fact, they would have liked to see it, too!

"Letting the Form down!" went on Coker. "I'd have knocked the man across the study! But Price always was a funk!"

The unpleasant word reached Price's ears, as Coker intended that it should. He flushed crimson, and, affecting not to have heard it, walked on quickly. That was all he could do—unless he was going to punch Coker's head—which he longed to do, but dared not. A scornful snort from Horace Coker followed him.

"Bend over!" squeaked Tubb of the Third, passing near Price, and the unhappy senior again affected not to hear, and walked on.

He wondered how long it was going to be before he was allowed to forget that whopping.

Hilton of the Fifth came out of the House, and Price glanced at him. But Hilton did not seem to see him. He walked across to a group of games men—Wingate, Gwynne, Blundell, Bland—and joined them, without noticing his former friend.

Price drove his hands deep into his pockets, and slouched away.

His feelings were bitter beyond words. He was by no means sure that he had lost Hilton for good. This was not the first time that the dandy of the Fifth had yielded to better influences, but it had never lasted very long. Still, it looked like the genuine thing this time. And he knew that Hilton was ashamed of him—that he despised him for having bent over and taken a whopping like a fag! The alternative had been an interview with the Head, and probably the sack—which Price dared not face.

"I say, you fellows!" He caught Billy Bunter's fat voice. "I say, there's Price of the Fifth! He was whopped yesterday!"

Price glared round savagely.

But Billy Bunter was making that remark to five or six Remove fellows, and Price did not want a shindy with a crowd of juniors. They all looked at him and grinned. Coker of the Fifth, in Price's place, would have charged the whole bunch. Price walked on.

"Ho, he, he!" Bunter's fat cachinnation followed him. "I say, you fellows, I hear that Price was howling like a baby! Lots of fellows heard him. Blubbing, you know! A fellow told me he heard him begging Wingate not to lay it on so hard!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

With a crimson face, the wretched Price slouched away to the House, and went in. He wanted to keep out of the public eye.

He went to his study.

There at tea-time he expected to see Hilton. But the dandy of the Fifth did not come.

Standing at his study doorway, Price kept an eye on the passage for him. Three or four Fifth Form men came along, Hilton among them.

"Comin' in to tea, Hilton?" called out Price, assuming the old friendly manner.

Hilton glanced at him.

"Teasing with Blundell!" he answered briefly.

"Been bending over lately?" called out Tomlinson of the Fifth, and there was a laugh from the seniors, as they went together into Blundell's study.

Price stood with a black brow. He was not feeling disposed for tea on his own, in a lonely study, and he went down to the quad again. There the first

object that met his view was the grinning, fat face of Billy Bunter.

Billy Bunter had not forgotten that smacking on the Remove staircase. Certainly he had deserved it; but the fat Owl of the Remove never liked getting what he deserved. Bunter's idea was to take it out of Price of the Fifth by "rubbing in" that whopping!

"I say, Price!" squeaked the Owl of the Remove. "Like me to lend you an exercise-book to stuff in your bags next time you see Wingate?"

Price made a stride towards him. But there were a dozen Remove men in sight, and he did not want another ragging from the Remove. He walked across the quad, unheeding the grinning Owl.

But there was a glint in his eyes. Even since that whopping he had been turning over in his mind schemes of revenge on Wingate, and on his former friend. Nothing practical had so far occurred to him. But Bunter, at least, could be dealt with—and Price knew how!

Thrashing Bunter would have been satisfactory, but it meant another shindy

BRAVO, BERKS!

The following Greyfriars limerick sent in by Philip Barnett, of Croft House Cottage, Pangbourne, Berks, has earned for its author one of this week's useful pocket wallets:

Said Flashy to Bunter: "I think
You're a great fat guy and a gink.
Where your brains should be
I guess you will see
An empty space or a kink!"

There's a chance for all of you to win these useful prizes. Get busy right away and address your attempts to: "Limericks and Jokes" Editor, c/o MAGNET, 5, Carmelite Street, London, E.C.4 (Comp.).

with the Remove, which was far from satisfactory. There were other ways—slyer ways, more in keeping with his character. It was almost too easy to lay a trap for the fat and fatuous Owl of the Remove to fall into. Bunter had "snaffled" cigarettes from Price's study—but it was not cigarettes that he had been looking for. Price gave the matter some little thought, and then went to the school shop.

Billy Bunter was there—blinking in at the window, like a fat Peri at the gate of paradise. Bunter, not for the first time, had been disappointed about a postal order, and the good things in Mrs. Mimbles' shop were beyond his reach. He was debating in his fat mind which man in the Remove was likeliest to be successfully "touched" for a little loan, when Price came along, and went into the shop.

A few minutes later Price came out with a parcel in his hand.

Bunter blinked at that parcel.

From its size, it looked as if Stephen Price had been doing some rather extensive shopping for tea.

Price glanced at him.

"Carry this to my study for me, will you, Bunter?" he asked.

Any other Remove man would have told the Fifth Former to go and eat coke! But not Bunter.

"Eh? Oh, certainly!" said Bunter at once.

Price handed over the parcel and

walked away. Billy Bunter blinked after him through his big spectacles thoughtfully. Then he went towards the House.

But he did not head for Price's study in the Fifth. He headed for Study No. 7 in the Remove.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Teasing with Bunter!

"I AM stony—thou art stony—he is stony!" said Bob Cherry mournfully. "We are stony, you are stony, they are stony!"

"The stoniffulness," remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, "is terrific!"

"Je suis stony!" went on Bob, putting it in French. "Tu es stony—il est stony! Nous sommes stony—vous etes stony—ils sont stony—"

"Oh, chuck it!" said Frank Nugent.

"What's going to be done?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Who's going to be done?" asked Bob.

"We can't stick Mauly again!" remarked Harry Wharton. "Mauly played up like a trump yesterday; but we're not sponging on Mauly."

"What about Smithy?" suggested Bob.

Wharton shook his head.

"Toddy—" said Nugent.

"Poor old Toddy!" Wharton laughed. "He can't stand a feed for five fellows, especially with Bunter in the study!"

"What about Wibley? Let's go and ask him to do some of his theatrical stunts, and ten to one he will ask us to tea!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Look here, it's got to be tea in Hall, and we may as well go down to it before it's too late."

The Famous Five, in a group outside Study No. 1, were discussing ways and means. The sad stony state was still prolonged; no remittances had arrived from kind relatives. Lord Mauleverer, certainly, would have welcomed them in his study, which was a land flowing with milk and honey. But they had a natural delicacy about sticking his open-hearted lordship a second time. Stony as they were, they did not want to take Billy Bunter as a model. The Bunder, no doubt, would have played up, but they did not want to ask favours from the Bunder. It was tea in Hall or nothing, and they made up their minds to it.

"I say, you fellows!"

They were starting for the stairs when Billy Bunter came up, with a big parcel in his hand.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What have you got there, Bunt?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Oh, a few things for tea!" said the Owl of the Remove carelessly. "I say, you fellows, come and tea with me! I've got rather a lot."

The Famous Five stared at the parcel. Bunter, in possession of an unusual amount of tuck, was liable to the suspicion of having raided the same. But that parcel, it was obvious, had come direct from the school shop. It looked as if Bunter had been shopping on an unusual scale.

"Don't tell us your postal order has come, old fat bean!" ejaculated Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Wonders will never cease!" grinned Nugent.

"I say, you fellows, as a matter of fact, I've had a remittance," said Bunter airily. "I told you I was expecting a postal order. You cackled. Well, now you can jolly well see for yourselves! You make out that I never

stand a spread! Just come along to my study and see!"

"No smokes this time!" grinned Bob. "Look here, are you coming?" demanded Bunter warmly. "My spread won't go begging, I can jolly well tell you that! Lots of fellows I can ask! I'm asking you first, because we're old pals!"

"H'm!" The Famous Five were quite unaware that they were Bunter's old pals. They did not yearn for that distinguished honour, either. They exchanged glances, and Harry Wharton shook his head.

"Thanks all the same, old fat bean—" he began.

Bunter sniffed. "If that means that you're turning my spread down, Wharton—" "Well, not exactly that; but—" "But what?" demanded Bunter.

"Fellows make out that I never stand my whack. You've said so yourselves! Now, as soon as I get a postal order, I offer to stand a spread all round, and you turn it down! Yah!"

Bunter blinked reproachfully at the Famous Five.

They exchanged rather uncomfortable glances.

Put like that, it really did seem rather ungracious to refuse to accept the fat Owl's invitation.

It was not a case of smokes this time; it was tuck for tea, and, to judge by the size of the parcel, there was plenty of it. And Bunter, who might have been expected to "scoff" the lot without wasting a thought on any other fellow, was urging them to join him—making an urgent point of it. Really, it was scarcely possible for the chums of the Remove to refuse further.

"Well, if you'd really like us to come—" said Harry at last.

"Keen on it!" said Bunter. "You fellows are so jolly nice—" "Eh?"

"Such sportsmen—" "What?"

"The kind of fellows to stand by a fellow! Not the sort of fellows to let a fellow down! Just the sort of chaps I admire!" said Bunter.

The Famous Five gazed at Billy Bunter.

This sort of "soft sawder" was all very well and nothing new if Bunter was seeking to barge into a spread. But it was amazing when he was offering the spread!

"Do come on!" said Bunter. "I shouldn't enjoy the spread a bit without my pals! Do come!"

"Done, then!" said the captain of the Remove; and they followed the fat junior to Study No. 7.

Bunter's unexpected invitation came at the right moment, there was no doubt about that. It was welcome enough, in the stony circumstances.

Bunter plumped the parcel on the study table. The juniors glanced round Study No. 7. Nobody else was present.

"Toddy and Dutton are teasing out," explained Bunter. "I should have been fairly left if this hadn't turned up. Toddy's selfish, you know: when he's teasing out, he never cares whether there's anything in the study for me. You fellows get the fire going—what?"

The visitors in Study No. 7 were prepared to make themselves useful. While the fire was got going, and the kettle got ready, and crocks sorted out, Billy Bunter unwrapped the parcel.

He was rather curious himself to ascertain what it contained—though it did not, of course, occur to his guests that he did not yet know!

He grinned a happy grin at the sight

of ham and sausages, a box of tarts, a cake, and other good things.

Price, apparently, had intended to do himself well at tea in the Fifth! Possibly he had expected visitors! Bunter did not worry about that!

Bunter was by no means a dishonest fellow. He would not have touched a farthing that did not belong to him. But in matters of tuck, Bunter was a Bolshevik pure and simple. Tuck he simply could not resist. Somehow or other, he seemed to work it out in the depths of his fat and podgy brain that he had some sort of a right to tuck, wherever found.

In the Remove, no fellow's cake was safe from Bunter. Coker of the Fifth had kicked him times without number for grub-raiding in his study. Mr. Quelch had caned him, more times than he could remember, for surreptitious visits to the larder. Even at the school dining-table, under a sea of eyes, Bunter had been known to annex another fellow's pudding if the fellow was not looking. Annexing Price's parcel was a mere trifle to Bunter.

If he thought about the matter at all, it was only with a view to possible consequences. If he dodged the consequences, it was all right. There was, so far as Billy Bunter could see, nothing else to worry about.

Six fellows sat down to tea in Study No. 7.

Football practice in the keen air had made the Famous Five hungry. They were ready for a spread.

Bunter was always ready for one. He had done no footer practice, but he did not need that to give an edge to his appetite. His appetite was always in first-class working order.

"I say, you fellows, this is all right—what?" grinned Bunter. "Help yourselves, old beans!"

And Bunter helped himself liberally. There was quite a lot of tuck, though with half a dozen hungry fellows to punish it there was certainly not more than enough. And Bunter, in the gastronomic line, counted as two or three, if not four.

Bunter, as usual, handled the lion's share. Still, there was sufficient to go round, and the Famous Five were not exacting.

They made quite a good tea. Every crumb, however, vanished under the combined attack.

Strange to relate, that seemed to please Bunter! He might have been expected to want to leave something over for supper. But he didn't! He seemed to want to get the whole of the supplies demolished at one sitting.

"Jolly good feed, what?" he asked cheerily when the Famous Five rose to their feet at last.

"Fine!" said Bob Cherry.

"Ripping!" agreed Nugent.

"The ripfulness is terrific!" said Hurree Janset Ram Singh solemnly.

"I say, you fellows, don't be in a hurry to go!" said Bunter. "I—I say, hang on a bit, will you?"

"Oh! Yes! All right!"

"I—I'd rather like a bit of a chat!" said Bunter.

"Oh!"

As their host seemed to desire more of their company, the chums of the Remove could hardly rush off the moment the spread was over! Remove men at Greyfriars

were not Chesterfields; still, something was due to politeness. They lingered.

Bunter sat in the armchair and blinked at the door.

He was wondering whether Price of the Fifth would come up to the Remove to inquire after that parcel.

In fact, Bunter was rather surprised that Price had not been after it already.

If he had bought the stuff for tea he must have wanted his tea before this! Really, he seemed to be giving Bunter time on purpose to dispose of the tuck before inquiring after it.

Bunter did not want to be alone when Price came up.

Tap! The door opened.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry, as the sour face of Stephen Price looked in. "Come up for another ragging, Pricey?"

"This is Bunter's study, I think?" said Price.

"Eh! Yes! Here's Bunter if you want him!" said Wharton. "If you're on the warpath again, Price, you know what to expect."

"Nothing of the kind. Did you take my parcel to my study, Bunter?"

Price looked across at the fat junior in the armchair—noting, with the tail of his eye, as it were, the signs of a recent spread on the study table.

"Eh! Oh! Yes!" stammered Bunter. "You—you'll find it there, Price."

"I've looked, and it's not there," said Price casually. "If you put it there, all right! Sure you did?"

"Oh! Yes!" gasped Bunter.

"All serene!" said Price. "If you put it there, somebody's taken it away—I'd better report the matter at once. Whoever's got it will cough it up fast enough, I dare say, when the prefects get after him."

And with that, Price of the Fifth turned from the doorway of Study No. 7, and walked away down the passage. He left a dead—not to say deadly—silence behind him in Bunter's study.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

After the Feast, the Reckoning!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. looked fixedly at Billy Bunter. Bunter blinked at them.

The silence could almost have been cut with a knife! Price's footsteps died away down the Remove passage towards the stairs.

"You fat scoundrel!" Wharton broke the silence at last. "Have you been spoofing us again?"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Did that parcel of tuck belong to that rotten outsider, Price of the Fifth?" breathed Bob Cherry.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"Spoofed!" said Johnny Bull.

"Might have known it!"

"The mindfulness is terrific!"

"I—I say, you fellows!" stammered Bunter. "It—it's all right! I—I told you I was expecting a postal order! If—if Price makes a fuss about it, I—I'll pay him for the tuck—when my postal order comes."

(Continued on next page.)

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"So it was Price's?"
 "Nunno! Mine!" said Bunter.
 "The fact is, I—I—" said Bunter.
 "Cough up the truth, you fat freak!" hissed Johnny Bull. "Can't you see there's going to be a row about this? Price isn't a fellow like Coker, who would be satisfied with kicking you. He's going to make trouble."

"Well, he jolly well asked for it!" said Bunter. "Fagging a Remove man, you know! Like his cheek to ask me to carry his beastly parcel to his study!"

"You needn't have carried it."
 "Well, I knew what it was, you know! And—and that beast Price pitched into me yesterday!" said Bunter. "He jolly well deserved to be punished, see? I say, you fellows, I suppose you're going to stand by a chap, after I've stood you a splendid feed?"

"You howling ass!" said Harry. "Is that why you asked us? I see now! But it's not a question of a fellow pitching into you, you blithering idiot. Though if Price wanted to thrash you for bagging his tuck, I certainly shouldn't interfere, for one. I wish he'd let it go at that!"

"Why, you beast—"
 "He won't!" said Nugent.
 "No fear!"

"I—I say, you fellows, what do you think Price will do?" exclaimed Billy Bunter, in alarm.

"You heard what he said! He's going to report to the prefects that a parcel has been taken from his study. That means an inquiry."

"Oh crikey!"
 "It will come before Quelch—it may come before the Head!"

"Oh lor'!"
 "You'd better cut after Price, and own up, before he goes to Wingate!" said Bob. "Once the prefects begin to—"

"Oh, scissors! The—the fact is, it—wasn't Price's parcel!" stammered Bunter. "I—I lost his parcel—it—it's rather foggy in the quad, you know, and—and I dropped it, and—and couldn't find it again, and—and—"

"Are you going to tell the Head that?" inquired Johnny Bull sarcastically.

"Oh lor'!" gasped Bunter.
 He blinked at the chums of the Remove in great alarm.

So far, Bunter had not given the matter much thought! At the worst, he had supposed that Price would be "after him," as in the matter of the snaffled cigarettes. Having shared the plunder with the Famous Five, Bunter considered that it was up to them to stand by him, and "put paid" to Price if he came up on the warpath.

Now he realised that the matter was much more serious than that! Price had not dared to report the pilfering of the cigarettes to the beaks. The pilfering of tuck was quite a different matter.

"I—I say, you fellows!" gasped Bunter. "I say, you've got to stand by me, you know! After all, you had as much as I did."

"You fat rascal!" roared Johnny Bull. "We never knew—"

"That's all very well!" argued Bunter. "But you had it, all the same! Look here, Wharton, you go after Price, and—and own up—"

"Own up!" gasped Wharton blankly.

"Yes, old chap! Own up that you snaffled the parcel," said Bunter, blinking at him. "Price won't dare lay a finger on you—everybody knows he's a funk! Look how he was whopped yesterday—"

"Scrag him!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I—I say, you fellows—"

"I think I'll speak to Price!" said Harry, and he left the study, and ran down the Remove passage to the stairs.

Price of the Fifth was on the lower landing when he sighted him.

"Hold on a minute, Price!" called out the captain of the Remove.

The Fifth Former glanced round and stopped.

Wharton came down breathlessly.

There was a mocking gleam in Price's eyes. It had been easy enough to trap Bunter; but, rather unexpectedly, the cad of the Fifth had caught the Famous Five in the same trap! He had not forgotten that ragging on the Remove staircase; and he was going to make matters just as unpleasant as he possibly could for the chums of the Remove. That Bunter had stood a spread in his study with the tuck, and that Harry Wharton & Co. had shared it, was quite plain to Price, and it was his intention to make the very most of it.

"Well, what?" he asked.

"Look here, Price, there's no need to inquire what became of your parcel. You know Bunter pretty well, and you jolly well know what became of the tuck," said Harry impatiently.

"He's told me he put it in my study."

"Well, you jolly well know he didn't! You jolly well know he scoffed it!" said Wharton.

"And the worst of it is that he asked us to the spread, without telling us what he'd done. If you'll let us know what it cost, we'll square, among us, as we had the stuff."

Price raised his eyebrows.

"Indeed!" he drawled. "So that's how the matter stands? Well, the stuff cost a pound, and it will certainly have to be paid for, every penny. If you shared the plunder with Bunter, I've no doubt that your Form-master will order you to pay your share of the amount."

"There's no need for the matter to go before Quelch."

"Isn't there?" smiled Price.

"No!" snapped Wharton. "You know how the matter stands now, and you'll be paid. What more do you want?"

"I'm afraid I can't let it drop at that!" said Price smoothly. "Stealing is rather too serious a matter for that, my young friend. As you state that Bunter stole my parcel, I shall go to Bunter's Form-master instead of to Wingate. I dare say he will send for you later."

"I didn't state anything of the kind," said Wharton, between his teeth. "Bunter's too big a fool to realise that bagging tuck is pilfering, and you jolly well knew—"

Price turned his back and went down the stairs.

"You're going to Quelch?" exclaimed Wharton.

"Certainly!" said Price, over his shoulder.

"You rotter!" shouted the captain of the Remove. "What did you trust the stuff in Bunter's hands at all for? It looks to me as if the whole thing's a put-up job."

"You'd better tell your Form-master so, if you think so," drawled Price, and he walked away to Masters' Studies.

Harry Wharton slowly went back to Study No. 7 in the Remove. A dismayed half-dozen waited there for the inevitable summons to Mr. Quelch's study. It was not long in coming.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Heavy Hand.

MR. QUELCH was looking grim and stern when the juniors filed into his study.

The Remove master was not in his usual state of health, and it was

rumoured in the Form that he was soon going away for a change without waiting for the Easter holidays. He was looking rather pale and worn, as well as grim and stern. His gimlet eyes gleamed under knitted brows.

Price stood by his table, with a serious and respectful manner, but with a lurking glimmer in his eyes which told that he was enjoying himself. Price was in hopes that these members of the Remove, at least, would soon have something to think about, other than his whopping from Wingate.

The Famous Five were red and uncomfortable. Their feelings towards the fat Owl, who had tricked them into this unenviable position, were deep. With flushed faces they stood in a dismal row before Mr. Quelch.

"I have heard a very extraordinary statement from this Fifth Form boy, Wharton," said Mr. Quelch coldly. "Am I to understand that a quantity of food, purchased by him at the school shop, has been purloined—I may almost say stolen—by members of my Form, including my head boy?"

"Certainly not, sir!" said Wharton quietly, his eyes flashing at Price for a second. "We had not the faintest idea that the things belonged to Price, when Bunter asked us to a spread in his study."

"Not the foggiest, sir!" said Bob Cherry.

"I—I say, you fellows—" stammered Bunter.

"Bunter!" rapped Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, yes, sir!" groaned Bunter.

"You were entrusted with a parcel to carry from the school shop to Price's study. You kept possession of it!"

"Oh, no, sir! I—I mean—"

"What did you do with it?"

"I—I—I—" Bunter gasped helplessly. "I—I—I—"

"Answer me immediately, Bunter!"

"I—I—I—we—we—we—" stammered Bunter.

"I—I whacked it out with these fellows, sir!"

"Do you mean to say that they were aware of the fact that it did not belong to you?" demanded Mr. Quelch.

"Oh lor'! No, sir! I—I didn't mention that!" groaned Bunter. "The—the fact is, sir, I—I never—I—I never—"

"You never what?"

"Oh, nothing, sir!" gasped Bunter.

"I—I didn't know that beast—I mean, Price—was going to make a fuss like this about it, sir. I—I—I thought it would only be a row—"

"Price has very properly reported the matter to me, as your Form-master, Bunter. Wharton, I accept your assurance that you and your friends were unaware of the circumstances, and exonerate you, as far as that goes. You do not deny, however, that you helped Bunter to consume these—these comestibles?"

"No, sir."

"Very well, you will all be held equally responsible in indemnifying Price. Price states that the value was one pound, one shilling. That will be three shillings and sixpence each for the six of you."

"Very well, sir. We shall be glad to pay up, of course."

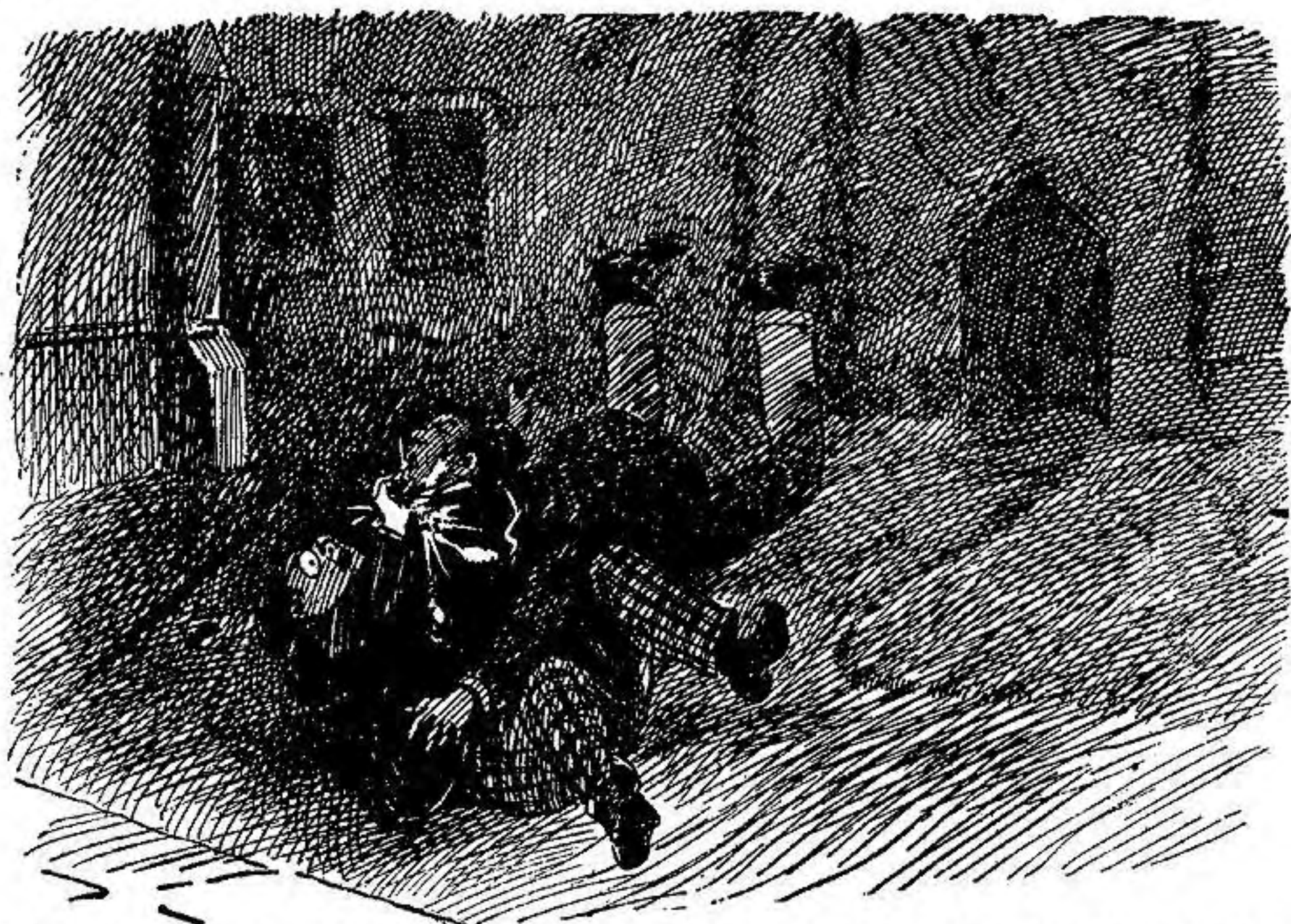
"You may lay your money on my table!" said Mr. Quelch.

The colour deepened in the cheeks of the unfortunate Co.

"We—we're stony—I—I mean, short of cash, sir!" stammered Harry. "We—we can't pay at the—the moment!"

Price's lip curved in a sneer. Only the presence of the Form-master saved him at that moment from being knocked along the study carpet.

"That is immaterial," said Mr. Quelch, taking compassion on the crimson confusion of the juniors. "I will



"Ooogh!" gasped Bunter, as a running figure loomed out of the fog and crashed into him. The fat junior rolled over backwards as if a cannon-shot had struck him. There was a cracking sound as the ripe egg in Bunter's hand smashed, and the scent that spread around was thicker than the fog!

pay the amount and stop it out of your next allowances."

"Thank you, sir! That will be all right."

"The rightfulness will be terrific, honoured sahib."

"Very well," said Mr. Quelch, "you may leave my study. Not you, Bunter!"

"I—I say, sir, I—I—" stammered Bunter.

"You will remain, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch grimly.

"Oh lor!" groaned Bunter.

Harry Wharton & Co. left the study. Bunter, much against his will, remained.

"I scarcely know how to deal with you, Bunter!" said Mr. Quelch. "I am accustomed to making allowances for your obtuseness, for your unusual and extraordinary stupidity. But this matter is very serious. Price takes the view that you have committed what amounts to a theft."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter.

"You have purloined what did not belong to you, Bunter."

"It—it was only tuck, sir!" groaned the Owl of the Remove.

"You must learn, Bunter, that pilfering is pilfering, whether the object pilfered is edible or otherwise," said Mr. Quelch. "You fully deserve to be taken before your headmaster and expelled."

"Oh lor!"

"I shall, however, make allowances, as I have done before, for your impenetrable stupidity, Bunter—"

"Oh, thank you, sir! C-can I go!" gasped Bunter.

"You may not go, Bunter."

"Oh dear!"

Mr. Quelch rose to his feet and picked up a cane from his table.

"I shall not trouble the Head with this matter, serious as it is," he said. "I

shall administer a punishment myself, Bunter, so severe that I have hopes that it will impress a much-needed lesson on your mind."

"Ow!"

"You will bend over that chair, Bunter!"

"I—I say, sir!"

"Bend over!"

"Oh crikey!"

With a dismal fat face, Billy Bunter bent over the chair. The cane rose and fell in a succession of swipes that sounded like pistol-shots. Loud rang the cane—louder still rang the fearful yells of Billy Bunter.

It was not merely "six." It was as thorough a licking as Mr. Quelch had ever administered; such a licking as Bunter had seldom or never experienced before! Never in his fat career had his grub-raiding led to such disastrous results as this.

He yelled and he howled and he squirmed and he roared, and still the cane swiped and swiped.

Price looked on with a lurking grin. Billy Bunter had been the cause of his own humiliating whopping, and Billy Bunter had "rubbed it in." Bunter was paying dearly for it now!

It had cost Price nothing. He was fully indemnified for the loss of the raided tuck, as he had, of course, known that he would be when the matter came before authority. It had cost him nothing but a little cunning scheming to revenge himself on the wretched Owl. He wished that it was as easy to revenge himself on Wingate and Hilton. In the meantime there was keen satisfaction in seeing Bunter squirm, and hearing him yell.

Mr. Quelch laid down the cane at last. He looked quite tired with his exertions. Bunter was more than tired.

"Go!" he snapped.

Bunter went.

He groaned his way down the passage. He groaned his way to the stairs. He groaned his way up to the Remove.

On the Remove landing five fellows were waiting for him. They waited with vengeful looks.

"Here he is!" roared Johnny Bull.

"Collar him!"

"Scrag him!"

"Burst him!"

"Ow! Ow! Ow! Wow!" groaned Bunter. "I say, you fellows—Ow!" They looked at him.

"He's had enough!" said Harry Wharton. "Let him rip!"

"I'll kick him to-morrow!" said Johnny Bull.

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

Bunter groaned his way onward! He groaned into Study No. 7, and for a long, long time afterwards any fellow passing that study heard deep and horrid groans proceeding therefrom. Billy Bunter had often suffered for his sins; but never had he suffered so severely! And he groaned and groaned and groaned as if he would never finish groaning. Hours later, when prep came round, Bunter was still groaning—and did not cease to groan till Peter Todd hurled a Latin dictionary at him and threatened to follow it up with the ink-pot! Then at last Billy Bunter ceased to groan, and the weary were at rest!

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Bumping for Billy Bunter!

"THICK!" remarked Bob Cherry. "The thickfulness is terrific."

"Doesn't look like footer!"

said Harry Wharton

(Continued on page 16.)

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(Continued from page 13.)

"Not quite!"
"I say, you fellows—"
"Kick him!"

Billy Bunter dodged.

It was Wednesday afternoon, which, being a half-holiday, should have been merry and bright.

Instead of which it was far from merry and far from bright!

February had been rather foggy, and it was winding up with the thickest fog ever!

There was fog on the land and fog on the sea, and the chums of the Remove, as they looked out into the dim mists, could hear the far-off, dismal hooting of sirens from unseen steamers on the shadowed waters.

Football, it was clear, was "off." That was clear, if the weather wasn't! Even Bob Cherry did not think a game practicable that afternoon.

"May clear off!" he remarked hopefully.

But it did not look like it! Fog on the land was thickened by rolling mist from the sea. The Greyfriars quad was a dim well of gloom. From the windows figures in the quad loomed like ghostly shadows as they passed—but very few fellows were out of doors. There was a light drizzle falling through the mists, which was discouraging.

"What about a walk?" asked Bob.

"Um!" said his comrades.

"Wingate's gone out!" remarked Bob. "I saw him going into the quad! He has a match on with the Fifth this afternoon."

"It will have to be scratched!" said Nugent.

"Could make a pun out of that!" remarked Bob Cherry thoughtfully. "Match scratched because there's no light—"

"Don't!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Waiting to be kicked, Bunter?"

"Beast!"

Billy Bunter was waiting, though, apparently, not to be kicked! Hilton of the Fifth came lounging along to the big window and stared out into the mist. His handsome face was rather clouded. This was the date of the senior match in which the reformed scapegrace of the Fifth was to have played in Blundell's team. It seemed unlikely that the match would be played.

"Nothing doing to-day, Hilton!" remarked Harry Wharton.

The dandy of the Fifth glanced at him.

"Doesn't look hopeful!" he agreed. "Seen Wingate anywhere? He's not in his study."

"He went out a few minutes ago," said Bob Cherry. "Gone to see if it's a bit clearer on the football ground, I fancy."

Hilton nodded, and strolled away to the door. Perhaps he was keen on playing Soccer, or perhaps he was unwilling to waste the afternoon if

Soccer was not going to be played. Possibly he was remembering the excursion Price had planned for that day, which had been "washed out" owing to his now Soccer activities.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, buzz off, Bunter!"

"That beast Price—"

"Bother Price!"

"He's gone out!" said Bunter.

"What about it, fathead?" grunted Johnny Bull. "Does it matter two straws to anybody whether that worm has gone out or not?"

"Well, look what a chance it is!" urged Bunter.

The Famous Five turned from the window and transferred their attention to William George Bunter. His remark was rather mystifying.

Billy Bunter had had a troublous time since the affair of the feed in Study No. 7. Quelch had given him a record licking, and since then he had accumulated an unusual number of kickings. All the Remove had chortled over the story of that spread, and over such great guns as the Famous Five being called up before a beak on the charge of grub-raiding. Bunter, of course, had taken them in—but fellows like Skinner & Co. affected to believe that the famous Co. had been "in" with Bunter in annexing Price's tuck. Which was annoying and ridiculous. Naturally, they handed out to Bunter what he deserved—much to his annoyance; for often as the fat Owl had been kicked for his sins, he had never grown to like it.

"It's the chance of a life-time!" said Bunter, blinking at the surprised five through his big spectacles. "Look at what that beast did! I know jolly well that he was pulling my leg the other day! He meant me to scoff that tuck so that he could get me a beak's licking! It was a plant!"

"Looks like it!" agreed Wharton. "And quite in Price's line! He's a deep rotter!"

"It was a rotten trick he played on me, you know!" said Bunter.

"Nobody but you would have fallen for it!" growled Johnny Bull. "He couldn't have played it on anybody but a greedy, pilfering, dishonest young scoundrel!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Bob Cherry.

"Beast! Well, look here, I had a fearful licking from Quelch," said Bunter. "Price planned the whole thing, and got away with it. Just because Wingate whopped him over those smokes, you know! Taking it out of me."

"Serve you right!"

"Yah! Well, I'm jolly well going to make the cad sit up, I can tell you!" said Bunter darkly. "I'd thrash the brute, only—only I can't, you know!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I want you fellows to back me up! Price is out in the quad now—and it's so jolly thick that nobody can see anything. We go after him—"

"Eh?"

"And bag him!" said Bunter.

"Bag him?" repeated Wharton.

"Yes; and you fellows hold him while I wallop him!"

"Oh, my hat!"

"I'll give him what Quelch gave me, and some over!" said Bunter. "See? All you fellows will have to do is to hold him so that he can't punch me. That's important."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, don't cackle! Can't you see what a chance it is?" urged Bunter. "We don't get a fog like this every day! Chance of a life-time."

"You blithering owl!" exclaimed

Bob. "Think Pricey would take it smiling? He would go straight to the Head if a crowd of Remove men set on him and walloped him."

"I've thought that out!" said Bunter astutely. "You see, in this fog nobody will see us! Who's going to believe Price if we deny it?"

"Wha-a-at?"

"We all tell the same tale when we come before the Beak!" explained Bunter. "We swear that we never saw Price—never went out of the House at all, in fact—and the Head's bound to believe us if we all stick together."

Harry Wharton & Co gazed at the Owl of the Remove dumbfounded. Bunter, evidently, had thought it out!

"See the idea?" asked Bunter brightly. "Safe as houses! Come on!"

"We—we—we're to set on Price in the fog, and—and tell the Head a bushel of lies about it afterwards!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Is that the idea?"

"That's it, old chap! Come on!"

"Oh, my only summer bonnet!"

"I don't suppose the Head would take Price's word, anyhow," added Bunter. "He's untruthful! All the fellows know that he tells lies! He deserves a jolly good whopping for that alone! If there's anything I despise in a fellow it's untruthfulness!"

"Ye gods!" gasped Nugent.

"Come on!" said Bunter. "I don't know what he's wandering about in the fog for, but he may come in any minute. No time to lose!"

The Famous Five lost no time. Certainly they were not likely to fall in with Bunter's remarkable scheme for making Stephen Price of the Fifth suffer for his sins! They were not bothering about Price! But they lost no time in dealing with the happy Bunter!

They grabbed him all at once.

Bump!

Billy Bunter sat down suddenly and unexpectedly. He roared as he sat.

"Yaroo! I say, you fellows—Yarooop!"

"Bump him!" said Harry Wharton.

"I say, you fellows—leggo—whoop!" yelled Bunter frantically as he was swept up—and swept down.

Bump!

"Beasts! I say, old chaps—Yarooop!" shrieked Bunter. "I say—Whoop! Look here, you old chaps—I mean, you beasts—Yooooop!"

Bump!

"Owl! Wow! Leggo! Help!"

Bump!

"Yoo—hoo—hooooooooop!"

Why the chums of the Remove were bumping him, Bunter did not know. But he knew that they were bumping him, hard! On that point there was no doubt—not a possible, probable shadow of doubt!

Bump! Bump!

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

Harry Wharton & Co. sauntered away, leaving Bunter roaring. The fat Owl's mental efforts in thinking out that astute scheme of vengeance on Price of the Fifth had been a sheer waste. It was plain that he was getting no backing from the Famous Five. He had got a bumping—merely that and nothing more!

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Blow for Blow!

STEPHEN PRICE breathed hard and deep.

In the dimness of the fog in the quadrangle of Greyfriars he could see hardly a yard before his nose. Only by groping his way could he be sure that he was on the path.

But he could hear! The thick mists made no difference to that! And from the fog voices came to his ears. He stopped silently, and listened, his sly, cunning eyes glinting under his knitted brows.

There was a stick under Price's arm. It was a walking-cane which he had picked up in the study before going out.

Black and bitter thoughts had been in his mind when he went out into the fog with that stick under his arm. He had seen Wingate of the Sixth leave the House, and guessed that he had gone down to look at the football field. Half formed, vague plans had been in his mind when he followed. He had slipped quietly out of the House, unaware of the fact that Billy Bunter's eyes—and spectacles—had been on him. He was not thinking of Bunter—he was done

with Bunter, and had almost forgotten his existence.

He was thinking of his enemy—the prefect who had made him an object of scorn and ridicule in the Fifth Form by whopping him like a fag!

Billy Bunter was not the only fellow who had thought, that afternoon, that the blanket of fog over the school gave a fellow a chance!

From day to day, since that prefect's whopping, Price's bitterness had intensified, till the thought of vengeance on the captain of Greyfriars occupied almost the whole of his thoughts.

But the thing seemed impossible! There was nothing he could do—he was helpless! Even had he dared to tackle Wingate it was the sack for attacking a Sixth Form prefect—and anyhow, he dared not! But when he saw Wingate leave the House in that blanket of fog, other ideas came.

He had not made up his mind—he was still thinking it out, calculating the risks, counting up the pros and cons, when the sound of voices came to his ears and he listened. The speakers were Wingate of the Sixth and his former friend, Hilton—and they were not three yards from him, though obviously quite unaware of his presence.

"No good wastin' the afternoon, Wingate—"

"I fancy it is going to clear off!" came Wingate's voice. "Anyhow, the game's not due for an hour yet. If the wind rises it will clear."

"It doesn't look like it."

"Well, we'll hope for the best, Hilton! The men will be ready, if we get a chance to play."

"Well, yes, but—"

"But what?" There was a rather sharp note in Wingate's voice.

(Continued on next page.)



If you're in doubt over any Soccer problem, don't scratch your hat till your hair comes through, but write to "Linesman," c/o The MAGNET, The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. He will be only too pleased to give you his expert opinion.

WHO SCORED THAT ONE?

I GET a very real kick from the knowledge that when I talk to readers of the MAGNET they listen. This week I got an additional kick from the knowledge that my "listeners" not only hear at the particular moment, but they remember what I have told them. That's fine! But, of course, it also means that I have to be careful what I say; be wary lest I should contradict myself.

The letter which reminds me of these things comes from a Sheffield reader. I may as well quote it: "You have always insisted in your broadcast," he says, "that it does not matter who scores the goals in football so long as the goals are scored. But there are evidently some people even connected with the big clubs who don't agree. The other week I went to the Sheffield Wednesday ground and noticed that they have put up a big board, for all the spectators to see, and on this board there is posted, during the match, not only the position in which the game stands, but also the scorers of the goals. Numbers are put up when a goal is scored, and those numbers can be identified by a reference to the official programme. It seems that the Sheffield officials think it matters who scores."

Now it is quite true that this innovation has recently been installed on the Sheffield Wednesday ground, as my correspondent says. When a goal is scored by either side a number is put up. The number refers to a player, and he can then be identified because the players are numbered on the programme.

This is one of several new ideas initiated by Mr. William Walker—the former Aston Villa player we used to call Billy—who took over the managership not long ago.

I do not think, however, that it is quite correct to say that this new idea proves that there are football officials who think it matters who scores the goals. It doesn't matter to the club concerned. But the

Wednesday manager thinks it matters to the spectators who attend the games; that the name of the player who puts the ball into the net interests them. I quite agree. I believe the same idea would be appreciated on other football grounds. As to the view that this will encourage selfishness among the players I don't believe for a moment.

A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY!

BETWEEN the members of real football teams there is usually a spirit of comradeship, and without it no team can hope to succeed. I saw not long ago an interesting case of the players of a football team trying all they knew to enable a particular player to score. Arsenal were playing Crystal Palace in a Cup-tie. The Arsenal score had run up to half a dozen, and, of course, they were certain of victory. All the forwards except Bowden had scored at least one goal. So the rest of the players tried their utmost to make openings for Bowden to score, even sacrificing their own chances. That's the spirit!

In reply to another correspondent, the referee is definitely instructed not to stop the game for a free kick or even for a penalty-kick if he thinks that by so doing he will benefit the offending side.

This power to refrain from blowing the whistle puts a great responsibility on the shoulders of the referee, of course, as he may think a player who has been fouled is going to score, and then that player may fail to do so.

The recent Cup-tie between Tottenham Hotspur and Aston Villa reminded me of one of the strangest incidents I have ever heard of in football, and in a way it concerns this power to refrain rule. Many years ago Aston Villa and Tottenham were playing a Cup-tie on the Villa ground. One of the Tottenham players was fouled as he was making for goal and the referee was about to blow his whistle to stop the

game and give a free-kick to the Spurs. There was some dirt in the whistle, however, and it refused to function. While the referee was struggling with the whistle, the player who had been fouled recovered, and went on to score. A goal was duly awarded, which was quite right. But if that whistle had been in good working order Tottenham would have had a free-kick, not a goal, and they might not have won the match!

FIRST LEAGUE FOOTBALL IN FOUR DAYS!

CAN you tell me the name of the player who has made the quickest rise from obscurity to first-class football? This is another question which has reached me, and I am not sure that I can give a definite answer. But I can tell of a player with a record in this connection which would be difficult to beat. This is Harry Race, the inside-right of Notts Forest. Some seven or eight years ago Race, who lived in Durham, could not get a job in his native county, either at his ordinary work in a coalmine or with a football club. He tried to get a show with several first-class teams, but they would not have him. Eventually he wended his way, bit by bit, to Liverpool, and there so impressed the officials with his earnestness that they agreed to give him a trial in a Central League match. The game was duly played; Race did very well indeed, and as Liverpool had a mid-week match on their programme four days later and were in a dilemma for a forward, Race was put into the first team. What is more, he played very well with the first team, and scored a goal!

From obscurity to first-league football in four days! As I say this may not be a record rise, but we can certainly say that the player "raced" to the fore-front.

Now I'll turn to a technical point. A young full-back says that playing against a certain particularly clever player he is "given the slip" every time, and he asks for a tip which will save him this experience. I can certainly give him one tip which may come in useful, and that is not to go in to tackle at all, but to play what is called the stand-off game. There is one thing the very clever "diddling" wingers love and that is for full-backs to make flying tackles. The thing they do not love, is for full-backs to stand off, and wait for them. I know several clever wingers who are always held up by defenders who keep within a few yards of them. The winger cannot then slip the back, and is reduced to swinging the ball into the middle. Try this stand-off tactical idea.

"LINESMAN."

"Well, I don't see hangin' about! Blundell doesn't think there's much chance of a game to-day."

"He will be glad enough if a chance turns up! Look here, Hilton, don't be an ass! Blundell's got you down to play, and if you're thinking of going out of gates, wash it out."

"Well, I was thinkin'—"

"Wash it out!" said Wingate tersely. "I don't see it!" There was a sulky sound in Cedric Hilton's voice. "What's the good of hangin' about wastin' time?"

"Any special attraction out of gates?"

"Well, the pictures at Courtfield would be better than loafin' about the House."

"A lot you care for the pictures at Courtfield!" said Wingate gruffly.

"Don't be an ass!"

"Well, I'm goin' out."

"You're not!"

"Who says I'm not?" Hilton's voice was angry now.

"I do!" said Wingate. "You're in the Fifth Form team; and ought to be glad of it! You're not letting Blundell down if there's a chance to play the match to-day; and I think there's a chance. You'll be on hand if you're wanted, like the other men."

"I shall suit myself about that!"

"You won't! I happen to be captain of the school and head of the games. You'll stay where you're wanted, Hilton! Has that cur Price been getting at you again?" added Wingate scornfully.

"I've had nothing to say to Price—and don't want to! But—"

"Well, that's that! You're staying in."

There was an angry mutter from Hilton that the listener did not catch. Then there was a sound of a fellow tramping away in the fog.

One of the two speakers had gone! The other was still standing not three yards from Price—which? Price guessed that it was the captain of Greyfriars, but he could not be sure. The stick slipped down from under his arm into his hand, and he grasped it hard.

"The silly ass!" he started a little as Wingate's voice came to his ears. "The silly owl!"

Having expressed his irritation in that exclamation, the Greyfriars captain moved away. Price heard his footsteps grinding on the gravel of the path.

His heart beat as he stole after him on tiptoe.

This was his chance!

Silent as the snake which in other respects he resembled, the cad of the Fifth tiptoed after the fellow he regarded as his enemy.

Wingate's burly figure loomed up in the mist in front of him. Price could have touched him by stretching out his hand.

His eyes burned.

The fog wrapped him like a blanket, there were no eyes to see! This was the fellow who had thrashed him like a fag! For a second more he hesitated, his coward heart quaking at the fear that Wingate might look round. But the Greyfriars captain had no suspicion that anyone was behind him in the fog—he had heard no sound of the stealthy feet. Price made up his mind at a jump. It was a chance of vengeance that would never recur—and it was safe—safe!

He leaped forward, and a violent shove in the back sent Wingate crashing on his face, taken utterly by surprise.

The next instant Price's knee was jammed in the small of his back. And the stick rose and fell, once, twice, thrice, with terrific force.

Lash! Lash! Lash!

Wingate, utterly amazed and astounded, was helpless for the moment. Then, as he heaved under his assailant, Price leaped away and vanished in the fog. Wingate scrambled to his knees, dizzy and dazed.

"Who—what—" he panted.

A vague sound came to him from the fog. That was all! His assailant was gone. The Greyfriars captain got on his feet. He had received only three swipes from the stick, but they had been dealt with terrific force, and he ached with pain.

"Who was that?" roared Wingate. "Who—"

His voice echoed through the fog. But he realised at once that his unknown assailant was not likely to

answer or to show up, and a chase in the blinding fog was futile. With a set face and glinting eyes, the Greyfriars captain tramped up the path towards the House.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not According to Plan!

"**B**EAST!" murmured Billy Bunter.

Bunter was lost!

He blinked to and fro in thick fog, and took the spectacles from his fat little nose, rubbed the mist from them, replaced them, and blinked again.

But it was useless to blink.

Even with the aid of his spectacles the Owl of the Remove could not see two or three feet from his fat nose.

He was lost—in the Greyfriars quad—and where he was, and which way to turn, were mysteries to William George Bunter.

Bunter had not foreseen that when he left the House. Bunter never did foresee anything! He had calculated on the fog to hide him from all eyes! He had not calculated on it to hide everything from his own eyes! Once having missed the paths, Bunter was done!

"Beast!" he breathed.

He was referring to Price of the Fifth. It was, of course, all Price's fault! But for that beast Price, Bunter would not have ventured out into the fog at all.

Having failed to receive any backing from Harry Wharton & Co., Bunter had resolved to "try it on" on his own! We was almost as keen for vengeance on Price as Price was for vengeance on Wingate! Like the cad of the Fifth, the Owl of the Remove realised that this was a chance that would not recur.

Not that he was thinking of whopping the Fifth-Form man all on his lonely own! Bunter was armed with a ripe egg, which he intended for his enemy! That egg had been overlooked in the study cupboard in Study No. 7 for some time, and when Bunter had spotted it there even he had been doubtful about disposing of it in the usual way. Now, however, he had found a use for it! He would have preferred to "wallop" Price, with the Famous Five holding him for the purpose; but the Famous Five had let him down—and wallopings were off! Still, if he landed that over-ripe egg full on Price's ill-favoured features, Bunter considered that he would have got a little of his own back!

"Bunging" a bad egg into a Fifth Form senior's face was, of course, a frightfully risky proceeding, in ordinary circumstances. It would have led to a fearful thrashing from the Fifth Former concerned, and perhaps from the "beak" as well; but in the fog, as Bunter astutely calculated, it was all right!

Bunter had it all cut and dried!

All he had to do was to run down Price, who was somewhere out of the House in the fog, "bung" the egg into his face, and vanish in the fog without being spotted!

It seemed simple enough when Bunter had planned it!

It was not so simple when he came to carry it out! In a few minutes, Bunter missed the path he was on, and found himself wandering—lost to the world!

So far from finding Price, Bunter was now in need of being found himself!

This was rather a "facer" for a vengeful fellow on the trail of vengeance!

"Beast!" groaned Bunter.

He groped about in the clinging mists,

Dr. "Sammy" Caught Napping!

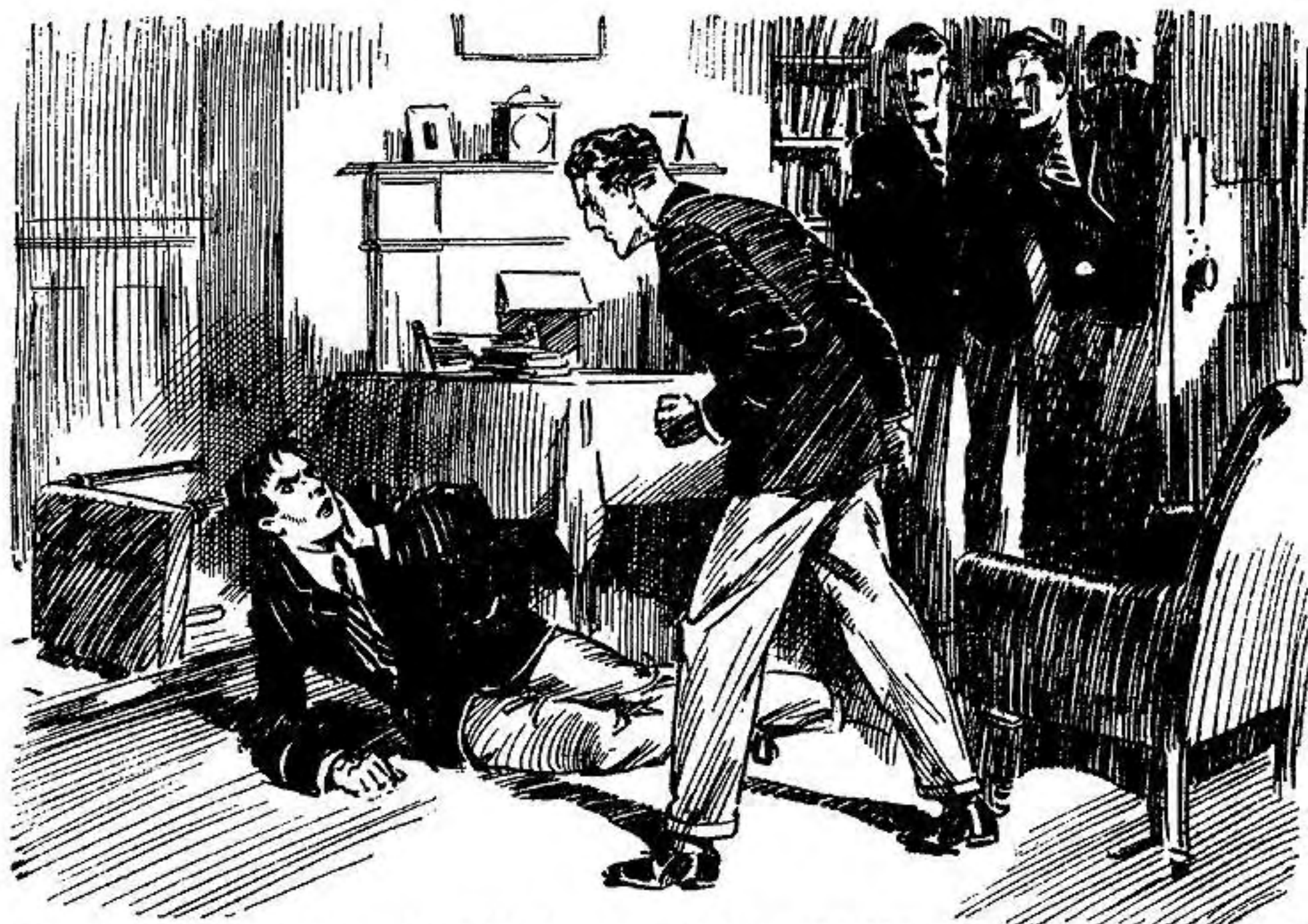


"Look, there he is! That's Dainty!"

A dim figure, wearing shorts and a hat, moved through the branches of the tree. In the darkness, Dr. Sparshott and Ginger Rawlinson & Co., the Grimside castaways, thought it was Jim Dainty, the rebel for whom they have been searching. Little did they suspect that it was a monkey which Jim Dainty, actually hiding in the hollow trunk of the tree, had dressed in his own clothes! It was certainly one up to Jim for his fellow Crusoes were deceived—and the rebel still has his freedom. This is only one of the thrilling and novel incidents from this week's grand story by Frank Richards, entitled "The Cheerio Castaways", which appears with SIX OTHER THRILL-PACKED STORIES in "THE RANGER."

The RANGER

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"A fellow who would attack a man from behind is a rotter," said Price. "And it looks to me as if you did it, Hilton!" Smack! Hilton's open palm struck Price across the mouth, and he went down with a crash on his back, and lay panting. "You lying worm!" roared Hilton. "Get up, and I'll knock your words back down your throat!"

seeking a path. Thoughts of vengeance were abandoned—all Bunter wanted was to get back to the House.

Where was he?

Somewhere within the wide walls of the school, that was all he knew. He might be only a couple of yards from the House steps—he might be in the middle of the quad—really, he might be anywhere—there was no telling!

He groped on! His eyes and his spectacles were of little use to him; but he listened intently with his fat ears, hoping to hear some sound that would guide him. The bang of a door, the slam of a window, or a calling voice, would have been enough.

Suddenly he heard a sound in the fog. It was at a little distance, but the sound of a heavy fall came to his ears. Someone, apparently, was out in the fog, and had fallen over!

To Bunter's surprise, that sound was followed by another—three sharp cracks in swift succession, like pistol shots! It sounded like three terrific whacks with a stick! Who was whacking with a stick, and what he was whacking, and why, were mysteries to Bunter. He blinked through the thick mist in the direction of the startling sound in sheer wonder.

There was a sudden rush of footsteps. Before the fat Owl realised that the footsteps were coming in his direction, a running figure loomed out of the fog, right upon him and there was a crash. "Ooogh!" gasped Bunter.

He went over backwards as if a cannon-shot had struck him. And the fellow who had run into him, taken as much by surprise as Bunter was, sprawled headlong over him, panting. "Urrrrggh!" gasped Bunter.

There was a cracking sound! Bunter had forgotten the ripe egg in his fat

hand. He was reminded of it now! That egg was jammed between Bunter and the fellow who had fallen on him. Naturally, it broke; and the scent that spread around was thicker than the fog!

"Ow! Ooogh! Who—urrrggh—" gurgled Bunter. He grabbed wildly at the sprawling figure over him. "Ow! Knocking a fellow over—ow! Who are you, you beast—yow-wow! Oooh!"

The face that was only a few inches from Bunter's was the face of Stephen Price of the Fifth! At a distance of only a few inches, even Bunter could see it clearly enough; and even at that startling moment, Bunter could not help noting the white, stricken terror in it.

But it was only for a moment that he saw it. Almost in a moment the other fellow leaped away and vanished.

Bunter sat up dizzily.

"Urrrrggh!" he gasped. "That was that beast Price—gurrgrgh!"

He set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and blinked round him. Price was gone! Not even a sound of his running feet came back.

"Ow! Beast!" gasped Bunter. "Grooogh!"

He had to remember the egg!

Price, no doubt, had got some of it; but most of it was smeared over Bunter! And the scent of it was horrid.

Sitting on the cold, unsympathetic earth, Billy Bunter jerked out his handkerchief and dabbed at that horrid egg. From a distance he heard a shout, which he recognised as Wingate's voice. But it was not repeated. He dabbed at the egg. He dabbed and dabbed and dabbed. Some was on his waistcoat, some had gone down his neck. From the bottom of his fat heart, Bunter wished that he had never brought out that egg for Price of the Fifth!

He staggered to his feet at last.

He had found Price in the fog—or, rather, Price had found him! He had got most of the ripe egg himself! And he was still lost!

"Oh lor!" groaned Bunter.

Haunted by the clinging aroma of the egg, the fat Owl groped and stumbled and fumbled on. Suddenly his feet caught in something, and he went headlong

Bump!

"Yaroooooh!" roared Bunter.

He sprawled in damp grass! Sitting up, he groped about him, and made the discovery that he had fallen over a low chain, stretched between two low posts! But he knew where he was now—he had stumbled over the chains of the Sixth-Form green. Picking himself up, he groped to the path beside the green, and groped and fumbled away towards the House, feeling every inch of the way, in terror of getting lost again.

He gasped with relief at the sight of an arched doorway at last. A gleam of light came to his eyes—the electric light was on in the House. He gurgled, and stumbled in.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry had come along to look out at the weather. He forgot the weather, and stared at Billy Bunter.

Bunter was camp and muddy and eggy. There was an eggy aroma hanging round him. Bob sniffed.

"What the thump—" he ejaculated.

"Oh dear!" gasped Bunter. "Thank goodness I've got in. Oh lor! All your fault, you beast! If you'd come out with me this wouldn't have happened!"

"What the dickens did you go out in the fog for, you fat duffer?" demanded Bob.

"I was going after that beast Price!"

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groaned Bunter. "I had an egg for him—I was going to bung it at him, you know—"

"You howling ass!"

"Beast! And he ran into me in the fog, and burst the egg all over me—"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry.

"And I'm all eggy—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And sticky—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Beast!" roared Bunter, and he rolled on in search of a wash—even Bunter, who had a rooted objection to washing, as a rule, realising that he was in need of a wash now. He left Bob roaring with laughter. Bunter on the trail of vengeance struck Bob Cherry as comic. And Bob's merry roar followed the eggy Owl as he went.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Startling!

"**H**EARD!" asked the Bounder, with a grin.

"Which and what?"

yawned Peter Todd.

"About Wingate—"

"What about Wingate?" asked two or three voices.

"He's been whopped!"

There was a buzz in the Rag. A crowd of fellows had gathered there, chiefly occupied in making uncomplimentary remarks about the weather. But they forgot the weather as Smithy announced the startling news.

"Wingate—whopped!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"Gammon!"

"Rot!"

"The rotfulness is terrific."

"Tell us another, Smithy! An easier one."

"Honest Injun!" grinned the Bounder. "It's going the rounds already. Frightfully important matter, you know! Any of us men can be whopped, any old time; and who cares a brass farthing? But when one of the high and mighty Sixth gets a few on his bags—"

"Well, it's a jolly serious thing, if the head prefect of the school has been whopped!" said Harry Wharton, staring at the Bounder. "But is it true?"

"It's the sack for somebody!" said Frank Nugent. "What silly idiot has been pitching into Wingate?"

"Nobody knows," grinned Smithy. "A rather deep card, whoever he was. From what I hear, Wingate had gone down to the football field to have a squint at it—they've got a match on in the Upper School, you know. Coming back to the House, he was barged over in the fog—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"Some person or persons unknown, as they say in the police reports," chuckled the Bounder. "Whoever it was, barged Wingate over from behind, and laid into him with a cane, or a stick—three of the best!"

"Great pip!"

"The pipfulness is preposterous!"

"And Wingate never saw him?" asked Harry.

"So they say. The jolly old fog gave him a chance—he whopped Wingate, and hooked it before he could be spotted. Never thought of leavin' his card, it seems."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"But who—" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Echo answers who," said Smithy. "Whoever it was, he will keep it fearfully dark if he can—it's the sack for pitching into a prefect. Aren't the prefects the jolly old Palladium of a

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public school?" And the Bounder chortled, evidently very much amused.

"Some frightfully reckless ass, I should say!" remarked Squiff. "But who the deuce could want to whop old Wingate? He's got hardly an enemy in the school."

"He's got a few," said Johnny Bull dryly. "Fellows he's called to order. You know anything about it, Skinner?"

"I!" ejaculated Skinner. "What do you mean, you silly ass?"

"Well, Wingate's whopped you twice this week—"

"You silly chump!" howled Skinner. "Think I'm idiot enough to lay into a prefect? I'm glad he got it, if you come to that; but—"

"Catch Skinner taking the risk!" grinned the Bounder. "I fancy it was one of the seniors—most likely a Sixth Form man. Or—" The Bounder broke off with a whistle.

"Or what?" asked Wharton.

"Might have been a Fifth Form man!" grinned Smithy. "There's a Fifth Form man who's been feelin' jolly ratty with Wingate lately."

"If you mean Price—"

"Better name no names!" chuckled Smithy. "Tain't safe. But if I were Wingate, I'd ask Pricey where he was at the time."

"Price hasn't the nerve, I imagine," said Wharton. "It wants a lot of nerve to handle the captain of the school."

"Not from behind. And Pricey is the man for that. But if it was Pricey, you can bet that he's covered up his tracks, safe and sound. He's deep."

There was a buzz of excited discussion in the Rag. It was interrupted by the arrival of Billy Bunter, fresh from his recent wash—looking newly swept and garnished, so to speak.

"I say, you fellows," squeaked Bunter, his little round eyes gleaming with excitement behind his big, round spectacles.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's the latest, Bunter?"

"I say, you fellows, have you heard?" howled Bunter. "Wingate's been whopped—"

"We've had that from Smithy!" said Harry Wharton, laughing.

"Oh!" said Bunter, disappointed, Bunter liked to be first with the news.

"Well, I'll bet I know more than Smithy does. I say, all the Sixth are jabbering about it, like a lot of old hens. They say that the Head is going to hold an inquiry. I say, Wingate was knocked down from behind, and stunned—"

"Stunned!" yelled the juniors.

"Yes, rather! And as he lay senseless, he was beaten to a jelly. Most of his bones broken—"

"Go it!"

"It's a fact, you fellows! He tottered into the House groaning horribly, covered with blood—"

"While he was senseless?" asked Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"No you ass—after he recovered his senses. Of course, he recovered his senses before he tottered into the House. I hear that he's going into sanny, and the doctor's sent for."

"Not the undertaker?" asked Skinner.

"Oh, really, Skinner! He's an absolute wreck!" said Bunter impressively. "Can't walk or talk, you know. He was unable to utter a word when he got in. He told the Head—"

"Oh my hat!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's lying in his study now—"

went on Bunter.

"While you're lying here?"

"Beast! He's lying in his study

groaning fearfully. If you go along to the Sixth, you'll hear him groaning. Awful!" said Bunter. "It's rather heartless to cackle when poor old Wingate is lying on his back, unable to utter a sound, and groaning horribly, and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Of course, it rather serves him right," went on Bunter. "He's a beast; he whopped me the other day for smoking—I mean, he made out that I'd been smoking, and whopped me. I say, you fellows, nobody seems to know who pitched into him, or just when it happened. But there's no doubt that he's fearfully injured—crippled for life, I believe—he may never be able to walk again—"

Wingate of the Sixth at that moment walked into the Rag. All eyes turned on him at once.

Evidently Bunter's account was exaggerated.

Not only could Wingate walk, but there were no signs whatever of injuries, fearful or otherwise. He looked his usual self, except that his face was set and grim, and that there was a gleam in his eyes. He glanced sharply over the crowd of juniors, at face after face.

"Any fellow here been out in the quad since dinner?" he rapped out.

There was no answer. The fog had not tempted the juniors out of doors. But Bob Cherry glanced at Bunter.

Bunter looked alarmed.

"Better answer, you fat ass!" whispered Bob.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"I want to know if any fellow has been out of the House?" said the Greyfriars captain. "Sharp's the word!"

"Not guilty, my lord!" said the Bounder.

Wingate gave him a look. If the unknown fellow who had attacked him was a Removite, the reckless, mutinous Smithy was the most likely.

"I don't think any Remove man has been out, Wingate," said Harry Wharton. "It's too jolly thick in the quad—"

"Speak up, you blithering fat idiot!" whispered Bob to Bunter. "You've nothing to be afraid of, you ass!"

"I haven't been out!" hissed Bunter.

"You fat chump, I saw you come in."

"I mean—I—I mean, I—I—shut up, you beast! Think I'm going to have it put on me?" hissed Bunter.

"You howling ass—"

"Beast!"

Wingate gave another sharp glance over the fellows in the Rag, and then went out. He left a buzz of excited discussion behind him. Billy Bunter's fat voice did not join in it. He rolled out of the Rag; for once having nothing to say, which was unusual; and for once, doing some thinking, which was still more unusual.

That afternoon, fog-bound in the House, the Greyfriars fellows had dimly expected the dullest of dull times. Instead of which they had been unexpectedly provided with the sensation of the term. The "whopping" of a prefect, who was also captain of the school, was an utterly unheard-of and unprecedented occurrence. It was a matter that the Head was bound to take up. It was a matter that could hardly end in anything but the expulsion of the offender, if and when detected. It was a thrilling excitement for all the fellows in all the Forms, from the Sixth to the Second. All over Greyfriars, that afternoon, fellows were asking themselves, and one another, the question to which, so far, there was no answer—who whopped Wingate?

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Coming to Blows!

"**W**AS it you?" Cedric Hilton asked that question as he came into his study in the Fifth.

Price raised his eyebrows.

He was seated at the study table with books before him. Not a studious youth, as a rule, Price seemed to be spending that foggy afternoon "swotting."

"Was what me?" he asked.

"You know what I mean?" snapped Hilton.

"Not the foggiest!" said Price easily.

"Has anything happened?"

"Wasn't Wingate here?"

"Wingate! He looked in about a quarter of an hour ago, and asked me if I'd been out of the House since dinner. I told him I hadn't."

"You told him you hadn't," repeated Hilton.

"Naturally, as I've been swotting at this stuff for Prout ever since dinner. He didn't even say why he wanted to know," yawned Price. "If the fog clears off, I'm going out when I'm through. You comin'? I fancy your footer's off for to-day."

Hilton looked long and hard at his study-mate. The Bounder was not the only fellow who had thought of Price, when the news came out that Wingate had been attacked in the fog in the quadrangle.

But Price's face was unconcerned.

He was, so far as he could see, perfectly safe. He was absolutely certain that Wingate had not even seen him, let alone recognised him. He had lost no time in getting back to the House; and he got in by a back window, to

make assurance doubly sure. He was back in his study, sitting at his books, before the row started.

There was only one dubious point—he had run into Billy Bunter and knocked him over, in the fog, in his flight. He had glimpsed the fat face and spectacles, and knew that the fellow he had knocked over was the Owl of the Remove.

But he did not believe that Bunter had recognised him. The fog was thick, the fat Owl was short-sighted, and he had been winded, and gasping for breath; and Price had vanished again almost instantly. It was an unfortunate happening, in the circumstances; but Price did not believe that it spelled danger. He was, of course, quite unaware that it was specially on his account that Bunter had been out in the quad—that he had been in the fat Owl's mind all the time. Still less was he aware that Bunter had, in point of fact, recognised him, and already mentioned the meeting to another Remove fellow. Had Stephen Price been aware of all that, he would hardly have looked so cool and unconcerned.

He yawned, as if tired from his work, and laid down his pen. Through the open doorway came a buzz of voices from the passage. Several of the Fifth were discussing the matter there, and Coker's bull voice could be heard.

"Has anythin' happened?" he asked again. "Wingate looked as grim as a gorgon when he looked in here. He's got his jolly old back up about some-thing. You been rowing with him?"

"I had a few words with him in the quad," said Hilton. "So far as I can make out, he was attacked a few minutes afterwards."

"Attacked!" repeated Price.

"Yes. Some fellow knocked him over and laid into him with a stick."

Price whistled.

"Sure you've got it right?" he asked. "That sounds pretty steep to me."

"The whole House is buzzing with it," said Hilton curtly. "It's up before the Head."

"Yes, I suppose they'd make a fuss about it," drawled Price. "Common mortals mustn't lay their hands on the great panjandrum. You must have been a fool to do it, Cedric."

Hilton jumped.

"I!" he ejaculated.

"Wasn't it you?"

"What do you mean?" shouted Hilton furiously. "Do you dare?" He made a stride towards the fellow at the table.

"Keep cool!" said Price calmly.

"You asked me if it was I, before I knew that anythin' had happened at all. I don't see why I shouldn't return the compliment, and ask you whether it was you—was it?"

"You know it wasn't!"

"I don't know anything of the sort," said Price deliberately. "You've admitted that you were practically on the spot at the time, at all events. Has it come out that anyone else was?"

"Nobody knows, so far. The prefects are going up and down the House asking fellows questions. I hear that the Head has given orders that all fellows who were out of the House are to be reported to him so that he can question them."

"That includes you."

"Of course it does!" said Hilton angrily. "But nobody, I suppose, is going to suspect me of attacking a fellow from behind. If I hit Wingate, I should hit him facing him."

(Continued on next page.)

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"I'm going to speak to Price." It was Coker's bull voice in the passage. "I'm going to ask him where he was." Hilton's lip curled.

"I'm not the only man in the Fifth who thought of you, Pricey," he remarked.

"I may not be the only man in the Fifth who's thought of you," said Price venomously. "If you did it, you won't find it easy to land it on me."

"You rotter!"

"Easy enough to call a fellow names," said Price, raising his voice a little as Coker's heavy footsteps came tramping towards the half-open door. "But a fellow who would attack a man from behind is a rotter, if you like, and it looks to me as if you did it, Hilton. I shan't say so outside this study, but if you did it—"

Coker of the Fifth stared in. He had heard every word uttered by Price as he came to the door.

He stared blankly at Hilton.

"You!" he ejaculated. "Was it you, Hilton? My hat, if it turns out to be you, you rotter!"

"You silly fool!" yelled Hilton. "I know no more about it than you do."

"Well, I came here to speak to Price," said Coker. "I was going to ask you, Price, where you were when Wingate was whopped. We all jolly well know what you feel like about Wingate whopping you in this very study—"

"My dear man, I haven't been out of the House," drawled Price. "If you want to ask questions in this study, you'd better ask a fellow who was. Hilton may be able to tell you something."

Horace Coker stared at Hilton again. "Have you been out of the House?" he asked.

"Find out!" snapped Hilton.

He had no mind to be questioned by the egregious Coker.

"That's not an answer," said Coker.

"It's all you'll get from me."

"Look here—"

"Oh, don't barge into my study, fat-head! Run away and play."

"That won't do," said Coker quietly.

"If you can't answer a plain question plainly, Hilton, it looks to me—"

"Get out!"

Hilton slammed the door. Coker got out in rather a hurry, his nose having a narrow escape from the slamming door.

Price laughed.

"That sort of thing won't wash," he remarked. "If you want to keep it dark, old man, that's not the way."

Hilton's eyes glittered at him. His suspicion was strong that Price was the guilty party, though he had no doubt that the wary rascal had covered up his tracks too carefully to be in much danger of detection.

"I can see your game, you rotter!" he said, between his teeth. "Nobody will ever know who whopped Wingate; and you'd like to put a spoke in my wheel by putting it about that I did it. That fool Coker's got it into his thick head already."

"Looks like it," agreed Price. "And I fancy Wingate will remember that you were on the spot, and nobody else was. Look here! What's the good of gammoning? You know you did it!"

Hilton's eyes blazed, and he fairly jumped at his whilom friend.

Smack!

His open hand came across Price's sallow cheek with a crack like that of a pistol.

Price leaped up from the table, his eyes burning, his chair flying backwards with a crash.

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"You rotter!" he yelled. "You dare—"

"Now put up your hands!" said Hilton, between his teeth, and he came at Price, hitting out as he came.

Price had no choice about putting up his hands. He was no fighting-man. But there was no help for it, and he put his hands up, and in a moment there was a fierce scrap going on in the study.

"Hallo! Is that a fight?" came Potter's voice from the passage. The door was thrown open, and half a dozen Fifth Form men stared in.

Crash!

Price went down on his back, and lay panting. Hilton stood over him with clenched fists and blazing eyes.

"Get up, you cad!" he shouted. "Get up and have some more!"

"You rotter!" panted Price. "You bully! Keep off, you hound!"

"What's the row about?" asked Greene of the Fifth.

"What's it about?" snarled Price. "It's about what's happened to Wingate. Hilton's pitching into me because I told him I knew he had done it—that's what the row's about!"

"You lying worm!" roared Hilton. "Get up, and I'll knock that back down your throat!"

Price did not get up. He lay on his elbow, panting and snarling. The Fifth Form men in the doorway exchanged glances.

With a glare of scorn at the sprawling senior, Hilton stalked out of the study. The fellows made room for him to pass, and he went down the passage. Then Price slowly picked himself up.

"You think it was Hilton?" asked Potter.

"I know it was!" snarled Price. "And I fancy you'll find that Wingate knows it, too!" He wiped a trickle of crimson from his nose. "He's admitted that he was there, right on the spot—and Wingate knows that! You can ask Wingate if you want it from him!"

"I'll jolly well ask Wingate!" said Coker, and he marched off.

Price shut the study door.

He dabbed his nose, which persisted in trickling red. That nose was rather damaged. But Price was not dissatisfied. Nobody would ever know for certain who had whopped Wingate—but a good many fellows would suspect Hilton—very possibly, Wingate himself!

The schemer of the Fifth had killed two birds with one stone—not only had he returned Wingate's whopping, but he had put the suspicion of that cowardly act on the fellow who had dropped him.

Wingate was whopped—Hilton was under suspicion—and the cad of the Fifth was secure—doubly secure! Fortunately, perhaps, for his satisfaction and peace of mind, Price had forgotten the insignificant and unimportant existence of Billy Bunter of the Remove!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Secret!

"WHO whopped Wingate?"

"Ask us another!"

It was the one topic of Greyfriars. It was discussed in all the studies. After prep, a crowd of juniors in the Rag were discussing it again. Nothing had come to light. It looked as if the matter was going to remain a mystery—with all sorts of doubts and suspicions abroad.

The name of Hilton of the Fifth was bandied up and down the passages. Owing to the thick fog that afternoon the assailant had escaped unrecognised—but, owing to that same fog, hardly any

fellows had been out of the House. That boiled it down, so to speak, to a very few possible "suspects."

"I'd have bet a pony to a peanut that it was Price!" the Bounder remarked. "But it seems that Pricey was in his study, swotting for Prout. I hear that he's said out plain that it was Hilton."

"Blessed if it doesn't look like it!" said Harry Wharton. "It's come out now who was out of the House at the time. Gwynne of the Sixth—but he's a pal of Wingate, and that washes him out. Hobby of the Shell had groped over to the tuckshop, but Hoskins and Stewart were with him—and they're witnesses for one another. Tubb of the Third was out of doors somewhere—but Tubby—"

There was a laugh. A Third Form fag was not a likely object of suspicion in such a case.

"And Hilton!" added Wharton. "It seems that Hilton was not only out of the House, but had been speaking to Wingate, in the fog, only a minute or two before he was attacked. So he was right on the spot."

"But why should he?" asked Nugent. "They've been friendly enough this term. Hilton's taken up Soccer, and Wingate has been backing him up. Have they had a row?"

"Must have had, if it was Hilton that pitched into him," said Peter Todd. "Likely enough, too. But—"

Harry Wharton shook his head.

"I fancy there was somebody else out of the House who hasn't owned up to it," he said. "He wouldn't, of course, if he had whopped Wingate! If it comes out that another fellow was out, and hasn't admitted it, they won't have far to look for the fellow who whopped Wingate."

"Oh lor'!" murmured Billy Bunter.

Bunter was not taking part in the discussion. He was listening to it with both his fat ears, in a very worried frame of mind.

He blinked uneasily at Bob Cherry.

Bob was the only fellow who knew that Bunter had been out at that critical time. Bob had not forgotten seeing Bunter come in, and had not forgotten what the fat Owl had told him when he came in. From that, Bob had drawn his own conclusions; but he had not stated them in public. It was not his business to catch the offender, or to mention Bunter's name. But he felt very uncomfortable at keeping his knowledge to himself.

"Might have been anybody!" said the Bounder thoughtfully. "Even a fag like Tubb could have done it, if he'd wanted to. You see, Wingate was barged over suddenly from behind, and whopped before he knew what was happening. Then the fellow bolted in the fog. If it comes out that any chap was out of the House, and has denied it—"

"That will settle it!" said Johnny Bull.

"But, who the dickens—" said Squiff.

"It's a jolly old mystery!"

"Bunter—" began Harry Wharton.

Billy Bunter jumped up.

"You beast!" he yelled.

The captain of the Remove glanced round at him.

"You there, fathead? I was going to say—"

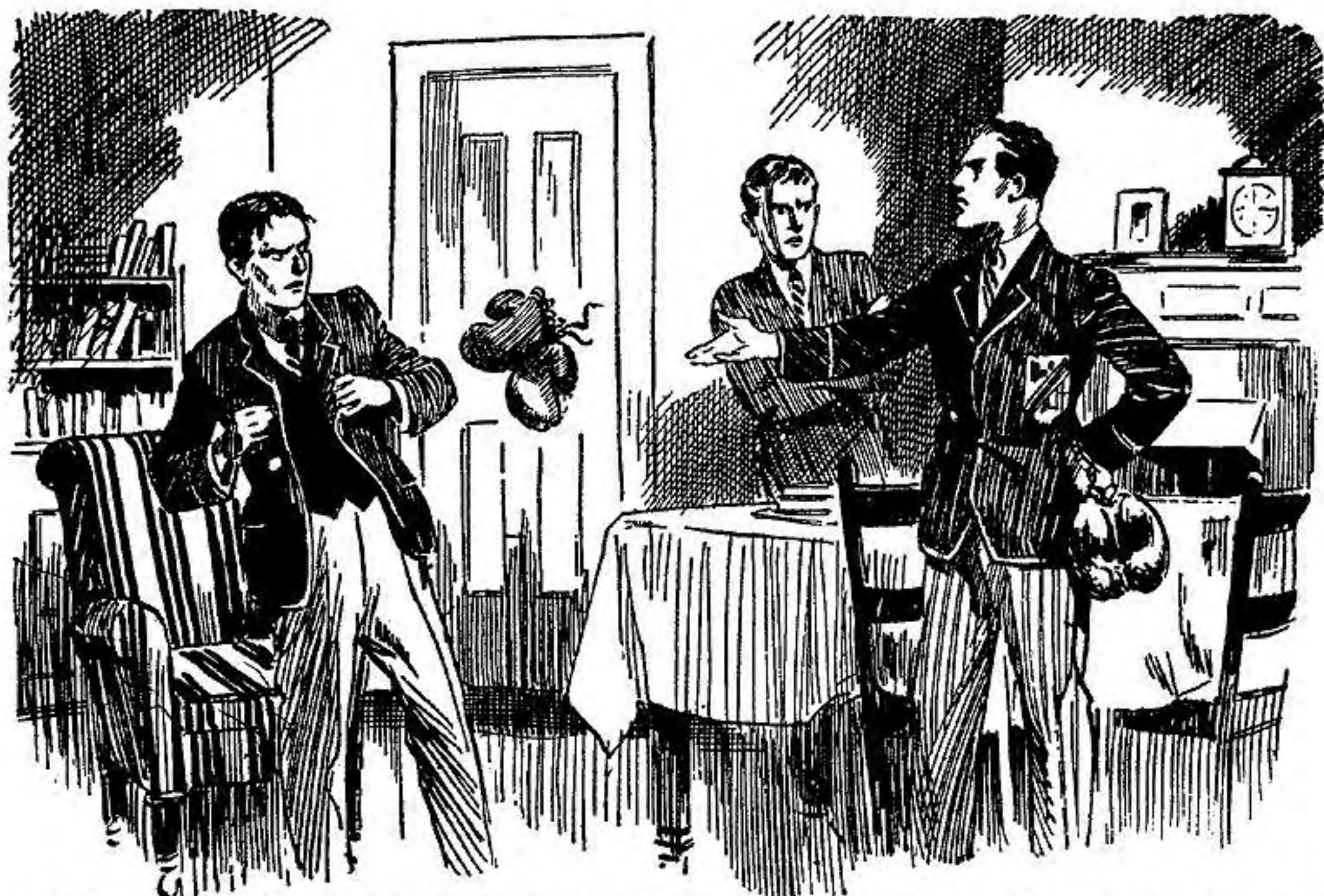
"Beast! It wasn't me!"

Wharton stared at him, and burst into a laugh.

"You blithering Owl—"

"It wasn't!" roared Bunter. "I wouldn't have touched him! As if I'd whop Wingate! I'd like to, of course, but—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"



"You're a pretty complete rotter, Price," said Wingate, scornfully. "But I'm not keen on getting a Greyfriars man sacked on a personal matter. I'll deal with you myself. Trot out the boxing-gloves, Hilton!" Hilton obliged, and the Greyfriars captain tossed a pair across to Price. "Ready?" he asked.

"But I didn't! You make out that it was me, Wharton—"

"You howling ass!" roared Wharton.

"I was going to say—"

"Beast!"

"I was going to say—"

"Rotter!"

"Will you let a fellow speak?" hooted Wharton. "I was going to say that you told us that Price of the Fifth had gone out, some time before it happened, when you wanted us to go after him with you, and—"

"I didn't!" gasped Bunter.

"You didn't?" yelled Wharton.

"No, I jolly well didn't! I never even thought of going after Price, and I never asked you fellows to back me up, and hadn't the faintest idea of bagging him and walloping him. I never even dreamed of going out. It was too foggy for me. I never spoke to you fellows at all—"

"Oh, my hat!"

"And after I spoke to you, I went to my study—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And stayed there!" asserted Bunter.

"As for going out after Price, it never even crossed my mind. If that old egg is gone from the study, I expect Toddy chucked it away. I never took it out to bung at Price."

"Well, my hat!" said the captain of the Remove, staring blankly at the fat Owl. All eyes in the Rag were turned on Bunter now. Bob Cherry grinned. He had felt bound not to mention what he knew of Bunter's proceedings that eventful afternoon; but Billy Bunter had his own inimitable way of keeping a secret!

"I never stepped outside the House!" went on Bunter firmly. "Why, you beast, if they knew I was out at the time, they'd make out that I whopped Wingate! You jolly well know that! You're trying to put it on me, you

rotter. Bob Cherry jolly well knows that I wasn't out! He saw me come in!"

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

"You can cackle!" howled Bunter.

"But I think it's pretty sickening to make out that I did it! Beasts!"

"So you were out of the House, Bunter?" yelled Skinner.

"I wasn't!" roared Bunter.

"Bunter all the time!" chortled Skinner. "Fancy Bunter having the nerve to pitch into old Wingate! No wonder he tackled him from behind!"

"I didn't!" shrieked Bunter.

"Bunter, you awful ass!" gasped Wharton. "Surely you weren't idiot enough—"

"Isn't he idiot enough for anything?" chuckled Skinner. "Wingate whopped him for smoking the other day, and Bunter got his own back in the fog this afternoon! What a nerve!"

"Was it you, Bunter?"

"Fancy Bunter—"

"I say, you fellows," howled Billy Bunter, in great alarm, "it wasn't me! I tell you I wasn't out of the House!"

"We jolly well know you were!" grinned Skinner. "Did Bob Cherry see you come in when you hadn't been out?"

"Yes, exactly—I—I mean—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I mean, he didn't see me come in! He never saw me at all! I wasn't out of the House! I was in the Rag all the time, sitting over the fire—"

"You've just told us you were in your study!" chortled the Bounder.

"I—I mean, I was in my study, sitting over the fire—"

"Try again!" grinned Peter Todd.

"I was in the study, old fat bean, and didn't come down till I heard the row on. If you were there, I never saw you."

"I—I—I mean, I—I was in Quelch's study! He—he—he sent for me about some lines—"

"Will Quelch say so if they ask him?" chuckled Skinner.

"Oh lor'! I—I mean, I—I was in Hall—"

"So was I," said Bolsover major, "and you jolly well weren't there, you fat fibber!"

"I—I mean—"

Billy Bunter paused, blinking dimly at the grinning Removes. Generally Bunter was not at a loss for a fib. But he was at a loss now. It was not an easy matter to prove an "alibi." The fog had kept nearly all the fellows in the House, and there was somebody or other to prove that Bunter hadn't been anywhere where he claimed to have been.

"Give him time!" chortled the Bounder. "He will make up a good one if he's given time! Weren't you in the library, Bunter?"

"Oh, yes! Exactly!" gasped Bunter, catching at a straw like a drowning man. "That—that's just where I was, Smithy!"

"Then you're all right!" said Smithy. "I happen to know that the Head was in the library, so he will be a witness for you!"

"Oh lor'!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I—I mean, I wasn't in the library, you beast, Smithy!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You blithering bandersnatch!" roared Bob Cherry. "Why can't you tell the truth for once? If you owned up when Wingate asked us whether any of us were out of the House—"

"I'll watch it!" gasped Bunter. "The beast jolly well knows that I'd like to

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whop him, and he would have believed that—"

"We'd better keep this dark, you men!" grinned Skinner. "It's the sack for Bunter if it comes out!"

"I never did it!" wailed Bunter. "You beast, Skinner—"

"We jolly well know you did!" said Skinner. "What beats me is where you got the nerve from! Whopping the captain of the school—"

"I didn't!" shrieked Bunter. "I never went into the quad at all, and I jolly well saw another fellow there, too, at the time—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Whom did you see there?" demanded Wharton.

"Oh, nobody! I wasn't out of the House, you know!"

"Did you see Price?"

"How could I when I wasn't there? He never barged into me and burst that egg all over my waistcoat! I never told Bob Cherry that he did—did I, Bob, old chap?"

"You did!" answered Bob.

"Beast!" roared Bunter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, you fellows, don't you get saying that I was out of the House!" implored Bunter. "They'll all think it was me! That beast Price would say so, too! He's making out that it was Hilton now, but he'd just as soon make out that it was me! And Wingate knows I'd like to whop him—"

"Thank you, Bunter!" said a quiet voice.

"Oh lor'!"

Billy Bunter spun round like a fat humming-top, and his eyes almost popped through his spectacles at the sight of Wingate of the Sixth, standing in the doorway of the Rag.

"Dorm!" said Wingate in the same quiet tone. "Gwynne, old man"—he called to another Sixth Form man in the passage—"will you see lights out for these young sweeps? I've got to talk to Bunter for a few minutes!"

"Oh crikey!" groaned Bunter.

And the Removites marched off to their dormitory, leaving Billy Bunter with the captain of Greyfriars!

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Brought to Book!

PPRICE of the Fifth smiled. Prep was over in the Fifth, and in that study not a word had passed between the two former friends during prep. Cedric Hilton rose, and pushed his books away, and, still without a word, turned to the door. There was a dark cloud on his handsome face. Price passed his hand over his nose, which still felt rather painful. But he was solaced by the cloud on Hilton's face, and he smiled. The fellow who had turned him down was under suspicion, and he, after his revenge on the captain of the school, was perfectly safe. He felt that he had reason to be satisfied.

If he had had any uneasiness on the score of that unlucky meeting with Bunter in the quad, it had evaporated now. Nothing had come to light; it was not even known that the fat Owl had been out of doors. Obviously—to Price—Bunter had not known, in the fog, who it was that had barged him over; on that side he was quite secure. And he had put a very effective spoke in Hilton's wheel—the one-time scape-grace would hardly keep on pally terms with the games men when he was suspected of a miserable, cowardly attack on the head of the games.

Price's satisfaction was keen—but it

was destined to be short-lived. There was a tap at the door, and Wingate came in.

Hilton gave him a sullen look.

"Want me?" he asked, with a half-sneer.

And Price smiled again. His impression, for the moment, was that the suspected Fifth Form man was to be called up before the prefects.

But the smile faded from his face at Wingate's reply.

"No; I want Price."

The Greyfriars captain came to the table and stood looking across it at the cad of the Fifth. Stephen Price felt his heart beating rather unpleasantly. He told himself that nothing could possibly have been discovered—that nothing could have come out; but Wingate's steady gaze disconcerted him.

"You've told me, Price, that you were not out of the House this afternoon," said Wingate quietly.

"That's so!" assented Price.

"I found you in this study when I came in—"

"I'd been here over an hour, then, swotting for old Prout! What about it?" drawled Price. But there was a slight tremble in his drawl.

"You did not barge me over from behind in the fog—and whop me before I could make a move?"

ANOTHER "MAGNETITE" WINS A POCKET WALLET

for sending in the following
GREYFRIARS LIMERICK:

There's a "Noo Yark" junior
named Fish:
To "wake up Greyfriars" is
his wish.
When caught money lending
For "six" he's soon bending
And an ashplant is going swish,
swish!

Sent in by: J. Becque, 34,
Richmond Gardens, Shepherd's
Bush, W.12.

"Hardly!"

"You did not bolt in the fog?"

"I've said not."

"You did not run into a junior who happened to be out of the House?"

Price's heart gave a jump.

"No!" he muttered.

"A Remove junior who, as I've just learned, had a grudge against you, and had gone out with some fatheaded intention of biffing an egg at you and dodging away in the fog."

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Hilton, and he smiled. It was his turn to smile now! Certainly there was no trace of smiling about Price!

Wingate glanced round at him.

"I'm sorry, Hilton, if I let the idea come into my head for a moment that it was you that did that rotten, cowardly thing," he said. "I know now that it was Price."

"It was not!" said Price between his teeth. "And I defy you to prove it!"

"You mean that you did not know that Bunter of the Remove had recognised you?" said Wingate contemptuously. "As it happens, he did. The young ass was keeping it dark because he was afraid he might be suspected of having done the trick himself."

"If he was on the spot probably he did!"

"I think not! I've questioned the young ass, and I think I've got the truth out of him. But if you deny it—"

"Every word!" hissed Price.

"Very well," said Wingate grimly. "I've sent Bunter to his dormitory now, but it will come before the Head in the morning. I dare say Dr. Locke will be able to settle where the truth is in the matter. If it comes before the Head you know what to expect. That's all!"

Price's face was like chalk. The bare thought of standing before the Head and desperately denying what was obviously true made his heart sink. It was the "sack" for whopping a prefect! But from one of Wingate's words the wretched, detected schemer drew a gleam of hope. If it came before the Head! If!

"Stop!" breathed Price. The Greyfriars captain's hand was on the door. Wingate turned.

"Well?"

"Give a fellow a chance!" muttered Price huskily. "You said if—it comes before the Head! It needn't!"

"The Head has left it to me to deal with, or report to him, as I think fit! If I tell him I've dealt with the matter that will be sufficient. If you choose to tell the truth—"

"You'll deal with the matter?"

"Yes."

"Oh!" gasped Price.

"You're a pretty complete rotter, Price!" said the Greyfriars captain scornfully. "But I'm not keen on getting a Greyfriars man sacked on a personal matter. But—the truth!"

Price licked his dry lips.

"I—I own up!" he muttered. "It was because—well, you know why it was. You made me look a fool to all the Fifth, and—and—"

Wingate nodded.

"Quite! I've said that I'll deal with the matter myself—and I will! Got any gloves here, Hilton?"

"Eh? Yes!"

"Trot them out!"

Hilton grinned and sorted out the boxing-gloves. Wingate tossed a pair across the table to Price.

"Ready?" he asked.

Price rose slowly to his feet. It was better than going up before the Head to be sacked! He realised that! But during the next ten minutes he rather doubted it!

"I say, you fellows, seen Price?"

And Billy Bunter chortled.

Bunter was feeling merry and bright that morning!

Who whopped Wingate was no longer a mystery!

There had been no official statement on the subject. But there was talk in the Fifth and Sixth which reached the ears of the juniors. And if anyone had doubted, the condition of Stephen Price that day would have banished all doubts.

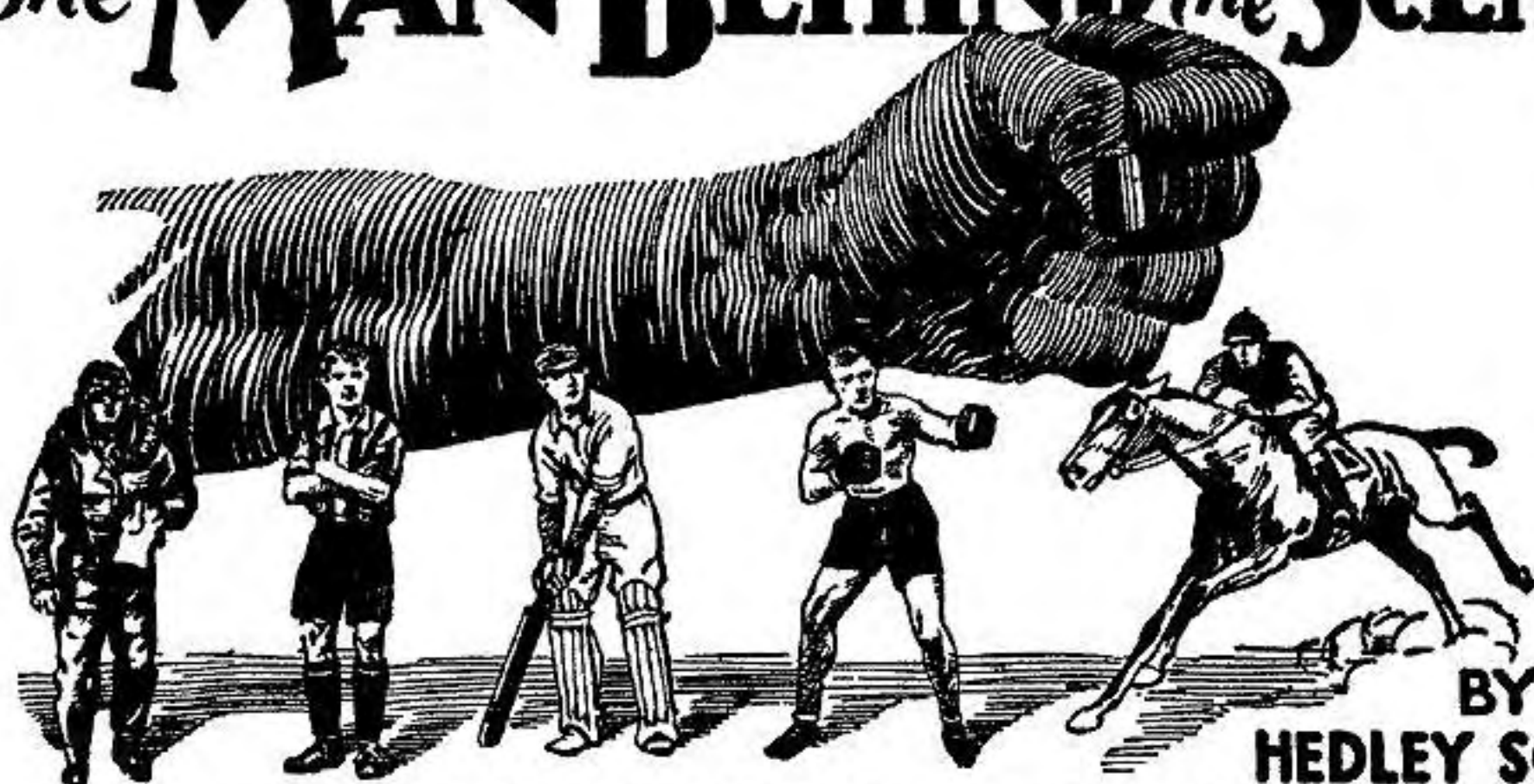
He had not gone up to the Head to be sacked, he had not had a "prefects' beating," but that he had been severely "through it" was only too clear from his aspect. Wingate, evidently, had settled the affair, more in accordance with the customs of the Remove than with those of the Sixth Form! And it was days before Price recovered from that terrific thrashing. And—though he was not much given to repentance—it was probable that he repented very deeply and sincerely of having "whopped" Wingate!

THE END.

(Look out for another grand long story of your old favourites—Harry Wharton & Co. in next week's MAGNET, entitled: "THE MYSTERY OF THE HEAD'S HAT!" You'll vote it one of Frank Richard's extra-specials, chums!)

START IT TO-DAY—THRILL-PACKED DETECTIVE STORY!

The MAN BEHIND the SCENES!



BY
HEDLEY SCOTT

Starring **FERRERS LOCKE, DETECTIVE**, and his clever boy assistant, **JACK DRAKE**.

HOW THE STORY STARTED.

CHRISTOPHER DEAN is attempting a double Atlantic flight when his machine is wrecked by a bomb which has been cunningly hidden in the fuselage. Clinging to the wreckage, Christopher encloses his log-book and a piece of the bomb in a vacuum flask which he tosses into the sea. The flask is picked up by some Greyfriars boys with whom **FERRERS LOCKE**, the famous detective, has been spending the day. Lock suspects **MERVYN VILLIERS** and sets **JACK DRAKE** to watch the house. Meanwhile, he discovers that a big insurance was effected on Dean's life by **JULIUS TANKERHEAD**—an old jail-bird friend of Villiers. Villiers, however, denies all knowledge of the man, yet within a few moments of that denial, Jack Drake phones through to his chief with the information that Tankerhead has just called on Villiers and was greeted like an old friend.

(Now read on.)

"Bert Entwistle!"

"**C**OME back at once, my lad—as quickly as you can!"

With that sharp command to his assistant, Ferrers Locke replaced the telephone receiver, and began to walk up and down the thick pile carpet, his head sunk upon his chest, his brow furrowed in deep concentration.

He had made up his mind to a certain course of action when Jack Drake arrived.

"Here we are, guv'nor!" exclaimed the youngster boisterously. "Took a taxi!"

"Good lad!" smiled the great detective. "Now listen to what I've got to say! Listen carefully!"

"O.K., guv'nor!"

"To-morrow, my lad, you will be Bert Entwistle, of Pegg Bay, Kent."

Jack's interest was betrayed by the slight elevation of his eyebrows, but he asked no questions.

"To-morrow," resumed Locke, "you will call upon Mr. Mervyn Villiers, of Malplaquet Crescent, and tell him—"

For quite fifteen minutes the detective outlined his instructions, and finally asked his young assistant to repeat them in every particular. Parrot-wise, Drake voiced them almost word for word.

Locke flashed him a rare smile.

"Good, young 'un! There are not many boys of your age who could so faithfully repeat what had been said to

them. Your powers of concentration are improving. Now, let's get busy!"

For something like two hours Ferrers Locke and Drake were busy in the laboratory before the former announced that it was high time they snatched a few hours' sleep.

Shortly after breakfast the next morning Jack Drake, clad in baggy, blue trousers of a coarse material, thick woollen jersey, and reefer jacket which smelled strongly of the sea, allowed Ferrers Locke to practise his skill as a make-up specialist upon him.

In something under half an hour a complete transformation had taken place. Jack's face now possessed that leathery, weather-beaten appearance of one who follows the sea as a profession; his hands and forearms were similarly treated, suggesting that their owner was one accustomed to much manual outdoor work.

Locke surveyed his handiwork with a critical eye, added a few deft touches with a lining pencil, and pronounced himself satisfied.

"You look a sailorman, wearing his Sunday best, to the life, my boy!" he remarked. "Now, don't forget to walk with a slight roll!"

"How's this, guv'nor?" asked Drake, moving across the room as if it were the heaving deck of a ship.

"Good enough, Jack! Good-bye—and good luck!"

Touching the bulging pocket of his reefer jacket, Drake winked at his chief, and let himself out of the detective's chambers—by the back door. Soon he was rolling along the busy streets of London, a young sailorman on a visit to London to the life!

He blinked at the imposing residence of Mr. Mervyn Villiers, in Malplaquet Crescent, undecidedly, and then, as if having made up his mind, he rolled to the door and rang the bell.

A superior-looking manservant opened the door, sniffed at him disapprovingly, and was about to slam the door in the youngster's face when he realised that the caller had forestalled that move by jamming his foot over the threshold.

"No hawkers allowed here, young man!" rasped the superior manservant.

"Ho, messmate!" came the boisterous

return. "I'm not a hawker! You slip along to the bridge an' tell the skipper—lemme see, his name's Villiers—tell him that I want to see him on important business!"

The manservant was not impressed. He sniffed audibly.

"I'm sure my master would not desire to see you!" he answered, recoiling from the somewhat overwhelming aroma of tar and brine which enveloped his young visitor.

"Ho, messmate!" returned the young sailorman. "Tell him that Bert Entwistle—that's me—has picked up something in the sea concerning his pal, Christopher Dean—"

At mention of the name the manservant's face expressed a sudden alarm. Now, no longer eager to speed the young sailorman on his way, he invited him inside with a greasy smile, and departed hot-foot to find his master.

Humming a sea-chanty to himself, Drake waited, and was at length invited into a sumptuous apartment, wherein sat Mr. Mervyn Villiers, enjoying a fragrant cigar.

A meaning nod passed between the manservant and his master, what time Jack Drake toyed nervously with his peaked cap and rolled slightly from one foot to another.

"Take a seat, my young friend!" smiled Mr. Villiers.

Awkwardly Drake complied, and sat on the edge of the armchair with about as much outward show of comfort as if it were the edge of a volcano.

"Well"—Villiers' rather closely set eyes smiled at his young caller invitingly—"what can I do for you, young man?"

Drake coughed, and then fished from his reefer jacket a leather-covered vacuum-flask.

"Well, skipper—begging your pardon, Mr. Villiers," he began—"I was out in Pegg Bay with the smack yesterday when I caught sight of this flask a-bobbin' up and down, so I fished it up." He unscrewed the cap of the flask. "An' this, skipper, is what I found inside."

His blue eyes never left the flacid
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features of Villiers. They noted the sudden interest, not unmixed with a measure of alarm, that sprang into being in the big man's eyes.

"How interesting, my lad! Let me see that flask!"

Drake could have sworn that the man's hands trembled slightly as he took the flask and examined the log-book and the piece of bomb casing it contained. Followed a few moments' heavy silence, then Villiers looked up, with a smile.

"How very interesting!" he remarked. "But what a pity that some misguided person should perpetrate such a wicked thing in the name of one of the finest sportsmen who ever lived!"

Bert Entwistle, alias Jack Drake, looked perplexed—according to plan.

"Skipper," he made answer, "I'm afraid I don't follow you. As I read it, that vacuum-flask and the two things it contained tells me that your pal, Mr. Dean, met with foul play when he tried to fly the Atlantic a few months ago."

"My dear fellow," replied Villiers, "I appreciate your sentiments, but I am afraid you have been the victim of a wicked hoax. In short, these things are not genuine. I am sorry," he added, as his caller's face fell, "I'm sorry, Mr. Entwistle, that you have had your journey to London for nothing."

"Oh, that's all right, skipper!" answered Drake. "Somehow, at the back of my mind, I had a feelin' that perhaps some dirty rotter fixed this up for a joke; that's why I didn't mention finding the flask to a soul—"

"Good!" exclaimed Villiers involuntarily, and his eyes glinted curiously. "I mean, in the circumstances—ahem—that was very wise. No one likes to be made a fool of." He seemed to consider awhile, then he forced a smile. "Look here, Mr. Entwistle, please allow me to recompense you for all the trouble and expense you have been put to."

Drake demurred, but Villiers would have none of it.

"Here, take this, young fellow!" he insisted, handing the young sailorman a five-pound note. "No, really, I insist! And, if you will accept a spot of advice from me, don't say anything about this affair to a soul! Why?"—he laughed breezily—"you'd be the laughing-stock of Pegg—what?"

"Bert Entwistle" grinned awkwardly and agreed. Pocketing the five-pound note, he lurched to his feet and announced that he would not take up any more of Mr. Villiers' valuable time.

A few seconds later he was being shown out by the manservant. But the moment the door closed behind him, Drake dodged round to the window and cautiously peered in. What he saw brought a glimmer to his eyes, for there was Mr. Villiers pointing furiously at the flask, the log-book, and the piece of bomb casing, during which his manservant peered at them with unbelieving gaze.

Drake, of course, could not hear the words that passed. It would have been better for him had such a thing been possible.

"By thunder, Morris!" Villiers was saying hoarsely. "To think that little things like these would put us all in prison! Don't you understand that we've had a narrow escape?"

"Gosh, boss!" gasped Morris. "Those things of Dean's fair give me the creeps! They're genuine, all right!"

"Of course they are!" snapped Villiers impatiently. "It's his, his writing that—"

"Gee! If those articles had fallen into some hands, instead of a stupid, ignorant sailorman," grated Villiers' servant, fingering his throat significantly, "I shouldn't feel mighty comfortable now! But, boss, supposing that kid talks—"

The same thought was obviously passing through Mervyn Villiers' mind.

"That's the trouble," he muttered thickly; and an evil, murderous look crossed his florid face. "He might talk. He might talk unless—unless—"

He leered up at Morris wickedly. "We can't afford to take chances, Morris. That dolt of a sailorman must be silenced somehow."

A reflected evil now blazed across the once superior-looking features of Morris, the manservant. Then he pursed his lips and snapped his fingers in a horrible fashion.

"Leave that guy to me, boss. I'll soon settle him—nice and proper! I've done it before."

Mervyn Villiers tapped a bejewelled set of fingers on the small lacquered table by his side, and nodded.

"You're right, Morris. Get busy!"

The exchange of views, hurried and yet determined, had taken barely two minutes. Well inside five minutes Morris, seated at the wheel of his master's streamlined sports car, was trailing the rolling figure of Mervyn Villiers' late caller.

Still whistling, Jack Drake sauntered along in a leisurely style, feeling somewhat elated with the way things had gone. Obviously Mervyn Villiers, professional sportsman and patron of sport, was a double-dyed scoundrel. He had told Drake without a blush that the flask and its contents was the work of a practical joker. Yet his actions, seen through the window, suggested that he believed them to be genuine.

COME INTO THE OFFICE, BOYS.

BY the way, chums, I hope you all took particular notice of my announcement in MAGNET a few weeks ago offering to all readers a wonder volume of information, entitled: **THE WORLD PICTORIAL GAZETTEER**, and that you are all collecting the necessary tokens.

Bang up-to-date, this quick and ready reference book is finely produced in every way and is beautifully bound in red cloth with a fine silk grain. In a nutshell, this **WORLD PICTORIAL GAZETTEER** is a volume containing first-hand information on all countries, their natural features and resources, their cities, towns, villages, and historic places, and the native races of the world, embodying about 20,000 articles, comprising a million words. And then there's the alphabetical arrangements of the contents. This handy reference book of the world and its affairs will be of tremendous assistance to all those who wish to get a bigger and better knowledge of the things that matter. Mention this wonderful offer to your parents, who will, I feel sure, be quick to see the many advantages behind it. Never before has such a splendid book of reference with its 1,024 pages and its 1,500 maps and illustrations been offered to readers. All you are asked to do is to send in Six Tokens and P.O. for 2s. 10d. to cover cost of postage, etc. Grasp the opportunity now—send in your Reservation Form and then collect the necessary **SIX Tokens**—before it is too late.

WHAT is the last thing you would expect to find in the middle of the great Sahara desert, chums? You certainly wouldn't expect to come across a petrol pump there, would you? Yet

THE MOST ISOLATED PETROL PUMP in the whole world is to be found miles away from civilisation in the centre of that vast sandy wasteland. It is known as "Bidon 5," and the "station" consists of two ramshackle huts and the petrol pump. The population is exactly—one!—the native in charge of the petrol pump. You wouldn't think that a petrol station in such an isolated position would do much business, would you? Yet it does—and a great deal of business, too!

The Sahara is now linked up by ordinary motor-bus services, and it is possible to journey from Algeria to Gao and Timbuktu. Bidon 5 is situated approximately half-way along the thousand-mile desert journey, and the result is that all drivers of official and private motor-cars journeying across the desert make for this station in order to replenish their stores of petrol.

A little while ago I received a letter from a reader written in

MICROSCOPIC WRITING.

Although this chum had written in longhand he had managed to crowd a tremendous number of words on to one page—enough, in fact, to fill three full pages of typewriting. He asks me if this is a record? It certainly is so far as letters from my readers are concerned—but just listen to this!

A man once wrote a letter on a single grain of rice! That takes some swallowing, doesn't it—the letter I mean, not the grain of rice! There were no fewer than 1,615 letters in the message. It was, of course, quite impossible to read the message with the naked eye, but it was perfectly legible when magnified. Another "microscopic writer" actually engraved the Lord's Prayer on the head of a pin! And both these experts claimed that they achieved their feats without the aid of a microscope or magnifying glass!

It's time I was looking at my "record book" to see what is in store for you in next week's issue.

For a "kick-off" there is

"THE MYSTERY OF THE HEAD'S HAT!"

By Frank Richards,

a long complete yarn of the chums of Greyfriars that is going to make you wish it was three or four times as long as it is! There is no need for me to tell you much about it in advance, as you know you can always depend on this popular author to "deliver the goods." So don't run the risk of missing this fine yarn, but orders your copy now and make sure of reading it.

You'll get thrills galore in next week's chapters of our powerful detective story and chuckles in the "Greyfriars Herald" supplement. And if there is anything you want to know, or any advice you need, or if you have any interesting paragraphs to pass along to other readers—well, don't forget to "drop me a line."

YOUR EDITOR.

Little did the cunning Mervyn Villiers appreciate, just then, that Ferrers Locke had anticipated his reactions to Bert Entwistle's call, and it said much for the detective's powers as "an amateur forger" that the exercise book which contained a log of Dean's attempted Transatlantic flight was accepted as genuine.

The real log-book, flask, and incriminating piece of shell casing were actually, at that moment, reposing behind the closed door of Locke's secret safe. Those in Villiers' possession now were clever fakes!

Drake, mindful of these things, felt quite pleased with the way he had carried off the imposture. Then happened one of those things which are almost inexplicable. He looked into the large "traffic mirror" of a stationary touring car, which gave a view of the traffic speeding behind his back. And in that quick, fleeting glimpse Drake saw a fast two-seater sports car, apparently out of control, thunder towards him, its near-side wheels already encroaching on the pavement.

With an ejaculation of alarm Drake wheeled, felt something hit him, and then collapsed in a motionless heap. Yet before his senses left him he was sure that the face of the driver at the wheel of the out-of-control sports car was the face of Mervyn Villiers' superior-looking manservant.

Shrieks arose on all sides as various people witnessed the tragedy, for tragedy it appeared to be. On the edge of the pavement, with blood streaming down his face, lay the young sailorman. Bending over him, a victim of horror and anxiety, apparently, was Morris. Striding towards the gathering crowd now came a policeman.

He bent over Drake, felt the youngster's heart, and informed the agitated driver that so far he had cause to thank himself that the boy still lived.

The driver explained, nervously, haltingly, that his steering column had suddenly refused to function; that he could not have avoided that terrible accident. Inwardly, however, the villain was censuring himself for not having made a better job of that "accident."

He was still telling himself so when the ambulance arrived, and Drake, now shifted to a stretcher, was gently lodged within the ambulance.

Followed the usual formula of taking the driver's name, inspecting his licence, and so on. Then Mr. Morris, abandoning his car to the care of a breakdown gang, entered a taxi, and asked to be driven to the hospital where the victim of the accident had already been taken.

Amazing things were taking place in that hospital, for Drake, in the privacy of the emergency ward where such street accidents were taken, "came to" with horrifying effect.

"I'm all right, sir," he grinned, at a bewildered group of nurses and doctors. "This is only a slight cut in my napper. No bones broken. But, doctor"—he beckoned the surgeon to his side, whispered who he was, and added—"if that guy who knocked me down comes nosing round here, keep him waiting for news of me until I have phoned my chief."

Drake had to repeat this more than once before the doctor was convinced that the youngster was not quite mad.

The surgeon dismissed the nurses, and personally got into communication with Ferrers Locke. He heard quickly enough then, by reason of Locke's description

of his assistant's disguise, that the young sailorman was actually Jack Drake.

"Is he hurt?" snapped the detective into the telephone, and breathed his relief when he received a negative answer. "Oh, splendid! Put him on the telephone, doctor—there's a good chap. This is a highly important case."

In a few moments Drake was through to his beloved chief, and, adding his own assurances that he was not hurt, except for a slight flesh wound, asked for instructions.

"The chap who knocked me down was Villiers' manservant," he added. "I'll swear I'm not mistaken! Deliberate attempt to put me out for keeps, guv'nor, if you want my opinion."

Ferrers Locke's instructions were not long in coming over the wires.

"Just lie doggo for a bit, young 'un, until I come round. But put me on to the doctor again."

The much amazed surgeon once again conversed with the celebrated detective.

He was more astonished than ever at what he was asked to do.

"I'm afraid, Mr. Locke, that is impossible," he stuttered. "It's—it's—well, irregular and inhuman, to say the least."

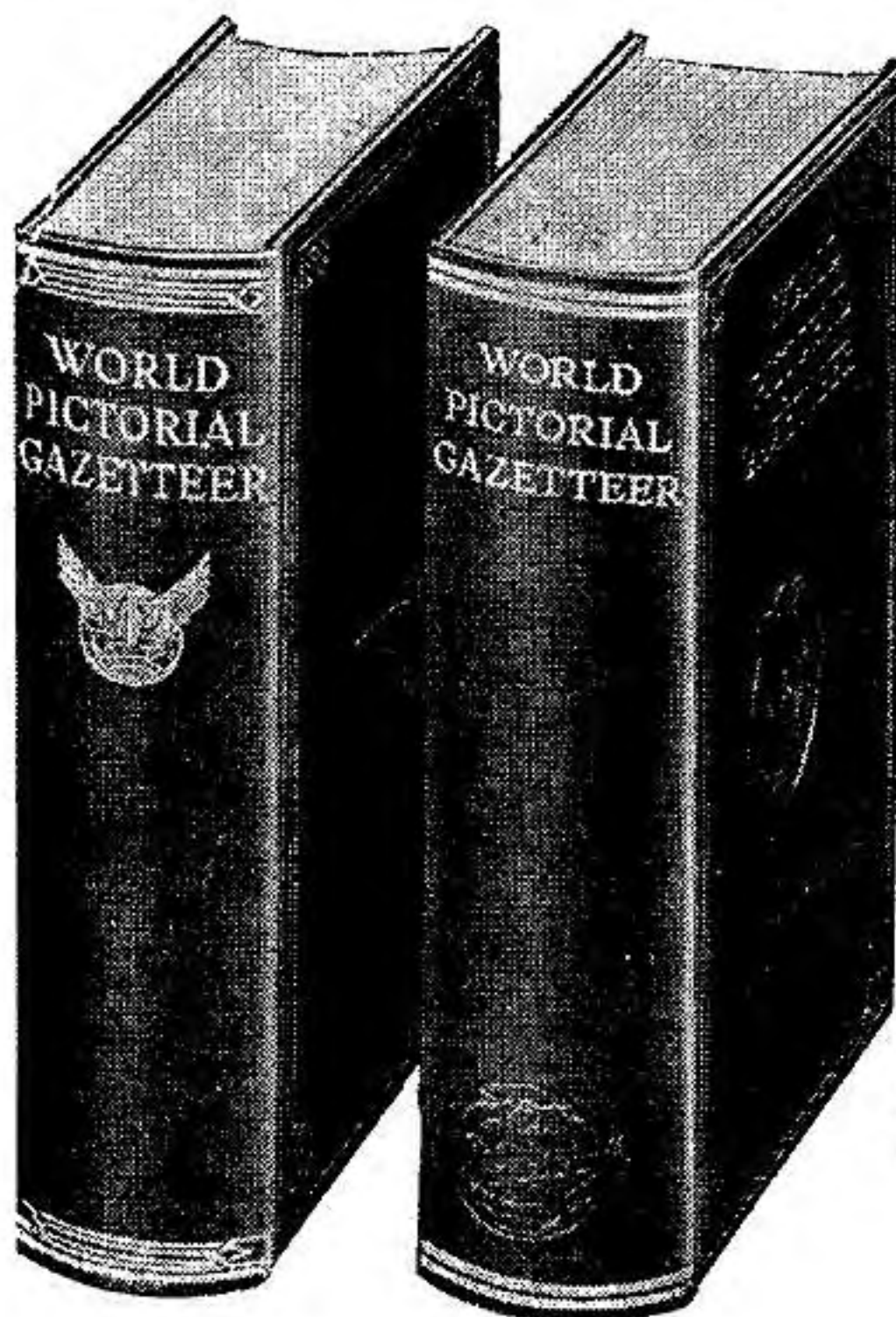
Ferrers Locke snorted his impatience.

"I tell you it is necessary," he replied. "and, as a governor of the hospital, I will take full responsibility for any consequences."

"Very well, sir," replied the surgeon. "I will do what you ask on that understanding."

He carried out his instructions very creditably when, in an adjoining room, he encountered a harassed-looking

(Continued on next page.)



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individual, who stated that he was the driver of the car which had knocked down the young sailorman.

"Calm yourself, Mr. Morris," said the doctor gently. "I have bad news for you."

The crafty Morris jumped eagerly at the bait.

"You mean the poor fellow is—"

He did not finish the sentence, but the inference was that the young sailorman was dead. The surgeon was not put to the unhappy position of having to tell a lie. He merely shrugged his shoulders, and Morris jumped to the conclusion that the worst indeed had happened.

His mean soul, thereafter, cunningly prompted words of deep regret and remorse; his face and general tearful expressions seemingly backed up his sorrow.

Knowing something of the true nature of things, the surgeon was sorely tempted to grab this hypocritical scoundrel by the scruff of the neck and pitch him out, neck and crop, from the hospital. Instead, he held himself in check and bowed the conscience-stricken driver off the premises.

A few moments later Ferrers Locke arrived, carrying a suitcase. Inside it was a change of clothes for Jack Drake, now happily little the worse for the fall he had taken. A strip of plaster at the back of his head, and a few minor bruises, were all that showed of his narrow escape from death.

Locke shook him warmly by the hand.

"Young 'un," he said enthusiastically, "we've struck one of the biggest cases of our career. And we're not letting up until we've put Mr. clever Mervyn Villiers in his proper place. Now, how do you feel? Ready to go home? Good! Change into your own togs. For the time being Bert Entwistle is dead. You follow?"

Drake grinned, removed his sailorman make-up in the privacy of the surgeon's own room, and donned his ordinary everyday clothes.

"Mr. Locke," remarked the surgeon, when the transformation was made. "I'm holding you to your word over this strange business. The authorities—the police—"

Ferrers Locke stayed him with a gesture.

"Leave everything to me, doctor," he replied confidently. "I'll square all this business. Later on, when things have developed, you will be able to tell

your colleagues how you helped to unmask one of the greatest swindlers the world has ever known! Good-day to you, and many thanks!"

"Well?"

Mervyn Villiers' hands were twitching with nervous excitement. On the little table was a half-filled decanter and a tray of glasses.

Before him, smiling in triumph, was his trusted servant Morris.

"Well?" demanded Villiers for the second time. "Why don't you tell me what's happened?"

Morris paused another second, the better to enjoy his triumph, then he winked knowingly and calmly helped himself to a measure of refreshment from the decanter.

"It was plumb easy, boss. Never done a neater job in my life!"

"Well?" shrieked Villiers. "What the devil does that mean exactly? Speak up, you grinning idol!"

"It means, boss, that your clever sailorman will never speak again. He's through with the sea," he added callously. "Reckon he's through with everything! The surgeon at the hospital said so."

Which wasn't quite accurate, of course, but it served the purpose of restoring the colour to Mervyn Villiers' flabby face.

"Phew!" he breathed. "I've been on tenterhooks all the time you've been gone!" He grinned. "But I'll say you're a specialist at 'accident' cases, Morris. I'll give you a testimonial any time, what? Ha, ha!"

His eyes dwelt on the vacuum flask, the log-book, and the piece of shell casing.

"We'll get rid of these things at once. I don't like the idea of them hanging about the place."

"You're right, boss. They remind me, too, of an unhappy past. Here"—he picked up the flask and the log-book and stalked towards the brightly glowing fire—"I'll burn these for a start."

He thrust the exercise-book into the heart of the flames, and watched it burn to ashes. Next, he crushed the vacuum flask between his strong hands and watched the flames play havoc with that. Finally, he picked up the jagged piece of shell casing and fingered it reflectively.

"This, boss, is the most dangerous tit-bit of the lot," he remarked, turning it over and over in his hand.

"How so, Morris?"

"Why, boss. Tankerhead's Steel Works manufacture their steel to a secret formula. A clever analyst could trace this piece of steel back to him. But we'll soon put the kybosh on anything like that, because your humble will dump this in the river before the morning's out!"

He laughed, helped himself to another glass of liquor, and then aggressively held out an open palm.

"Guess Tankerhead got paid out his insurance money yesterday. Forgotten, boss, that a share of it was promised to me?"

He made no attempt to hide the threat in his voice.

Villiers glared back at him sourly, grinned in half-hearted fashion, and withdrew a bundle of notes from his wallet.

"Here you are, Morris. You earned them, anyway."

Morris counted the notes and pocketed them.

"You've forgotten something, boss. My price for putting a guy on the spot is ten guineas."

Reluctantly Mervyn Villiers parted company with an additional ten-pound note.

"That's O.K., boss!" smiled Morris greasily. "Now, what's the next lay?"

Villiers drummed his fingers on the lacquer table.

"Tankerhead is framing the Athletic's big match with Malpen Villa. He reckons it's money for jam!"

"Good!" grunted Morris.

And in that self-same moment, a couple of miles away, Ferrers Locke was addressing Jack Drake.

"Jack, my lad," he said, "we're up against a big organisation of crime, operating behind the world of sport. I'm sure of it. Villiers is in it—so is that gaolbird friend of his, Julius Tankerhead. It will pay us to keep a watchful eye on Mr. Julius—he's had a long run of freedom—"

"Twenty years since he came out of Dartmoor!" interrupted Drake. "I've been hunting up the records."

"You're quite correct," smiled Locke. "But it won't be twenty years before he is back behind prison bars—mark my words!"

(Mervyn Villiers and Julius Tankerhead will need to go very warily with Ferrers Locke dogging their footsteps! Look out for a heap more thrills in next week's gripping instalment, chums!)

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CAN MAN BECOME ANIMAL?

Is magic true after all? Can spells be cast? Is it possible for a man to be changed into an animal? All interested in these engrossing questions should turn up in the Rag next Wednesday evening at 8 p.m. when J. Bull, Esq., will lecture on "How Coker Made a Complete Ass of Himself!"

IS TREVOR ANOTHER CARUSO?

Surprising Song Recital

Trevor, who is not often in the limelight, has come into the full glare of publicity this week by announcing that he has a marvellous voice.

Bolsover, the celebrated leader of the phenomenally successful comb-and-paper band known as Bolsover and His Boys, was delighted to hear it.

"The only thing we lack is a good crooner," he told Trevor, with enthusiasm. "If you can croon jazz melodies to the throbbing rhythm of my band, fame, if not fortune, is yours!"

But Trevor, to Bolsover's surprise, only glared.

"Croon!" he said, contemptuously. "Why, I'd rather give up singing altogether. My singing, I'd like you to know, is of the operatic type. On the concert platform, of course, I condescend to sentimental ballads or sea-shanties—but crooning, never!"

On the strength of that little oration, many fellows felt impelled to turn up to Trevor's first song recital in the Rag a little later.

And their comments on "Prologue to Pagliacci" and "Un Peu d'Amour" were not altogether favourable, consisting mostly of yells of "Put a sock in it!" throughout both songs.

Their comments on "My Dreams," which followed, were even more unfavourable, as they consisted almost exclusively of tomatoes, hurled with unerring aim at Trevor's face, the result being somewhat on these lines:

"I dream of the day I met you—wooooooh! That shone—ow!—in your tender eyes, love—groooooh!"

When first—mmmm!—they looked in mine—woooooh!"

"My Dreams" concluded the show, and Trevor staggered off to the nearest bathroom, followed by the derisive howls of the audience.

"Do you think he really can sing?" we asked Hoskins afterwards—not knowing enough about singing to be able to express a personal opinion.

The eyes of Hoskins, musical genius of the Shell, were fairly gleaming as he made reply.

"Sing? My dear sir, I should think he CAN sing!" Hoskins said, rapturously.

"Unfortunately, I didn't hear him owing to the noise, so I am unable to give a technical report on the quality of his voice. But about his ability to sing, there can be no question. Anyone who arouses the jeers of the uninitiated philistine mob that gets into the Rag to this extent MUST be good!"

So now you know!

WE COULDN'T RESIST THIS!

Somebody writes to tell us that to-day is the fiftieth anniversary of an occasion when the Sark overflowed its banks and a Greyfriars boatrace was rowed in Friarale Lane.

"Jubilee" it is!

THE NEW

Greyfriars Herald

No. 74 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

March 3rd, 1934.



By Aubrey Angel

I'm a go-ahead kind of chap, with tastes considerably more advanced than those of the rest of the Fourth. Temple and his crowd find their diversion in football and similar puerile pastimes. I find mine in billiards, banker, betting and similar manly hobbies. ("Manly"—Ed.)

This being so, it won't surprise you to know that I'm not averse to the consolation of an occasional cigarette. But it may surprise you quite a lot to know that my weakness for My Lady Nicotine brought me the worst experience I can remember, last Christmas.

My pater, Sir Philip Angel, caused it. He happens to possess a peculiar sense of humour, and when he discovered me smoking in my room, he didn't just read out a lecture as a normal pater would. He patted me on the back instead and said: "Well done, Aubrey! Glad to see you're becoming such a man!"

Then he added: "Come downstairs and try something really worth smoking!"

I followed him. He went straight to his smoking cabinet and got out a box of enormous black cigars.

"Try one of these!" he said, holding up a cigar.

"Would you believe it?"

For once Coker's unruly hair and untidy garb are frequent targets for Mr. Proust's wit in the Fifth Form-room. Coker told him that a fellow with personality needn't bother about trifles—and earned 500 lines!

Horace Coker's unruly hair and untidy garb are frequent targets for Mr. Proust's wit in the Fifth Form-room. Coker told him that a fellow with personality needn't bother about trifles—and earned 500 lines!

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MY WORST AND BEST EXPERIENCE

Boneshaker was the name of the animal, if I remember rightly.

I panned my gold tinker for a "tenner," enclosed the cash in an envelope, and addressed it to Mr. Joseph Banks.

When the evening paper came out, I don't mind confessing I felt a bit shaky, though, on the strength of what Pon had told me, I thought I was on a really good thing.

I looked in the "stop press" for the result—and when I saw it, I almost swooned.

Boneshaker had failed me; he was in the "Also Rans"!

I dropped the paper and went back to my study in a frightfully perturbed state.

And then I made the discovery that turned despair into really cheery optimism once more.

I had forgotten to post the letter! Believe me, the happiest moment of my life was when I extracted that crisp, rustling "tenner" from the unposted letter and put it back in my pocket!

(Next week, as a contrast to the somewhat unsavoury reminiscences of the Bad Lad of the Fourth, we're going to have an article by Oliver Kippes, of the Remove. Look out for it, chaps!—Ed.)

STOP PRESS. We have just stopped the press to announce that nothing unusual has turned up in the Swindleton Stakes—

Very little goes on among the Third Form tags that Sammy Bunter does not hear about! He is a champion eavesdropper, and is usually lurking behind the door of Dicky Nugent & Co. are batch-

ing a scheme!

REMOVE FLYING SQUAD'S CAPTURE

Trapeze Expert Trapped

Why Bolsover should hold against lamp-posts, scattered pedestrians, a laughter and a driving licence is a mystery. He holds one, anyway. Last Wednesday he hired a car from Courtfield and took Skinner and Stott and Trevor and Treluce for a ride.

The laws of the land began to operate, however, once also got his hired antique on the road; and, having ravaged the law about dangerous driving by keeping to the wrong side of the road as often as possible, he soon found himself being chased by two officers of the law—one on foot and the other on a push-bike!

Skinner and Stott and Trevor and Treluce didn't quite like the look of things. "Don't you think you'd better stop?" Skinner asked. "I would if I could!" was Bolsover's succinct reply.

The fact was that he couldn't! The particular model Bolsover had hired had taken a rare lot of cranking up and a rare lot of starting; but once it did start, it didn't seem to want to leave off!

Bolsover doesn't know an awful lot about driving cars, anyway, and what he did know wasn't of much use to him, since this car had been designed some years before Bolsover's birth!

(Skinner tells us the garage people bought it from the Courtfield Museum!)

On roared Bolsover and his passengers, leaving behind them dense clouds of dust and petrol-fumes; and the farther they went, the more they piled up the offences. They mounted footpaths, brushed

pened to be looking out—and just managed to avoid a collision with another car by driving through the open gates into the grounds of Popper Court!

We have always maintained that it's better to be born lucky than good-looking. Bolsover, of course, lays no claim to good looks. But what happened next is positive proof that the gods of fortune are with him.

Just as it happened, you see, at the very moment when

In the boxing ring a-orge Wingate is invincible at his weight. In the final of an inter-schools contest he defeated Eric Kildare of St. Jim's on points—thus winning a handsome challenge shield!

ungratefully turned down!

Bolsy turned into the grounds of Popper Court, Sir Hilton was having a violent struggle with a housebreaker who was trying to escape out of one of the bed-room windows. The housebreaker had reached the top of the ladder that was reared against the wall outside when Sir Hilton gave him a violent push that sent the ladder flying backwards.

But for Bolsover, the crook would have made a perfectly happy landing, for he happened to be Slim Herbert, an unemployed trapeze expert who was never more at home than when balancing himself on the top rung of a ladder.

But Bolsover's hired car came rattling down the drive leading to Popper Court just as Slim Herbert arrived out of the blue—and Slim Herbert, to his surprise, found himself landing in the midst of a yelling crowd of Removites!

A moment later, the car came to a stop—against the solid impediment of Sir Hilton Popper's ancestral home!

When the two perspiring policemen arrived on the scene a little later, they found a housebreaker to reward their efforts. They did think of arresting Bolsy, too. But after one look from Sir Hilton—they decided to rest content with one housebreaker!

Sir Hilton, you'll gather, was delighted. He christened Bolsy's outfit the "Greyfriars Flying Squad," and got the Head to give all the lucky bargains in the car an extra "halfer."

We'd rather have their luck than all our good looks!

SITUATION VACANT. My doctor has ordered me to take a two-hour run every morning; but I fear it is too much for me. Who will offer to take the run in my place? Rob a day salary. Apply Lord Mauleverer, Study No. 12.

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FREE! FREE! FREE!

Benevolent Early Riser, anxious to assist those who have difficulty in getting up, will gladly squeeze wet sponge over anybody in any dorm, at any time WITHOUT CHARGE.-- Write or call, R. CHERRY, Study No. 13, Remove.

Doctor Vernon-Smith?

Boulder's Remarkable Cure

We really think Vernon-Smith should take up a medical career. Untrained as he is, he can already diagnose diseases with extraordinary accuracy—and cure them, too!

Take the case of Snoop, for instance. Snoop called on the Boulder one evening and complained that his face was too pale.

Smithy had a good look at it under the study light and promptly said "Anaemia!"

"You think that's what I've got?" Snoop bleated. "How do I cure it, then?"

Smithy pondered. Eventually, he looked up with a gleam in his eye.

"I think I know something that will put some colour into your cheeks," he said. "Come along with me."

He then took the patient along to Study No. 1, where an inquest was being held over the previous night's dorm raid on the Fourth, which had fallen lamentably owing to some person unknown betraying the Remove plans.

"Found out who sold the fort?" he asked the war council.

"Not yet!" growled Johnny Bull. "Wait till we do, though!"

"What are you going to do with him?" asked Smithy, carelessly.

Wharton replied that they were going to flay him alive.

Bob Cherry added that the victim would afterwards be hung, drawn, and quartered.

Tom Brown favoured something lingering, with boiling oil in it.

Bulstrode advocated making the culprit run the gauntlet at least a dozen times.

At this juncture, the Boulder turned round and examined his patient.

Snoop was cured already! His face, which had had a ghastly pallor only a minute before, was now as red as a peony!

Naturally, Smithy told the council of his wonderful success.

Snoop didn't wait to hear the end of the recital. For reasons best known to himself, he fled!

The war council are still hunting for him. Somehow, they seem to have an idea he may know something about the failure of that raid on the Fourth dorm.

But that's nothing to do with Smithy's success as a doctor, which is really the subject of this news item.

As to that, we think the way he brought the colour back to Snoop's face was really wonderful.

Don't you?

DICKY NUGENT'S WEEKLY WISDOM

On his way to the sanatorium this week, Dr. Piltbury slipped on a banana-skin I'd thrown out of the window and decided to postpone his visit for 24 hours.

So you see, it's not only an apple a day that keeps the doctor away. A banana does equally well!