

"WHO SHALL BE CAPTAIN?" Sensational Yarn of Schoolboy Adventure Featuring . . . **Harry Wharton & Co.**

The Magnet

2^D





Come Into the Office, Boys—and Girls!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

THERE are some very curious expressions still in use in the English language that are very puzzling to understand. For instance, have you ever heard of the expression:

"WIGS ON THE GREEN!"

Dick Renwick, one of my Hartlepool readers, asks me what it means, and how it originated. The expression means a serious rumpus or scrimmage, and dates back to the days when people in this country wore wigs. When a heated battle started on some village green, the combatants generally got their wigs knocked off, as people get their hats knocked off nowadays. So "wigs on the green" meant trouble—with a capital T!

In the middle of the eighteenth century wigs were very widely worn in this country, and there were thirty or forty different names for the vast variety of styles. People wore certain wigs according to their particular station in life, and the wealthiest persons wore the largest of all. Hence the expression "bigwig," to denote any prominent person.

Talking about wigs, do you know

WHY SAILORS WEAR SQUARE COLLARS?

This is also a relic of the days when pigtails were worn in the Navy. The officers used to wear wigs, but the sailors merely allowed their own hair to grow, and then formed it into a pigtail. These pigtails were always kept well-greased to keep them out of the way. The thick oil and grease with which the sailors plastered their pigtails generally made a mess of their jumpers, so the square collar was introduced to protect them. Naval officers ceased to wear wigs long before the people ashore did, and when wigs died out, the sailors were allowed to cut off their pigtails. But the collars still survive!

HERE is an interesting paragraph I came across the other day. Do you know that

IRON HAS BEEN CUT BY A PENKNIFE?

Seems amazing, doesn't it, but a little while ago an experiment was carried out to discover what a tremendous effect rust has upon iron. A piece of iron was brought up from the bottom of the sea, after it had been there for a year and a half. It was then found possible to cut it with an ordinary penknife. If it wasn't for the fact that they are constantly painted with rust-preventing mixture, most of the big iron bridges in the world would be useless by now. To keep off the moisture which causes rust, these bridges are painted with oil mixed with paint and boiled. The job of painting the really big bridges of the world never ceases, for as soon as the painters reach one end of the bridge they have to start again at the other end and do the whole job over again!

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Another reader asks me a question concerning another old saying. When we talk about anyone being rather peculiar, we sometimes say he has

"BATS IN THE BELFRY."

This comes from an old French saying, which was translated as "Rats in the Garret." The curious thing is that the expression is common in a large number of countries. An old Scotch saying, which meant the same thing, is: "His head is full of bees," and the Dutch phrase is: "He has a mouse's nest in his head." There used to be an old English idea that if a person was somewhat out of the ordinary, he had maggots in his brain, and the word "maggots" eventually came to mean a whimsical or fanciful dance tune. It is rather strange that all these different sayings should express the same curious idea.

SOME time ago I gave you a little information in this little chat of mine, concerning magnets, and their effect on ships' compasses. One of my Devonshire readers asks me to tell him

MORE ABOUT MAGNETS.

Where, for instance, did they get their name? From a place called Magnesia, in Greece, where magnetic ore was said to abound. There are, of course, many places in the world where magnetic ore is found in large amounts, and in some parts the deposits of ore are great enough to affect ships' compasses whenever they are in those particular neighbourhoods. Old-time travellers' tales referred to a mysterious place known as "The Magnetic Mountain," and it was said that its power was so great that it drew out all the nails of any wooden ship which approached within its influence! That was, of course, an exaggeration; but, like most of those old travellers' tales, it had its basis in a fact. For in those days, when the science of navigation was not so well known, it was possible that a ship's captain, not realising that his compass was being affected, allowed his ship to drift from her course and subsequently be wrecked.

Now for a few

RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to various queries from readers:

Why are Junior Boys at Schools Called "Fags"? ("MAGNET Reader," of Hove): The present word is said to be derived from "factotum," meaning one who does all sorts of services for another—as a fag does for a senior.

A Cricket Book Query. ("Cricket Enthusiast," West of Scotland): The book you require is published by J. Wisden & Co., Ltd., of 15, Great Newport Street, London, W.C.2. The cheapest edition costs 5s. 6d. post paid, and there is a better edition at 8s. post paid. A

local bookseller, however, will probably be able to supply you at the price of 5s. and 7s. 6d. respectively.

A Cycling Query. (S. J. P., of Meadows, Notts): Yes, those particular cycles are made by the firm you mention. The manufacture of them was taken over by the firm about three or four years ago.

Why do we Talk about March Hares Being Mad? ("Naturalist," of Chatham): It is said that hares are unusually shy and wild in March. Another explanation is that the word should be "marsh," owing to the fact that hares which live in marshes are wilder than others.

What were "Blayney's Bloodhounds"? (Tom Scott, of Shrewsbury): This was the nickname given to the old 89th regiment of Foot. They were called bloodhounds because of their perseverance in hunting down Irish rebels, and Lord Blayney was their commander.

What does "To Get the Bird" Mean? (H. G., of Inverness): It is a term used by actors and means that the person who has "got the bird" has been hissed or laughed off the stage.

NOW, in response to many further inquiries from readers, here is a further selection of

SURNAMES AND THEIR MEANINGS:

Cousins: This is a modern form of "le Cusyn," and means, literally, a cousin. Cozens is another form of the same name.

Shields was bestowed upon its original bearer because he fought in tournaments, and carried a shield. Other names which were given to those connected with tournaments are: Lance, Sword, Gauntlet, Dagger, etc.

Fuster is another form of Fewster, and means a maker of wooden frames for saddles.

Cullabere was originally a hunter of bears. The name means "kill-bear."

Ibbot is a shortened French form of Isabel, and the first owner of the surname was called after his mother's name. Ibbotson, Ibbs, and Issot, are other forms of the same name.

Marriot is a surname derived from the woman's name Mary. Other forms are Maryat and Mariette.

Bell comes from various sources. It, too, might have been derived from Isobel. It can also mean "a dweller by the bell," or even have come from an old English word meaning handsome.

Burder was originally a jester. The name Jester comes from a similar source, but originally meant a story-teller.

I am afraid this is all the space I have at my disposal this week, chums, so if I have not yet answered your particular query, I can only ask you to keep your eye on this page of mine, and the answer will appear in due course.

Now a word or two about next week's programme. First comes another tip-top yarn from the gifted pen of Frank Richards, entitled:

"HARRY WHARTON'S TRIUMPH!"

This topping story telling of the bitter feud between Harry Wharton and the scheming Ralph Stacey abounds in surprises and exciting situations. It will keep you interested from the first chapter to the last, so don't miss it. Be wise, then, and order your copy in good time. You'll find Harrison Glyn at his very best, in further gripping chapters of his Canadian adventure yarn. The "Greysfriars Herald," too, will be up to standard, not to mention the Greysfriars Interview in verse by our clever rhymester.

Meet you again next week, chums.

YOUR EDITOR.

WHO SHALL BE CAPTAIN?

By FRANK RICHARDS



Featuring HARRY WHARTON & CO., the World-Famous Chums of Greyfriars.

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Ink for Skinner!

"SLACKER!" Harry Wharton flushed scarlet.

Two or three Remove fellows, passing the open doorway of Study No. 1, dropped that word in as they passed.

Wharton was sitting at the table, writing lines. He had gone to his study soon after dinner, to grind out that inpot for Mr Quelch, his Form-master. This term Harry Wharton very often had lines for Quelch.

Lines on a sunny half-holiday in June were not grateful or comforting. Undoubtedly Wharton would have preferred to join the fellows going down to Little Side for cricket. Neither was there any special hurry for those lines. In point of fact, Wharton had gone to his study to write them chiefly to keep out of the way of the other Remove fellows.

He rose quietly and shut the door, and sat down to Latin lines again. A minute later the door was flung open from outside.

Russell, Ogilvy, and Stacey, from Study No. 3, looked in. Stacey smiled, but did not speak. Russell and Ogilvy spoke together:

"Slacker!"

And the three passed on, leaving the door open.

A few minutes later a fat figure appeared there, very nearly filling the doorway. Billy Bunter blinked in through his big spectacles.

"I say, Wharton—" squeaked Bunter.

Harry looked up impatiently. "What?" he asked. "Slacker!" grinned Bunter. "He, he, he!"

And he rolled on hastily to the stairs as Wharton reached for the inkpot.

Wharton laid down his pen.

It was not much use trying to get through his lines in these circumstances. He relinquished the pen in favour of the inkpot. The next fellow who called that obnoxious word into his study was going to get the contents of the inkpot.

When Harry Wharton resigns the junior captaincy, Greyfriars sits up and takes notice. Yet there's a reason for this sudden move of Harry Wharton's, as you will learn when you read this exciting school yarn.

The next fellow to appear was Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars. He stopped and looked in, and Wharton waited grimly. A stream of ink was ready for Smithy if he uttered the obnoxious word.

But the Bounder did not utter it. "Look here, Wharton—" he began.

"Looking!" said Harry.

"You're playing cricket this afternoon."

"I'm not!"

"I've put your name down."

"Take it off again."

"And why?" demanded the Bounder hotly. "We're playing the Shell this afternoon, and we want you. You know that. Why?"

"You know why," answered Harry Wharton coolly. "I've resigned the captaincy because the fellows want that new man Stacey in the eleven, and I won't play in the same team as him. When I resigned, I said that I should cut cricket. I'm doing it. That's all."

"I call it slacking!"

"You can call it what you like—but not to me! Shut up and clear!"

"Now, look here, don't be a silly ass!" argued the Bounder. "You've been turfed out of the captaincy because you kept up your idiotic feud with Stacey to the extent of keeping him out of the cricket matches—a man who could play your head off. We elect a new skipper on Monday—Quelch has fixed the date for the election. I've got to carry on as vice-captain till then. I've got to captain the side this afternoon. Where's the sense of letting me down because you bar Stacey?"

"Are you playing Stacey?"

"You know I am."

"Then you won't play me. Leave me alone. I've got lines to do for Quelch."

"Bother your lines for Quelch!" roared the Bounder. "Look here, you're wanted to play cricket for your Form. The Shell are too tough for us unless we put the best men in. You've no right to slack in your study and let us down!"

Harry Wharton laughed. "I like that from you, Smithy!" he

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said. "You let me down last Wednesday in the Highcliffe match—you and a lot more! We got whopped to the wide in consequence. Cheese it!"

"It's different!" said Smithy angrily. "We stood out because you refused to play the best cricketer that ever handled a bat at Greyfriars. You're refusing, simply because you've got your silly back up! I want to beat the Shell!"

Wharton laughed again.

"A win to-day would help you in the election on Monday—what?" he asked sarcastically. "Stacey is counting on squeezing into my place now he has edged me out of it, but you're going to give him a run for his money! Well, I'm not going to help you."

"You've said yourself that Stacey won't be a good captain for the Remove," said the Bouncer sullenly.

"Neither will you! You've tried it before and made a hash of it. There are better men than either of you!"

"If you're standing for re-election!"

"Nothing of the kind! I shan't even vote! The Remove can carry on without me!"

"Well, you wouldn't have a dog's chance!" sneered the Bouncer. "I don't believe a man would vote for you—even your own friends! Nugent might—nobody else, not even Cherry or Bull or Inky—"

"Hadn't you better get down to the field?" suggested Wharton.

"Are you coming?"

"No."

"Slacker!" roared Vernon-Smith.

Wharton poised the inkpot.

"I'd rather not spoil your flannels, Smithy! I give you one second to get out of that doorway!"

Smithy got out of the doorway inside the second. He did not want a stream of ink over his spotless flannels.

Wharton sat frowning when he was gone. His mind was made up; but he was not quite sure that he was right in what he had determined on.

The Shell were an older Form than the Remove, and they had some good men. That game was a tough one for the Lower Fourth. The fact that Smithy hoped by a cricket victory on Saturday to enhance his chances of election on Monday did not really matter very much to the fellow who had thrown up the captaincy and was done with it.

Indeed, of the two, he would have preferred Smithy to Stacey as captain of the Remove. He was wanted in the game, and he was not wholly satisfied with playing the part of Achilles—sulking in his tent.

In that disagreeable mood of doubt he was interrupted by Skinner, whose grinning face looked in.

"Playing this afternoon?" asked Skinner.

"No!" snapped Wharton.

"Afraid of Stacey topping your score?"

"Better cut!" said Harry.

"Slacker!" said Skinner.

Skinner had no flannels to spoil—he was no cricketer! He had asked for it, and he got it!

Wharton's arm jerked forward, the ink streamed from the inkpot, and landed on Harold Skinner with a horrid splash.

"Oh!" gasped Skinner. "Ow! Why, you rotter—Grooogh! Oh crumbs!"

Suddenly transformed into a black man, with ink running down him in streams, Skinner staggered in the doorway of Study No. 1. Spluttering ink and rage, he shook an inky fist at the late captain of the Remove.

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Wharton's hand went up.

"The inkpot's coming after the ink!" he said.

Skinner vanished.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Talked Over!

BOB CHERRY grunted.

"It won't do!" he said.

"It won't!" agreed Frank Nugent.

"The won'tfulness," said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh solemnly, "is terrific!"

"Let's go and put it to Wharton!" said Johnny Bull.

"Um!" said Bob.

The Co. had met in Study No. 13—Bob Cherry's study—to discuss it. It was close on time for the Form match to begin, and they were worried.

Bob and Johnny and Inky were down to play; but Nugent was as keen as they were to see his best chum in the team, though he had the reversion of the place if Wharton persisted in standing out.

"Tain't as if it was a match with the Fourth," said Johnny Bull. "Any old scratch crew could beat Temple and his fumbling crowd. But we have to pull up our socks to beat the Shell."

"Wharton's got to play!" said Bob decidedly. "It's all rot his standing out of the cricket because that man Stacey's playing. We're not going to let him do it!"

"It's rotten for him having a fellow here who's his relation, and as like him as a twin, when they bar one another," said Johnny. "But that's got nothing to do with cricket. He seems to think that Stacey is a bad hat, too—but that needn't worry him now he's not skipper any longer. Smithy's captaining the side to-day, and he can play any man he likes—it's not for Wharton to pick and choose."

"No good putting it to him like that, though," said Bob ruefully. "His back's up now, no good putting it further up. Better put it tactfully."

"The coolfulness of the esteemed dove is the proper caper!" suggested Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. "The soft answer turns away the wrath in time from a bird in the bush, as the English proverb remarks."

The juniors grinned at the English proverb.

"Well, come on!" said Bob.

And the four juniors left Study No. 13 and went down the Remove passage to Study No. 1. They stared at a startling figure they met in the passage. It was Skinner coming away from his unpleasant interview with the late captain of the Form.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob.

"Been taking a bath in ink, Skinner?"

"Urrrgh!" gurgled Skinner. "That rotter Wharton—urrgh!"

"I dare say you asked for it!" said Frank Nugent, and, passing the inky Skinner, the four juniors went on to Study No. 1.

Harry Wharton looked up quickly. Skinner had had the ink; but the inkpot was ready for the next man who called "Slacker" into the study.

But he replaced it on the table at the sight of his friends.

"Busy?" asked Johnny Bull, rather sarcastically.

"I've got lines for Quelch!" said Harry briefly.

"Well, never mind lines for Quelch just now," said Bob. "Lines for Quelch can wait while we're beating the Shell."

"No need for them to wait. I'm not playing!"

"You are!" said Bob.

Wharton shook his head.

"Look here—" hooted Johnny Bull. "I believe they've pitched the stumps," said Harry. "Hadn't you men better cut along?"

"Not yet," said Frank. "I'm wanted, if you're not playing, Harry."

"You're not changed!"

"I don't want to change. I want you to change."

"Nothing doing, old man." Wharton's answer was in the negative, but his tone was very soft. He knew, better than anyone else, how keen Frank was to get on in the cricket. Plenty of fellows in Frank's place would have been glad enough to see him standing out, in the circumstances.

"I can guess why you chucked that ink at Skinner," said Nugent. "I've heard some of the fellows yelping into the study. But, look here, Harry, if you don't play, you jolly well deserve it!"

Wharton coloured.

"You know my reasons!" he snapped. "That cad Stacey—"

"Never mind whether he's a cad or not! Most fellows seem to think him decent enough. But, admitting you're right, it's for the skipper to pick out the men—and Stacey's not the only man in the team you're on scrapping terms with."

"He's the only man who's so like me that we're mistaken for one another, and the only man at Greyfriars mean enough to land me with the trouble when he plays the rotten blackguard!" said Wharton bitterly. "What is Quelch down on me this term for—and old Wingate, and all the prefects? Because I'm supposed to have done rotten things that that rank outsider has done!"

The Co. were silent and uncomfortable. There was a difference of opinion in the Co. on that point, and they could not take Wharton's view. If he was right, Stacey was a fellow as deep as a well, and as cunning as a fox; but he did not look the part, and they could not believe it of him.

"Well," said Nugent, after a pause, "never mind that now—"

"I can't quite help it."

"It's got nothing to do with cricket! Look here, Harry!" said Nugent earnestly. "We're your friends, and we don't want to see you let yourself down. Can't you take our advice in this and act on it?"

Harry Wharton sat silent. He looked from face to face, and read in all of them the same thought. All his friends were against him in this. And his mind swayed in doubt. There was a long pause.

Wharton broke it at last.

"Mind, I don't think you're right," he said. "But I'm not going to stand out against the lot of you. I'll play, if Smithy hasn't changed his mind by this time. But—I believe it will lead to more trouble if I do."

"I don't see why it should," said Bob. "As skipper you'd have had to deal with Stacey—as simply another member of the team you can keep as clear of him as you like."

"If he will let me!" said Harry.

"You've only got to keep your temper," said Johnny Bull.

"Shut up, old man!" murmured Bob.

Wharton laughed sarcastically.

"Well, I'll try to keep my temper, rotten as it is," he answered. "We'll see how it works. I'll go and change." And he went.

Five minutes later he walked down to Little Side with his friends. In spite of his doubts and misgivings, he was glad to find himself there, on the green grass,

dotted with white-clad figures. Vernon-Smith, with a scowling face, was speaking of him to the other cricketers—not in a complimentary strain. But he broke off, and his face cleared at the sight of the late captain of the Remove coming on the ground in flannels.

"You're playing?" he called out, turning to Wharton.

"If you want me, Smithy."

"You know I do, you silly ass! All serene, then!"

Ralph Stacey gave his relative and double a glance.

Stacey looked very handsome and fit in flannels, and more like Wharton than ever. When they were together it was easy to tell one from the other, but apart, it was just as easy to make a mistake.

Perhaps that very likeness was one cause of the deep antipathy between

expressed it, a "grumptious blighter." "Mustn't a man speak?" drawled Stacey.

"Oh, dry up! We're here to play cricket, not to jaw. Here comes Hobby!"

Smithy proceeded to toss with the captain of the Shell, and, having performed that first duty of a cricket captain, winning the toss, he elected to take first knock. And he went in himself with Stacey.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Run Out!

"WELL hit!"

"Good man, Stacey!"

"By gum, that man can hit!"

"The hitfulness is truly terrific!"

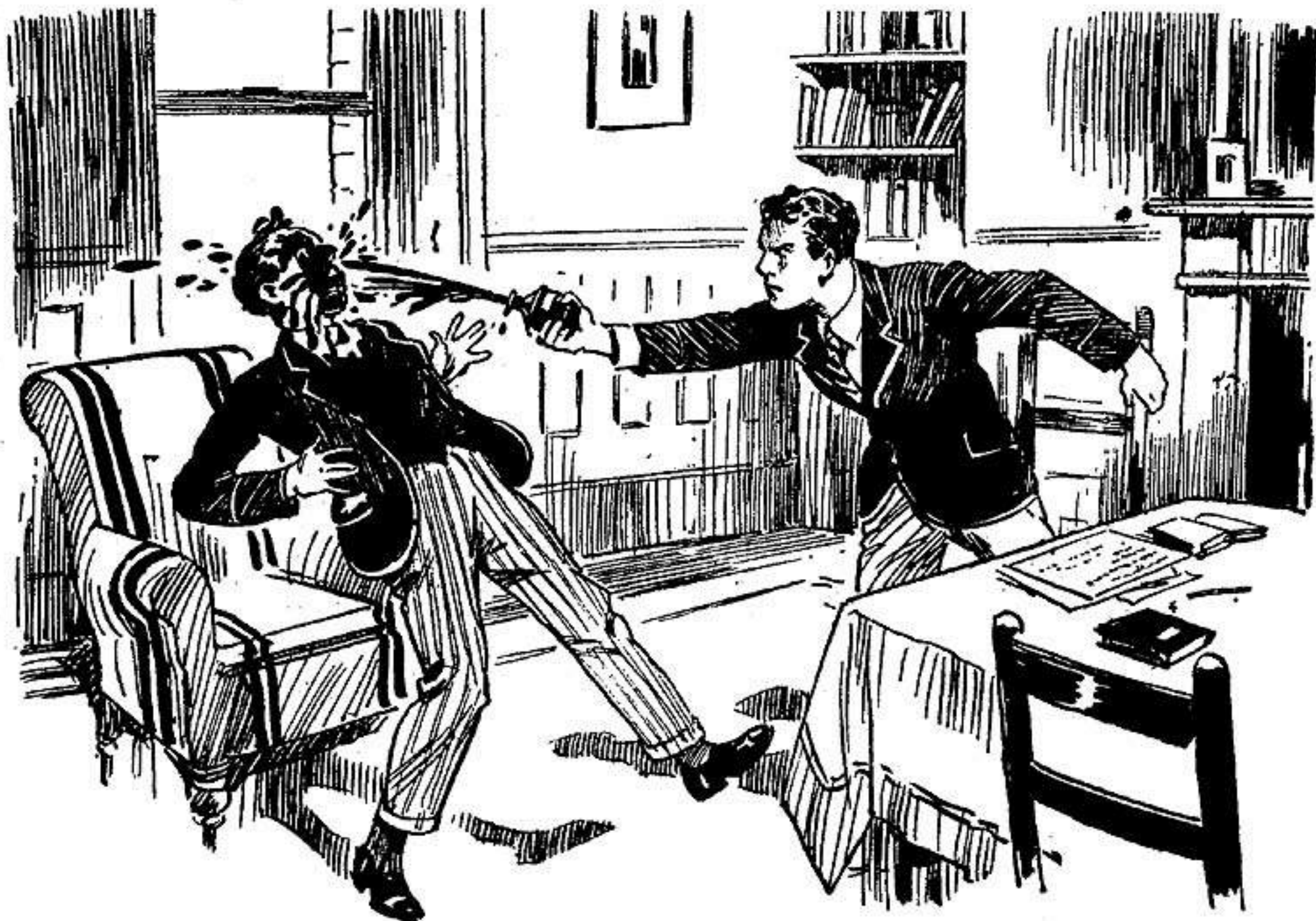
Harry Wharton's clouded face cleared

Hobby & Co., as Shell fellows—almost seniors in their own estimation, were a tough packet for the Remove to tackle. They were older and bigger, and they played good cricket.

Only with its very best team in the field could the Remove hope to keep their end up. And Stacey was easily the best man they could have put in.

Had Harry Wharton remained captain of the Remove, that remarkable player would not have figured in the match. Which quite consoled the Removites for the loss of their captain—especially as they still had him, as it turned out, as a member of the team.

Even Wharton realised, as he looked on, that the fellows could not be expected to take his decision patiently. Stacey, at the top of his form, was playing a game that some of the Greyfriars first eleven could not have beaten.



"You've asked for it, Skinner, and now you're going to get it!" said Wharton angrily. His arm jerked forward, the ink streamed from the inkpot, and landed on Harold Skinner with a horrid splash. "Oh!" gasped Skinner. "Ow! Why, you rotter—groooh! Oh, crumbs!"

them. Certainly it was annoying to both; though Stacey, at least, had found it useful on some occasions. There was a mocking glimmer in his eyes, which Wharton noted, though he was not looking at him, and made it a point to ignore his presence.

Stacey called to him:

"Glad you're playing, Wharton."

Then Wharton gave him a look.

"Thank you for nothing!" he answered, and turned his back.

"Grumptious blighter!" murmured Ogilvy—not the only fellow present who thought so.

"Beautiful manners!" drawled Stacey, unmoved.

"Don't you men begin ragging!" said the Bounder sharply. "Why the thump can't you keep quiet, Stacey?" The Bounder was no fool, and he was not blind to the fact that Stacey's object was precisely to make the other fellows think that Wharton was, as Ogilvy

as he stood at the pavilion with the other waiting batsmen and watched the innings. The Bounder was good—and before Stacey had come to Greyfriars had been considered as good a bat as any man in the Remove. But at his very best, he was nowhere near Stacey's form.

Wharton, as he watched, almost forgot his dislike and distrust of the fellow in admiration of his cricket.

There was no doubt that Ralph Stacey was a wonderful man at the game. He had an easy, almost careless way, yet he always "got there." There was just a trace of playing to the gallery, and sometimes he took what looked like risks—yet they always seemed to come off. Some of the Shell bowling was very good, and in the field they were very good indeed. Hobson kept his men well up to hard practice in that line. But neither bowlers nor fieldsmen seemed dangerous to Stacey.

Hobby & Co. knew the kind of man they had to deal with. They were accustomed to taking a rather lofty attitude towards Remove cricket; but now they were very serious and attentive to business. It was obvious to all, that the Remove had a prize-packet in the new man.

Smithy came out after scoring twenty—which was not bad, though it was about a third of what he had hoped to notch. Smithy was not looking agreeable as he came back to the pavilion; the Bounder was not a good loser. He had "rowed" with Wharton, and even stood out of the Highcliffe match as a protest against Stacey's exclusion, but he was not pleased at being out-done himself on the pitch. The result of that match was quite likely to affect the captain's election on Monday, and Smithy had hoped for sixty, and dreamed of a century. Now he had, at

least, the credit of a captain who was willing to play a better man than himself—but that was not wholly gratifying to a fellow like the Bounder.

"Man in, Wharton," he said tartly. Disappointment always affected the Bounder's temper for the worse.

Wharton finished buckling his pads quietly. Stacey had knocked up fifty while the Bounder was taking his twenty. The score stood at 70 for one wicket—not very encouraging for Hobson & Co. And Wharton, unless he had lost his form, could be counted on for more than twenty.

His face was quietly determined as he went on. He hated partnering Stacey at the wickets, but it was unavoidable as he was third on the list to bat, and if he had been fifth or sixth, it would have come to the same thing, for the new man was obviously set.

He was not free from a suspicion that his rival and enemy might play him some rotten trick, though he tried not to think of that. Stacey looked like a cricketer, born and bred; but good as his cricket was, Wharton had only too much reason to know that in other respects he did not play the game.

Smithy had gone out at the second ball of the over, so Wharton had four to take from Stewart of the Shell. Stewart was as good a man with the leather as the Shell could put on, and his bowling was not easy to handle. Wharton handled it well, however, knocking away the ball for 2, then for 2 again, and then for 3.

He had the temptation to leave the third hit at two, in order to keep the bowling for the remainder of the over. But he took the run, and the batting was handed over to Stacey for the last ball.

Stewart sent it down. Stewart put all he knew into bowling to Stacey, knowing what to expect from that particular batsman. Stacey, with his usual manner of almost indolent carelessness, snicked it away and ran.

Wharton seemed glued to his wicket. There was simply no chance of a run—whether that fact was visible to the pavilion crowd or not, it was plainly visible to Wharton.

He would not have expected Billy Bunter, or Coker of the Fifth to attempt to bag a single off that hit. No fellow who could play cricket would have taken the chance at the risk of running his partner out—no fellow, unless he had other than cricket purposes to serve.

Wharton, in fact, knowing that there was no run, was not ready to make the attempt, and Stacey was half-way along the pitch before he realised that the fellow really was running at all.

Then he made a desperate spurt. "Move, for goodness' sake!" Stacey jerked out in passing, near Wharton's wicket, far from the one he had so recklessly abandoned.

Wharton covered the ground as he had never covered ground before. He was almost mad with rage, but he was not going to let the scheming rascal run him out if he could help it.

But it was, of course, futile. His bat was yards from the crease when the ball came in, smashing the wicket.

"How's that?" chirruped somebody in the Shell.

Wharton stood burning with fury. It was no error of an inexperienced batsman—Stacey was anything but that. Even Bunter would have known better—Coker would have known better.

Stacey had deliberately run him out; caring absolutely nothing for the loss

of a wicket to his side, so long as he scored over an enemy.

That was the man the Remove were so eager to play in matches—for whose sake they had discarded their skipper—a fellow who was not decent enough to play in a Borstal side. Wharton stood crimson. He turned to look at the other batsman, and caught the mocking glimmer in his eyes—and made one stride back along the pitch. What he intended to do he hardly knew—but fortunately he controlled himself, and walked off.

He went unsteadily back to the pavilion. Stacey had given the field that chance intentionally; he could have lifted the ball to the boundary had he liked. With cool unscrupulousness he had turned Wharton out of the game.

"Man in!" snarled the Bounder, and Peter Todd, with rather a queer look at Wharton's burning face, went in.

"Hard luck, old man," said Bob Cherry.

Wharton looked at him, without speaking. Had these fellows missed what was plain enough for a blind man to see?

"Putrid, to be run out!" said Tom Brown, the New Zealand junior, who was next on the list. "Shouldn't have thought it of you—or Stacey."

"Stacey's a bit reckless," said Frank Nugent. "I shouldn't have thought there was a run there."

"Stacey got it!" remarked Linley.

"Yes—but—"

"Dash it all, Wharton, have you been sticking gum on your shoes, or what?" exclaimed the Bounder irritably. "Might as well have left you in your study at this rate."

Wharton choked.

No man likes being run out at the very best of times. It is the sort of mischance that the victim thinks ought not to happen. But a mistake, a blunder, even an idiotic bungle, can be more or less forgiven. But this was no mistake, no blunder, no bungle. It was deliberate treachery! And these fellows could not see it!

Frank touched his chum lightly on the arm. He could understand Harry's feelings, but he was alarmed at the expression on his face.

"Rotten luck, old chap!" murmured Frank. "But—"

Wharton found his voice.

"It was not rotten luck!" he said, and his voice was loud and clear, heard by everybody. "Stacey ran me out intentionally."

"Harry, old chap—"

"Wharton—"

"Don't talk rot!" snapped the Bounder. "Bad enough to throw away a wicket, without whining like a fag in the Second."

Wharton's eyes flamed.

"If you couldn't see it, Smithy, you're a fool, and not fit to captain a side of rabbits!" he roared.

"Look here, you cheeky ass—"

"That treacherous cur ran me out on purpose! That's the sort of rascal you're playing for the Remove!"

"For goodness' sake, chuck it!" breathed Bob Cherry. "It was a bit thick, but what's the good of saying any—" Bob's honest mind simply could not grasp such trickery.

Wharton flung down his bat with a crash.

"I'm finished here!" he exclaimed.

"Hold on, you hot-headed fool!" roared the Bounder. "We shall have to bat a second time, after your rotten show—no chance of pulling it off by an innings now."

"You'll bat without me! I won't play again with that cur! What's the

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good?" shouted Wharton savagely. "Do you want to see me run out in the second innings, too? What's the good of my going to the wickets at all if that hound is going to run me out first chance! I'm finished here."

And leaving his bat lying where it fell, Harry Wharton walked off the cricket field.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

In the Wrong Hands!

"**O**LD on, sir!" Harry Wharton stared round angrily.

He was still in flannels. He had left the cricket field without a backward glance, too savagely angry to care what the fellows were thinking or saying.

He went out of gates—done with cricket for the day, whether he was wanted in the second innings or not. That, certainly, was not the right line for any fellow to take; on the other hand, he knew that he could not have gone on the pitch with Stacey in his present mood, without knocking the fellow spinning—so perhaps it was just as well.

Anyhow, he was done with the game, and he tramped away from the school—with a look on his face that made Gosling, the porter, blink at him a second time as he passed.

He tramped away by the river, rolling bright and rippling in the June sunshine. As he tramped up the towpath he came in sight of the gate of the Three Fishers. That disreputable inn, where prize-fights sometimes took place, and the worst characters in the county gathered, was severely out of bounds for Greyfriars fellows—but anyone going up the towpath had to pass the gate.

It was there a few weeks ago that Mr. Quelch had seen Stacey—and believed that he had seen Wharton, owing to the unfortunate likeness between the "doubles" of the Remove.

Wharton was not thinking of that as he passed; and he did not even notice a man on the inner side of the gate who looked at him very hard. But when he had passed, the man came out of the gate and hurried up the towpath after him.

As he spoke Wharton looked round. He did not want any company just then—least of all that of a man in a spotted neck-cloth, who smelt of tobacco and spirits.

He had never seen the man before so far as he knew, and had no idea what the fellow wanted with him.

To his amazement the fellow winked at him.

"Spotted you passing, sir!" he said. "You ain't been round lately."

Wharton could only stare. As he had not noticed the man at all, he did not even know that he had come out of the Three Fishers.

"Looking for a chance to 'and you this note, sir!"

"A note," repeated Wharton. "What—"

"'Ere you are, sir."

The man extracted a rather grubby envelope from his pocket, and passed it into the astonished junior's hand.

Wharton took it mechanically.

The man touched his battered bowler, and went back to the gate of the riverside inn.

The Greyfriars junior stood with the letter in his hand, staring after him.

Someone might have sent him a note, even by this frowsy-looking messenger. It was not until he saw the man enter the gate and walk up the path towards

the inn that lay back from the towpath that he understood.

His teeth came together with a snap. It was a frowsy hanger-on of the Three Fishers who had had that note, looking for a chance to deliver it. A message from such a place, to a Greyfriars fellow, had to be delivered with caution!

Obviously now, it was not for Wharton. He had no connection with that disreputable den. But he knew that Stacey had.

The man had mistaken him for Stacey. He crushed the note in his hand, his face almost white with rage.

Twice Stacey of the Remove had been seen in questionable circumstances—once by Mr. Quelch, once by Wingate of the Sixth. Each time he had contrived to make it appear that he had not been on the spot—with the inevitable result that Form-master and prefect believed that it was Wharton that they had seen.

Stacey perhaps had not exactly planned that; but in proving an "alibi" for himself, he had no choice but to leave his "double" to bear the brunt.

And now a note from some dingy bookmaker, obviously intended for Stacey, had been slipped into Wharton's hand.

He trembled with rage.

Crumpling it there, he made a stride back—but it was useless to think of flinging the missive at the head of the messenger. The man had gone back into the public house.

Wharton stopped at the gate. Beyond that gate was "out of bounds" even if he had thought of rooting through a disreputable den in search of the beery loafer who had handed him the note.

He turned towards the shining river, his next thought being to throw the letter into the water.

But he restrained himself! A savage smile came over his face. That note was for Stacey—well, Stacey should have it!

He should have it in the presence of all the Form, many of whom were keen on voting him in as captain of the Remove on Monday. It was Stacey's property, and he should receive it.

There was no superscription on the envelope. But there could be no doubt for whom it was intended—as it had been handed to a fellow mistaken on his looks for Stacey! Wharton could not have been mistaken for anyone else. He thrust the letter into his pocket, and continued his walk.

The man had said that he had not been round lately—no doubt Stacey had been giving the place a wide berth since the day Quelch had seen him there. Reckless rascal as he was, he was as cunning as a fox. The letter, probably, was from Mr. Banks, who, as Wharton knew, had dealings with some of the sporting set at Greyfriars—the Bounder and Skinner, and Hilton, of the Fifth.

No doubt Stacey was now on the list of Mr. Banks' "clients"—and Mr. Banks was anxious to get in touch again with a profitable customer. Stacey had as generous an allowance from Colonel Wharton as the old colonel's own nephew. He was quite worth Mr. Banks' while!

This was the fellow his uncle wanted him to be friends with—blamed him for not making friends with! What would Colonel Wharton have thought of this? What would Mr. Quelch have thought?

Wharton knew perfectly well that Stacey, in his place, would have made unscrupulous use of that letter. Such an idea Wharton would have spurned from him with scorn. Neither the colonel, nor Mr. Quelch, was going to

know anything about it—he was no tell-tale. But the Remove fellows were going to see it handed to the owner, and judge between them.

Weary at last with his walk, Harry Wharton stopped at the bun-shop in Courtfield for tea; and then walked back to the school. It was close on calling-over when he reached Greyfriars.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Face to Face!

FRANK NUGENT slipped his arm through his chum's when he came in. Frank was waiting at the gates for him. They went to Hall together.

"It's all right!" said Nugent.

"What's all right?"

"I mean, we did not have to bat again, so it didn't matter about your clearing off."

Wharton shrugged his shoulders.

"So Smithy pulled it off?" he asked.

"Yes, rather—an innings to spare! Stacey—"

"Of course, Stacey covered himself with glory," said Wharton sarcastically.

"He was not out, for 110!" said Nugent. "Every other man came and went while he was at the wickets. He's a wonderful cricketer, Harry."

"I know that!"

"The fellows are making no end of a fuss of him." Nugent smiled faintly. "May as well keep clear of the Rag after call-over. Stacey's going to be rather lionised, I hear."

Wharton smiled grimly.

"Not at all; I'll be present. Why not? Besides, I've something for him."

"Don't get into a row with him, Harry."

"I'm not going to! I happen to have something that belongs to him, and I want to hand it to him in public. While they're doing the lionising will be a good opportunity. Did he run any other man out?"

"No!"

"No? He keeps these favours for me! Well, he'll never have any other chance—I was a fool to play in the same team with the cur; I might have known what to expect."

Nugent seemed to swallow something. "You—you still think—" he hesitated.

"I don't think—I know! The fellow's as treacherous as a snake," said Wharton coolly. "He will make capital out of this at home—he's trying to cut me out with my uncle as he's cutting me out in the Remove! I can't stop him—I couldn't stop him without being the kind of cunning cad that he is, and I'm glad I'm not! I'd rather go down than keep my end up by lying and trickery."

"Nobody thinks of him like that but you, Harry."

"Nobody knows him so well as I do."

Nugent said no more, but his face was clouded. When they went into Hall it was easy to see how Stacey had jumped into new popularity.

That unfortunate run-out was a spot on his glory perhaps—though nobody took Wharton's view of it. But for the rest, Stacey had put up a show seldom or never equalled in junior cricket at Greyfriars School.

A 110 runs off his own bat was a remarkable score; centuries were few and far between in junior cricket. And he had taken six wickets in bowling—including the "hat trick" in one over, and made good catches in the field. The Shell had had to follow their innings—a new experience for Hobson & Co. in playing the Remove—but their total score for both innings came nowhere

near the Remove score for once. Which was, of course, a glorious triumph for the Remove—and put a sort of halo round Stacey's head.

Ogilvy and Russell, his study-mates, were in proud possession of the hero of the hour, shining with reflected glory. Everybody seemed to want to make much of him—with few exceptions.

The Bounder was one. Smithy was up as a candidate for election on Monday; but he realised that he had little chance against the present overwhelming popularity of Stacey. Stacey was up, and his friends—now many in number—were expecting rather a walk-over for him when it came to the voting. So far, no third candidate had appeared, though there was still time for another to put up his name if so disposed.

Wharton's intention had been to cut the election entirely. It was useless to stand for re-election himself, even if he had thought of it, which he did not. Stacey he regarded as the worst possible selection; and the Bounder had many serious drawbacks. But the former captain of the Remove was thinking the matter over.

In his peculiar feud with Stacey he had no chance of keeping his end up, simply because he could not descend to the methods used by his enemy. In the Form match that day he had been made to look like a captious, disgruntled ass, while Stacey covered himself with glory. But he would not have changed places with Stacey at the cost of acting as he had done. Better to go down with honour than to win by treachery.

But that was no reason for giving his rival a free run. It might still be possible to put "paid" to his ambition of becoming captain of the Form.

There were plenty of men in the Remove fit for the place. Squiff and Tom Brown for instance. Both of them were good cricketers; decent fellows, and could have captained the Remove with credit. Either was a very much better selection than Stacey or Vernon-Smith. And with the Bounder, who had his own following, splitting the vote, it was possible that a third candidate might get home. Which would be a good thing for the Remove, who—whether they knew it or not—did not want a Form captain, whose name was on the list of Mr. Banks' clients at the Three Fishers, and who would run out a fellow he disliked in a cricket match.

After roll-call the Co. gathered round Wharton, and went to the Rag with him. Wharton's wrong-headed obstinacy in dealing with Stacey, as most of the fellows regarded it, had alienated most of the Remove; but the Co. were still sticking to him loyally. In the matter of Stacey, certainly, they were against him like the rest, but now that he was no longer skipper that difficulty was done with.

The Rag was crowded.

All the Remove were there, and when the Famous Five came in, many eyes turned on Harry Wharton—not with favour or approval.

Had the Remove taken a second knock Wharton would have been wanted—and he would not have been there. Which led a good many fellows to remark that it was just as well that he was cutting Form cricket, or Form cricket would have had to cut him.

Stacey came in a little later.

The Bounder watched him with a sarcastic sneer when he came, guessing that he had delayed a little to get all the Form assembled for the expected ovation. As he walked in there was a loud outburst of cheering.

Stacey smiled and nodded.

He looked very handsome and very

good humoured, and fresh as paint after a game that might have tired any fellow. No one, looking at him, would have been surprised by his popularity in the Form.

Wharton, glancing round over many faces, smiled rather sarcastically as well as the Bounder. Most of the Form cheered Stacey with hearty spontaneity. He had played a splendid game, and they were willing to let all Greyfriars hear what they thought of it, and him.

Still, there were exceptions. Skinner & Co. were sneering. So long as Harry Wharton had been top dog, Skinner had been against him in principle. Now Wharton was down, and Stacey looked like becoming top dog, so Skinner withdrew his valuable support from the new arrival. Skinner and Snoop sneered; Stott grunted; Fisher T. Fish shrugged his bony shoulders. Hazeldene scowled, being chiefly afflicted by jealousy of the new fellow's cricket. Bolsover major snorted. Nobody took much heed of the slackers and duds and frowsters of the Form. Still, they all had votes when the election came.

Stacey was standing in an admiring group, when Wharton left his friends and walked over to him.

There was a thrill in the Rag at once. Most of the fellows expected that a row was coming.

Stacey expected it, too, and he smiled. He was not wanting in courage, and if Wharton chose to make himself look a bigger fool than ever, by picking a quarrel with him, nothing could have suited him better.

But that was not Wharton's intention. His manner was quite calm and polite. He slipped his hand into his pocket, and took out a grubby letter.

"This belongs to you, Stacey," he said in a clear voice, distinct in every corner of the Rag, in the hush that had fallen. "At least, I think it does."

Stacey stared at him in blank surprise. "What do you mean?" he snapped.

"I'll explain," said Harry, apparently unconscious of the fact that every fellow in the Rag was staring at him, and listening with deep attention. "I passed the Three Fishers on the river this afternoon, and a scrubby loafer cut after me from there, and put this note in my hand."

Dead silence!

Stacey's face changed. With all his nerve he was hard hit by the surprise.

He guessed instantly that a mistake of identity had occurred—that a note intended for him had been handed to Wharton. If it was seen—

He braced himself against the shock. But the change in his face was unmistakable; and it caused fellows to look at him, and at one another rather queerly.

Stacey stretched out his hand eagerly for the note. To get hold of it, to get it away, to get it out of sight, was his immediate thought.

But Wharton was in no hurry to hand it over.

He stepped back a pace; and Stacey's hand, having remained outstretched for a moment or two, dropped.

"No hurry," said Wharton coolly. "I said that I think this note was intended for you, because it certainly cannot have been intended for me. I have no friends at the Three Fishers."

"Oh, my hat!" grinned Vernon-Smith.

Skinner & Co. listened with rapt attention; other fellows stared.

"There's no name or address on the outside, and no name was mentioned by the frowsy blighter who shoved it into my hand," went on Wharton. "I conclude that it is for you, because I must have been taken for you."

"Harry!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Wharton, old man—" murmured Bob.

Harry glanced at his friends.

"I'm speaking out plainly before all the Form intentionally," he said. "Stacey has played the rotten blackguard since he's been at Greyfriars, and he has wangled it to put it down to me. I can't tell Quelch, and I can't tell the prefects, but I can tell my own Form, so that they will know the truth from the lies next time a mistake is made, or if I get taken up for the sack for something that Stacey has done. One of us two is a blackguard, and I want the Remove to know which. I think I'm entitled to that."

"Rubbish!" snapped Peter Todd. "Whatever you may claim to be, Stacey's nothing of the kind. A fellow who plays cricket as he does—"

"You're dreaming, Wharton!" said Tom Brown. "I've always been a friend of yours; but I think you're treating Stacey rottenly. If all this is because he ran you out to-day—"

"You're not showing up well, Wharton," said Squiff. "I'd advise you to chuck it."

A dozen voices spoke one after another, or all at once. Harry Wharton stood cool and calm waiting till they had finished. The grubby letter was still in his hand, firmly held, for he knew that Stacey would have snatched it, given a chance.

Stacey's face was almost white now. Giving him away to masters or prefects, he knew, was not in Wharton's thoughts, though it might have been in his own in similar circumstances. But a show-up before all the Remove was a heavy blow.

He had been careful—very careful. He wanted to keep in with the best set, the decent set—the fellows who had been Wharton's friends, and were now estranged from him. Smithy, Skinner, Hazel, might think none the worse of him for his dingy adventures outside the school; but the best fellows, the cricketing fellows, would take a very different view.

He came a little nearer Wharton, his eyes burning.

"Give me that letter!" he breathed.

Wharton laughed mockingly. Again and again he had had to go down before the cunning of his rival. But he had the upper hand now.

"No hurry, as I've said," he retorted. "If it is your letter, you shall have it fast enough. But—"

"You've said it's for me!" hissed Stacey.

"I believe it is for you, because it was given me by a loafer at the Three Fishers, who must have mistaken me for you. I believe it is from some disgraceful bookmaking sharper like old Banks, or somebody of the kind. Do you claim the letter—under that description?"

Stacey's lips set in a bitter line.

Every eye in the Rag was on him—breathlessly.

If he claimed the letter as his after that, he was admitting what he was—throwing away the careful reputation he had built up in the Remove—as a decent honourable fellow, with no shady secrets to keep.

"By gum!" breathed Bob Cherry.

"The gumfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

There was a brief silence.

"If that letter's what you describe, it's not for Stacey," said Tom Brown. The New Zealand junior's eyes flashed with scorn. "You can't make out here that Stacey's that kind of rotter, Wharton. That letter's not for him."

"Of course it isn't!" said Squiff,



Wharton flung down his bat with a crash. "I'm finished here!" he exclaimed. "Hold on, you hot-headed fool!" roared the Bounder. "We shall have to bat a second time after your rotten show—no chance of pulling it off by an innings now." "You'll bat without me!" said Wharton. "I refuse to play with that cur, Stacey!"

"Utter rot!" said Mark Linley.

"Stacey doesn't want your private notes from your bookies, Wharton!" said Micky Desmond; and some of the fellows laughed.

Wharton smiled grimly.

"Let Stacey speak for himself!" he said. "I've said that I think the letter is for him; but I may be mistaken. We bar one another, and perhaps I don't do him justice."

"No perhaps about that!" snapped Tom Brown.

"Very well! If I'm doing him injustice, the letter is not for him, and I shall not bung it at him. Let him speak. You know now, Stacey, where I got this letter, and what I think is in it! If it's yours, from a pal at the Three Fishers, I'll hand it to you. Is it?"

The whole room hung on Stacey's reply. His lips were dry; the colour wavering in his cheeks. But he answered—the only answer he could make if he was not to admit that he was the double-dealing rotter Wharton accused him of being.

"No! It's not mine! Keep it!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Yes or No?

"KEEP it!" snapped Stacey contemptuously.

There was a deep-drawn breath in the Rag.

Stacey's friends—the cricketers—looked relieved. They did not, and could not believe this accusation—but his look and manner had caused strange doubts to rise in their minds.

"That's that!" said Tom Brown.

"For goodness' sake chuck the rotten rubbish away!" said Bob Cherry.

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Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'm not finished yet!" he answered. "You're finished with me," said Stacey, between his teeth. "I want to have nothing to say to you, Harry Wharton! And I don't think my friends will listen to rotten, lying accusations."

"No fear!" said Peter Todd.

"Chuck it, Wharton!"

"Find something else!" said Wibley. "That chicken won't fight!"

"Don't you believe what Stacey says, Wharton?" exclaimed Squiff angrily.

"Not a word!" answered Wharton coolly. "But he's told me to keep this letter, and that it's not his. If he's telling the truth—"

"Take that as read!" said Toddy.

"I'm bound to!" assented Wharton, with grim mockery. "I can't give the letter to Stacey, as he declares himself not the owner. I'm certainly not going to keep it! I'm going to hand it over to my Form-master, and ask him to see to the matter."

Stacey's face whitened again.

"I've told you what happened," went on Harry. "I was stopped on the tow-path by a dingy lout, who shoved this letter into my hand. I might have been seen taking it. I can't go to the Three Fishers, hunting for him. Quelch can send the letter back there and explain that it was handed to the wrong person."

"Well, that's a jolly good thing to do with it," said Peter Todd. "If you might have been seen taking it, that's what you'd better do—or it certainly might be supposed that you'd got friends there."

"That's right!" agreed Tom Brown.

"Blessed if I can see what you're making such a song and dance about it for," said Squiff. "Why can't you hand it to Quelch and say no more about it?"

"For this reason," said Wharton quietly and distinctly. "I don't want to give a Remove man away for the sack, though he's not been so particular in dealing with me. I'm going to give Stacey every chance of owning up that the letter's his; but he's got to do it before all the Remove. He dare not let this letter go to Quelch."

"Rot!"

"Rubbish!"

"Gammon!"

"Chuck it!"

The Bounder grinned with sheer enjoyment of the scene.

He was keener than most of the juniors, and he could see at once that Wharton held all the cards in his hand. That letter, if not intended for Wharton himself, could only be intended for his double; and the facts spoke for themselves.

Immediately it came into Smithy's mind how this exposure would help his chances in the election on Monday.

His own "juicy" reputation was against him; the Remove did not want a "pub-haunter" to captain the Form. If Stacey's reputation became equally "juicy," it was a leg-up for the Bounder. It put them on an equal footing, in that respect, at least. And the Bounder knew already what the other fellows did not yet realise, that Wharton had his rival in a cleft stick—that Stacey dared not let that letter reach Quelch!

Stacey, with all his nerve, all his cunning, all his wary resource, stood utterly at a loss.

He knew, of course, that the letter was for him—given to his double by mistake. What was in it? If Banks had written cautiously, mentioning no names, referring to nothing that might identify him, it was all right—the letter could be pinned up on the school

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notice-board for all he cared, in that case. But had Mr. Banks been so careful as all that?

He did not know—he could not tell. Unless he knew he dared not let that missive reach his Form-master—he dared not let it meet the eyes of authority. He knew that only too well.

Wharton's cool, mocking look did not change. He had suffered too much at his enemy's hands to spare him now. Twice Stacey's misdeeds had been put down to him. With masters and prefects, he could not set the matter right; but he could prevent a similar error being made in his own Form! And he was going to.

Many eyes fixed on Stacey's pale, hunted face. Again the fellows exchanged queer glances.

What was the matter with Stacey?

Wharton went on quietly:

"You men know that Quelch has been down on me this term! You don't know why! I'll tell you now—I couldn't prove it before—now I can! Quelch saw a Remove fellow at the Three Fishers and took him for me."

"If he took him for you, it was you!" growled Squiff.

"We shall see! Another time, Wingate spotted a fellow he took for me, card-playing with Pon & Co., of Highcliffe. That's why I'm in Wingate's black books."

"You shouldn't have done it!" suggested Russell.

"Well, my point is that I didn't—and Stacey did! And all the Form is going to know the truth—ready for the next time he lands his rascalities on me!"

"Oh, rot!"

"Cheese it!"

"Shut up!"

"Well, I'm done!" said Wharton lightly. "I will give Stacey this letter from the Three Fishers if he claims it as his before all the Form. Otherwise, as it has no owner, I shall hand it to Quelch."

"Get on with it and shut up!" growled Squiff.

"Shut up, anyhow!" said Ogilvy.

Wharton put the letter into his pocket. He turned towards the door. He was perfectly well aware that Stacey dared not let him get out of the Rag with it, after his declared intention of handing it to the Remove master.

Stacey caught his breath.

For a moment more he hesitated. To claim the letter was to admit everything—to cover himself with shame and ignominy.

It was no question of punishment; the matter would not come before the Head or his Form-master. It was a question of admitting the truth to the Form—of showing himself up in his true colours, to the fellows who trusted him, who repudiated the accusation on his account in their trust.

Wharton walked to the door. Frank Nugent cut after him, and caught him by the arm. Stacey paused.

"Harry!" panted Nugent. "If it's as you think, you can't get a man sacked—your own relation, too."

"If it's as I think, Frank Nugent, the owner of this letter can have it by admitting that he is the owner!" answered Harry Wharton coolly. "If Stacey, as he says, is not the owner, he need fear nothing from Quelch seeing it."

"By gum, he's got the cad on toast!" murmured the Bounder to Tom Redwing.

Redwing nodded, with a clouded face. He believed now as the Bounder believed—indeed, as very many of the fellows were coming to believe. The hunted look in Stacey's face was hardly to be mistaken.

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"But, I say—" stammered Nugent. "You needn't say anything, Nugent! A loafer from a pub has bunged a letter on me, and I've a right to hand it to my Form-master, and explain that it doesn't belong to me."

"Well, yes; but—" Wharton shook off Nugent's detaining hand and went to the door.

As he put his hand on the door-handle, Stacey cut after him. Everything had to be thrown aside, rather than allow that letter to reach Mr. Quelch's study.

Stacey's face was white, his eyes burning. He grasped Wharton by the shoulder and dragged him back from the door.

Wharton spun round and knocked his hand away with an angry blow, his own eyes flashing.

"Don't touch me, you outsider!" he snapped.

"Give me that letter!"

"Stacey—" shouted Ogilvy blankly.

"Stacey, old chap—" gasped Russell.

He did not heed them.

"Give me that letter, you rotter!" he panted.

Wharton put his hand into his pocket for the letter. There was a buzz, or rather, a roar, in the Rag.

"I say, you fellows, it's Stacey's letter, after all!" squeaked Billy Bunter, his little round eyes almost popping through his big round spectacles in his excitement. "I say, you fellows—"

"Stacey!" shouted Squiff. "Are you potty? What—"

Stacey's hand was outstretched for the letter.

"Give it me!" he hissed.

"I'll give it to you, if you claim it as yours!" said Harry Wharton icily.

"If you claim this letter from a boozy waster at the Three Fishers, I'll hand it to you. But you've got to say so out plain. I'm not giving you a letter which you've said belongs to somebody else. I'm not leaving you a hole to crawl out of, you worm! Is it your letter or not? Yes or no?"

"Give it me!"

"Yes or no—if you want the letter." Stacey almost choked.

"Yes!" he hissed, white with fury.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Bounder.

But nobody else laughed. There was surprise, amazement, disgust, in almost every face.

"By gad!" said Lord Mauleverer. "What a dashed worm! What?"

Harry Wharton, without another word, handed the letter over to Stacey!

With scarlet flooding his face, Stacey hurried out of the Rag with it. With all his nerve, all his effrontery, he could not meet the eyes of his Form-fellows just then.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Third Man!

AFTER prep that evening Harry Wharton went along to Study No. 2 in the Remove.

Tom Brown and Hazeldene were leaving to go down when he arrived there. He tapped the New Zealand junior on the arm.

"Just a word, Browney!" he said.

Tom Brown looked at him rather uncertainly. Like all the cricketers of the Form, he had been against Wharton in the matter of Stacey. But the strange scene in the Rag had rather altered his views.

All the Remove knew, now, that Stacey was a scapegrace on the same lines as the Bounder—with the added

vice of hypocrisy. Wild and reckless as Smithy was, he had no humbug about him—he never pretended to be better than he really was. Stacey had pretended, and had got away with the pretence—so far! Now he was shown up. Driven fairly to the wall, he had lied and shuffled, and finally owned up to the truth—and the Bounder, with all his wild ways, showed up very favourably in comparison. And that Wharton had good reason for barring his "double" could hardly now be doubted.

Tom stepped back into the study, and Wharton followed him in, Hazel going downstairs.

"Well?" said Tom briefly.

"About the election on Monday," said Harry.

"You're standing?" asked Tom.

Wharton shook his head.

"Nothing of the kind," he answered.

"I'm not thinking of that. I'm thinking of the Remove. I think most of the fellows are agreed that Smithy isn't the skipper that's wanted, for a lot of reasons we needn't go into, though, personally, I'd prefer him to Stacey."

Tom Brown made a grimace.

"I think I should—now!" he said slowly. "Still, you can't get away from the fact that Stacey's a wonderful cricketer, and will have to play for the Remove—whatever else he may happen to be."

"Quite! As I shall never play again in the same team with him, I can't put up as captain of the Form again. But you can."

"I?" ejaculated Tom Brown.

"Yes, you! You're as good a man as any in the Form—"

"Thanks!" said Tom, with a grin.

"I was going to cut the election," went on Harry. "But if you stand I shall vote for you, and some of the fellows, at least, will follow my lead. I'm not making any secret of the fact that I want to keep Stacey out; but I think a good many fellows will admit now that he's not the kind of man that's wanted."

"Blessed if I can make the chap out at all!" confessed Tom Brown. "I thought you were just a disgruntled ass, barring him as you do; but—but—Dash it all, he was telling downright lies in the Rag about that letter, and—and—it's pretty thick for you being taken for him by his shady pals outside the school. Might get you into a row with the beaks some day."

"It has already," answered Harry. "One of us will be up for the sack one of these days. Never mind that. Will you put up your name?"

Tom reflected a few moments.

"Well, a few hours ago I'd have said no," he answered. "I was going to back Stacey all along the line. But—I'm not backing him now. I think I'll put up my name. If the fellows want a pub-haunter as skipper, they can vote for him or Smithy—if they don't, they can vote for me."

"Good!" said Harry.

Ten minutes later the name of the New Zealand junior was added to the list of candidates for the Remove captaincy.

"That's good!" was Bob Cherry's verdict. "Vote for old Browney, you men."

"The votefulness will be terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Good egg!" agreed Johnny Bull.

The Bounder was not pleased.

Harry Wharton, though quite unintentionally, had been playing his game for him in the scene in the Rag. Plenty of fellows who, like Tom Brown, had intended to back Stacey, had changed their minds since then.

Even if they did not vote for Smithy

their votes would be lost to his rival—which counted in his favour. But the introduction of a third candidate changed the situation again.

The Famous Five were going to back the New Zealand junior. They had a great deal of influence in the Form, and a good many were following their lead. And Brown, honest and good-natured, and a good cricketer, was very popular in the Remove. The Bounder, as a sporting man, would have bet two to one on Browney's chances!

However, he was still determined to try his luck—and he had his own following, though it was not a following of which he was, perhaps, particularly proud.

Skinner, and Snoop, and Stott, backed him simply because he was rather a black sheep, and they were tarred with the same brush. Bolsover major and Hazeldene were his supporters, principally from jealousy of Stacey's powers as a cricketer.

Billy Bunter was enthusiastic in his cause—hopes being held out to Bunter of a magnificent spread if the Bounder got in! Fisher T Fish was another supporter—for business reasons. Fishy would not have bothered to vote at all for any other reasons. Fishy had a watch that he had bought from some hard-up fellow for half-a-crown. Smithy was going to give him ten shillings for it—after he was elected!

This was so near to bribery and corruption that it would have required a powerful microscope to detect the difference. But neither the Bounder nor the business man of the Remove cared a boiled bean for that.

Redwing was backing his chum, though with a doubtful mind. Wibley was backing him, owing to a sudden interest and enthusiasm that Smithy had displayed in the Remove Dramatic Society, of which Wibley was the head. On that subject Wib's leg was easy to pull.

With nearly every fellow in the Form living, moving and breathing cricket, it was a sheer pleasure to William Wibley to find a chap like the Bounder fearfully keen on amateur theatricals. It was probable that the Bounder's keenness on that subject would diminish—after the election!

Elliott was another supporter. He owed the Bounder a pound, which debt was going to be washed out by the new captain of the Remove—if the new captain was Herbert Vernon-Smith.

Support of this kind was not likely to see a candidate through; but Smithy hoped for the best—or for the worst, as other fellows might have regarded it.

It was not a happy evening for Stacey. At "Sunday prep" that evening in Study No. 3 there was an awkward silence between him and his study-mates, Russell and Ogilvy. Only a few hours ago they had been proud of being seen with him—but they were not feeling proud of him now.

When they went down after prep Stacey remained alone in the study.

He did not care to show up in the Rag.

His cricket that day had covered him with glory. He had counted, with hardly a doubt on success in Monday's election. Success had been within his grasp. Even the miserable trick he had played on Wharton in the Form match had not told against him—it had made his rival look like a fellow who could not keep his temper on the cricket field.

Wharton was down and out, and he could afford to disregard him. He had twice or thrice the chances of the Bounder. He was going to win hands down—and already he was gloating over

his anticipated triumph! But now—Nothing could have been more unfortunate for the fellow whose scheming had come to the very edge of success.

With cool, ruthless unscrupulousness he had scored over his rival again and again, and now the whole thing was knocked to pieces like a house of cards.

Stacey paced up and down his study with clenched hands and gleaming eyes, his heart full of bitterness.

His strange resemblance to Wharton had served his turn; twice it had saved him from the consequences of his misdeeds. That it had brought his relative into undeserved disgrace he did not care a straw. Now that likeness had worked against him, and Wharton had hit back—hard! Monday's election, instead of a certainty, was now very doubtful.

It was more doubtful than he realised, for, remaining in his study, he was unaware of the new development, and that a candidate more popular than the Bounder had put up against him.

Not till the Remove went to their dormitory that evening did Stacey learn that Tom Brown was "up," then he learned it from the talk of the other fellows.

He glanced at Wharton, who met his eyes with a mocking smile. He had never even thought of the New Zealand junior as a possible rival; and he knew who had pulled the strings. He turned in in silence, with black bitterness in his heart. His luck, for once, had failed him, and he was learning that the way of the transgressor was hard.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Ousted!

"WHARTON!"

"Sir?"

"Kindly remain."

"Very well, sir."

It was the end of second lesson on Monday. The Remove were dismissed for break, when the head boy was told to remain.

As head boy of the Form, it was not uncommon for Wharton to be told to remain after the Form went out, but on this occasion all the Remove knew that it was no Form business that was to be discussed as usual.

Wharton was in his Form-master's black books that term—to such an extent that it surprised many of the fellows that he had been allowed to retain his official position.

Captain of the Remove was elected by the Form, and with that Quelch had nothing to do, except to confirm the election when decided.

Head boy was quite a different matter. Head boy was appointed by a Form-master at Greyfriars. The position did not depend on being top of the class—though, of course, a head boy had to have a good place in the Form. It was rather like the position of head of the House in a school divided into Houses. Head boy of a Greyfriars Form was somewhat like a headmaster's preceptor.

Wharton had filled the position quite satisfactorily before Stacey came to Greyfriars, but no fellow in the Remove expected that he would keep it through that term.

Many of the fellows glanced curiously at Harry as he stood before his Form-master's desk and the rest filed out; some of them guessed what was to come.

Wharton himself guessed it, and there was a hardly concealed sneer on his face. Once more he was going to suffer for the sins of his double.

The look on his face did not please Mr. Quelch. In Wharton's present

mood, he cared little whether Quelch was pleased or not.

The Remove-master did not speak till the rest of the Form were gone, but his face hardened grimly.

"Now, Wharton," he said, when they were left alone, "I think it is probable that you can guess what I am going to say—"

"Quite, sir," said Harry coolly.

"I am not satisfied with you this term, Wharton—"

"I know."

"You have given me much cause for dissatisfaction—"

"Not at all, sir."

Mr. Quelch breathed hard.

"Allow me to finish speaking, Wharton! On two occasions you have been seen in very questionable circumstances. Owing to the unfortunate resemblance between you and your relative, Stacey, there exists a possibility of error, and you have been given the benefit of the doubt. I have considered the matter very carefully, and taken my time to do so, and I have come to the conclusion that you cannot be allowed to retain the position of head boy of my Form."

"That is for you to decide, of course, sir."

"You are dismissed from the position. Wharton!" rapped Mr. Quelch sharply.

"Very well, sir."

"I shall appoint Stacey in your place."

"I thought so."

"You had reason to think so, Wharton, as Stacey is a boy in whom I can place trust!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "I am sorry to say that I can no longer place it in you. You have changed very much for the worse this term, Wharton. I fear that you must have come under some bad influence during the Easter holidays."

"I did not meet Stacey till the last day of the holidays, sir, and he has no influence over me whatever," said Wharton.

Mr. Quelch stared at him.

Whatever he might have expected Wharton to answer, certainly he had not expected an answer like that.

He breathed hard and deep.

"You are adding insolence to your other faults, Wharton," he said, after a long pause. "I warn you to take care! You may go."

Wharton went.

He was smiling, not a pleasant smile, as he came out of the House. His friends were waiting for him rather anxiously in the quad.

"Another row?" asked Bob Cherry uneasily.

"Oh, nothing!" answered Wharton lightly. "I'm sacked from head boy, and Stacey's shoved in. I expected it."

"Rotten!" said Nugent. "But I suppose—"

"I've seen it coming," said Harry. "Stacey's been working for that, as well as to oust me from the captaincy. He's succeeded with Quelch, but I don't think he will get away with the captain's election this afternoon." He laughed. "That frowsy blighter from the Three Fishers who gave me the note for him dished him in the election."

He laughed again.

"Quelch has timed this well," he said. "Head boy of the Remove just before the election—that to let the Form know what Quelch thinks on the subject. It will be rather a knock for the old bean if Stacey gets left at the poll."

"It's rotten all round," said Johnny Bull slowly. "I'd never have believed it of Stacey, only it seems clear enough after what happened on Saturday."

"Well, I suppose it's the fellow's own

bizney what he does outside the school," said Bob.

"Oh, quite!" answered Harry. "We all like Smithy; though we don't want him to captain the Form; and we all know that he kicks over the traces and swanks about it. I dare say Stacey's no worse. But Smithy doesn't tell rotten lies about it, at least, and Smithy would be sacked a dozen times over before he would land his gruel on another man. If the beaks got a man in mistake for him, Smithy would own up like a shot."

"Any fellow would," said Nugent—"any decent fellow."

"Stacey hasn't!"

The Co. were silent.

"What has Quelch just kicked me out for?" said Wharton savagely. "Because Stacey's been seen playing the goat, and he's cunning enough to get it put down to me. You know it now as well as I do—now you know that he gets letters from a sharper at the Three Fishers! He would have made out that that letter wasn't for him, only he dared not let Quelch see it. My hat! It would have opened Quelch's eyes about his precious new head boy if he had!"

"The fellow's an awful humbug!" said Nugent. "He's taken in the whole Form, as well as Quelch. Some of the fellows are sticking to him, though."

Wharton laughed scornfully.

"Oh, I dare say he will make up some sort of an explanation when he has time to think over a fresh string of lies!" he answered. "He wants to keep in with the decent set in the Remove if he can. I dare say it will blow over in a week or two, especially if he wins some more cricket matches for the Form. Luckily, the election's to-day, and it can't be put off. Quelch is booked for a disappointment."

In third school that morning Mr. Quelch made his official announcement regarding Stacey. Many of the fellows surmised, like Wharton, that Quelch had timed the announcement as a hint to the Form of his personal wishes in the matter of the captain's election.

Certainly it would have had a good deal of influence in the Form, but for what had happened in the Rag on Saturday.

If Stacey was going to regain the position he had lost in the opinion of the Remove it was a matter of time and patience. At present the matter was fresh in every mind, and the juniors, instead of being influenced by Mr. Quelch's obvious wish, were only wondering what Quelch would have thought if he had known about that letter from the Three Fishers.

"Like the man's cheek!" was the Bounder's comment. "He can make Billy Bunter head boy if he likes; but we're going to suit ourselves about our Form captain! Quelch has given us a hint that he wants Stacey elected—and I advise every man in the Remove to give Quelch a hint to mind his own business."

There was brisk canvassing for votes that morning. The Famous Five were very keen in the cause of Tom Brown; the Bounder was very keen in his own cause; and Stacey was not idle, though he could not flatter himself that he could count on a large vote.

The Remove was a numerous Form; but a number of the fellows declared their intention of not voting at all. Ogilvy and Russell were among this number—they could not quite make up their minds to turn against Stacey, and at the same time did not want to back the fellow whom Skinner had already nicknamed the "Three Fishers candidate."

Often, in a Form election, the voting

was very close, and voters were whipped up to the last man; but on this occasion there were likely to be absentees.

In afternoon school the Remove fellows were mostly thinking more about the election than about the instruction they were receiving from Mr. Quelch.

In the Latin hour papers had to be done by the juniors, which were collected by the head boy and taken to the master's desk.

Stacey, instead of Wharton, performed this task, figuring as head boy for the first time in the Remove-room.

Wharton, certainly, was not keen on going round the Form collecting Latin papers; but his brow was dark as he watched the successful rival who had ousted him.

This was last lesson, after which the Form would be dismissed; and the election, which was to take place in the Rag, was the next business on hand. All the candidates and their supporters were keen to get to it.

"Dismiss!"

The Remove marched out, leaving Stacey with the papers. Mr. Quelch was going to mark those papers at his leisure. As the juniors departed, the plump figure of Mr. Prout loomed up in the doorway.

"You are here, Quelch?" asked the master of the Fifth.

"I am here, Prout!"

"The Head desires to speak to you in his study."

"Thank you, Mr. Prout; I will go at once."

Prout rolled away.

"Leave the papers on my desk, Stacey," said Mr. Quelch, as he left the Form-room, "or, rather, take them to my study, my boy; I will look them over when I leave the Head."

"Certainly, sir!" said Stacey.

Quelch went away to see Dr. Locke. The Remove had gone out into the quad. Stacey was left with the pile of Latin papers.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

"LOOKS like a win for us!" remarked Bob Cherry.

The Famous Five were in the Rag, where most of the Remove had gathered very soon after school was dismissed.

Frank Nugent had a list of names in his hand. It was a list of twelve, and included most of the members of the Form eleven; the cricketers who, a day or two ago, had been so keen on Stacey.

Wharton looked at it and smiled—a rather grim smile. That scene in the Rag on Saturday was producing its effect.

Harry Wharton's object at the time had simply been to make it clear to the Form how matters stood between him and his double; to put Stacey in his true colours and prevent him from getting away with further trickery founded on the likeness between them. In that, no doubt, he had been successful; and his success had gone farther. A crowd of Removites who had fully intended to back Stacey had dropped away from him.

They would not have backed the Bounder. But now that there was a third candidate, a man with whom no fault was to be found, they plumped for him. It was Wharton who had induced Tom Brown to stand; and in doing so he had practically assured the defeat of his enemy.

The list was headed by the names of

the Famous Five, followed by those of Lord Mauleverer, Field; Peter Todd, Dutton, Newland, Vivian and Mark Linley. It was a total of twelve assured voters, and there might be others. A dozen voters would not have been very useful if the candidates had been only two; but with three in the field it was very likely to make a majority, for there were hardly three dozen fellows in the Form.

"We shall beat Stacey, at any rate!" said Harry. "We've got most of his men here."

The Co. nodded with satisfaction. Tom Brown had saved them from doubts and difficulties in the matter of the election. Whether any of them might have voted for Stacey, it was now unnecessary to consider; they did not think of doing so for a moment when the New Zealand junior entered the field.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo, Smithy!" shouted Bob. "How many have you got?"

The Bounder was standing by the window, with a paper in his hand. He looked up with a grin.

"Oh, dozens!" he answered airily.

"Make it hundreds!" grinned Bob.

The Bounder laughed and did not answer. As a matter of fact, he had ten names of promised supporters on his list.

They were not all present, however. Skinner and Snoop and Stott had turned up; Bolsover major came in with Hazeldene; and Fisher T. Fish came in with his jerky steps in good time. Redwing was there, but Elliott, Wibley, and Bunter were not to be seen.

Smithy was unwilling to leave the Rag, and he whispered to Redwing:

"Cut off and get those men—there's three to come! Mind they don't get in late; the door's to be locked when Wingate comes at five to count the votes."

Redwing nodded, and left the Rag.

Stacey was not present yet. He had remained in the Remove Form-room after the rest left; but that was half an hour ago, and it was not likely that he was there still. But he had not yet come into the Rag.

All Brown's supporters were present, Lord Mauleverer having been hooked off his study sofa, and reminded of the election, which he had, of course, forgotten.

Redwing came back with Elliott and Wibley. The former had been doing lines; the latter occupied with sorting over theatrical "props" in his study. Redwing marched them into the Rag in good time for voting. It was only half-past four as yet.

"Where's Bunter?" asked the Bounder.

"Can't find him anywhere," answered Redwing.

"Looked in the tuckshop?"

"Yes," Redwing laughed. "I've asked Gosling, and he thinks he saw him go out of gates after class."

The Bounder snapped his teeth.

"The fat fool! What's he gone out of gates for? Has the blithering idiot forgotten the election?"

Billy Bunter, whose unimportance was usually infinite, was important for once; his vote counted. But it looked as if the Bounder had lost that valuable supporter—if the Owl of the Remove had gone out of gates.

"Hallo, here's the fat freak—no, it's Trotter! What the thump does he want here?" snapped the Bounder, as the House page put a chubby face in at the doorway.



"I believe this letter is for you, Stacey, because it was given me by a loafer at the Three Fishers, who must have mistaken me for you!" said Wharton. "I believe it's from some disgraceful bookmaker. Do you claim the letter under that description?" Stacey's lips set in a bitter line. Many eyes in the Rag were on him—breathlessly.

"Master Wharton here?" asked Trotter, staring round over the crowd of juniors.

Wharton looked round.

"Here!" he answered.

"Mr. Quelch wants you in his study, sir."

Wharton's lips set.

"What the thump does the old ass want now?" he muttered.

"Don't cheek him, for goodness' sake!" said Nugent. "If you get a detention, Brownie loses your vote."

"Oh, I'll be jolly careful!" said Harry. "Perhaps that's what Quelch wants—he knows I'm against his favourite."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Wharton shrugged his shoulders and left the Rag. Stacey passed him coming in. Wharton took no notice of him, but he caught a glimmer in Stacey's eyes in passing.

He proceeded to his Form-master's study.

Mr. Quelch was sitting at his table with a pile of Latin papers before him. Evidently he had been going through that pile of papers. He looked up as Wharton presented himself, with a frowning brow and a glinting eye.

"You sent for me, sir," said Harry quietly. He could see that trouble was coming, but for the life of him he could not guess why. So far as he was aware, he had given no new cause of offence.

"Yes, Wharton! This morning you were removed from your position as head boy of the Remove. Is that the cause of the slovenly carelessness you have displayed in your Latin paper?"

"I haven't—"

"Your paper is a disgrace to the Form! It would be a disgrace to a boy in the Third Form!" thundered Mr. Quelch.

Wharton looked at him steadily.

It was perhaps true that that term Wharton had not worked so well as of
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old in the Form-room. A sense of injustice was discouraging. But he had not been slovenly, and he had not been careless in his Latin paper, and he knew it. It was not so good a paper as Linley's or Peter Todd's, perhaps, but it was a better paper than most in the Form, and at least as good as a dozen others.

The junior stood silent, with intense bitterness in his heart. Many of the papers must have been worse, even if his was bad—such as Bunter's, Skinner's, Snoop's, Fish's. Yet only he was sent for.

"I have warned you," went on Mr. Quelch, "that I am dissatisfied with you, Wharton! Such a paper as this from Bunter I might expect—but from you, I can only regard it as an act of intentional impertinence. You will not be allowed to display your arrogance in my Form-room, Wharton. What you have done is intentional, and is intended as a defiance to me personally, I shall not tolerate this."

Wharton said nothing.

"You will be detained until six o'clock, and write another paper," said Mr. Quelch. "Go to the Form-room."

Wharton caught his breath.

"There's a Form election, sir—"

"If you desired to be present at the Form election, Wharton, you should not have been guilty of this impertinence!" said Mr. Quelch harshly. "Go to the Form-room this instant. In fact, I will take you there."

He rose from his chair.

In bitter silence Wharton followed him to the Remove-room, where he sat at his desk, with another Latin paper before him. Mr. Quelch gave him a grim, stern look as he went out.

"I shall mention to the prefects that you are in detention, Wharton," he said at the door. "If you leave this Form-room before six o'clock, you will take the consequences—and I warn you that they will be severe."

He shut the door.

Wharton set his teeth.

It had been in his mind to cut and get back to the Rag; but Quelch evidently had thought of that. Wingate and Gwynne, of the Sixth, were to be present at the election, and they would know that he had cut detention and would certainly not allow him to be present. The Famous Five's candidate had lost his chief supporter—and one certain vote. And Wharton, knowing that there was no reasonable fault to be found with his Latin paper, could only think one bitter thought—that Quelch was doing this to help on the chances of his favourite in the captain's election.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Captain's Election!

WINGATE of the Sixth came into the Rag, followed by Gwynne of that Form.

The two Sixth-Form prefects were to be in charge of the election and keep order—sometimes very necessary on such occasions. Five o'clock was striking from the clock tower.

"All here?" asked Wingate, looking round with a smile.

"Wharton hasn't come back, Wingate," said Frank Nugent. "He had to go and see Quelch—he's been a jolly long time—"

"He won't be here," answered Wingate. "I've heard from your Form-master that he's in detention."

"Oh, my hat!" The Co. looked dismayed.

"All the rest here?" Wingate looked round again.

"Bunter—" said Vernon-Smith. "Bunter was coming—"

"Well, we'll allow five minutes' grace for late comers," said the captain of
(Continued on page 16.)

WHO SHALL BE CAPTAIN?



(Continued from page 13.)

Greyfriars. "After that the door will be locked."

Vernon-Smith went to the door and looked out. Never had he felt so strong a desire to kick the fat Owl of the Remove.

He had eleven names on his list now; Kipps had joined up in support of the Bounder. But if Bunter continued missing, the eleven were reduced to ten; Smithy had no doubt of beating Stacey, but it was certain to be close voting with the Brownites. Every vote told; Bunter's as much as anyone's. But there was no sign of a fat figure rolling up the passage as the minutes ticked away.

Smithy was as puzzled as angry. He had promised Bunter a splendid spread if he got in as captain, and Bunter would have voted for his worst enemy, with a spread in prospect. It was amazing that the Owl of the Remove was throwing over such a prospect.

Vernon-Smith gave Stacey a suspicious glare. He suspected at once that that valuable voter had been "got at."

Wharton's detention came as a wind-fall to the Bounder; it was one vote gone from Tom Brown's list. Smithy, at least, had been glad to hear that Wharton had got detained; and he had a suspicion that the new head-boy of the Remove had had a finger in the pie somehow. Not that he cared; Stacey was welcome to play his game for him, if he liked. It improved his chances, but he wanted every vote he could get—and he stared and glared along the passage for Bunter—staring and glaring in vain.

Wingate looked at his watch.

"Time's up!" he said. "Lock the door, Gwynne."

Patrick Gwynne shut the door and turned the key. The Bounder bit his lip with savage anger. He had to get on the best he could without William George Bunter.

"Now—" said Wingate.

Sampson Quincy, Illey Field, otherwise Squiff, proposed Tom Brown, and was seconded by Bob Cherry.

"Hands up for Brown!" said Wingate.

Eleven right hands went up.

Wingate counted and Gwynne counted and the number was agreed. And the Bounder gritted his teeth.

Had Bunter been present he would have had eleven votes and tied with Brown. As it was he had ten.

Stacey it was clear was nowhere.

Vernon-Smith was proposed and seconded and ten hands went up for him. Again there was a count.

"That fat rotter!" breathed Skinner. "We could have tied with Bunter here, and that would mean the election over again. Might have pulled it off at the second shot."

"Rotten luck!" said Snoop.

"Rotten trickery, I believe!" muttered the Bounder savagely. "Bunter's been got away somehow."

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"You think Wharton's gang—"
"No, I don't, you ass! I believe Stacey's wangled it somehow. The fellow can play cricket, but he can't play the game."

"I'll jolly well kick Bunter!" said Bolsover major.

"Anyhow, that cad Stacey's out!" said Hazel.

"Yes!" The Bounder nodded. "That's one comfort. That show-up on Saturday has dished him to a frazzle."

Penfold proposed Stacey and was seconded by Mickey Desmond. Morgan was the only other man who voted for him.

Stacey's face was not pleasant to see. Only a couple of days ago he had been counting on a walk-over. Now he was fairly washed out.

Three votes, out of a Form counting over thirty members, was not only useless, but rather ridiculous. And even his three supporters were not enthusiastic.

Wingate read out the result.

"Tom Brown, eleven votes; Vernon-Smith, ten votes; Stacey, three votes. Tom Brown is duly elected captain of the Remove."

"Bravo, Browney!" roared Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah!"

"Good old New Zealand!"

The door was unlocked, and the two Sixth-Form prefects departed. The Rag rang and echoed with the cheers of the victorious party.

Stacey slipped away immediately after Wingate and Gwynne. The Bounder walked over to the successful candidate and gave him a smack on the shoulder.

"Grattors, Browney!" he said.

"Thanks, old bean!" said Tom.

"Best of luck—I've no doubt you'll make a better Form-captain than I should," said Vernon-Smith.

"I'll try!" grinned Tom Brown.

"I'll kick Bunter, all the same, for letting me down," said Smithy. "But for that fat brute we'd have tried it over again, and I might have dished you. I'll kick him hard."

Stacey had gone to his study.

He stood looking out of the window, with a black brow and a bitter heart. He was still standing there staring into the quad, when a fat figure rolled up from the gates. It was Billy Bunter, looking happy and sticky, with a smear of jam adorning his capacious mouth.

Stacey scowled down at him.

He knew better than anyone else why Bunter had missed the election.

But his trickery had recoiled on himself. Had Bunter voted, the votes would have tied, which would have meant another election at a later date, by which time he might have recovered lost ground, and had a chance of success. As it was, Bunter's absence had spelt success to Wharton's candidate. It was a bitter reflection to the schemer of the Remove.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Trickster!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

The Co. were waiting at the end of the Form-room passage to meet Wharton when he came out of detention. It was nearly six o'clock.

Billy Bunter rolled up to them in a great hurry.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Whose jam have you have scoffing?" inquired Bob Cherry.

"Eh?" Bunter dabbed a fat hand over a large mouth. "I say, you

fellows, you stand by a fellow, you know! That beast Smithy—"

"You've missed the election!" said Bob.

"That's what that beast Smithy is kicking up a fuss about," explained Bunter. "I was going to vote for him, but I got back late. It wasn't my fault, of course—I've only just got in. And that beast rushed at me in the quad and—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"And kicked me—"

"Good egg!"

"Beast! And he's after me—"

"You shouldn't have let him down!" said Johnny Bull. "If you were going to vote for a man you should vote for him."

"Well, I couldn't get back in time," said Bunter. "I'd have voted for him like a shot—I hear that Browney's got in, and I jolly well know that Browney won't stand his voters a spread, as Smithy was going to do if he got in. But—"

"So that's why you were going to vote for Smithy!" snorted Johnny Bull.

"Well, you know the spreads in Smithy's study," said Bunter. "It would have been ripping if Smithy had got in. Still, it wasn't certain, you see, and a bird in hand is worth two in the bush, isn't it?"

The Co. stared at Bunter, quite puzzled by that remark.

"If I'd had a taxi fare on me I'd have got back in time," said Bunter. "But Stacey wouldn't lend me a taxi-fare, though I told him I would settle up out of my postal order to-morrow."

"What on earth has Stacey to do with it?"

"Eh? Oh, nothing!" said Bunter hastily. "He told me not to mention it, now I come to think of it. So I'm not going to."

But the Co. scented a rat by this time, and they did not let it go at that.

"Had Stacey anything to do with your missing the election?" asked Bob, with a grim look.

"Oh, no! Nothing! He never knew I was going to vote for Smithy! I didn't tell him when he asked me for my vote."

"Where have you been?"

"Oh, nowhere!" said Bunter vaguely.

"You got that jam on your face nowhere?"

"Eh? Yes! I mean, no! I'm jolly well not going to tell you!" said Bunter. "Stacey asked me not to! I mean, there isn't anything to tell! Besides, Stacey can stand a friend a bag of jam tarts if he likes, I suppose."

"You fat villain—"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"So Stacey stood you a bag of jam tarts to let Smithy down in the election!" exclaimed Frank Nugent.

"Nothing of the kind! I'm not a fellow to be bribed, I hope!" said Bunter, with dignity. "It wasn't like that at all! Stacey had ordered the tarts at Courtfield, to be called for to-day, you see! He couldn't go on account of the election, so he told me I could call for them if I liked, and have them for my trouble. He lent me the bus-fare to Courtfield. He's jolly mean, though—he wouldn't lend me enough for the fare back—not even a bus-fare back!"

"Well, of all the scheming rotters!" said Bob, in disgust. "He fixed that up to keep you out of the voting and sneak one of Smithy's votes."

"Lot of good it did him!" grunted Johnny Bull. "It was Bunter being away that let Browney in."

"Rotten trick, all the same."

"The rottenfulness was terrific."

"I say, you fellows, I really tried to get back in time," said Bunter. "If

Stacey had lent me my fare back I might have managed it."

"He was likely to—in the circumstances!" grinned Bob. "Well, I'm glad you cut the election, you fat fraud, as it helped our man in. But you ought to be kicked, and Stacey ought to be kicked."

"That beast Smithy—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here he is!"

"Hook it, Bunter!" grinned Nugent.

"Oh lor!" Billy Bunter dodged behind the Co. as the Bounder appeared in the offing. "I say, you fellows, keep him off!"

"Now, you fat rotter—" said Vernon-Smith.

"Keep him off!" yelled Bunter.

"I'm going to kick that fat spoofer!" growled Vernon-Smith. "Don't you fellows barge in."

"Oh, really, Smithy—"

"Wouldn't barge in for worlds," said Bob. "Kick him as much as you like, and then go and kick Stacey."

"Stacey—what—"

"According to Bunter, Stacey bribed him with a bag of jam tarts—"

"Nothing of the kind!" roared Bunter. "I'm not the chap to let a man down for a bag of jam tarts! I—I don't like jam tarts."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, Smithy, I haven't been to Courtfield, and I never called for that bag of jam tarts that Stacey ordered on Saturday, and—and—" Billy Bunter dodged wildly. "I say, you fellows—Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter fled up the passage, with the Bounder in pursuit. He vanished round a corner, Smithy dribbling him like a fat football.

A few minutes later Mr. Quelch came up the passage. He passed the waiting group of juniors without appearing to notice them, and went to the Form-room. Six was striking, and Wharton's detention was up.

Wharton came out of the Form-room with a knitted brow. He joined his friends, and they went out into the quad together.

"How did it go?" asked Harry quietly.

"All serene," answered Bob. "Browney's in."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Then Quelch never got away with it?" he said.

"Quelch!" repeated the Co.

"What do you think I was given detention for?" asked Wharton scornfully. "To keep me out of the election, of course."

The Co. looked at him with very grave faces.

"You had better cut that out, Wharton," said Bob quietly. "It was rotten, and all that, but if you think that Quelch would do a mean thing like that you're talking rot, and you know it."

"I'm not talking rot, and I don't know it! Why do you think I was given a detention while the election was taking place?" asked Wharton, with a sneer.

"Nothing to do with the election, anyhow!" said Frank Nugent. "For goodness' sake don't talk such piffle!"

"The esteemed piffle is terrific!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"I suppose Quelch gave you a reason!" said Johnny Bull.

"Oh, yes! My Latin paper was careless and slovenly—that was the reason," said Harry. "It was nothing of the kind. It wasn't the best in the Form—but it was better than a dozen others, and nobody else was given a detention."

"If Quelch said it was, it was!" granted Johnny Bull. "What's the good of talking out of your hat?"

"You saw my paper, Frank; you were sitting next to me. Did you think it was the worst in the Form?"

Nugent was looking startled.

"No," he answered; "that's all rot! I borrowed one of your answers to a question, as you know. Your paper was all right."

"Rubbish!" said Johnny Bull gruffly.

"We all know that Quelch is down on Wharton this term, whether it's Stacey's doing or not; but he's just when he's down on a man. He's a crusty old bean, but he's just, and every man in the Form knows it!"

"You've heard what Frank said!"

Wharton, "How many votes did that scheming rotter bag?"

"Three!" said Bob, with a grin.

Wharton laughed.

"My esteemed and ridiculous chums!" said the nabob. "The absurd and execrable Stacey kept Bunter away, and it occurs to my debilitated intellect that he also kept the ludicrous Wharton away."

"Oh, don't be an ass!" growled Johnny Bull. "Think he had the nerve to give Quelch a hint to detain a man? Quelch would have given him six, if not taken him to the Head for a flogging! Don't be a goat!"

GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

(1)

A smaller edition of Billy, I found, was his minor, young Sammy; He's equally stupid and silly, And equally sticky and jammy! No brotherly signs of affection Exist between brother and brother, If either was up for correction, 'Twould be a good joke to the other!



Strong man and weak man, fat man and thin man—our Greyfriars Rhymester's got to interview 'em all in turn. This week he visits

SAMMY BUNTER,

Billy Bunter's minor in the Second Form.

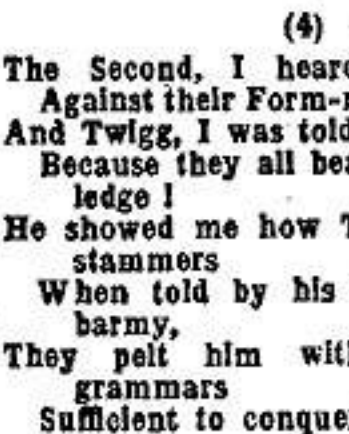
(2)

I found Sammy down in the Second, He was toasting a kipper on pencils, Which method he used, as I reckoned, For lack of the proper utensils; The fish gave a horrible odour, I gasped and called faintly for water, Then someone, I think it was Loder, Walked in and accomplished great slaughter!



(3)

Young Sammy, I found, was quite willing To talk, and still more so to borrow The capital sum of one shilling, To be reimbursed on the morrow! I bribed the unprincipled brigand The sum of a bob, as requested; He then told me all about Twigg, and How sadly that master was bested!



(4)

The Second, I heard, daily battled Against their Form-master in college, And Twigg, I was told, became rattled Because they all beat him at knowledge! He showed me how Twigg gasps and stammers When told by his Form that's he barmy, They pelt him with Cæsars and grammars Sufficient to conquer an army!

(5)

Young Sammy speaks up like a giant (Or so he informed me) with vigour! He's resolute, bold and defiant! A Jove-like, but juvenile, figure! "Let Twigg start his silly old bunkum!" Said Sammy. "I'll give him some coaching! These masters—d'you fancy I funk 'em—?" Here Twigg was seen swiftly approaching!



(6)

Alas!—For the fact must be stated That Sam lost his nerve at this juncture! His corpulent form was deflated Like a motor-car tyre with a puncture! "Come, Bunter!" said Mr. Twigg coldly, "The hour of detention's beginning!" And instead of defying Twigg boldly, Sam went! And I sallied out grinning!



snapped Wharton, with smouldering eyes.

"And you've heard what I said—rubbish!" retorted Johnny Bull.

"My esteemed chums—" murmured the Nabob of Bhanipur.

"I was detained, to pip me for the election," said Wharton. "It might have made all the difference."

"It would have, if Bunter hadn't been away, too," said Frank.

"Browney's votes would have tied with Smithy's, and there would have had to be another election. According to Bunter, Stacey got him away."

"And Quelch got me away!" said

"The absurd Stacey is now head boy of the Remove—"

"What about that, ass?"

"He handled the Latin papers before they met the ridiculous eyes of the idiotic Quelch—"

Harry Wharton started violently.

"Oh! Inky—you—you think—"

"The thoughtfulness is terrific," said the nabob. "The excellent and emphatic Johnny declares that Quelch would not play a rotten trick, which is a terrific certainty. But his absurd leg might be pulled—"

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,426.

"But how could Stacey—" stammered Bob.

"I rememberfully recollect that the fat and esteemed Prout called Quelch away when we were leaving the Form-room. The Latin papers were left with the execrable head boy."

Wharton drew a deep breath.

"Inky's got it! I remember Quelch never said there were mistakes in the paper—he said it was careless and slovenly. Easy enough to make it look like that if a fellow was cur enough."

"But—" gasped Bob.

"I'm going to know!" said Harry Wharton savagely. "I'm going to ask Quelch to let me see my paper. If it's not as I left it, Quelch is going to know that it's been tampered with."

To that the Co. assented, and Wharton went back into the House. But the look on his face as he went made his friends feel very uneasy as to the result of the interview with his Form-master.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Shock for Quelch!

MR. QUELCH gave his late head boy a cold, grim look as he came into his study.

Last term Wharton had been his trusted head boy, a credit to his Form in every way, in Mr. Quelch's opinion. This term he was lowest of all the Remove in the opinion of the Form-master. That opinion seemed to find confirmation in the Form, as Wharton had been turned out of the captaincy by his Form-fellows—a matter with which Quelch had nothing to do. Quelch's conclusion was that Wharton had fallen into bad ways during the holidays—not an uncommon happening. And if he had any idea of continuing those bad ways at school, Henry Samuel Quelch was exactly the man to deal with him drastically.

The Remove master was aware of the result of the captain's election now, and that result was a deep disappointment to him. He had made Stacey his head boy, and had hoped to see him captain of the Form also. Certainly nothing would have induced him even to think of keeping a voter away from the poll, as Wharton had so recklessly suspected. But he was annoyed and irritated by the result, and not in a mood to be patient with the junior who had already tried his patience very hard.

"Well?" he rapped. The question came like a bullet.

"I wish to speak to you about my Latin paper, sir!" said Harry, as quietly and respectfully as he could, though his heart was beating fast.

Mr. Quelch made a gesture.

"That matter is closed now, Wharton! Your paper was a disgrace to your Form; but you have had your detention, and I desire to hear nothing more about it."

"I must speak about it, sir."

"You will leave my study, Wharton."

Wharton's jaw set hard. He did not leave the study; he stood firmly where he was, facing the Remove master across his writing-table.

"I believe, sir, that my paper must have been tampered with!" he said.

Mr. Quelch jumped.

"What?" he thundered.

"May I see it, sir?"

"You may not see it! You may leave my study! I will hear no more insolence from you, Wharton!"

"Very well, sir," said Harry. "I will go to my headmaster, and appeal to him. Dr. Locke will do me justice, if you will not."

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Mr. Quelch rose to his feet. He seemed to tower in his wrath and indignation.

"Wharton! Are you in your senses? Do you dare to question the justice of your Form-master?"

"I have said that I believe my Latin paper was tampered with," answered Wharton steadily.

"By whom?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

"That's not for me to say! By a fellow in whose hands it was, at any rate!" said Wharton bitterly.

"Is it possible, Wharton, that you carry your jealousy and dislike of your successor to such a length, that you dare to suspect Stacey?" Mr. Quelch was genuinely shocked.

"Will you let me see the paper, sir! I only need to look at it to see whether it is as it was when Stacey took it from my desk."

Mr. Quelch breathed hard through his nose.

"I will let you see the paper, Wharton! But I warn you in advance that I will listen to no unfounded and base accusations against a boy whom you should be proud to have as a relative—a boy in whom I have the most implicit confidence."

He sorted out Wharton's paper from a pile. With a grim, frowning brow, he passed it across the table to the junior.

Wharton looked at it.

His eyes glinted at it.

Now that he saw it he did not wonder that Quelch had described it as "careless and slovenly." Any fellow who handed in such a paper was certain of a detention to follow.

It was disfigured by blots and smears galore. As such slovenliness was no part of Wharton's character, it was natural that Quelch had taken it as an act of deliberate impertinence. That, he had supposed, was Wharton's retort to his decision "sacking" him from head boy's position. In the circumstances, he could hardly have supposed anything else.

"Oh, the rotter!" breathed Wharton.

"Mr. Quelch! There was not a single blot, not a single smear on that paper when Stacey collected it."

"How dare you say so, Wharton?"

"Because it's true!" answered Harry fearlessly. "I tell you, sir, I never made one blot or one smear. That paper's been tampered with since it left my hands."

Mr. Quelch stared, or rather, glared at him. He did not believe a single word of that statement.

Blots were not uncommon on such papers. A fellow who was a bit uncertain between "amaverim" and "amaveris" might hope to conceal his dubiety by a judiciously dropped blot!

On Wharton's paper, however, there were more than a dozen blots, as well as a number of smears that would have caused even Billy Bunter to stare.

The Bouncer might have turned in such a paper, just to show his Form-master that he didn't care twopence for the beaks! That was what Mr. Quelch had supposed that Wharton had done.

Now, however, a darker suspicion was in his mind. It looked to him as if his dismissed head boy had taken measures to give colour to an accusation against the new head boy.

Hardly a fellow at Greyfriars was capable of such an action as was now imputed to Stacey. Mr. Quelch was not likely to believe Stacey capable of it—a boy whom he trusted and liked!

He stood towering in wrath.

"Wharton!" He spoke at last in almost a gasping voice. "I hardly know what to say to you! Such unscrupulousness—such effrontery—"

"I've told you the truth, sir."

"You have told me falsehoods!" thundered Mr. Quelch. "I do not believe a single word you have uttered, Wharton."

Wharton thought for a moment of Nugent; Frank had seen the paper. But he could hardly call Nugent as a witness.

It was a strict rule that fellows did not look at one another's papers. That rule, of course, was frequently disregarded; a fellow would help a friend out with an answer to a question, if it could be done without catching the eye of the beak. Schoolboys and schoolmasters take different views of the matter. But certainly it was impossible to tell a "beak" that another fellow had looked over his shoulder for help in a knotty point.

Wharton stood silent in bitter anger and resentment.

He had proved to himself that Stacey had tampered with that paper—in the hope of getting him a detention and keeping him away from the election in the Rag. Unfortunately, it was impossible to prove it to Mr. Quelch.

To Mr. Quelch it seemed only a wild and reckless accusation, founded on resentment and envy.

There was silence in the study for a long minute. Then Mr. Quelch picked up his cane.

"Leave my study, Wharton! Utter another word, and I shall cane you! Go!"

Harry Wharton turned and walked out of the study.

He did not speak another word. His feelings were too deep for words. His face was almost white as he went back into the quad and rejoined his friends.

"What luck?" asked Bob uneasily.

"I've seen the paper!" Wharton almost choked. "It's mucked up with blots and smears—just as Inky guessed! Stacey did it, of course. You know whether there were blots and smears on my paper, Frank."

"I know!" said Frank, in a low voice.

Bob Cherry whistled.

"It must have been Stacey," he said. "I don't see how it could have been anybody else! He's taken Quelch right in!"

"He has no right to be taken in by a plotting cad!" said Wharton fiercely. "He's called me a liar!" He clenched his hands. "By gad—"

"Keep cool, old chap!" said Bob. "After all, Stacey never got away with his putrid trickery. He overdid it—getting Bunter away, too! He's properly dished himself in the end. But what a poisonous toad! I—I thought you were rather a fathead to bar him as you did. I couldn't see any harm in the chap! But—"

"Well, we know him now!" said Johnny Bull. "And I'll tell you this—he can't keep up this game for ever! Swindlers and liars always get found out in the long run. It's a mug's game, if they only knew it!"

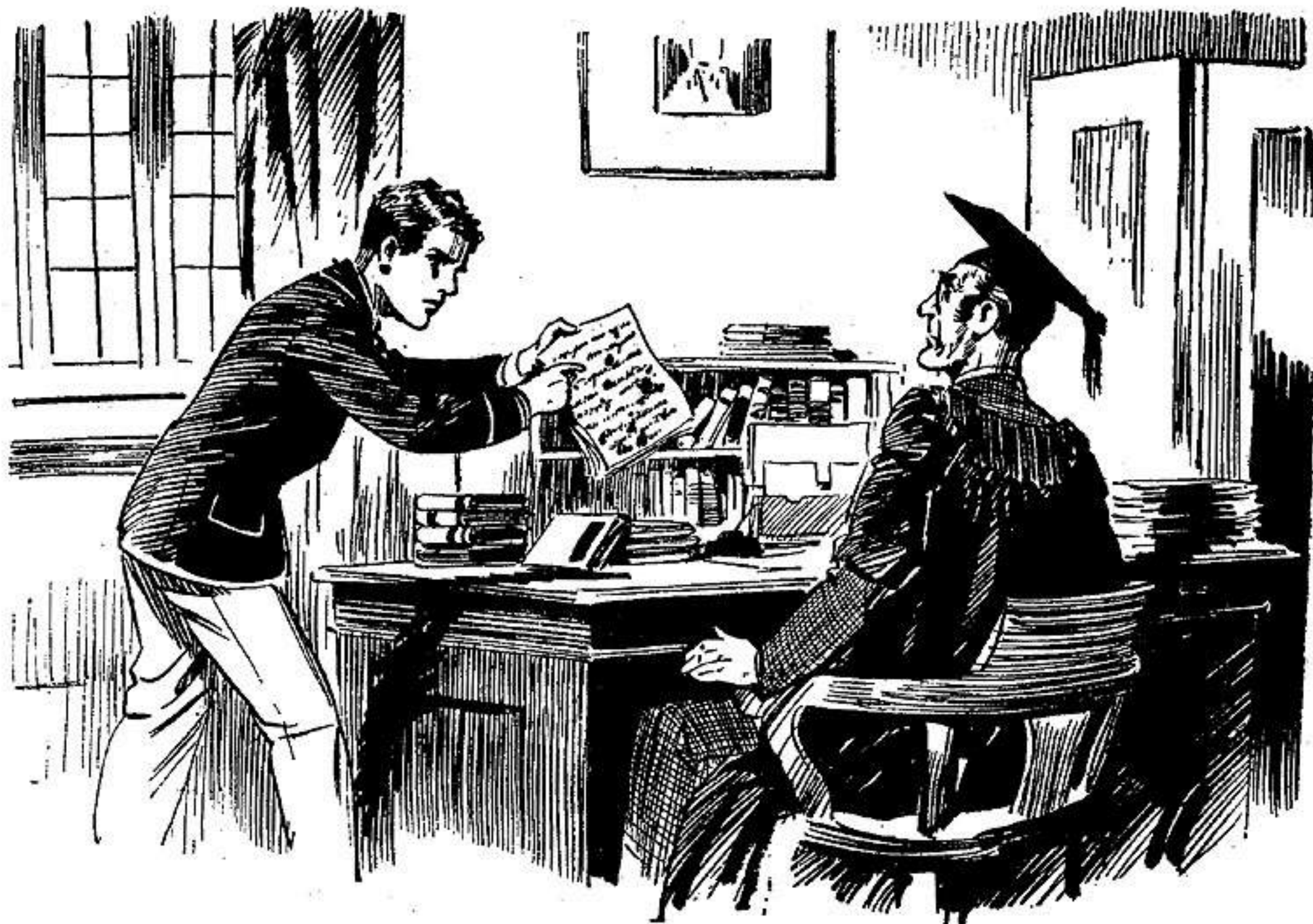
"Hear, hear!" said Bob.

"The esteemed Johnny has uttered words of golden and ridiculous wisdom!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, with a nod of his dusky head.

"Quelch will spot the cad, sooner or later!" said Nugent. "He's a downy old bird, you know."

That was little comfort to Wharton. It was the present that troubled him, not the future.

But there was comfort, at least, in finding the Co. convinced at last that he was in the right in his feud with his "double." He had, after all, defeated the fellow. It was Tom Brown, and not Ralph Stacey, who had succeeded him as captain of the Remove. And in the trouble yet to come it was something to have his own chums solidly on his side.



"Oh, the rotter!" breathed Wharton, glancing at the paper. "Mr. Quelch! There was not a single blot, not a single smear, on that paper when Stacey collected it." "How dare you say so, Wharton?" thundered the Form-master. "Because it's true!" answered Wharton fearlessly. "That paper's been tampered with since it left my hands!"

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Out in the Rain!

"RAIN!"

"The rainfulness is terrific!" "Looks like cricket!" said Bob Cherry lugubriously.

It did not—quite!

Through the morning there had been drizzle, and the cricketing fellows had hoped that it would dry up in the afternoon and leave them some sort of a wicket. Instead of which, it rained on steadily, and turned out, as Johnny Bull put it, a nice half-holiday for ducks!

Which was dismal for the fellows who wanted to handle bat and ball, as they felt that they had a right to expect to do in June! Something was wrong in the scheme of things when it rained on a half-holiday! But it was raining—hard.

"O lovely June!" sang Bob sadly.

"The Junefulness of this absurd afternoon is not great!" groaned the Nabob of Bhanipur. "But the rainfulness will perhaps be good for the esteemed crops!"

"Blow the crops!" said Bob. "I mean, I don't mind it raining on the crops! But I wish it would rain in sections, and leave us a dry spot! But it won't! What are we going to do?"

"I say, you fellows——"

"Oh, good egg, here's Bunter! Let's kick Bunter!"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Turn round and stand steady!" said Bob.

"You silly ass, wharrer you want to kick me for?" demanded the Owl of the Remove indignantly.

"Must do something on a rainy half-holiday," explained Bob, "and a kicking always does you good! You're not kicked enough, as you jolly well know!"

"The kickfulness of the esteemed Bunter is an excellent and wheezy idea!" exclaimed the Nabob of Bhanipur. "Cricket being off, let us play absurd football with the ludicrous Bunter!"

"Hear, hear!" grinned Johnny Bull. Billy Bunter backed away.

The Famous Five were standing by a window in the Remove passage, looking forth to view the weather, when the fat Owl rolled up. Bunter eyed them warily.

Cricket was off, and even a walk was not attractive in a steady drizzle of rain; but Bob Cherry's exuberance had to find some outlet. Bunter, however, did not want it to find an outlet by using his fat person as a Soccer ball.

"I say, you fellows, don't play the giddy ox!" urged Bunter. "I say, I came here to speak to you. Can I have your raincoat, Wharton?"

Harry Wharton stared. It was not surprising for Bunter to want to borrow something; he was generally wanting to borrow something or other. But the request for the loan of a raincoat was rather surprising. It indicated that the fat Owl intended to take a walk in the rain, and it was unusual for Bunter to take walks even in fine weather if he could help it.

"What the thump do you want my raincoat for?" asked Harry.

It was hard to believe that Bunter was going out, when even hardy fellows like the Famous five were little disposed to do so.

"Eh? To wear, of course," answered Bunter. "I don't want to eat it, fat-head!"

"No, even you wouldn't eat it, I suppose!" said Wharton, laughing. "But you don't mean that you're taking a walk in this weather."

"Yes, rather! I'm no slacker!" exclaimed Bunter. "I don't believe in frowsting about the House, even in this weather, like some fellows!"

"Ye gods!" ejaculated Bob.

"I've asked Toddy," went on the fat Owl, blinking at the astonished juniors through his big spectacles. "But he's refused! You know how jolly selfish Toddy is. He says he wants his coat himself."

"Same here!" said Harry, laughing.

"I hope you're not going to be selfish like Toddy, Wharton! I've asked your cousin——"

"I've got no cousin at Greyfriars that I know of!" snapped Wharton.

"Oh, really, Wharton, you needn't snap a fellow's head off!" said Bunter peevishly. "I don't care whether the fellow's your cousin or not, or your twin brother, if you come to that. He's as like you as a twin——"

"Dry up!"

"Well, you jolly well know he is!" said Bunter. "Like you in his beastly selfishness, too! He refused to lend me his raincoat, because he was going out and wanted it——"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! Rotten selfishness all round," said Bunter. "I say, Cherry, you're not so beastly selfish as Wharton and Stacey. Will you lend me your raincoat?"

"If you like to fetch it for yourself," answered Bob.

"I don't mind! Where is it?"

"At Cherry Place——"

"Eh?"

"In Dorsetshire!"

"You silly ass!" roared Bunter, while the juniors chortled. "Do you mean that you haven't got a raincoat at the school?"

"Just that!" grinned Bob. "I didn't"

think I should want one in the summer, and I left the old mac at home. If you like to walk to Dorset for it—"

"Beast! I say, Nugent—"

"Bow-wow!" said Nugent. "Like-wise, rats!"

"Inky—"

"The ratfulness is terrific, my esteemed fat Bunter!"

Billy Bunter blinked at the Famous Five in great exasperation. He had drawn them all blank.

"I say, you fellows, a fellow can't go out without a mac, in this!" urged the fat Owl. "And I've really got to get out—it's important!"

"Going anywhere special?" asked Wharton.

"Yes, rather; and I can't hang about, you know, or he will be gone—"

"Who will be gone?"

"Oh, nobody!"

That surprising answer made the juniors stare, as well it might.

"You blithering ass!" said Bob.

"I say, you fellows, you're wasting time jawing!" urged Bunter. "I say, one of you lend me a mac, as you're not going out. You see, I haven't got a mac at the school, and—"

"You're such a careless fat blighter!" said Harry. "You'd bring a fellow's mac home thick with mud, and—"

"Then I can have it?" asked Bunter, apparently taking that for permission.

"Thanks, old man!" And he rolled away.

Wharton stared after him, and made a step after him. Then he stopped, with a laugh.

"After all, if the fat boulder's getting some fresh air and exercise, I won't stop him," he said. "Let him have the mac! I suppose I can tip Trotter to clean it if he brings it back mucky. It's not a new one, anyhow."

"If we're going out you'll want it yourself!" said Nugent.

"Oh, I can shove on something else!" said Harry carelessly. He looked from the window again. "It doesn't look jolly inviting!"

Nobody would have guessed that it was a June day from the look of it. The rain came down steadily, splashing on the earth, pattering on the windows. Few were out in it; but the juniors had

seen the tall, angular figure of Mr. Quelch stride down to the gates, muffled up to the neck. Prout had been going to walk with the Remove master that afternoon; but Prout, after a look at the weather, had called it off, and Quelch plugged through the rain on his own.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! There goes a Remove man!" said Bob, looking down. "I say, if other fellows are chancing it, we're not going to stick indoors."

Wharton's eyes fell on a figure leaving the House—and though he could see little of it, but a cap and a raincoat, he knew that it was Stacey. His lip curled as he looked down at his double.

The thought crossed his mind that Stacey probably had a destination that he would not have cared for Mr. Quelch to learn.

The same thought was in the minds of his companions. Their opinion of Stacey had changed very much since the affair of the Three Fishers letter.

That episode had knocked into pieces the careful appearances he had kept up, and it was not likely to be soon forgotten in the Remove.

"Look here! If Stacey's chancing it, and even that fat ass, Bunter, we're going out, what?" asked Bob. "Walk down to Courtfield. The pictures are better than nothing on a rainy day."

"Might as well," said Johnny Bull.

"There goes Bunter!" said Nugent.

The juniors grinned down at the fat figure of Bunter, as it appeared in the rain below. He was wearing a raincoat too long for him that flapped round his fat ankles as he rolled. Already it was gathering splashes of mud, and there was little doubt that Trotter would be required to clean it when Bunter came in.

"Is Stacey the chap he's going out with?" asked Bob, in surprise. "They're not pally—except when Stacey stands him jam tarts to out an election."

"Looks as if he's after him," said Nugent.

It did! Bunter was proceeding at a pace that was unusual for the fat and lazy Owl, cutting down to the gates as if anxious to catch up with somebody. If so, it could only be Stacey.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob. "Look!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bunter, stumbling in a puddle, lurched, and his little fat legs tangled in the raincoat that was nearly a foot too long for him. He went over with a bump and a splash.

The grinning juniors, from the window, watched him scramble up and plug on.

"Trotter will want a decent tip if he's going to clean that mac for you, Wharton!" chuckled Bob Cherry. "It will want some cleaning."

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Lucky it's an old one!" he said.

"Well, what about getting out?" asked Bob, and the juniors decided to get out, and they went for coats and caps.

In a cheery bunch, despite the rain, they started to walk across the common to Courtfield. There the Co. went into Courtfield Picture Palace—and Wharton, who was disinclined for the pictures went to the bookshop in the High Street, to look over the books there—having arranged to meet his friends at the bunshop for tea. And, as it happened that Courtenay, of the Highcliffe Fourth, had walked down to the same place to fill in a rainy half-holiday, Wharton met him there—and found the time pass very pleasantly in agreeable company.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter, Too!

RALPH STACEY paused on the towpath by the Sark, and glanced back.

On that rainy afternoon there was nobody on the river, and he did not expect to see anybody on the towpath.

It was the habit of caution that made him glance back before he drew near his destination—the Three Fishers Inn.

He was aware that Mr. Quelch had gone out that afternoon, in spite of the weather, and that the Remove master sometimes took his walks along the Sark. It was, indeed, in taking such a walk a few weeks ago, that the Remove master had seen Stacey at the gate of the Three Fishers—and believed that he had seen Wharton.

But there was no sign of an angular figure on the towpath. There was only one figure to be seen—that of a fat schoolboy in a raincoat much too long for him and rather splashed with mud.

The gleam of Bunter's spectacles under his cap revealed his identity, even if Stacey had not known him by his circumference.

He frowned, turned again, and walked on more quickly. It was easy, as a rule, to drop a walker like Bunter. It did not occur to Stacey that the fat Owl was intentionally following him, though he was surprised to see him out of doors at all in such weather.

The winding of the path soon dropped Bunter from sight, and the towpath was quite deserted when Stacey arrived at the inn gate.

He gave a quick look round, entered swiftly, and cut quickly round the building. Once out of sight from the towpath he had nothing to fear—if he had anything at all to fear on a day that kept most of Greyfriars within gates.

He did not enter the inn by the front way; the billiards-room at the back had french windows on the weedy, unkept garden. That was the scapegrace's way in—a way he knew well, short as was the time that he had been at Greyfriars School.

An elegant figure lounged towards



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him as he entered. It was Cecil Ponsonby of the Fourth Form at Highcliffe School. A dingy man with a beery face, the marker, nodded to him. It was the same man who had delivered the note in mistake to Wharton a few days ago.

"Chanced the rain, what?" said Pon. "Nobody here with me—the other men wouldn't come out. Glad you've come."

"Glad you've turned up, Pon!" answered Stacey, as the marker helped him off with his wet raincoat, and hung it on a peg by the door.

"What about a hundred up?"

Stacey nodded.

"Quid on it?" asked Pon.

"Two if you like."

"Make it two!" agreed Pon.

And the young rascals selected cues. They had the billiards-room to themselves, excepting for the beery marker.

Stacey was glad of it. Certainly nobody connected with Greyfriars School was likely to drop into such a place and observe him. But what he was doing was a risky adventure for a Greyfriars fellow.

It meant at least a flogging, and more probably the "sack," if he was found out, and that, in turn, meant that he would have nothing more to expect from Colonel Wharton.

The old colonel, who was displeased with his nephew for not making friends with the relative he had taken up and was providing for, would certainly have changed his views had that relative been kicked out of Greyfriars in disgrace.

It was odd enough, perhaps, that Stacey should run the risk, with so much at stake. But there was a strain of blackguardism in his nature that was not to be denied.

It was some excuse for him that his father, Captain Stacey, had fallen upon evil days, and had for years led a wandering life, living chiefly on his wits. Ralph, in his company, had seen and heard much that was bad in its influence on a boy.

For more than a year before Colonel Wharton had taken him up, Ralph had shared his father's wanderings, had kept late hours, and had seen many things very unsuitable for youth. And at Greyfriars, though he realised that it was a great chance for him, and though he enjoyed the cricket, at least, he was bored by what seemed to him dullness after the excitement of earlier days.

Risky as it was, Stacey felt, or imagined that he felt, the need of some excitement now and then—and he found it out of bounds, in company with the young rascals of Highcliffe.

At Greyfriars he was very careful. Even after the "show-up" in the Rag, he was as keen as ever on keeping up appearances in his school, and patching up, as it were, his reputation after the knock it had received.

He was rather drawn towards the Bounder, a scapegrace like himself; but he had no idea of entering into any of his reckless escapades. Nobody at Greyfriars was to know anything—so far as he could prevent it. Outside the school it was a different matter—he did not care how much Pon & Co. knew. What they knew could not damage him.

The click of cue and ball was music to his ears. To do him justice, he would have preferred to be playing cricket. But cricket was off on a drenching day, and he was keen on a gamble. And his skill at billiards was evidence that he had spent a good deal of time in such resorts, young as he was.

Pon gave a miss in baulk, and Stacey began to score. He had knocked up fifty in a single break, when the french

window was pushed open from outside, and a rainy figure rolled in, dripping.

Stacey glanced round carelessly—then his gaze became fixed.

It was Billy Bunter!

The colour wavered in his cheeks! So much for his careful regard for appearances at Greyfriars! Bunter, the peeping Tom and tattler of the Remove, grinning and blinking at him through his big spectacles.

"Wet, ain't it?" said Bunter cheerfully. "I say, lend me a hand off with this coat! I'm jolly well soaked."

The marker took the dripping raincoat, and hung it on a peg beside Stacey's.

Pon stared at Bunter.

"That fat freak a friend of yours, Stacey?" he asked.

"No!" said Stacey, between his teeth.

"Oh, really, Stacey!" said Bunter, with a fat and cheery grin. "I say, old chap, I guessed where you were off to, after what Wharton said the other day in the Rag! He, he, he!"

Stacey gripped his cue, as if the thought was in his mind to knock the fat Owl down with it. Bunter eyed him warily through his big spectacles.

The Owl of the Remove was perfectly well aware that Stacey did not want his company—or any company—in his shady adventures outside the school. But that was a trifle light as air to William George Bunter.

"I say, old chap, don't be shirty!" said Bunter breezily. "Nothing to get your rag out for, old chap! I'm not going to give you away to Quelch! He, he, he! He wouldn't be so pleased with his new head boy if he knew—what? He, he, he! I say, I'll give you a hundred up, Pon, after this game."

Pon stared at him contemptuously.

"A quid on the game, if you like!" said Bunter.

Pon's look became more amiable.

All was grist that came to Pon's mill; and if Bunter had a "quid" about him, the young rascal of Highcliffe had no objection to annexing the same.

"Oh, all right!" he said. "Get on with it, Stacey!"

Stacey did not get on with it.

The presence of Billy Bunter quite spoiled the escapade for him. If this was tattled up and down the Remove, it—

His one thought was to get away—to work up some sort of an "alibi," if he could, to prove that he had not been at the Three Fishers, if Bunter tattled that he had seen him there. Fortunately, Bunter was well known to be as untruthful as he was inquisitive and loquacious; but it behoved Stacey to get away as quickly as he could.

"I'll play this out another time, Pon!" he muttered.

And, without waiting for an answer, he threw down his cue, hurried on his raincoat and cap, and went to the french window.

"I say, old chap, don't go!" squeaked Bunter.

But Stacey was gone.

Bunter blinked after him in dismay. It had been Bunter's idea to borrow a necessary small sum from Stacey. In the circumstances, Bunter considered, Stacey could hardly have refused.

That sudden departure quite spoiled the fat and fatuous Owl's little game.

Pon gave a sniff.

Stacey was gone, and he turned to Bunter.

"Play?" he asked.

He was thinking of the quid Bunter had mentioned, and was naturally unaware that the fat Owl had intended to borrow that necessary quid from Stacey.

"Oh, yes, rather!" answered Bunter.

"Quid on it?"

"You bet!"

As Bunter was in possession of three-halfpence in the way of cash, it was a little difficult to see where Pon's winnings were to come from. Happily unaware of that, Pon chalked his cue, and prepared to relieve Bunter of the imaginary quid in the shortest possible space of time. Stacey, tramping savagely through the rain, left the Three Fishers far behind him, resolving to kick Billy Bunter the whole length of the Remove passage at the earliest opportunity.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Quelch on the Trail!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" murmured Bob Cherry. "Quelch!"

Four members of the famous Co., having left Wharton at the bookshop in the High Street, had arrived at the portals of Courtfield Picture Palace. The rain, which had slackened a little during their walk to Courtfield, came on with a sudden heavy downpour, and they were glad to get under the arcade in front of the building.

A good many people had stepped under that arcade for shelter from the gust of rain. Among them was an angular gentleman, with a dripping umbrella.

Mr. Quelch's walk that afternoon had evidently taken him to Courtfield—for there he was!

He did not look very amiable. He was damp and uncomfortable, and, keen walker as he was, keen on fresh air and exercise, rather doubtful of his wisdom in taking a walk that rainy afternoon. Prout, in his armchair in a cosy study, was certainly more comfortable at that moment.

The four juniors "capped" Mr. Quelch as they passed him under the arcade on their way to the entrance.

The Remove master acknowledged the salute, his gimlet eyes scanning them as they passed.

He noted at once that Wharton was not with his friends. The Famous Five, as a rule, were together on a half-holiday, and it seemed unlikely that Wharton had remained indoors when his chums faced the rainy weather.

Bob and his comrades went into the cinema, leaving Mr. Quelch with food for thought.

Quelch's brow was knitted.

He was asking himself—where was Wharton that afternoon? That term, he was convinced, Wharton was playing the "giddy goat," as the juniors would have expressed it, though certainly not Mr. Quelch. He had seen him—or believed he had—at the Three Fishers on one occasion, though his unfortunate likeness to Stacey gave him the benefit of a doubt. Now, on a half-holiday, his friends had gone to the pictures, and Wharton was not with them. Was he repeating his visit to that forbidden "pub"?

Quelch's lips set hard.

Believing, as he did, that Wharton was disgracing the Remove and the school by reckless and shady conduct, the Remove master was very anxious to pin him down—at least, to ascertain the truth beyond the shadow of a doubt.

There was only one way—to catch the culprit in the very act, so that there would be no possibility of his taking advantage again of his likeness to another boy in the Form!

The rain having slackened again, Mr. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,426.

Quelch left his shelter and headed for the road across the common.

From that road he turned into Oak Lane, which led past Sir Hilton Popper's estate towards the river.

As he had nothing on hand that afternoon except a walk, there was no reason why he should not walk in the direction of the Three Fishers—and see what was to be seen!

As he tramped up Oak Lane, under his dripping umbrella, he gave a little start at the sight of a junior coming towards him in a raincoat.

As was usual, at a distance he could not tell whether the junior was Wharton or Stacey, but he knew that it was one of them.

On a nearer inspection, however, he saw that it was Stacey.

The frown melted from his grim brow, and he stopped to speak to his new head boy in passing.

Stacey had left the Three Fishers hardly ten minutes ago. No suspicion of that fact was in the Remove master's mind.

But Stacey, seeing the direction Mr. Quelch was taking, was glad that he had left the place. He suspected that it might be the Form-master's destination.

"So you are out in the rain, Stacey?" said Mr. Quelch amiably.

"Yes, sir!" said Stacey brightly. "No cricket to-day, sir. But I can't stand sticking indoors. I'm doing a ten-mile tramp."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"A long walk for a junior, Stacey."

"Oh, I've done more than that at times, sir! I don't mind the rain. I've been round by Redclyffe," added Stacey artlessly.

If he had been round by Redclyffe, he had been across the river, and must have come to Oak Lane by Courtfield Bridge—in which case he had not been within a mile of the Three Fishers.

That was the impression he desired to leave on the Remove master's mind.

"Well, well, I am glad to see you so energetic, Stacey!" said Mr. Quelch; and, with a nod and a smile, he continued on his way.

Stacey glanced after him for a moment. By the way he was taking he was heading for the towpath, and would pass the gate of the Three Fishers. He was not likely to step into such a place; but Stacey was glad, very glad, that he was safely off the scene.

Mr. Quelch tramped down the towpath.

He reached the gate of the Three Fishers and stopped.

For several minutes he stood there, looking over the gate. He was undecided.

Was Wharton there? If he was there, and Mr. Quelch saw him there, he could not put up a pretext this time that it was Stacey that his Form-master saw, as Mr. Quelch had passed Stacey in the lane more than a mile from the inn.

If he was there, there was an opportunity of resolving the matter beyond the shadow of a doubt.

Deeply repugnant as it was to the Greyfriars master to enter such a place, he decided to do so.

Opening the gate, he passed along the path round the building which led to the back entrance. To enter the inn and inquire whether a Greyfriars boy was there was, of course, useless; he would not have been told the truth, and the boy would have been warned, and would have escaped unseen. He had to find out for himself, if he was to find out at all.

Mr. Quelch had been in the place before. On a certain occasion, a Grey-

friars fellow had been caught there, in the billiards-room that opened at the back, and he had not forgotten. That was the most likely place to spot the culprit, if he was there, and Mr. Quelch splashed along the wet and muddy path to the french windows of the billiards-room. There he would be able to look in and ascertain whether a Greyfriars boy was present.

A dingy, beery man was looking out at the weather. It was the marker.

His eyes fell on Mr. Quelch approaching, and he stared at him, hard—and then, as he recognised a Greyfriars master, jumped.

He fairly spun back into the room behind him—and Mr. Quelch, realising at once that he had been seen and recognised, and what the man's alarmed action meant, came on at a run! He knew now that a Greyfriars fellow was there—and he had little or no doubt of the name of that Greyfriars fellow! And he was going to know for certain!

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Proof Positive!

BILLY BUNTER blinked rather dismally at Pon.

Bunter had scored two, on a lucky cannon. Now Pon was in play, and he was putting up a break which looked as if he was going to run out, without giving the fat Owl of Greyfriars a chance to display his wonderful powers on the green baize again.

Pon's tally was already at seventy, and he was still going on, making cannon after cannon, and leaving the balls where he pleased.

It was growing clear to Bunter that he was not going to win a "quid" from Ponsonby on that hundred up!

Neither, it was certain, was Pon going to win a "quid" from Bunter, as the fat junior hadn't one! And that made Bunter uneasy. He could not help feeling that Pon would be nasty when it proved that there was no pecuniary reward for his skill as a billiards-sharper!

Bunter began to regret that he had dropped into the Three Fishers at all. In his fat obtuseness, he hardly realised that he was doing wrong—his idea was that he was sportsman, a "bit of a dog," a sort of rorty blade! But it was difficult to carry on as a sportsman, a dog, and a rorty blade, without that necessary article, cash. Bunter foresaw trouble when Pon had finished his break—and he would have been glad to follow the example of the Arab who folded his tent and "steal silently away."

Bunter would have been glad of an interruption. As it happened, his desire was to be gratified.

The marker had gone to the french windows to see whether the rain was easing off. He spun back from the windows with a startled face.

"Look out, young gentlemen!" he exclaimed. "You'd better 'look it—there's a gent coming up the path—a gent I've seen about the school—looks like a Greyfriars schoolmaster to me, and—"

"Oh, crikey!" gasped Bunter.

He blinked round in terror through his big spectacles.

Pon scowled.

He had nothing to fear from a Greyfriars master; still, it was very probable that such a master, finding him there, would report the matter at Highcliffe. Pon was prepared to lie himself out of a scrape, but escape was an easier method. The marker had already opened an inner door—and

Pon, dropping his cue on the green cloth, darted through it.

Bunter whipped after him.

"Get out of the door at the end of that there passage, and you're all right," whispered the marker. "Or you can wait till the old gent's 'looked it."

He shut the door on them and locked it, and put the key in his pocket.

Mr. Quelch was at the french window by that time.

The marker cut across to the peg where Bunter's raincoat and cap hung. He grabbed them both down. The cap he threw out of sight, under the billiards-table. The coat was rather too bulky to be so easily concealed, and he had no time to deal with it, before the french windows were flung open and Mr. Quelch stepped in.

He stared at the beery man with the damp raincoat in his hands, with a glittering gimlet-eye.

"Where is the boy?" he demanded.

The beery man blinked at him.

"Lookin' for somebody, sir?" he asked. "Nobody 'ere but me, sir! 'Ardly anybody coming along in this weather."

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips in a tight line, and advanced towards him, grimly.

"Nobody 'ere to give you a game, sir!" said the man with cool impudence. "Unless you would like me to give you a 'undred up, sir!"

"Do not be insolent!" said Mr. Quelch. "I am a Greyfriars master, and I am convinced that a Greyfriars boy was here a moment ago. I am assured that you saw me coming, and gave him a warning. Where is he?"

"Ain't seed any boy 'ere this afternoon, sir," said the marker stolidly.

Mr. Quelch smiled bitterly.

That he had interrupted a game, and that the players had vanished at warning of his approach, was obvious. The ball was spotted, a cue lay across the baize—another on the floor by the table. And it was a boy's raincoat that the marker had in his hands—damp with recent rain.

Mr. Quelch stretched out his hand.

"Give me that coat!" he said.

"This 'ere coat, sir—"

"Hand it to me at once."

"I'm minding this 'ere coat for a gentleman, sir—what's in the bar—"

"That," said Mr. Quelch, "is a false statement! I insist upon taking that coat, which undoubtedly belongs to a Greyfriars boy." He made a stride at the marker, and grasped the coat. "Give it to me at once! I shall take it away with me."

The beery man reluctantly let go the coat. He had done his best, but he was not disposed to defy this grim-looking gentleman. Indeed, Mr. Quelch would have had little hesitation in knocking him down, had he refused to part with Greyfriars property.

Taking the coat, the Remove master examined it. Every such article, at Greyfriars, had to be marked with the name of the owner; that was an invariable rule.

The wearer of that coat was gone; but the coat itself was an infallible clue to him! Mr. Quelch was not in the least surprised at the name that met his eyes on the tag sewn in the neck of the coat:

"H. WHARTON."

He breathed a long, long breath.

Without another word to the marker, or a glance at him, he went out by the french windows, the coat over his arm.

All was settled now; the matter was placed beyond doubt.



"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" cried Bob Cherry. "Look!" Billy Bunter, stumbling in a puddle, lurched, and his fat little legs entangled themselves in the raincoat that was nearly a foot too long for him. He went over with a bump and a splash. "Yaroooh! Ooooh!" he gurgled. "Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the juniors, at the window.

The culprit, warned in time, had escaped, but he had left indubitable proof behind him. This was why Wharton had not been with his friends this afternoon—as Quelch had suspected!

Mr. Quelch's face was hard and grim as he walked back to Greyfriars School, with Wharton's raincoat over his arm.

On the last occasion, Wharton had declared that it was not he that his Form-master had seen at the public-house. What would he say now? He could not deny the evidence of the coat—left behind in his hasty flight. Even to his unscrupulous audacity, there was a limit!

Expulsion—that was the only thing! A boy who had gone so thoroughly to the bad, could not be permitted to remain at Greyfriars.

Mr. Quelch's mind was grimly made up on that point as he walked back to Greyfriars, the coat on his arm.

He reached the school and waited in his study in a grim mood for Harry Wharton to come in.

He was unaware that while he waited for Wharton, a drenched and dripping figure—coatless and hatless—crawled dismally in at the school gates.

It was the unhappy Owl of the Remove!

Ponsonby had remained at the Three Fishers; but nothing would have induced Bunter to remain there with his Form-master at hand! Bunter, regardless of rain, had bolted—he would have bolted through tornadoes and hurricanes! Hatless, coatless, drenched to the skin, the wretched Owl plugged through the rain back to Greyfriars—and by the time he crawled in, he was repenting, from the bottom of his fat heart, that he had ever entered on the career of a sportsman, a dog, and a rorty blade!

Cap and coat had been left at the Three Fishers. He was glad that he had put on his old cap, anyhow. As

the coat was Wharton's, that was a trifling matter, and did not worry Bunter.

Certainly it did not occur to his fat brain that the coat was already back at Greyfriars—hanging on a chair-back in Mr. Quelch's study! Billy Bunter was not bothering about the raincoat—or about Wharton, or about anything but getting dried and changed!

Mr. Quelch, in his study, waited for the culprit to come in, little dreaming that the culprit had already come in, and was dismally towelling himself dry in the Remove dormitory.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Sack!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. tea'd at the bun-shop in Courtfield, with Courtenay, who came along with Wharton. After which, the Highcliffe junior went his way, and the Famous Five walked back to Greyfriars.

It was still raining, and they were considerably damp by the time they reached the school. But there was plenty of time to dry before calling-over, and they went into Hall with the rest of the Remove, in a cheery bunch. The Bouncer winked at them in Hall.

"Something's up with Quelch," he murmured. "Who's been rousing the old bean to-day?"

"Not us," grinned Bob Cherry. "My hat! He does look shirty!"

Prout was taking roll; but the Remove master was present, and it was easy to see that he was in a grim mood. His brows were knitted, his eyes had a glint in them. His gimlet-eye singled out Wharton in the ranks of the Remove, as a good many fellows noticed.

"I say, Wharton, what have you been up to?" whispered Billy Bunter.

"Nothing, you fat ass!"

"Well, Quelch looks as if he thinks you have," grinned Bunter.

All the Remove could see that. A sarcastic smile came over Harry Wharton's face. He could see that trouble was coming after roll-call, and he wondered whether his "double" was at the bottom of it again. Luckily on this occasion, he had no difficulty in proving where he had been, and how he had been occupied that half-holiday.

When roll was over Mr. Quelch barked:

"Wharton! You will follow me to my study!"

"Certainly, sir!" drawled Wharton. His mood was one of sardonic amusement.

He followed Mr. Quelch to his study.

As he entered, one of the first things that caught his eye was a damp raincoat hanging over the back of a chair.

He stared at it in surprise.

He knew his own coat, and he was astonished to see it in Quelch's study. Mr. Quelch, catching his surprised stare at the raincoat, set his lips grimly.

"Wharton, I have but little to say before I take you to your headmaster," he said. "I regret—I very much regret—that I can hold out no hope of your being allowed to remain at Greyfriars."

Wharton stared at him blankly.

He was expecting trouble of some sort, but this was amazing.

"I don't quite understand you, sir," he said quietly.

"I am aware, Wharton, where you have spent this afternoon, and in what kind of company," said Mr. Quelch briefly. "I trust that you will not add to your offence by useless prevarication."

"Certainly I shall not tell you any lies, sir, if that is what you mean," answered Wharton coolly.

"I trust not," said Mr. Quelch grimly. "I regret that it has come to this, Wharton. It will be a blow to your

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uncle and guardian, a gentleman whom I deeply respect. It will reflect disgrace upon your relative, Stacey, a boy of whom I have the highest opinion. But I have no alternative, but to request Dr. Locke to expel you from Greyfriars School."

Wharton almost staggered.

But he recovered himself at once. It was obvious that there was a mistake somewhere—that Mr. Quelch was labouring under some extraordinary delusion. Surely a fellow who had done nothing had nothing to fear. Unless Stacey—

Wharton almost laughed.

"Have you seen Stacey at a pub again, sir, and taken him for me?" he asked, with cool sarcasm.

Mr. Quelch's eyes glittered.

"Insolence will not serve you, Wharton," he said. "On this occasion I did not actually see you at the Three Fishers—apparently your favourite resort on a half-holiday. You were wary enough to escape by one door as I entered by another. But you had no time to take your raincoat with you, and it fell into my hands."

"Oh!" gasped Wharton.

He knew now where Billy Bunter had been that afternoon. That was where the fat and fatuous Owl had been following Stacey.

"Here," said Mr. Quelch, "is the coat. You do not deny, I presume, that it is yours, as your name is in it."

"Certainly it is my coat, sir!"

"I brought it away from the billiards-room at the Three Fishers, Wharton, after you had eluded me by an inner door."

"I have never been inside the Three Fishers, sir, either to-day, or any other day," said Wharton coolly.

Mr. Quelch's lip curled contemptuously.

"I will not listen to falsehoods, Wharton! On a previous occasion, when I saw you at that disreputable resort, there was a remote possibility of error, owing to your likeness to Stacey. On this occasion there is no such possibility. You will hardly suggest that Stacey was wearing your coat?"

"Not at all, sir."

"I shall now," said Mr. Quelch, "take you to the Head, and place the matter before him."

Wharton smiled faintly. But he said nothing.

He could have cleared himself with a few words; and he did not choose to utter them. Let Quelch make a fool of himself, if he chose. It might be a lesson to him another time. In Quelch's view his case was hopeless. He was condemned to the "sack" on irrefragable evidence. In point of fact, he had Quelch in the hollow of his hand. And in his bitterness and resentment he would not spare him.

Quietly he followed his Form-master down the passage.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Not Wharton!

DR. LOCKE listened quietly to what the Remove master had to tell him.

His brow grew sterner and sterner as he listened. He glanced at the damp raincoat, and the name in it.

Wharton stood silent, respectful, before his headmaster, a faint smile hovering on his lips. His coolness seemed, to his Form-master, merely effrontery, and it added to his anger. A hardened young rascal—that was Mr. Quelch's opinion of his formerly trusted head boy. The sooner he left Greyfriars, the better. And now he was going.

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"That is all," said Mr. Quelch, at last. "I leave the matter in your hands, sir!"

"Wharton!"

"Sir!"

"Have you anything to say?"

"Only that I have done nothing, sir!"

answered Wharton meekly.

"This is your raincoat?"

"Yes, sir."

"You know where Mr. Quelch found it?"

"He has told me, sir."

"You do not deny that you were at the place where Mr. Quelch found your coat?" demanded the Head.

"Yes, sir!" said Wharton calmly.

"You deny that you were the boy who escaped, by an inner door, when Mr. Quelch entered?"

"Yes, sir."

"Then how," said the Head grimly, "do you account for your raincoat being left behind by that boy?"

"He must have borrowed my coat, sir."

"You have been out on a rainy day, Wharton! Do you tell me that you went out without your raincoat?"

"I put on another coat, sir," answered Wharton, in the same meek manner. "Some fellow had borrowed my raincoat before I went out."

The Head glanced at Mr. Quelch. Borrowing a coat, or a hat, was by no means an uncommon occurrence at Greyfriars, or any other school. The Remove master's lips set in a hard, tight line.

"If Wharton has been harmlessly occupied this afternoon, sir, as he would have you believe, he can account for his time!" he said bitterly.

"Quite so," said the Head. "Were you alone, out of gates, this afternoon, Wharton?"

"No, sir!"

"Who was with you?"

"My friends, sir—Cherry, Bull, Nugent, and Hurree Singh, of my Form."

Mr. Quelch's eyes flashed.

"Dr. Locke! I saw the very boys that Wharton names, entering the picture house at Courtfield, and Wharton was not in their company. It was this circumstance——"

"Quite!" assented the Head.

"May I explain, sir?" asked Harry meekly. "We walked to Courtfield together and parted in the High Street. They went to the pictures, and I went somewhere else."

"Alone?" asked the Head.

"Yes, sir."

"To the Three Fishers!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh, no, sir!" Wharton's voice was soft as the coo of a dove, and very respectful indeed. "To Mr. Wade's book-shop in the High Street, sir."

Dr. Locke looked at him very hard. Mr. Quelch glared at him with grim unbelief.

"I met a Highcliffe fellow there, sir," went on Harry. "Chap named Courtenay—I think you have seen him, sir."

"I know the boy!" said the Head. "Proceed."

"He had come to look at the books, and he stayed with me till we went along to the bun-shop, and met the other fellows at tea! Then I walked back to school with my friends. I have not been alone for two minutes all the afternoon."

The Head coughed.

"Will Courtenay bear out your statement, Wharton, if asked?"

"I am sure he will, sir, and Mr. Wade, too, was in the shop all the time, and you could ask him, if Mr. Quelch is not satisfied."

There was a deep silence in the Head's study.

Dr. Locke coughed again.

The accused junior had proved an alibi—as complete an alibi as could be desired, if his statements were true. That was easy to test—it was only necessary to ask the Co., and Courtenay, and Mr. Wade.

The test was so easy that it was obvious to the Head that the statements were true. And even Mr. Quelch, in spite of his grim unbelief, had to realise the fact!

Wharton had not been at the Three Fishers that afternoon! Somebody else had gone there in a borrowed raincoat!

Wharton could have named that "somebody else," if he had chosen; but he did not choose. It was for the beaks to find the culprit out. He intended to kick Bunter; but he certainly did not intend to give him away to the Head.

The silence was long.

"You understand, Wharton," said the Head at last, "that the boys you have named, and also Mr. Wade, will be asked to confirm your statements."

"Of course, sir."

Once more the Head coughed.

"Please call in Cherry, Bull, Nugent, and Hurree Singh, Mr. Quelch!"

Mr. Quelch choked a little.

He knew it was unnecessary; he knew what the mocking glimmer in Wharton's eyes meant! It meant that the accused junior had him on toast, and was enjoying the situation. He knew that Wharton had intentionally refrained from explaining all this, in his study, in order to reserve the explanation for the Head's ears—to make him look a fool before his chief!

And in that the junior had succeeded—never had Henry Samuel Quelch looked and felt so utter a fool! He had marched a boy into the headmaster's study with a demand for his expulsion—a boy who proved, in a few words, that he was completely innocent! Somebody had borrowed his raincoat—that was all!

The crimson fairly pumped into Mr. Quelch's unhappy face. A newly boiled beetroot had nothing on Quelch, at that moment.

"I think," said the Head, taking pity on him—"I—I think we may regard the matter as closing here, Mr. Quelch."

Mr. Quelch nodded. He could not speak.

"You may go, Wharton!" added the Head hastily.

"Thank you, sir!" said Wharton demurely. "Am I to understand, sir, that Mr. Quelch does not suspect me any more of having been to the Three Fishers this afternoon?"

He looked at his Form-master's burning face.

"Yes, yes!" said the Head. "Quite. Go at once, Wharton."

Wharton went, taking the raincoat with him.

He laughed as he went down the passage. Mr. Quelch, in the Head's study, heard that laugh—as he was intended to do.

A few minutes later there was loud laughter in the Rag, where Wharton was telling the story. The only fellow who did not laugh was Billy Bunter!

"Oh, lor'!" gasped Bunter.

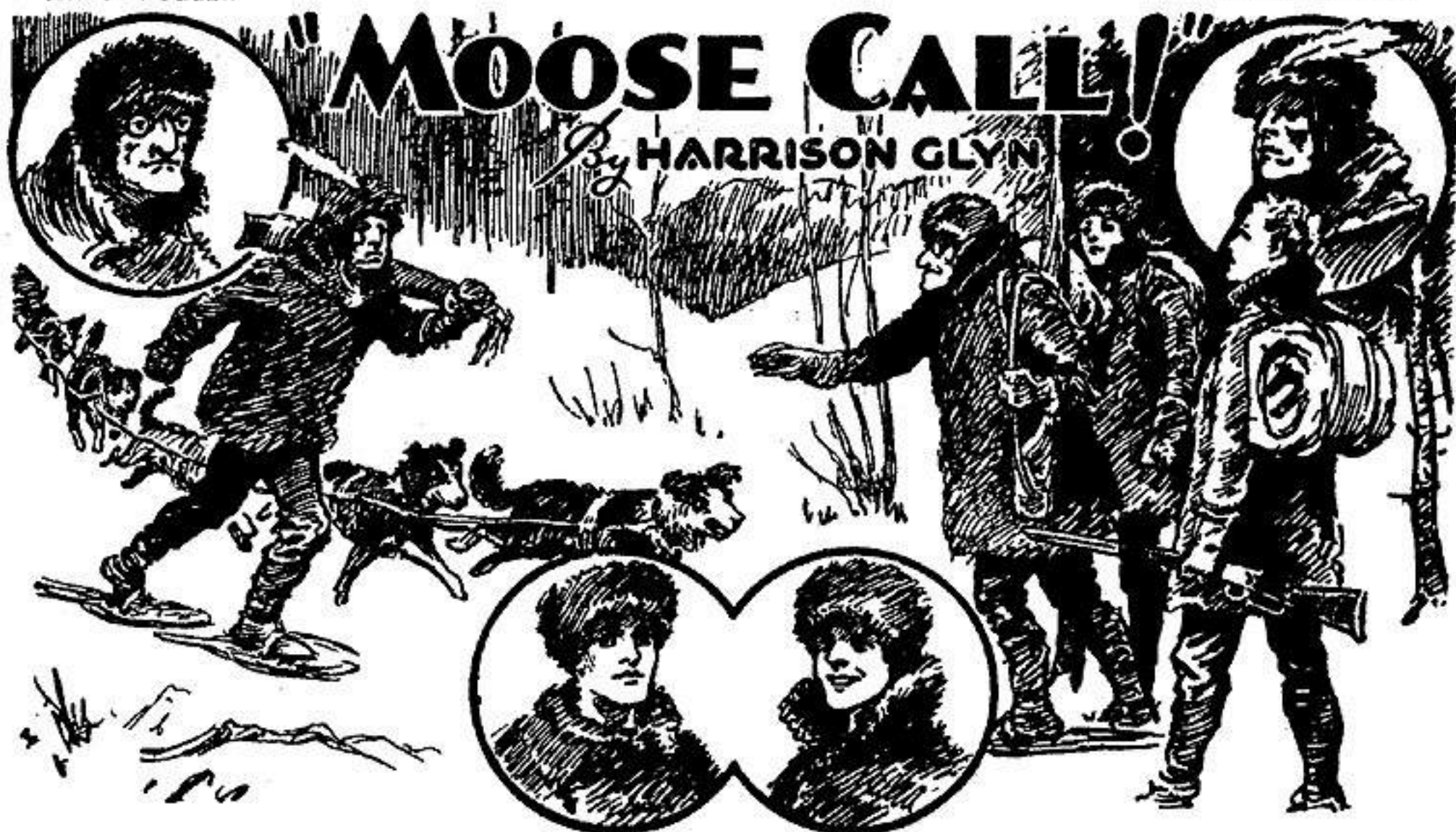
It was likely to be serious for the fat Owl, if Quelch ever discovered who had worn Wharton's raincoat that afternoon. Fortunately for William George Bunter, Quelch never did!

THE END.

(Now look out for the next yarn in this exciting series entitled: "HARRY WHARTON'S TRIUMPH!" If you miss it, chums, you'll be missing one of Frank Richards' best stories!)

ISAAC SNUGGER

MOUNTAIN LION



SELWYN and COLIN

WHAT'S GONE BEFORE.

Selwyn Gore and his brother, Colin, learn from Isaac Snugger, a solicitor, that their Uncle Amyas, a gold prospector, has been murdered. Determined to settle accounts with the murderers, the two brothers leave for Canada in company with Snugger. Following two unsuccessful attempts upon their lives in Tomahawk, the trio set out for Moose Call, closely followed by two suspicious-looking rascals named Wilmot and Majoe. En route, they meet Mountain Lion, a Sioux Indian, in whose charge Amyas Gore had left a message requesting that his nephews bury him at Great Chief's Head, in the Sunrise Mountains. On reaching the spot, the party find the ground besprinkled with yellowish coloured particles.

"Looks like gold dust!" says Colin, excitedly.

(Now Read On.)

The Mysterious Fire!

"It is gold dust," said Mountain Lion. "The men who shot Amyas Gore and hurled his body over the cliff, robbed him of his gold. One bag I found on the rocks below. The murderers took the rest, but they dropped and spilled one here. The dust they have left behind is worth little."

Selwyn felt his heart leap. His Uncle Amyas had found this gold up in the mountains, at the place where he had staked his claim.

Somehow the mere sight and feel of the precious particles seemed to bring Uncle Amyas very near.

Selwyn looked beyond the plateau or ledge. It was shut in by huge boulders and bushes which grew thickly and luxuriantly everywhere. No murderer could ever have wished for a better or a safer screen.

At about thirty yards distance a trail turned through the bushes. Doubtless Amyas Gore had come down that trail and paused for a moment to gaze upon the wonderful scene which stretched below him. He could have had no idea

that he was being watched. Then the lurking murderers had leapt upon him, gun in hand.

They could have given Amyas Gore little time for argument, Selwyn guessed, for Amyas was a powerful man without fear. They must have shot him in cold blood.

In the paling light Selwyn mentally staged the murder; his uncle, standing with his back to the brink, feeling for his gun, perhaps, the gold bags slung from his shoulders and filling his pockets, maybe.

He could see the flash of the murderers' guns, see them leap in and tear the gold bags away as Amyas swayed and dropped, then lift him bodily and hurl him sheer over the cliff to the rocks below, where the faithful Indian had found him.

And Uncle Amyas had not been able to identify the men who had killed him, had given but the vaguest description of them.

He must have had a constitution of iron to have withstood the long and agonising journey back to the shack whither Mountain Lion had borne him after dressing his wounds. There he had lingered in delirium, and died just as the winter snows came.

Selwyn stepped to the edge of the cliff and looked down. The mere sight of the steep drop made him shiver. Wounded by the murderers' bullets, and cut by the cruel rocks, it was a miracle Amyas had lived after the fall.

"Boys," said Snugger at this juncture, "s'posin' we camp here? That is, unless you're scared of the place."

Colin strode up the track and peered behind the close clustering bushes, where dark shadows lay. The day was waning fast. Soon night would come. They would have difficulty in keeping the trail.

"Let's stay here," he said, when he came back. "We can sleep over there near the rocky wall. We have the dogs to warn us of danger should anyone steal down on us."

"It is a good place," grunted the Sioux. "To-morrow we will go on to the Great Chief's Head."

They freed the dogs from their packs and fed them. After which they ate from their own ample rations, and then settled down for a quiet smoke.

The ledge looked out over miles of pine-clad country.

A light showed far below, far away in the deep grey of the early night. It flickered as if driven by the wind, and then grew in brightness, flaming like a huge torch.

After watching it awhile, Selwyn sprang to his feet.

"I say," he cried excitedly, pointing, "look there! Isn't that where our shack stands? If so—what's that burning?"

Mountain Lion turned his head slowly, drew his pipe from his mouth and grunted. His expressionless face betrayed no emotion, but his lips tightened and his right hand stretched out mechanically to where his Winchester was propped against the rocky wall.

Colin looked in the direction indicated, his keen eyes studying the leaping light. Isaac Snugger stared at it unbelievably.

"It's a fire!" said Colin breathlessly.

"It's the shack burnin'!" shouted Isaac. "It's been set alight. Look how red it glows now. An' the fire's spreading. Injun, am I right?"

The Sioux grunted savagely.

"The shack is burning," he said. "The stables and store sheds are in flames. There was nothing to cause the fire. The bad white men have lit it."

Isaac Snugger turned reproachfully to Selwyn.

"When I had that black-bearded rascal at the end of Long Lizzie and pulled the trigger, you shouldn't have jogged my arm. I'd have got him, boy. It would have meant a fight, and we'd have bagged the other skunk, too!"

"I was a fool to have only shot the pale-headed rascal's ear," grunted the Sioux. "I, too, could just as easily have driven bullets through the two of them. It would have saved the sheds."

It was impossible for them to be mistaken. For more than an hour after

Selwyn had first sighted the blaze, the fire grew and reddened in intensity, the leaping flames lighting up the sky. After that, the fire began to die down, and at last it could be seen no more.

The party sat in a line near the brink of the cliff and watched it burn out.

"Of course, we've got no proof that those two men, Majoe and Wilmot, did it," growled Colin.

"We have no more proof against them in this than that one of them was the man who shot at you boys back in 'Tomahawk,'" said Isaac Snugger. "Or that they wuz the skunks who set the tent on fire. But who else would do it? Moose Call's as lonely as an uninhabited island. Amyas Gore didn't brag about findin' the gold. If those two skunks are the men who murdered him, they wouldn't spill the beans about gold lyin' thick up in the Sunrise Mountains for fear of startin' a gold rush. But if they ain't the men, why did they follow us, an' why did they build that shack in the woods?"

"They must be the men," said Mountain Lion, lifting up the gun which he held across his knees. "They burn and they kill, and they are out hunting gold. They declared war. But we, too, can fight."

"You've said it, Sioux," growled Snugger, "an' we're gonna fight. An' I promise you next time I get John Majoe at the end of Long Lizzie and pull the trigger I shan't miss!"

Amyas Gore's Claim!

THE four companions slept very restlessly that night. For one thing, the dogs soon awakened, and from that moment onward, at frequent intervals, they broke out into violent barking, and twice they rushed in pursuit of some straying animal, a mountain lion or a bear perhaps, and it was only with difficulty that the Sioux brought them back.

The party were glad when the new day came. They lit up the stove and made coffee and ate, and resumed their journey at an early hour.

Before starting, however, they looked back at the scene of the fire, but they were too far away to make out the charred ruins of the shack.

Even the Indian's eagle eyes failed in this. But they had no doubt in their minds that it was the shack they had seen burning the previous night.

They thought once of going back to see, but if the shack had been burnt to the ground it would do no good. Suspicion was not proof. They might accuse Majoe and Wilmot, but they could not pin the crime on them without witnesses. Majoe and Wilmot could wait until a better opportunity came to wreak justice upon them.

"I vote we push on to the Great Chief's Head," said Selwyn. "Let's find the place Uncle Amyas speaks of in his letter, and look for his gold claim."

The track was steep enough now. At times the trail ran into a dead end and they had to retrace their steps and find another way up.

One moment they would go scrambling over big boulders and up treacherous paths where loose stones lay thickly, the next they would thread a way among the bushes with everything hidden, but the blue sky above.

The fine weather had set in definitely, and there was no fear of snow.

Towards midday the party emerged upon a wild slope of the mountain.

There were no trees and only a few stunted bushes above them now, and lost in the clouds high above lay hidden the snow capped peak.

Suddenly the Indian halted, pointing to a place where a strangely shaped rock jutted out of the mountainside.

"The Great Chief's Head!" he said.

Selwyn gasped as he studied the rock, for it was indeed shaped like the head of a Red Indian capped with a mighty spreading headdress of eagle's plumes. From where they stood the illusion was complete.

"It looks as if a sculptor had carved it out of the mountain," said Colin. "Is it a natural rock, Mountain Lion?"

"Yes," grunted the Sioux. "It only looks like a Great Chief's Head from here. Soon as you mount upward, if you watch, the plumes will disappear, the shape of the rock will change. When you are close upon it, it looks like any ordinary rock. The Great Spirits of the Sky and the Clouds fashioned it, perhaps to show that this land is by rights the property of the Indians."

"And you knew this place when you were a boy, Mountain Lion?" asked Selwyn.

"Ugh! Yes! I was hunted. I hid in the place behind the Great Chief's Head of which the good white man Amyas Gore speaks. The hunters never found me. It is a strange and lonely place."

It was the first time Isaac Snugger had seen the Great Chief's Head.

"It's exactly like a Sioux chief in full ceremonial dress, isn't it?" he said. "Amyas Gore always told me it wuz, but I never believed him. But if the claim's thar, Sioux, that's a mighty big landmark leadin' to it that nobody c'd miss."

"The way in is not so easy to find, though," grunted the Sioux, "as you will soon see."

The track along which the Sioux now led them was narrow and at places dangerous. Mountain Lion's nine dogs hurried on in front, turning every now and then to make sure they were on the right trail.

Burdened as the climbers were with their packs, guns, and other impedimenta, progress was slow, and they made frequent stoppages, dropping down upon the boulder-strewn way to rest.

It was during one of these enforced rests that Selwyn, glancing back down the winding trail, picked up two ant-like objects which came moving slowly upward.

"Look!" he cried excitedly. "We are being tracked down."

The others followed the line of his pointing finger.

"Two men," grunted Mountain Lion. "Then they must be the bad white men. Ugh! It might be a good thing to wait here for them on the track, and shoot them as they come up."

"Ain't they fools to show themselves?" declared Isaac Snugger, as he watched the distant climbers. "Don't seem sense to me."

It was the Sioux Indian who accurately analysed the situation.

"No trail show here," he said, pointing to the stony track. "Nothing for white men to follow. They must watch where we go."

"Knowing that we are going to try to find Amyas' gold claim?" said Selwyn warmly.

Snugger began to remove his long rifle from its green baize cover, and Selwyn grinned as he eyed the prehistoric weapon.

"What do you reckon you're going to

shoot with that, Isaac," he asked. "Rabbits?"

"Going to shoot them skunks down there if they come nigh enough," growled Isaac. "An' I seldom miss!"

Colin was watching the climbers down below, saw them dodge behind big, sheltering rocks, then emerge into view again, to vanish once more. The chance of hitting them at that distance was remote. If they were to wait in ambush and let the climbers come nearer, the men would see them, grow suspicious, and dodge under cover. And they, too, would be armed. They might be crack shots, too. It would end in a battle with the odds in favour of the Snugger gang—but still a battle. Why should they let the men come nearer? Why should they not push on?

Colin advanced these arguments. Mountain Lion nodded approval.

"Good cover up by the Great Chief's Head," he said. "No rain. We leave no trail. Much better go on."

They went on, and as the track bent and turned and rose and fell, they lost sight of the men below.

In the middle of the afternoon Mountain Lion announced that they were now behind and abreast of the Great Chief's Head. He pointed to a stone strewn track which led to the right away from the outward slope of the mountain.

"Way round there," he said. "Walk plenty miles and come out below near to the shack at Moose Call."

"Another way back?" asked Selwyn.

Mountain Lion nodded.

"Yes, another way back," he said, pointing in the direction of the hidden Head. "Down steep face of mountain. Bad climb up. Better climb down."

"And we can choose either way?" asked Selwyn. "That's good. I say, shall we wait for those men?"

"White men not near here yet," said the Indian.

"Then let's find the place where Uncle Amyas wished to be buried," said Selwyn. "You said it was behind the Great Chief's Head, Mountain Lion."

"Watch!" said the Sioux Indian.

The party were standing below a wall of rock which ran unevenly as far as they could see to left and right. About twelve feet above them the rock jutted out. The Red Indian climbed up, rifle and pack slung on his back, clinging on to the face with toe hold and foothold. He gained the place where the rock jutted out, slid his feet forward, and disappeared from view.

The dogs following in his wake and barking wildly, managed to scramble up the steepish face of the rock at the same point, and, one after the other, disappeared.

"Up you go, Isaac!" said Selwyn excitedly.

He gave Snugger a lift up, and Isaac, with the long rifle slung from his shoulders, also gained the point and vanished from view.

Colin followed, helped with a hefty lift. Selwyn went last. He found foothold easier than he had thought. He was hard and fit, and full of bounding energy.

To his surprise, when he gained the spur of rock, he found a sort of open funnel there leading downward.

He sat down, set his feet into the hole, and slid.

The way had been worn smooth by rain and snow and wind. He shot unchecked to the bottom, landed safely on his feet, and found himself standing in

a narrow gorge which opened out a little distance away.

The dogs had dashed impatiently on, and were waiting with their shaggy heads turned to look. The four comrades followed and soon found themselves standing in a wonderful natural amphitheatre, hollowed out of the mountain.

A mountain stream ran gurgling through it, and they could hear it gushing down a distant fall. There was blue sky above, soft earth underfoot. Here and there, winter flowers showed their heads above the soil.

They walked forward wondering.

Suddenly, Selwyn caught sight of a wooden post stuck in the ground some way ahead of them about thirty yards from the rushing crystal stream at which the dogs were lapping. The post carried a cross-piece, and Selwyn ran to look.

Reaching it, he bent his head and saw that something had been painted on the cross-piece. A message, he supposed, or else a name.

He looked closer, and read the following inscription:

"Amyas Gore. His claim."

Luck at Last!

"AMYAS GORE—his claim."

The party and the dogs gathered round the wooden post, and the two boys and Snugger doffed their hats and stood with heads bent in reverence.

The Sioux, folding his arms, stood rigid.

For two minutes silence reigned. Selwyn was the first to break it.

"Uncle Amyas' claim. Isaac, I know now why my uncle wrote that request that he should be buried here. Mountain Lion knew the way to the spot, and Uncle Amyas believed if ever we came out here the Sioux would lead us to the place, and we would be sure to find the claim."

The surroundings presented a scene of imposing and rugged grandeur. The place was like a vaulted cathedral and just as silent.

"And you showed Amyas Gore this place, Mountain Lion?" asked Selwyn. "This is where you hid when you were a boy and they were hunting you?"

"Yes."

"How came you to find such a place?" Colin broke in. "The way in is completely hidden."

"I was hungry," the Indian explained with just the ghost of a smile. "I had got away from my pursuers. I had climbed the path by which we came, and near this point I startled a cougar. I did not like using my gun lest the report should betray me; but I was starving, and so I risked a shot. But the puma was quick, and I merely wounded her. I ran after her, and as she came to this point and realised that she would be cornered if I drove her on the sheer slope of the mountain, she leapt up the rock face we climbed and vanished."

"And you followed her?"

"I went to see. I found the hole and slid through it. I tracked the cougar by the trail of blood she left behind and found her collapsed in a pocket over there near the rocks. A second shot killed her. I dried the flesh in the burning sun, and so had food in plenty, and fresh water during the whole of my stay here."

"What about those men? Supposing they find the way in?" said Colin anxiously. "Hadn't we better set a watch?"



Groping in the shallow stream, Selwyn grabbed the yellow stone. "Look!" he yelled excitedly, holding it up for inspection.

"The dogs will give us warning," said the Indian.

"Uncle Amyas' claim," said Selwyn, looking around him eagerly. "Then the gold he carried when those villains murdered him must have come from here. I can't see any trace of a working, though, Snugger."

"Let's have a look round," said Snugger, thrusting out his jutting chin, and feeling every bit as excited and eager as the boys themselves.

In the shadow of the rocky cliff it was damp and cold; but in the open the sun blazed gloriously down. In this warmth the party trudged the full length of the amphitheatre, which measured more than 600 yards of fairly level ground from the point of entrance to the end where rugged rocks, piled in a heap, barred the way.

The ground had thawed out and was quite yielding underfoot, so soft, in fact, that the soil clung to their boots like clay. Now and again they stopped to hack the stuff away with the blades of their strong jack-knives. But almost as fast as they removed it, so it adhered to the nail-studded leather again, spreading over the edges of the heavy soles and heels.

They came back, keeping close in to the rocky wall, but they found no trace whatever of the ground having been dug or worked. It was so cold in the sheltered places that they were glad to move out into the sunlit open again.

Back they went to the point of entry. Amyas Gore had worked no claim there. They wandered along beside the swiftly running stream of crystal clear running water, but once more met with disappointment. They had found Uncle Amyas' claim, but it remained a mystery.

At a place where the mountain water had made a hollow in the soil Selwyn threw himself flat, and, thrusting his head over the brink, set his lips to the rushing torrent and drank.

The water was ice cold, soothing, delicious.

Having drunk, Selwyn lay there watching the water go gushing over the stone-strewn channel that formed the bed of the rivulet. The stones were all washed clean, and presented every possible shade of brown, grey, and purple as the sunlight danced upon them. One stone in particular was as bright and full a yellow as any gold Selwyn had ever seen.

Jumping to his feet suddenly, he gave a wild yell, and then leapt right out into the bubbling stream. The water rushed by almost up to his knees as he groped in the shallow, crystal stream and grabbed the yellow stone.

Holding it tight in his fingers, he scrambled back on to the bank.

Colin, who was lying stretched out, his hands behind his golden head, using his pack for a pillow, grinned at Isaac Snugger.

"Every now and then, Snugger," he said, "my brother Sel goes crazy. He's got one of his crazy fits on now. He's not always dangerous, mind; but if you see any straw in his hair, hit him over the dome with the butt end of Long Lizzie. And mind you hit him good and hard; it's the only way to keep him quiet."

Mountain Lion had cast aside his coat and fur cap. He lay stretched out on his stomach, his massive, muscular frame clad in jacket and trousers of skin, elaborately beaded, painted, and fringed, his feet in moccasins. His long, straight coal-black hair was held back by a bandeau, in which five eagle's feathers had been fastened. He gave a grunt and a nod as Selwyn came running up, holding out the yellow substance he had snatched from the stream for his chums to see.

"Look, you chump!" said Selwyn. "I found this just now in the stream. THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,426."

I ask you what you think it is, Snugger."

Isaac looked hard at the irregular, yellow-hued mass; then suddenly he gave a cry of astonishment and snatched it from Selwyn's hand. Turning it over and over, he stared at it with bulging eyes.

"It's gold!" he bellowed excitedly. "A nugget! It must weigh a pound-and-a-half if an ounce and it's nearly all pure metal; there ain't no quartz. This bit must hev bin washed down the mountain by the stream. It probably took hundreds of years to reach this point. An' you found it in the stream. I wonder how many more there are like it lying on the river bed?"

Selwyn pointed to the fast-flowing torrent.

"That must have been Uncle Amyas' gold claim. Snugger," he said.

Isaac handed the nugget to Colin, who was all agog, to examine it.

"Wait a minute, though!" he said, turning to Mountain Lion. "Didn't you say that the gold Amyas Gore carried with him when he was foully murdered was bags of dust—eh, Sioux?"

The phlegmatic Indian, who had not reacted to the thrill of Selwyn's find, nodded.

"It must have been all dust," he agreed. "One bag I gave you—the one that was spilled on the rocks when he fell. More dust lay upon the plateau. Besides, Amyas Gore, the white man, would have told me if he had found any nuggets."

"Sure!" rejoined Snugger, pushing his chin up and his nose down until the two points almost met. "Sure! And he would have told me when he kem into Tomahawk to report, or else went on to Edmonton to bank some of his dust thar. He showed me bags of gold-dust, but never any gold in solid mass. No, Selwyn, my boy, that river warn't Amyas Gore's gold claim."

"But look what he painted up on that post," pointed out Selwyn. "Amyas Gore. His claim." The claim must be here."

"Oh, it's hyar all right! Reckon it's all around. And before we leave," said Snugger, "we're going to locate it. Now, boys, we've had a hard climb and we're hungry. What say we give the gold a rest, make camp in a place out of the wind, light up the stove, brew some coffee, eat some grub, and then hit the hay? The sun'll sink soon, and night won't take long a-fallin' up in these parts."

"I'm all for it," answered Selwyn. "And we'll be quite safe; the dogs will bark if those men come near. Besides, they could never find that hole in the dark."

"They'll never find it," said Colin, plucking at the fine short new grass which had sprung like magic out of the soil since the snow had melted. "They'll reckon we've gone along back to Moose Call by that other track Mountain Lion showed us before we came in here."

The party found a sheltered pocket in the rocks, removed all their belongings there, refilled the primus stove

from their dwindling store of oil, and lit it.

They fed the dogs and shared out food, tossing the dirty utensils aside for washing in the morning.

Then they fetched armfuls of dry grass and wind-blown debris from sheltered places in the rocks, into which the storm winds had blown the litter, and built a roaring fire.

It was a welcome sight, and they enjoyed its warmth; for hoar frost was already gathering in places.

The dogs stretched themselves out lazily; Snugger, Selwyn, Colin, and Mountain Lion did the same, keeping their rifles and revolvers ready to hand.

Colin lay with his feet turned towards the blaze, as did Isaac Snugger, who was stretched out on his side, his grizzled head set upon his pack.

The soles of their boots were lit up by the leaping flames of the comforting fire—soles and heels, too—broadened to almost twice their width by the soil which clung to them and which they had not yet removed.

Selwyn eyed these extended big feet lazily through half-shut lids. It seemed to him odd that they should come upon a sticky, clay-like soil so high up the Sunrise Mountains—a soil which clung to one's boots like glue.

It was a rum-coloured soil, too; not red clay, or brown clay, but a clay that was speckled with gold. When the flames danced upon it the bright yellow specks shone like metal, real metal—gold metal.

"Gold!" Selwyn let out a yell that must have been heard far beyond the confines of Amyas Gore's amphitheatre. "Gosh! Would anybody ever believe that?"

He felt in his pocket for his jack-knife, whipped it out, removed it from the chain to which it was fastened, and then opened out the big blade. Springing up, he rounded the fire and pounced on Isaac Snugger, holding him down by the throat, setting him flat on his back, and brandishing the knife as if he intended to drive it down deep into Snugger's heart.

Colin sat bolt upright in amazement and alarm, groped for his gun, drew it, half turned it on Selwyn, then tossed it on the ground.

Selwyn had really gone mad this time, he thought. But a fist was the right sort of weapon to use, not a gun, even if he had gone mad.

Isaac gurgled as he felt the clutching hand tighten on his throat. His goggling eyes stared appealingly into Selwyn's, which were all on fire.

"Boy, don't kill me!" Snugger choked. "We've hit a long, hard trail, I admit, but—"

"Lie down!" said Selwyn excitedly. "Keep still while I scrape your soles clean—"

"My soul is clean enough!" choked Isaac, as he seized the strangling hand and tried to pull it off his bruised and contracted throat. "You lemme be! Lion—"

Selwyn brought the blade of the knife down—but it was only because brother Colin, who had scrambled up, and was bending double over him, had measured

distance accurately and swung a smashing right-hand punch to the point of his chin.

Selwyn instantly let Snugger's windpipe go and did a roll over on to his back, legs and arms upflung, his blue eyes set on Colin's in a stare of pained surprise.

Mountain Lion slowly rose.

For a second or two Selwyn lay prone; then he struggled up, looking wild, rubbing his bruised chin with caressing fingers.

"For Pete's sake, Colin," he jerked out, "why did you do that?"

Colin towered over him threateningly. "Now, you keep still, Sel, before I sock you another one!" he said. "Who do you think you are that you can go about choking the life out of poor old Snugger? What do you mean by drawing your knife on him?"

Selwyn looked puzzled.

"Drawing my knife on Snugger?" he said, and then he burst into a peal of happy laughter. "Oh, I get you, Colin! But you've got me wrong."

He rose to his feet again, and, before anyone thought of preventing him, he had hurled Isaac Snugger prone once more, was kneeling on him, and cutting the adhering clay in chunks off his boots as the solicitor lay motionless.

"You clean his other boot, Col," said Selwyn elatedly. "You take a peep at the soil you cut loose when the firelight plays on it."

Selwyn cut a chunk of soil off the boot and tossed it to the ground so that the dancing flames could play upon it.

"It's gold, Col!" he yelled, as he worked overtime. "Gold! It's on all our boots. It's lying so thickly that you pick it up in heaps as you walk. All you've got to do is walk about, then wash the soil you pick up as you prowl. Look!"

Selwyn held out his knife-blade with soil caked upon it, all speckled with glinting particles.

Mountain Lion towered over them, his sphinx-like face spreading a huge grin.

Snugger, released for a moment, sat up.

"Now, boys," he protested, "I won't stand for—"

"Shut up!" said Colin, helping Selwyn to pin him down again, and setting to work with his knife to clean up the other boot. "You're a walking gold mine. Sel, it's miraculous! Now we know what that sign means—'Amyas Gore—His Claim.' All this is our uncle's claim. And the gold lies thick everywhere!"

The moment the two brothers released him, Isaac Snugger sat up, his face crimson with indignation, his chin thrust out, his narrowed eyes darting fiery indignation.

"Have you two boys gone plumb crazy?" he gasped. "You tryin' to murder me?"

"It's gold, Snugger!" laughed Selwyn, holding out a lump of caked clay for the solicitor to see. "Look how it sparkles! It's real gold! We've been walking on gold!"

(Watch out for further exciting chapters of this popular adventure story in next week's MAGNET, chums!)

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THE BATTLE of ST. SAM'S!

By DICKY NUGENT

Dr. Crule, the tyrant Head of St. Sam's, poked his nose round the door of Mr. Lickham's study. There was a gloating grin on his twisted lips and an evil gleam in his bloodshot eyes.

"Lickham!" he said, as he writhed like a snake into the Fourth Form master's study. "I am the bearer of grate and glorious tidings!"

"You mean the Guvvners have given you the boot and made me Head in your place?" cried Mr. Lickham. "Hooray! Of course, I can't say I'm surprised."

"Don't be an idiot!" snapped Dr. Crule. "The Guvvners would have to be blind, deaf and silly before they'd appoint a nitwit like you in my place! Still, Lickham, it is promotion of a kind. As you are aware, a critical state of affairs has eggisted at St. Sam's since my appointment as Head."

"Trew, sir!" sighed Mr. Lickham, swallowing his disappointment with a mitey effort.

"First I had to put up with the late headmaster barring himself out," said Dr. Crule, savvidgely; "and now I am faced with something worse—the open rebellion of your own Form, the Fourth, who have now joined the rebel Head! Lickham, in this hour of crisis, I feel the need of a second-in-command."

"Oh crikey!" eggseclaimed Mr. Lickham, getting an inkling of what was coming.

"My choice, Lickham," went on Dr. Crule, fixing his hipnotick eyes on the Fourth Form master, "has fallen on you. I feel that you are the right man for the job—that you will make me an eggcellent right hand man. So I am going to make you my left tenant."

"I—I see, sir!" stammered Mr. Lickham, who was wishing heartily that the new Head's choice had fallen on somebody else. "Thank you very much, sir, I'm sure!"

"Not at all!" leered the tyrant Head. "Your position will be no easy one, I can tell you! Now to bizziness! The first task I am going to give you as my left tenant is the task of leading an attack on the tuckshop where the rebells are holding out."

"Oh, crums!"

"I have picked out the strongest and tuffest boys in the skool to follow you," snarled Dr. Crule, "and I shall eggpect you to lead them to viktory! My orders are that you shall drive out Birchemall and his motley crew like rats from their holes. Of course, you will eggpect to take some hard knocks."

"I shouldn't be at all serprized!" groaned Mr. Lickham.

"But even though the rebells bash you black and blew, I shall rely on you to stick grimly to your task till the battle is won! Well, Lickham, that's settled! Are you ready?"

Mr. Lickham shuddered.

"N-n-not quite, sir!" he moaned. "I'm wondering if there isn't a better way of doing it. Can't you send for the perlice?"

The master of the Fourth looked hoapfully at the tyrant Head as he made the suggestion. Then he started siltely.

"Was it his imagination, or had the word 'perlice' had a strange effect on Dr. Crule?"

Mr. Lickham certainly thought he detected a change in the tyrant's demeanour. A moment before, he had been a bellowing, blustering booby; but now he was shivering and shaking and nocking at the neeze and whimpering and wining and cringing like a whipped cur. Not many people would have noticed the change; but Mr. Lickham's sharp eyes noticed it, sllite as it was.

"The—the perlice?" repeated Dr. Crule, in a hoarse whisper. "Nunno, I can't send for the perlice, Lickham. You—you see, some awful crime mite be committed somewhere if they were diverted from their normal duties—someone mite drive a car at more than thirty miles an hour, for instance."

"That's trew, sir, of course," admitted Mr. Lickham, eyeing Dr. Crule closely and trying, without success, to read his inmost thoughts.

"Still, even so, don't you think that—"

"No, I don't!" thundered Dr. Crule, pulling



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himself together again. "This dispute can be settled without any help from interfering blue-bottles, and settled it shall be! Follow me!"

He led the way out, and Mr. Lickham, with a despairing shrug, followed him.

Down in the quad, a serprize awaited Mr. Lickham. A grate crowd of St. Sam's boys were assembled there, all armed to the teeth with kriket-stumps, ink-squitters, peashooters and other deadly weppons of war. The tyrant Head had selected them for the job of attacking the tuckshop, and they were only awaiting the arrival of a leader before herling themselves into the fray!

Had the new Head but known it, their simperthies were all with the rebells. But Dr. Crule fondly imagined that his barbarous dissiplin had nocked all such mutinous ideas out of their noodles.

"Boys!" he cried. "I have appointed Mr. Lickham to be my left tenant, and I have given him the task of leading you in your grate attack on the tuckshop. Lickham, you will now take charge—and I suggest that you start the attack at once."

"Thanks awfully, sir!" said Mr. Lickham, with a sarkasm that was wasted on Dr. Crule. Then



he made a sign to the assembled boys to follow him.

The boys were rather serprized at Mr. Lickham agreeing to the Head's plan so reddily. But there was no need for them to worry. Mr. Lickham was only pretending to fall in with his souperior's ideas; he had thought out quite another wheeze himself!

The upper winders of the barricaded tuckshop were filled with the grinning faces of the rebells as they drew near the rebells' stronghold. Dr. Birchemall, prominent among them, waved them a cheerful greeting.

"Good-morning, Lickham!" he called out. "Come to join the merry rebellion?"

"No fear!" yelled back Mr. Lickham. "I've come to smash it up—to drive you out of this place like rats from their holes!"

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



Having tried unsuccessfully to get various Removites to mend his old crock of a bike for him, Billy Bunter sat down and pulled it nearly to pieces in an effort to mend it himself! Luckily, Bob Cherry took pity on him before it was too late, and put Bunter's bike in working order—or as near that as possible!



Eager to show his prowess as a swimmer, Coker attempted a high dive from the pier at a South Coast resort. He overdid it, and landed smack on the water—whereat his chums, Potter and Greene, made a "dive" for concealment, nearly choking with laughter! Coker was "choking," too, when he got ashore!



Lots of fellows roared with laughter when Alonzo Todd sallied forth with a huge net to catch butterflies and moths. But they were astonished when, later, "Lonzy" showed considerable scientific knowledge of his "captures," and delivered a lecture in the Rag! "Lonzy" wasn't such a "butterfly" as he looked!



Appearing in the quadrangle with a live snake coiled round his neck, Dick Russell scared Kinner & Co. into fits! Russell simply explained to fellows who stared near that it was a perfectly harmless specimen—as of the collection he, as a pen naturalist, is forming. Kinner & Co. felt "bitten"!



Offered a bag of doughnuts by Vernon-Smith if he could achieve the pole-vault, Billy Bunter took a terrific run with the pole and simply hurled his huge bulk into the air. He failed to bring down the record, but "brought down" the cross-bar instead! Bunter's fall almost buried him in the sand-pit!



Trying to "look big," C. R. Temple, of the Upper Fourth, said he would swim the Channel, but arriving at Pegg Bay, he said the tide was not favourable. Harry Wharton swam two miles out to sea and back, accompanied by his chums in a boat. If Temple had attempted that, he would have been "tied up"!

BOB CHERRY'S ADVICE ON—

WHAT SHOULD A HIKER WEAR?

Worried hikers are continually coming to me for advice on what to wear. Are shorts better than plus-fours?—they ask. Or do brogues beat boots for hoofwear? Should a chap brave the elements without a hat? Or will a hat put him more in his element?

Well, my infants, you'll be glad to know that your Uncle Bob has given his special attention to the problem of hiker's wear this week—and prepared an answer based on a close study of a live hiker in action.

The hiker I studied was Tom Brown. He wore shorts and an open-necked shirt and brogues. But this costume proved quite inadequate to his needs!

The first thing that happened to him was a skid over a stone that gave him a cut knee. This seemed to me to rule out shorts.

After that, one of Major Thresher's dogs caught him trespassing and made a leap at his neck. This seemed to me a straight tip not to wear open-necked shirts.

Then his foot caught in a man-trap on Sir Hilton Popper's land. This seemed to me to point to the need for something a little more substantial than brogues.

Finally, having escaped from the man-trap, he got soaked to the skin in a downpour of rain. This condemned the whole outfit, anyway!

Thinking it over



very carefully, in the light of my study of Brown, I fancy I've been able to devise just the right costume for a hiker.

Here it is:

A suit of armour.

A pair of deep-sea diver's steel topboots.

A steel helmet.

An umbrella.

So now you budding hikers know what to order when you go to get your outfit!

Chunkley's Hair-dressing Department write to deny that they gave Hoskins his last haircut.

They point out that it was only six months ago when they opened.

Answers to Correspondents

"ARTISTIC" (Remove).—"Why has Frank Nugent given up painting?"

We can only think it's because he's "off colour"!

"MUSICIAN" (Shell).—"What do you think of Hoskins' piano-playing?"

His execution is all that can be desired!

G. BULSTRODE (Remove).—"Who has the longest memory at Greyfriars?"

Cecil Temple. He remembers the last time the Fourth cricket team beat the Remove!

That's Where He Shines!

Bolsover minor's popularity as a fag is due to his gift for making seniors' old toppers look like new.

He knows how to "rub them up the right way"!

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

DONALD OGILVY ENTHUSES ON— SQUIFF'S SIMPLIFIED SWIMMING

When I went down to the Sark Swimming Pool to interview Squiff for the "Herald," I knew nothing about Squiff's Simplified Swimming except the vague rumour that it was a jolly good method of teaching chaps to swim. But what I saw soon convinced me that it's going to be a great success!

"Wait till a customer comes along, old sport," said Squiff, when I asked for an explanation of the principles of his method. "The principles will explain themselves then better than I can explain them by talking."

I hadn't long to wait before the first customer rolled up. It was Snoop, of the Remove. Someone had induced him to put on a swimming-costume and he had decided to invest sixpence in a spot of Squiff's Simplified Swimming instruction.

I watched. The simplicity of it was amazing. Squiff and his two assistants first rowed Snoop over to the school raft. They then stood him at the side of the raft and Squiff explained in a couple of jiffies how to do the breast stroke.

After that, with remarkable suddenness, the two assistants grabbed Snoop and threw him into the water.

Snoop crashed into the water with a fendish yell, went under once, came up spouting freely and splashing wildly, and finally, to his own surprise and relief, managed to cover the three yards separating him from the raft without going under again!

"There you are! You've done it—you can swim already!" said Squiff, triumphantly.

"You—you manias!" shrieked Snoop. "If I hadn't swum, I should have been drowned!"

"Exactly!" grinned Squiff. "The choice is easy—either you swim or you drown. Most chaps swim right away!"

For some reason, Snoop still seemed annoyed. But Snoop apart, Squiff's Simplified Swimming had already justified itself in my eyes.

I can see it being all the rage this summer.

At all events, it's pretty well bound to be all the rage with the spectators!

JOHNNY BULL SUSPECTS RAKE'S ROLLER ROAD RACE RECORD

I can take defeat as well as any man, I hope. But if you expect me to grin over my defeat by Rake in the Roller-Skating Race from Courtfield to Greyfriars you'll be jolly well disappointed!

I don't need to be told that Rake broke all records for the course. Rake's speed doesn't interest me in the least. What does interest me, is how a blessed novice like he is could possibly come along and beat all the rest of us hollow as he did!

There's something fishy about it, to my mind. Rake's funny grin whenever the race is mentioned is enough to convince me about that. But apart from that, I couldn't help noticing something strange about his movements during the race.

On no less than three occasions he reappeared in front of me after I had previously overtaken him!

Each reappearance, strangely enough, occurred shortly after a motor-van had passed; but I mention this, of course, not as a suspicious circumstance, but merely as an odd fact I couldn't help noticing at the time.

How to account for his reappearing in this funny way I don't know. But if it didn't happen just as I've told you, then I must be suffering from delusions!

Anyway, delusions or not, I don't feel at all happy over Rake's win. Rake seems to think it funny. But I don't!

The fact is, I suspect Rake's Roller Road Race Record—and I don't mind who knows it!