

"HARRY WHARTON'S TRIUMPH!" Exciting Story of Schoolboy Rivalry, featuring . . . **Harry Wharton & Co.**

The Magnet ^{2^D}



*The Coward's Blow
for Harry Wharton!*



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.

FROM one of my readers who lives in Richmond, Surrey, I have received some most interesting information regarding

A "MAGNET" CLUB

which he and his chums (all of whom are regular readers of the old paper) have recently formed. Each week they put away a certain sum of money, in order to pay fares and expenses, and on Saturdays they visit various places of interest. My chum goes on to say that they intend to visit as many of the famous Public schools of this country as they can.

Already they have visited both Eton and Harrow, and I am sure they must have spent a most interesting time on these outings. I am afraid, however, that I cannot help this happy band in their desire to visit Greyfriars, except in imagination through the pages of the good old MAGNET!

There are, however, many famous Public schools within easy reach of Richmond, and if my reader consults Whitaker's Almanack—which he can see at his nearest public library—he will find a list of schools that are well worth visiting.

Here is a curious paragraph which I came across the other day. Have you ever heard of

THE PARACHUTE THAT FELL UPWARD?

It happened a short while ago. A parachutist was making a descent from a plane in Russia, and dropped from 23,000 feet. He did not pull the cord until he was within 500 feet of the ground. To the amazement of the onlookers, when the parachute opened, it started to go upward! It was evidently caught in a strong ascending current of air, and the amazed parachutist found himself rising instead of falling!

He rose to a height of 3,000 feet, and then began to drift in the air. He drifted for twenty-five minutes, and covered a distance of eight miles from his starting point before the parachute finally came down, and he landed safely.

A READER in Swansea asks me to tell him

HOW SWANSEA GOT ITS NAME.

The name dates back to the days when the Norsemen landed on the west coast of Britain. One of the greatest of Viking warriors was named Sweyn, and he landed at what is now Swansea. The old sea rovers preferred to establish their camps on land which could be reached by their boats, rather than to settle upon hilltops. The name Sweyn has become contracted to Swansea. The MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,427.

to Swans, and the final "ea" is Anglo-Saxon or Scandinavian for running water. So the name Swansea actually means Sweyn's-town-on-the-water.

Another of my reader chums has been completely baffled by

AN EGG BALANCING TRICK,

and he wants to know how it is done. His friend not only made an egg stand up on its end, but actually balanced it on the edge of a table in such a manner that the greater part of the egg was hanging over the edge of the table. Sounds miraculous, doesn't it—but it's quite easy to do.

Take an egg with as white a shell as possible and make a small hole in either end with a darning needle. Then "blow" the egg, by blowing through one hole and forcing out the white and the yolk at the other. This needs a bit of careful work. Having done this, wash out the shell with a little warm water and wait until it is perfectly dry. Next get a teaspoonful of fine silver sand and pour it into the empty eggshell. You can then seal up the holes by using slightly melted candle wax, scraping off the superfluous wax. Now, no matter in what position the egg is placed, the sand will fall to the bottom, and you will find it easy to stand it on end, or balance it in a bewildering manner.

Here are a few

RAPID-FIRE REPLIES

to shorter queries which various readers have propounded to me:

How Do Toy "Swimming Ducks" Work? (T. H., of Byker).—A tiny piece of camphor is fixed at the stern of the duck. The action of the camphor on the water drives the duck along in a realistic manner. The water, however, must be perfectly clean.

Is it True that Some Natives Fish with a Pick and Shovel? ("Sceptic," of Reading).—Yes. In a certain district of Brazil there is a variety of fish that buries itself in the mud. The natives dig them out with picks and shovels!

Who Wrote Aesop's Fables? (H. C., of Walthamstow).—Most people would say "Aesop," but they would be wrong! These fables weren't written until several centuries after Aesop's death. They were written by a Greek-Italian named Babrius.

Is There an Insect That Prays? ("Curious," of Chatham).—No, but there is one called the "praying mantis." It is named thus because of the peculiar position of its legs, which makes it appear to be praying!

Why is a Sailor Sometimes Called a "Matlow"? ("Inquirer," of Bootle).—This is an Anglicised version of the French word *matelot*, meaning a sailor. It is frequently used in the navy.

HERE is a query which requires a longer reply. It comes from a Glasgow reader, and concerns

SCOTTISH CLANS AND THEIR BADGES.

How many Scottish clans are there, he asks? According to experts there are forty-five different clans, each with their own particular badge of distinction. In ancient days the chief of each clan wore two eagle's feathers in his bonnet, in addition to a badge. I am afraid I haven't space to give a list of all the various badges, but here are a few of the most prominent:

Buchanan wears birch; Cameron, oak; Campbell, myrtle; Drummond, holly; Ferguson, poplar; Gordon, ivy; MacDonald, bell-heath; MacKay, bulrush; MacLean, blackberry heath; MacNeil, sea-ware; Munro, eagle's feathers; Robertson, fern or brochans; Ross, bear berries; Stewart, thistle; and Sutherland, cats-tail grass.

By the way, a most interesting ship returned to England recently after a long voyage, on which she had been

SHOOTING WHALES WITHOUT KILLING THEM!

Seems strange, doesn't it, but actually the idea was to place a mark on the whales. Whales, like many other denizens of the deep, are rather mysterious in their habits, and they sometimes disappear from the known whale-fishery grounds, and the whale fishers cannot get on their track again. They bob up at all sorts of peculiar places.

Therefore, it was decided to find out where they go, so that whalers can follow them around. A new type of gun was invented, which, while it does not kill the whales, puts a certain mark on them. The whales are then allowed to proceed. Whale fishers keep a look-out for any whales which bear these distinguishing marks, and report them when they are found. About eight hundred whales have been marked in this manner, and when these whales are eventually found in other parts of the world, scientists will be able to get a lot of information concerning the various migrations which these sea animals make.

Time I was dealing with next week's programme, chums. First "on the bill" is:

"THE BLACK SHEEP!"

By Frank Richards,

another top-notch yarn of Harry Wharton & Co. by this master writer of boys' stories. Frank Richards' stories remind me of the old remark—every week and in every way they get better and better! I can tell you that the remaining stories in his present series are going to grip your interest more than ever. Don't miss them, chums. Place a regular order for the MAGNET, and be sure of being on a good thing!

What do you think of our serial, "Moose Call"? It's the goods, isn't it? You'll enjoy next week's gripping chapters. When you next drop me a line, I should be glad to have your opinion on this yarn.

The "Greyfriars Herald" supplement and another of our Rhymester's effusions will appear as usual, and I'll have another budget of interesting paragraphs and answers to correspondents in my chat.

Cheerio, chums,

YOUR EDITOR.

HARRY WHARTON'S TRIUMPH!



By
FRANK RICHARDS

Time and again has Harry Wharton had to go down before the cunning of his relative and rival, Ralph Stacey. But the former captain of the Greyfriars Remove can hold his own when it comes to playing cricket!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter Talks Too Much!

"I'LL help you, old chap!" Harry Wharton stared round at Billy Bunter.

He was sliding his skiff from the school raft into the Sark, when the fat Owl of the Remove rolled up and offered to help.

It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars School, and the Remove had a cricket match on. All Wharton's friends were in the team. Wharton himself was not. That was why he was going for a pull up the river on his lonely own. On that sunny June afternoon most Greyfriars fellows were looking merry and bright, but the face of the late captain of the Remove was a little clouded. He was keen on rowing, but he was keener on cricket, and his thoughts were with the fellows in flannels on Little Side.

"Fathead!" was his ungrateful reply to Billy Bunter.

He did not need any help in handling a light skiff. Neither was Bunter the fellow to offer to help anybody do anything, unless he had an axe to grind. If the Owl of the Remove wanted to be pulled up the river in that skiff, there was nothing doing. It would have been rather too much in the way of ballast for the light craft.

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Cut, you ass!"

The skiff slid into the water, and Wharton took his sculls. Billy Bunter grabbed the gunwale and held on.

"I say, old chap——" persisted Bunter.

"Let go, fathead!"

"Can't you give a fellow a lift?" demanded Bunter.

"No!"

"Beast!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"I'm going right up the river, past Courtfield Bridge," he said, "as far as Highcliffe. I can't pull a ton weight all that way. Chuck it!"

To his surprise, Bunter winked in reply to that—a fat and very sly wink.

Wharton, sitting in the skiff, stared at him.

"Gammon!" said Bunter.

"What do you mean, you fat ass?"

"You can't stuff me," grinned Bunter. "I jolly well know where you're going! He, he, he!"

"I've told you where I'm going, you benighted duffer! Let go!"

"He, he, he!" cackled Bunter. "That will do for Quelch, old bean! It won't wash with me! 'You ain't going as far as Courtfield Bridge! I jolly well know where you're going to stop! Think I don't know that you go to the Three Fishers on half-holidays? Yah!"

Harry Wharton coloured with anger. He lifted one of his sculls, with the intention of jamming it against Bunter's podgy chest, and sending him backwards across the raft.

But at that moment a tall, angular figure appeared round the corner of the boathouse. It was that of Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove.

Wharton refrained from giving the fat Owl what he had asked for.

"I jolly well know the game, old chap!" continued Bunter. With his back to the Remove master the fat Owl did not observe his approach, and was unaware that his words fell on official ears. "You're keeping out of the cricket, because you're jealous of that new man, Stacey. He, he, he! But that isn't the only reason. Think I

don't know that you're going out of bounds while your pals haven't got their eyes on you? He, he, he!"

Looking past the fat Owl, Harry Wharton saw his Form-master come to a halt, his eyes fixed on both of them. Evidently Quelch had heard.

Wharton saw his lips shut hard.

"Look here, old chap, I'm on!" said Bunter persuasively. "It ain't more than a mile up to the Three Fishers, and you can pull me all right. If it's billiards, I'm your man! I'm a dab at the game! Are you meeting any of the Highcliffe crowd there? I've heard fellows say that you've made friends with Ponsonby, and go blagging with him. You've been seen together. He, he, he! Look here, old chap, you don't want to go on your own! I'll come."

Wharton breathed hard and deep.

Since his relative and "double," Ralph Stacey, had come into the Remove at Greyfriars, Wharton had had a good deal of this sort of thing. It was awkward enough for a decent fellow to have a double who was given to kicking over the traces.

"You fat, blithering, blethering idiot!" said Harry. "Sit down!"

And heedless of the fact that he was under his Form-master's eyes, he jammed the end of the scull on Bunter.

"Yaroo!" roared Bunter.

He let go the gunwale, staggered back, and sat down on the raft, with a bump that almost made it rock.

"Ow! Beast! Wow!" roared Bunter.

Wharton pushed off, put out his sculls, and pulled away. He knew that Mr. Quelch had heard every word uttered

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by the fat and fatuous Owl, and he wondered, bitterly, what was Quelch's impression. He was already under suspicion, owing to his resemblance to the scapegrace, Stacey. And those words, uttered by a Remove fellow, could hardly have any effect, but to confirm Quelch's suspicions. Quelch could only get the impression that the Remove fellows thought of Wharton, as he thought of him himself.

His brow was dark as he pulled away. Bunter was left roaring.

"Beast!" roared Bunter. "I jolly well know where you're off to! I've a jolly good mind to tell Quelch! Rotter! Yah!"

"Bunter!" The fat Owl fairly bounded at the deep voice behind him.

He leaped to his feet, spinning round, his eyes almost popping through his big spectacles at Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Oh lor! I—I didn't know you were here, sir. Oh crikey!"

Bunter realised that he had done it. Certainly he had had no intention of giving away Wharton to his Form-master.

There was nothing to give away, in point of fact. But Bunter was unaware of that. And assuredly Mr. Quelch was not likely to think so, after what he had heard.

"Bunter, I heard what you said to Wharton," rumbled Mr. Quelch.

"Oh lor!" groaned Bunter.

Mr. Quelch's glance followed the skiff, shooting away up the Sark in the sunshine. If Wharton was going to Court-field Bridge, he had to pull past that disreputable establishment, the Three Fishers. But was he? Evidently Billy Bunter did not believe so. Neither did the Remove master.

"Bunter, what reason have you to believe that Wharton is going out of school bounds?" demanded Quelch.

"I—I—I didn't—"

"I heard every word you uttered, Bunter."

"Oh dear! I was only—only jig-jig-joking," stammered the hapless Owl. "Just pulling Wharton's leg, sir. I—I don't think he's going to the Three Fishers, while his pals are playing cricket."

"You are speaking untruthfully, Bunter."

"Oh dear!"

"You expressed your desire to go with Wharton to that disreputable place, Bunter, out of bounds for all Greyfriars boys. If Wharton would have taken you, you would have gone."

"I—I—I—"

Mr. Quelch had a walking-stick under his arm. He slipped it down into his hand, a proceeding that William George Bunter eyed with dismay and apprehension. An upturned boat was near at hand, and Mr. Quelch pointed to it with the walking-stick.

"Bend over that boat, Bunter!"

"I—I—I say, sir—"

"Bend over!"

"Oh crikey!"

Billy Bunter bent over. Three fellows, coming down to the boathouse, stared, and grinned.

Bunter did not grin.

Whack!

"Yaroop!" roared Bunter.

"Now, Bunter—"

"Yow! Ow-ow-ow! Wow!"

"You will go back to the school," said Mr. Quelch. "As you desire to spend your half-holiday in disregarding the rules of the school, Bunter, you will be detained for the afternoon."

"Oh, scissors!"

"You will go into the Form-room, Bunter, and write out Latin conjugations—"

"Oh, dear!"

"Until five o'clock—"

"Wow!"

"If I am not satisfied with what you have done, when I return, Bunter, you will be detained for another half-holiday—"

"Oooogh!"

"So I warn you not to waste your time, Bunter."

"Oh lor!" groaned Bunter.

He rolled off dismally up the path to the school. Mr. Quelch watched him go with a grim and frowning brow.

Bunter's half-holiday had gone west, which was perhaps no more than the fat Owl deserved. When he was gone, Mr. Quelch looked up the river again.

Wharton, in his skiff, was still in sight on the shining Sark.

Mr. Quelch, with a brow grimmer than ever, started walking up the tow-path. If Harry Wharton intended, as Bunter believed, and as his Form-master did not doubt, to drop into the Three Fishers that afternoon, he would not drop in unseen. The keenest pair of eyes at Greyfriars would be upon him, and the result would be the "sack," short and sharp.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

"Man In!"

"**M**AN in!" Tom Brown rapped out the words on Little Side at Greyfriars.

A man was coming away from the wickets, and another man had to go in, but the "man in" was not in evidence. Tom Brown snorted.

"Where's that man Stacey?"

Stacey of the Remove was not to be seen.

The batsmen waiting at the pavilion looked round for him. Generally, Stacey was right on the spot when he was wanted. But the latest and greatest recruit in the Form eleven was not visible now. Bob Cherry roared:

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Stacey! You're wanted!"

But there was no answer.

It was a Form match with the Fourth—not a very important matter in the eyes of the Removites. But it was rather important to Tom Brown, who was captaining the side for the first time since he had been elected captain of the Remove. The New Zealand junior took his duties as cricket captain very seriously. Moreover, after this game he was to pick out the side for the match at St. Jude's—a much more important function.

Temple, Dabney & Co. were in the field. Temple & Co. had taken first knock, and were all down for 32—a result chiefly due to the wonderful bowling of the new recruit in the Remove—Stacey having performed the "hat trick" twice in the innings.

Tom Brown had opened for the Remove with Vernon-Smith and Frank Nugent. Nugent was a new recruit, having taken Harry Wharton's place—very reluctantly, keen as he was to figure in the Form eleven. But as Harry Wharton definitely refused to play in the same side with his relative and double, Stacey, his place had to be filled, and Frank was doing his best to fill it. He was doing it well, too. Vernon-Smith, when they went in, called out to him: "Don't run me out, Nugent, if you can help it!"—which was rather swank in the Bounder's usual style. And then Fry of the Fourth got the Bounder with a ball that looked

like a wide, but wasn't, and Smithy came out for 2, with a long face, leaving Nugent grinning.

Peter Todd, next man in, also fell to a tricky ball from Edward Fry. And so did Mark Linley. And after that—wonderful to relate—Cecil Reginald Temple, captain of the Fourth, made a catch at cover and sent Ogilvy bootless home. Stacey was next on the batting list, and as Robert Donald Ogilvy came off, he was called for—but in vain.

"The silly ass!" growled Browney.

"Ho was here," said Johnny Bull.

"I saw him ten minutes ago."

"He ought to be here now."

"The oughtfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"But the herefulness is not great."

"Stacey!" bawled Bob Cherry.

"Stacey, you ass!"

"I believe he's somewhere reading a letter," said Squiff. "I saw him take a letter out of his pocket."

"This isn't a time for reading letters!" growled Tom Brown. "And how the thump long does it take him to read a letter? You'd better go in, Cherry."

"Right!" said Bob. And he buckled his pads and went in.

Tom Brown frowned. Four wickets were down for a thimble-full of runs, and the Fourth Form men were looking bucked. It was time somebody made a stand. Temple of the Fourth, perhaps, was beginning to dream of winning that game, as he had often dreamed before—though he generally woke up disappointed! In a more important match, Tom Brown would have sent Stacey, his best man, in first wicket—but it was fairly certain that a bat like Stacey would be "not out" against Fourth Form bowling, and the new captain of the Remove wanted to put the other men through their paces.

So Stacey's name had been put farther down the list. But he should have been on the spot when he was wanted. No doubt he had expected wickets to stand longer against the Fourth, but cricket was an uncertain game, and he was too good a cricketer to be unaware of that fact.

And the unusual luck of the Fourth seemed to be keeping up; for after a couple of overs, Bob Cherry was stumped, much to his surprise, and came out with only a poor little half-dozen runs to his credit.

"Stacey!"

No answer.

"Bother the fellow!" exclaimed Tom Brown. "Get in, Bull, and some of you go and look for that idiot Stacey."

Johnny Bull went out to the wickets. Frank Nugent was keeping his end up in quite good style, with better luck than better batsmen. Johnny gave him a congratulatory grin as he went in.

Bob Cherry put down his bat, and fanned himself with his cap.

"The Fourth aren't so rotten as usual to-day!" he remarked.

"And the Remove are a bit rottener than usual!" remarked Hazeldene.

Hazel was not in the eleven; he was there to look on, and compare other fellows' performances with what he could have done himself—perhaps!

"The rottenfulness is not terrific, my esteemed and idiotic Hazel!" said Hurree Jamset Ram Singh gently.

Hazel sneered.

"They're going down pretty fast! And that precious new and wonderful man, Stacey, doesn't seem to think the game worth his while. Not that I think him so jolly wonderful."

"You would, if you knew anything

about cricket!" said Vernon-Smith. "He can play all our heads off."

"Yours, perhaps!" said Hazel. "He ran Wharton out in the Shell match the other day, and Wharton thought he did it on purpose—"

"Oh, rot!"

"Wharton's an ass!" said Squiff.

"Well, I rather think Wharton was right! I shouldn't care to bat with a man who'd run me out if he had his knife into me."

"You won't have the chance!" grunted Tom Brown. "You'll have to put in a lot of practice, Hazel, before you're wanted to play for the Remove. Look here, make yourself useful by finding that man Stacey."

"Rats!" replied Hazel.

which was surprising enough in so keen a cricketer.

Bob, not a suspicious fellow as a rule, could not help wondering whether that letter was from some shady acquaintance outside the school, and whether the sportsman had been having some bad luck.

It was known all over Greyfriars that a Remove fellow—either Wharton or Stacey—had been kicking over the traces, and opinion was a good deal divided on the point.

Mr. Quelch had so firm a faith in Stacey that he had made him head boy of the Remove, and so far as masters and prefects were concerned, the new fellow had a spotless reputation.

But Wharton's own friends, at all

"What's the odds on Nobbled Nick for the Welsh Stakes?" asked Bob Cherry, with cheery sarcasm.

Stacey gave him a black look.

"You fool!"

"Thanks!" said Bob imperturbably. "Same to you, old bean, with knobs on!"

"I've had a letter from my father, you silly fathead!" grunted Stacey. "Not that it's any business of yours."

"Not at all," agreed Bob. "I fancied it might be from Mr. Banks, at the Three Fishers, judging by the cheerful expression on your chivvy. Anyhow, you're wanted to bat, and Browney's getting his hair off."

With that Bob Cherry turned and walked away. Stacey followed him to



"If you're going to the Three Fishers, Wharton," said Bunter, "I'll come with you." "You fat, blithering idiot!" said Wharton. "Sit down!" Heedless of the fact that he was under his Form-master's eyes, he jammed the end of the scull into Bunter's waistcoat. "Yaroo!" roared the fat Remove, staggering backwards.

"I'll go and look for him," said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Can't understand the man clearing off like this. He's usually keen."

Bob walked away from the pavilion to look for Stacey. He was some time finding him.

But he sighted him at last, lying in the grass under one of the shady old elms near the cricket field.

Stacey was lying on his elbow, and in one hand he held an open letter. He was not reading it—but evidently he had been reading it, and its contents had not had a cheering effect on him.

His handsome face, which was so strangely like Harry Wharton's, was clouded. The letter was crumpled in his slim, white fingers. There was a deep moody line in his brow.

Bob looked at him curiously as he came up. Stacey, buried deep in moody thought, did not notice him coming.

It was plain that he had forgotten the cricket match that was going on;

events, believed that the fellow who had been spotted in questionable circumstances was not Harry Wharton—and that it was, therefore, his "double."

"Money—money!" Stacey muttered that word aloud as Bob came up, and he crumpled the letter savagely. "Money—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob. He did not want to hear any of Stacey's self-communings.

Stacey gave a jump.

Instantly the crumpled letter disappeared into his pocket. He stared up angrily at Bob's ruddy, cheery face.

"You silly ass!" he snapped. "What the thump do you want to make a fellow jump nearly out of his skin for?"

Bob laughed.

"Looking for you, old bean," he answered. "You're wanted to bat, and Browney's had to put two men ahead of you on the list."

"Oh!" Stacey rose to his feet. "I forgot—" He coloured. "I—I was reading a letter—"

the pavilion. As he arrived there, a shout came joyously from the Fourth Form men.

"How's that?"

"Out!"

Johnny Bull was out.

"Where's that ass Stacey?" roared Tom Brown.

"Coming!" grinned Bob.

Stacey came up at a run. Tom Brown greeted him with a glare.

"What the thump do you mean, clearing off when you're wanted to bat?" he demanded. "If you can't be here when you're wanted—"

"Well, I'm here!" said Stacey sullenly.

"Get your pads on! How long are you going to keep the game waiting?" snapped Browney.

Stacey made no reply. He was quickly at the wickets, Tom Brown watching him with a morose brow.

But that morose look faded away as

Stacey began to hit the Fourth Form bowling.

Fry of the Fourth had had some luck, and he was hoping for more. But his good fortune petered out all of a sudden when he had to deal with Stacey.

Whatever it was that had been worrying Stacey, and had caused him to forget the game, he dismissed it from his mind once the willow was in his hands. Fit and alert and handsome, he made a fine figure at the wickets—and his hitting drove the ball all over the field—except where a fieldsman was ready for it.

Tom Brown grinned.

"My hat!" he said. "What a rod in pickle for St. Jude's! I'm sorry we shan't have Wharton, but, by gum, this new man is worth two or three of him. Bravo! Well hit, old man, well hit!"

Stacey grinned. Whatever else he was, he was undoubtedly a wonderful cricketer—the best junior cricketer at Greyfriars. Five wickets were down for next to nothing—but now the score went up by leaps and bounds, and the Fourth Form men fagged and grunted and gasped as they hunted leather. And Cecil Reginald Temple, who had been dreaming of a win, had to wake up!

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Leg-Puller!

HARRY WHARTON, looking back as he sculled up the shining Sark, smiled sarcastically.

On the towpath, an angular figure was to be seen—and every now and then a pair of gimlet eyes glanced out over the river at the skiff. Against the thick woods that backed the towpath, Wharton would probably not have

observed the pedestrian, had he not been looking for him. He had wondered whether, after hearing Billy Bunter's fatuous talk on the raft, the Remove master would think of keeping an eye on him. Now he had no doubt that Quelch was thinking of it—and doing it.

There was bitter anger and resentment in Wharton's breast. He was suspected—because his double had been seen in disreputable resorts and taken for him. Stacey's cunning and resource seemed unlimited—in almost every way he had turned his resemblance to his relative to his advantage.

That resemblance did Stacey no harm—for Wharton had no shady secrets to keep. But it had done Wharton a great deal of harm; ever since the beginning of the term he had been in trouble of some sort; and all of it had come from Stacey. It had been an ill day for him when his uncle, Colonel Wharton, had befriended that penniless relative. From their first meeting at Wharton Lodge in the Easter holidays Stacey had been his rival and enemy—and both at home and at school he had made his enmity felt.

Wharton was no longer captain of the Remove—no longer head boy of the Form. He was suspected—and watched! All the fellows knew that the Sixth Form prefects had been warned to keep an eye on him. Now Quelch was stalking him!

Last term, if Quelch had passed him out of gates, he would have given him a nod and a smile. Now—

Quelch was said in the Remove to be a downy bird! Yet Stacey seemed to have no difficulty in pulling the wool over his eyes. Wingate of the Sixth, head prefect of Greyfriars, was a keen fellow enough, yet he had actually seen

Stacey card-playing with Pon & Co., of Highcliffe, and believed that it was Wharton he had seen! The Head himself had given Wharton some very grave glances of late.

He slowed down in the skiff.

A bitter, mocking smile came over his face, he had intended to pull a long distance up the river, and perhaps land at Highcliffe and look in on his friends, Courtenay and the Caterpillar, there. Now he changed his intention.

Quelch was stalking him! Quelch wanted to make a discovery! Well, Quelch should make one!

A mile up the river the red roofs of the Three Fishers showed over the trees.

The inn fence ran along the towpath for some distance, half-buried in thick hawthorns. There was a gate on the towpath—and undoubtedly Mr. Quelch suspected that Wharton was bound for that gate.

Had the junior pulled on, Quelch might have given up that suspicion; or, more likely, he would have fancied that Wharton had spotted him and taken the alarm. But the junior did not pull on.

He sculled into the bank at a spot opposite the gate of the inn. He was a good distance ahead of the Remove master, but he knew that the gimlet eyes would not miss his movements.

He stepped ashore and tied the skiff to a willow-tree on the bank. Then he lounged carelessly across the towpath to the inn gate.

From a distance down the path Quelch glimpsed him as he crossed.

If the Remove master had had any doubts before, he could hardly have any now! Wharton was quite well aware of that.

He reached the gate. Beyond it was strictly out of bounds for all Greyfriars fellows. Wharton did not go beyond it.

A thick mass of hawthorns close beside the gate screened him from view. Careless of thorns, he squeezed himself into the hawthorns.

In the midst of the bush he was completely out of sight; anyone might have stood within three feet of him without knowing that he was there.

With a smile on his face he stood there, silent, and waited. Swift footsteps came up the towpath.

They halted at the gate.

Through the thick hawthorns Wharton could not see Mr. Quelch; neither could the Remove master see him. But he knew that the Form-master was there, looking over the gate into the grounds of the inn; he could hear him breathing hard after his hurry.

Silent as a stone statue, suppressing his breathing, he waited, wondering what Quelch would do. He grinned as he caught a muttering voice:

"The young rascal! The disreputable young rascal! There is no doubt now—not a shadow of a doubt! Upon my word!"

To Mr. Quelch's mind, there seemed no shadow of a doubt. Wharton's skiff was in full view, tied to the willow. There was no one to be seen on the towpath in either direction. Evidently—to Mr. Quelch—the young rascal had gone in at that gate.

That the young rascal had taken cover in the hawthorns within a few feet of him, deliberately to give him that impression, was not likely to occur to Henry Samuel Quelch.

He stood staring over the gate.

He was undecided what to do. Wharton was in those forbidden precincts—he was certain of that. Quelch had no doubt—none whatever—that he had gone round the building, and was in those very moments in the billiards-room at the back—probably with those lawless young rascals of Highcliffe, with whom



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he was supposed to have made friends—Pon & Co. Quelch had as good as seen him go in—but he had not actually seen him go in—he had come up a minute or two after Wharton had vanished. In the matter of an expulsion, proof had to be absolute. Mr. Quelch was not long in making up his mind. Much as he disliked entering such a disreputable den, he had his duty to do—and he did it!

Wharton heard the gate creak as it was opened. He heard the sound of receding footsteps on the garden path.

Quelch had gone in!

Wharton chuckled softly.

He stirred at last and peered out of the hawthorn-bush. Quelch was out of sight. He had gone round the building.

Wharton stepped out of cover, ran across the towpath to his skiff, jumped in, and cast loose the painter.

He took his sculls and fairly shot down the river with the current, towards the Greyfriars boathouse.

It was a matter of a very few minutes before the skiff was bumping on the Greyfriars raft.

A number of Sixth Form men were putting a boat into the water. That glorious June afternoon was tempting a good many fellows to the river. There were twenty or more fellows on the raft and at the boathouse. Among the seniors was Wingate, the captain of the school.

Wharton, as he jumped ashore, called to him.

"I say, Wingate!"

The Greyfriars captain looked round at him, frowning. Wharton was not in his good graces, and it was "side" for a junior to hail a Sixth Form man in that familiar way.

"What's the time, Wingate?" asked Harry coolly.

"Go and look at the clock!" answered Wingate briefly.

"But I want you to tell me," said Harry. "It's rather important! I'm proving an alibi!"

"A what?" ejaculated Wingate, staring at him blankly, as did the other seniors—Gwynne and Bancroft and Sykes.

"An alibi!" answered Wharton, with perfect coolness. "You see, my Form-master, Quelch, has got an idea that I'm out of bounds at this very minute, and I want to be able to convince him that I'm not when he asks me."

"What the dickens do you mean?" demanded Wingate gruffly.

"Exactly what I say!" answered Harry. "Will you look at the time, so that you can tell Mr. Quelch if he asks you?"

Wingate gave him a rather grim look. But he glanced at his wrist-watch.

"Just four!" he snapped.

"Thanks!"

Wharton walked up to the school. Over the trees came floating the chime of four from the clock-tower of Greyfriars. Quelch, in those very moments, was rooting at the Three Fishers for the junior he was certain had entered that unsavoury establishment, and Wharton was in happy possession of a witness—no less a person than the captain of the school—that he had been a mile from the Three Fishers at four o'clock.

He smiled as he strolled on to the cricket ground to give the Form match a look-in.

"How's it going?" he asked.

"Great guns!" answered Bob, with a grin. "The Fourth are having the time of their lives. They look a bit tired—what?"

"The tirefulness of the esteemed Fourth is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Stacey's giving them enough to do," remarked Nugent. Frank was out for 20—not a bad score for him.

Wharton looked at the batsmen. Squiff was partnering Stacey at the wickets, and they were going strong. The Australian junior was a mighty hitter, and he was backing up Stacey in great style.

Runs were jumping up. Stacey's graceful and athletic figure, as it crossed the pitch with the speed of a deer, might easily have been taken for Wharton's. At the distance, any casual observer might have supposed that it was Wharton at the wickets. But Wharton himself admitted that Stacey was a better man at the game, good as he himself certainly was.

When he was watching Stacey at cricket he could forget that the fellow was his enemy—and an unscrupulous and insidious enemy.

"He's made 60," said Bob; "and he could make 600, for all the Fourth could do to stop him."

Wharton nodded.

Temple, Dabney & Co. were red and breathless, and feeling as if their legs were going to drop off. They were not particularly good at fielding; but good fieldsmen would have had their hands full with Stacey. He was hitting all round the wicket and never giving them a chance.

"Good man at cricket, there's no doubt about that!" said Harry.

Tom Brown gave him a grip.

"Good man for St. Jude's next week—what?" he said. "And there's a place for you in the team, Wharton, if you want it."

"Thanks, no!"

"You're an ass!" said the New Zealand junior warmly. "You jolly well know you're wanted to play for the Remove! What's the good of cutting cricket, just because you bar Stacey?"

"What's the good of batting if that chap's watching all the time for a chance to run me out?" answered Harry.

"Oh rot!" Browney turned away impatiently.

Wharton remained watching the match with his friends; it was worth watching so long as Stacey was at the wickets.

There were several wickets yet to fall when Tom Brown declared at 100, to give the Fourth a chance to bat again.

Which was a relief to Temple & Co., though they no longer hoped that a second knock would do them any good.

When the Remove went into the field Harry Wharton remained at the pavilion, still looking on. Whether Quelch had got back from the Three Fishers yet he did not know, but it was his game to keep in the public eye till he was wanted.

It was not—as he admitted to himself—a respectful game that he was playing; not the sort of trick that a fellow ought to have played on his Form-master. But his mood was rebellious and sardonic.

Quelch chose to suspect him—to watch him and stalk him! Well, Quelch could get on with it, and report him to the Head if he liked! He would make a fool of himself, and it might be a warning to him to turn his suspicions in some other direction! As for his bitter anger when he found that he had been

made a fool of, Wharton cared nothing for that.

The Fourth Form second knock did not last long. Stacey put in the hat-trick again; and then Tom Brown, in sheer mercy to the Fourth, called him off, and gave the bowling to other hands.

But it booted not, so far as the Fourth were concerned, for Stacey proceeded to make wonderful catches in the field.

Wharton watched him with keen interest. As a batsman he was far and away the best in the Remove. As a bowler, he was equal to Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, if not better. And in the field, he was the perfect fieldsmen. He made catches that looked miraculous; he was after the ball like lightning, and returned it like a bullet, straight as a die. In every branch of the game he was the complete cricketer.

It was no wonder that when the luckless Fourth were all down for 25 the Removites gave Stacey a sort of ovation.

Tom Brown clapped him on the back as he came off with the field. Squiff gave him a friendly dig in the ribs. The fellows cheered him loudly, and his name rang and echoed across the field.

Wharton's eyes were on him, and he noted that the hero of the hour did not seem to be enjoying that ovation.

The moment the game was over, almost, dark thoughts seemed to have returned to Stacey's mind, and, though he smiled mechanically, there was a cloud on his brow.

Wharton noticed, too, that he got away from the other fellows as soon as he could. He wondered sarcastically whether Stacey had some trouble on his mind—whether one of his gee-gees had come in eleventh at Wapshot.

Wharton went to the House with the Co. The match was over in time for tea.

Billy Bunter met them as they came in, with a glum and lugubrious fat brow.

"I say, you fellows, I've been waiting for you!" said the fat Owl.

"Sorry you've been troubled, as they say on the phone!" grinned Bob Cherry. "Don't wait any longer—cut!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—Oh! Is that Wharton?" Bunter blinked, at Harry through his big spectacles. "You've got back, then?"

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Long ago, fathead!" he answered.

"I say, that beast Quelch gave me a detention, because he heard what I said to you on the raft!" groaned Bunter. "I had to stick in the Form-room till five!"

"Serve you jolly well right!"

"Beast! I say, Quelch looked fearfully shirty when he came in," said Bunter. "Nearly bit my head off when he told me I could go."

"So Quelch is in?"

"Eh! Yes! I wonder if he knows you've been at the Three Fishers, Wharton—"

"You blithering idiot!"

"Oh, really, Wharton! He's fearfully stuffy about something, anyhow!" said Bunter. "I shouldn't wonder if he kept an eye on you this afternoon! If he did, you've very likely been spotted. He, he, he!"

"What is that fat idiot blithering about?" asked Bob.

Wharton chuckled.

"Quelch heard him ask me to take him along with me to the Three Fishers," he answered. "The fat duffer thought I was going there, and he gave dear old Quelch the same impression."

"Is that why you gave up your pull

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THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Wharton is Wanted!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!"

Bob Cherry greeted Wharton with a cheery roar as he came up to the pavilion.

Wharton gave him a nod.

on the river, and came back to the cricket?" asked Nugent.

"Just that! I thought I'd like a few witnesses that I haven't been playing billiards with Pon!" said Harry, laughing.

"Quelch had no right to fancy anything of the kind," said Frank indignantly.

Wharton's lip curled.

"Oh, he fancies all sorts of things since he saw Stacey at that den weeks ago, and took him for me. Hallo, here he is!"

The angular figure of the Remove master bore down on the juniors. His eyes, glinting, fixed on Harry Wharton.

"Wharton!"

"Here, sir!"

"Follow me to the Head's study."

"Certainly, sir!"

And the suspected junior, with a gleam of mockery in his eyes, followed his Form-master.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Plain English!

DR. LOCKE coughed. One glance at the grim, set face of the Remove-master, warned him that something very serious was coming. One glance at Wharton revealed to the keen old Head that the junior was in no state of apprehension, but rather in a mood of suppressed sarcastic amusement.

He coughed.

"Sir—" began Mr. Quelch.

"One moment!" said the Head. "Wharton, leave my study, but remain in the corridor till you are called in."

"Very well, sir!" said Harry.

He stepped out of the study again and closed the door after him. He grinned at the closed door. He knew that the Head, who was not blinded by angry suspicion like the Form-master, had more penetration just then than Mr. Quelch.

Mr. Quelch rather surprised and displeased, looked at his chief, as the door closed on Wharton.

"Dr. Locke—" he restarted.

"One moment, my dear Quelch," said the Head urbanely. "I gather that Wharton, of your Form, is in some trouble again—"

"The most grave and serious—"

"Quite so! Perhaps it will be better for me to hear you not in the boy's presence," said Dr. Locke. "It is possible that another mistake may have been made—" He coughed again.

"Dr. Locke!"

"You have not forgotten, my dear Quelch, that only a few days ago you brought Wharton before me on a charge of frequenting that low resort, the Three Fishers? His raincoat was found there, which seemed to you and indeed to me indubitable evidence. Yet it was proved, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that Wharton had not been near the place that day, and that his raincoat must have been borrowed by some other boy, so far undiscovered."

"I have not forgotten, sir. But—"

"Mistakes of that kind, my dear Quelch, must be avoided if possible," said the Head gently. "Circumstantial evidence is so very unreliable—"

"In this case, sir, the evidence is that of my own eyes!" said Mr. Quelch stiffly.

"Please proceed!"

"This afternoon, sir, I heard a Remove boy, Bunter, speaking to Wharton by the river—discussing his intention of going up to the Three Fishers, as if Wharton's habit of going there was common knowledge in the Remove. I decided to keep my eye on the boy."

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"Quite so! If you actually saw him—"

"I did, sir! I walked up the towpath while Wharton rowed up the river in his skiff. From a distance I saw him pull into the bank at the inn."

"And then—"

"I saw him land, tie up his skiff, and cross the towpath to the inn gate. The bushes hid him from my sight at that point. I hurried on, and found that he had gone in."

"You did not actually see him enter?"

"No, sir; but he was gone when I reached the inn gate; the river-bank was utterly deserted, and his skiff was left tied up to the bank," said Mr. Quelch. "There was only one direction in which he could have disappeared, and that was into the grounds of the Three Fishers."

"That would appear clear," said Dr. Locke slowly. "What was your next proceeding, my dear Quelch?"

"Much against my will, sir; but feeling it my duty, I entered the place, to find him, sir, in the very act of delinquency. But—"

"Did you find him there? If so—"

"No, sir. Probably some habitue of the place gave him warning, as happened on the previous occasion, when the raincoat was left. I looked in the billiards-room, but he was not there—and I was treated with rudeness, and—contumely, by some of the frequenters of the place—a disreputable crowd." Mr. Quelch's face coloured with vexation at the recollection.

It was clear that Quelch had not enjoyed his visit to that disreputable den, the Three Fishers.

"However, sir, I made some inquiries—being answered with scoffing rudeness," continued the Remove-master. "After that I walked through the grounds, but Wharton was not to be found. When I returned to the towpath, at length, I found that the skiff was gone—obviously, he had eluded me and escaped in it." Mr. Quelch breathed hard. "I have been through a very unpleasant and very humiliating experience, sir. There is no doubt—none whatever—that the boy was in the place."

Dr. Locke pursed his lips.

"In that case it is somewhat unfortunate that you did not actually find him there," he said. "However, there certainly appears to be no doubt from what you have said. Yet the boy seems to feel no apprehension—and he must know—"

"He is hardened, sir!" said Mr. Quelch bitterly. "I had at one time a very high opinion of him; but since the Easter holidays there has been a very great change in him. I believe him now to be the worst boy in my Form."

"You are assured?"

"Quite!"

"Then please call him in, Mr. Quelch."

There was a lingering doubt in the Head's mind. The peculiar glimmer he had caught in Wharton's eyes made him dubious. Still, on the Remove-master's positive statement there was nothing for him to do but to go ahead.

Mr. Quelch opened the door and snapped:

"You may enter, Wharton."

"Very well, sir."

Wharton entered, and Quelch closed the door again with almost a vicious snap. The culprit stood facing his head-master.

"Wharton!" said the Head, in a deep voice. "Kindly answer the questions I am going to put to you. You went up the Sark in your skiff this afternoon?"

"Yes, sir!" answered Harry.

"You landed at the bank by the gate of the Three Fishers?"

"Yes, sir."

"You entered by the gate?"

"No, sir!"

Mr. Quelch's jaw shut like a vice.

"Take care, Wharton!" said the Head quietly. "Mr. Quelch was on the towpath, and his eyes were on you."

"I knew that, sir!" answered Harry coolly.

The Head started.

"You knew that your Form-master was observing your movements?" he exclaimed.

"Certainly, sir! He heard a silly fellow talking nonsense to me at the raft, and I thought that very likely he would keep an eye on me. So I kept my own eyes open, sir, as I pulled up the river, and I saw Mr. Quelch following me up the towpath."

The Head looked rather blank.

"Do you believe that statement, Mr. Quelch?" he asked, with a glance at the Remove master, who was pale with anger.

"No, sir!" said Mr. Quelch, between his set lips. "I do not believe a single word of that statement. I am convinced that even this reckless and unruly boy would not have ventured to enter such a place had he known that my eyes were upon him."

"But I did not enter the place, sir!" said Wharton coolly.

"That is a false statement, Wharton."

"I hope the Head will believe me, sir, if you do not!" answered Harry. "I can prove what I say."

"Mr. Quelch saw you cross the towpath to the gate of the Three Fishers, Wharton!" said Dr. Locke.

"I knew that, sir. I knew he was watching me! That was why I did it," said Wharton, with icy coolness. "I knew that he suspected me, and I thought that he had no right to suspect me—"

"Wharton!"

"Any fellow who knows me will tell him that I'm not that kind of rotter," said Harry. "I've never been in that rotten show, and never wanted to."

"Then where were you, Wharton, when Mr. Quelch reached the gate and found you gone?"

"I was hiding in the hawthorns, only a few feet from Mr. Quelch, on the towpath," answered Harry. "I waited there till he went in."

"Bless my soul!"

The Head stared at the cool junior. Mr. Quelch gave him a glare that the fabled Gorgon might have envied.

"You deny that you entered the gate at all, Wharton?"

"Certainly, sir!"

"And why did you hide, as you state?"

"To make a fool of Mr. Quelch, sir!"

"Wha-a-at?" stuttered the Head. "What—what—what did you say, Wharton?"

And Wharton, with perfect coolness, repeated his words:

"To make a fool of Mr. Quelch, sir!"

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Unpleasant for Quelch!

THERE was a dead silence in the Head's study.

For a long minute a pin might have been heard to drop.

The Head, dumbfounded, adjusted his glasses and peered across his writing-desk at the calm, cool face of the junior. Mr. Quelch was bereft of speech, almost of breath. Wharton's heart was beating a little fast, but he was perfectly cool.



"Bend over that boat, Bunter!" cried Mr. Quelch angrily. "I—I—I say, sir—" "Bend over!" "Oh crikey!" Billy Bunter bent over. Three fellows coming down to the boathouse, stared and grinned. Bunter did not grin, he roared. "Yow-ow-ow-ow-wow!"

Dr. Locke broke the long silence.

"Wharton, how dare you!"

"I think I had a right to act as I did, sir!" said Harry steadily. "I have been suspected of things I have never done. I have been followed and watched as if I were some shady rascal. Only a few days ago I was brought before you, sir, on the very same charge because a fellow had borrowed my raincoat and left it behind him at that den. I wanted Mr. Quelch to bring me before you again, sir, to make him tired of suspecting me without cause."

"Boy!" gasped Mr. Quelch.

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Locke. "This is—is—is extraordinary! Do you mean to say, Wharton, that you deliberately concealed yourself outside the gate in order to give your Form-master the impression that you had entered?"

"He was welcome to have any impression he liked, sir! I thought he had no right to suspect me at all," said Harry. "I did it to make a fool of him, and I think I had a right to do it!"

"If your statement is true, Wharton, your action was most disrespectful!" said the Head sternly. "Mr. Quelch, do you believe that statement?"

"No, sir!" answered Mr. Quelch in a grinding voice. "I do not! I believe that this boy is adding insolence to bad conduct, that is all, sir!"

"I can prove what I say, sir!"

"You will be required to prove it, Wharton!" said the Head grimly. "Unless you can do so, you will be expelled from Greyfriars! Your defence, apparently, is that, instead of having gone out of bounds, you played a reckless and disrespectful trick on your Form-master! I shall certainly not believe this unless you can prove it!"

"I can prove where I was, sir, within

five minutes of Mr. Quelch entering the gate of the Three Fishers. As soon as he had gone in, I got back into my skiff and rowed home. Perhaps Mr. Quelch remembers the time that he was there?"

"That may be material, Mr. Quelch," said the Head. "If you noted the time—"

"I am quite aware of the time, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "I heard four o'clock chime from Courtfield Church while I was in the grounds of the Three Fishers. That was a few minutes after I had entered at the gate."

"Can you prove that you were elsewhere at four o'clock, Wharton?"

"Easily, sir! I landed on the school raft at four, after pulling back down the river as fast as I could."

"Was anyone on the raft?"

"Several fellows, sir."

"Did they see you?"

Wharton paused a moment, and a glitter shot into Mr. Quelch's eyes. So far he did not believe a word of all this.

Wharton's pause gave him the impression that the junior, who was lying, found himself in a difficulty.

He did not guess that the pause was intended to give him that idea, and that the young rascal was deliberately "drawing" him.

"I—I suppose they did, sir!" said Harry slowly.

Mr. Quelch broke in:

"You suppose? If you were there, they must have seen you! Give Dr. Locke their names, so that they can be questioned."

"Their names!" repeated Wharton in the same slow way.

"Unless you can give the names of the boys who saw you land at the boathouse at four o'clock, Wharton—"

"He cannot!" said Mr. Quelch bitterly. "This is an end of his subterfuge, sir! He cannot give a single name!"

"I think I can, sir," said Harry. "One was Wingate—"

"Wingate?" repeated the Head.

"Yes, sir. And another was Gwynne—"

"Sixth Form boys!" exclaimed Dr. Locke.

"Yes, sir! I've no doubt they will tell you if you ask them," said Harry. "They can tell you that it was four o'clock, because I asked Wingate the time, and he told me."

Dead silence.

Mr. Quelch, driven to belief in spite of himself, glared at the delinquent as if he could have bitten him.

Dr. Locke breathed rather hard.

"I shall question Wingate, Wharton," he said at last.

"Very well, sir."

"If he bears out your statement—"

"He will, sir."

"You—you may go for the present," said the Head hastily. "I may require to see you again, after I have spoken to Wingate. For the present, leave my study!"

"Thank you, sir!"

Wharton left the study.

He left a dead silence behind him.

The Head's face was grave and worried. Mr. Quelch's was crimson. For the second time he was placed in the position of having demanded expulsion for a boy who was obviously guiltless. It was an extremely unpleasant position for any Form-master to be placed in.

Both the masters knew that it was unnecessary to question Wingate. The young rascal had planned all this, and

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Wingate's evidence was part of his game.

But if Wingate of the Sixth had seen him land on the school raft at four o'clock, it was plain that he had not been in the Three Fishers.

So far from having been in that establishment, and having dodged and eluded Mr. Quelch there, he must have started home directly after Mr. Quelch had entered the gate; and even then he must have made quick work of it to pull back to the Greyfriars houseboat by four.

It was, in fact, perfectly clear that Wharton had done exactly as he had stated—that he had not been out of bounds at all, but that from first to last he had known that he was watched, and had set out to make a fool of the master who was watching him.

And he had succeeded!

There was no doubt about that. If there was a man in the United Kingdom at that moment who felt an absolute fool, his name was Henry Samuel Quelch!

He hardly dared to meet his chief's eyes.

With a complexion like unto a freshly boiled beetroot, Mr. Quelch kept his eyes on the floor.

Dr. Locke coughed. It was some time before he spoke. When he did, his kind voice had a rather unusually acid tone.

"My dear Quelch," he said quietly, "it is clear that what the boy has stated is true. And, disrespectful as his conduct has been, allowances must be made for a lad feeling himself wrongfully and unjustly suspected. Are you sure, Quelch—are you quite sure—that Wharton is deserving of these doubts you feel regarding him?"

Mr. Quelch almost choked.

He was sure—quite sure—more sure than ever, in fact, since he had been made to feel and look such an unmitigated fool! His feelings towards that disrespectful junior were intensely bitter.

"I have no doubt, sir," he gasped—"no doubt at all that it was the young rascal's intention to break bounds! But it seems that he did, indeed, discover that my eye was upon him, and he decided to play this insolent and disrespectful trick instead!"

"If that is the case, the boy has certainly changed very much for the worse," said the Head, "and undoubtedly you must continue to keep him under observation. As for the present matter, I advise letting it drop entirely. Such a recurrence of mistakes is calculated to bring authority into contempt. The sooner this episode is forgotten, Mr. Quelch, the better."

Mr. Quelch realised that himself only too clearly.

He left the Head's study, his face so white with suppressed anger and chagrin that it drew several glances on him as he hurried away to his own quarters.

In his own study he shut the door—hard! He threw himself into a chair, but rose again immediately. He was too deeply disturbed to keep still.

Seldom, or never, had he been so bitterly, almost savagely, angry. It was no light matter to be made to look a fool in his chief's eyes. And the knowledge that the boy had been leading him on, pulling his leg, deliberately planning to make a fool of him, was intensely bitter.

He had been, as Shakespeare expresses it, tenderly led by the nose, as asses are! It was not a gratifying experience. It was mortifying and exasperating.

Standing at his window, he looked out into the golden June sunshine, his own face a startling contrast to the same. His brow was black; his lips hard set.

More than ever he was convinced that he had to deal with a young rascal—a deep young rascal! His humiliation in the Head's presence banished any lingering doubt of that—which was not logical, but rather natural. Next time he would make assurance doubly sure before he placed the matter before Dr. Locke. There should be no doubt next time!

The boy who had stated in the plainest of plain English to the Head that he had set out to make a fool of his Form-master—that boy should have no mercy next time! It was practically impossible to punish him for those insolent words; for Wharton, unjustly accused, was the injured party. That insult had to pass—but next time—

Next time!

It was just as well for Harry Wharton that he was not the young rascal that his incensed Form-master believed him to be. For next time—if there had been a next time—he would have received no mercy from Henry Samuel Quelch!

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Stacey's Father!

RALPH STACEY started and hurriedly thrust a letter into his pocket, as Russell and Ogilvy came into Study No. 3.

Seated in the study, the new fellow in the Remove had a tired, harassed expression on his face which he was not able immediately to banish as his study-mates entered. They gave him cheery looks.

"Fagged, old chap?" asked Russell.

"You played a topping innings!" said Ogilvy.

"Oh! Yes—no!" Stacey rose to his feet. "I think I'll take a turn in the quad—I'm a bit headachy!"

"What about tea?" asked Ogilvy.

"Tea! Oh, all right!"

Stacey was very silent at tea in Study No. 3. In that study he was on the best of terms with Russell and Ogilvy, two of the best fellows in the Remove. They were proud of chumming with the great cricketer.

"Penny for 'em, old chap!" said Ogilvy, with a grin, after Stacey had been silent for more than ten minutes.

The new junior started and coloured.

"I—I was thinking—" he stammered.

"About the St. Jude's match?" asked Russell.

Stacey gave him a rather curious look. The matter on his mind was of deeper import than a cricket match. He could have laughed.

"You're all right for St. Jude's," said Ogilvy, as he cracked his second egg. "Browney's cock-a-hoop at having you in the team! He's not a silly ass like Wharton—even if he loathed you, he'd jump at playing you for the Remove. You're the goods, old man."

Stacey nodded. He knew that.

"Look here, you're bothering about that jaw that Wharton started the other day, are you?" asked Ogilvy. "I own up that it was a bit of a staggerer, when he came in with a letter that a beery blighter had handed him in mistake for you, and you admitted that it was for you. But we told you we were sorry when you explained the matter afterwards."

"Couldn't say more than that!" said Dick Russell. "And, dash it all, Stacey,

it did look awfully fishy. Of course, it's no bizney of ours if you get letters from a man at the Three Fishers, or anywhere else; but—and it's a bit thick on Wharton, having them handed to him because he's so like you to look at—but since you explained—"

"You can take it from us," said Ogilvy, "that most of the Remove back you in that matter, Stacey! It made a rather rotten impression at the time and dished you over the captain's election. If you'd explained on the spot—"

Stacey shrugged his shoulders.

"I didn't choose to," he answered. "I explained afterwards to you fellows, because you're friends of mine—I don't see why I should tell all the Form."

"Well, that's so," agreed Ogilvy. "Still, it looked pretty bad at the time—made you look like a pub-haunting bouncer like old Smithy—you can't be surprised that you were turned down at the captain's election, in consequence, and old Browney got in. He's a good skipper, if you come to that."

"As good as we want," said Stacey. "I'm not worrying about that. So long as we win matches—that's the chief thing."

Those words did not express Stacey's thoughts; but they were good enough for his unsuspecting study-mates.

"Right as rain," said Ogilvy. "And you haven't got it up against us that we were taken in about that letter?"

"Not in the least!"

Stacey made an effort to banish heavy thoughts, and began to talk in a cheerful strain.

But it was an effort, and he got away from the study as soon as he could.

He went out into the quadrangle and walked into a quiet corner under the old elms.

There he had what he wanted—solitude! He sat on one of the old oaken benches, and drew the crumpled letter from his pocket.

For the tenth or twelfth time he read that letter. It was, as he had told Bob Cherry, from his father.

It was the first time that Captain Stacey had written to his son since he had been at Greyfriars School. The gallant captain led a very busy life—making both ends meet, somehow, by means of his sharp wits.

The fact that he had fought in Flanders, and that Colonel Wharton had known him there in those grim and terrible days, caused Harry's uncle to stand by him now that he was down in the world.

Towards his benefactor, the old colonel, Stacey's feelings were of utter indifference, tinged with mockery. Towards Harry they were of bitter envy and dislike, for no real reason except that the colonel's nephew was more fortunately placed in the world. But for his father, the disreputable captain, he had a strong affection—almost the only soft spot in his hard nature.

Indeed, as a matter of taste, Stacey preferred the wandering, shady life he had led with the captain, to the more respectable and orderly existence at Greyfriars. His experiences had made him older than his years, and given him a restless spirit.

Great chance as it was for him to be taken up by Colonel Wharton, and sent to school with the colonel's nephew, he sometimes regretted that that chance had come his way at all.

But he was going through with it; and, a thorough adventurer like his father, he thought and planned to make the most of it—by any method, fair or unfair, that came his way.

It would be worth while, he reflected sardonically, if he could cut his relative and rival out—at school, and at home! If he played his cards well, there was the possibility of ousting Wharton at home, as he was trying to do at school—of being named heir of Wharton Lodge in his place!

That was a prize worth struggling for, and a penniless adventurer could not afford to have scruples.

Yet there was a better strain in him which had led him to declare open war on his rival, and tell him, in so many words, what he intended to do, if he could! False as he was, there was something within him that balked at falsity. Wharton, at least, knew what to expect from him—there was no deception about that.

And by a peculiar process of reasoning, Stacey found some justification for what he was doing. Had Harry been the old colonel's son, it would have been different. But a nephew was only a relative—a nearer relative than Stacey, certainly—still, only a relative. It was fair play to cut him out, if he could. Of the fact that Harry had been adopted in infancy, and brought up as his uncle's heir, he did not choose to think.

Now, as he sat with the letter in his hand, under the shady old elms, his thoughts and feelings were far more bitter than ever.

Wharton, if he had wanted money, could have obtained it from his uncle. Stacey had the same allowance as Harry; but if he had asked for extra sums it would have been a different matter. Now he wanted money—more than Harry Wharton had ever wanted it.

Or, to be more exact, his father wanted money; and Stacey wanted it to give him. It was doubtless to his credit that he retained his affection for a scapegrace and worthless parent; but that letter, if Colonel Wharton had seen it, would have made the old soldier doubt very seriously whether he had been wise in befriending those relatives:

"Dear Raiph,—It was good news to hear that you were going to Greyfriars, my old school. I suppose you're having the time of your life now. Your cricket ought to make you popular, unless the old school has changed a lot since my time. I've no doubt the colonel is treating you handsomely in the way of pocket-money. From what you've told me in your letters, he has taken rather a fancy to you. Is it worth anything in the way of hard cash?"

"I've had the most fearful luck lately. Unless I get fifty pounds pretty soon I shall be in Queer Street seriously. I suppose there isn't a dog's chance; but you know best, as the fellow on the spot, and if there's anybody you could possibly touch for that sum you will know where to send it.

"Your affectionate father,
"A. S."

It was certain that no other Greyfriars fellow had ever received a letter like that from his father!

But the irresponsible and careless selfishness of the captain did not appear to Stacey, as it would have appeared to others.

A more scrupulous fellow would have been shocked at the idea of screwing money out of his benefactor to pay some disgraceful debt of a gambling waster. Stacey was not shocked, but he knew that it was utterly hopeless to think of "touching" Colonel Wharton for any such sum.

It was true that he had deluded the old colonel, as he had a gift for deluding people; and Harry's uncle liked him, trusted him, and was irritated with Wharton for not making friends with him. But asking him for any such sum as fifty pounds was simply asking for trouble. Captain Stacey must have been in very deep waters indeed to think of such an idea.

Certainly, the old colonel, kind and generous as he was, would not have been "touched" for fifty pounds by a schoolboy, and such a request would have led to nothing but searching inquiry.

Stacey did not even think of it.

But what could he do?

His father was in another of his many scrapes. He wanted to help him. Had he possessed such a sum he would have dispatched it by return of post, without a second thought.

But he did not, of course, possess any such sum, or anything like it. He had a pound or two, that was all.

Evidently, there was nothing doing. Yet, to write back to his father and tell him so was bitterly repugnant to Stacey.

For a couple of days that letter had been on his mind and on his heart. It had spoiled the cricket for him, though it had not prevented him from playing his usual great game. Could Wharton, the nephew—the "favourite," as he bitterly thought of him—have obtained such a sum by asking for it? It was very doubtful. At all events, there was no chance for Stacey. In Wharton's place, he might, perhaps, have borrowed the money somehow. Wharton was in his way—everywhere, and all the time! He had everything, Stacey nothing, and envy and malice grew and rankled in his heart at the thought.

He gave a start as he heard the voice of the fellow of whom he was thinking. He stared round, with a black look.

The Famous Five were strolling under the elms, after tea. They did not notice the junior sitting on the bench as they came in a cheery bunch along the Elm Walk. They were talking cricket, and, evidently, Wharton's chums had been arguing with him on the subject of his determination to cut the game for the season.

"Rot!" Wharton was saying, as the chums of the Remove came within Stacey's hearing. "I am not wanted at St. Jude's, if you come to that, with Stacey there! But, wanted or not, I wouldn't play in the same team with that treacherous rotter."

Stacey sprang to his feet.

In his present mood, those words seemed like the last straw to him. He ran into the path of the Famous Five, his eyes blazing.

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

The juniors realised at once that Stacey had heard.

Smack!

Stacey's open hand came across Wharton's face with a sounding slap. Harry staggered back, taken by surprise.

Stacey's eyes blazed at him.

"Now put your hands up, you rotter!" he shouted.

He had barely uttered the words when Wharton was springing at him,

with clenched fists and gleaming eyes.

"Oh, my hat!" said Bob, in dismay. And the chums of the Remove stared on at the rivals of the Form, fighting furiously.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

"Six" for Wharton!

"I SAY, you fellows!" yelled Billy Bunter.

"It's a fight!"

"Who?"

"Wharton and Stacey——"

"Come on!"

"That ass, Wharton, rowing again!"

"This way!"

"I say, you fellows, they're going it hammer and tongs!" squeaked Billy Bunter. "I say——"

"Come on, you men!"

There was a scampering of feet on all sides. Removites, Fourth-Formers, and Shell fellows crowded under the elms. Coker, and Potter and Greene, of the Fifth, came along. So far, no Sixth Form prefect had arrived on the scene.

Mr. Quelch, in his study, looked from the window.

Quelch was still in a disturbed mood, troubled and angry, and unable to settle down to correcting a pile of papers for his Form, which waited on his table unregarded.

He was pacing restlessly about the study when there came sounds of excitement from the quadrangle, causing him to look out of the window—not with an amiable expression.

He did not catch what was said. The most unthinking junior was too careful to shout out the news of a fight near a Form-master's window. But he could not fail to see that something unusual was "on."

From all directions juniors were heading for the Elm Walk, across the quad—some of them running.

Mr. Quelch frowned portentously. Something was going on under the elms, out of his sight—something, it was clear, of an exciting nature. That it was a "scrap" was extremely probable.

If Remove boys were concerned, it was Quelch's business. If not, it was, of course, not! But the Remove master decided to look into it. He was aware that Wharton, the boy who was in disgrace, had more than once come to blows with Stacey, his relative, now head boy of the Form. Was the young ruffian giving rein to his brutal temper again?

Mr. Quelch's eyes glittered at that thought. Quelch was a just man, and at bottom a kind-hearted man, but he would have been rather more than human if he had not bitterly resented his humiliating defeat in the presence of the headmaster. For that Wharton was to escape unscathed. But if he was giving his Form-master new and just cause to punish him—— In that case,

(Continued on next page.)

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punishment would not err on the side of leniency!

The Remove master whisked out of his study and hurried from the House. With a very unusual speed, his gown whisking in the breeze, he crossed the quad.

"Cave!" shouted some fellows who spotted him coming.

"Look out!"

"Ware beaks!"

Fifty fellows, at least, were gathered under the elms, in a thick ring, round two juniors, who were fighting.

They parted to give Mr. Quelch room to pass, and, with a set face, he strode into the ring. He had recognised the doubles of the Remove.

Wharton and Stacey were fighting—though it was rather difficult to tell which was which. Two noses were streaming red, and both were tousled, untidy, crimson, and breathless. Neither had heeded the warning cry of "Cave!" shouted by a dozen fellows as the Remove master rustled on the scene. They were too fiercely excited for that.

"Pair of young hooligans!" Coker of the Fifth was saying. "Scrapping without gloves or rounds! Yah!"

"Cease!" exclaimed Mr. Quelch. "Cease this at once! How dare you? I order you to separate!"

"Wharton, for goodness' sake—"

"Stacey—"

"Do you hear me?" thundered Mr. Quelch.

The panting combatants separated. Neither, so far, could claim an advantage over the other. Both had been hard hammered, and both were in a state that, in the eyes of authority, could only be considered disgraceful.

Mr. Quelch clapped a hand on a shoulder.

It was not easy at the moment to tell Wharton from Stacey, and he very nearly grabbed Stacey by mistake. However, it was Wharton's shoulder he grabbed.

"Wharton, you ruffianly young rascal—"

Wharton panted.

As a reasonable fellow, he had to admit that he looked, at the moment, a ruffianly young rascal! But what was Stacey?

"How dare you indulge your brutal temper in this manner, Wharton?"

Wharton's eyes flashed.

"Why not ask Stacey that?" he almost shouted. "Half a dozen fellows here can tell you that he struck first, if you want to know."

"Do not raise your voice to your Form-master, Wharton! I do not believe what you say. When I find you attacking a boy of excellent and exemplary character, I know what to think!"

"But, sir—" exclaimed Bob.

"Silence, Cherry!"

Stacey, panting, mopped his perspiring face with a handkerchief. His animosity was still unabated, and he was savagely angry with the Remove master for interrupting the conflict.

But he was cool almost at once—mentally, if not physically. The Co. looked at him grimly. Other fellows had not seen the beginning of the shindy—but they had seen it. Quelch was taking it for granted that Wharton was the aggressor—and it was clear that Wharton was up for punishment. It was for Stacey to speak out.

Perhaps he was not wholly lost to a sense of fair play. At all events, he did not choose to let himself down in the

eyes of four members of the Remove and earn their contempt. He spoke:

"I'm sorry, sir! What Wharton says is true—I struck him first."

Mr. Quelch dropped his hand from Wharton's shoulder. He was quite taken aback, and far from pleased.

"Stacey!" he exclaimed. "You, my head boy—"

"I'm sorry, sir! I lost my temper—but if Wharton chooses to tell you why I—"

"I have little doubt—indeed, no doubt, that the provocation was given by this unruly boy. Wharton, I should certainly not take your word, but I am bound to take Stacey's—"

"I don't care whether you take my word or not!" replied Wharton. "I've given up expecting justice from you, sir."

"Harry!" gasped Frank Nugent, in utter dismay.

"Wharton, old man!" breathed Bob.

"By gum, what a man to ask for it!" murmured the Bouncer to Skinner, and Skinner nodded and grinned.

Mr. Quelch stood as if thunderstruck. He seemed unable to speak for some moments. He fairly gasped.

"And I'll tell you what Stacey heard me say," shouted Wharton. "I said he was a treacherous rotter—and every man in the Remove who isn't a fool knows that that is what he is!"

Quelch grasped his shoulder again in a vicelike grip.

"If you used such an expression to Stacey, Wharton," he said, "I can excuse him for losing his temper. I shall say nothing more about this fighting, disgraceful as it is. I shall deal with you for the insolent words you have uttered to me personally. Come!"

He led the crimson, panting junior away towards the House.

The crowd under the elms was left in a buzz. Stacey went to the fountain to bathe his burning face, and a good many fellows went with him—evidently in sympathy. By owning up, as he had done, he had acted in what the fellows considered a sporting way, and they hardly noticed that even in owning up that he had started the row, he had contrived to throw the blame for it on his adversary.

"It's rotten!" groaned Bob Cherry, as the Co. moved dismally to the House after their chum. "Quelch would have had to let him off after what Stacey admitted—but a chap can't talk to a beak like that—"

"He had no right to say that he would not take Wharton's word!" said Frank Nugent hotly.

"Well, beaks can say what they like!" remarked Johnny Bull. "Wharton should have kept his mouth shut. He's given Quelch the chance he has been watching for. I shouldn't wonder if Quelch takes him to the Head."

"The flogfulness will be terrific!" groaned the Nabob of Bhanipur.

But Mr. Quelch did not take Wharton to the Head. Doubtless he would have done so, but for the fact that he was by no means keen on taking that particular junior to the headmaster again. As only the headmaster could administer a flogging, Wharton was safe from that.

But a caning could be very nearly as effective as a flogging. Mr. Quelch marched the delinquent to his own study.

There he selected the stoutest cane from several which he kept for the good of the Remove.

"I shall not trouble your headmaster with you again, Wharton!" he said, between set lips. "I shall cane you myself! Bend over that chair!"

Harry Wharton took the "six" without a sound. It was such a six as Mr. Quelch seldom handed over. Every lash rang through the study almost like a pistol-shot.

Wharton rose with a pale, sullen, savage face, when it was over. This was what he received for pitching into a fellow who smacked his face! He did not reflect in those angry moments on the bitter humiliation he had inflicted on his Form-master only a couple of hours ago in the presence of the Head.

"Leave my study!" said the Remove master harshly. "And bear this in mind, Wharton—you have escaped more than once what I am convinced are your just deserts, but unless you mend your ways, you will not be allowed to remain at Greyfriars!"

"That is for the Head to decide!" said Wharton coolly.

Mr. Quelch gazed at him. Such an answer from a boy he had just caned severely was rather the limit. He gripped the cane almost convulsively and came very near to ordering the rebel of his Form to bend over again. But he checked that impulse.

He pointed to the door with the cane. "I warn you, Wharton, that my patience is very nearly at an end!" he said in a gasping voice. "Go! Not another word—go!"

And Wharton left the study.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Not an Edible Pork Pie!

"PORK PIE!"

Billy Bunter started as those words fell on his fat ears.

It was after prep, and most of the Remove had gone down from the studies. Billy Bunter had his own reasons for lingering. It was one of the fat Owl's happy customs to peer into fellows' study cupboards like a lion seeking what he might devour. Naturally, it was better for a fellow to be off the spot when Bunter investigated the contents of his study cupboard. After prep was Bunter's chance.

In Study No. 3, Bunter suspected the existence of a cake. He had seen Ogilvy and Russell in the school shop pooling resources for that cake. That was after tea, so they could not have scoffed it at ten. Had they scoffed it since, or were they keeping it for supper? If so, it was Billy Bunter's supper for which they were unintentionally keeping it!

The fat Owl had seen Ogilvy and Russell on the stairs, going down. But Stacey had not gone down yet. And Bunter was lingering near the door of Study No. 3, waiting for him to depart.

His cupboard campaign could not be carried on in the presence of a fellow who belonged to the study. But Stacey seemed a long time going.

It was not likely that prep was keeping him; he handled prep easily enough. Neither was it likely that he had lines to write. Stacey never had lines. Billy Bunter wondered impatiently what the fellow was sticking in the study for after nearly everybody had gone down.

He began to suspect that he might be too late for that cake! A suspicion came into his fat mind that that cake was Stacey's reason for remaining after Ogilvy and Russell had gone. Having blinked up and down the Remove passage and ascertained that nobody was about, Bunter stooped to the key-hole of Study No. 3—intent on ascertaining whether Stacey was scoffing that cake! If so, Bunter meant to roll in



"The young rascal! The disreputable young rascal!" said Mr. Quelch. "Wharton's entered the inn! There's no doubt now—not a shadow of doubt! Upon my word!" That Wharton had taken cover in the hawthorns, within a few feet of him, deliberately to give him that impression, was not likely to occur to Mr. Quelch!

and demand halves! It was then that the words muttered in the study caught his ear—muttered aloud by Stacey.

"Pork pie!"

Bunter's eyes glistened behind his big spectacles. Pork pies appealed to Bunter quite as much as cake.

If Stacey had a pork pie, Bunter was the man to help him deal with it! He would have preferred to deal with it without Stacey's assistance, certainly. But it was plain that the fellow did not intend to go down. Perhaps he did not want to show a red and rather swollen nose in the Rag! Stacey, as well as Wharton, bore very visible traces of that fierce fight under the elms. Billy Bunter decided to look in on him.

He tapped at the door, opened it, and rolled into Study No. 3, his fat face assuming its most ingratiating grin.

"I say, old chap—" began Bunter.

He broke off, blinking round the study. There was no sign of a pork pie or any other comestible.

Stacey, whatever he was thinking, did not seem to be thinking of supper. He was moving restlessly about the study, with his hands driven deep into his pockets and a deep line in his brow.

He stopped and stared angrily at Bunter.

"You fat ass!" he snapped. "What do you want?"

What Billy Bunter wanted was a whack in a pork pie. But he did not say so.

"Can I help, old chap?" he asked amiably.

"Help? What do you mean?"

"I mean, I thought you might be bottled over your prep, as you're sticking in the study," explained Bunter. "I'll help you like a shot."

"You fat fool!"

That was neither a polite nor a grateful reply. Certainly, Bunter's help in

prep, if a fellow was "bottled," was not likely to be valuable.

"Oh, really, old chap—"

"Buzz off!"

"Finished your prep?" asked Bunter.

"Yes; cut!"

"I say! How's your nose?" asked Bunter, blinking at him. "Wharton seems to have damaged it a bit, what? He, he, he!"

Stacey passed his hand over his handsome nose—not so handsome as usual at the moment! It certainly was damaged.

"Will you clear?" he snapped.

"Well, look here," said Bunter, driven to speak out at last. "I think you're rather a greedy beast, sticking in here to supper by yourself. Dash it all, if I had a pork pie I'd whack it out with a friend."

"A—a—a what?" ejaculated Stacey.

"A pork pie! Look here, where is it? In the cupboard? I'll carve it for you, if you like. Is it a big one?"

Stacey stared at him blankly for a moment or two. Then, instead of answering, he came across the study, grasped Bunter by his fat shoulders, and spun him through the doorway.

"Ow!" yelled Bunter. "Leggo! Beast! Ow!"

Bump!

Bunter landed in the passage.

Slam!

The door of Study No. 3 closed on him.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Wow! The awful beast! Guzzling pork pies all by himself, and chucking a fellow out—wow!—because a fellow—Yoooh! Beast!"

The fat Owl scrambled up. He bent to the keyhole and yelled through it:

"Yah! Rotter! Beast! Keep your mouldy pork pie! Who wants your rotten pork pie? Pork ain't in season, anyhow, and I jolly well hope it will give you tummy-ache! Yah!"

After which the fat Owl departed in haste, lest the door should open and Stacey come out. He scuttled down the Remove staircase.

There was a deep frown on Bunter's face as he rolled into the Rag. Not only was there no whack in a pork pie for him, but he had had to give up his nefarious designs on the cake in Study No. 3. It was enough to annoy any fellow!

"I say, you fellows!" Bunter rolled up to the Famous Five, in the Rag. "I say! What do you think?"

"I think you're a silly ass!" answered Bob Cherry cheerfully.

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"I think you're a blithering fat idiot!" remarked Johnny Bull.

"The thoughtfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Janset Ram Singh.

"I say! That cad Stacey—" said Bunter. "I say, Wharton! You didn't give that cad enough! Just like that old ass Quelch to barge in before you'd whopped him! I say! He's in his study now—"

"Shut up!" suggested Frank Nugent. The mention of Stacey's name brought a black look to his chum's face. Wharton was still feeling the "six"; and, more than the "six," the sense of injustice rankled.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I say! Wharton could go up to his study and thrash the brute without Quelch barging in now!" suggested Bunter.

"Dry up, you fat owl!"

"I'd have thrashed him myself," said Bunter; "but a fellow doesn't want to soil his hands on such a cad."

"They couldn't stand much more soiling!" remarked Johnny Bull, with a glance at Bunter's fat paws, which undoubtedly were grubby.

(Continued on page 16.)

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HARRY WHARTON'S TRIUMPH!



(Continued from page 13.)

"Yah! I say! He pitched me out of his study, just because I went in to help him with his pork pie—I mean, with his prep—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! What do you think of a fellow who sticks in a study, guzzling a pork pie all on his own?" demanded Bunter indignantly. "Pig, you know!"

"You fat ass!" said Ogilvy, looking round.

"That fat frump dreams of pork pies," said Russell. "There's no pork pie in our study, you howling fathead!"

"That's all you know!" sneered Bunter. "Stacey's jolly well got one! I heard him say 'pork pie,' and then I went in to offer to help him with his prep—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's jolly well got a pork pie! He hasn't told you chaps—he wants to scoff it on his own!" said Bunter scornfully. "Pig!"

There was a roar of laughter in the Rag. Nobody but Billy Bunter was likely to suspect Stacey of sticking in his study to guzzle a pork pie on his lonely own. Grub did not loom so large in the average mind as in William George Bunter's.

"I tell you he's got a pork pie!" roared Bunter. "I distinctly heard him say 'pork pie,' mumbling to himself in the study, you know."

"Oh gad!" exclaimed the Bounder, and he burst into a chuckle. "He'd better not let Quelch hear him!"

"Eh? Why not?" asked Bunter. "We're allowed to have pies for supper—a chap can have a pork pie if he likes."

"Not the sort of pork pie Stacey's thinking about, I fancy!" said the Bounder, laughing. "Even you couldn't eat that pork pie, Bunter."

Harry Wharton glanced curiously at the Bounder. His words were quite mysterious to most of the fellows in the Rag.

"What the dickens do you mean, Smithy?" asked Peter Todd.

"Bless your innocent little hearts," said Vernon-Smith. "I dare say you don't know that the races are on at Wapshot."

"The races?" repeated Toddy blankly. "What has a pork pie to do with races, fathead?"

"Lots!" grinned Smithy. "There's rather a big race at two o'clock next Wednesday at Wapshot, and one of the gees is named Pork Pie."

"Oh, my hat!"

"Rubbish!" exclaimed Ogilvy angrily. "Think Stacey is bothering about rotten racing, like you, Smithy?"

"Chuck it, Smithy!" snapped Russell.

"Well, it looks like it!" grinned Smithy. "And as you're friends of his, I advise you to tip him not to back Pork Pie. You can get five to one against him—which shows what he's

worth! If Stacey backs Pork Pie he will be sorry on Thursday."

"Oh crikey!" gasped Bunter. "Is that all? A rotten racehorse! I thought he meant a pork pie—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Shut up, Smithy!" roared Ogilvy. "It's all rot, and you know it!"

The Bounder laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

Harry Wharton's lips curled. He had no doubt that the Bounder was right.

"And that's Quelch's precious new head boy!" he said to the Co. "That's the Good Little Georgie who can do no wrong in Quelch's eyes!"

"Putrid outsider!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Well, Bunter's such a silly ass," said Bob doubtfully. "He may have got it all wrong—"

"Wednesday is St. Jude's day," said Harry. "Stacey will be playing cricket at St. Jude's—with his money on Pork Pie for the two o'clock. Head boy of the Remove—backing horses at five to one!" He laughed. "If Quelch took the trouble to follow him, instead of me, he might find somebody at the Three Fishers, seeing Mr. Banks! And I've had a letter from my uncle, slating me for not being better friends with him! I wonder if my uncle would like me to join up with him and back Pork Pie for the two o'clock?"

Stacey did not appear in the Rag that evening. When the Remove went to their dormitory, a good many fellows looked at him curiously. But he did not seem to observe it—he was buried in deep thought, and he turned in without speaking a word to any fellow in the dorm.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Smithy Takes a Hand!

HERBERT VENON - SMITH grinned.

It was Saturday afternoon, and cricket practice was going on. Tom Brown, keen on putting his team through their paces, ready for the match at St. Jude's on Wednesday, was keeping the Remove men up to the mark.

For once, Stacey was not available for practice; he had, it appeared, knocked his wrist on something in the study. That news caused Tom Brown's face to grow almost as long as a fiddle—at the bare idea of losing his best bowler and best batsman in the fixture shortly due. But it shortened again, as it were, when Stacey explained that it was merely a slight damage, certain to be all right in a day or two—only he thought he had better give it a rest that day. To which the new captain of the Remove agreed at once.

Nobody could suspect Stacey of slacking: that, at any rate, was not one of his faults.

"Wrap it up in cotton-wool, old chap!" said Tom. "Anything, so long as you're fit on Wednesday."

"I shall be all right before then!" assured Stacey, and he went away, leaving his skipper comforted.

Vernon-Smith, grinning, tapped Tom Brown on the arm.

"I shall have to cut the practice this afternoon, Brownie!" he said.

"What the thump for?" demanded Tom.

"Knocked my wrist in the study!" said the Bounder, with perfect gravity.

Tom stared at him.

"You—as well as Stacey!" he exclaimed.

"Why not me as well as Stacey?"

asked Smithy. "I'm quite as clumsy as he is, and quite as damaged."

The New Zealand junior looked at him steadily.

"If you mean that Stacey was spoofing me, Smithy, you're talking silly rot," he said brusquely. "He's as keen on cricket as any man at Greyfriars. What the dickens do you mean, then?"

"Exactly what I say! But I think a walk may do it good, and I'll come in later!" said the Bounder.

And he walked away, leaving Tom Brown frowning.

Apparently Stacey also thought that a walk might do a damaged wrist good, for when the juniors had settled down to cricket, he walked out of gates.

The Bounder, grinning, walked after him.

Stacey went down to the towpath and started up the river. Glancing back, he saw the Bounder a dozen yards behind him.

With a careless air he changed his direction and went by a footpath through the wood.

But when he looked back again he saw the Bounder still behind him.

A glint came into his eyes.

He stopped and stood leaning on a beech, waiting for Herbert Vernon-Smith to come up.

The Bounder came sauntering on, with his hands in his pockets. He, too, stopped as he reached the spot where Stacey stood. He leaned carelessly on another tree, facing the new junior.

"You're not at the cricket, then?" remarked Stacey.

"Same trouble as yours," explained the Bounder. "It's a coincidence, but I've knocked my wrist in the study, just as you did."

Stacey compressed his lips.

"You don't expect me to believe that?" he asked.

"Well, perhaps I should say I've knocked my wrist just as much as you did," said Smithy. "I expect you to believe that! You see, it's true."

"Why are you following me?" asked Stacey abruptly.

"Ah, now you're coming down to brass tacks!" The Bounder grinned. "This is a day of coincidences! You've damaged your wrist—perhaps. So have I—perhaps! You're taking your damaged fin for a walk! So am I! You started towards the Three Fishers, the delectable abode of the excellent and sportive Joe Banks! So did I! You changed your mind and walked into this beautiful wood—I did the same! You've stopped for a pleasant chat—same here! What a string of jolly old coincidences!"

"I'm going on—"

"Another coincidence—so am I!"

Stacey did not go on. He stood by the beech, breathing hard. The Bounder's face was scornfully mocking.

"Solitude isn't good for a chap, even with a gammy wrist to nurse," he remarked. "Wouldn't you like my company in a walk?"

"No."

"Another coincidence—I shouldn't like yours!" agreed Smithy. "I'm going to have it all the same!"

"Will you tell me what you mean by this, Vernon-Smith?" asked Stacey, in a low, suppressed voice of fury.

"Pleased!" drawled the Bounder. "If you're going to see a bookmaker to-day, as I jolly well know you are, I'm going to see him, too. You make me sick with your rotten lying and humbug, Stacey, and I'm going to put paid to it."

"Is it your business?"

"Quite. You took me in as you took in all the Form," said Vernon-Smith. "I'm no pal of Wharton's, but I rather like the fellow. I'm a bit of a bad hat myself, but I can respect a fellow who's

straight—and Wharton's straight. I think him a bit of a noodle, but that's neither here nor there. You've taken advantage of your likeness to him, to get him into hot water with the beaks and the prefects. He's been in disgrace all this term—and you jolly well know who ought to have been."

"Has Wharton asked you to protect him?" sneered Stacey.

"He would probably punch my head if I offered to!" said the Bounder. "But that's got nothing to do with it. I was down on him as much as any man for chucking you out of the cricket. You know that. I stood by you in that, with the rest of the fellows. But in other matters it's a different thing. I've no use for hypocrisy and humbug."

"You think—"

"I don't think—I know!" answered the Bounder coolly. "You've pulled the wool over most eyes in the Remove. You've been seen playing the goat, and it's been put down to Wharton. I never knew what to think—till that affair of the letter a week or two ago. A beery blighter from the Three Fishers shoved a letter into Wharton's hand, taking him for you. That did it! It dished you in the captain's election—"

"I've explained that since—"

"I know you have. Pity you didn't think out a whopping lie earlier," said the Bounder scornfully. "You admitted before all the fellows that that letter was for you, because you dared not let Wharton keep it out of your hands. Since then you've explained that it was quite a harmless matter."

He laughed.

"And it was."

"Gammon!" said the Bounder coolly. "Good enough for Ogilvy and Russell and fellows who want to believe in you. You took me in once—you can't take me in twice."

"It was a perfectly simple matter, but liable to be misunderstood," said Stacey calmly. "I met that man at Courtfield Bridge, where they hire out boats. I asked him to let me know if he could send a boat up to the Greyfriars raft for me on the next half-holiday. I expected him to write by post, but he gave the note to a man to hand to me—a man who happened to belong to the Three Fishers."

"Go it!" grinned the Bounder.

"The note was given to Wharton in mistake for me; but as soon as he said that it was handed to him by a hanger-on at the Three Fishers, I saw how the matter might be misunderstood."

"Understood, you mean?" grinned Smithy.

"You don't believe me?"

"Not a word!"

"Most of the fellows do."

"You tell a whopper so well, you see!" grinned Vernon-Smith. "But it took you some time to think that one out."

Stacey breathed hard.

"Well, you can keep your own opinion," he said. "You can think exactly what you like! But you can't follow me about, spying on me."

"Who's spying?" asked the Bounder blandly. "I can take a walk on a half-holiday if I choose! Why don't you like my company? I'm quite an agreeable chap."

"Will you keep your distance?"

"No!" answered Vernon-Smith coolly. "I won't! I've told you I've no use for hypocrisy and humbug. You're a fellow like myself a good deal—I'm not blaming you for that!" He chuckled. "But I'd be hanged, drawn and quartered before I'd land my troubles on another chap, as you've done. You're going to the Three Fishers to see Banks and lay money on Pork Pie for Wednesday's

race. If you happen to be spotted there, you'll pull everybody's leg again, and make out that it was poor old Wharton! I'm going to put paid to it. I'm not going to lose sight of you this afternoon."

Stacey clenched his hands hard.

"This isn't quite a safe game to play, Vernon-Smith," he said, between his teeth. "You're asking for a licking."

"Get on with it!" said the Bounder. "I fancy I could keep my end up. I'm your man!"

"Will you mind your own business?" breathed Stacey.

"I'm making this my business! Bunter's tattled about seeing you at the Three Fishers, but nobody takes

Bunter's word! They'll take mine! If you go to that den this afternoon, every man in the Remove is going to know it—and know that it's you, and not Wharton, who plays the giddy goat there!"

"I'm not going there."

"Not with my eye on you, what?" chuckled Smithy.

Stacey's eyes glinted at him. The Bounder laughed carelessly. He was not afraid of the fellow; and he had made up his mind. As he had said, he had no use for hypocrisy and humbug. The Bounder, as he cheerfully admitted, was rather a "bad hat," but a fellow who let the disgrace of his misdeeds fall

(Continued on next page.)

GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS

(1)

Last evening I dropped in to see The Fourth Form master, Capper, I found him sitting down to tea. He wagged a kindly napper And bade me take a chair, and state The object of my visit; "And as," he said, "it's getting late, Please try to be explicit."

(2)

Now Capper's like a broody hen, He fiddles and he fusses; The scandal of the Master's Den He eagerly discusses. With barbs included in his speech, He sighs and sympathises, And after, in odd corners, each Colleague he criticises.



(5)

"For hours to-day I taught the fool, Whose brains are like a Dyak's, A simple and straightforward rule, In Latin elegiacs. And when, exhausted, down I sat, He said, approaching nearer, He couldn't see the sense of that, And would I make it clearer!"



(8)

"I'm fond of Quelch, but there's no doubt His Form is getting slacker; The same, of course, applies to Prout, And, naturally, to Hacker. Far be it I should criticise The gentlemen I've mentioned, But still, I think it might be wise, If all the lot were pensioned."

"A change is as good as a feast," is what our clever Greyfriars Rhymester was heard to say when he set off to interview one of the "big noises."

ALGERNON CAPPER, B.A.

Master of the Upper Fourth Form



(3)

I asked him, then, to talk about His trials and tribulations; And dragged my penny notebook out, To take his observations. "Well, well," he said, "one has to learn That life is not all honey!" "Indeed?" said I. "But don't you earn A decent bit of money?"

(4)

He frowned and answered: "May I say That's hardly diplomatic? However high our scale of pay, We earn it—that's emphatic! My scholars all, from last to first, Give great dissatisfaction; A boy named Temple is the worst, He drives me to distraction!"

(6)

I sympathised with him, of course, For there is no denial That teaching Temple is, perforce, The dike of a trial; But all the Upper Fourth (or so Removies all acknowledge), Is nothing but a waxworks show, And useless at the college.



(9)

"And they are not the only ones," I felt inclined to mutter, As Capper spread his toasted buns With finest dairy butter. I did not say the words aloud, For that would be disaster, Instead, I took my leave and vowed I'd like to be a master!

on another fellow made him sick. He knew that he was tormenting Stacey, and he enjoyed the process. His idea was that the fellow deserved it, and more.

Stacey moved on along the footpath again at last.

The Bouncer, grinning, strolled after him.

Stacey breathed hard as he went. Little as he cared what his conduct was like, it was part of his game to keep his name clean at Greyfriars. He dared not head for the Three Fishers while the Bouncer's mocking eye was on him.

But he had to get there if he was to carry out his purpose. There was no opportunity, except on a half-holiday—unless he was prepared to take the risk of breaking out after lights-out.

He walked on with a moody brow. He was tempted to rush at the Bouncer, hitting out right and left. But a scrap with Smithy would not have helped; it would not have turned the Bouncer back.

He emerged from the footpath on Courtfield Common and walked on towards the road. Vernon-Smith, grinning, strolled on a few paces from him. He was sticking to Stacey like a limpet to a rock.

Stacey's eyes had a sudden glint.

In the distance ahead a big red motor-bus was rolling along the road across the common. By breaking into a run a fellow could catch it as it passed.

Stacey swiftly made up his mind. He turned and made a sudden rush at the Bouncer, taking him by surprise and barging him over headlong into a mass of gorse.

Smithy roared as he sprawled there.

Without giving him a look, Stacey raced away across the common towards the road, his feet seeming scarcely to touch the ground. He leaped into the road as the bus passed, and jumped on the moving vehicle.

The Bouncer scrambled out of the gorse, red with rage; he glared round, panting, for Stacey.

"By gum!" he gasped, staring across the common.

In the distance he saw Stacey jump on the motor-bus. It roared on towards Courtfield. The Bouncer had no chance of getting to it before it was gone.

He stood staring after it as it disappeared towards the town.

"By gum!" he repeated.

Then he laughed. He was beaten; Stacey had eluded him. If he told this story in the Rag most fellows would tell him that it served him jolly well right for pestering a fellow who did not want his company. And Stacey, clear of him now, could choose his own time and route for getting to the delectable society of Mr. Joseph Banks.

Smithy did not like being beaten. But he was beaten, and he walked back to Greyfriars; and Tom Brown grunted when the Bouncer blandly informed him that his wrist was all right again, and that he had come back to play cricket.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Bouncer's Tip!

HARRY WHARTON was rather enjoying himself that afternoon.

Having "cut" cricket so far as the Remove matches were concerned, he missed the game sorely—all the more because his friends were all keen cricketers, and he was, therefore, left a good deal on his own by them, which could not be helped. Except for practice at the nets, he had no cricket, and

this afternoon the Remove were not at the nets, but were playing a pick-up game for practice.

Stacey having cleared off, Wharton joined the rest of the Removes, and the new skipper was only too glad to see him there.

Tom Brown still nourished a hope that the late captain of the Remove might get over his objection to playing in the same team with his double; he wanted him in the St. Jude's match if he could get him there. Anyhow, Stacey now being off the scene, Wharton turned to cricket like a duck to water, captaining one side in the scratch match, the Remove skipper captaining the other.

He was at the wickets when the Bouncer came back from his excursion and joined up. It was only practice, with eight or nine men a side, but Wharton was batting as if he fancied it the biggest fixture of the season, in sheer enjoyment of having the willow in his hands again in a game.

It was Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh, at length, who bowled his chum, and Wharton came off with a flushed and cheery face. Vernon-Smith gave him a grip as he came up to the pavilion.

"I've been watching you," he remarked. "You'd be jolly useful at St. Jude's, Wharton, if you came over on Wednesday."

"What about your wrist? Didn't you tell Browney—"

The Bouncer laughed.

"My wrist's all right again, thanks. That was only a joke—second-hand from Stacey! You know your jolly old relative so well that I dare say you can guess why he croaked his wrist this afternoon."

"Gammon, I suppose."

"Just that! Listen, and I will a tale unfold!" said the Bouncer, with a grin; and he related what had happened out of gates that afternoon.

Wharton listened, with a curling lip.

"I've got a reason for telling you this," went on the Bouncer. "That fellow Stacey is a bad hat—which doesn't matter to anybody but himself, though I dare say Quelch would be interested if he knew. But putting it on to you because you happen to look like him isn't playing the game—what?"

"A fat lot he cares about playing the game!"

"What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander," said Vernon-Smith. "If a fellow did it to me I'd have no mercy on him; I'd go all out to show him up."

"I've shown him up in the Form, though he seems to have lied himself out of it pretty easily," said Wharton contemptuously. "I can't show him up to Quelch."

"Why not?" said Smithy coolly.

Wharton stared at him.

"Why not? Don't be an ass! Do you think I'm going to sneak about a fellow?"

"That's a nasty word," agreed the Bouncer. "But is giving a fellow away worse than landing on a fellow something he's never done?"

"Hardly."

"Well, then, I'm giving you a chance to put paid to the rotter. He's with that bookie Banks at this very minute. I suppose you know he's backing Pork Pie for the two o'clock on Wednesday? Most likely he's at the Three Fishers; that's where Banks is usually to be found."

"Most likely," assented Wharton.

"But what—"

"Quelch stalked you there the other day. Why not give him a chance of stalking the right man?"

"Smithy!"

"Too jolly particular?" grinned the Bouncer. "Well, you're a fool, Wharton! That fellow, the way he's going on, will be up for the sack before the end of the term, and you can bank on it that when the crash comes he will land it on you if he can. He won't be turfed out if he can get another man turfed out for his jolly old sins, instead of himself."

"I know that."

"Don't take the risk. Nail him while you've got the chance. I've told you where he is and what he's up to."

"You wouldn't do it yourself, Smithy?"

"I would!" said the Bouncer grimly. "If a fellow plays me fair, I'll play him fair; if he plays me foul, I'll play him foul. It's not my idea to keep the gloves on when the other man takes them off."

Wharton smiled faintly.

"You mean go to Quelch?"

"Why not? If that fellow doesn't get what's coming to him, it will come to you instead if he can wangle it. Are you going to take a risk like that on a point of honour?"

Wharton stood silent. There was a hard and ruthless strain in the Bouncer—very evident now, though he was speaking as a friend for Wharton's own interests. Had Stacey been dealing with a fellow like Smithy he certainly would not have scored over him as he had done over Wharton.

But Wharton was not tempted to take the Bouncer's advice. He had to keep to his own code of honour, whatever his enemy might do.

He shook his head.

"Thanks for the tip, Smithy. I know you mean it as a friend," he said, "but—"

"You won't do it?"

"No," answered Harry, smiling.

"You're an ass! You spare him, but you can bank on it that he won't spare you in his turn."

"I know. But I don't believe that rotten trickery can come out ahead in the long run. Anyhow, I'm taking my chance. I can't give a man away to the beaks, even a treacherous rat like that fellow."

"Well, you're a fathead!" And the Bouncer, being wanted at the wickets now, took his bat and went.

Wharton being out, and the practice match being single innings, he was not wanted again. He walked off the field and strolled in the quad, thinking of what the Bouncer had told him.

In the quad he passed his Form-master walking with Mr. Prout.

Quelch gave him a cold glance in passing. He was deep in the disfavour of his Form-master. He smiled sarcastically as Quelch passed on with Prout. He was wondering what Quelch would have thought had he taken the Bouncer's advice and told him where he could find Stacey if he liked.

Wingate of the Sixth stopped him in the quad a little later, giving him a rather grim look.

"Here, Wharton, I've been going to speak to you!" he rapped. "I hear that you're taking to slacking."

"Better see a doctor!" suggested Wharton.

"Eh, what?"

"I mean, there must be something wrong with your hearing."

"I don't want any cheek!" said the Greyfriars captain. "You've been cutting games practice and cricket generally. Is it true that you've offered a place in the match at St. Jude's on Wednesday, and you've refused it?"

"Yes."

"You don't call that slacking?"



"You're going to see Banks, and lay money on a horse for Wednesday's race," said Vernon-Smith coolly. "If you happen to be spotted, you'll pull everybody's leg, and make out that it was Wharton. I'm going to put paid to it, I'm not going to lose sight of you!" "Will you mind your own business?" breathed Stacey.

"No!"

"Well," said Wingate, "I do! And I'll tell you this, you cheeky young rick, if you don't play cricket for the Remove on Wednesday, I'll have you up in the Prefect's Room and whop you for slacking! Think that over."

Wharton coloured with anger.

"Don't be a sulky young ass!" added Wingate, more kindly. "You play a good game, and your Form's entitled to your services. If you want an example, take that of your cousin—"

"What cousin?"

"That new kid Stacey—"

"He's not my cousin."

"I don't care what he is—don't argue with me," snapped Wingate. "He's a good cricketer, and plays hard—never slacks! Do the same as he does, and you won't go far wrong."

Harry Wharton burst into a laugh. He could not help it. He was advised to do the same as Stacey, and take him as an example—and, unless the Bounder was mistaken, Stacey was at the Three Fishers making arrangements with Mr. Joe Banks to put his bet on Pork Pie for the two o'clock on Wednesday. It was rather entertaining to receive such advice from the head prefect of Greyfriars.

Wingate glared at him.

"Do you think it manners to cackle at the captain of the school?" he demanded.

"Well, you see, I can't very well take Stacey as a model," said Harry. "I should be afraid of getting sacked."

"I don't know what you mean, and don't want to," said Wingate. "But I know you're a cheeky young rascal, and you'll go straight into the House and write a hundred lines, and bring them to me after tea. Cut!"

Wingate stalked on frowning, and Wharton, shrugging his shoulders, went into the House to write lines.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

The Dark Horse!

"LOOK!" whispered the Bounder. "Eh?"

It was Monday afternoon, and class was over. Harry Wharton had come up to the Remove passage, and he met the Bounder on the landing. There was a grin on Smithy's face, as he told Wharton to "look."

Harry glanced round puzzled. Smithy made a gesture towards a junior who was in the window-seat at the landing window, reading a newspaper.

It was Stacey! He was reading eagerly, and there was a very elated expression on his face as he read. He was too intent on his reading, whatever it was, to observe the Bounder.

"Well, what is there to look at?" asked Harry. "I've seen Stacey before."

"See that jolly merry-and-bright expression on his chivvy?" asked Vernon-Smith. "He looks pleased, what?"

"Yes; what on earth about it?" Wharton was not interested in Stacey's looks, whether they were pleased or displeased, and he was puzzled and impatient.

"Guess what he's reading."

"Looks like a newspaper."

"Fathead! He's reading the sporting page."

"Pity Quelch can't see him!" said Harry.

"If Quelch saw him, dear man, he would be reading the county cricket

news! In the happy cloistered shades of the Remove passage he can read the sporting news!" chuckled the Bounder. "I've looked at the paper myself, you see, and I know what he's reading, that makes him grin so happily. The odds have shortened on Pork Pie."

"Pork Pie!" repeated Wharton. He had already forgotten that.

"On Saturday, the day I trotted out after that sportsman, you could still get five to one against Pork Pie!" explained the Bounder. "But in the evening paper to-day it's stated that the odds have shortened to three to one. Know what that means?"

"No, and don't care much."

"I'll tell you! Always come to me for information on the sport of kings!" said the Bounder grinning. "I'm the man to help bring up any fellow in the way he shouldn't go! Pork Pie is a dark horse! Long odds against him meant that most of the bookies didn't think he had an earthly. Now there's rumours that he's a better gee than was supposed, and they've shortened the odds in consequence. Either he has a chance of winning, or else some sporting gang are making out that he has, to pull the leg of the dear old public, and get their money off them on Wednesday."

Wharton made a gesture of distaste. "Chuck it, Smithy," he said. "You know too much about those things, and it's not to your credit."

"Quite!" agreed the Bounder. "But isn't it amusin'? Our dear friend Stacey has backed Pork Pie at five to one—he stands to bag five quids if he's put a quid on! To-day he could only get three to one! He must be jolly glad he succeeded in dodging me on Saturday. He's looking so merry an'

bright because the shortening of the odds looks as if Pork Pie has a chance of getting first past the post! If the geo's really any good the betting will be down to evens on Wednesday, and Stacey's got in on the ground floor! But—"

"But what?"

Smithy chuckled.

"I know more about these things than that sportsman does, I fancy! They can shorten the odds all they like, but I'd give any man two to one that Pork Pie won't be in the first three! Take it on?"

"Rats!"

The Bouncer walked away, laughing. Ogilvy and Russell came up the Remove staircase, glanced round, and crossed over to Stacey. The newspaper rustled, as a page was quickly turned.

"Looking at the news?" asked Ogilvy.

"Yes! Middlesex are doing pretty well," said Stacey.

Wharton went to his study without hearing more. Stacey had been reading the racing news, grinning with delight over the improved chances of the horse he had backed; but Ogilvy had no doubt that he had been reading the county cricket news! Such a facility for deception in a fellow no older than himself made Wharton wonder, as much as it disgusted him.

Most of the fellows noticed that Stacey was in good spirits that evening. In the innocence of their hearts, they supposed that he was thinking of the St. Jude's match on Wednesday, and the big score he was likely to put up there.

Perhaps he was, but he was thinking a great deal more of another matter. The improvement of Pork Pie's chances in the race meant more to Stacey than even the keen-witted Bouncer thought of suspecting.

For the "sportsman" of the Remove had gone in a good deal over his depth. He had not laid a "quid" on that "gee," as the Bouncer thought likely; he had laid ten quids.

Like most dabblers in that dingy sport, Stacey had a belief that he could "spot a winner." His pal Pon at

Highcliffe had "tipped" him Pork Pie. Pon himself was "putting his shirt" on him as he expressed it. Stacey, in the strange life he had led with his father, had picked up some knowledge of racing matters—and it was said of old that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing!

Satisfied that Pork Pie, though regarded as an outsider, had a good chance of pulling it off, he had backed him for Wednesday.

On his own account he would have put a "quid" on the horse. It was on his father's account that he had plunged! The hope of being able to send Captain Stacey the fifty pounds he so badly needed, had caused him to forget his usual prudence.

Joe Banks, who only knew him as an apparently wealthy schoolboy, had had no hesitation in booking his bet on "tick." He had accepted two pounds in cash—all Stacey had—and taken an I O U for the other eight.

That was all right if Pork Pie got home! Stacey would get his I O U back and fifty pounds along with it. Joe Banks was, in his own way, an honest dealer; he would pay the winnings over—if any! But the fact that Joe was willing to book the bet at all, showed how little belief he had in Pork Pie personally. It was fairly certain that Mr. Banks did not expect to have to pay anything out after the race on Wednesday.

Stacey had not been comfortable in mind over the week-end. In his desire to help his scapegrace father he had plunged out of his depth, and there would be trouble if Pork Pie lost. Banks, naturally, would expect to receive the eight pounds for which he held the schoolboy's written promise to pay. If he did not receive it he was likely to cut up extremely rusty.

Where it was to come from, if needed, Stacey had no idea! He could only hope that he had, indeed, "spotted a winner," and that it was Mr. Banks who would have to do the paying!

In his eagerness to win money he hardly realised that this sort of thing

was so near dishonesty that it was hard to see any difference.

The news in Monday's paper was good news for the reckless plunger. With the odds against Pork Pie shortened to three to one, it looked as if a good many people regarded him as a probable winner.

And on Tuesday there was still better news—the odds were down to two to one! Stacey looked so merry and bright that day that one or two fellows asked him if he had come into a fortune.

Only the Bouncer guessed the kind of fortune he was expecting to come into; and even the Bouncer did not think of guessing the sum that was at stake.

That day the list for the St. Jude's match was posted up in the Rag. And, to the surprise of a good many fellows, the name "H. Wharton" figured in it. Tom Brown had had a heart-to-heart talk with the late captain of the Remove.

"Look here," said the New Zealand junior, cornering Wharton in the quad on Tuesday morning, "you're at the top of your form, and we want you at St. Jude's. There's a rumour about that you're getting into a row with the Head of the Games if you cut cricket. You don't want that—and you do want to help me make a success of the captain's job, don't you?"

"Yes," said Harry. "But—"

"You've got it fixed in your head that Stacey ran you out on purpose the other day—"

"He did!"

"Well, nobody else believes so; but never mind that. Look here, I'll do all I can to keep you apart. Stacey will go in first wicket. Like me to put you down as last man?"

"Oh!" Wharton made a grimace.

"If you'd rather go in at the end of the tail than risk partnering Stacey at the wickets—"

"Done!" said Harry, making up his mind.

And so that was settled. It was not a glorious position, at the "end of the tail," but it was likely to keep him away from the first man in, and that was all he wanted. And when Wingate of the Sixth gave that cricket list a glance, he grunted—rather relieved that he would not have to have Wharton up in the Prefects' Room for a whopping!

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Bombshell!

STACEY'S face was one of the brightest in the Greyfriars party when the team went over to St. Jude's on Wednesday.

He was in great form, expecting to cover himself with glory, as usual, on the cricket field; and much more important than that, he was expecting to hear that afternoon that he was the happy winner of the handsome sum of fifty pounds. He was counting on this as a certainty, after the latest news of Pork Pie—feeling that he had snapped up the chance of a lifetime in backing that "dark horse" while the odds were still long.

He was too eager to think of waiting for the news of that great win in the evening paper. He had arranged with Mr. Banks, who was to be at Wapshot that afternoon, to let him know as soon as possible after the two o'clock race was run. It was easy to send him a telegram.

Stacey would hardly have ventured to receive such a telegram at Greyfriars, however carefully worded. But at St. Jude's it was safe enough.



- G — gigantic
- A — amazing
- T — terror-striking
- U — unusual
- N — never beaten
- G — great
- A — axe-man

Meet Gatunga—Gatunga, the mighty warrior, the man who can split a tree with one blow of his huge axe, and can kill a lion with his bare hands. Read about the adventures of this amazing strong man in this super new story appearing to-day in the **RANGER**. 'GATUNGA THE AXE-MAN' is a unique yarn; read it to-day!

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No master or prefect at his own school would see or hear anything of it. His fellow cricketers, if they noticed it at all, would only suppose it was a wire from some relation. In case of a win, Mr. Banks was to wire "Got Home." In case of Pork Pie losing, he was to wire "Not Got Home." Even if other eyes saw that telegram, who was likely to guess that it referred to a horse running in the races at Wapshot? Stacey had no doubt that the telegram, when he received it, would read: "Got Home." He was elated at the great prospect.

Every other fellow in the charabanc was thinking of cricket, though every now and then the Bounder's eyes turned curiously, and rather sarcastically, on Stacey's cheery face.

Wharton kept as far as he could from the fellow he barred, and had nothing to say to him. Stacey, at present, in his mood of happy anticipation, had almost forgotten his rival's existence.

Lunn, the junior captain of St. Jude's, gave them a cheery welcome when they arrived. He had heard about the wonderful new man in the Remove eleven, and was rather keen to make Stacey's acquaintance. He stared at him and at Wharton in great surprise, struck by the resemblance between the two relatives.

"Which is which?" he asked, with a grin, and Tom Brown laughed.

"This is Stacey," answered Tom.

"Relation of Wharton's, I suppose?" said Lunn, as he shook hands with Stacey.

"Yes—a distant relation," answered Stacey, in so dry a tone that the St. Jude's man guessed at once on what footing the relationship stood, and dropped the subject immediately.

They chatted amicably for a few minutes, and then Stacey came to the subject that was uppermost in his mind.

"I suppose I could get a telegram here," he said. "My father's promised to run down in his car and give the match a look in, if he possibly can, otherwise, he's going to send me a wire. If it comes along—"

Lunn looked a little surprised, but he nodded.

"That's all right," he said. "I'll speak to the porter—he will take it in if it comes. I'll tell him that if there's a wire for Stacey, he's to bring it to you at the pav." "

"Thanks," said Stacey. "Sorry to bother you, but—"

"Not at all."

Lunn went away to speak to the school porter.

Satisfied that he would get the telegram when it came, Stacey dismissed that matter from his mind.

It was a glorious June day, and the wicket was perfect. Every fellow was looking forward to a great game. Harry Wharton's face was bright. The only fly in the ointment, as far as he was concerned, apart from Stacey, was the fact that Frank Nugent would have had the place had he stayed out. But Frank was too glad to see his chum in the eleven to think about himself, and he was looking very cheerful.

St. Jude's won the toss and went in first. Stacey was put on to bowl the first over against Lunn. The Remove fellows looked on with happy anticipation. The St. Jude's men, having heard of Stacey's prowess with both bat and ball, watched him curiously. Lunn was very careful indeed, and after that over he realised that the new Greyfriars man had not been over-rated. He had saved his sticks—but only just!

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh bowled the second over. He was a good man with

the leather, but the St. Jude's batting was good, and no wicket fell.

Then the ball was given to Stacey again, and the fireworks began.

A single run—all that had been taken off Hurree Singh's bowling—had left Lunn at the safe end, and he was rather glad of it, as he watched Stacey proceed to make hay of the wickets.

Stacey was in great form. One, two, three, the wickets went down, and the Greyfriars fellows cheered the hat trick.

"By gum, that man can bowl!" grinned Tom Brown.

"The bowlfulness is truly terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

The ball went down again and was knocked away, in the direction of Harry Wharton, at point.

Smack! Palm met ball, and Wharton held it up.

"How's that?"

"Out!"

Stacey gave his rival a curious look. Wharton met his glance, and his lip curled.

He knew that Stacey, in his place, would have dropped that catch. He knew, too, that the fellow was aware that he knew it, as he saw a flush come into Stacey's cheeks.

Four wickets in an over was as much as even Tom Brown expected of Stacey. At this rate, St. Jude's looked like being walked over.

And walked over they were, for though the runs came from the change bowlers, Stacey was simply far and away too good for the St. Jude's bats, and whenever he was on the bowling crease wickets went down.

Lunn's face grew very serious and solemn. He was accustomed to keeping his end up in cricket matches, and as a rule his team were as good as the Greyfriars crowd. Now they were hopelessly outclassed. The St. Jude's captain himself went out for ten, and his was the biggest score for his side.

Last man in was called at thirty, and it was still thirty on the scoreboard when the innings closed. It was a briefer innings than Lunn & Co. were used to.

"You've got a prize packet in that new man," Lunn said to Tom Brown, when the field came off.

Tom Brown grinned cheerily. He was in a merry mood. He was keen to signalise his captaincy by a victory in the first important fixture, and it looked as if this was going to be a victory with an innings in hand.

"Not bad, what?" said Tom. "Wait till you see him bat."

"Is he as good with the bat as with the ball?"

"Quite!"

"We may as well make you a present of the game and call it a day!" said Lunn, with a rueful grin.

Which was only a jest, for the St. Jude's men were hard nuts to crack, and they were fully determined to fight it out to a finish. No game is more uncertain than cricket, and there was always hope of snatching victory from the jaws of defeat.

"Stacey!" called out the Bounder, as the St. Jude's porter appeared upon the scene, a buff-coloured envelope in his hand.

"Here's a man asking for you!"

Stacey caught his breath.

It was his telegram!

"Mr. Stacey, sir?" The St. Jude's porter came up, touching his cap.

"This is for you, sir!"

"Thank you!" said Stacey, taking the buff envelope from the man.

He caught the Bounder's eyes mockingly on him, and refrained from opening it on the spot. But his fingers trembled with eagerness. He knew what it contained, of course. Pork Pie had won! There could be no doubt about that! But he wanted to see it, to know it beyond the shadow of a doubt.

He moved away and went into the pavilion.

Three or four fellows who had seen the telegram handed him glanced after him. Vernon-Smith nudged Wharton's arm, with a grin.

"Spot that?" he asked.

"No. What?" asked Harry.

"Stacey's just had a wire."

"Has he?" said Wharton indifferently.

"You've forgotten Pork Pie?" grinned the Bounder.

"Pork Pie! What the thump do you mean, Smithy?"

"That jolly old gee ran at two o'clock at Wapshot!" grinned the Bounder. "Rather a coincidence that Stacey gets a wire soon after three!"

Wharton started, and stared at the Bounder.

"What rot!" he said. "Even Stacey wouldn't—"

Vernon-Smith laughed.

"I fancy he would—and has!" he answered.

"The dingy rotter!" muttered Wharton, in disgust.

Stacey neither thought nor cared what they might be thinking. He had forgotten them, and the cricket match, too, for the moment. Inside the pavilion he tore open the envelope, and eagerly read the message within.

Then he stood dumbfounded.

Every vestige of colour deserted his face. His eyes had a hunted look. His jaw dropped.

Was it possible?

It was. The message was not the one he had expected. It was the one he had not expected—but which, really, he might have expected, when Joe Banks had been willing to take his bet to the tune of fifty pounds against that "dark" horse! The message ran:

"NOT GOT HOME.—J. B."

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Crushing Blow!

"STACEY!"

"Where's Stacey?"

"Seen Stacey?"

"Oh, here you are!" exclaimed Tom Brown, as he came on his man in the pavilion. "Get your pads on, Stacey! You're wanted to open the innings, you know!"

Stacey was seated on a bench, his stalwart shoulders drooping. The telegram was in his pocket. Tom Brown did not see it, and did not even know that he had received one. He stared blankly at Stacey.

He could see that there was something the matter with his prize-packet.

"Come on, old man!" said the New Zealand junior. "You begin our knock, you know. Anything up?"

Stacey raised his head. His face was so ghastly that Tom hardly needed to ask him whether anything was "up." Obviously, something was up.

"Not feeling fit?" asked Tom, in dismay.

Stacey was always as fit as a fiddle. If his best man was going to crouch up so early in the match, it was rather dismaying for the Remove skipper.

"Eh—yes—no! What do you want?" muttered Stacey.

After the terrible shock he had

received, it was not easy to bring his mind back to cricket.

"What do I want?" repeated Browney blankly. "I want you to bat, of course! We're going on now."

Stacey strove to pull himself together. Whatever happened, appearances had to be kept up. He could imagine—and he did not want to see—the look of contempt and disgust that would have come over Browney's face had he known how matters stood.

"I—I say, put me down the list, will you?" he stammered. "I—I'm feeling a—bit queer—the sun, I suppose—"

Tom Brown drew a hard, deep breath. There was no doubt that the fellow was "queer"; he looked it, if ever a fellow did.

He nodded in silence, and went out of the pavilion. His clouded face drew curious glances.

"Cherry and Vernon-Smith!" he said briefly.

"Isn't Stacey—"

"No; I'm giving him a rest."

Bob Cherry was ready; he had been going on with Stacey. Smithy proceeded to don his pads. He gave Wharton a wink as he did so, and Wharton stared at him.

"Pork Pie's lost!" the Bounder whispered to Wharton, as he was going.

"How do you know?"

"Guess!" chuckled the Bounder; and he followed Bob.

The St. Jude's men, in the field, had expected to see the wonderful new recruit open the innings for Greyfriars. They did not see him, however—and were not likely to see him for some time. Tom Brown's brow was rather knitted. It was amazing to the Greyfriars skipper that Stacey should have conked out like this. He could only hope that his wonderful man would pull round in time to go in next wicket.

Stacey was not thinking of that.

Left alone again, he took the telegram from his pocket and stared at it, as if by staring he could change the message written on it.

But never had a message been plainer and more unmistakable. Instead of the expected "Got home," it was "Not got home"—there could be no mistake about that. He thrust the slip of paper into his pocket again, hardly able to suppress a groan.

Pork Pie had lost! That deceiving "gee" was not, after all, a dark horse; he was the outsider he had been generally supposed to be. The shortening of the odds, which had so encouraged and elated Stacey, was either an error of judgment, or, more likely, some of the dingy trickery inseparably associated with gambling on the Turf. Anyhow, dark horse or outsider, Pork Pie had lost—that was the stunning fact!

To Stacey's credit, be it said, his first dismayed thought was that he would now be unable to send his father the sum he wanted. It was a bitter and crushing disappointment after his high hopes.

But other thoughts quickly followed.

He was not going to receive fifty pounds from Mr. Joseph Banks. It was Joseph Banks who was due to receive eight pounds from him, on his written promise to pay that amount.

He had not eight shillings in his possession. He had no prospect, no hope whatever, of raising such a sum as eight pounds.

He could not pay Banks.

No doubt the man would wait a day or two—two or three days—knowing the difficulty of communication; but he would expect to see Stacey, at latest,

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on the next half-holiday, and he would expect him to bring the money he owed.

Excuses would not be of much use to Joe Banks. The first excuse would open his eyes to the fact that the sportsman of Greyfriars, while prepared to take his winnings if he won, was not prepared to pay his losings if he lost!

What effect would that have on a man like Banks—a man used to welshing, but certainly not to being welshed?

Stacey could picture his bitter anger and resentment at being "diddled" by a schoolboy. And he had the I O U written and signed by Stacey; without that as security for his money, Joe Banks would have done no business with him at all. What would he do with that paper when he found that he was not going to be paid?

Stacey's brain fairly reeled at the thought.

Unless he paid Banks, he was done for at Greyfriars. And he could not pay him. The whole extent of his reckless folly came clearly now before his mind.

He had made himself a position in the school. He had ousted Wharton from the post of head boy of his Form; he was high in the opinion of his Form-master and headmaster; and at home he had brought his rival into something like disfavour with his uncle. He had followed up his own advantage with cool, cynical unscrupulousness, and he was beating him everywhere all along the line! And what was the use if he was to be shown up at Greyfriars by the enraged Banks and kicked out of the school in disgrace? That was the ghastly end of all his cunning scheming!

The perspiration dripped on his colourless face.

He heard, without heeding, a shout from the cricket field. Then Tom Brown's voice fell on his ears, and he looked round, with savage impatience. Cricket now—cricket?

"Cherry's out!" said Tom. "Feeling fit now, Stacey?"

"No! Leave me later!"

Tom compressed his lips.

Stacey was left to himself again. Little enough he cared how the innings was going, and whether he was wanted or not. He sat, oppressed by dark and gloomy thoughts. Somehow, by Saturday, he had to raise eight pounds, or he was lost! That was what his harassed mind was running on now. Could he get it, somehow, from Colonel Wharton—at the cost of any amount of falsehood and subterfuge? Somehow he had to get it, or he was done for! What a fool he had been—what a fool! He did not add, what a rascal!

Tom Brown came back to him a little later.

"Linley's out," he said. "I'm going in. Sorry you've crocked up like this, Stacey, but I suppose it can't be helped. Pull yourself together, if you can."

A savage reply trembled on Stacey's lips. But he checked it. If he did succeed in pulling out of this disaster, all would be well, and no one need know that anything had happened. He nodded.

"Right-ho!" he said. "Leave it at that."

Tom went to the wickets in Mark Linley's place. The St. Jude's men were looking very cheery now. Greyfriars were making a good stand, but there was, so far, nothing "to write home about" in their innings. Wickets were going down for runs. There was nothing in the nature of fireworks! And Brown did not stay long. Perhaps the worry and disappointment about his new recruit cramped his style a little. Anyhow, he was out for two.

Runs came, but wickets went. Peter

Todd, Squiff, Penfold, Johnny Bull, knocked up only a few each. The Bounder was still going strong, but he was stumped in attempting to turn a certain three into a possible four, which was rather in the Bounder's reckless style, and he went out with twenty to his tally.

Hurree Jamset Ram Singh made six, with the Bounder at the other end, before he went. Then Tom Brown, after a glance at Stacey, sent Wharton on. Stacey was left for last man.

"Sorry, old man!" said Browney. "You know I meant to put Stacey on first, but he's crocked, somehow. You'll get him with you, after all. For goodness' sake, old chap, remember you're playing cricket, and forget that you're on scrapping terms with him when he comes on."

"Rely on me," said Harry quietly.

And as he went out to join Hurree Jamset Ram Singh he hoped that Stacey would forget it, too.

Hurree Singh added nothing to his six. The St. Jude's bowling put paid to the dusky Nabob of Bhanipur, and he left Wharton to be joined by Stacey.

Harry looked very curiously at Stacey as he came from the pavilion.

He had to bat now, if he was to bat at all, and he came. He had pulled himself together, to some extent, but it was clear that he was not his usual self.

He had the bowling, and it was in Wharton's mind that he might try to bring off a run-out, as he had done before. But Stacey was not thinking of that—or, indeed, of anything but the black trouble that lay like lead on his mind. Lunn put on his best bowler to deal with that wonderful man, and the field watched keenly and eagerly. And there was a general gasp when Stacey's wicket went down first ball.

"Stacey—"

"Out!"

"For a duck!"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Well, my only hat!"

"If that's their great batsman," Lunn remarked to his bowler. "I wish they had a few more like him—what?"

Stacey's face was red as he went back to the pavilion. And Harry Wharton, with feelings too deep for words, carried out his bat—not out for nil!

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Coming to Blows!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH scowled blackly at Stacey as the latter stood leaning on the pavilion rail.

Stacey had himself more under control now. He was striving hard to dismiss this haunting, unnerving trouble from his mind and think of the matter in hand—which was St. Jude's cricket match. His pride was wounded by the disappointed looks of his fellow-cricketers and the dubious expression on Tom Brown's face.

After all his exploits on the Greyfriars ground, after all the high hopes he had raised, he had crocked up like this, in the first outside fixture in which he had to play. It was a blow to the Remove skipper and all the team. They could not help wondering whether Stacey was, after all, the cricketer they had taken him for.

Somehow, Stacey told himself savagely, he would pull out of the hole he was in, the pit he had dug for his own feet. And if he did, he wanted to keep the position he had won in the Remove. He resolved, almost fiercely, that he would not fail in that match—that he would think of nothing but



Stacey turned, and made a sudden rush at Vernon-Smith, taking him by surprise, and barging him over headlong into a mass of gorse. Smithy roared, as he sprawled there. The next moment, Stacey was racing across the common to catch the bus! "By gum!" gasped the Bounder.

cricket, so long as it lasted, and somehow banish black care, till the game was over. He would not fail—he would not let fellows see that anything was the matter. He would not wear his heart on his sleeve for daws to peck at.

But it was not easy. Black care was like lead on his mind and his heart. He tried to speak casually to his skipper.

"One swallow doesn't make a summer, Brownie. I shan't make another duck. Accidents will happen."

"Well, if you're feeling fit now—" said Tom doubtfully.

"Fit as a fiddle!" said Stacey, trying hard to speak lightly. "Anyhow, we're in no danger. We've doubled their score on the innings, even with my duck and Wharton's."

The Bounder, scowling, broke in.

"You didn't give Wharton much chance to make anything but a duck. He was not out, anyhow."

"Don't rag, Smithy!" said Tom Brown quietly. "That's no good."

He walked away to speak to Lunn, who was looking at the pitch. The Bounder's eyes gleamed at Stacey, who leaned on the rail again, hardly able to conceal his weariness of mind, if not of body.

"You rotter!" said Vernon-Smith, in a low voice.

Stacey started, and stared at him.

"You worm!" went on the Bounder. "Haven't you sense enough, decency enough, to keep your rotten betting and such rot clear of cricket? Are you going to throw away a match for Greyfriars because your dashed gee-gee has lost, you silly fool?"

"What do you mean? I—"

"Think I don't know what that telegram was about?" said the Bounder scornfully. "Think I don't know why you went white as a sheet and looked as sick as a sea-sick monkey? You fool! If you back horses, don't you expect to get

a knock now and then? And can't you take one without crumpling up and throwing away a match for the school?"

The Bounder spoke in a low voice, full of savage anger.

He had been cynically amused at first—but he was no longer amused when he saw the result of that telegram, its effect on Stacey. The Bounder dabbled in such things himself, but he could take what came to him without flinching. For a School match to be lost because a rotten racehorse had lost at Wapshot seemed altogether too thick to Smithy—as, indeed, it would have seemed to all the Greyfriars fellows, had they known.

Stacey's face burned crimson. He saw that the Bounder knew, or guessed. Smithy's taunt struck him hard. He was not, in truth, the fellow to crumple up under a knock; but Smithy did not know how terribly hard this knock had been!

"Pull yourself together!" added the Bounder roughly. "You've lost on your putrid gee-gee. What's that got to do with anybody but yourself? Are you going to let us all down and get us licked because you don't know how to take what you've asked for?"

"You cheeky rotter—" breathed Stacey.

"Oh, can it!" snapped Smithy. "Pull yourself together! By gad, Wharton was right all the time—all along the line—you're not a fellow to be trusted in any team. He was right never to play you when he was skipper, and we were a set of fools to turf him out for it. You're letting Brownie down in his first fixture as captain—letting us all down, you cur, and— Oh!"

Smack!

A back-hander from Stacey, full across the Bounder's mouth, cut short the flow of bitter words.

Stacey was already near the limit of

endurance, and in no state, and no mood, to listen to scornful taunts. Certainly, he deserved every word of it, but that made it no less bitter and exasperating.

Smithy staggered back. The next instant, with blazing eyes, he was springing at the fellow who had struck him.

"Smithy!"

"Stop!"

"What the thump—"

Half a dozen fellows grasped Vernon-Smith and dragged him back in time. Stacey stood with clenched fists and burning eyes. The Bounder struggled to release himself.

"Let me go!" he panted. "Let me get at the cad! You saw what he did! Let me get at him!"

"For goodness' sake, Smithy," breathed Wharton, holding the enraged Bounder fast by the arm, "remember where you are—"

"I don't care! I—"

"We do!" snapped Bob Cherry, with a grip of iron on Smithy's other arm. "Chuck it, you fathead! You can hammer the fellow all you like when we get back. You can't kick up a shindy here."

"Stop it, Smithy!" said Frank Nugent. "And you keep your paws to yourself, Stacey, you cheeky cad!"

The Bounder's face was burning with rage. But he was held back, and he realised, too, that a fight between two Greyfriars men on the St. Jude's ground was rather too disgraceful an episode. Several St. Jude's men were staring on at a little distance, some of them exchanging curious looks. The Bounder, with an effort, choked back his fury.

"All right—let me go, you fatheads—it will keep!" he muttered, and as the juniors released him, he moved away to a distance from Stacey.

Tom Brown came back to the pavilion. It was time for Greyfriars to go into the field.

"All right for the first over, Stacey?" asked Browney. Stacey's utter failure in batting had made him doubtful of his powers in the other line.

"Yes, yes!" muttered Stacey.

"Well, give them jip, old bean!" said Tom.

There were doubts in other minds as well as Browney's when Stacey went on to bowl against Lunn. And the doubts were justified.

He did his best—he tried his hardest to dismiss other matters and concentrate on cricket. But his thoughts wandered—his nerves were in rags. All the sting was gone out of his bowling. It was not merely not good—it was bad—it was such bowling as Third Form fags could have played.

Tom Brown watched it, his ruddy face growing longer and longer.

Lunn made ten in that over. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh took a wicket in the next. The nabob, though not quite so good as Stacey at his best, was incomparably better than Stacey at his worst.

In the third over, Stacey was put on again. Tom Brown hoped against hope that he would improve—instead of which he grew worse.

It made St. Jude's stare. In their first innings Stacey had mowed them down like hay; in their second he was giving them bowling that the last man in the St. Jude's tail could have played with ease.

Tom Brown looked and felt glum. This was the man upon whom he had placed such reliance—this was his prize-packet—his rod in pickle.

It was sheer luck for St. Jude's. Once more the glorious uncertainty of the great game of cricket was exemplified.

St. Jude's, as well as Greyfriars, had rather expected the game would end without Greyfriars having to bat a second time. It had looked like it when their first knock closed. Now there was quite a different complexion on affairs! In the first innings Greyfriars had made 62 and St. Jude's 30. Now, in the second knock, St. Jude's already stood at 40 for one wicket! It was a change of prospects with a vengeance!

Browney decided to give that unreliable bowler a rest. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh and Squiff and Browney himself shared the bowling, with an occasional over from Smithy. In the field, Stacey showed that he had lost his form, as much as in other directions. He dropped a "sitter" from Lunn, and gave that cheery youth a fresh lease of life at the wickets—of which Lunn took full advantage, making a total of fifty before he went out to a catch by Wharton.

Later, Browney tried Stacey at bowling again. He watched him anxiously. But if the new recruit had been rotten before, he was worse now! That over gave St. Jude's sixteen, and Tom did not try him again—it was altogether too expensive!

The St. Jude's knock ended in good time for tea, with a total of 120. Evidently, Greyfriars had to do better in their second innings than in their first if they were going to win that match.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Winning Hit!

"LAST man!" muttered Stacey, biting his lip.

"Yes!" answered Tom

Browney curtly.

"Look here—"

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Stacey's face flushed with anger and mortification.

For the moment he forgot the weight on his mind in his angry resentment. He had come over to St. Jude's as the star man of the team. Now he was ruthlessly relegated to the tail! After the way he had gone to pieces in the game, he could scarcely expect anything else. But it was a bitter humiliation.

"No good talking," said Browney. "Sorry and all that, but we're here to win this match if we can. I'm not blaming you—if I've made a mistake about you, it's my fault, not yours, and if you've crooked up somehow, it's your misfortune, not your fault. But we can't start with a duck's egg, and that's that!"

"Who's opening the innings?" asked Stacey, in a low voice. He guessed the answer before it came.

"Wharton!" answered Browney.

"Wharton!" repeated Stacey between his teeth, and his eyes burned. He had changed places with his rival!

"Yes, and thank goodness we've got him!" said Tom. "Thank goodness he came after all! That's a bit of luck for us—and we want some!"

Stacey said no more; he could not. He threw himself into a seat and, with a dark and sullen face, watched St. Jude's going into the field.

At the bottom of his heart, he knew that Tom was right; he was so obviously off-colour that his wicket was as good as lost, anyhow. But that made it no pleasanter, and his eyes almost flamed when Harry Wharton went out with Bob Cherry to open the innings.

All eyes were on Wharton—he was the hope of the team now! Before Stacey's coming, he had been the best bat in the Remove, and now that Stacey had failed so lamentably, he was the "goods" again!

Hardly a glance was turned on Stacey as he sat sullenly watching. He was nobody now! His bitter thought was that now his rival had a chance of scoring over him.

Wharton was thinking of nothing of the kind. He was only glad that he was there, when he was wanted so badly. Greyfriars wanted 88 to tie, 89 to win, and they would not be easy to get. Wharton was thinking of the game and of doing his best for his side, and he had forgotten Stacey. Certainly, he was glad that Browney had decided to open with him, and he was determined to justify his skipper's choice, if it lay within his powers to do so.

And it did!

Wharton was at the top of his form. He had had no chance in the first knock, but he had his chance now and made the most of it.

There were no "fireworks." He played himself in steadily and carefully, taking the measure of the bowling. His score did not go up by jumps, as Stacey's was wont to do, but it went up steadily, and Tom Brown's face grew brighter and brighter as he watched him.

Other batsmen came and went. St. Jude's bowling was good and the fielding was keen, and the average of runs was low. Wharton, thoroughly set, could not be shifted. He was feeling confident—the happy feeling of the batsman who has an instinct that it is "his day." One after another, men came out from the pavilion and trailed home again, and still Wharton was on the spot.

"By gum," said the Bounder, who was out for fifteen. "Looks like being first in and not out."

"The lookfulness is terrific!" chuckled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh; and in his satisfaction at his chum's success, the

dusky nabob forgot that his own score was a big round nought for that innings.

Seven down for 60—eight down for 82—nine down for 85! Last man in!

"Stacey!"

Wharton had the bowling. Stacey came out to the wickets; and there was a deep breath among the Greyfriars men.

"Fan me, somebody!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"If that cur lets him down—" muttered the Bounder.

"Oh, shut up, Smithy!" muttered Johnny Bull. But he was feeling uneasy himself.

Three wanted to tie—four to win! But Wharton had the bowling—and he was glad of it, as he saw the black and bitter face at the other end of the pitch. Stacey knew that he could not keep his wicket up—neither did he want to do so; he would gladly have thrown the game away to prevent his rival from scoring the winning hit. If the bowling came to him—

It looked as if it might. Once, twice, thrice, the ball came down, and nothing happened. Again it came, and again, and Wharton stopped it dead. The Greyfriars men watching from the pavilion, were on tenterhooks. Every man knew that the game depended on the next hit. If the bowling came to Stacey—only a few hours ago the star of the team—the game was up! And the Bounder, at least, suspected that, whatever the hit was like, Stacey would fail to make the running good.

The bowler seemed incredibly slow in getting going with the last ball of the over.

But it came down at last.

If Wharton failed—

He did not fail! He stepped out to the ball and it went. But Wharton did not run—Stacey had no chance of letting the game down! He knew that it was a boundary—and it was!

Bob Cherry hurled his cap high into the air, careless where it came down, or indeed whether it ever came down at all!

"Four!" gasped Bob. "Four, my beloved 'earers—did you hear me say four?"

"The fourfulness is terrific!" chorled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Bravo!"

"Well hit, Wharton!"

Tom Brown fanned a perspiring brow. "Fancy that chap giving us a jolly old boundary to wind up with!" he said. "Good old Wharton! Good man! Oh, good man!"

There was a rush on the field. Harry Wharton was grabbed, swung on shoulders, and carried back to the pavilion. That last hit had won the game for Greyfriars; and all was well that ended well.

"Hurrah!"

"Bravo!"

"Oh, good man, good man!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

Wharton laughed breathlessly as he was set down. It was a happy moment for him and for his friends. He had saved the game; and, at that moment, past troubles were forgotten and he was as popular as he ever had been in the Remove. And hardly a fellow noticed the white-faced, scowling "star of the team" as he left the field. Stacey's cup of bitterness was full, and envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness ran riot in his breast as he heard the roar of cheering for his rival.

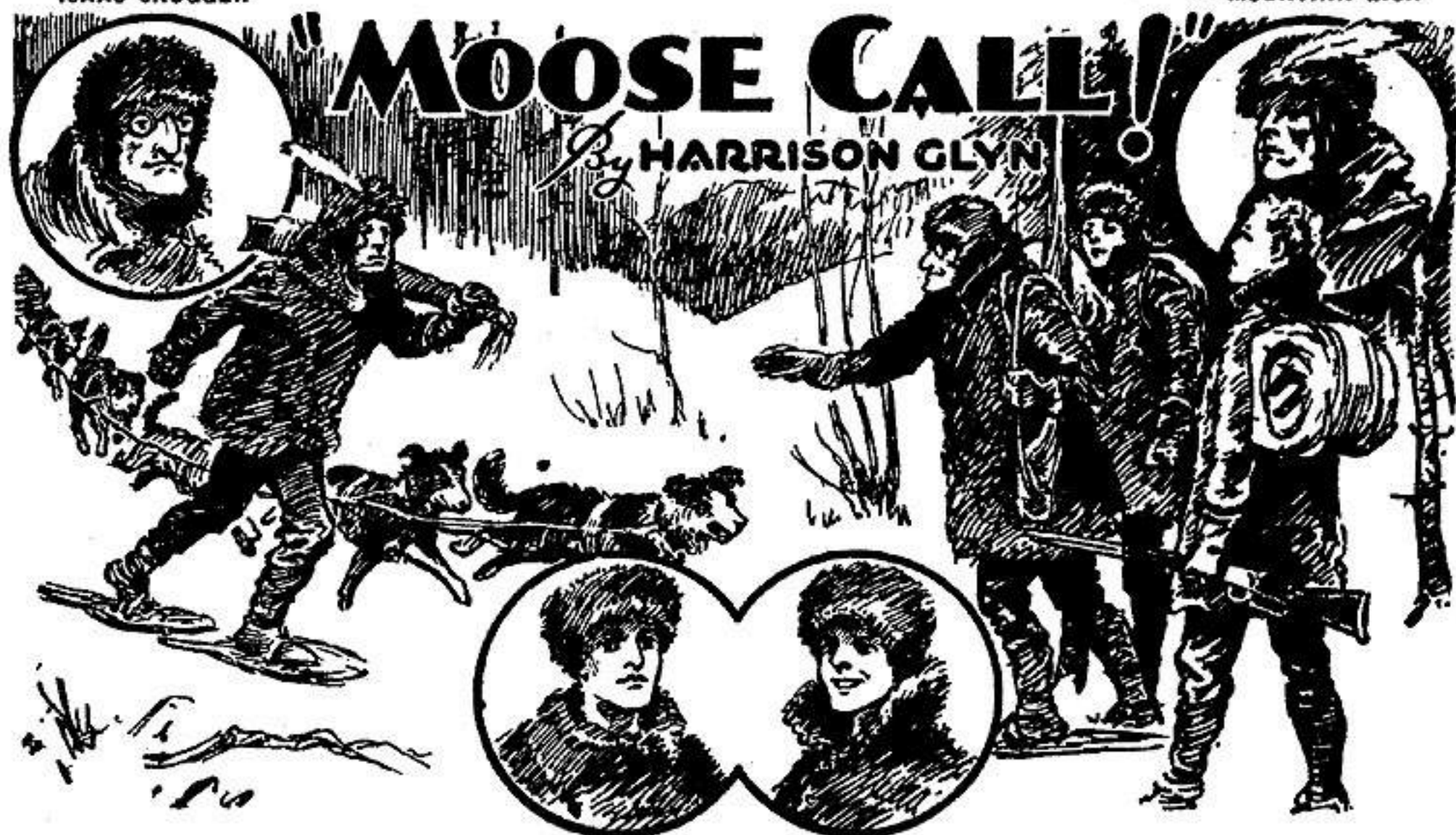
There was a celebration in the Rag after the return of the cricketers from St. Jude's.

Stacey did not join in it.

(Continued on page 28.)

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 Wilnot 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 behind the Great Chief's Head, in the Sunrise Mountains. Eventually reaching the spot, the party discover that it is none other than Amyas Gore's claim.

(Now Read On.)

Ambushed!

SELWYN dropped down on the damp turf on one side of Snugger and Colin on the other. The dogs gathered round. Mountain Lion, pulling at his pipe, sat cross-legged in front of him.

"No wonder Uncle Amyas came down the mountain with those bags of gold-dust, Isaac," said Selwyn. "What a find! There's millions of dollars' worth of dust lying here only waiting to be picked up. And gold nuggets lying in the bed of the stream. Snugger, it must all have been washed down the mountain at some time or other."

Snugger's eyes changed to a merry twinkle.

"Waal, it seems we've tumbled on Amyas Gore's claim all right," he muttered, as he took a piece of the sticky clay and examined the specks of gold that studded it. "Don't think he ever registered it. P'r'aps one of the first things we'd better do is to put in some work around here; then, when we've got plenty of dust, we can go back to Tomahawk and have the claim settled legal and reg'lar."

The party sat up late that night talking things over, and in the morning, as

soon as they had partaken of breakfast, they carried their frying-pan and kettle, saucepan and basin, down to the fast-flowing stream. Heaping soil into the various containers, they crumbled it with their fingers, and then washed it, pouring off the muddy water, until that which remained was crystal clear. And there in the bottom of the tilted can or pan they saw a considerable deposit of the precious, glittering dust.

The mountain stream was icy cold and numbing, but they got used to it, and began to wade the whole length of the arena, peering into the depths in the hope that they might find more nuggets.

They were disappointed, however. That nugget Selwyn had found proved to be a lone friend.

Still, there was plenty of dust to be had for the washing, and, though the work was tedious, they had their pockets well filled by sundown.

Isaac Snugger was as excited as a schoolboy.

"Injun," he said to Mountain Lion, "workin' this claim's the last job of work any of us'll ever do. I shall sell my shanty in Tomahawk and retire from business. I'm going to tour round the world soon's we've raised enough cash. And you say you hid in this place when you was a kid? Funny you never found the gold-dust when you wuz hyar!"

Mountain Lion shrugged his broad shoulders and gave a deep-throated laugh.

"I noticed the yellow, gleaming dust lying in the ground even then," he said. "But I was happy. Roaming Sioux no want white man's gold. But I remembered, and that was why I showed my white brother Amyas Gore where it lay."

The party stayed in the sheltered arena behind the Great Chief's Head for three days, washing gold in their primitive way, exploring, eating, and resting, and then at last decided to return to Moose Call.

"I suppose that was Amyas Gore's shack we saw burning, Snugger," said Selwyn thoughtfully.

"There's no doubt about that," said the Sioux Indian. "The bad white men set it on fire out of revenge."

"And they followed us," said Selwyn. "I wonder how near they got to this place, and whether they saw us come in?"

"They no see," answered the Sioux. "No find trail."

"I s'pose not," growled Snugger, frowning uneasily. "But I ain't feelin' happy in my mind about it. If it wuz that black-bearded John Majoe and his pal Musty who murdered poor Amyas they must have followed him, lost track of him on the mountains, and waited in ambush on that ledge when he kem back. They'd know Amyas got his gold somewhar up hyar. In that case, I figger out they'll be waitin' for us when we go back."

"Isn't there another trail back to Moose Call, Mountain Lion?" asked Selwyn.

"All trails lead the same way," replied the Indian. "Can't go back the way we came in. Nobody could climb up through that polished hole in the rock. Good way back by waterfall."

It was by way of the waterfall the Sioux alluded to that the party of four and the nine dogs started in the warm sun of early morning, on the homeward trail to Moose Call.

They carried their packs upon their backs, the gold they had washed securely stored away with the rest of their impedimenta.

The stake they had found with Amyas Gore's name upon it was buried beneath some heavy boulders, there to remain until they bore Amyas in his coffin up the steep mountain trail.

The mountain stream ran out through a tunnel in the rocks, and as they made a steep climb upward, hanging on to rock, and bush, and branch, to avoid slipping and breaking their necks on the polished stones, they could hear the roar of the rushing waterfall on the other side of the almost unclimbable barrier.

At times the narrow, worn path

which zig-zagged dangerously among the boulders and solid mountain rock, was blocked by thickly clustering bushes, and they had to use their jack-knives to cut a way through.

Eventually they found themselves high on the rocky walls of the chasm which the melting mountain snows and torrential summer rains had worn in the mountain side.

It was risky work going down. Progress was slow, and Mountain Lion had to think of the dogs.

At frequent intervals the party paused to rest.

"How are we going to get back to Tomahawk when we hit Moose Call?" asked Isaac Snugger, during one of those short periods of enforced rest. "The old flivver's burnt up. Can't use a dog sledge in summer, and it ain't a short ten-mile tramp, if you're forced to walk it."

"Best way to stay in mountains," the Indian suggested. "Mountain Lion go with dogs to Sioux camp and fetch Indian pony, then ride to Tomahawk."

"We could wait in the shack if—" Selwyn began.

But Mountain Lion interrupted him vigorously.

"Shack all burned," he said. "Bad white men camped on trail. Mountain Lion fetch Sioux braves. Drive bad white men out of Moose Call."

The day was well advanced by the time they reached an easy track which ran in corkscrew windings down the mountain side.

Suddenly the view opened out, and as they came in sight of the jutting rock known as Great Chief's Head, Selwyn burst into a cry of wondering admiration.

"Look!" he exclaimed. "There it is! What a landmark! The Great Chief watching there to guard Uncle Amyas Gore's gold claim. Won't it be thrilling working it? And when the summer wanes we'll bear Uncle Amyas up there and lay him to rest, as he wished, and leave the Great Chief on guard."

Braang!

Selwyn stood boldly outlined at a point where the trail jutted outward, presenting an easy target to the killers who were lurking somewhere on the slopes below. The whistling bullet sang by close to Selwyn's head.

Quick as thought, Mountain Lion dropped, and pulled him down by the ankles.

Selwyn landed heavily and let out a yell of protest.

"What the—"

Braang!

A second bullet tore its way through the pack on Isaac Snugger's back, and in a flash, Colin pulled him down, too, on to the track.

"Ooh!" howled Isaac, as he drove his knees in among the stones.

The four lay flat, heads scarcely raised, eyes bent on the mountain slopes. About a quarter of a mile below them puffs of smoke were drifting away on the breeze, showing where the killers were ambushed. But no trace of a man showed.

The dogs, roused by the rifle shots, dashed headlong down the trail, backs bristling, fangs showing, and ears pricked up.

Braang, braang, braang!

Three more sharp reports rang out in quick succession, and three of the sledge dogs leapt in their death agony, two of them plunging sheer over the mountain side.

Selwyn heard Mountain Lion give a

deep, harsh grunt as he saw his beloved dogs go hurtling through the air, shot dead by the villains who were lying in wait below. Then the Sioux's shrill whistle rang out, sharp and clear, checking the downward rush of the survivors of the dog team. They swung round, stood for a moment hesitating, and then looked up.

Braang, braang!

Two more shots rang out, and two more dogs dropped upon the narrow track. The murdering villains below had got the range to a nicety.

With a sharp cry, Mountain Lion unslung his rifle, pulled it to his shoulder, looked along the sights, and fired.

Isaac Snugger was fumbling at the green baize cover of his prehistoric weapon, and soon had the heavy butt pressed hard against his shoulder. The light, sharp crack of the Sioux's Winchester was followed by the roaring boom of the muzzle loader.

Watching with intent gaze, Selwyn saw a spit of dust fly from the trail close to where the puffs of smoke had jetted viciously. Quite a larger cloud blew as Snugger's bullet hit close to where the killers were hiding.

With a grunt, the Sioux pointed to the rocks behind and began to wriggle backwards towards them.

Colin leapt up and gained the safe shelter of the rocky screen in a few springing strides, a bullet whistling close to his head as he ducked.

Selwyn tore after him, his body almost bent double to the trail, and plunged down behind a boulder just as a bullet stirred it.

Isaac Snugger edged back, cursing. His long rifle could not be recharged as easily as a modern Winchester. He would have to get busy with ramrod and wad and bullet before he could hope for another chance at their enemies.

The remainder of the dogs were tearing back along the winding path in obedience to the Sioux's shrill call.

Braang, braang!

Two more of them hurtled over, leaving only two alive. As these came leaping to where Mountain Lion lay crouched among the rocks, the Indian's face suddenly twisted in a spasm of pain.

The Sioux began to fire deliberately then, shot following shot, with just about the same pause between.

Looking down, Selwyn could see that the Indian's aim was deadly. When next the killers fired they had changed their position.

Mountain Lion's lips had thinned into a hard and vicious line. His keen eyes were fixed upon the spot where the lurking villains lay. Presently he arose, and, with a sign to his comrades to remain where they were, he began to glide, with low, swift-running steps, trailing his rifle, down the track towards the point of ambush.

Only once or twice his figure showed as he went down, and then only for a fleeting second. And each time it drew a wicked rifle shot and speeding bullet from the lurking murderers. Finally, he vanished altogether.

A full half an hour passed before another shot rang out. Then the crackling echo rang from much farther down the mountain. Soon Selwyn was able to distinguish the sharp crack of the Indian's Winchester from the slightly different reports of the guns the killers were using.

The firing sounded farther and farther away, and as the day began to wane, finally ceased.

The moon was up and the mountain veiled in bluish mist when, at last, soft padding footfalls sounded on the trail, and Mountain Lion's crested head showed up.

As Selwyn, Colin, and Snugger moved to meet him, the Sioux dropped the butt of his Winchester upon the track and leant upon the barrel. His eyes were glinting fiercely and his face was grim.

"Mountain Lion must be the worst shot that ever used a gun," he said with a tinge of bitterness. "He did not hit once."

Colin cried out in dismay as he saw that the Sioux's right shoulder was dyed crimson.

"You have been hit," he cried anxiously.

"It is nothing," said the Indian, shrugging his massive shoulders. "I showed myself to draw their fire so that I might know where to aim. The bullet merely tore the skin."

"And you never got one of them, Sioux?" growled Isaac Snugger.

"No, white father. They have gone back to Moose Call. But I got near enough to recognise them in the setting of the sun. They were the bad white men, John Majoe and Musty Sam Wilmot. They have killed the dogs I loved."

"As they killed poor Amyas Gore," said Isaac Snugger savagely.

"But I shall kill them," the Sioux went on. "If the law allowed I would carry their scalps dangling from my belt."

"Durn me, Sioux," said Isaac, "if I wouldn't like to do that same myself!"

Snugger Has a Plan!

SINCE Mountain Lion was positive that Majoe and Musty had gone back to Moose Call, it was decided that the four comrades should follow in that direction.

They moved off with the keen-eyed Indian and his two dogs leading the way.

The downward journey was quicker and easier, though the upward climb had been long and arduous. They halted for a breather upon the plateau from which Amyas Gore had been flung to his death, and then moved quickly on again.

Selwyn had never felt so fit. The keen invigorating air had rendered him proof against fatigue. The Sioux was all steel and whipcord, while Isaac Snugger trudged along as if even a tramp all round the world would not prove too much for him.

The four comrades arrived at last upon the sloping foothills and sped over these in their downward trek to the clearing in which Amyas Gore had built his shack.

The stars were brilliant overhead, and the moonlight flooded the glade. The shack and the outbuildings, however, were no longer to be seen. Instead, a dull dark patch of charred ashes and debris heaped the spot where the shack had been.

They were moving on stealthily in case Musty and Blackbeard should be watching, when—braang!—a shot rang out sharply.

The bullet whistled amongst them and, as they drew back, their guns ready, the two dogs leapt, barking furiously, past the blackened ruins of the shack and on in the direction of

the new log cabin which Blackbeard and Musty occupied.

Two sharp reports rang out, and the barking ceased.

Mountain Lion's dog team had been wiped clean out, and the Sioux, with a low strangled cry, sprang forward, his Winchester dangling from his right hand.

"No you don't, Sioux," said Snugger, leaping forward and entwining his arms tightly round the Indian. "Blackbeard an' Musty may have a gang of toughs waitin' in the wood. Help me stop him, boys!"

Snugger, Selwyn, and Colin had all their work cut out to hold the Indian back.

"Listen, Mountain Lion," said Snugger. "I've a better idea. Let's get up the hills and make our way round above the shack. Plenty of cover thar. When day comes we'll soon find out if them durn crooks have brought an army along. If it means a battle, thar's plenty of cover. I'm ready to make a bet that their shack won't last much longer than daybreak."

The Sioux ceased to struggle and looked keenly at Snugger.

"You have a plan?" he said.

"Yes," answered Isaac Snugger, with a chuckle. "Dynamite!"

The party hurried back, keeping close to the fringe of the wood, as they mounted up the hills, and were soon making their way round behind the new shack which Blackbeard and Musty had built.

They crept to the edge of the rocky ledge and peered over. The shack showed below them, the cliff dropping steeply down. To right and left of it were dark pine woods, while ahead of it was moonlit glade. There was no sign of life.

They lay for a while listening, watching intently, then edged off towards the boulder screened trail which might so easily serve as a way of retreat for the occupants of the shack.

Suddenly, the Indian made a sign and moved silently away.

It was a good half an hour before he returned from his scouting expedition.

"There's no sign of anyone on the track, or in the glade either," he said. "They must be inside the shack."

Isaac Snugger undid his pack and felt about in it until he found a stick of dynamite with fuse attached.

The moon was fading now, and it grew suddenly dark around them. Unless they flashed a light it was impossible to see, and so they waited for dawn.

As the sky lightened in the east and rocks took shape, Isaac Snugger explained his plan, pointing to the massive rocks in front of him.

"Look at them boulders," he said. "I used to wonder, when I kem hyar to see poor Amyas Gore, how long they'd etay poised above the drop. Dynamite strikes down as well as up. If I light a fuse and throw a stick of dynamite deep down between the boulders, it will explode and hurl tons of solid rock down on that shack an' wipe Blackbeard and Musty clean off the map."

The Indian's eyes lit up, while Selwyn drew a deep breath.

"They're in the shack now, I expect," said Colin, "or one of 'em, anyway, if the other stayed on watch all night. But we couldn't kill them in cold blood."

"Did they care how they murdered your Uncle Amyas?" asked Snugger harshly. "Did they think of sparin' those poor dogs they killed to-day? Would they have felt sorry if they'd shot and killed us? Don't we know that



As the huge boulders came hurtling down, Musty leaped frantically out of the shack. As he did so, Selwyn levelled his gun!

they burnt up the shack? And what about firin' our car and the tent way down the road when we wuz comin' hyar?"

"Lay the dynamite fuse and light it," growled the Sioux. "Then let us go and see the rocks tumble down and smash up the shack like matchwood."

"Sure," said Snugger, as, with chin stuck out and dynamite fuse in hand, he began to mount the rocks.

Selwyn leapt forward and peered down at the log cabin. The windows which looked out upon the hills were shut. If Snugger lit that dynamite fuse the explosion would send an avalanche of rocks hurtling down upon the shack. It would be smashed like matchwood, and if the men were asleep inside they would be blotted out without being given a chance.

Selwyn's sporting instincts rebelled against such an end. He must give the men a chance, even if they were his uncle's murderers. Gripping the Winchester, he leapt down the steep slope, springing from rock to rock, and, reaching the bottom, ran pell-mell till he could see the front of the cabin.

It was furnished with two glass windows and a stout door. The shutters were set back. Glancing up at the rocks, Selwyn saw Isaac Snugger standing among the boulders. He was lighting the fuse.

As Selwyn saw the slow match splutter he knelt and levelled his rifle at one of the cabin windows and fired.

Braang! Crash! Jingle!

The splintered glass fell, and as the tinkling echo died, a man inside the shack let out a yell. A second later bolts were shot back, the door opened, and into the open sprang Blackbeard, rifle in hand.

Selwyn could have shot him as he came, but hesitated, and in that second's pause Blackbeard raced round the shack and hid behind the wall.

Selwyn ducked to cover, which was as well.

Braang!

The bullet from Blackbeard's gun hit the ground close beside him.

John Majoe must have caught sight of Snugger as the Tomahawk solicitor, having dropped his fuse among the rocks, began to make his way back to cover, for his second shot hurled a bullet close by Snugger's ear, and Selwyn saw Isaac throw up his hands and bump down on the rocks.

Isaac was not killed, however, for Selwyn heard him yelling and saying things as he slid from view.

The shot were followed by silence. A brooding stillness hung over the hills and mountains, and as Selwyn watched, a thin line of blue smoke curled upwards from the burning fuse.

Suddenly the other villain showed himself cautiously at the door of the cabin, the barrel of the rifle he held sticking out. Musty Wilnot took a quick look round. Then Blackbeard came running to the doorway, vanishing inside it with a frantic leap and pulling Majoe after him.

A thrill ran through Selwyn's veins. He had roused the two villains, and yet they had gone back inside the shack. He could do no more, and if the exploding dynamite brought down half the hillside and buried the shack and the men with it, so much the worse for them.

Selwyn began to count the seconds, wondering how long the fuse would burn before the explosion came.

Meanwhile, the Indian, Snugger, and Colin had gained safe cover.

Each second seemed like an hour. One, two, three, four—Selwyn lost count. He could hardly breathe for excitement. What fools those men were. They would never have such a grand chance of getting away as this, with

Mountain Lion, Colin, and Snugger lying under cover, and only one boy and a gun against them.

High on the hillside the blue smoke thickened. It was almost time for the explosion.

Suddenly out of the cabin sprang Blackbeard. He had a pack upon his back and trailed his rifle. He started on a zigzag run for the pine wood, and Selwyn, as he fired, saw the villain sprawl headlong, then rise and go on again, leaping from side to side like a jumping bean.

"All right, please yourself, Musty," Selwyn heard him shout. "But there's something wrong going on up in the hills."

As the words echoed, a flash of smoke and flame spread from the cliffs above, and Selwyn saw great rocks hurled high in the air, and the whole front of the cliff fall away and come hurtling downwards.

Lying flat, Selwyn glued his eyes on the cabin door. Musty was doomed! When those rolling thousands of tons of rock hit the shack—

At the very moment when the mighty mass of leaping boulders hurtled downwards, Musty came to the door with a frantic leap and raced away in the direction of the pines, gun in hand.

Selwyn pressed the butt of his Winchester to his shoulder and fired.

The crack of a rifle rang from the hill-top, and, as a puff of smoke jetted and spread, the rocky avalanche hit the cabin with a rending crash and blotted the timber structure out as if it had been made of matchwood.

Majoe had vanished among the pines. Selwyn fired again in the direction of the scared and jumping Musty. Down the side of the hill came the Sioux, followed by Colin, with Isaac Snugger limping in the rear, for he had bruised himself considerably in his fall.

Selwyn started at full speed for the pine wood. Musty, gaining the shelter of a tree, turned and fired at him, the bullet whistling uncomfortably near. Then he ran on.

Selwyn gained the pine wood, dodged behind a tree, and looked and listened. He could see no sign of the two men, but guessed that they were somewhere near, hiding among the sombre trees.

He heard a twig snap, then the rough echo of Blackbeard's voice. He sped in the direction of the sound. Suddenly the coughing splutter of a motor engine stirring into life echoed through the wood. Selwyn heard the car moving away, and later saw it bumping along among the pines. Blackbeard and Musty were in it and crouching low, Majoe steering.

Selwyn fired, and saw his bullet chip a tree. He ran back into the clearing, gaining it just as Colin, Snugger and Mountain Lion came up.

"They've got away!" said Selwyn.
"Yes, thanks to you, Sel," said Colin.
"We ain't got a spice of luck!"

grumbled Snugger. "We couldn't get 'em even with dynamite. Boy, what did you want to wake 'em for?"

Mountain Lion was running at top speed along the clearing, but when the car appeared it was a quarter of a mile away and gaining speed.

Then Snugger's gun roared, and Selwyn uttered a yell of delight as he saw the nearside rear wheel tyre of the car flatten out.

"You've slowed 'em up, anyhow, Snugger," said Selwyn as he took aim again.

But every second added to the distance between them and the car and they saw it go bumping and rocking and swaying along the glade until it reached the road to Tomahawk.

Despite the flattened tyre, the car tore along at forty miles an hour, and was so far away that the comrades were unable to register another hit.

The car gathered speed, and Musty, rising from his seat, waved his gun derisively. A spare wheel showed on the side of the car. Later, the villains would stop the car, change the wheels, and all would be well again. They had made a clean getaway.

Mountain Lion turned to Selwyn.

"Why did the white boy save the bad white men?" he asked solemnly.

"Oh, I had to give them a chance," said Selwyn, shrugging his shoulders. "I couldn't see them blotted out without giving them warning!"

"And now they get away and perhaps come back and kill white boy," said Mountain Lion. "Injun way is best. Kill bad man. Scalp him. Him do no more harm!"

There was a twinkle in his eyes as he smiled broadly at Selwyn and nodded to show that he understood.

"Them durned skunks must be headin' for Tomahawk," growled Snugger, as he began to reload his gun.

"Perhaps Beaver Creek," answered the Sioux. "Or Fort Raymond. And we not catch. Car wheels move faster than white man's feet."

"Injun," said Snugger. "we've got no shelter. We ought to register that claim, and we've got to send the Mounties after Musty Wilmot and Black Majoe. But it's a mighty long tramp to Tomahawk. How the dooce are we going to get thar?"

"Indian pony," replied the Sioux.

"Injun pony, eh? But how are we going to get 'em, Sioux?"

Mountain Lion pointed along the line of the bush-clad foothills.

"Over there, thirty, forty, miles away," he said, "Sioux camp. Big Chief Red Bull have heap plenty-pony, heap plenty braves, and heap plenty guns. Red Bull great man of peace, but him lend plenty pony, plenty braves when Mountain Lion tell him story of the bad white men."

(Look out for further gripping chapters of this popular adventure yarn in next week's MAGNET.)

HARRY WHARTON'S TRIUMPH!

(Continued from page 24.)

He went to his study; and when Ogilvy and Russell went to fetch him down, he snapped at them so savagely that they left him to himself. Billy Bunter gave him a look-in, and narrowly escaped a Latin grammar that was promptly buzzed at his fat face.

Bunter rolled grinning into the Rag. "I say, you fellows, Stacey's fearfully shirty!" he said. "He, he, he! Sulking in his study, like Pontius Pilate in his tent!"

"Do you mean Achilles, you fat ass?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Eh? Was it Achilles? I knew it was somebody or other," said Bunter. "I say, I told you that chap was no good, Browney! You'd better play me next time."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Stacey, in point of fact, was not sulking in his study like Achilles in his tent on account of his inglorious failure at St. Jude's. He had already forgotten the cricket match; other and heavier matters were on his mind. Now that he was alone, the full weight of his disaster seemed to fall on him with crushing force. The bloated face of Joe Banks haunted him—the man that he had to pay, and that he could not pay. He had two or three days respite—and then—

What then?

In the Rag he was forgotten—but one fellow remembered him. That was Herbert Vernon-Smith. Smithy had not forgotten that back-hander at the St. Jude's pavilion, which he had been unable to avenge on the spot. The Bounder slipped quietly away from the Rag and went up to the studies.

He opened the door of Study No. 3.

Stacey was there—and he was going to see Stacey!

But as he looked in, Smithy's expression changed.

Stacey was seated at the study table, his face buried in his hands. He did not look up—he did not know that the Bounder was there. Smithy looked at him in silence. He knew that there was more on the wretched fellow's mind than a failure in a cricket match—and he realised, as he looked at that bowed head and crushed figure, that Stacey had had a harder knock than he had dreamed—that he was in deep waters!

For a full minute Vernon-Smith stood there gazing at the bowed head, Stacey unaware of his presence. Then he quietly stepped back into the passage and drew the door softly shut. Stacey had enough trouble on hand, without the Bounder adding to it—and there was no longer hostility in the Bounder's face as he went quietly away.

THE END.

(The next yarn in this splendid series is entitled "THE BLACK SHEEP!" You can only make sure of the MAGNET, chums, by ordering your copy WELL IN ADVANCE!)



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THE NEW GREYFRIARS HERALD

No. 142 (New Series).

EDITED BY HARRY WHARTON.

June 22nd, 1935.

APPEAL

Coker writes to demand his "proper place in suitable school games." Will charitable fags please give him a trial for hopscotch, marbles, or blind-man's-buff?—Write, G. WINGATE, Prefects' Room.

THE SCHOOL PORTER COMMITTEE

appeal for £4 19s. They promised Gosling a shilling for every year he has been at Greyfriars!

DO YOU BELIEVE IN MASCOTS?

Asks DICK RAKE

If you do, I've got a nice little problem for you!

Inky had a lucky charm which he looked on as indispensable when he played cricket. It was an ugly little ivory image, and he always took it on the field with him for luck.

A fortnight ago he lost it. And right from that time, Inky's game went down till he couldn't seem to do a thing right. He put it down entirely to the loss of his lucky charm.

By a funny coincidence, Stott blossomed forth into sudden brilliance as a cricketer, just as Inky seemed to fizzle out. Stott took on the mantle of the dusky nabob and his bowling became almost as deadly as Inky's at its best.

After he had given a particularly bright display, I tackled him about it and got an explanation. It was the most astonishing explanation imaginable.

"The fact is," Stott told me, having sworn me to secrecy, "I picked up Inky's mascot in the quad a week or two back, and it brought me his cricketing luck!"

That was weird enough. But the sequel is weirder still!

On the following day, Inky found his mascot in the fob-pocket of his flannel bags. He realised at once that he had never lost it, and Stott realised at the same time that the mascot he had picked up was not the famous lucky cricket charm, after all.

Inky promptly recovered his old form as a cricketer and Stott equally promptly lost his! Now, what have you got to say to that, you believers in lucky charms and magic mascots?

Strikes me, the only virtue in mascots is the self-confidence they give to chaps who believe in 'em.

If, like me, you've got plenty of self-confidence already, there's no sense whatever in cluttering up your pockets with a lot of graven images. And if you haven't got plenty of self-confidence already, then you can jolly well get it, anyway—without the aid of mascots!

Inky and Stott are requested to read, mark, and inwardly digest!

Lickham. "Do you think it's wise to do so, sir? It might be an unfriendly tree—"

"We'll take the risk, Lickham. Probably its bark is worse than its bite!" Dr. Birchmell turned round from the window and bawled down the tuckshop stairs: "Jolly! There's an animated roedodendron bush waiting outside. Open the door and tell it to trot in!"

It spoke volumes for the discipline of the rebels that Jack Jolly didn't argue the toss for a moment. Whatever surprise he may have felt inwardly, he went straight up to the door without winking an eyelid and opened it wide.

A few seconds later, the roedodendron bush climbed up the stairs leading to the rebel leader's office. Only then did it fling aside its foliage to reveal a face that was very familiar.

"Herlock Sholmes!" eggshelled the Head and Mr. Lickham together.

"Good-morning, gentlemen!" smiled the famous detective. "Pray excuse me some what unusual guise. In view of what you told me in your letter, Doctor Birchmell, I thought it best to disarm the suspicions of anyone who might be watching from the school buildings. So I disguised as a roedodendron bush."

"My hat!" eggshelled Dr. Birchmell admiringly. "What a wonderful wheeze!" "Merely one of the little devices which are part of the stock in trade of a slooth!" smiled Herlock Sholmes. "And now, my dear doctor, what is the trouble? I understand that you are running a school rebellion on account of being sacked?"

"Fired!" corrected Dr. Birchmell, whose prejudice against slang was as strong as ever. "They gave me the boot, Mr. Sholmes, and put an awful cad in my place. Crule, his name is—Doctor Crule, bust him!"

Herlock Sholmes lit a couple of pipes and fixed his eagle eyes on the Head.

"You have not, I perceive, a very high opinion of Doctor Crule."

Dr. Birchmell uttered a cry of amazement. "Bless my sole! How ever did you discover that?"

"By the application of some quite elementary laws of logic," replied the slooth with an enigmatical smile. "Now, tell me, my dear doctor, how I come into this bizziness."

"With pleasure, Mr. Sholmes," said the Head, whose somewhat shifty green eyes were gleaming now with undisguised admiration. "The fact is, that we—that is, Lickham and I—think there is something fishy about Doctor Crule. We suspect he has some dark,

sinister secret which would get him slung out of St. Sam's on his neck, if it were known. But we can't find out what it is."

Herlock Sholmes nodded thoughtfully. "And you want me to bring his secret to light?"

The Head jumped.

"Mr. Sholmes—how did you guess?"

"Tut-tut! Let us not waste time discussing my methods while there is a mystery to be solved," cried the slooth briskly. "I suggest that we get to work immediately. Where can I see this man Crule, unobserved?"

"I believe I saw him walking towards his underground tortcher chamber a few minnits ago," venerated Mr. Lickham.

"Eggcellent! Doctor Birchmell, you shall show me the way," smiled Herlock Sholmes.

"We will both go disguised, so as not to arouse suspicion. I will don this roedodendron costume again, and we will rig you up, my dear doctor, as a Belisha beacon. Come!"

Five minnits later, a roedodendron bush and a Belisha beacon mite have been seen walking cautiously across the quad. They reached the other side without arousing suspicion, and then hurried along to the ruins of the old St. Sam's monastery, where Dr. Crule's underground tortcher chamber was situated.

From behind some fallen masonry they waited for the Tirant Head to appear.

They hadn't long to wait. In less than a minnit, footprints were heard coming up the stone steps of the crypt. Dr. Crule came in sight.

One glance at him was sufficient. Herlock Sholmes sprang to his feet.

"At's Slim Jim!" he cried. "He's wanted by the perlice all over the country!"

The slooth and the rebel Head made a dash. But they never reached their quarry. Before they could do so, Dr. Crule wheeled round. There was a gleaming ortomattick in his hand, and a smile on his evil fizz.

"Hands up!" he rapped out. "I guessed someone would find me out sooner or later—but now you've learned my secret, it's not going to do you a scrap of good! Down you go into the crypt!"

"W-w-what are you going to do?" gasped Dr. Birchmell.

The Tirant Head's reply sent a shiver down his spine.

"Tortcher both of you till you promise not to give me away!"

"(Birchy" and Herlock have landed themselves in a nice old mess now! Read how they get out of it in the last yarn of this "grate" series in next week's Number—"The Rebels' Triumph!"—Ed.)

BOB CHERRY

reveals truth about

BUNTER'S LOST CLOTHES

Last week, while taking his annual dip in the Sark, poor old Bunter had his clothes pinched. And the problem that has been worrying everybody since is: who was the culprit?

Bunter's clothes, as you well know, old pals, are not a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. They're coated thick with ink, grease, dirt, and jam-stains, and the pockets are morasses of partly eaten slabs of toffee. The only thing of value contained in them is Bunter's solid-gold hunter watch, and that's worth, at the very outside, fourpence.

But, more important even than all that, who the dickens could wear them?

The theft mystified everyone!

Well, I'm now going to clear up the mystery.

Strange as it may sound, the chap who pinched Bunter's clobber pinched it for a very definite purpose.

He was an employee of the circus at Courtfield, and as soon as he saw Bunter's duds lying on the river-bank, he realised they were exactly what he had been seeking for a long, long time.

He was conscious that he was doing wrong—but the temptation was too great. He nabbed Bunter's clobber and fled.

And that night Bunter's purloined clothes figured in one of the most successful turns at the circus.

It was the first time in history, that the performing elephant had turned out in a suit that really fitted it!

GEORGE TUBB says—

HOSKINS' PIANO IS HAUNTED

There's something jolly rummy about Hoskins' piano, and I don't care who hears me say so! I've never been a chap to believe in ghosts and things, myself; but after seeing Hoskins' piano I can jolly well believe anything!

Two chaps were with me when it happened, and they'll support what I say. Their names are Wingate minor, and Bolsover minor.

The three of us had gone to Hoskins' study to work a jape on the old fogey. The idea was to sprinkle colourless gum all over the keys of his piano so that his fingers would get stuck to the jolly old keys as soon as he started playing—rather a bright wheeze on our part, by the way!

But the jape was never worked. When we came to do it, something rummy started happening to the piano that put us clean off our stroke.

The fact is, dear readers, believe it or not, HOSKINS' PIANO STARTED PLAYING BY ITSELF!

My pals and I simply blinked at it, I can tell you! We knew it wasn't an automatic piano, and we could see for ourselves that there was nobody there playing it. Yet we couldn't get away from the fact that it was playing!

We could see the keys moving up and down, and hear the notes being struck—and there was nothing whatever to account for it!

After staring at it for a few ticks, I don't mind admitting that I felt my hair beginning to stand upright on my head. Young Bolsoy and Wingate felt the same way about it, for after a very brief interval, they began edging out of the study. I didn't feel a bit keen on being left alone with it myself, so I followed suit, and in the end all three of us bolted!

Now, what I want to know is: what's the explanation? As I say, I've never been a chap to believe in ghosts and things; but unless you believe the giddy piano was haunted, how the dickens can you account for it playing on its own?

If anyone can give me a satisfactory answer, I shall be jolly glad to hear it!

(Fortunately, young Tubb, we're in the position of being able to explain the "mystery" completely. The fact is, that a large family of mice recently built their nests inside Hoskins' piano, and their antics over the works of the instrument frequently resulted in its starting to play, to all appearances, without assistance! Hoskins has now had the mice cleared out.—Ed.)

A SLOOTH to the RESKEW!

By DICKY NUGENT

"Lickham! I could swear—" "Don't, sir!" said Mr. Lickham, the master of the Fourth Form at St. Sam's, in horror. "Swearing's a very bad habit, and, besides, there are many innerrent ears about just at present."

He jerked his thumb significantly in the direction of a crowd of juniors who were larking about in the tuck-shop below.

Dr. Birchmell snorted.

"Fathead!" he said. "I was only saying I could swear—"

"Please don't, sir!" eggshelled Mr. Lickham. "Even though you're the leader of a rebellion instead of headmaster of the school, you shouldn't swear!"

"You idiot!" roared the rebel Head. "If you'll let me finish, I was going to say I could swear—"

"I hoop you won't, sir!"

"That there's something funny going on in the quad!" yelled Dr. Birchmell. "That's what I could swear, you silly ass!"

"Oh! Well, why didn't you say so at first, then, sir?" asked Mr. Lickham. "Let me have a squint."

Dr. Birchmell, breathing hard, pointed out of one of the upper winders of the tuckshop through which he had been looking. Mr. Lickham glanced out; then he started violently.

"Bless my sole!" he cried. "One of the roedodendron bushes seems to be walking!"

"Eggactly! That was just what I was trying to tell you!" snapped the rebel Head. "I thought I was suffering from delusions for a moment; but if you can see it, too, then it must be so!"

"It's—it's eggstraordinary!" gasped Mr. Lickham, gazing down into the quad. In distonishment. "I've often seen a barn



dance and a door step and an apple turn over—but I've never before seen a tree walk! What on earth is the eggplanation?"

Dr. Birchmell nitted his brows as he gazed down into the quad.

"Ask me another! It's certainly walking—and, what's more, it's making straight for this here tuckshop!" he added eggstidly. "Lissen!"

The two listened, and their serprize became still grater when they heard a deep voice calling out from the roedodendron bush:

"Open the door and lemme in!"

"It's asking us to let it in!" gasped Mr. Lickham. (Continued at top of next column)

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



When the school doctor ordered Billy Bunter to put in half an hour daily on a rowing-machine, Bunter obeyed—for one day! At the end of the half-hour, however, the Owl felt half dead. He gave up, preferring to risk a different sort of "row"!



Horace Coker thinks he knows all there is to know about chemistry. When he conducted a forbidden experiment on his own in the lab., there was an explosion—and Coker lost his eyebrows! Coker was "blown up" in more ways than one!



Monty Newland is interested in architecture, and has completed a model city planned on ultra-modern lines entirely by himself. Newland plans to "build" his future—in which respect he is "streets" ahead of slackers like Skinner or Bunter!



Tom Redwing had a grand chance of winning the Remove sculling championship when he had the misfortune to break a scull near the winning post. Wharton, his strongest challenger, won—but, like the sportsman he is, offered to row the race again.



Bob Cherry has become an expert surf-rider, practising at Fegg Bay, at considerable personal risk. Surf-riding on a narrow board is not so easy as it looks—as Billy Bunter found! The fat Removeite made a "splash" of the wrong kind when he tried!



The new Belisha crossings in Courtfield have already been violated by Coker of the Fifth—though Coker claims it was a pure accident. He says he skidded, luckily doing no damage. Removeites want to know—is Coker (s)kidding?

GREYFRIARS FACTS WHILE YOU WAIT!

WARNING!

The Remove humorists who have dubbed Hoskins "the Camel" because of his loping walk and the funny way he sticks out his neck, had better desist. Poor H. has got the hump over it already, and if it keeps on it's bound to put his back up!

ODD FACT!

We recently gave the Third the wire that Coker was after their blood, and the Third were just in time to fix-up a booby-trap of green paint for him.

We dropped them a hint—and they dropped him a tint!