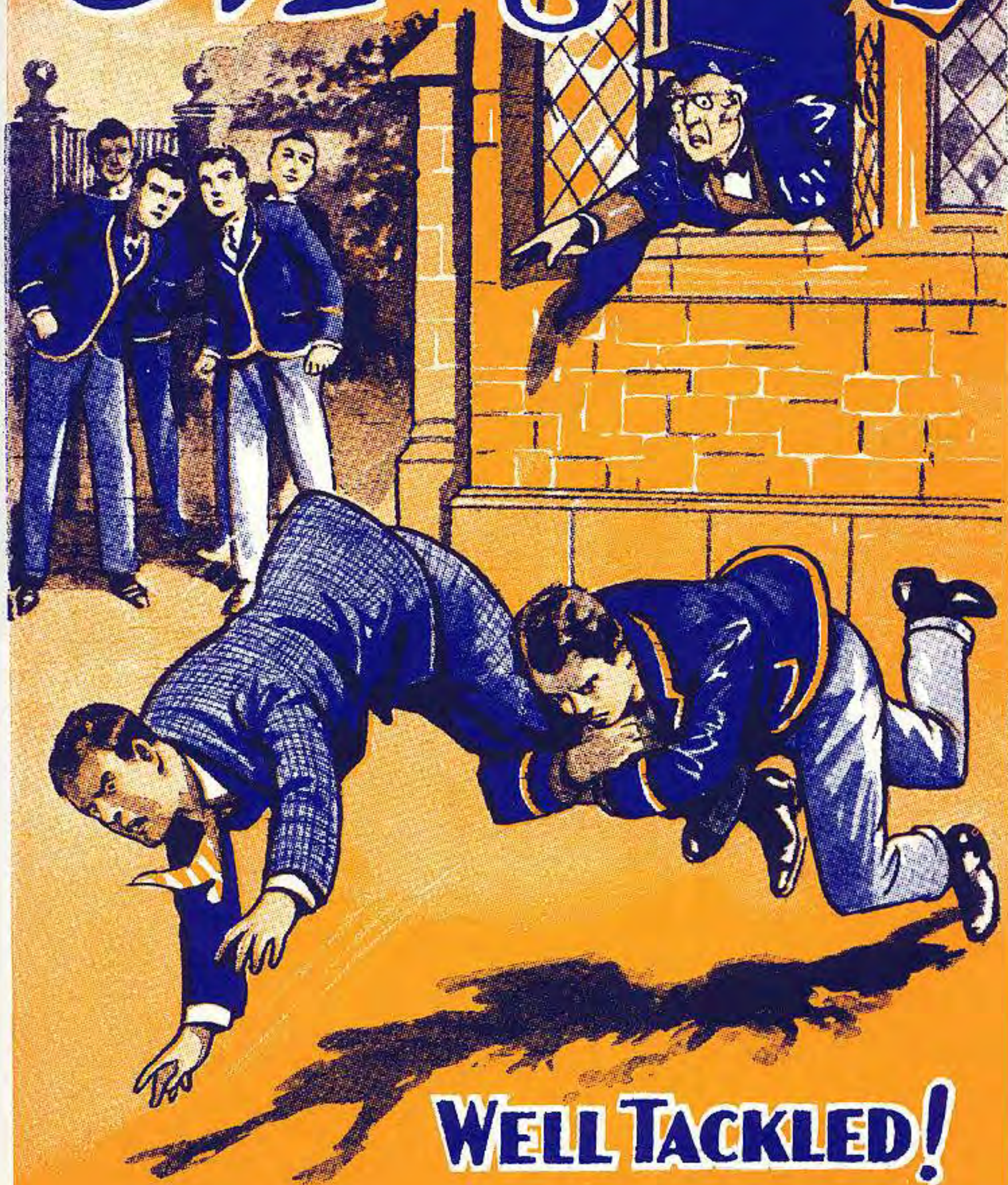


"Bunter Spills the Beans!" THE STAR SCHOOL STORY OF THE WEEK **By Frank Richards**

The Magnet 2^D



WELL TACKLED!

BUNTER SPILLS *the* BEANS!



THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Bunter In Ambush!

WHIZ!
Squash!
"Oh!"

Harry Wharton of the Remove Form sat down suddenly in the snow.

He was taken quite by surprise.

There had been an early fall of snow, and the quadrangle of Greyfriars gleamed white in the wintry sun.

Snowballs had been whizzing that morning. A snowfall was a joyful event to most of the juniors, and most of them had made the most of it. But Harry Wharton was not thinking of snowballs as he crossed to the school letter-box in the wall to drop a letter in. Close by the wall, at a little distance from the box, was an ancient elm, leafless, the massive old trunk glimmering with frost.

Harry Wharton saw no one at hand as he dropped his letter in the box. It did not occur to him that anyone was in ambush behind that frosty old elm; so when a large, fat snowball flew and crashed on his ear he was quite surprised. He gave a gasp, slipped, and bumped down.

"Oh! Oooooogh! Oh!"

He sat and blinked and rubbed his ear, then he stared round him. There was still no one to be seen, there was not a sound to be heard; but it was clear that that snowball could not have flown through the air of its own accord. It had landed on his right ear, and to the right stood the frosty old elm. That, evidently, was the line of inquiry.

Wharton scrambled to his feet, gathered up a large handful of snow, and started towards the elm. A snowball squashing on his ear was neither grateful nor comforting, and he was anxious to discover who had buzzed it. A handful of snow pushed down the back of the buzzer's neck seemed a good idea.

"Oh crikey!" came a startled squeak as he came round the big trunk of the elm. "I say, Loder, it wasn't me!"

"Bunter, you fat Owl!" exclaimed the captain of the Remove.

A fat face and a large pair of spectacles blinked at him. Billy Bunter did not seem to have expected to be rooted out of his ambush. Really he might have thought it probable if Bunter had ever thought of anything—but Billy Bunter seldom did.

But he gasped with relief at the sight of Wharton.

"Oh, only you!" he gasped. "I—I thought it was Loder!"

"You thought it was Loder, you

howling ass!" exclaimed Wharton. "Do I look anything like that Sixth Form tick?"

"Well, I knew Loder was coming to post a letter," explained Bunter. "I heard him tell Walker he was catching the collection, so I cut down here and got behind this tree to catch him with a snowball, you know. I buzzed it when I heard the letter drop in the box. See? I didn't know it was you; I thought I'd got Loder—"

"You got me," hooted Wharton. "right in the ear!"

"He, he, he!"

Billy Bunter chuckled; he seemed to think there was something funny in getting the captain of the Remove right in the ear.

"You blithering Owl—"

"I say, don't yell, old chap!" said Bunter. "Loder may be along any minute, and I don't want him to know what's coming to him. I say, you get a snowball, too, and let's give him one each!"

"You fat ass, it's rather too risky snowballing a Sixth Form prefect—"

"He won't know; he can't see us here!"

Harry Wharton laughed.

As he had spotted almost immediately that the snowball had come from behind the elm, he had no doubt that Loder of the Sixth would do the same if he received a similar missile.

"Better leave Loder alone," he said; "he's dangerous."

"Yah! I'm not funky of Loder, if you are!" retorted Billy Bunter disdainfully. "The beast is too jolly handy with his cane, whopping fellows right and left. And why? Just because he's got a rotten temper; because he's left out of the football, and that chap Warren has got in. He

By **FRANK RICHARDS**

gave me six the other day, making out that I'd been ragging in his study—"

"So you had, you fat duffer!"

"Well, I told him I hadn't," argued Bunter. "It's pretty low to doubt a fellow's word, I think. The cad wouldn't take my word that I hadn't done it, just because he knew I had, you know—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"Well, I'm going to get him—"

"Look here, you ass—"

"I tell you I'm going to get him with a snowball!" snorted Bunter. "I shall have to make another now, owing to you barging in, you ass! You've made me waste that snowball on your silly ear!"

Billy Bunter grabbed up snow in his fat hands and proceeded to knead another missile ready for Loder of the Sixth.

"You howling ass—" said Harry Wharton.

"Cheese it!"

"You'll get a whopping—"

"Well, I'm not afraid of a whopping!" sneered Bunter. "You clear off if you're funky, Yah!"

"You blithering bandersnatch—"

"Oh, shut up! Get out of it—blow you!"

Harry Wharton dropped the handful of snow he had gathered to ram down the snowballer's neck. If Billy Bunter was determined to heave snowballs at Sixth Form prefects he was likely to have enough coming to him.

"Well, I've warned you—" said Harry.

"Will you shut up and get out?" demanded Bunter. "Loder may come along while you're gabbling! Shut up and buzz off, you silly ass!"

Evidently it was a hopeless task to attempt to save the fat Owl of the Remove from his own fatuous fatheadedness. The captain of the Remove walked away, rubbing remnants of snow from his ear, and left him to it.

Billy Bunter gave a snort and prepared his new snowball with great care. Loder of the Sixth was going to get it—and get it hard—as soon as he came to the letter-box. Missile in hand, deep in cover behind the elm, the fat junior waited and listened for footsteps on the path to the letter-box. Bunter was not going to show himself; he was going to wait for the sound of a letter dropping in the box, and hurl the snowball with swift suddenness.

Footsteps!

Bunter breathed hard.

Plop!

It was the faint sound of a letter dropping in the box. The beast was just where Bunter wanted him!

A fat face and a fat hand with a snowball in it appeared round the elm for a fraction of a second—just long enough for Bunter to hurl. He did not give himself time to see at whom he hurled; there was a figure in front of the letter-box, and that was enough. Having hurled, he popped back into cover, grinning breathlessly.

And Jim Warren of the Fifth Form, turning from the box after posting his letter, gave a frantic howl as the snowball plumped into his eye.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Third Shot Lucky!

L ODER of the Sixth burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The astute Owl, in his cover, had made another mistake. Warren of the Fifth, like Wharton before him, had got the missile intended for Loder.

Loder was coming, but he had not yet come. He was on the path, but still at a distance, when he saw the Fifth Former stagger, clap his hand to an eye that was bunged up with snow, lose his footing, and sit down on the spot where Harry Wharton had sat ten minutes ago.

Loder seemed amused.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he roared.

"Oh!" gasped Warren. "Ow! Who the deuce—What the dickens—Oh!"

Loder of the Sixth came up, chuckling. He had a letter in his hand; but, instead of stepping to the box, he stood and looked at Warren as he sat in the snow and chortled.

Had Gerald Loder received that snowball there would have been fireworks at once, but it was very entertaining to see Warren of the Fifth get it. Warren was his rival in Soccer, and had the place in the first eleven to which Loder considered—or chose to consider—that he himself was entitled. Any mischance that came the way of his rival and enemy was a satisfaction to Loder.

Warren staggered to his feet, still clawing at his snowy eye. He gave Loder a glare with the other eye.

"You silly ass!" he gasped. "Do you think it's funny?"

"Well, yes, rather!" chuckled Loder. "Ha, ha, ha! Who got you with that snowball, Warren? You don't seem to be so jolly popular as you fancied."

"Some silly ass—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Behind the elm, Billy Bunter's eyes gleamed through his spectacles. He grabbed up snow for another shot.

Even Bunter might have been discouraged by getting the wrong man a second time. He might have realised that other people, as well as Loder, might come along to post letters that morning. But he heard Loder's well-known voice, and knew he was on the spot. There was no mistaking Loder's hard, rather disagreeable voice!

Bunter was sure of his man now.

While Loder roared with laughter at Warren's mishap, the fat Owl got going again. He peered cautiously round the elm. This time he peered a little more carefully. He did not want to land Warren with another. Loder, with his letter in his hand, was standing with his back towards Bunter.

Nothing could have been more favourable.

Whiz!

Squash!

Bunter popped back as the snowball crashed and squashed in the back of Loder's neck!

Loder gave a fearful yell.

Taken by surprise, he staggered forward as the snowball crashed, and pitched into Warren.

"Here, hold on!" gasped Warren.

Loder clutched at the Fifth Former to save himself. The letter in his hand dropped into the snow unheeded. He hung on to Warren, spluttering.

"Ooogh! What—who—ooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Warren. It was his turn to laugh. "That's one for you, Loder! Funny, ain't it?"

Loder did not seem to think it funny. All the fun of the fair seemed to have departed so far as Loder was concerned. He detached himself from the Fifth Former, and glared round for the snowballer, red with rage.

"Who—" he roared.

His assailant was not to be seen or heard. Loder, like Moses of old, looked this way and that way; and there was no man. Billy Bunter was not likely to show himself at that moment.

Unfortunately for Bunter, Loder jumped to it, as Wharton had done, that the snowballer was parked behind the elm. Having jumped at that conclusion, Loder of the Sixth jumped at the elm—and at the sight of a fat figure behind it, jumped at Bunter!

"Bunter!" he roared.

Bunter barely dodged a clutching hand.

Next to eating, tattling is Billy Bunter's great delight. This week, he has an item of amazing news to impart to all and sundry "in strictest confidence!"

"I—I say, Loder, it wasn't me!" he yelled. "I'm not here—I mean I wasn't did it—I never wasn't—I wouldn't didn't—oh crikey!"

Bunter bolted.

"Stop!" shrieked Loder. He leaped after Bunter.

"Oh lor!"

Bunter fairly bounded. After him bounded Loder. Puffing and blowing, his spectacles slipping down his fat little nose, Billy Bunter fled for his life. After him flew Loder.

In ordinary circumstances, the Owl of the Remove would have had no chance in a foot race with a long-legged senior. But these circumstances were not ordinary. Bunter put on a turn of speed that was really miraculous, considering the weight he had to carry. His feet seemed hardly to touch the ground as he flew.

Across the quad went Bunter, heading for the House, like a fat rabbit for a burrow. After him thundered Loder.

Fellows on all sides spotted the chase, and stared, and shouted encouragement.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" roared Bob Cherry. "Go it, Bunter!"

"Put it on, fatty!" bawled Johnny Bull.

"Put it on terrifically, my esteemed fat Bunter!" gasped Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You're winning, Bunter!" yelled the Bounder. "Keep it up!"

"Ooogh!" gasped Bunter, as he flew. "Ooogh! Wooogh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"He's just behind you, Bunter!" howled Skinner.

"Hop it, Bunter!"

"Go it, old fat man!"

"Ooogh!" spluttered Bunter.

Bunter was going it—going it strong! He reached the House steps, and went up them like a plump rocket. After him went Loder. Bunter vanished into the House—Loder vanished after him. In the quad there was a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jim Warren, standing by the letter-box in the distance, still rubbing one eye, watched the wild flight of Bunter and the fierce pursuit of Loder, with the other, and grinned. He was turning away from the spot when he discerned the letter Loder had dropped, and forgotten in his fierce chase of the hapless Owl of the Remove.

As Loder had evidently intended to post that letter, Warren stepped towards it, and stooped, with the intention of picking it up and dropping it into the box.

Then he suddenly stopped—staring at the letter. It lay in the snow with the address upward; and he could not help seeing the address on it as he stooped over it. And the address was:

"Captain Warren,
"Warren Croft,
"Surrey."

For a long moment Jim Warren stood staring at that letter—addressed by Loder of the Sixth to a man of Warren's name; a man whom Loder certainly did not know, and had never seen. Then, setting his lips, Jim picked up the letter, and with it in his hand, walked away to the House.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Hide-and-Seek!

M R. QUELCH frowned.

The whole Remove grinned.

That is to say, the whole Remove with one exception. Billy Bunter was not there to grin. Probably he would not have felt like grinning had he been there.

When the bell rang for the school dinner, as a rule, Billy Bunter was the first to obey the summons. Often late for class, unpunctual in most other matters, Bunter was never late for a meal. Punctuality is said to be the politeness of princes. The politest prince had nothing on Bunter in the matter of punctuality at meal times.

But now he was late! Almost for the first time on record, if not for the very first time, there was a meal—but no Bunter!

He was not only late, he was very late! He did not, in fact, turn up at all. His place at the Remove table in Hall remained empty. Bunter, evidently, was remaining empty, too.

And there was steak-and-kidney pie! It was almost tragic to think of Bunter missing steak-and-kidney pie. Bunter loved steak-and-kidney pie with a love that was loyal and lasting.

But, as the poet has remarked, the course of true love never did run smooth! Steak-and-kidney pie was there waiting for Bunter—but Bunter was not keeping the tryst!

Quelch frowned. He was a whale on punctuality. He had asked Wharton, his head boy, where Bunter was. Wharton did not know.

Nobody knew—least of all, Loder of the Sixth. Loder was very anxious to know.

Bunter had dodged him after getting into the House. Loder had hunted him.

high and low. He had drawn the Remove studies, and the Rag, the stairs and the passages and the box-rooms—he had even drawn the Fourth, Shell, and Fifth studies. Bunter had vanished. Loder had been so busy hunting Bunter that he had had no time to change; and there was a clammy, uncomfortable feeling of melted snow down the back of his neck as he sat at the prefects' high table. And the expression on Loder's face hinted of what was to come to Bunter when he did turn up.

Steak-and-kidney pie was faithfully dealt with by a hungry Remove, and still there was no Bunter. Quelch's frown intensified.

He was not alarmed for Bunter's health. Missing a meal was not likely to hurt Bunter—it was more likely to do him good than harm. But it was against all the rules, all the laws written and unwritten, for a fellow to cut dinner. Certainly, it was an offence that Bunter was not prone to commit. He could, in this case, at least, claim the indulgence due to a first offender.

"Wharton!" rumbled Mr. Quelch.

"Yes, sir!"

Apple turnover was following steak-and-kidney pie. But the captain of the Remove politely turned his attention from apple turnover to his Form-master.

"It is very singular that Bunter is absent!" said Mr. Quelch. "Do you not know what has become of him?"

"I—I think he's in the House, sir. I saw him go into the House shortly before the bell rang. He—he seemed in rather a hurry."

Whereat the Remove grinned again.

"He must have heard the dinner-bell!" snapped Mr. Quelch. "Perhaps you know where he is, Todd?"

"No, sir!" said Peter Todd.

"Does anyone here know where Bunter is?" barked Mr. Quelch.

Loder, at the high table, caught that question. He bent his ear to catch the answer. Loder of the Sixth wanted very much to know where Bunter was. But the answer came:

"No, sir!"

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips and dropped the subject. Dinner ended, and the Greyfriars fellows marched out. Harry Wharton & Co. went into the quad, with smiling faces. They were wondering where Bunter was and how long he was going to keep up this game of hide-and-seek.

Loder of the Sixth came out, with his ashplant under his arm and a grim look on his face. He called to the chums of the Remove.

"Haven't you seen Bunter?"

"Not since the foot-race, Loder!" answered Bob Cherry.

Loder scowled at him.

"He can't be in the House!" he snarled. "Where is the young scoundrel hiding himself?"

"O where an' O where can he be?" murmured Bob.

"The wherefulness is terrific!" said Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh solemnly.

Warren of the Fifth came down the House steps, glanced round, and came across to Loder. He had a letter in his hand.

"Loder—" he began.

Loder gave him a stare and turned his back. Warren coloured.

"Look here, Loder, I want to speak to you! I—"

Loder walked away.

He wanted to hunt for Bunter, and it was a satisfaction to him to snub the Fifth Form fellow. Warren stood, with flushed cheeks and a gleam in his eyes, the letter still in his hand.

Harry Wharton & Co. sauntered

away. Jim Warren, with set lips, went back to the House.

"Pig!" remarked Johnny Bull. He was referring to Loder.

"The pigfulness of the esteemed Loder is terrific!" remarked Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

"Where can that howling ass Bunter be?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Look!"

The Famous Five were passing along by Masters' Studies. Bob made a gesture towards Mr. Prout's window.

The lower sash of that window was up. A face was peering out into the quad. But it was not the portly, fruity face of Prout, the master of the Fifth. It was the fat countenance of William George Bunter!

"Bunter!" gasped Harry Wharton.

"In a beak's study!"

"Oh, the ass!"

The mystery of Bunter's disappearance was solved. He had taken refuge in a Form-master's study, where certainly nobody would have thought of looking for him.

A beak's study was rather a dangerous refuge. No doubt it was a case of any port in a storm; but Bunter, in Prout's study, was rather in the situation of Daniel in the lions' den. In his terror of Loder, Billy Bunter dared to be a Daniel!

The fat junior was blinking out cautiously. His eyes and his spectacles fell on the Famous Five, staring at him, and he popped back in a hurry. Then he discerned the fact that they were Removites, and his fat face and spectacles reappeared at the window.

"I say, you fellows!" squeaked Bunter.

The Famous Five came up to the window. They were grinning—they could not help grinning—at Bunter's antics. But they were also concerned for the hapless fat Owl.

"I say, you fellows, is Loder about?" gasped Bunter. "I say, dud-dud—does he look waxy?"

"Well, not in the very best of tempers!" said Bob Cherry. "Sort of shirty!"

"Oh dear!"

"Better get it over, old fat man!" said Harry Wharton. "You can't expect to snowball a prefect without something to follow."

"I—I dare say he will calm down if—if he's given time," mumbled the fat Owl. "I—I don't want a whopping from Loder, you know. I say, you fellows, d-d-do you think he'll forget about it if—if he doesn't see me this afternoon?"

"I think he's got rather a good memory, old fat bean!" chuckled Bob.

"Oh lor'!" groaned Bunter.

It was a half-holiday that afternoon. So, as there were no classes, it was practicable for Bunter to keep out of sight—so long as he was not rooted out of his hiding-place. But if the fat Owl was waiting for Loder to calm down and forget that he had been snowballed in the back of the neck, it did not seem a hopeful prospect to the chums of the Remove. They rather fancied that Loder's wrath would improve, like wine, with keeping. But that was the only straw Bunter had to cling to. Anyhow, he was postponing the hour of reckoning.

"I say, you fellows, do you know where Prout is?" asked the hapless Owl. "He naps in this study sometimes after dinner. I don't want him to find me here if he barges in."

"I wouldn't recommend it!" assented Bob. "But I think I saw Prout walk out into the quad with Capper—"

"Oh crikey! If he sees me here—" Bunter disappeared from the window. His fat voice proceeded from behind the shelter of a curtain. "I say, you fellows, I'm awfully hungry! I say, I had to miss dinner! I say, what was there for dinner?"

"Steak-and-kidney pie!"

Groan!

It was a deep groan, expressive of Bunter's anguish of spirit!

"And apple turnover—"

Groan!

"I've got some toffee, old chap!" said Bob sympathetically.

"Oh, good! Chuck it in!"

Bob Cherry tossed a packet of toffee in at the window. There was an immediate sound of gobbling.

"Look here, Bunter, you ass!" said Harry Wharton. "You can't park yourself in a beak's study for ever. You'll get whopped if Prout catches you. Come out and get it over."

"Beast!"

"That's good advice, old fat man," said Bob.

"You want me to be whopped, you beast!"

"You howling ass—"

"I say, you fellows, I'll tell you what!" Bunter's voice, muffled by toffee, came from behind Prout's window curtain. "You keep watch, and let me know when it's safe to drop from the window. Then we'll get down to Courtfield, and you can stand me a dinner at the bun-shop! If you all club together, you'll have enough—"

"Oh crumbs!"

"I'll settle up later, when my postal order comes. I think I told you I was expecting a postal order."

"Oh scissors!"

"And look here, you fellows, you stand by a pal, and I'll ask the lot of you home to Bunter Court for the Christmas holidays! There!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at! I say—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Here comes Prout!"

"Oh crikey!"

The window-sash closed down swiftly. Bunter was heard no more. Harry Wharton & Co. walked on, as Mr. Prout and Mr. Capper came majestically along the path by Masters' Studies.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

Bunter is Mystified!

BILLY BUNTER groaned. He had gobbled till the toffee was finished. Now he groaned.

The fat Owl of the Remove was up against it. Loder of the Sixth was rooting over the school for him, with an ashplant ready for him if found. In a beak's study he was safe from Loder—but not from a beak. There was a chance—a slim chance—that, given time, Loder might get over his bad temper and take a milder and more lenient view of the episode of the snowball. But Bunter had to realise how very slim that chance was.

In the meantime, he had missed his dinner. With Prout in the quad, he dared not attempt to escape by the window and get out of gates. And he could not help realising that the Famous Five, sympathetic as they were, had not jumped at the idea of pooling their resources, to stand him a dinner at the bun-shop in Courtfield. Pooling all their available cash, and spending a half-holiday watching Bunter eat, did not seem to have evoked their enthusiasm. It was, as Bunter dimly realised, a selfish world!

At least, there was a good fire and a comfortable armchair in Prout's study. The toffee had staved off the fiercest of pangs of famine. Bunter was not so badly off, so long as Prout did not come in. Perhaps "Old Pompous" would be going for one of his walks that afternoon, being a half-holiday. In that case, Bunter was safe in his hide-out; nobody else was likely to come to Prout's study.

He settled down in the armchair, with an uneasy eye on the door. And then, as a culminating blow in a series of misfortunes, the telephone-bell rang.

Really, it needed only that. That putrid telephone-bell had to ring; and, of course, it would bring somebody to the study!

"Beast!" hissed Bunter.

He bounded out of the armchair, and

Warren Croft!" went on the deep voice. "It was my intention to ask Mr. Prout's leave to speak to Warren, of his Form. If he is absent, however, I suppose he would have no objection to my doing so. Please ask J. Warren of the Fifth Form to come to the telephone."

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter.

Bunter rather liked J. Warren of the Fifth Form. Warren had once chipped in to restrain Loder's exuberance when the bully of the Sixth was applying the ashplant to the fat Owl's tight trousers. That, indeed, had been the beginning of Loder's enmity for the new fellow in the Fifth.

So Bunter would willingly—indeed, gladly—have called Jim Warren to the telephone to speak to Captain Warren at Warren Croft.

But—Bunter could not leave Prout's

speaking to the Fifth Former. Why the thump couldn't the man write instead of phoning? Bunter wondered indignantly. But the fact that he was phoning from such a distance as Surrey showed that it was urgent—which meant that the beast was sure to ring again if he was shut off. Really, it was very awkward for Bunter, whose affairs, of course, were of infinitely greater importance than those of the Warren family.

Then Bunter had a brain-wave.

He had rather a trick of imitating voices; and, anyhow, a buzzing telephone on a long-distance call would account for a difference in voice. It was easy to answer as Warren. The captain, at the other end, would suppose that J. Warren had been called to the phone as requested.

That would satisfy the beast, and



Whiz! Squash! Billy Bunter let fly with the snowball, and it crashed and squashed in the back of Loder's neck. The Sixth Form prefect gave a fearful yell, staggered forward, and pitched into Warren. "Here, hold on!" gasped Warren. The letter in Loder's hand dropped into the snow, unheeded.

clutched the receiver off the hooks before the unpleasant instrument had time to give a second buzz. At any cost, the beast at the other end had to be shut off! He had to be shut off—quick. A telephone-call for Prout was a matter of very little consequence compared with the importance of Billy Bunter remaining undiscovered in his hide-out.

"Hallo!" breathed Bunter into the transmitter. "Prout's out!"

"Is that Greyfriars School?" came a deep voice that Bunter had never heard before. "Mr. Prout?"

"Prout's out!" gasped Bunter.

"Eh—what? Please take a message, then!"

The man at the other end no doubt supposed that a servant was taking the call, Prout being out. Bunter glared at the telephone. He was certainly going to take no message. He would have shut off instantly, but for the probability that the beast at the other end would have rung again—and next time the bell might bring somebody to the study.

"Captain Warren speaking from

study. Not for Jim Warren or for all the Jims and Jameses in the wide world would Bunter have risked running into Loder of the Sixth!

"Do you hear me?" went on the deep voice that had a pleasant ring in it. "I desire to speak to my—to J. Warren very particularly. Please get him to the phone at once!"

"Oh, yes! Um!" gasped Bunter.

"Is—is that Warren's uncle speaking?"

"Eh—tell Warren that it is Captain Warren speaking."

"Oh, yes! All right! Hold on!" gasped Bunter.

He stood with the receiver in his fat hand, blinking helplessly at the instrument. He could not call Warren of the Fifth without leaving the study. He could not ring off without Captain Warren ringing again.

Bunter was quite at a loss.

He thought of saying that Warren was out, like Prout. But that only meant that the captain might ring up again, probably soon, if he was, as he stated, very particularly anxious of

Bunter would have done with him. He grinned at the idea.

He put his capacious mouth to the transmitter again.

"Hallo! Are you there? Warren speaking."

"Is that you, Jim?" came the deep voice.

"Yes!" breathed Bunter.

He made his fat voice husky, as if he had a slight cold. The man at the other end noticed it at once.

"I hope you haven't a cold, Jim?"

"Oh, no—I mean, yes! Just a trifle!" "I'm glad I'm able to speak to you, Jim! I've just got definite news, and it's settled. I got the appointment."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

It was difficult for Bunter to make any other reply, as he had not the faintest idea of what Captain Warren was talking about.

"You think you'd like a trip to Africa, Jim?"

"Af-Af-Africa!" gurgled Bunter.

"D-d-did you say Af-Af-Africa?" THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,451.

"My dear boy, I suppose you have not forgotten that Abyssinia is in Africa!"

"Ab - Ab - Ab - Abyssinia!" stuttered Bunter.

"It means so much to us both, my boy. I have my pension, of course, and I pick up a little here and there; but I have had to have help from my brother Arthur, and it is not pleasant." The captain's voice was a little bitter. "I made a mistake in bringing back a game leg from the Sonme!" Then a cheery note came into the voice again. "But the game leg won't worry me out there. I can train native troops with a game leg, Jim."

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Yes!"

"It's a good appointment, Jim. Your education, of course, is on my mind a lot. But you're getting this term at Greyfriars. And it could hardly last over the end of this term, could it, in the circumstances?"

Bunter gaped.

Why Jim Warren couldn't stay on at Greyfriars over the end of the term was a mystery to him. There was no reason why the son of Sir Arthur Warren, the wealthy baronet, should not stay on at Greyfriars as long as he liked, so far as Bunter could see.

"James is a difficulty," went on the captain. "But I understand that James is behaving himself better now, and, though I have not heard from him, I believe he is in decent company and keeping out of mischief."

"J-James!" stuttered Bunter.

"Your Cousin James."

"Oh! Ah! Yes!"

Bunter remembered James Warren, Jim's cousin. He had reason to remember him. James had kicked him.

He knew—all Greyfriars knew, for that matter—that Jim's cousin of the same name as himself was staying at Popper Court, a few miles from Greyfriars.

That residence was let to a young man named Clarence Cook, who had a rowdy party there, and James Warren was one of the party.

Clarence Cook and his racing friends were hardly to be called "decent company" for any youth; and it was clear from the captain's words that he did not know where James was or what he was doing.

"Some arrangement will have to be made about James," went on the captain. "Possibly, if he really is improving, he might be willing to be placed at school. He was very unwilling before, but I have hopes of him now."

"Oh crikey!"

"Eh—what did you say, Jim?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"Anyhow, I shall consult Sir Arthur by telegram. He is at Hong Kong now, and remaining there for some time before proceeding. Of course, James could hardly go to Greyfriars, even if

he were willing, after you have been there. Some other school—Rookwood, perhaps—but that will have to be thought out. You will leave at Christmas, Jim, and very soon afterwards we shall be on our way to East Africa. You like the idea?"

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "Fine!"

"Although you like Greyfriars so much, my boy, I do not think you will be sorry to leave, after all the talk there has been. Of course, I never foresaw that any boy at the school would know James by sight. The young rascal deliberately cleared off when Colonel Wharton and his nephew came to see him here in the holidays. I never even dreamed that Wharton had met him by chance. Anyhow, it could hardly have lasted longer than the present term. You've had one more term at school, Jim, than we could have expected; when you left your last school it was the finish, if this hadn't turned up."

Bunter's head seemed to be turning round.

Captain Warren was, he knew, the younger brother of Sir Arthur Warren, uncle to Sir Arthur's son, who was—or was supposed to be—in the Fifth Form at Greyfriars.

Apparently, he was planning to take Warren of the Fifth with him when he went out to East Africa after Christmas.

It was all very mysterious to Bunter.

"I thought I'd tell you at once, Jim, now it's definite," the captain's voice went on. "I'll write full details. Good-bye, my boy!"

"G-g-good-bye!" stammered Bunter.

The fat junior replaced the receiver. He stood blinking at the telephone in amazement. He could not make head or tail of what Captain Warren had been saying.

Still, the beast was satisfied now, and would not ring again. That was the important point.

It did not really matter much what Captain Warren meant, or whether he meant anything at all, so long as Bunter remained safe in Prout's study. The fat junior returned to the armchair—and forgot all about Captain Warren and his mysterious remarks in his uneasy fear that "Old Pompous" might roll in and find him in the study.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Whip Hand!

LODER of the Sixth stamped angrily into his study and threw his ashplant down on the table with a crash.

He had hunted Bunter high and low since dinner, and had failed to find him. And he had another annoyance on his irritated mind. He had remembered the letter he had dropped when the snowball smote him; he had gone to look for it, and found that it was no longer there.

That meant the trouble of writing the letter over again; neither did Loder want that letter to meet a lot of eyes and reveal to the Greyfriars world generally that he had written to Captain Warren, at Warren Croft, Surrey.

Altogether, Loder was in an exceedingly bad temper when he stamped into his study, hurled his ashplant on the table, and slammed the door shut. Then he became aware that the study was not empty. An athletic, fair-haired fellow stood by the window—and he turned to Loder. It was Warren of the Fifth.

Loder gave him an angry glare.

"What the dickens are you doing in my study?" he snarled. "Who asked you here, I'd like to know?"

"Nobody!" said Jim cheerfully.

"Well, get out!"

"I've got to speak to you. I tried in the quad—"

"I want to have nothing to say to you—a fellow in a false name—a spoofer and impostor!" said Loder venomously.

"So I came in here to wait for you, and here I am!" said Warren calmly. "I picked up the letter you dropped at the letter-box, and here it is."

He threw the letter on the table.

Loder stared at it, and then at Warren.

"Oh!" he said. "I see!" He sneered. "I suppose you've seen the address—you know I've written to James Warren's uncle."

"I could not help seeing the address, as it was staring me in the face. I want to know what you are writing to my home for."

Loder laughed. He sat on the corner of the table facing Warren, and swung his legs.

"I don't mind telling you," he said. "I intended it to come as a surprise to you; but since you've seen the letter, I'll tell you. I'm going to show you up in your true colours here. You've beaten me more than once; but I've thought of a way of giving you the K.O., and it's coming to you."

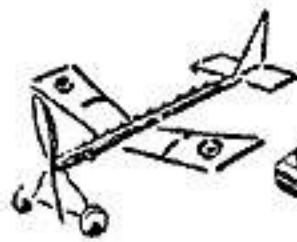
Warren did not look alarmed. He looked amused and contemptuous. Gerald Loder's brow darkened.

"You came here at the beginning of the term as James Warren, son of Sir Arthur Warren, Baronet!" said Loder, in measured tones. "Nobody would have supposed anything different—had not young Wharton of the Remove known the real James Warren by sight. Price of the Fifth heard him tell you to your face that you were not the real James Warren."

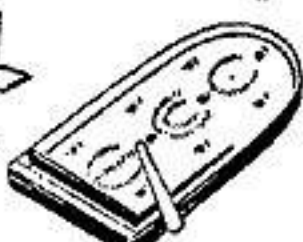
"Are you raking all that up again?" asked Warren, with a yawn. "Price isn't telling that old tale now."

"You've stuffed him, somehow," said Loder. "Never mind that! I don't say I should have taken much stock in it had not that other James Warren turned up—the loafing outsider who's staying with that rowdy crew at old Popper's

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place. That fellow fits Wharton's description of the real man. You don't—not in the least. Wharton won't speak a word—but I had all that from Price, before you got round him. Then, the other day, a letter came from Sir Arthur Warren at Hong Kong—and instead of opening it, as his son would have done, you took it to that sweep at Popper Court—and I watched you."

"You ought to be a detective!"
"I'll detect you fast enough, anyhow," said Loder. "It's perfectly plain to me that that blackguard at Popper Court is the real man. Why he's letting you carry on in his name here, I don't know. You must have fixed it up with him somehow. What do you fancy the Head will think when he hears that Warren of the Fifth is an impostor? You'll get booted out of Greyfriars so quick it will make your head swim."

"Is that all?"
"You think I've got no proof?" jeered Loder. "That cad at Popper Court won't own up; you won't—and there's no proof. You dodged seeing a chap who came over from Oakshott, his last school. You've persuaded young Wharton, somehow, to hold his tongue. You think you're safe. Well, you're not. I can't bring a man over here from Oakshott to identify James Warren. But I can bring James Warren's uncle!"

"James Warren's uncle?" repeated Jim.
"Exactly! I've been finding a few things out," said Loder. "Sir Arthur Warren left in the hole to take up an appointment in China! That gave you and his precious son this chance of playing a game of spoof. But the old bean's brother, Captain Warren, is at Warren Croft. He will know whether you're James Warren or not when he sets eyes on you."

Loder broke off, staring blankly at the Fifth Former! Warren had burst into a laugh.

"Oh! That amuses you, does it?" snarled Loder.

"Yes, a little! Go on—you're quite entertaining. So you've written to Captain Warren to tell him that some impostor is taking the place of his nephew, James, here."

"I have. And that will bring him here, if anything will, and then you'll be shown up!" said Loder. "No good going out of gates, or dodging as you did before—James Warren's uncle will speak to the Head if you're not here, and demand to see you, and you can't wriggle out of it."

"I hardly think he will come!"
"I think he will!" said Loder. "I've told him in this letter that a fellow here, who calls himself Warren, isn't his nephew at all, and that his nephew is staying with a racing gang at Popper Court, where he can see him if he likes. I fancy that will fetch him."

Warren started.
"You've told him about my cousin James!" he exclaimed.

"Ah! That touches you, does it?" jeered Loder. "Yes, my pippin, I've told him about your Cousin James, who's the real article, and I've told him the kind of company he's keeping at Popper Court—and if he's got a rag of decency in him he will look into the matter without delay. Even if he doesn't believe a word of the story, he is bound to look into it when I've told him that his nephew is associating with a lot of gambling, racing men—a rowdy crew who are making old Popper's place the talk of the neighbourhood."

Jim set his lips.
"So that's what you've written to my—
to Captain Warren?"

"That's it! And you can't stop me!" sneered Loder. "Stick to my place in

the first eleven for another day or two—after that you'll be booted out of Greyfriars, and a good riddance to you!"

"Listen to me, Loder," said Jim quietly. "James Warren is a rotten blackguard, and he's carrying on like the outsider he is. But you've no right to give him away to his uncle."

Loder shrugged his shoulders.
"It will mean a lot of trouble for him, most likely," said Jim.

"Let it!"
"It will mean a lot of worry and trouble for Captain Warren, too—a man you don't know, and who has never done you any harm."

"Go it!" jeered Loder. "I thought you'd get funky when you knew what was coming to you."

"I am not funky, you fool! I have nothing to fear from anything you may tell Captain Warren."

"Liar!" said Loder coolly.
"You can tell Captain Warren anything you like about me. But leave out that chap at Popper Court."

"I'll watch it!" grinned Loder.
Jim Warren's eyes glinted at Loder. The bully of the Sixth slipped from the table and picked up the letter. He flourished it vauntingly in Warren's face, and walked out of the study with it in his hand.

Warren followed him slowly from the study. He stopped at the passage window to look across the quad. Loder came into his view—striding away towards the letter-box. He disappeared, but a few minutes later Warren saw him coming back, with a grin on his face. Evidently the letter was posted now—and soon it would be on its way to Warren Croft.

Jim's handsome face was clouded and troubled.

He stood for some minutes in deep thought.

His eyes rested on the portly figure of his Form-master, Mr. Prout. Prout was going down to the gates in coat and hat, in company with Mr. Capper. And when Jim had seen that portly figure disappear at the gateway, he moved away with a quick step—in the direction of Prout's study!

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bad Luck for Bunter!

" Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter. Footsteps sounded in Masters' Passage.

Five or six times, since he had answered the telephone, the hapless hidden Owl had been alarmed by the sound of footsteps in the passage.

Every time he heard them, he bounced out of the armchair, and parked himself under the table—lest it should be Prout.

And every time it was only a false alarm; and after a few moments of panic for Bunter, the footsteps would pass on and die away.

Now, as he heard more footsteps, he bounced once more, like a fat india-rubber ball, and nose-dived under the study table, and palpitated there.

It was not a false alarm this time. The study door opened and someone came in and closed the door after him.

Bunter hardly breathed.
It was not Prout. The study would have shaken under Prout's elephantine tread. Was it Loder? That was worse than Prout. Had that unspeakable beast jumped to it that Bunter was hidden in a beak's study?

Bunter could have groaned. But he didn't. A groan would have betrayed him. Crouched under the table he had a view of a pair of legs crossing the study. Were they Loder's legs?

A chap could not be identified by his legs. Bunter suppressed his desire to groan, and palpitated. If it was Loder—

The legs stopped at the telephone. Bunter heard the receiver taken off the hooks. He breathed again.

It was only some fellow coming to use Prout's telephone while Prout was not there. Loder, perhaps—but it might be anybody. This looked as if Prout had gone out for one of his walks—a fellow wouldn't come in to use the phone if Prout was liable to pop in any minute. That was a relief. But, really, Bunter was getting altogether too much of that telephone. First a beast at the other end—now a beast at this end! Bunter was fed-up to his fat chin with Prout's phone!

"Courtfield 202!"

Bunter started. That sounded like Warren's voice giving the number. Bunter knew that number, too—it was that of Popper Court. Popper Court was ordinarily the residence of Sir Hilton Popper, a governor of Greyfriars. "Old Popper" had let it for the autumn to Mr. Clarence Cook. And James Warren was one of the rowdy gang there!

The fat Owl understood now. Jim Warren had come there to ring up his cousin. He breathed more freely.

But he did not stir. He was not afraid of Warren—a very good-tempered chap. Still, if Warren was going to phone it was probable that he would kick a junior out, if he saw him before he began. He would not want the Peeping Tom of Greyfriars to hear what he said to his relative.

On that point, however, Warren was going to have no choice. He did not know that Bunter was there—and Bunter was not going to tell him. Bunter sat tight.

"Popper Court? Ask Mr. James Warren to come to the phone, please—his cousin speaking from Greyfriars School."

There was a pause. Then came a voice on the telephone. Bunter was too far from the instrument to catch the words, but he recognised the jeering, unpleasant tones of James' voice.

"Jim speaking!" said Warren quietly. "I've got something to tell you, James. Oh, shut up—what do I care if I've interrupted your rotten card-playing! You ought to be jolly well ashamed of yourself. Look here, James, you've got to get out of that den and away from that crew! Do you hear? Do you want your uncle to find you there, and thrash you as you deserve?"

"Oh crikey!" breathed Bunter inaudibly.

"No!" rapped Warren. "I haven't given you away—I've never mentioned you in my letters home. But somebody else has done so—do you understand? By to-morrow morning my father will know the way you're spending your time."

Bunter nearly gasped! How could Warren's father know anything by to-morrow morning, when Sir Arthur was in China!

"You don't care" went on Warren. Bunter, under the table, could only hear Jim's end of the conversation. "Well, you will care, you fool, when Captain Warren calls to see you—and you can bet he will! I've said nothing—I wouldn't worry him with your rascalities and fooleries, but he will know now! Do you think he will do nothing, when your father left you in his charge when he went to China?"

Bunter quite gasped this time!

"You rotten brute—you disreputable
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blackguard!" went on Jim Warren in tense tones. "I tell you, get out of that den of blackguards at once. You've spoofed my father into believing that you're spending your time decently—and I can tell you, you're booked for trouble now that he's going to know what you're doing. No, you rotten rascal, I tell you I never gave you away—but a spying rotter of a fellow has nosed it all out and done it. I tell you he's just posted a letter to my father at Warren Croft, and told him where you are and what you are up to! Can't you take a tip?"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bunter. He heard an angry exclamation from Warren.

"Are you there? James! James, you rotter! James, you cad! Are you there, you fool and blackguard?" Evidently James had rung off!

Jim banged the receiver back on the hooks with a bang that made the telephone rock. His face was crimson with anger as he turned from the telephone.

He turned—to jump almost clear of the floor, in startled surprise, at the sight of a fat face and a large pair of spectacles, staring at him from under Prout's study table.

Bunter, in his utter amazement at what he heard, had forgotten caution. He knew Warren's secret now!

He had heard, of course, the talk about the new fellow in the Fifth—the rumour that Jim Warren was not the fellow he was supposed to be.

He knew that Wharton knew, or was supposed to know, something about this mysterious matter.

Now he knew more than Wharton. He knew more than anybody else. He knew, so to speak, the whole bag of tricks!

Most fellows had laughed at that story about Warren. It was true that Sir Arthur was in China, but his brother, Captain Warren, was at Warren Croft, and he had sent Warren to Greyfriars. Obviously, he must know who the chap was.

And he did—as Bunter realised now. For it was his own son that he had sent to Greyfriars, in the place of his nephew, the baronet's son!

Bunter, petrified with amazement at that startling discovery, blinked at Warren from under the table as the Fifth Former stood at the telephone. Warren, turning from the phone, spotted him.

The look that came over Warren's startled face warned Bunter—though rather too late. He popped back out of sight.

"Bunter!" gasped Warren.

"Oh crikey! I—I say, Warren, it ain't me—I mean, I'm not here—I say, don't tell Loder I'm here!" gasped Bunter.

"Come out of it, you spying little beast!"

"I—I say—"

"Come out!" said Warren, between his teeth.

Bunter crawled out from under the table. Warren's face, from red, had become pale. It was so set, so tense, so grim, that it made the fat Owl of the Remove quake. He would rather have met Loder than Warren, with that look on his face.

Jim, looking at him, was going over in his mind what he had said on the phone to James. He realised that, unaware that he was overheard, he had given the whole game away. His hands clenched.

Bunter gave a squeak of alarm.

"I—I say, Warren, d-d-don't be shirty!" he gasped. "I say, I never heard what you said on the phone! Not a syllable! I'm not going to tell anybody, either! I—I like you, old chap! I—I wouldn't give you away for—for worlds! I won't tell anybody that you're a swindler—"

"What?" yelled Warren.

"I won't, really!" gasped Bunter. "I mean it, Warren! I won't tell a soul that you're lying and spoofing and—yaroooooh!"

Warren grasped him by the collar. Shake, shake, shake!

"Yaroo!" roared Bunter. "Yoop! I—I say, leggo! Beast! I'll jolly well tell all the fellows that you ain't you—I mean that you're somebody else—leggo—oooh!"

Shake, shake, shake!

"Urrgh! You're chook-chook-choking me!" gurgled Bunter. "If you

make my spick-spick-specks fall off, you'll have to pip-pip-pay for them! I say—urrgh!"

Still grasping the fat Owl's collar with his right hand, Warren opened the study door with his left. His arm swung, and Billy Bunter went hurtling into the passage.

He rolled along the passage, roaring. Warren, with a set face, walked away and left him to roar. Billy Bunter sat up, spluttering.

"Urrgh! Beast! Ow! Ooogh!"

Bunter's dulcet tones had reached other ears besides Warren's. Mr. Quelch's study door opened, and the Remove master stared out in angry surprise.

"What is that? What—Bunter! How dare you make that noise here—how dare you sprawl about this passage! Go away at once! Take fifty lines! Go!"

"Oh crikey!"

The fat Owl scrambled to his feet. He blinked at Quelch, through his big spectacles, in great dismay. Under Quelch's gimlet eye, he could not take refuge again in a beak's study. He had to go. But if he ran into Loder—

"Do you hear me, Bunter? Go away at once!"

"Oh, yes, sir!" gasped Bunter.

He rolled dismally away. There was no help for it—but he kept his eyes, and his spectacles, warily about him as he rolled. The big door of the House stood open—there was a gleam of wintry sunshine on powdery snow in the quad. Bunter rolled to the door.

He rolled out—just as Loder of the Sixth, returning after posting his letter, came in!

"Oh!" gasped Bunter.

"Ah!" said Loder.

Bunter made a wild bound.

But there was no escape for him this time.

Loder's grip fastened on his collar.

"You'll come to my study, Bunter!" said Loder, quite genially. "I've got something for you."

"Oh crumbs!" groaned Bunter. "I—I say, Loder, leggo! I say, I—I'll follow you all right. I—I want to come to your study. I—I really do!"

Loder hooked him away.

In Loder's study Bunter blinked at the bully of the Sixth. Perhaps he still nourished a faint hope that Loder might have calmed down, and got over his bad temper.

Alas! for Bunter. Loder's temper, instead of getting better, had got worse during his long hunt for the elusive Owl. Bunter had dodged, hidden, and cut dinner—all for nothing. Worse than nothing, in fact—Loder's temper being worse, and his hand heavier! Bunter's last state was worse than his first!

Loder gave Bunter six—and a few over!

The fat Owl crawled away, feeling that life was not worth living. He spent the rest of that half-holiday wriggling and squirming. It was not Billy Bunter's lucky day.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Cat Out of the Bag!

HARRY WHARTON started a little, and compressed his lips. It was the following morning, in break, and Wharton was in the quad, his thoughts running chiefly on football matches. But he forgot all about Soccer as words reached him from a group of Remove fellows—coupled with the name of Jim Warren.

"Well, it's out now about Warren!"

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"So you've written to Captain Warren?" said Jim Warren, with a start. "Yes," said Loder, flourishing the letter vauntingly in Warren's face. "I've told him that a fellow here, who calls himself Warren, isn't his nephew at all, and that his nephew is staying with a racing gang at Popper Court!"

said Skinner. "The fact is, I always thought there was something in it."

"Wharton jolly well knew, if he liked to tell!" remarked Snoop.

"I believe his friends knew, too!" said Bolsover major. "I don't see why they should keep it dark! It's a bit thick, a man coming to Greyfriars in a false name!"

"Well, it seems to be his name all right, so far as that goes," said Russell. "He's the same name as that cousin of his."

"That's all very well; but he isn't his own cousin!"

"No; hardly."

"Awful spoofer!" said Skinner. "Fancy a fellow keeping up a game like that all through the term!"

"He's done no harm here, at any rate!" said Tom Brown. "Even if he's somebody else, he's a decent chap, and a jolly good footballer."

"Look at the way he played in the Higheliffe game!" said Squill.

Skinner chuckled.

"I fancy he won't play football for Greyfriars again! He can't stay here now it's come out!"

"Somebody will tell the Head!" remarked Stott.

"I guess Loder won't be long in getting a cinch on this!" grinned Fisher T. Fish. "I'll say Loder don't like that guy Warren a whole lot! And he's a perfect!"

"It's all rot!" broke in Tom Redwing. "I don't believe a word of it! The whole school has heard that yarn about Warren, and laughed at it."

"They won't laugh now," chuckled Skinner. "You see, it's true!"

"Rubbish! I know that Sir Arthur Warren is in China; but Captain Warren, his brother, is at Warren Croft, and do you think he would let a spoofer come here in his nephew's name? What utter rot!"

"Oh, you haven't heard the latest!" said Skinner, laughing. "You see, it turns out that this chap, Warren, is the jolly old captain's own son!"

"That's how!" said Bolsover major.

"What a game!" chuckled Fisher T. Fish. "I'll say that guy, Captain Warren, is all there! It's the bee's knee!"

Harry Wharton stood quite still.

The group of Removites, in excited discussion, did not glance at him. He stood as if transfixed.

Captain Warren's son!

Wharton had never thought of that—never dreamed of it! He had known that Jim Warren was not the son of Sir Arthur—he knew that Sir Arthur's son was that rowdy blackguard at Popper Court.

But he had never dreamed of this!

Back into his mind came a talk he had had with his uncle, Colonel Wharton, in the holidays. The old colonel had mentioned that Captain Warren had a son—who, like Sir Arthur's son, had been named James, after the colonel himself, a friend to both men.

He had forgotten it. He had never thought of the captain's son in connection with Warren of the Fifth.

But he knew now!

How these fellows knew, he could not imagine. But he realised that it was the truth.

It accounted for all that had mystified him.

After Sir Arthur had left on his journey to China, Captain Warren had sent his own son, instead of James, to Greyfriars. Their names being identical, it had been easy enough. Back into his mind, too, came the memory of that afternoon at Warren Croft, when he had seen that the captain was anxious for him to go without meeting James, though at the time he had not been able to guess why. The captain's plans had been laid then—and had Wharton, a Greyfriars fellow, seen Sir Arthur's son, he could not have carried them out. He had not known that Wharton had met James in the grounds.

Wharton felt a pang. The game was up for Warren of the Fifth. Now that this was out, the strange story about

him, which had been laughed at, would certainly be laughed at no longer.

Warren's days at Greyfriars were numbered.

Wharton had kept silent about what he knew—his friends had kept silent. But it was clear that somebody else had not kept silent—somebody who knew more than Wharton had ever suspected.

Skinner, glancing round, caught sight of him, and burst into a laugh.

"Here's Wharton!" he exclaimed.

All eyes in the group turned on the captain of the Remove.

"Did you know, Wharton?" exclaimed two or three voices.

"Of course he did!" said Skinner.

"We all knew that he knew something about Warren!"

"I certainly never knew what you've just been saying," said Harry quietly. "And I don't see how you know, either."

"Haven't you heard Bunter's latest?"

"Bunter!" exclaimed Harry.

"Bunter knows the whole yarn!" grinned Skinner. "He's telling everybody at Greyfriars—in the strictest confidence, of course!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"How the thump can Bunter know anything about Warren and his personal affairs?" demanded Wharton.

"Doesn't Bunter know everything?" said Ogilvy, laughing. "He always will, so long as they make keyholes to doors."

"The Head will want something better than keyhole evidence against a chap like Warren!" said Redwing.

"Oh, it's right!" said Skinner.

"Look at it! First there's a rumour about Warren being here in another fellow's name—and Wharton knowing! You all know that Wharton refused to say a word—and he'd have said a word fast enough if he could have said it in Warren's favour. Then that shady blackguard of the same name turns up—and he's been heard to speak of Warren as a poor relation! The fly in the ointment was, that it couldn't have

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been worked without Captain Warren knowing—but if the chap's the giddy captain's own darling boy, that accounts for everything."

"But is he?" said Vernon-Smith.

"Bunter says so—and he says he heard Warren himself admit as much in talking to James on the telephone. He says that Warren spoke of the captain as his father."

"The fat rotter!" breathed Harry.

"Anybody can see it's true, now that we know it all!" said Skinner. "What a game of spoof, my beloved 'earers! And what a jolt for Warren when he gets called up before the Big Beak."

"I'm sorry, anyhow!" said the Bouncer. "Warren's a decent chap, whoever and whatever he is."

"Where's Bunter?" asked Harry Wharton, setting his lips.

"Spreading the glad tidings somewhere!" chuckled Skinner. "If you see him, he will tell you—in strict confidence, on condition you don't let it go any further—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton walked away, with a knitted brow. The group of juniors remained in excited discussion—and more and more fellows joined in it. Warren of the Fifth came along, with Hilton and Price.

"My hat! Here's Warren!" breathed Skinner.

"Shut up, you men!" said Redwing hastily.

There was a sudden, dead silence, as the three Fifth Formers passed. But all eyes were glued on Jim Warren.

Did he know they knew?

If so, his handsome face expressed nothing. Clearly, Hilton and Price had not heard. The startling news was going the rounds in the Remove, and already spreading in the Fourth and the Shell; but it had not got to the seniors yet. It was not likely to be long in getting to them.

Breathlessly, twenty fellows or more watched Jim Warren, till he passed on out of hearing. Then the discussion broke out again, with more excitement than ever. Potter and Greene, of the Fifth, came along to see what was exciting the fags—and heard, with wonder.

It was getting to Warren's Form—the Fifth! Potter and Greene walked away, exchanging curious glances. They both liked Warren.

"Can't be anything in it!" said Potter.

"Nothing!" said Greene.

But they both knew that there was.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Keep It Dark!

"I SAY, you fellows!"

Four members of the famous Co. were heading for the school shop, when Billy Bunter rolled up to them.

Bunter's fat face was eager and excited.

Bunter had news—startling news.

Bunter liked to be the fellow with news. He liked to startle fellows. Often and often he drew on his fat imagination for surprising news.

Now, however, Bunter was in possession of facts—startling facts! Billy Bunter was not very particular whether his yarns contained fact or fiction. Still, facts were facts, and more convincing than fiction. And this time Bunter had facts.

Not that Bunter wanted to do Warren of the Fifth any harm. He rather liked the chap.

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True, the beast had kicked him out of Prout's study the previous day, and caused him to fall into Loder's clutching hand. But on other occasions, he had been quite decent. So far as it was in Bunter's nature to like anybody but W. G. Bunter, he liked Warren.

But keeping this amazing story to himself, for Warren's sake, was a thing impossible to Bunter.

Next to eating, talking was Bunter's great delight. He was not always able to indulge himself in that delight, for want of listeners. Bunter's voice, music in his own fat ears, did not impress other fellows in the same way. Bunter was always prepared to talk—but few fellows were prepared to listen in.

Now he had an item of news that a fellow simply had to listen to. He was the fellow who knew. He was the only fellow who knew. Had Bunter tried to keep his amazing news to himself, he would really have been in danger of bursting.

Still, Bunter was considerate. He told his tale about Warren—but he told it in confidence. Every fellow that he told was strictly enjoined to let it go no further. He had told about twenty fellows so far. He had not yet had time to tell more.

Overnight, after prep, Bunter had started. In the morning, after prayers, he told two or three fellows. After breakfast he told a few more. And in break, his fat jaws had hardly ceased to wag for a moment. Now he was going to tell Bob Cherry and Nugent, Hurree Singh and Johnny Bull. They had not yet heard—and Bunter was beginning to run short of Remove fellows who had not yet heard. So he was glad to spot the Co.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Wherefore this thushness?" inquired Bob Cherry, staring at the fat Owl's excited face. "Don't tell us your postal order's come, Bunter. The shock would be too great."

"I say, you fellows—" gasped Bunter.

"The shockfulness would be preposterous, my esteemed Bunter."

"Do let a fellow speak. You haven't heard about Warren—"

"Oh, chuck it!" growled Johnny Bull.

"I say, you fellows, don't let this go any further!" said Billy Bunter. "I say, it will be pretty serious for Warren if it gets out, you know. I can trust you fellows—"

"You needn't trouble!" remarked Frank Nugent.

"Oh, really, Nugent! I say, keep it dark—mind you keep it dark. You don't want that chap Warren sacked, do you?"

"Warren sacked!" ejaculated Bob.

"Well, he would have to go if the Head knew," said Bunter. "That stands to reason. So mind you don't let it go any further."

"What bee has that fat idiot got in his bonnet now?" asked Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull—"

"Shut up, anyhow!" added Johnny.

"I say, you fellows, do give a chap a chance to speak! You're like a sheep's head—all jaw! I say, that chap Warren isn't himself at all—"

"What?"

"I mean, he isn't his father's son," explained Bunter. "That is, he isn't his uncle's son—I mean, his son's uncle—I mean—"

"You mean he isn't his grandfather's Uncle George?" asked Bob Cherry.

"No, you ass!" yelled Bunter. "You confuse a chap, keeping on interrupting him. I mean, he isn't his father's uncle—that is, I mean, his father isn't his father at all, but that other chap's

father—that old bean out in China, you know—Sir Father Uncle—I mean, Sir Arthur Warren—"

"Sounds a bit mixed!" said Bob. "Let's have it clear, Bunter! If the chap isn't his own uncle, whose uncle is he? Or is he somebody's aunt?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do shut up, Cherry! You get me all mixed with your fatheaded interruptions. Mind, keep this dark! I'm telling you fellows on condition that it goes no further. That chap at Popper Court—that rowdy beast, you know, who kicked me—he's Warren, and Warren isn't Warren at all—at least, he's another Warren of the same name. Captain Popper—I mean Captain Warren—is his pater—he's sent him to Greyfriars instead of Sir Popper Uncle—I mean, instead of Sir Arthur Warren's son. See?"

The Co. ceased to laugh.

They stared at Bunter.

They already knew that the rowdy James was Sir Arthur Warren's son, and that Warren of the Fifth was not, though at Greyfriars School he was supposed to be.

But they certainly did not know that he was the son of Captain Warren, the baronet's brother.

"You—you—you frabjous owl!" exclaimed Bob. "How did you get that idea into your silly head?"

"Warren told me so," said Bunter.

"Warren told you so!" yelled Nugent.

"Yes! We're rather pals, you know," explained Bunter. "He came to me, and said, 'Look here, Bunter, I'm going to confide the whole thing in you!' His very words."

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "Blessed if I didn't half-believe that fat idiot for a sec. Now I know it's all fibs."

"The fibfulness is terrific."

"Eh? It's true!" said Bunter, blinking at the Co. through his big spectacles.

"Warren told me the whole story. He came to me and said—'Yaroooooh!'"

Bunter was interrupted by the Co. collaring him suddenly, and sitting him down in the quad.

He sat hard, with a bump and a roar.

"Now, you fat villain—" said Bob.

"Yoo-hoop!"

"Kick him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Kick him jolly hard!"

"I say, you fellows— Whoop!"

roared Bunter.

He bounded up, as four boots clumped on him. Without staying to tell the Co. anything more—in strict confidence—Billy Bunter bounded away.

Unfortunately for him, he bounded right into the captain of the Remove, who was coming to look for him.

Harry Wharton caught him by the collar.

"Ow!" howled Bunter. "Leggo, you beast!"

"I've been looking for you, you fat rotter!"

"Ow! I say, Wharton, old chap, I've got something to tell you!" gasped Bunter.

"Leggo my collar! I say, if I tell you about Warren, mind you don't let it go any further!"

"You gabbling fat rascal!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Is there anything in it?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I'm afraid there is. That fat brute has been spying and prying as usual," answered Wharton. "He's spilled the beans about Warren. By gum, he ought to be lynched! I've just heard about twenty fellows talking it over."

"I—I say, I—I told them in confidence!" gasped Bunter. "I—I told

(Continued on page 12.)

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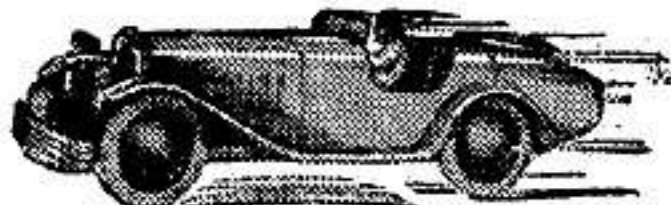
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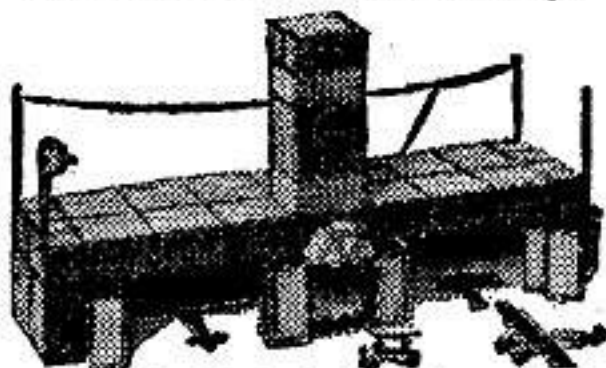
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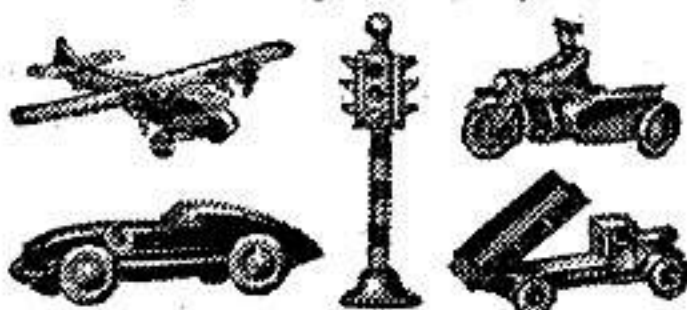
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every one of them not to let it go any further. I—I did, really."

"How did you find out, you prying worm?" snapped Harry.

"Warren told me, you know. He came to me and said—Beast! Leave off shaking me! Ow! Wow!" gurgled Bunter. "I mean, I was in Prout's study yesterday, and heard him phoning to that chap at Popper Court—quite by accident, of course. Naturally, I wouldn't listen!"

"You heard without listening?" asked Bob.

"Yes, old chap. Warren gave the whole show away. Of course, I'm not going to give him away. I'm keeping it all dark—fearfully dark. Look at the harm it would do him if it got out," said Bunter. "I've told you fellows, because you're pals. But mind you don't let it go any further."

"Oh, squash him!" said Bob.

"I say, you fellows—Ow! Beasts! Wow! Oh crikey! Yarrah!"

Bump!

"Whooop!"

Bump!

"Yurrrrggggh!"

The bell rang for third school. It rang rather fortunately for Billy Bunter. The Famous Five ceased to bump the fat and fatuous Owl, and scudded off to the House.

Billy Bunter puffed and blew as he followed. He arrived in the Remove Form Room in a breathless state.

A few minutes later, when Mr. Quelch was looking in his desk for a book, Bunter leaned over to Wharton, and whispered:

"I say, mind you keep it dark!"

"Shut up, you fat idiot!" hissed Wharton.

"That's all very well, but I warned you not to let it go any further," persisted Bunter. "I like old Warren, you know. You mind you keep it dark."

Mr. Quelch's gimlet eyes gleamed round.

"You are talking in class, Bunter!"

"Oh, no, sir!" gasped Bunter. "I never opened my mouth, sir! I was only telling Wharton to keep it dark about Warren."

Mr. Quelch gave a start, and stared at Bunter. A pin might have been heard to drop in the Remove-room for a moment. But, to the relief of the Co., Mr. Quelch only said:

"Take fifty lines for talking in class, Bunter!"

"But, sir, I never spoke! I only said—"

"Take a hundred lines, Bunter!"

"Oh lor!"

Bunter was silent after that.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

The Captain Calls!

THE lean, brown-faced man who stepped from the train at Courtfield Station walked along the platform with a slight limp.

It was eighteen years since Bernard Warren had stopped a fragment of Shell on the death-swept banks of the Somme and he still limped. He came out of the station on to a slushy pavement wet with half-melted snow, but he did not call a taxi. Having inquired the direction of Popper Court, he set out to walk, and, in spite of his limping leg, he walked quickly and tirelessly. He was brother to a wealthy baronet, but he had no spare cash to waste on taxi fares.

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Out of the town he traversed the road across the common, and turned into the great gateway of Popper Court. The big bronze gates stood open. The mansion could be seen in the distance through the leafless branches of old trees.

A young man was loafing up the drive with a gun under his arm, and a cigarette hanging from a loose lip. Harry Wharton & Co. would have known him as Mr. Clarence Cook, who had taken Popper Court for the autumn, and was entertaining a rather hilarious party there. But he was a stranger to Captain Warren, as the captain was to him. He turned his head, and glanced at the brown-faced man with the limp, with a faintly disdainful glance.

The captain's clothes were good, but certainly not new. Clarence wondered who the shabby blighter was.

Being monarch of all he surveyed at the mansion he was renting from its owner, he naturally wanted to know. And he had not a lot of civility to waste on a man whose clothes were not new, and who did not display a single article of jewellery anywhere on his person. Clarence himself glittered with bits of gold and precious stones, almost like a Central African chief.

"Hi!" called out Clarence.

Captain Warren glanced at him.

"Want anything here?" inquired Clarence.

"I should not have come here otherwise!" rapped the captain.

Four years of war, and four times as many of making both ends meet after the War, had not made the captain very patient with popinjays. He almost barked at the happy Clarence.

"Well, look here! If you want to see the keeper, or anythin', this isn't the way!" Clarence pointed out. "You don't go up to the house, you know—what?"

"I am here to see your master!" snapped the captain.

"Eh—what?" ejaculated young Clarence. "What? I don't get you? What the dooce do you mean—what?"

Then, as it dawned on his rather weak brain that this shabby blighter had mistaken him for a manservant, Clarence crimsoned with wrath.

"Good gad! Look here, my man! I don't want any of your dashed impudence, you know! Do you think I'm a dashed butler, or what?"

"No!" grunted the captain. "I supposed you were the butler's son, or something of the kind. Who the dickens are you?"

"I'm Cook!" hooted Clarence indignantly.

"Cook?" repeated Captain Warren. "Yaas, Cook—Clarence Cook, confound your dashed impudence!"

The captain looked at him. The name of Clarence Cook, tenant of Popper Court, had been mentioned in Loder's letter. So this was the fellow. The captain's keen eyes scanned the weak face, the loose mouth, the signs of late hours and foolish indulgence, and his lip curled with contempt.

"Oh!" he snapped. "You're Cook, are you? If you're Cook, I've called to see you—at least, a guest of yours. Have you a lad staying with you named Warren?"

Clarence extracted an eyeglass from his pocket, jammed it into a watery eye, and surveyed the brown-faced man with crushing disdain.

"I don't know who you are, and don't want to!" he said. "And I don't fancy Warren wants to see anybody of your sort. There's the way to the gate. Get out!"

"Is James Warren here?"

"Find out!" retorted Clarence.

"I'm asking you to find out, you young fool!" said the captain. "I've been told that he is staying here. Is he?"

"No bizney of yours," said Clarence. "Just travel, and don't butt in again! Butler's son, by gad! Of all the dashed impudence—"

"Will you answer me?"

"I said get out!" answered Clarence scornfully. "And if you're not gone when I get to the house, I'll send out a footman to boot you!"

With that the highly offended Clarence turned his back on the shabby blighter, and walked on.

Captain Warren made swift strides after him. A grasp descended on the back of Mr. Cook's neck, and he was suddenly stopped.

"Oooogh!" gasped Clarence.

His gun dropped with a clatter from under his arm. His eyeglass streamed at the end of its cord. He crumpled in that iron grasp.

"Wooogh!" spluttered Clarence. "Leggo! By gad! Ooogh!"

"Is James Warren staying here?" thundered the captain, shaking Clarence a good deal like a terrier shaking a rat.

The hapless Clarence sagged in his grasp, almost folding up.

"Urrgh! Yaas!" gasped Clarence. "Oh, yes! Oh, gad! Leggo! Ow! My neck! Leggo, will you?"

"Is he in the house?"

"Ow! Yaas! Leggo! Ow!"

The captain let go. Clarence was strewn on the gravel, and the captain walked on and left him strewn.

He sat up in quite a dizzy state.

"Oogh!" gasped Mr. Cook. "Oogh! Who's that hefty blighter, I wonder? Grip like a dashed vice! Ooogh! Dashed if I don't lay a horse-whip round him! Yooogh!"

Without a backward glance at the dizzy Clarence, the brown-faced man walked on up the drive and reached the house. His sharp knock was answered by a footman, who looked at him very curiously—having witnessed the scene from a window.

"I've called to see Mr. James Warren!" rapped the captain.

"What name, please?"

"His uncle, Captain Warren."

"I will see if Mr. Warren is disengaged, sir—"

"You will do nothing of the kind! You will take me to him at once!" said Captain Warren. "Lose no time!"

The manservant blinked at him.

"I think Mr. Warren is engaged at the moment, sir—"

"That is quite immaterial."

"If you will wait here a few moments—"

Captain Warren had a walking-stick under his left arm. He slipped it into his right hand. It was rather a thick stick. The captain's brown face was calm; only a gleam in his eyes told that he was deeply and intensely angry.

"Take me to my nephew at once!" he barked.

"Oh, yes! Certainly, sir! Please follow me!" stammered the footman—and he led the way.

Captain Warren followed him, the stick under his arm again. Judging by the grim look on his face, it was not going to remain under his arm. It was highly probable that James was going to make a close acquaintance with that stick.



Captain Warren kicked aside the card-table, sending cards, cigarettes and ash-trays in a shower to the floor. "So you are here, James! And this is how I find you occupied!" said the captain quietly. "I was told that you were here, and I came to see if it was true!" James tried to pull himself together, as he sat blinking at his uncle.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

The Stick for James!

JAMES blew out a little cloud of smoke from his cigarette, removed it from his mouth, and took a sip from a tumbler at his elbow. Then he replaced the cigarette, and looked at the cards in his hand.

The room was almost foggy with smoke.

It was a large and handsome room—the smoke-room at Popper Court. Big windows looked out on the park. A log fire crackled in the deep, old-fashioned fireplace. Two other young fellows were there with James—two of Mr. Cook's other guests.

The three were playing poker.

Cigarettes, ashtrays, cards, and money were on the green-baize table. James, who had been losing, was not in the best of tempers.

James did a good deal of losing at cards. But he was not aware that he had been asked to join Mr. Cook's merry party chiefly for that reason.

Having looked at his "hand," James threw away two of the cards. The dealer gave him two more, and James felt bucked—he had drawn an ace to three aces; which gave him four of a kind, and looked as if his luck was improving.

He was prepared to play high and heavy on that hand. He tossed a pound note into the pot.

The door opened, and a brown-faced man looked in.

The brown face had been grim already. It grew grimmer as the captain saw how James was occupied.

The three young rascals did not glance round at the door. They were getting deep in the game. Pound notes whisked into the pot, singly; then in

twos; then in threes! Then James flung in a fiver!

"James!"

The deep voice came like the bark of a mastiff. James Warren fairly jumped.

"Oh!" he ejaculated.

He half-rose from his chair. His eyes almost popped from his head at the sight of the lean man who strode in.

His cards dropped from his hand, scattering. The cigarette dropped from his mouth. He gazed at the captain.

"Oh!" he repeated feebly.

The two young men stared round at the captain. They were as surprised as James, though not so alarmed.

"Who the dooce—" asked one.

"What the dooce—" asked the other.

Captain Warren glanced at them.

"This boy is my nephew!" he said quietly. "Have the kindness to leave me alone with him!"

The two sportsmen looked at one another, looked at James, looked at one another again, and finally faded out of the room. Out in the hall, with the door shut, they told one another that the brown old bean was a dashed cheeky old blighter, and ought to be booted out of the house, by Jove!

But they did not feel disposed to tell the captain so personally; and they drifted away to the billiards-room in an indignant frame of mind, feeling glad, at least, that the brown old bean wasn't their uncle.

James had sunk back into his chair, his eyes fixed on his uncle. The sight of his father, Sir Arthur, would not have scared him half so much.

Captain Warren gazed at him. Then he kicked aside the card-table, with his sound leg.

It toppled over, sending cards and

cigarettes and ashtrays in a shower to the floor.

"Oh!" gasped James, for the third time.

"So you are here, James! And this is how I find you occupied!" said Captain Warren quietly. "I was told that you were here—"

"Oh!"

"And I came to see if it was true!"

James blinked at him. He wished that he had acted on the tip Jim had given him over the telephone the previous day.

James' aggressive, self-sufficiency rather failed him, in the captain's presence, under the keen, searching eyes.

The previous day he had not wholly believed what Jim had told him. He knew that the fellow who had taken his place at Greyfriars School hated him to be anywhere near the school, and he suspected that Jim Warren had been trying to scare him away.

Having little regard for truth himself, James did not place much faith in the word of others.

But he had said to himself that, even if the captain knew, it wasn't going to make any difference to him. Wasn't a fellow jolly well his own master?

Of course he was!

Was a fellow going to be bully-ragged and dictated to by a poor relation?

Of course he wasn't!

So James, only half-believing that his uncle knew of his whereabouts, and wholly disregarding the possibility, had paid no heed—and now he wished that he had.

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(Continued from page 13.)

Under the captain's keen, contemptuous eyes, he did not feel so much his own master.

He sat blinking at the stern, brown face.

"You disgraceful young black-guard!" said the captain, in a low, tense tone. "You disgraced yourself at Oakshott School. You had to leave—you were lucky not to be expelled. You had a chance to make a fresh start at Greyfriars, and you refused to take it. Now I find that you have deceived me, and have joined up with a party of arrant young dissipated blackguards! What would your father think if he knew?"

James tried to pull himself together. He told himself that this man was, after all, only a dashed poor relation. He had seen his father, Sir Arthur, treat the man with lofty patronage. He would have been glad to follow the same tack himself. But it was not easy—it was hard!

"Look here, if you've come here to kick up a shindy—" he said feebly. "Look here, have you seen Cook?"

"I have seen him."

"Look here, you be civil to him, you know—"

"I shook him and left him lying on the drive."

"Oh gad!" gasped James. "I am rather sorry now that I did not lay my stick round him!" added the captain.

"I—I say, this won't do!" gasped James. "Look here, you chuck it—see? You're queering my pitch here, kickin' up shindies—"

"Do you think I shall allow you to remain here?" snapped Captain Warren.

"Yes, I jolly well do!" said James, getting himself a little more in hand. "The pater left me with you, but he said distinctly that I was not to be overruled, or dictated to, or anythin' of that sort."

"Quite!" said Captain Warren. "I was not in a position to refuse the charge my brother laid on me, and I carried out his wishes. You refused to go to Greyfriars—you threatened to carry on there as you had carried on at Oakshott, and get yourself expelled, if you had to go. Sir Arthur, instead of thrashing you as you deserved, left instructions that you were not to be coerced—although your name had been entered at the school, and the fees paid for the term—"

"I suppose my father can do as he jolly well likes, without askin' your leave!" said James sulkily.

"Perfectly so!" said Captain Warren. "It is not for me to dictate to my elder brother. But although I was bound to let you have your way, in not going to Greyfriars, I was bound also to see that you did not continue the career of rascally black-guardism you began at Oakshott."

"Oh, draw it mild!" said James.

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He was recovering his nerve more and more.

"I'm not a little tin angel, and I don't pretend to be! And the pater always let me do as I liked! And now Jim's told you I'm here—"

"Jim has told me nothing! He has not mentioned you once," said the captain. "But—since it proves that you are here—I suppose he knows?"

"Knows!" repeated James, with a stare. "Well, yes, rather!"

"Then, you know—" Captain Warren paused.

But James understood the unspoken question.

He grinned. He was pulling himself together now. After all, wasn't a fellow his own master—a rich fellow, too, dealing with dashed poor relations!

"Yes, I know!" grinned James. "Jim's at Greyfriars! I hadn't the faintest idea when I came to this show—in fact, I didn't know this place was near Greyfriars at all till I met a Greyfriars kid, young Wharton. Even then I never knew that Jim was at the school till I came on him a good bit later. I can tell you, it was amusing!" James chuckled. "I never suspected that that was why you agreed so easily to let me keep away from the school—because you had a scheme of bunging your own son in, in my place. Ha, ha!"

James laughed. But his laughter died away under the grim, stern, steady stare of the captain's eyes, under the wrinkled brows.

"I did not agree easily to letting you keep away from the school, James." The captain's voice was cold and hard. "I urged you to obey your father's wishes. It is true that I knew you would not do so unless you were compelled—and your father forbade compulsion. I had no choice about letting you have your way, under my brother's instructions. Sir Arthur left me in an impossible position, and I did what I considered best. But—"

"Leave it at that," said James. "Jim's getting school—he seems to like it. I'm getting a good time! I don't know what silly ass gave me away, if it wasn't Jim—but he might have minded his own business. Leave me alone—that's all I want!"

"That I cannot do! You deceived me!" said the captain sternly. "I believed that you were gone on a holiday in respectable company. I do not approve of idleness. But you are Sir Arthur's son, not mine; it is for him to decide to what extent your slackening may be indulged."

"I am on a holiday—and the company's good enough for me!" said James sulkily. "And I never deceived you, either. I told you the truth, if you'd only known it."

"You told me you were going on a holiday with Cook," said Captain Warren. "A harmless and instructive tour, as I supposed—"

James chuckled. "So I was," he said. "Only the Cook was Clarence Cook—not the Cook's touring firm."

Captain Warren stared at him blankly. Until he had received Loder's letter, he had believed that James was gone on a Cook's Tour—as James had led him to believe when he left Warren Croft. He had never even heard of the festive Clarence.

Possibly he had been glad to lose James' unpleasant company. But certainly he had believed that James was harmlessly, indeed instructively, occupied during those weeks. He had even taken it as evidence of an improvement in James' character!

The expression on his face made James chortle explosively.

"You young rascal!" ejaculated the captain at last.

"I pulled your leg!" grinned James. "I was jolly well going to do as I jolly well liked, anyhow; but it saved trouble. That's why I got some papers about trips and excursions from Cook's and left 'em about for you to see! I didn't want you barging in! I don't want you barging in now, if you come to that! I'm on a holiday with Cook—ha, ha! And I'm jolly well keeping it up, too!"

Captain Warren drew a deep breath. "You will leave this house with me at once!" he said.

"I won't!" said James.

"I shall take you—"

"You jolly well won't!" James seemed to have recovered all his aggressive self-confidence by this time. "Think you can send me to Greyfriars now—after Jim's been there in my name!"

"No!" said the captain sternly. "You refused to go to Greyfriars unless I took you there by force. You threatened to act in such a way that you would be expelled, and I did not choose that such news should reach my brother in a foreign land. You cannot go to Greyfriars now."

"Think I want to?" jeered James. "Jim's welcome to it, for all I care! I wouldn't be found dead there. I'm staying here."

"You are not staying here!" said Bernard Warren, raising his voice ever so little. "I have my duty to my brother to think of. You are leaving this house with me immediately!"

"I'm not!"

"Go and get your coat and hat!"

"I won't!"

"Or," said the captain, in a deep voice, slipping his stick into his hand—"or I shall give you the thrashing you have long deserved!"

James' face flamed.

"You dare lay a finger on me!" he panted. "You—a poor relation hanging on to my father—a sponger sticking at Warren Croft, because you can't afford to live anywhere—sticking your son into my school, because you've no money to pay his fees at any other show! Think I don't know why he had to leave last term—because you couldn't keep on the fees, and my father wouldn't stand the racket! By gad, you lay a finger on me, and I'll write to my father, and he'll send orders for you to be kicked out of Warren Croft, and your precious son after you! You dare—"

James got no further than that.

The captain's left hand gripped his collar and twisted him over. The captain's right wielded the stick.

Whack, whack, whack!

James roared.

James struggled.

James yelled and howled.

But the stick whacked and whacked and whacked. James was getting the thrashing at last, for which he had asked so long and so earnestly.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Does Not Stay to Tea!

BILLY BUNTER tapped at the door of Study No. 4, in the Fifth Form at Greyfriars, opened it, and blinked in through his big spectacles.

There was an agreeable smile on Billy Bunter's fat face. The smile was, at all events, intended to be agreeable.

It was tea-time, and Jim Warren, Hilton and Price, were sitting down to tea in Study No. 4.

Billy Bunter was a celebrated butter-in at meal-times. But even Bunter, as a

rule, drew the line at butting into senior studies. He was much more likely to be booted out than asked to stay.

But circumstances alter cases.

In the present circumstances Bunter felt entitled to ask himself to tea in the Fifth.

Bunter was feeling very friendly towards Warren. He liked the chap. He had found him out, but he was going to keep his secret—in his own remarkable and inimitable way.

He had told about thirty fellows, so far. But he had told every one of them to let it go no further—so that was all right!

Probably during the remainder of the day he would tell about thirty or forty more. But every one would be bound to secrecy. So that, too, would be all right!

Keeping Warren's secret, and looking after his interests in this friendly way, Bunter had a feeling that the Fifth Form chap was under his protection—taken under his fat wing, as it were. He felt very protective and kind and generous—very friendly and pally. And, considering all he was doing for Jim Warren the chap could hardly refuse to ask him to tea. Indeed, he ought to be delighted to do so.

Bunter had arrived at Study No. 4 to be made welcome as a distinguished guest.

The study was very silent.

Jim's handsome face was quiet and subdued in expression, but a faint trace of a smile lurked on it. He knew, from Hilton's and Price's looks, that they had heard what was now rattled up and down Greyfriars from end to end. They had said nothing about it; but they could hardly disguise the fact that they had heard.

It was no great surprise to Stephen Price. Price had known all about James; and he had guessed that Captain Warren knew of the "spoof"; indeed, had he known that the captain had a son named Jim he would have guessed long ago how the matter stood. But to Hilton of the Fifth it came as a surprise and a shock. Like most of the fellows, he had laughed at the rumours about Warren; but he knew now.

Proof was hardly needed. Jim had never denied the story—he had simply let it pass unheeded. Hilton knew now why he had never denied it. He could not have denied it without lying—and nothing would have induced him to lie.

Now that the facts were out, any number of little circumstances showed where the truth lay. Fellows had often wondered why the son of a wealthy baronet was kept carefully with a very moderate allowance. Hilton spent money lavishly, and Price sponged on him a good deal in the study. Warren certainly never sponged; he was very careful indeed not to share in expensive things he could not afford to return. But he spent even less than Price, and Hilton had sometimes wondered, and sometimes felt irritated. He knew now that Warren had had little to spend—the son, not of a wealthy baronet, but of a hard-up ex-officer.

The three seniors sat in silence, when the fat face and big spectacles of William George Bunter glimmered in at the door.

Bunter blinked at them in surprise. Something seemed to be up; Bunter could not guess what. Generally, they were very cheery, and friendly, and chatty, in that study. Hilton and Warren were great pals, and Price, after his feud with the new fellow, had come to be on friendly terms with him. Now, it was clear, something was amiss. Bunter wondered what. However, he rolled in.

Jim Warren glanced at him in mild surprise. Hilton gave him a contemptuous stare. Price yapped:

"What the thump do you want, Bunter? Get out!"

Bunter blinked at him.

"I haven't come to see you, Price!" he answered loftily.

"Well, get out!" said Hilton.

"I haven't come to see you, Hilton!"

Cedric Hilton laughed.

"You're the happy man, Warren! Do you want the fat porker here?"

"Hardly!" answered Jim.

"Oh, really, Warren—"

"Clear off, Bunter!" said Warren.

Billy Bunter blinked at him, with an expression like that of Hamlet's father—more in sorrow than in anger.

"I say, Warren, old chap—"

"Don't 'old chap' me, you fat ass! Just clear!"

"This was far from the welcome that Bunter expected. It was far from the welcome that a kind and generous protector deserved. Bunter was annoyed.

"Look here, Warren, if you don't want me here—"

"Of course I don't!"

"Well, that's rather thick, I must say!" said Bunter. "I hope I'm not the fellow to butt in where I'm not wanted. I hope I never was! But—"

"Shut the door after you!"

"I say, you haven't got your back up, old chap, have you?" asked Bunter. "I say, I haven't given you away, you know! I haven't told Hilton or Price anything. I'm not going to!"

(Continued on next page.)

GREYFRIARS INTERVIEWS



It is said that music has charms to soothe the savage breast. But it failed to soothe our clever Greyfriars Rhymester when he visited the Music-Room to interview
CLAUDE HOSKINS.
the musical genius of the Shell.

—1—

In a future age beyond imagination,
All the musical disciples of the earth
Will assemble to express their admiration
Of a great composer's genius and worth.
Giant orchestras will play his paraphrases.
Great musicians will play lovingly and well,
And the audience will volley forth the praises
Of that mighty genius, Hoskins, of the Shell!
They will publish their opinion that the music is unique,
That his symphonies are great beyond compare.
In comparison with Hoskins even Beethoven is weak,
And Tchaikowsky—well, he simply isn't there!
He's a greater man than Delius, he is better than Sibelius,
Far superior to Schubert at his best.
No composer can out-class him, none can rival or surpass him,
He is Hoskins, and he's far above the rest!

—2—

None but he will ever see this great assembly,
Which persistently fades out at rising-bell!
None but he will find in progress up at Wembley
Any festival to Hoskins of the Shell.
None but Hoskins will observe a marble statue,
Wearing laurel wreaths and Hoskins' name and form,
For you realise when seeing things like that you
Will be asleep, and dreaming, in the dorm!
Yes, in spite of future greatness it's a melancholy fact
That at present Hoskins isn't a success!
His amazing compositions undeniably attract
Not applause, but exclamations of distress!
His concertos and sonatas are rewarded with "tomatoes,"
And his preludes with the produce of the hen.
So the features of the "master" are a vegetable plaster
When he condescends to play to Greyfriars men!



—3—

"It's a puerile and painful exhibition
Of their ignorance, on which I will not dwell!
Such a disappointing lack of erudition
Is contemptible," said Hoskins of the Shell.
"It was hardly a successful concert, was it?"
I admitted, with a sly and stealthy grin,
While old Hoskins clawed the vegetable deposit
Which lay so thickly on his tender skin.
"I shall utterly refuse to give recitals any more,
For my art is not appreciated here!
I have spent a solid fortnight on repolishing that score,
Just to get a ripe tomato on my ear!
Such a howling kindergarten would most probably dishearten
Even Mozart from endeavouring to play,
But you are sympathetic, and as I feel energetic
I will play to you my Fantasy in A."



—4—

I tried to stop him, but he overruled me.
And of his fearful din no tongue can tell,
I therefore sat and suffered while he schooled me
In works composed by Hoskins of the Shell.
"Now mark," said he, "this compound sostenuto
In triple fifths, tremolo in the bass!
I call this work the 'Cavern Haunt of Pluto'!
It sounded very like that gruesome place!
And although my hair was rising irresistibly on end,
He continued with his agonising row.
As he shouted: "I enjoy performing pieces for a friend,
So I'll play an obbligate to you now!"
With that fearful obbligate I discovered a tomato
Which reposed in squashy splendour on the floor.
So I raised that toothsome trifle and I left him with an eyeful,
As I softly and serenely shut the door!



"You blithering idiot, get out!"
 "You can trust me," said Bunter reassuringly. "Rely on me, old fellow. I'm keeping the whole thing dark. I'm not the man to give a pal away, I hope. Kindest friend and noblest foe—that's me all over. I say, I'm not thirty about the way you carried on in Prout's study yesterday. You were rather a beast, but a chap can make allowances. Don't you fancy I'm going to give you away, old fellow. Wild horses wouldn't drag a word from me!"

Hilton grinned, and Price chuckled. Jim rose to his feet.
 "Will you get out, you blithering little idiot—or do you want me to kick you out?" he asked.

Billy Bunter eyed him warily through his big spectacles. Apparently, Jim Warren had no use for a kind and benevolent protector. Billy Bunter felt the annoyance natural to a fellow whose kind benevolence was chucked back into his fat face.

"Look here, Warren," he said. "You can wash that out. I don't want any cheek from you, and I tell you so plainly. I'm not going to give you away, but if you think you can cheek a chap who knows that you're a spoofer, pulling the Head's leg, you're jolly well mistaken—see?"

"Are you going you fat idiot?" snapped Warren.

"No!" retorted Bunter. "I'm staying, and you'd better be civil, see? I wonder what your pals here would think if they knew that you weren't the old bean's son at all, but somebody else. Not that I'm going to tell them. But if you think—"

Bunter was interrupted, by a finger and thumb fastening on his fat little nose.

"Tweak!"
 "Woooooogh!" gurgled the fat Owl.
 "Ooogh! Led do by dose! Ooogh!"

Jim did not let go the fat nose. Still gripping it between finger and thumb, he led Bunter out of the study. Bunter went—mumbling and snuffling and gurgling!

In the passage, Jim released the fat nose, and slewed Bunter round. His boot thudded on the tightest trousers at Greyfriars School.

"Yoooooop!"
 Bunter flew.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Coker of the Fifth, looking out of the next doorway.

Jim went quickly back into Study No. 4, and shut the door. Billy Bunter picked himself up, roaring.

"Ow! Beast! Wow! Beast! Ow! I'll jolly well tell everybody now! Wow!" He set his spectacles straight on his fat little nose, and gasped with wrath. "Beast! Rotter! Spoofer! Yah! I'll jolly well give you away—spoofering beast!"

"Hallo, what's that?" exclaimed Coker, staring.

"That beast Warren!" gasped Bunter. "I say, Coker, he's a spoofer—he's not his father's son at all—I mean, he isn't himself, you know, but quite another chap, and— Yaroooh!"

Lightning never strikes twice in the same place. Unfortunately for Bunter, boots did not resemble lightning in that respect. Coker's boot struck just where Warren's had struck.

Bunter flew again. After him flew Coker of the Fifth, letting out his foot again. Dribbled like a fat football, Billy Bunter disappeared from the Fifth Form passage, yelling wildly.

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THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Cut and Run!

"HALLO, hallo, hallo!" gasped Bob Cherry.

"Look!" breathed Nugent.
 "Jolly old James!" gasped Bob.

Harry Wharton & Co. stared. They were walking to Courtfield after class when they came on quite a surprising scene by the gates of Popper Court.

From that gateway James emerged. It was clear that he did not emerge willingly. A lean, brown-faced man had a grip on James' arm. Under his other arm he had a stick.

James was dragging back, as much as he could. But burly and beefy as he was, James did not seem much use in the iron grip of the brown-faced man. As he was marched out of the gateway he bawled:

"Leggo! I'm not going! I tell you I won't go! Kicking up a shindy here, you hooligan? What will my friends think!"

"Come!"
 "I won't!" roared James.

"Do you want another thrashing?"
 "Leggo!"

Under the amazed stare of the Greyfriars juniors, the lean man slipped his stick into his hand and whacked it across the tail of James' expensive overcoat. James roared.

"Now will you come?"
 "Oh, you cad!" groaned James.

He came!
 "Well, this is what Fishy would call the bee's knee, and the rhinoceros' side-whiskers!" gasped Bob Cherry. "Is jolly old James being kidnapped, or what?"

"Or has his father found him in bad company?" grinned Nugent.

"That's not his father," said Harry Wharton quietly. "I know that chap—I saw him at Warren Croft, in the hols. That's Captain Warren."

"Oh, his uncle, then!" said Bob.

"Yes."
 "And—and the pater of Warren of the Fifth, from what that prying worm Bunter says—"

"Yes!"
 "James doesn't seem to be enjoying the avuncular care he's getting!" chuckled Bob.

"The joyfulness does not seem to be terrific!" murmured Hurreo Jamset Ram Singh.

It was clear that James Warren would gladly have done without that avuncular care. But it was equally clear that he had no choice in the matter. Considering the kind of company the young rascal and scapegrace had been keeping with the rowdy crew at Popper Court, the juniors were not surprised that his uncle was taking him away. He was certainly using rather drastic methods. But if James refused to go quietly, it was difficult to see what other methods he could have used.

"Now," the Greyfriars juniors heard the captain's quiet, determined voice, "will you walk to the station with me quietly, James? I do not desire to drag a great hulking fellow like you through the town. But I shall do so, if you refuse to walk quietly."

James panted.
 "Let go my arm! I—I'll go quietly! I'll make you suffer for this! As soon as my father knows—"

"That will do!"

"You can't send me to Greyfriars now, and you know it, after your precious son has been spoofering there! Think you're going to bung me into any other school?" bawled James. "Well, if you do, I'll do just what I told you I'd do

at Greyfriars—I'll get sacked in the first week, see?"

"Nice boy!" murmured Bob.
 "You stick me at Rookwood!" bawled James. "I shan't stay there long, I promise you! The first news my father will get at Hong Kong will be that I'm sacked! I promise you that! He'd have got the news before now, if you'd bunged me into Greyfriars! And I tell you—"

"I will not allow you to make a scene on the public road, James! Cannot you see those schoolboys looking at you! Be silent!"

"I won't! I—"

"You will!"
 "Ow! Keep that stick away, you ruffian! Leggo my arm, and I'll go to the station!" panted James.

Captain Warren released his arm. Perhaps he did not quite trust James; but certainly he was unwilling to march the hulking fellow along with a grip on his arm. There was a good deal of traffic on the Courtfield Road; and the captain had rather more regard for appearances than James had.

Panting, the young rascal walked along by the captain's side in the direction of the town. Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged glances. That was their direction also; but they did not want to add to James' humiliation and his uncle's discomfort by following at their heels.

"Hang on here a bit!" said Harry, in a low voice; and his chums nodded, and remained where they were.

A young man, with a cigarette hanging on a flabby lip, blinked out of the Popper Court gateway, with an eyeglass stuck in a watery eye.

"By gad!" said the young man. "By gad! Dashed old ruffian! Good gad! Glad to be shut of him! Gad!"

And Clarence Cook walked up the drive to the house, leaving the Famous Five grinning. They could guess that Captain Warren's call at Popper Court had had rather the effect of a hawk dropping into a dovecot.

Having waited till Captain Warren and his nephew were a little distance, the schoolboys resumed their walk. The two figures were still in sight, ahead of them, on the road over the common. James was walking quietly by the captain's side, as if he had made up his mind to bow his head to the inevitable.

But evidently James was only biding his time; for all of a sudden he dropped back; and, as the captain turned, James jumped away, spun round, and came running back along the road.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" ejaculated Bob.

"James is at it again!"
 "The silly ass!" growled Johnny Bull.

"His uncle hasn't given him enough of that stick!"

James came speeding. After him rushed the captain, with a look on his face that boded painful things for James. But strong and active as the captain was, he was handicapped by his "game" leg. James was far from fit, and not much use as a sprinter; but he had the advantage of a man who limped.

"Stop him!"

The captain's shout came across the common. He was shouting to the five schoolboys, whom he could see in the road.

James was running directly towards them. Harry Wharton & Co. halted—in doubt. They did not like James—in fact, they disliked him intensely. But they felt rather dubious about collaring even the unpleasant James and handing him over.

James, however, settled that matter. Seeing the schoolboys ahead of him, he swung off the road and darted away



Captain Warren's left hand gripped James' collar, and twisted him round. His right wielded the stick. Whack, whack, whack! "Yaroooh! Ooooooh!" howled James, struggling in vain. He was getting the thrashing for which he had asked so long and so earnestly.

across the open common, while still at a distance from them.

The common was rugged and billy; and James, running hard, vanished from view in a few minutes. The captain, panting, reached the spot where he had left the road. The juniors saw him totter, and he leaned heavily against a wayside tree. It was evident that he had put too much strain on the leg that had stopped a fragment of shell on the Somme so many years ago.

Harry Wharton ran quickly towards him. The juniors were rather relieved to have nothing to do with James; but they were more than willing to lend the brown-faced man a hand, if he needed one.

"Can I help you, sir?" asked Harry, raising his cap politely.

The grim, brown face turned on him. "Thanks, I don't need any help!" answered Captain Warren. He relinquished his hold on the tree and stood upright—with his weight on his sound leg. He had given Harry a careless glance—but now his eyes fixed on him sharply. He knew Colonel Wharton's nephew again, though he had seen him only once.

"You are a Greyfriars boy!" he rapped. "Your name is Wharton?"

"Yes, sir!" answered Harry.

"Probably you remember me?"

"I remember you quite well, Captain Warren."

The captain's glance turned on the Co.; and they understood it and kept back. He wanted to speak to Harry alone, they could see.

"You know that fellow also—the young rascal who has just cut?" said the captain.

"Oh, yes."

"I have learned—since—that you saw him at Warren Croft, the day you came there with Colonel Wharton, though I did not know it at the time."

"He ducked me in the lake in the

grounds," said Harry. "It wasn't a matter I wanted to mention to his father or uncle."

"I understand! But—you knew he was coming to Greyfriars, and when a boy named Warren came, you knew he was not the same." The captain's eyes scanned Harry searchingly. "Yet you kept the secret?"

"Warren of the Fifth gave me his word that there was no wrongdoing in the matter, sir!" said Harry quietly.

"And you believed him—though he was at the school in the name of someone else?"

"Yes! Anybody could see that he was square!" said Harry. "Of course, I couldn't understand the matter—but I trusted him! I thought then that I was right—and I think so now."

The captain smiled. It was a very pleasant smile, like a gleam of sunshine on the hard, brown face.

"You were right, my boy," he said. "Jim is one of the best, and incapable of doing wrong. You were right to trust him. Very different from—"

He broke off. "Had it been known that anyone at Greyfriars knew my nephew James, Jim would not—"

He broke off again. "I must find my nephew; he has been in bad company, and I have to keep him under my eye."

He gave Wharton a nod, and started across the common in the direction James had taken. He was not running now; and it seemed to the Greyfriars fellows that he had very little chance of getting hold of the elusive James.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Coker All Over!

BANG!

Two heads came together with a loud concussion.

Two fearful yells, blended into one, rang out of Coker's study the whole length of the Fifth Form passage.

Evidently there was trouble in that study—not unaccustomed to trouble. But it sounded like trouble on a rather unusual scale.

Fifth Form fellows looked out of other studies. Wild and whirling sounds followed the bang and the yell.

"Is that Coker gone mad?" gasped Hilton.

"He hadn't far to go!" remarked Price.

"Sounds as if he's massacring Potter and Greene!" said Blundell, the captain of the Fifth. "Better look in and do a spot of life-saving!"

There was a loud crashing in the study as Blundell opened the door and looked in. A dozen seniors looked in also, round him, and over his shoulders. Quite a startling sight met their eyes.

Horace Coker was engaged in deadly combat with his studymates, Potter and Greene. He seemed to have started the proceedings quite suddenly by grasping them and banging their heads together. This, it seemed, had proved neither grateful nor comforting to Potter and Greene; and they had turned on Horace like tigers. The two of them together ought to have been able to handle Horace, beefy as he was. But it was clear that he was giving them a lot of work.

"What's the row?" roared Blundell.

Furniture crashed right and left, as the three struggled and strove. Chairs were up-ended all over the study. Books and papers lay scattered like leaves in Vallombrosa. The table rocked as they bumped on it, and went over on one side. The inkpot rolled off, and trailed ink over the carpet.

Bump!

Coker went down, Potter and Greene sprawling over him. He struggled and roared:

"Gerroff! Lemme gerrap! I'll smash the pair of you!"

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Being smashed by Coker did not seem a tempting prospect to his friends. They did not let him get up. They pinned him down.

Potter was clamped on his broad chest. Greene trampled wildly and recklessly on his legs. Coker bellowed.

He bellowed, he heaved, and he rocked. But it really was not safe to let Coker get up. They had him down, and they kept him down.

"You rotters!" bellowed Coker. "I'm going to thrash you! I'm going to smash you! I'm going—"

"You howling idiot!" yelled Potter.

"You dangerous maniac!" shrieked Greene.

"I'll spifficate you!" yelled Coker.

"Anythin' the matter?" drawled Hilton, and there was a laugh in the passage. It was only too clear that something was the matter.

"Draggemoff, you men!" grasped Coker. "I've only banged their cheeky heads so far! I'm going to smash them into little bits for telling yarns about a friend of mine—"

Jim Warren came out of Study No. 4 and looked into Coker's study. Coker's roar had reached him, and perhaps he guessed that he was the "friend" whom Coker was defending so strenuously.

"We didn't!" gasped Potter. "We never! We only mentioned to the silly ass what every fellow at Greyfriars knows now—"

"Just mentioned it!" gasped Greene. "Everybody but Coker knows—and the howling ass started this shindy—"

"I'll shindy you!" roared Coker. "Raking up that rotten tale about Warren! Making out that the chap isn't true blue! Don't I know a decent chap when I see one! Making out—"

"We never did!" raved Potter. "We like the chap all right, but everybody knows—"

"Rot!" bawled Coker.

"It's all over the school!" howled Greene.

"I don't care if it's all over the universe! It's all gammon and rot, and I'll punch any fellow's head that says it isn't!" bawled Coker. "I'm going to punch yours, Potter! I'm going to punch yours, Greene! Lemme gerrup, and I'll jolly well show you!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the Fifth Form men swarming round the doorway.

It was like old Coker to stand by a pal. It was like him to do it in the most idiotic manner possible!

Everybody at Greyfriars, or nearly everybody, had heard Bunter's tale by that time and knew that it was true. Not that anybody, of course, would have taken Billy Bunter's word on any imaginable topic, but it only needed the clue to be provided for everybody to see how matters stood. That clue had been provided in the revelation that Jim was the son of Captain Warren, James' uncle. Everybody knew.

Except, of course, Coker! Coker wasn't going to believe anything against Jim Warren! He was going to punch anybody who did! And he was doing it—or, at least, had been busy doing it, when he was interrupted by being extended on his own study carpet, with Potter sitting on him and Greene standing on him. But he was anxious to get going again.

"You can cackle!" spluttered Coker indignantly. "I'll knock 'em out! I tell you, Warren's all right! I'll thrash any man who says he isn't! Lemme gerrup!"

"You silly fathead!" roared Potter. "Who said he wasn't all right? But he isn't a chap he isn't—"

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"I tell you he jolly well is!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Jim Warren stepped in. The other Fifth Form men made way for him, giving him very curious looks.

The startling revelation that had thrilled Greyfriars that day had been taken very calmly by Warren, the person most concerned. He had said nothing at all about it, though he must have known that it was in every mind. That alone, of course, was a proof of it.

Yet, though it was now clear that Warren of the Fifth was not the fellow he had been supposed to be, there was little if any difference in the fellows' feelings towards him. They had always liked Warren, and they still liked him. They scouted the idea that there was any sort of a "swindle" in it—Warren, obviously, was not the fellow for that. Some fellows thought that it was some sort of an extraordinary "lark." Anyhow, it was known that the genuine James knew all about it, and could have stopped it any minute he liked. No wrong, clearly, had been done to James. It was an amazing affair certainly, but all the Fifth agreed that, weird as it was, old Warren was all right!

Warren's handsome face was as cool and calm as usual as he stepped into Coker's study. Horace glared up at him.

"Draggemoff, Warren!" he gasped. "I say, now you're here lend me a hand! You take Potter and I'll take Greene, and we'll jolly well teach 'em—"

"Don't be an ass, old chap!" said Warren.

"Eh?"

"What those fellows told you is true!" said Jim Warren.

He spoke quietly. His words caused a sensation! Everybody knew it—knew that Warren knew they knew it. But it startled them to hear the chap own up to it coolly and quietly.

Coker was the most surprised. He ceased to rock and heave. He gazed at Warren open-mouthed, looking like a fish out of water in his dumbfounded astonishment.

"D-d-did you say it was tut-tut-true?" he gasped.

"Yes!"

"Oh crumbs!"

Potter and Greene released Horace. He tottered to his feet. Horace was no longer dangerous.

"We never meant anything against you, Warren, old bean," said Potter. "We just mentioned—"

"I understand!" Warren nodded.

"Then that idiot had to go off at the deep end!" said Greene, rubbing his head. "That burbling ass—"

Warren smiled.

"Coker's a good pal!" he said. "Much obliged, Coker, old man! But, you see, it happens to be true!"

"Rot!" said Coker. "Don't be an ass, Warren! Mad, I suppose! Mean to say that you're a spoofing impostor?"

"No, not quite."

"Look here," roared Coker, "are you James Warren or not?"

"I am James Warren—generally called Jim, to distinguish me from my cousin of the same name," said Warren quietly. "I have never used any name but my own! But I am not the son of Sir Arthur Warren—I am his nephew!"

Coker gazed blankly at Jim Warren.

He was in a sadly rumpled and dishevelled state. There was a trickle of crimson from his rugged nose. But he did not notice it. He just gazed at Sir Arthur Warren's nephew.

Warren glanced round at the silent but excited and eager crowd of the Fifth. He smiled faintly.

"I never meant to spoof anybody," he said. "I don't want to give you details of my family affairs, and I don't suppose you'd be interested if I did. But the long and the short of it is, that Sir Arthur Warren's son was due to come to Greyfriars this term—and wouldn't come; and Sir Arthur's nephew came in his place. James was glad to keep away—I was glad to come. So I came. The names being the same, there was no difficulty about it—and nothing would ever have been said about it but for the circumstance that a fellow here knew James by sight. No wrong has been done to anybody—and I'm going to the Head this evening to explain the whole matter to him. That's all."

Warren walked out of the study.

Coker gasped.

Then he glared at Potter and Greene.

"You dummies!" he said. "I said the chap was all right. What the thump does it matter whether that old stick in China is his father or his uncle? What's it got to do with you, I'd like to know?"

"Nothing!" yelled Potter. "And I never—"

"I never—" howled Greene.

"You'd better shut up!" said Coker. "Let me hear you say anything more against Warren—"

"We didn't—"

"We never—"

"That's enough!" said Coker; and he left the study to bathe his nose.

It was rather fortunate that he did, for if he had remained a moment longer his nose would have been still more urgently in need of first aid.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Loder Asks for It!

LODER gloated. It was sheer luck for Loder. Indeed, it was such luck that the bully of the Sixth could hardly believe his ears when the story first reached them. But he soon knew that there was no doubt about it.

He questioned Billy Bunter. In spite of Warren's inhospitality at tea-time, Bunter had nobly determined not, after all, to give the chap away.

It did not seem to have penetrated into his fat brain that he had already given him away to the whole school.

Loder being a prefect, Bunter did not want to tell him anything. But it did not take Loder more than a few minutes to draw the whole detailed story from him.

And Loder gloated.

He understood now why Jim Warren had been contemptuously amused when the letter had been sent to Captain Warren. No wonder, if Captain Warren was his father—a party, as he evidently was, to the whole transaction!

So that was it!

What Captain Warren would do about that letter Loder did not know—or care now. Certainly he would not turn up at Greyfriars to denounce the impostor, as Loder had hoped and calculated.

But that mattered nothing, as the "impostor" was already shown up—had, indeed, owned up to a lot of the Fifth, as Loder heard soon afterwards.

The fellow, it seemed, was no longer even trying to make a secret of it.

It was great luck for Loder. His letter to Captain Warren was rather ridiculous, in the circumstances; yet it was that letter that had brought about the revelation. It was Loder's doing. For it was clear that it was because he had told Warren that he had mentioned James, and James' shady associations, in the letter that Jim had gone

directly to Prout's study to phone to the blackguard and "put him wise." But for that, the discovery would never have been made.

Loder felt, with great elation, that it was entirely through him that the revelation had come about. His planning had not amounted to much, certainly; but chance had favoured him. His hunting for Bunter had caused that fat and fatuous Owl to park himself in Prout's study—what he had told Warren had sent the Fifth Former to Prout's telephone—and so Bunter had heard the whole thing and told the world.

Loder considered, with reason, that he was the fellow who really deserved the credit of having brought this extraordinary imposture to light.

And now he had his enemy where he wanted him!

With indubitable facts in his possession, he was now empowered to report the matter to the headmaster; it was, indeed, his duty as a prefect to do so. But that was not all.

Loder was not fearfully keen on duty, as a rule. But this particular duty he was going to perform with pleasure—very great pleasure—and he was going to do it in the manner most unpleasant and humiliating to his rival and enemy. He thought the matter over carefully before he took action.

Finally he went down to Hall, where he found a good many fellows, most of them discussing the one thrilling topic. He looked round for Warren, but the fellow was not there.

"Do you know where Warren is, Wingate?" he asked.

"I think he's up in the Fifth." The captain of Greyfriars gave Loder a rather sharp look. "You've heard, of course?"

Loder laughed.

"Yes. I knew all along, and I've been taking steps to show the fellow up—as a matter of fact, that is how this came about. You haven't reported to the Head yet?"

Loder asked that question with a sneer. He knew that Wingate was not anxious to take any step against a fellow he liked, and who had been a highly prized recruit to the first eleven.

"No," said Wingate quietly.

"If you feel that it's up to you, as head prefect—" said Loder, with a sardonic grin.

"I don't."

"Right! Leave it in my hands, then!" said Loder cheerfully.

"Hold on!" said the Greyfriars captain quietly. "Warren is going to the Head himself about it."

"I can see him doing it!" grinned Loder.

"He has said so."

"Rot!"

"Leave it at that, Loder."

"I've my duty to do as a prefect," explained Loder. "I can't leave it at that. Thanks for your advice, all the same, of course!"

And Loder walked out of Hall, leaving the captain of the school frowning.

Cheerfully he went up to the Fifth. He looked in at the door of the games study, where the Fifth Form most did congregate. There was a crowd of seniors there, among them Warren.

Loder looked at him curiously.

The fellow seemed cool and self-possessed enough. He had always been cool and self-possessed, though he had had, as Loder knew, a series of narrow escapes all through that term of this very thing happening. Really, the fellow looked as if he had nothing on his conscience at all.

Certainly, the Fifth Form men seemed to be treating him in the same friendly manner as of old. Hilton was chatting with him, without any change of manner. Loder was rather glad that he had a chance of tackling Warren in the presence of most of his Form. He had a long and bitter grudge to satisfy, and he wanted to rub it in, and rub it in hard.

He stepped into the games study.

The Fifth Form men looked at him, not with welcome. Sixth Form men were not wanted there unless by special invitation. Nobody wanted Loder. That did not worry Loder. He rapped out sharply:

"Warren!"

Jim glanced at him.

"Yes, Loder!"

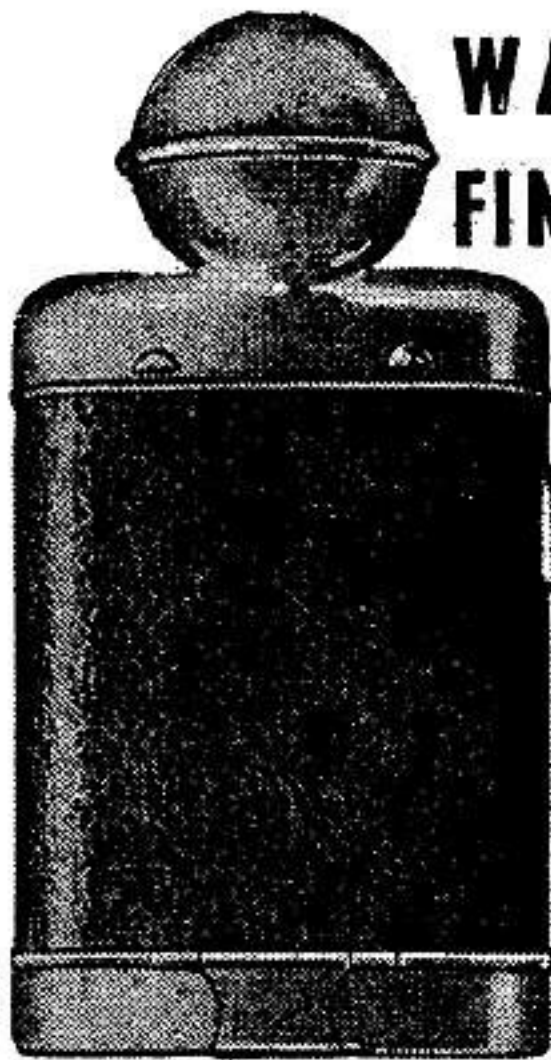
"It seems that your name really is Warren, after all," remarked Loder—"so I understand, at least!"

"Do you really?" asked Warren, with an air of surprise.

"Isn't it the case?"

"Oh, yes! But I'm rather surprised at your understanding it—I mean, I should hardly expect you to understand anything!"

(Continued on next page.)



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There was a chuckle in the Fifth. Loder reddened. It was like the fellow to keep up his cool cheek to the last minute.

"I don't want any impudence from you, Warren!" he yapped.

"Same here!" assented Warren. "I don't want any from you, Loder!"

Loder breathed hard. He felt that he was getting rather the worst of this. But he had his prefectorial authority to exercise.

"Follow me!" he commanded.

"Eh?"

"Follow me!"

"Are you asking me to supper in your study?"

"No!" hissed Loder. "I'm ordering you to follow me to the Head!"

"Oh!" said Warren, with a smile. "You're ordering me to follow you to the Head? Don't worry, Loder! I'm going to see the Head!"

"I'm going to take you to him!"

"Hardly necessary," said Warren. "Without being a Sixth Form man or a prefect, I'm quite capable of walking along a passage unassisted, and I need no guidance to tap at a door. It's awfully good of you, Loder, but you needn't trouble."

"I order you to follow me at once!" said Loder, breathing hard. "Are you going to do so, or not?"

"Not!" said Warren sweetly.

The Fifth Form men, in grim silence, were giving Loder grim looks. It was against all laws, written and unwritten, to "handle" a prefect of the Sixth. But some of the Fifth looked like breaking all those laws on the spot.

"Look here, Loder—" began Blundell.

"You needn't interfere, Blundell! It's come out now that that fellow is a fraud, as I've suspected all along, and I'm going to take him to the headmaster immediately!"

"He's goin' of his own accord, you know," drawled Hilton. "And I request you to choose your words a little more carefully, Loder! Even prefects have had their heads punched before this!"

"Warren, you will either follow me to the Head, or I shall take you by the collar!" said Loder. "Which is it to be?"

Of the two, Loder would have preferred to take the fellow by the collar. He rather hoped that Warren would refuse. And Warren did!

"The fact is, Loder," said Warren in quite a casual tone, "I don't like your company or your conversation! I don't think either of them improving. I should hate to take a walk with you, even for such a short distance as the Head's study! Run away and play!"

"That does it!" said Loder.

He strode straight at Warren and grasped at his collar.

There was a buzz from the Fifth Form men, deepening to a roar. If Warren had needed any help, every man in the games study was ready, prefect or no prefect. But he did not seem to need any.

His hand whipped up like lightning, and grabbed Loder's wrist before Loder could grasp the collar.

His grip was so like that of a steel vice, that the bully of the Sixth uttered a yelp of pain.

He wrenched at his hand; but it remained fast in Warren's steely fingers. Warren smiled at him. And the wrathful roar in the games study changed to a shout of laughter.

Red with rage, losing control of his temper completely, Loder struck at Warren's face with his left hand.

But again the fellow was too quick

for him. Loder's left wrist was gripped in time, and held fast, as in a vice.

He wrenched frantically—in vain.

With both wrists held in that iron grip, the bully of the Sixth was powerless, and Warren was still smiling at him.

"You—you—you—" panted Loder. "Let go! Let go my wrists, you—you hound! By gad, I'll—"

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

"Will you let go?" shrieked Loder.

"My dear man, you've asked for this—in fact, begged for it!" said Warren.

"Don't you like it, now you've got it?"

"I'll have you sacked for this!" yelled Loder.

Warren laughed.

"As I shall be leaving in the morning, anyhow, that doesn't cut a lot of ice!" he remarked. "I shouldn't have hunted trouble with you, Loder, but as you've asked for it, I'll give you what you want."

With a sudden twist, he pitched Loder face down on the table. His grip was transferred to the back of Loder's collar, and the prefect was pinned on the table, struggling frantically, but unavailingly. The games study rocked with laughter.

"Hilton, old man, mind handing me that book?" asked Warren. There was a "Holiday Annual" on the table. Cedric Hilton, grinning, handed it to Jim Warren. Jim took it by the corner in his right hand.

Whack!

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Fifth, as the bulky volume whacked on Loder's trousers with a resounding whack.

Loder yelled:

Whack!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You rotter, leggo!" shrieked Loder. He squirmed like an eel, struggling and kicking wildly. But the grip on the back of his neck pinned him to the table.

Whack!

"I'm giving you six, Loder," explained Warren. "You've often handed out six, Loder—and often asked for it, and never got it! Now you're getting it!"

Whack!

"Ow!"

Whack!

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Whack!

Loder yelled, and the Fifth Formers shrieked. Warren, smiling, threw the book aside—and then threw Loder of the Sixth aside. Loder sprawled headlong on the floor, gasping and panting, crimson with rage and humiliation.

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

"That's that!" said Warren cheerfully. "Glad to leave you something to remember me by, Loder!"

He walked out of the games study. Gerald Loder was left sprawling and panting on the floor, surrounded by the Fifth Formers, rocking with laughter.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The History of the Mystery!

HARRY WHARTON jumped up as the door of Study No. 1 in the Remove opened after a tap, and a handsome, fair-haired Fifth Form fellow looked in, with a smile on his face.

"Trot in Warren!" exclaimed Wharton at once.

The Co. were in the study, and they all rose, and gave the Fifth Form man welcoming looks. They had, in fact, been discussing him, and wondering whether to tell him what they had seen on Courtfield Common that afternoon.

Anyhow, they were all anxious to show Warren of the Fifth that he was welcome in the Remove, and that they liked him as well as ever. He understood, and smiled very pleasantly as he came into the study.

The armchair was vacated at once in his honour.

"Take a pew, Warren!" said Frank Nugent.

"Thanks!" said Warren. He sat down.

"You've heard, of course?" he said.

"The heartfulness was terrific, my esteemed and ludicrous Warren!" assented Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"That idiot Bunter—" said Bob Cherry.

"No harm done, as it happens!" said Warren. "But before I go—"

"You're going?" exclaimed Harry.

"Yes, I'm going."

"Sorry!" said all the Famous Five together. Hurree Jamset Ram Singh added that the sorrowfulness was preposterous.

"Well, I'm sorry, too!" said Warren. "I like Greyfriars no end! My last school—he smiled—"wasn't quite up to the Greyfriars mark. My Cousin James was at Oakshott—but my pater's means did not run to that. The dear old bean did the best he could for me, and scraped pretty hard to do it—but it wouldn't run to Oakshott or Greyfriars for me. I can tell you I've had a ripping term here. You've met my father, I think, Wharton—"

"We've all met him now," said Bob.

"How's that?" asked Warren, raising his eyebrows a little.

They told him what they had seen on Courtfield Common. He smiled as he listened.

"I don't know whether I ought to have let my father know about James and his antics," he said. "But—I felt that I couldn't give the brute away. Nobody likes telling tales about a chap. Still, I'm not sorry that Loder barged in, after all. The fellow wants looking after."

"He does!" said Harry.

"I gave him the tip on the telephone, too. He could have avoided being made to look an ass to his friends at Popper Court! That was how that young ass, Bunter—but you know all that!"

Warren paused, a thoughtful look on his handsome face.

"Look here! You kids knew my little secret, and you trusted me, and said nothing," he went on. "Before I go, I feel that it's up to me to explain a little. I shouldn't like you to remember me as a chap who had done something fishy."

"We shouldn't, anyhow!" said Harry at once. "I took your word that it was all straight. And I believe it now, as I did then."

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

"That's so," said Johnny Bull. "All the same—"

"Shut up, Johnny!"

"Shan't!" said Johnny calmly. "All the same, Warren, it was rather fat-headed—"

"Kick him, somebody!" said Nugent. Jim Warren laughed.

"The fact is, I rather agree with Bull!" he said unexpectedly. "No wrong has been done to anybody, but a fellow can't be too careful not to place himself in suspicious circumstances. You fellows have seen James, and know what he's like. You've seen his father, Wharton, and know what he's like, too! My poor old pater came back from the War with a game leg, and precious little else. Old Sir Arthur is a bit of a pompous old ass, but generous in his



Attracted by the wild and whirling sounds, the seniors pushed open the door of Coker's study. Quite a startling sight met their eyes! Horace Coker was grasping his study-mates, Potter and Greene, and banging their heads together. "What's the row?" roared Blundell, as furniture crashed right and left.

way—he helped us both. James, of course, was the apple of his eye."

"Rather a rotten apple!" murmured Bob.

"That was quite right, of course," went on Warren. "But James was—and is—what you know! He was nearly sacked at Oakshott—had to leave! I had to leave my poor little show, too—not because I'd been a goat, like James, but because the cash was running out. So we'd both left."

The juniors listened in silence.

They were not exactly curious, but they certainly did feel interested to know the facts of the strange affair.

"James vowed he wouldn't go to another school. He wanted a good time. Sir Arthur made all arrangements for him to come to Greyfriars, and he swore he'd get himself sacked if he came. He meant it, every word."

"Nice boy!" said Nugent.

"Old Sir Arthur was worried about James—but he gave nine-tenths of his time and attention to his jolly old diplomatic appointment in China. My pater was given all the trouble. Mind, he was willing to play up. Sir Arthur had been good to him, in his own, lofty way, though it was sometimes a bit hard to bear. But the position was impossible—like a puzzle without an answer."

Warren smiled faintly.

"You see, James had to go to Greyfriars—and wouldn't go! The pater had to see that he did—but was given strict instructions that James was not to be coerced in any way—the dear boy!"

"What he wanted," remarked Johnny Bull, "was a hiding. A jolly hard one!"

"At the same time," went on Warren, "Sir Arthur hugged the happy delusion that his boy had been rather misunderstood at Oakshott, and banked on his doing better at Greyfriars. He was afraid that he might get himself sacked—and he left it to the pater to see that

such a calamity didn't happen! That was rather a tough nut to crack—with a fellow like James!"

"The toughfulness was terrific!"

"If Sir Arthur had stayed at home I don't know how it would have turned out. But he had to leave for China—even the apple of his eye was not allowed to come between him and his jolly old diplomatic duties. And—"

Warren coloured.

"You see, though not a bad old bean, Sir Arthur looked on my poor old pater as a poor relation, bound to do anything and everything, possible or impossible!"

"James was to go to Greyfriars—without being forced, though he would only have gone if he'd been taken there by his collar. He was not to be sacked—though he was certain to be sacked, and, in fact, determined to be sacked. Sir Arthur, in China, was to have the comfort of hearing that he was doing well at his new school—though it was an absolute cert that he would do worse than ever! He was not to be distressed by bad news of his son—though he couldn't possibly receive any other kind!"

"And my pater was to work all these miracles—being a poor relation whose duty it was to work miracles for a benefactor."

A note of bitterness crept into Warren's voice for a moment. But he smiled again as he went on:

"The pater unfortunately, was no miracle-worker. James absolutely refused to go near Greyfriars. He had refused a dozen times already—and he made it more emphatic when his father was gone. That was that! He made out that he wanted to go on an extended Cook's tour—and that seemed decent and harmless enough, and the pater let him.

"I don't see what else he could have

done—and he never knew, of course, that James was deceiving him. As soon as Loder's letter told him that, he came after him fast enough, as you have seen."

"But—!" said Johnny Bull.

Warren smiled.

"I'm coming to that!" he said. "He couldn't carry out all Sir Arthur's contradictory instructions, so he did his best. But—that left it that James Warren was expected at Greyfriars at the beginning of the term—and no James Warren was available—except me!"

"I—I see!" said Harry slowly.

"But I want you to understand," said Jim, "that my father's chief concern was for his brother. Apart from the fact that Sir Arthur would have laid the blame on him; he did not want the old bean to hear either that his son had failed to turn up at school, or that he had been kicked out soon after he got there. It would have worried the old bean no end—thousands of miles away. He could rely on me to act decently and play the game. So I was sent here instead of James."

"Sort of substitute for a missing man in the team?" said Bob.

"Something like that!" said Warren, laughing. "And, of course, I was glad to get another term at school, especially a school like this, and the pater was glad of the chance for me. The name being the same, there was no difficulty, James being unknown here personally. The fact that I was Sir Arthur's nephew instead of his son would never have cropped up, but for the unfortunate circumstance that Wharton had, somehow, met the real James, and knew him by sight."

"Rotten luck!" said Harry.

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"But that really wouldn't have mattered, as it turned out, but for James coming to stay with that crew at Popper Court. James hadn't been told that I was playing substitute—he would have been glad enough to keep away from school on those terms, or any other; but he would have made himself as disagreeable as possible. As you know, he did—after he saw me and found that I was here."

"The niceness of the esteemed James is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Now the cat's out of the bag," went on Warren. "I've seen the Head, and told the whole story. He looked jolly serious over it, as you may imagine; but he's willing to believe that Captain Warren acted, as he believed, for the best on his brother's account. But, of course, I can't stay!"

His face clouded.

"It's rather rotten," he said. "The pater had reason, as he supposed, to think that James was showing signs of getting more decent. He hoped that he would be able to send him to Rookwood School next term. I was to play up this term, and prevent the old bean getting shocking news of him—and, after that, the pater hoped, James might play up decently on his own account. That's all knocked on the head, now that he's found out that the brute was only pulling his leg."

"And now——" said Harry.

"Now I'm going. I should have left at the term's end, anyhow. I'm going abroad!" explained Warren. "I've had a letter from my father to-day—written before he got Loder's—and he's got an appointment he put in for a long time back. He lost a good deal by the War, but it's turned up trumps

in the long run. His military experiences are coming in useful, now they're starting the game over again in Africa."

"Africa?" said Bob.

"A job in training Abyssinian troops," said Warren. "They want some training—and the pater's the man to give them what they want, game leg and all. It's rather a decent thing, and I'm going out with him—chance to take up coffee-planting later. It will be an opening for me, as well as the pater—and I never was afraid of work——"

"And James——"

Warren chuckled.

"James will have to find another guardian. I fancy he won't be sorry—after the way you've told me the pater was looking after him to-day. He's got another uncle, on the other side of the family—a tough old nut with a temper—just the man James wants to keep him in order, I think. I shan't be fearfully, awfully sorry to see no more of James!"

Jim rose from the armchair.

"That's the lot," he said. "I'm afraid I've bored you a bit; but I didn't want you to remember me as a doubtful character!"

And, with a cheery nod to the chums of the Remove, Warren walked out of Study No. 1.

THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

A Jolt for James!

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

Bunter fairly howled.

His eyes almost popped through his spectacles with excitement.

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It was break the next morning—and Harry Wharton & Co., in the quad, were thinking, and speaking, of the fellow who had gone.

Jim Warren had left that morning.

It was rumoured that the Head, taking a very lenient view of the peculiar affair, had offered to let him stay on to the end of the term—in, of course, his own identity. But the term was very near its end; and in view of his new prospects, Jim had preparations to make for a voyage.

It was known, too, that he had been on the telephone to his father at Warren Croft—and no doubt the captain, in view of the sensation that had been caused in the school by the unexpected revelation, had considered it better for him to leave at once.

All Greyfriars saw him off, at the gates, when he went—Prout, his Form-master, shook hands with him heartily—Coker thumped him on the back—dozens of fellows shook hands, or smacked his shoulders—and the Remove men cheered when the taxi drove off for the station. Loder, being observed to sneer, some person unknown got Loder with a snowball, which caught Loder behind the ear and caused him to sit down suddenly—to the general hilarity.

Now Warren was gone! He had had a last word with Harry Wharton & Co. before he went—a cheery word of friendly farewell. And he had mentioned that Captain Warren had gone home the previous day, after all, without James—James was still at large. Which they were not surprised to hear.

In break, all the fellows were talking about Warren, and wishing him luck. And when Billy Bunter, who had been blinking out of the gates, came scuttling across the quad, yelling with excitement, or, rather, shrieking, a dozen fellows told him to shut up—with great unanimity.

Bunter, however, did not shut up. He gasped with excitement.

"I say, you fellows! Jig-jig-jig——" The fat Owl of the Remove stuttered with excitement. "I say, Jig-jig-jig——"

"Potty?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Jig-jig-jig——" stuttered Bunter.

"The jigfulness is terrific!" remarked Hurree Jamset Ram Singh, in wonder.

"Jig-jig-jig-James!" spluttered Bunter. He got it out at last. "Jig-jig-James—he's coming!"

"James!" gasped the Famous Five.

"I've jig-jig-just seen Jig-jig-James!" gasped Bunter. "He's coming here—— And, I say, you fellows, there he is!"

The Famous Five stared at the gateway.

There was James!

Beefy and aggressive, scowling and unpleasant, there was James—coming in.

The juniors had wondered what had become of James. He had dodged his guardian, and had not been recaptured. As he had plenty of money, it was probable that James intended to carry on, on his own, in the agreeable and creditable manner to which James was accustomed.

But he was looking in at Greyfriars first. Harry Wharton & Co. as they stared at the unexpected apparition guessed why.

James knew nothing of his cousin's secret being out in the school. He did not know that Jim was gone.

He was longing for vengeance for the thrashing he had had from Captain Warren. And he had come to "take it out" of Jim.

(Continued on page 28.)

REVEL IN THE THRILLS IN THIS GREAT SEA STORY, BOYS!

DAN of the DOGGER BANK!

By David Goodwin.

The Capture of the Adder!

KENNETH GRAHAM, son of a millionaire shipowner, is rescued off the Dogger Bank by the Lowestoft trawler, Grey Seal.

His past life blotted from his brain, the youngster is given the name of "Dogger Dan," and signed on as fifth hand under Skipper Atheling, Finn Macoul, Wat Griffiths and Buck Atheling.

Aware of his nephew's fate, and knowing that he will be heir to the shipowner's money when his brother dies, Dudley Graham promises to pay Jake Rebow, commander of the Black Squadron, a fleet manned by men whom no honest trawler would take on board, £1,000 to get Kenneth out of the way for ever.

With a good load of fish aboard the Grey Seal, Skipper Atheling makes for Amsterdam to sell his catch. Here, Dan and Buck Atheling go ashore, where Rebow's confederates make a fruitless attempt to drown the two crums in a flooded cellar.

Late that night, when walking along by the sandhills that front the coast, Dan and Buck see the crew of the Adder, the Black's flagship, engaged in smuggling operations.

"She's forfeit for contraband if we take her into Ymuiden," says Dan, leading the way over the sand towards the Adder's boats. "Come on, while her crew's palavering ashore!"

The two chums reached the boats. A solitary watcher by the longboat started up as they approached. Before he could cry a warning, Buck's fist took him on the temple and sent him down, dazed and helpless.

"Stave the longboat!" cried Dan.

Buck picked up a keg and dashed it down on the boat's floorboards with all his strength. He heard the timbers splinter and crack.

"Quick, Dan—the dinghy!"

In a twinkling they ran the light boat down into the water and leaped into it. They ran out the sculls and drove her forward, while a crowd of dark forms poured out from the sandhills.

"Pull up the collar o' your jacket an' lie low," whispered Buck, "and pull for your life!"

Bent double, putting all their weight into the work, the boys drove the dinghy straight towards the Adder, where she lay rocking sleepily on the swells.

Suddenly a harsh voice broke from the smack's deck:

"Who goes there?"

The boys crouched lower. The hoarse voice came from the Adder, where she lay hove-to, rocking in the warm darkness. Dan bent nearly double in the dinghy, pulled her along swiftly and quietly.

"By George," whispered Buck, "there are two of them! I only reckoned to find one!"

There was no doubt about it. Besides the man by the tiller, there was a second man, looming dark against the night sky, standing by the hatchway.



Putting forth all his strength, Buck hurled his man into the companion-way. The steersman met his comrade coming up, and both of them hurtled back into the cabin, yelling like wildcats!

"Between two devils and the deep sea!" chuckled Dan. "We've got to take our chance now! We can't go back!"

"No!" breathed Buck, as a confused murmur arose on the beach and a swarm of black figures appeared round the longboat. "Neither of 'em have tumbled yet! Two's better than ten!"

Up went the dinghy—right up to the Adder's quarter. The second man aboard her went slowly down the hatchway into the cabin, and Dan gave a sigh of relief. A plan shot through his brain. The trawler's steersman hailed the dinghy lazily.

"Have ye got the stuff?" he said. "Can ye no speak?"

A hoarse, angry shout went up from the beach. The loss of the dinghy had been discovered. The steersman on the Adder started, and turned his eyes shoreward.

"No," said Buck grimly; "but we've got you!"

With a quick spring he gained the

trawler's deck and grappled with the steersman.

The man yelped with surprise, and tried frantically to draw his knife.

"Help!" he shouted.

"Stand out o' the way, Dan!" cried Buck, shifting his grip of the man. "I've got him!"

The cry for help brought the second seaman rushing up the companion-way. In another second he would have added himself to the fray, and he was by far the more powerful of the two. Dan, however, stood ready to grip him.

But there was no need. Putting forth all his strength, Buck hurled his man straight from him into the companion-way. The steersman met his comrade coming up, and both of them hurtled backwards into the cabin, yelling like wildcats. There was a violent slam, and Buck slid the hatch over and threw his weight on it.

"Quick, Dan—quick!" he cried. "Shut the fore-hatch!"

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Dan darted into the bows. The hatch leading into the fore-castle from the deck was not a scuttle-hatch, but a square one, with a movable lid, like a sail-locker, and the lid was lying loose on deck.

For a moment there was a wild commotion under the main-hatch, as the two men struggled to open it from beneath. Then, realising that it was being held, they left it and rushed into the fore-castle, just as Dan snatched up the hatch cover and flung it in place.

He was a second too late. The head and shoulders of the steersman popped up through the hole, and, though Dan slammed the hatch down and threw his body across it, he could not close it securely.

There was a savage yell from below, and the hatch cover swayed and heaved as Dan tried to keep it down. But the two men below had plenty of leverage, and they forced it up violently. A bare, sinewy arm was thrust out from underneath the cover, a long knife in its hairy paw, and slashed viciously at Dan.

"Help, Buck! Quick!" cried Dan. "I can't hold 'em!"

Snapping down the catch of the cabin hatch, Buck darted forward to help his comrade. Already the quick splash of oars sounded near at hand. The long-boat was approaching.

Throwing all his powerful weight on to the fore-hatch, Buck forced it down, and the arm holding the knife was pinched between hatch and coamings with a force that made its owner yell. Snatching up a handspike, Buck struck at the man's knuckles. The knife was dropped, and a smothered howl came from below.

"Draw your arm in!" shouted Buck. "Draw it in, or I'll pin it to the deck!"

He grasped the knife, laid its keen point against the protruding arm, and took his weight off the hatch for a moment. With an anxious yelp the arm was drawn in, and the boys jammed the hatch to its place, and fixed across it the iron battens that kept it down in heavy weather. A volley of muffled oaths filtered through the deck.

"Caught in their own rat-trap!" exclaimed Buck. "Jump lively, Dan! The long-boat's nearly on to us! She ain't staved, after all! Foresheet over!"

Nimble as cats, the boys sprang to their work. A chorus of oaths and threats came from the longboat, that was fast coming up, with oars that bent like willow wands. The Blacks were little pleased to find their work interrupted.

"Hard up your tiller!" shouted Buck, slacking away the main-sheet. "Stand by with an oar to brain the first man who tries to board! It's death if they catch us!"

"Give way, give way, ye loons!" roared the harsh voice of Rebow from the boat. "'Tis the cubs from the Grey Seal, an' nae Excise men! Fifty poon' apiece if ye lay them by the heels!"

"Ay, fifty poon'!" mocked Buck, as the Adder lay over and gathered away. "It's more than fifty poon' this night's work'll cost ye, Jake Rebow! She feels it now!"

And the flagship of the Black Squadron, laying her wicked side to the sea, raced away, leaving the longboat straining and sweating in her

wake. The curses of the smuggler crew were enough to darken the silver moon.

"At last!" cried Dan. "What a night's work, Buck! We'll lay her in Ymuiden for a rotting contraband, and the Blacks will have to get another flagship! That's two we've taken from 'em!"

"You bet!" said Buck. "Keep her out a bit more, old boy. It's shallow here. They're still after us!"

"Wish 'em joy!" returned Dan, looking over his shoulder. "We're doing seven knots to their five, and the wind's freshening!"

A sharp squall headed the trawler, and the wind, southing louder and louder, veered steadily round to the westward, blowing along the shore instead of off it.

"More away, more away!" cried Buck, watching a curling yellow wave that followed under the lee-quarter. "That means shoal water! Head her out from the land! Ah!"

There was a bump and a surge. The Adder had struck the ground!

"She's fast!" gasped Dan.

A faint hoot of triumph came from far astern, and the distant longboat quickened her pace.

"Slack away mainsheet!" shouted Buck, hauling the headsails a-weather. "Lash your helm hard up, an' come on to the bowsprit! That'll take the weight off her aft!"

"Confound it!" said Dan, scrambling forward. "The bottom's all hills and hummocks herabouts! We must get off, or we're as good as dead men!"

"She moved!" cried Buck. "The tide's still making! We're too close in shore! One good puff will bring her off!"

"Hope so," answered Dan. "That puff will have to hurry up, or it'll find a pair of corpses!"

A hideous clamour arose inside the smack. The main-hatch shook and quivered under heavy blows. The two prisoners, guessing from the shock what had happened, were trying to beat their way out.

"Ay, they may thump till they're tired!" said Buck. "The catch'll hold, an' nothin' but a sledgehammer will break the hatch! It isn't them I mind! It's yonder cutthroats in the longboat!"

"Why don't they open fire?" said Dan. "They're handy with their pop-guns most times!"

"Not allowed on smugglin' jobs," returned Buck. "Always left aboard. Only take knives as a rule."

Bang, bang, bang!

Three terrific reports echoed in the closed-in cabin, and three splintered holes blossomed in the top of the main-hatch.

"Just what I was going to suggest," remarked Dan. "If the guns are left on board, those beauties below are not so badly off as they might be."

"They're only damagin' their own property!" grinned Buck. "No good shootin' unless you've somethin' to shoot at! Wish they'd shoot each other an' be done with it!"

"She moved again!" cried Dan, as the trawler swung slowly round.

"Right!" shouted Buck, leaping to the deck. "Trim your sheets an' we'll best 'em yet!"

But slowly — painfully, slowly — the Adder moved. The longboat came up hand over fist, covering the last fifty yards at a furious pace. And in her bows, with murder in his eyes, crouched the form of Jake Rebow!



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The Hurricane!

WE'VE got 'em! We've got 'em!" snarled Rebow, in a thick voice. "Drive her under the lee-quarter!"

"Stand by with an oar, Dan!" muttered Buck, under his breath. "We're moving!"

Right under the quarter came the longboat. The trawler's boom, swinging idly, made the boat's crew duck and dodge.

Rebow stood up to make his spring. Whack! Thud!

Dan's oar, swung with all his strength, caught Jake full in the throat. The leader of the Blacks fell back among his men with a choking cry. Four or five of the crew started up to leap aboard.

"She's off—she's off!" yelled Buck, as the Adder swooped ahead with a surge and a heave. "Let 'em have it, Dan! Keep 'em away one moment more an' we're safe!"

A howl of rage arose from the longboat, and a lantern-jawed ruffian in her bows clapped his long knife between his teeth and made a spring that landed him on the Adder's quarter-rail.

"Down him!" yelled Buck.

Dan needed no warning. Before the man could use his knife, the good ash oar took him athwart the chin with a crack that sent him crashing backwards.

Away leaped the Adder, leaving the longboat tossing to the rising sea, her crew too disgusted even to curse.

Rebow was sitting up on her floorboards, holding his throat with both hands.

"They're licked!" shouted Dan.

"They say the Black Fleet's never licked while it's afloat," said Buck. "But we've got the bulge on it this time. Just run your hands over that swab there, and see if he's got anything dangerous about him."

"Only his knife," said Dan, picking it up and searching the fallen ruffian's clothes.

"Right! Chuck him below to join his mates. But be careful how you do it. They may fire."

"If anybody's hit it won't be me," said Dan, grinning, as he hauled the man up to the mainhatch. "Do you hear, you ornament!" he continued, as the prisoner opened his eyes. "If you don't want any lead bullets let into you, tell your pals not to shoot, or they'll get you!"

Dan raised the clasp of the hatch, and slid it back, drawing the ruffian's body over the gap as he did so.

The instant the top opened, a revolver muzzle was thrust up. Dan held his prisoner in front of him ominously.

"Don't shoot, mates! For mercy's sake don't shoot!" groaned the prostrate man.

With a sullen mutter the ruffian lowered the revolver.

With a quick turn, Dan bundled the fast-comer below, neck and crop, upsetting his friends as he arrived in disordered condition at the foot of the companion-ladder. Then the hatch was fastened again.

"An' that's that," said Buck. "Get a pull of your head-sheets, an' we'll cramp her up for Ymuiden."

Even as Dan got hold of the bowline, a gust of wind struck the Adder, laying her down till the water was nearly up to her hatches.

"She won't stand up to this," said Dan. "Madn't we better reef her down? It's coming on hard."

"Let her rip!" returned Buck quickly. "It's only five miles to harbour. She must stand it!"

The Adder, though swift, had neither the power nor the grip of the water that the boys were used to in the good

Grey Seal, and soon they had to heave her to and reef.

Buck, anxious to get in, would only haul down a single reef, and kept a whole foresail, but changed his jib for the spitfire, or storm-jib.

The boys cramped the lean trawler up for Ymuiden, and she travelled very wet. The wind headed more and more. They had to plug dead to windward at last, and on every tack the wind roared louder and the sea rose higher.

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 Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4. A stamped, addressed envelope will ensure a reply.

I WAS late arriving at the office this morning, chums. There was a dense fog over London. Traffic was held up, and one could hardly see a foot in front of one. When I'd managed to sink down at my desk, and pick up the first letter of the pile that was waiting for me, I found it was from a Lancashire reader, whose query lent point to my experience. He wants to know

SOMETHING ABOUT FOG!

Fog is vapour suspended in the atmosphere at or near the earth's surface, causing obscurity. This particular reader has heard that "London Peasoupers" are worse than any other fogs, and he wants to know why this is so. It is due to the great number of chimneys which continually send out smoke into the air. Moisture collects more rapidly around specks of dust, so that the fogs of London really consist of tiny particles of matter surrounded by moisture. That is why there are so many fogs in London at this time of the year.

One reads stories of the terrible fogs which used to be experienced in London in the "good old days." Actually, those fogs weren't half so bad as the ones we get nowadays, because there weren't so many chimneys. But they seemed worse—especially at night time—owing to poor street lighting.

The other day I came across

A RELIC OF OLD LONDON

in the shape of two iron brackets attached to either side of the doorway of an old house. They were rather like gigantic candle snuffers. Well, fogs were the reason for them being there. In the days before London was properly street-lighted, it was impossible to move around at night without carrying a torch. Youngsters made torches and hired themselves out as "linkboys," to guide citizens through the dense fogs.

Unfortunately, many of these "linkboys" used to guide their customers to convenient corners and alleys where they could be held up and robbed by highwaymen or footpads. Wealthy people eventually made their own servants act as "linkboys." On arriving home, the "linkboys" "snuffed" their torches in these cone-shaped iron brackets. A few of these torch-snuffers are still to be found on old houses in various parts of London.

The next query—a nautical one—comes from a Brighton reader. He asks:

WHAT ARE DOG-WATCHES?

Well, to begin with, they have nothing

"Look yonder!" cried Dan, as they neared the pier-lights. "Is that the Seal coming out?"

"It is, by gosh!" replied Buck. "Dad's left us behind! Or thinks we've gone to sea in a dinghy, maybe!"

(Are Dan and Buck heading for disaster, or will fortune favour them? Don't miss next week's thrill-packed chapters of this smashing sea story, boys!)

to do with dogs, and they are not time-keepers. At sea, the day is divided up into periods of time which are called "watches." A "watch" is four hours long, except the dog-watches, which are only two hours in length. The first dog-watch lasts from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. The second dog-watch lasts from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. The reason for dog-watches is that if the day was split up only into six watches, the crew, which are divided into two sections and take over alternate watches, would always be on duty during the same hours. This would mean that one section only had four hours rest at nights, while the other section had eight. By splitting the day up into seven watches it enabled the crew to have four hours rest one night, and eight hours the next, thus satisfying both sections.

If you are having a Christmas party this year, you will be glad to hear of anything guaranteed to make it go with a swing. While visiting some of the big London stores, I came across the very thing. It is called "Mappa-Mundi," and includes, among other things, a jigsaw puzzle big enough to cover a full-sized table top. You can get Mappa-Mundi sets at all bookstalls, stationers, or toy shops, and the price of this new travel game is 3s. 6d.

While we are on the subject, here are two more games calculated to produce fast and furious fun. One is "Alfa-Kubes," comprising a set of dice with letters instead of dots, with which you build words; and the other, "Bob's y'r Uncle," a card-game which simply cannot be played quietly. Both "Alfa-Kubes" and "Bob's y'r Uncle" are guaranteed to "bring down the house," and if you take my tip you'll have a set of each. Prices? Sorry, I forgot. "Alfa-Kubes" is. and "Bob's y'r Uncle" is. 6d.

Although space is short, we must find room for next week's super attractions. The long complete Greyfriars yarn, the first in a grand new Christmas series, is entitled:

"SMITHY'S STRANGE ADVENTURE!"

By Frank Richards,

and is one of the most exciting school stories I have had the pleasure of reading. In the forefront are Vernon-Smith and an Italian Count who has designs on certain property belonging to the Bounder's pater. Mr. Smith, however, refuses to sell, the Count becomes desperate, and things happen! Our popular author has fairly let himself go in this magnificent story, which will grip your interest from the very first line.

There will be further exciting chapters of David Goodwin's masterly sea story, a full-of-smiles edition of the "Greyfriars Herald," and another "Interview" by our clever long-haired poet.

Don't miss this bumper number, boys, whatever you do!

YOUR EDITOR.

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BUNTER SPILLS THE BEANS!

(Continued from page 24.)

It was only too plain. He was there to "show him up." He had held his tongue because it suited him to carry on with his rowdy friends at Pepper Court. Now his game at Popper Court was up, so he had resolved that Jim's game at Greyfriars should be up, also.

His first words as he swaggered across the quad showed his intention. He shouted to Harry Wharton:

"Here, Wharton, you young rotter! Where's that cousin of mine? Tell him his game's up here! I'm going to see his headmaster!"

And James swaggered on to the House.

In the doorway stood Mr. Quelch and Mr. Prout, and they eyed him with strong disfavour.

"Who is this?" boomed Prout. "Who is this noisy, ill-mannered intruder?"

"Warren's cousin, I think," said Mr. Quelch dryly.

James was directed to the Head's study by Trotter, the school page.

Dr. Locke gave quite a start when Trotter announced him. However, he gave orders for James to be admitted.

"Well?" rapped Dr. Locke. "Why are you here? You do not imagine, I presume, that you will now be allowed to come to this school?"

James stared at him. Then he laughed.

"Catch me!" he sneered. "I've come here to tell you that I'm the chap who was booked to come to Greyfriars this term, and—"

"I am aware of it."

"Oh, you're aware of it, are you?" said James insolently. "Perhaps you're aware, too, that my poor relation, my Cousin Jim, came here in my place, and that the fellow who's called Warren of the Fifth—"

"I am aware of the whole matter."

"Oh!" said James, taken very much aback. "Blessed if I knew! Mean to say you're not going to turn that spoofer out, now you know—"

"Warren of the Fifth has already left."

"Oh gad!" ejaculated James.

"But," went on the Head grimly, "Captain Warren communicated with me by telephone, and informed me that you were at large—"

"Oh, he did, did he?" jeered James.

"And requested me, if you were seen here again, to have you detained, and sent home—"

"What?"

"Which I shall certainly do, as it is only too clear that you need very careful and strict supervision," said the Head. "As you cannot be trusted, I am authorised to send for a constable to escort you to your home. I shall now ring up the police station, and request a constable to be sent. You will remain here until he arrives."

James jumped.

"I'm not going home!" he bawled.

"Silence!"

"I'll watch it!" yelled James.

He bounded to the door.

"Stop!" exclaimed the Head.

James flew.

Dr. Locke stepped to his window. He threw it open as James bounded out of the House, in full flight. Dozens of fellows stared at him.

"Stop that boy!" called out the Head. "Stop him at once, and detain him!"

"What-ho!" grinned Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton dived for James' legs like a Rugby half-back, and the burly fellow went sprawling head-first.

The next moment Wharton's chums hurled themselves on James as one man. James went down in a heap, with the chums of the Remove sprawling over him.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"We've stopped him!"

James was stopped—there was no doubt about that. Wingate, laughing, came up and sorted him out.

It was a breathless, gasping, dishevelled, and infuriated James who was led back into the House, with Wingate's grip on his shoulder.

Locked in a room till a constable came, James, no doubt, regretted that he had called at Greyfriars that morning. The dinner-bell was ringing when a constable arrived in a taxi for

James, and James was handed over to him.

All eyes were on James, including Bunter's, not to mention his spectacles. Through the crowd of Greyfriars fellows, James was led, scowling.

The taxi rolled away with him and his official conductor, and Greyfriars had seen the last of James.

Harry Wharton & Co. heard again from Jim Warren before the school broke up for Christmas. He wrote a happy, cheery letter—neck-deep in his preparations for the Abyssinian trip with his father. He mentioned that James had been passed on to the guardianship of his other uncle, the "tough old nut." Whether Sir Arthur, solemnly pursuing his diplomatic duties in far-off China, was likely to get good news of him was doubtful. It was to be hoped that the tough old nut was equal to the task of keeping James in order. No doubt it was a tough task. The Famous Five were reading that letter together, when Billy Bunter rolled up.

"I say, you fellows—" he began.

"Shut up!" said Harry. "This is from old Warren—"

"Oh!" said Bunter. "Has he gone to America yet?"

"He's going to Africa, fathead!"

"Eh! I thought he was going to Abyssinia," said Bunter. "Is Abyssinia is Africa?"

"Oh, my hat! Bort off!" gasped Bob.

"Well, I don't mind where it is," said Bunter. "Never mind Abyssinia, and never mind Warren. I want to speak to you fellows about the Christmas holidays. I say, you fellows, where are you going? I say, don't walk off while a chap's talking to you!"

But they did.

THE END.

(Now look out for next week's MAGNET, and a special yarn of Harry Wharton & Co.—the first in a grand new Christmas series—entitled: "SMITHY'S STRANGE ADVENTURE!" It's the type of school yarn you've long been waiting for. Be sure and order your copy EARLY!)

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TEST YOUR SKILL AS A 'TEC!

Here's an opportunity for budding detectives to test their sense of logic. We give below an actual cross-examination of our Prize Porker by Wingate after the disappearance of a large currant cake from the latter's study. Bunter's case appears to be flawless; but if you are keen enough you will discover a weakness in his argument that enables Wingate's remorseless reasoning powers to deduce that Bunter took the cake.

WINGATE: "Did you go to my study after the cake had been placed on the table?"

BUNTER: "Yes, Wingate—I mean, no. The fact is, I didn't know there was a cake there at all. When I looked in, I certainly didn't see it on the table wrapped up in greaseproof paper, and I shouldn't have known what it was if I had. Besides, I don't know which IS your study."

WINGATE: "How soon after your visit to my study was it when you were seen eating a cake in your own study?"

BUNTER: "About five minutes, old chap. But that wasn't your cake. It was another cake that one of my titled relations sent me."

WINGATE: "Who told you I had a cake?"

BUNTER: "Skinner did. He took me along to your study and pointed it out. Needless to say, I told him I wouldn't dream of touching it. Anyway, I never eat cake. Besides, I didn't know you had one."

WINGATE: "Did you or did you not take my cake?"

BUNTER: "Certainly not. Anyway, it was only a mouldy currant cake. I've eaten plenty that tasted better. I didn't take it, Wingate—honour bright!"

WINGATE: "You mean you DID!"

HOW DID WINGATE KNOW? BY WHAT MARVELLOUS PROCESS OF LOGIC DID HE FIND OUT THAT BUNTER WAS NOT TELLING THE TRUTH?

No prizes are offered—and the answer will not be printed in next week's "Herald."

GLEEFRIARS NEEDEE LEFORM PLENTY QUICK Says WUN LUNG

Wun Lung say English school needee reform plenty quick—what you think?

Too muchee Latin, too muchee history—but no one teaches Chinese magic and conjuring tricks! Wun Lung he thinkke this very silly!

Handsome Greyfriars masters not give poor Chinese proper things for eat and drink. Tea plenty weak—and lots of same old puddings! Why not nicee fried rats and lizards, and lovely boiled birds' nests?

Also, handsome masters not punish bully like in China. When Bolsover bully Wun Lung, Quelch canee. In China, they chop off Bolsover's ears and torture big bully plenty muchee—what you think?

All wrong though when Quelch canee poor Chinese. Why not sendee ghosts and demons to frighten instead, like in Wun Lung's country? Humble Chinese thinkke that lots better!

No time for more, handsome readers—but you savvy now why Wun Lung thinkke Greyfriars needee reform plenty quick? One day perhaps handsome masters sitce up and takee notice—what you think?

(We sincerely hope it will be a long, long time before they introduce "reforms" on the lines of Wun Lung's suggestions.—Ed.)

ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

"SYMPATHETIC" (Remova). "Is Coker worried about being summoned for not sounding his horn at the cross-roads?"

No; he doesn't care two hoots!



No. 166.

EDITED BY HARRI WHARTON.

December 7th, 1935.

The GREYFRIARS HERALD



WHY CENSOR PENFOLD'S NOVEL?

Asks BOB CHERRY

Why Quelch had to step in and censor the novel Penfold has written is a mystery. Penfold only showed it to him because he thought he'd like it. He got the shock of his life when Quelch returned the manuscript, heavily blue-pencilled, and told him he couldn't agree to its being sent to a publisher unless all that he had marked was cut out of the story!

I must say I saw no harm whatever in the yarn when I read it myself. It's a story about a school called Pinkfriars. The hero, Nick Penfold, is an awfully decent chap, and the yarn deals with his struggles to make good in the Lower Fourth Form, which is known as the Shift. Personally, I thought most of the characters awfully decent. The Shift Captain, a chap named Harry Wartoff, is quite a splendid sort of chap. So are his bosom pals, Frank Oldgett and Johnny Cow. Of course, there's a villain in the piece—a rank outsider named Harold Skinnem—and a rather too severe Form-master, Mr. Henry Samuel Quelch. But you wouldn't expect the characters in a novel to consist of heroes only, would you?

The more I think about it, the more weird it seems that Quelch should have taken such exception to the yarn. The only feasible explanation seems to be that Quelch has got an idea into his head that the yarn refers to actual living persons.

But where on earth he could have got such an idea as that, goodness only knows!

"HOBSON WILL SET 'EM ALIGHT!"

By G. BULSTRODE

For a week or more, that piano-punching chump Hoskins has been running around declaring "Hobson will set 'em alight!" As nobody ever hears what Hoskins says, most chaps have just smiled politely and passed on. But the phrase intrigued me and I asked Hoskins for further particulars.

"Set what alight?" I asked.

"I tell you he'll set 'em alight!" hissed Hoskins. "With me to show him all the little tricks—"

"So you're at the back of it, eh?" I interrupted grimly. "Don't tell me you're training Hobson to become a giddy fire-raiser?"

"Yes, he'll set 'em alight all right!" cried Hoskins, unheeding. "He'll set 'em alight and—"

"Why can't you chuck gassing about it and let him get on with it?" I hooted. "Here's a box of matches if they'll help him. I want to see what it is he's going to set alight!"

Hoskins came out of his dream. He looked at the matches, and he looked at me.

"You—you silly ass!" he gasped. "Hobson doesn't need matches to set 'em alight! He's going to do it with his VOICE! I'm training him, you see—training him to be a Torch Singer!"

"A—what?"

"A Torch Singer—a singer who simply sets the audience alight!"

"So that's it. If you chaps know what a Torch Singer is, you'll probably know now how he's going to set 'em alight. I'm still in the dark myself!"

Old Football Boots!

Would you mind forwarding your old football boots to me, my dear friends? I'm collecting them to send to the dear Eskimos for their Christmas dinner.—ALONZO TODD, Study No. 7, Remova.

BETRAYED by BIRCHEMALL!



Another Thrilling Instalment of Dicky Nugent's serial: "The Skoolboy Eggsplorers!"

"Boys! We're up against it now with a vengeance!" Doctor Birchmall's voice was hoarse with fear. It took a lot to cow him, but now he seemed as scared as a rabbit.

"What an ass I've been!" he groaned. "Fancy bringing you fellows all the way to Alljeers for you to laugh at me in the fowl dungeons of the Sheek! Fancy bringing you across the water only to land you in the soup!"

"I always did think it fishy, sir," remarked Burleigh. "We mite have known you should finish up in a joint like this. Well, we've got our desserts now!"

"Cheese it, Burleigh!" groaned the Head. "It's the future that's worrying me—not the past! How the dickens are we going to get out of the klutches of the Sheek?"

Tap, tap, tap!

"Hullo, hallo, hallo! What's that?" asked Jack Jolly of the Fourth.

Tap, tap, tap!

"Someone's a-nocking," said Mr. Lickham. "A-nocking on the other side of the wall!"

"My hat! I wonder if it's another prisoner trying to attract our attention!" eggsclaimed Frank Fearless.

"That's what it is, as like as not!" eggsclaimed the Head, eggstodily. "See if you can make a hole in the wall, boys! Here's a pocket knife, if it will help!"

A duzzen eager volunteers fell on their neezes and started attacking the solid stone wall with pocket-knives, nail-files, and safety-pins. Hour after

hour they worked until at last they began to make some impression on the wall. Eventually, to the tune of a subdued cheer, they pushed back a huge stone, revealing an aperture through which a yewman being could crawl.

Grato was their surprize when there came through the opening a couple of yung Englishmen wearing the uniform of air-liner officers!

"Bless my sole!" ejaculated Doctor Birchmall. "Who are you? And what are you doing in this garstly hole?"

"I am Kaptin Manley and my companion is Air-Pilot Curridge," answered the first of the newcomers. "We were taking the air-liner Gigantic from Timbuctoo to England when we ran out of petrol and came down in the desert. No sooner had we landed than the Sheek of Alljeers scooped our plane and put us in the next-door dungeon. That, sir, is the why and the wherefore of our imprisonment."

"Gentlemen!" said Doctor Birchmall suddenly. "I have an idea! How many passengers does the Gigantic carry?"

"We'd better return to our dungeon in case we're missed," said Kaptin Manley. "Good luck, gentlemen—and rely on us when it comes to

making that bid for freedom!"

Kaptin Manley and Air-Pilot Curridge then hopped back through the hole in the wall.

A moment later, the two Arab guards entered—a tall one with a beard and a short one without. One carried a few stale buns, and the other a pitcher of water.

The free hands of the two yewmen held grate curved swords that could have carved up yewman beings as easily as they could have sliced bacon. But the St. Sam's eggsplorers gave them no chance of using those deadly weapons! They sprang on them like wolves on their prey; and before the Arabs could say "Nife!" they were lying on their backs with all the puff knocked out of them!

"Quick! Gag them!" ordered Burleigh. "Now take off those nightshirts of theirs! When do you want as your partner, sir?" he added, turning to the Head.

Doctor Birchmall jumped. "M-m-my partner, Burleigh? Surely you don't imagine I'm the one that's going to take on this scouting job?"

"You've got to be, sir!" replied Burleigh grimly. "Can't you see that the taller of these two fellows is the same hite as you and wears a beard almost identical with yours? There's nobody else who can possibly take his place but you!"

Grate beads of perspiration stood out on Doctor Birchmall's forehead. His neeze began to neck together.

"Look here, Burleigh, it's two dangerous—"

"Who cares about danger at a time like this?" cried Burleigh scornfully. "Be British, sir! Now, lemme see, we shall want someone shorter to take the other fellow's place."

"Then we can all make a getaway!"

"The air-liner's big enuff for the lot of us, certainly," grinned Air-Pilot Curridge. "The problem is, how to get ourselves and the petrol into it!"

"I think I know a way," said the Head, winking slyly and sinking his voice to a whisper. "Lissen! In five minnits time two guards will enter with our miserable rashuns. If we can only overpower them, two of us can change clothes with them and do a bit of scouting disguised as Arabs. Those two can easily purloin some petrol ready for the flight and find out where the plane is parked. Then we can all do a bunk before the Sheek knows anything is wrong!"

"My hat! That's a top-ping wheeze, sir!" said Mr. Lickham.

"Quiet! Here comes the guards!" hissed the Head. "Go for them the moment they enter, my boys!"

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WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?



Dick Penfold likes the long, dark evenings because he can settle down with a good book after fooler practice. He finds the "Holiday Annual" contains the best reading—his only grouse being that it isn't issued more than once a year. Penfold wouldn't give the authors a "holiday" at all!

Bob Cherry is one of the few Removites who care for swimming in the winter. He can often be seen taking a "header" in the Sark while most fellows are still snug in bed! Coker braved the ice the other morning to give Bob some "tips"—but Bob's swift strokes left Coker behind. "Tey!"

Mr. Quelch estimates that since its inception in 1716 Greyfriars has been responsible for training approximately 6,200 boys, many of whom have made their mark in life. Of the present 200 pupils Mr. Quelch considers Wingate and Whaiton are the most promising. "Mark" them! "Yards" to the good, in fact.

Jack of hearing Bunter boasting about his sports prowess, Vernon Smith offered to cash his long-expected postal-order if Bunter would run 100 yards in less than 12 secs. As Bunter's time for the "hundred" is nearer twelve minutes, Smithy was pretty safe.

To see Coker shaving the down off his upper lip under the impression that he has a thick stubble is a sight Potter and Greene often have to endure. They keep their faces straight—if they didn't, they fear Coker might run amok with his razor!

A "sharp" look-out!

Bob Cherry possesses the loudest voice in the junior school—and he often gets into trouble for shouting in the passages. But when he shouted across a field to warn Mr. Quelch of the presence of an angry bull, his "roar" saved the Remove master from a tossing. The bull itself "roared" in vain!