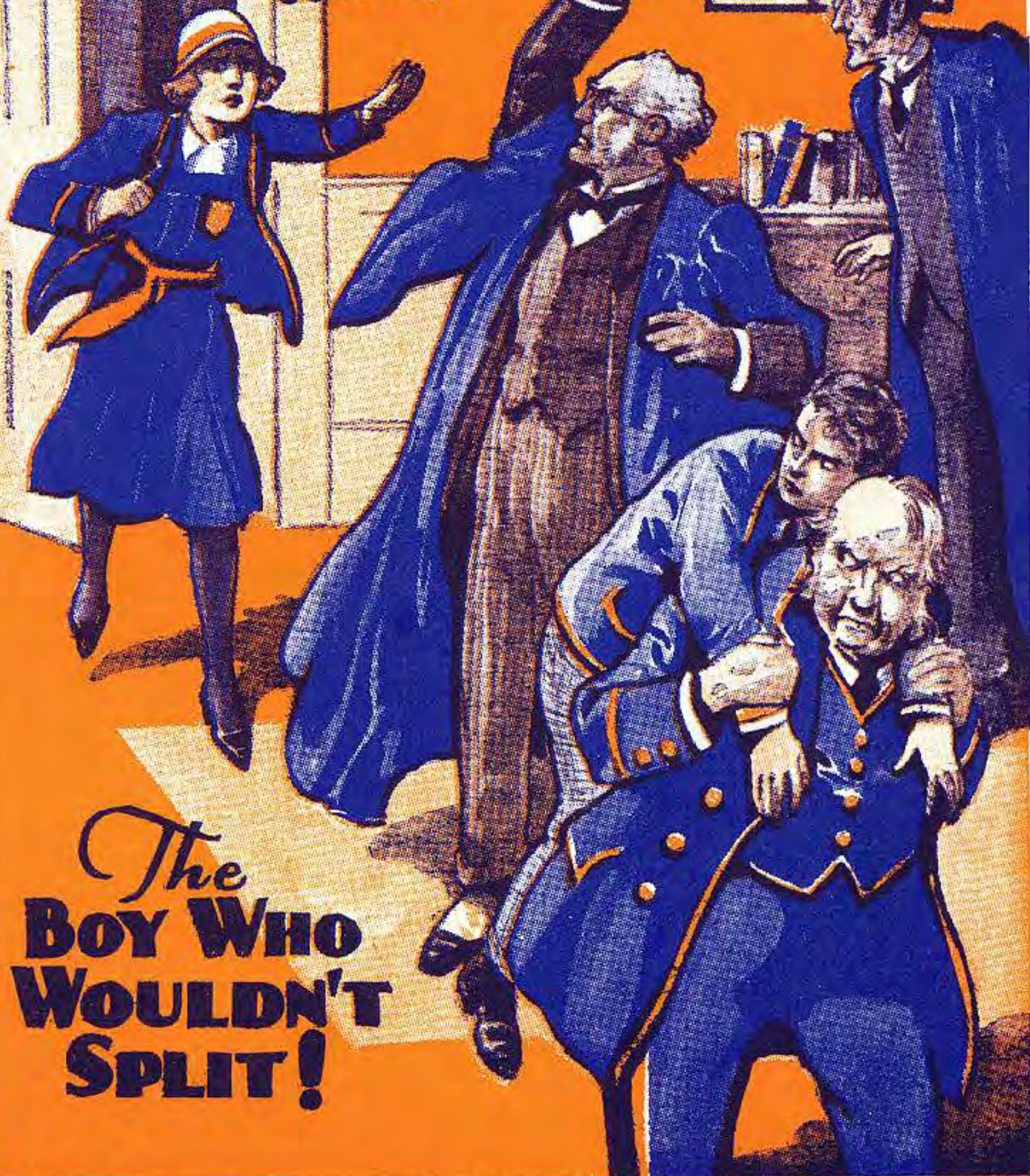


Latest News of Harry Wharton & Co.'s Feud with Cliff House

The Magnet^{2D}

Billy Bunter's
Own Paper



The
BOY WHO
WOULDN'T
SPLIT!

CALLING ALL READERS!



COME INTO the OFFICE, BOYS - AND GIRLS!

Your Editor is always pleased to hear from his readers. Write to him: Editor of the "Magnet," The Amalgamated Press, Ltd., Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

I DARE SAY many of you have read stories in which an invisible man is featured, and you may have wondered if it would ever be possible for such a man to exist in real life. In that case you'll be interested in this news which comes from the town of Graz, the capital of Styria, in Austria, where three local engineers claim to have discovered

THE SECRET OF INVISIBILITY,

and, what is more, are said to have demonstrated the fact that they can make a man invisible! They worked on the well-known fact that stars don't go out of the sky when day comes. They only appear to do so because they are surrounded by light, but they are actually there all the time. Therefore, runs their argument, why not apply the same principle to a man, and thus render him as invisible as the stars are in daytime? By an ingenious system of lighting it is said that they can make a man vanish in half a minute, although he himself can see perfectly well. So it seems that one of the dreams of scientists for centuries is coming true at last!

Talking of invisibility, do you know that

SEEING STARS IN DAYLIGHT

is possible under certain conditions—and I don't mean stage or film stars! If you were to descend a deep mine and stand there in perfect blackness, looking up the shaft of the mine at the sky, you would be able to see the stars. There is an even more remarkable case on record. Many years ago a boy was locked up in a pitch-dark prison and kept there for a considerable length of time. He was said to be the relative of a king who wanted him kept out of the way. Eventually, however, the prisoner managed to escape and made his way into the world of which he knew nothing. He was adopted by a kindly official, but was unable to say who he was or where he had been kept. Then a strange discovery was made. The prisoner's long years in total darkness had so affected his eyes that he was able to see the stars in the daylight!

HERE is another paragraph which may interest you. It concerns the man with

THE SHORTEST SURNAME IN THE WORLD.

You'll find it hard to believe, but there is a man called Mr. "I." Naturally, you will expect a man with a name like THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,529.

that to be a Chinaman, and he is. He is a Chinese Christian priest, whose full name is Father Vincent I. But apparently he's a militant priest, for he has just been presented with a medal for valour. He was very prominent in the fighting between the Chinese and the Japanese, and gained his medal for his work in that campaign. So, you see, although the following sentence seems all wrong grammatically, it is perfectly correct:

"I is a Chinaman!"

A Staffordshire reader asks me if many mutinies occur at sea nowadays. Not many, my chum, and when they do they are generally squashed very quickly. Some years ago there was

AN AMAZING MUTINY

in the Dutch East Indies. Imagine a battleship's crew suddenly mutinying and sailing off out of harbour, with a native crew defying an entire fleet! The native crew of a big battleship decided that they weren't getting enough pay, so they held a meeting and decided to mutiny. They seized their white officers, imprisoned them, and then proceeded to sea. The rest of the Dutch fleet in those waters were hastily sent after them, and eventually came up with them. Greatly outnumbered by the surrounding vessels, the mutineers were called upon to surrender, and it was confidently expected that they would do so. But they refused, and cleared decks for action. However, a seaplane stopped all that. It flew low over the vessel and dropped one bomb which did terrific damage and killed a large number of the mutineers. Warned by this what would happen if they continued to resist, the mutineers surrendered.

HOW FAR CAN A HORSE JUMP?

is a question asked me by Bert Grainger, of Harrow. One of the most amazing jumps made by a horse was over a ravine twenty-one feet across. The horse was ridden by Mr. Assheton Smith, a famous rider to hounds. Not many records of horse jumps are kept, so it is difficult to say whether this distance has been beaten.

A GOOD TIP!

Once again I must draw the attention of all "Magnetites" to the rollicking fine yarns dealing with the early adventures of Harry Wharton & Co. now appearing in our companion paper, the "Gem." You'll enjoy reading 'em, take it from me.

THERE are still a lot of strange and romantic things in this country of ours which remain to be explained. For instance, take

THE GREY LADY OF CRANFORD,

who is said to haunt a palatial mansion at Cranford Park, Middlesex. The house is owned by the local council, but no one has lived there for twenty years, except the caretaker and his family. Everyone else is scared to enter the place, because of the mysterious crashes which take place every now and again, and which are attributed to the "Grey Lady," as the ghost who is supposed to haunt it is called. The caretaker has just retired after his long vigil, and although he has never seen the ghost himself he is unable to account for the mysterious sounds and the crashing down of trees and ceilings. Many of the bookcases in the library are really secret doors, and several secret passages have been discovered, which yet remain to be explored. So there is work for explorers in this country even yet!

Now for a few

ITEMS OF INTEREST

collected from various sources.

White Foxes in Britain!—A white fox—a most rare animal to find in these islands—was recently captured at Rothbury, Northumberland.

Listening-in to the "Death Watch"!—Death watch beetles, which do so much damage to old buildings owing to their habit of burrowing into the wood, can now be listened to by means of microphones and amplifiers which amplify their sounds a million times. It is claimed that listeners can tell exactly what type of beetle they are listening to merely by the sound of its jaws at work!

The Rarest Whale in the World is the pygmy sperm whale. One was washed ashore with its calf recently in South Australia. It was the first seen for fifty years!

Trams Commemorate the Name of Their Inventor.—They were invented by a Scotsman named Outram. That is why we still call them "trams."

Now let me see

WHAT THE BLACK BOOK SAYS,

the black book being the diary in which I keep a note of our future issues. It tells me that the next long complete yarn is entitled:

"ON THE TRACK OF THE TRICKSTER!"

By Frank Richards.

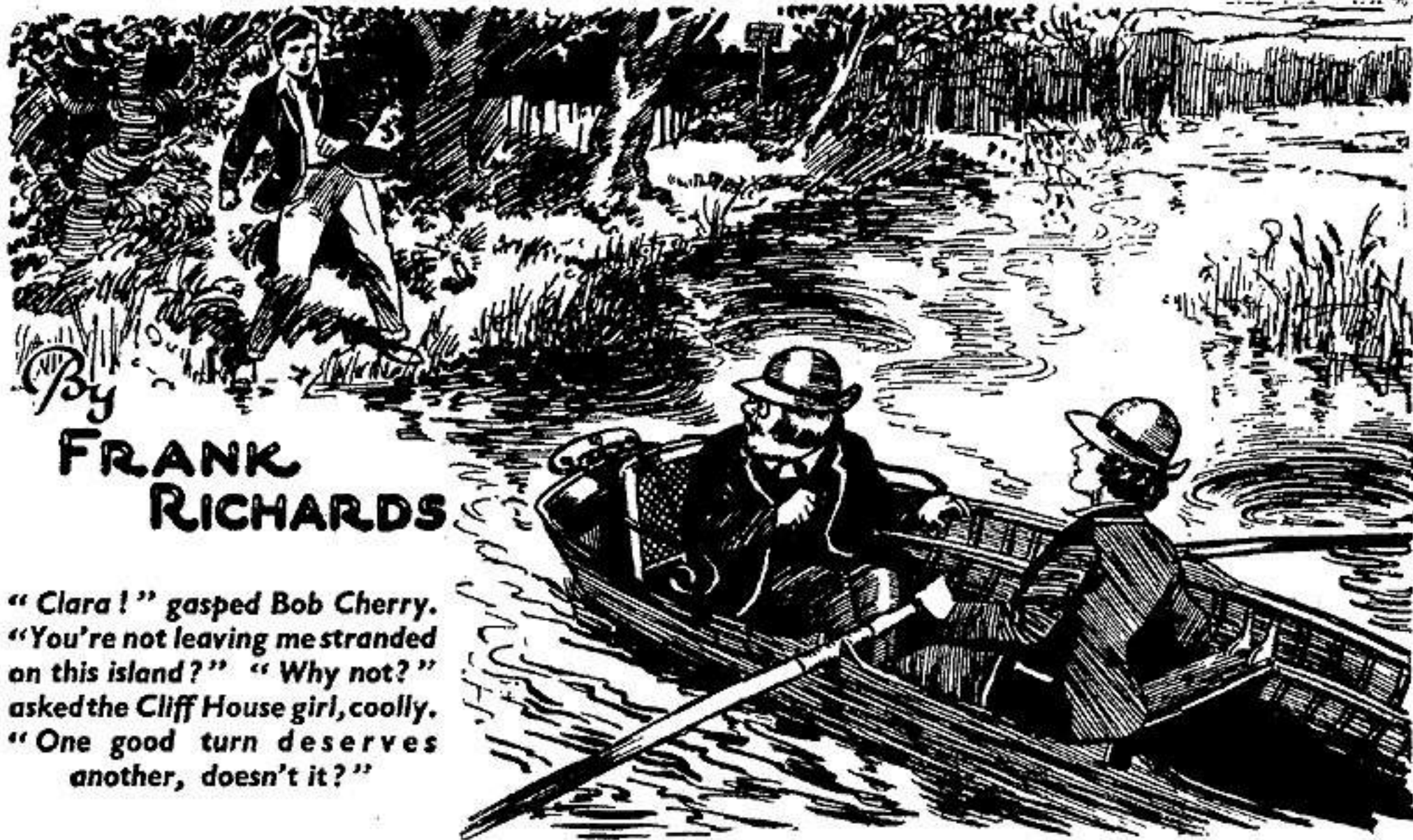
Although Harry Wharton & Co. are convinced that Ponsonby, the cad of Highcliffe, has caused friction between Marjorie Hazeldene & Co. and themselves, the girls of Cliff House remain unconvinced, and the feud is still "on." To force Ponsonby to "spill the beans" is the only way to put matters right. And this Harry Wharton & Co. determine to do. Chief and most energetic amongst them, strange to say, is Lord Mauleverer—the fellow who was born tired! Get next Saturday's MAGNET and read all about it.

Another sparkling issue of the "Greyfriars Herald," together with the Greyfriars Rhymester's contribution, will complete this bumper issue. Be sure to order your copy early.

YOUR EDITOR.

TRUE BLUE ALL THROUGH! "You are judged guilty of disgraceful conduct and of breaking one of the most important rules of the school!" says the Head of Greyfriars sternly. "Have you anything to say before I flog you, Cherry?" No answer came from—

The BOY who WOULDN'T SPLIT!



By
FRANK RICHARDS

"Clara!" gasped Bob Cherry. "You're not leaving me stranded on this island?" "Why not?" asked the Cliff House girl, coolly. "One good turn deserves another, doesn't it?"

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Unpopular!

"**H**ERE he comes!"
"Ha, ha, ha!"
Harry Wharton set his lips a little as he came across the Remove landing from the stairs.

Grinning faces met him as he came into the Remove passage.

A dozen members of his Form were there, and every face turned towards the captain of the Greyfriars Remove as he appeared. Prominent among them was the fat face of Billy Bunter, his little round eyes twinkling behind his big round spectacles. Herbert Vernon-Smith, the Bounder of Greyfriars, stood in the doorway of Study No. 4 laughing.

"I say, you fellows, here he is!" chuckled Billy Bunter.

Harry Wharton glanced over the crowd in the passage, his brows knitting. Evidently there was some joke on of which he was the object. He saw what it was as he reached his study door—No. 1 in the Remove.

On that door an inscription had been chalked in large capital letters. Harry Wharton stared at it, while the Removites chortled. It ran:

**"KADS!
WHO RAGGED THE CLIFF HOUSE
GURLS?
BEESTLY KADS!"**

That inscription was the work of a Remove man. There was only one member of the Greyfriars Remove who was so original in spelling. That member was William George Bunter.

Harry Wharton turned from the door, his eyes glinting. Billy Bunter's ortho-

graphic originality had set all the fellows chuckling; but it did not draw a smile to the face of the captain of the Remove. He was a good deal too angry to be amused by Bunter's antics.

"You fat dummy!" he exclaimed, making a stride towards the Owl of the Remove.

Billy Bunter's fat face was wreathed in grins. But it became quite serious all of a sudden, and he jumped back in alarm as the captain of the Remove strode at him.

"I—I say, it—it wasn't me!" ex-

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School Story of
HARRY WHARTON & CO.,
the Chums of Greyfriars.**

claimed Bunter in a great hurry. "I say, you keep off, you beast! Wharrer you want to pick on me for, I'd like to know?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" yelled the Removites. The fat Owl was quite unconscious that he had left a clue.

"You fat chump, I'll burst you all over the passage!" exclaimed Harry Wharton angrily.

"I say, you fellows, keep him off!" yelled Bunter. He made another active jump as Wharton reached him.

That jump took him past the door of Study No. 4. As Wharton followed him up, Vernon-Smith stepped quickly out. He interposed between the two.

"Chuck it, Wharton!" he said tersely.

"Get aside, Smithy!" snapped Wharton.

"You're not going to wallop Bunter," said the Bounder coolly. "The fat ast has only chalked up there what all the Remove thinks."

"Hear, hear!" grinned Skinner.

"Right on the wicket!" said Peter Todd. "You'd better chuck it, Wharton! Bunter's used the right word, though he's got his own way of spelling it."

"You cheeky dummy!" roared Wharton.

"Fellows who rag schoolgirls are cads!" said Peter. He stepped to the Bounder's side. "Bunter's sister Bessie was one of the girls you and your friends stranded on Popper's Island last week."

"And my sister Marjorie was another!" said Hazeldene. "If you're going to wallop every man who thinks you a cad, you'll have to go through all the Remove, except your own precious pals."

"Cad!" roared Bolsover major, lining up with Peter and Smithy. "Hear that? Cad!"

Harry Wharton came to a stop, his eyes blazing, and his cheeks crimson. Billy Bunter, safe behind a human rampart, grinned again.

With Smithy, Peter, and Bolsover major in front of him, the fat Owl of the Remove was bursting with pluck.

"Yah! Cad!" squeaked Bunter. "I'd jolly well whop you, only you ain't worth soiling a fellow's hands on! So would Hazel, only he's funky—"

"You fat idiot!" hooted Hazel.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sneaking swab!" went on Bunter, blinking between Smithy and Toddy, through his big spectacles. Cad!

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,529.

Rotter! Pinching a boat and leaving a lot of girls stranded on a beastly island! Bessie might have missed supper—"

"You fat owl, I did not!" roared Wharton.

"Yah! Everybody knows you jolly well did!" jeered Bunter. "We thought it was only Bob Cherry at first, and then it came out that you were all in it. Cad!"

"Will you fellows let me pass?" asked Harry Wharton, between his teeth.

"No!" answered Vernon-Smith coolly. "Bunter's going to call you just exactly what he likes! If the fat duffer could use his hands, he would thrash you, as you jolly well deserve. He can't use anything but his mouth—"

"Oh, really, Smithy?" squeaked Bunter.

"That's his long suit!" said the Bounder. "Go it, Bunter! Wharton's not going to touch you!"

Thus encouraged, Billy Bunter went it!

"Of all the rotten, sneaking cads," he said, "that fellow takes the cake! He's done a lot of beastly mean things, such as refusing to cash a postal order for a fellow when a fellow was hard up, and so on. But this is the limit. Those girls might have been stranded all night, if Coker hadn't happened to see them and take them off in his boat. They'd have been fearfully hungry—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" exclaimed Bunter. "They missed their tea, and came jolly near missing their supper! Fat lot that gang of cads cared!"

"You fat chump!" roared Wharton. "None of us went anywhere near Popper's Island last Wednesday."

"Gammon!" retorted Bunter. "You jolly well know you did! You're a cad, Wharton! Hear that? Cad! Bob Cherry's a cad—and Nugent's a cad—and Bull's a cad—and Inky's a cad—and you're a cad! Yah!"

"You fat, frabjous, blithering, bloater—"

"Yah! Cad!" roared Bunter. "You wouldn't have done it, if I'd been there. I'd have jolly well thrashed you if I'd spotted you pinching the boat! You'd jolly well be flogged if the Head knew! Cad! Rotter! Worm! Sneak! Funk! Oh, I say, keep him off!" Bunter wound up, as the captain of the Remove, red with wrath, made an angry rush.

Peter Todd staggered to the right, and Bolsover major to the left, as Harry Wharton came on with a fierce rush. But the Bounder stood like a rock, grasped him, and stopped him.

"No, you don't!" said Vernon-Smith.

Wharton gave grasp for grasp, and Smithy reeled. But Peter Todd and Bolsover rallied at once, and added their grasps. Hazeldene and Russell, Ogilvy and Newland piled in. Hands grasped the captain of the Remove on all sides.

He struggled savagely.

But good fighting-man as he was, he was of no use against the odds. The Removites swept him off his feet.

"He, he, he!" gurgled Bunter breathlessly.

"Chuck him into his study!" panted Vernon-Smith.

"Oh, you rotters!" gasped Wharton, as he whirled. "I'll lick you for this, Smithy! Toddy, you fool—Bolsover, you cad—"

"Take him home!" grinned Bolsover major.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,529.

"He, he, he!"

The captain of the Remove, resisting strenuously, was rushed down the passage to the door of his study. Fisher T. Fish kicked that door wide open and stepped back, grinning. The Removites stopped at the doorway and hurled their Form captain headlong in.

Crash!

Harry Wharton sprawled on the study carpet, crimson, breathless, and panting, his hair like a mop, and his collar hanging by a single stud.

"That's for you!" said Smithy contemptuously, and he slammed the door on the captain of the Remove.

On that door the chalked inscription still remained to meet all eyes. Harry Wharton, struggling spasmodically for breath, was in no state to deal with it or with Bunter. His chums in the quad were waiting for him to join them for a ramble out of gates after class. They had to wait! For quite a long time the captain of the Remove sat on his study floor gasping for breath.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Asking for It!

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

His eyes danced.

Bob was tramping up the towpath on the bank of the Sark. With his hands driven deep in his pockets and a straw hat on the back of his unruly mop of hair, he tramped, with his eyes on the ground and a wrinkle of worried thought in his brow.

But the worried look vanished from his face, and he brightened as he spotted a boat on the water between the bank and Popper's Island.

He halted and waved his hand.

There were two Cliff House girls in the boat—Clara Trevlyn, rowing, and Bessie Bunter, sitting in the stern.

Bessie Bunter turned her big spectacles, that were so like her brother Billy's, on the junior on the bank, and gave an audible sniff.

Clara glanced round for a moment, set her lips, and then pulled on, regardless.

Bob Cherry's cheeks reddened.

Ever since the "row" with Cliff House, Bob had had a worry on his mind. Since the day when Marjorie Hazeldene had "cut" him and his friends, Bob had not seemed like his old sunny self.

Wharton and Nugent, Johnny Bull and Hurree Singh, did not like the state of affairs, but they found themselves able to carry on quite cheerfully. It was Bob that took it most to heart.

It was not only that he liked Marjorie and valued her friendship. But she believed that he had played a rotten, cruel, cowardly trick, and that caused poor Bob the keenest distress.

As Marjorie & Co. refused to speak to their former friends, it seemed impossible to set the matter right. But as he sighted Clara and Bessie on the river, it seemed to Bob that here was a chance. He was sure that a few words would clear up the mistake that had so incomprehensibly arisen.

"Clara!" he called out appealingly.

Miss Clara did not look at him again.

"Bessie!"

"Yah!" retorted Bessie Bunter.

She turned up her little fat nose, and looked so like Billy Bunter as she did so that Bob involuntarily grinned.

Miss Elizabeth Bunter gave him a devastating blink in reply to the grin.

"Look here, stop a minute!" called out Bob. "I want to speak to you, Clara!"

Clara pulled on, and Bob, on the bank, kept pace with the boat. Bessie Bunter gave him another glare, and then leaned over and whispered to Clara.

Clara Trevlyn's set face broke in a sudden smile.

"Good egg!" she said.

She glanced round at Bob again. To Bob's great satisfaction, she tooled the boat in towards the bank.

He rewarded her with a happy grin.

"I say, Clara, if you'd let me explain!" he exclaimed. "If you'd give a fellow a chance to speak—"

"Jump in!" said Clara.

"Oh, all right!"

Bob scrambled down the bank into the boat. It was not a large craft, and Bob made himself as small as possible. Miss Clara dipped the oars again, and the boat floated across the channel towards Popper's Island.

Bessie Bunter was grinning all over her plump face—why, Bob did not know. Neither did he quite understand the gleam in Clara Trevlyn's eyes. But he was glad to have a chance to speak to the Cliff House girls at last. He wished that Marjorie had been with them. Still, if he could succeed in clearing up the misunderstanding, they would tell Marjorie, and all, so to speak, would be calm and bright.

"Shall I row?" he asked. "I'll take you down to Friardale, if you like, if you're going back to Cliff House."

"We're stopping at the island first," said Miss Clara.

"He, he, he!" chuckled Bessie Bunter.

"Oh, all serene!" said Bob, wondering why the two schoolgirls were going to stop at the island, but certainly never dreaming of guessing. "I say, Clara, I'm jolly glad of a chance to speak—"

"Are you?" said Clara in quite a grim tone.

"Yes, rather! I can't imagine why you fancy that I stranded you on that mouldy island last Wednesday," said Bob, his honest face eager. "I told Coker of the Fifth that he was a liar when he said you'd told him so—"

Clara gave a shrug.

"I never did, of course!" said Bob. "As if I'd play such a rotten trick on a party of girls! I can explain how we came to have the boat you lost—"

Bump!

The boat nosed into the rushes under the willows on the island.

"Jump out!" said Clara tersely.

"Right-ho!"

Bob Cherry jumped ashore on Popper's Island. He supposed that he was wanted to tie the painter if the girls were going to land there.

But as he jumped on the landing-place, Miss Clara gave a shove with an oar, and the boat shot back into the river. In a moment there was a dozen feet of water between them and the landing-place.

Bob stared blankly.

"He, he, he!" came a cheery cackle from Bessie Bunter.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Aren't you landing?" exclaimed Bob, puzzled.

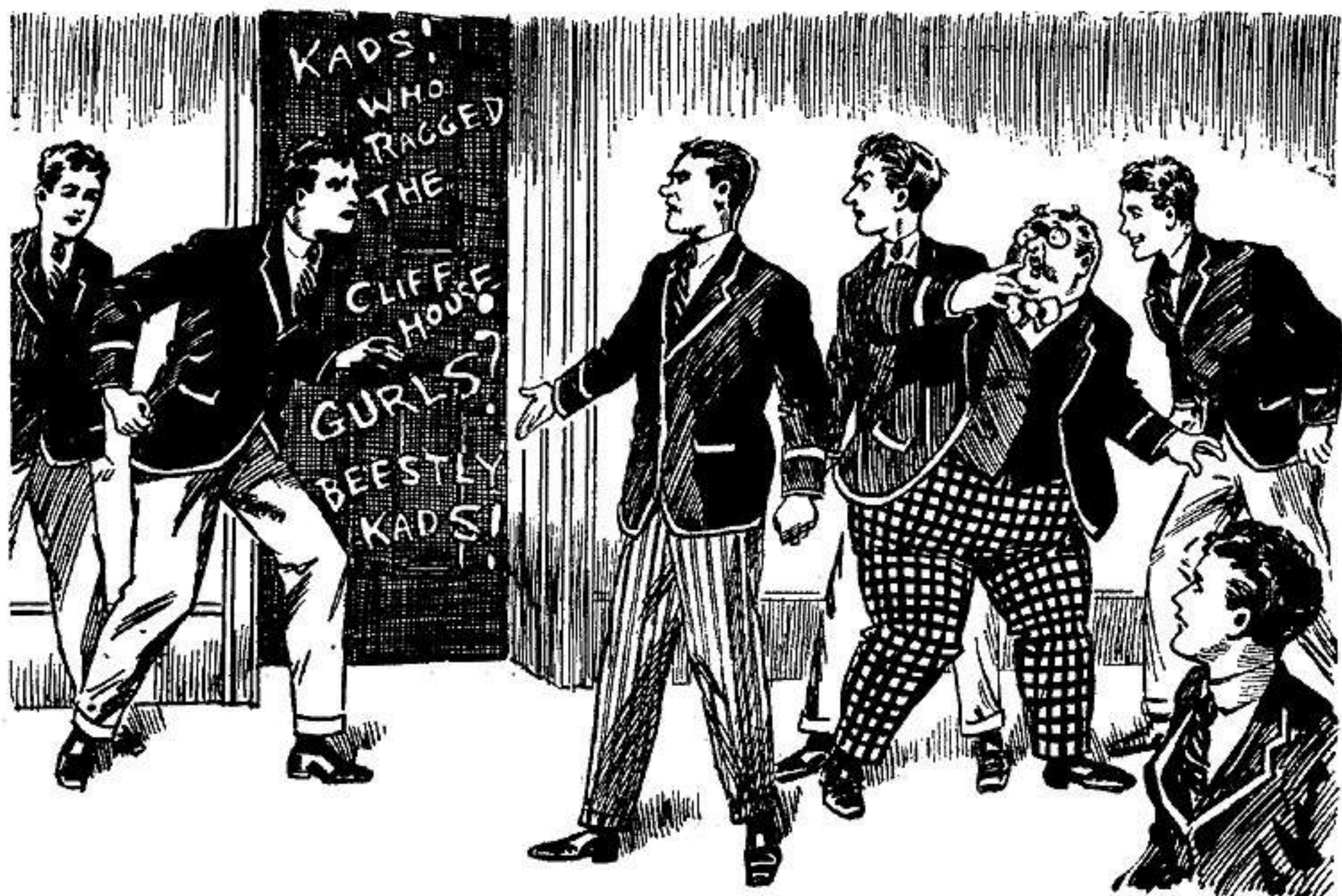
"Hardly!" drawled Clara.

"Then what the dickens have you landed me for?"

"Guess!"

"He, he, he!"

Bob gave quite a jump. Miss Clara, dipping her oars, was starting to row on again, leaving him on the island. The truth dawned on his unsuspecting mind.



As Wharton made a step towards Bunter, Vernon-Smith interposed between the two. "Chuck it, Wharton!" he said, tersely. "Get aside, Smithy!" snapped Wharton. "You're not going to wallop Bunter," said the Bounder, coolly. "The fat ass has only chalked up there what all the Remove thinks!"

"He, he, he!" chortled Bessie.

"Clara," gasped Bob, "you're not leaving me here?"

"Why not?" asked Miss Trevlyn coolly. "One good turn deserves another, doesn't it? You stranded us on the island last Wednesday!"

"I've told you I didn't!" roared Bob.

"Yah!"—from Bessie Bunter. "You can tell us till you're black in the face, and we shouldn't believe you!"

Bob set his lips.

"Don't you believe me, Clara?" he said.

"Naturally, I don't, as I know you did it!" answered Miss Clara coolly.

"If I were a boy, I'd punch your head—hard! I can't very well punch you, but I've stranded you on the island, the same as you did us! Now you can see how you like it yourself!"

"But I never——" roared Bob.

"Gammon!" squeaked Bessie. "He, he, he! Now you can miss your tea, the same as I did!"

"But—but you can't leave me here, Clara!" gasped Bob, in dismay. "I've got to get back to Greyfriars, you know."

"We had to get back to Cliff House last Wednesday!" said Clara. "What did you care about that?"

"I never——"

"Rats!"

"I tell you——" roared Bob.

"Bow-wow!"

"Look here——"

But the Cliff House boat was gliding out of the range of conversation. Miss Clara pulled on steadily down the river, her pretty face set and inflexible. Bessie Bunter stared back at Bob, grinning.

Evidently, there was no doubt in Clara's mind that Bob had been guilty of that wretched trick of the previous week. Now he had given her a chance of handing over a Roland for an

Oliver—fairly asking for it! And that was that!

"Look here, Clara——" bawled Bob.

"He, he, he!" floated back from Bessie Bunter.

Then the boat disappeared down the winding river, and Bob Cherry was left on the island, staring blankly.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob.

The boat was gone. There was no other craft to be seen on the Sark. Bob Cherry was stranded—as Marjorie & Co. had been stranded. And how he was going to get out of that scrape was a mystery to Bob.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

Tipped in Time!

"HATS off!" said Frank Nugent, with a grin.

"Eh—what?"

Harry Wharton looked up.

Four members of the famous Co. were sauntering along Oak Lane.

Harry Wharton had a clouded brow, thinking of a recent happening in the Remove passage. Frank Nugent, Johnny Bull, and Hurree Jamset Ram Singh were unusually thoughtful.

It was quite a new experience to the Famous Five to find themselves unpopular in the Greyfriars Remove. But that was how the matter stood.

Nearly every fellow in the Form had made up his mind that Bob Cherry had stranded the Cliff House girls on Popper's Island the week before, and that his comrades had backed him up in playing that thoroughly rotten trick.

Billy Bunter's absurd inscription on the door of Study No. 1 had only put into words what all the Remove were thinking.

After that rough handling by the Removeites, the captain of the Form had

been strongly tempted to call Vernon-Smith to account, with the gloves on.

But he realised that it was not much use to scrap with the Bounder, when a dozen other fellows had had a hand in it, and almost all the Form took the same view. Certainly, he did not want to scrap with Peter Todd, or Russell, or Ogilvy—fellows he liked. Moreover, it was clear that he could not scrap with all the Remove, one after another.

He had joined his friends in a walk to Courtfield. Bob Cherry had gone out on his own, in what direction they did not know—though it was probable that it was in the direction of Highcliffe School.

All the Famous Five were convinced that it was Ponsonby, of the Highcliffe Fourth, who had "pinched" the Cliff House boat that unfortunate day—and they would have been very glad to fall in with Pon.

But there were several ways of going over to Highcliffe, and they saw nothing of Bob in their walk by way of Courtfield Common and Oak Lane. And Frank Nugent, suddenly spotting a tall, lean figure, in shooting clothes, ahead, grinned and announced "Hats off!"

It was Sir Hilton Popper, lord of Popper Court, who appeared in the lane ahead. As Sir Hilton was not only a great gun locally, but a governor of Greyfriars School, they prepared to "cap" him as they passed.

Sir Hilton was standing with a gun under his arm, his eyeglass screwed into his eye, regarding them with a fixed stare as they came sauntering along.

The old baronet's idea of amusement in his leisure hours was to go out with a gun and slaughter some of the
THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,529.

feathery or furry inhabitants of his wide domains. Sir Hilton was not very popular with the human inhabitants of his broad acres, and was probably still less popular with the feathery and furry ones!

At this particular moment, however, the lord of Popper Court was not killing any of his furry fellow-creatures, or even thinking of killing them. His attention was fixed on the four Greyfriars juniors.

His look was suspicious.

Harry Wharton & Co. smiled as they noted it. But for seeing him there, they might very probably have taken a short cut across Popper Court Woods—at the risk of disturbing Sir Hilton's birds. Finding him on the spot, they were naturally going to give his woods a wide berth. At the moment they were in the lane, to which even the lord of Popper Court could hardly raise any objection. With Sir Hilton in the offing, they were going to keep to the lane.

"The old bean's got an eye on us," murmured Frank Nugent.

"Silly old ass!" commented Johnny Bull.

Oak Lane was a very ancient lane, winding like a corkscrew. In one place it bordered Courtfield Common. In another it bordered the grounds of the Three Fishers, a rather unsavoury resort on the river. In other places it wound through Sir Hilton's woods. In some spots there were fences, in others, none, and any pedestrian could have stepped into the woods almost anywhere. Sir Hilton had closed a good many footpaths on his estate; but even he could hardly close a public lane, though no doubt he would have liked to do so. But very, very often

he had a suspicious eye on that section of Oak Lane.

In this particular spot the lane wound between a high wooden fence, which barred off part of the rambling grounds of the Three Fishers, and an open wood, which was part of the Popper Court estate. Sir Hilton was standing by the high fence, his eyeglass gleaming at the four. He knew them all quite well by sight; he had seen the Famous Five often enough. And so he noted that one member of the Co. was not with his friends. Possibly, noting that circumstance, he suspected that the other member might be roaming in his woods, disturbing his birds, which it was very important not to disturb till Sir Hilton came along with a gun to massacre them.

Hats came off as the juniors approached the spot where the old baronet was standing.

"Stop!" said Sir Hilton.

The four juniors stopped.

"Someone has been in my woods disturbing my birds!" said Sir Hilton. "One of you, hey?"

"Not guilty, my lord!" said Johnny Bull, with perfect gravity; and Sir Hilton stared at him.

"What—what! Do not be impertinent, boy!" he rapped.

"Not for worlds, sir!" said Nugent, with equal gravity.

"We're walking to Courtfield, sir," said Harry Wharton mildly.

Sir Hilton eyed them grimly and suspiciously. He frowned, while the juniors smiled serenely. And at that moment there came a rustling sound from behind the high wooden fence, close by which the baronet stood.

Sir Hilton's eyeglass gleamed round. That fence was not on his property.

It belonged to the Three Fishers Inn. But the sound of some unseen person clambering up the other side of it drew the baronet's attention at once. And it had rather a startling effect on the four Removites.

They did not suppose that it was Bob there. He was quite likely to cut across Popper Court Woods; but extremely unlikely to enter the precincts of the Three Fishers, which were strictly out of bounds for all Greyfriars fellows.

But it was quite possible that it was some fellow from the school who had been out of bounds, and was getting out at this usually solitary spot, unaware that the spot was now populated. Smithy of the Remove, or Angel of the Fourth, or Price of the Fifth—it was as likely as not.

The four exchanged a quick glance.

They had no sympathy whatever with dingy fellows who dropped in at the Three Fishers for billiards, or to back their fancy with Bill Lodgey. At the same time, they did not like the idea of a Greyfriars man, however so dingy, dropping over that fence, right under the eyes of a governor of the school.

Sir Hilton was certain to report him to the headmaster, which meant the sack for a senior, or a flogging for a junior.

It was quite likely that it was the Bouncer who, an hour ago, had taken a leading part in pitching Harry Wharton headlong into his study. But Harry, though very much inclined to punch Smithy's nose, was not at all inclined to see him fall into Sir Hilton Popper's clutches.

Over the top of the fence a straw hat rose into view.

The band of it showed the Greyfriars colours.

That settled that point. It was a Greyfriars fellow out of bounds, climbing the fence to get out.

Another moment and the face under the hat would have been in view. At that moment Harry Wharton spoke—quickly, and quite loudly.

"Sir Hilton, may we go on, please?"

There was a gasp from the wearer of the straw hat, and it vanished instantly, dropping back below the fence-top.

Evidently the wearer thereof had heard Wharton's voice, and Sir Hilton's name, and taken the alarm at once.

There was a bump on the other side of the solid, wooden fence, followed by the sound of running feet.

Sir Hilton gave an angry snort.

The fence was eight feet high at that point. It was impossible to look over it. And the swift patter of footsteps told that the wearer of the Greyfriars hat had lost no time in beating a retreat.

Sir Hilton glared round at the four. "That was a Greyfriars boy!" he snorted.

"Was it?" murmured Wharton.

"He heard you speak—"

"Do you think so, sir?" asked Harry innocently.

"I am assured of it!" rapped the old baronet. "Otherwise, I should have seen him, and reported him to Dr. Locke. Probably it was the boy who is very often in your company. I think his name is Cherry."

"Oh, no!" said Harry. "Bob wouldn't be there—that's rot!"

"What?" roared Sir Hilton.

"The rotfulness is terrific, esteemed sahib," declared Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "The worthy and absurd

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Cherry would not be found dead in that delectable and iniquitous resort."

Snort!—from Sir Hilton. He did not speak again, but tramped away by a path through the woods, which the juniors knew led to Popper Court. He was heading for home, and—they could easily guess—the telephone.

They walked on with rather serious faces to Courtfield Common.

"What silly ass was that, I wonder?" asked Nugent. "Smithy most likely."

"Whoever he was, I'm glad I tipped him in time," said Harry Wharton.

"Serve him jolly well right to be spotted!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Well, yes; but—"

"But the butfulness is terrific!" murmured Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Not Bob, anyhow," said Harry.

"He wouldn't be ass enough to cut across the Three Fishers if he's been to the river. Not much good telling the Head he was taking a short cut if he was spotted there. Smithy, most likely. That silly ass goes there to meet his Highcliffe pals."

And the four walked on, wondering who the culprit was, and whether he was a Remove man—and glad, at all events, that they had saved some Greyfriars man from an extremely painful interview with his headmaster.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

A Narrow Escape!

"OH!" breathed Hazeldene.

He leaned on a tree in the weedy, unkept shrubberies of the Three Fishers, and panted for breath.

His face was almost as white as chalk. The shock had frightened him nearly out of his wits.

In the very act of climbing over the fence of the Three Fishers, he had been warned only barely in time—and he did not feel quite sure that it had been in time.

The name of Sir Hilton had been enough for him—and he had dropped back and run, like a frightened hare, and did not stop till he was safe in cover.

The knowledge that, but for that warning voice, he would have dropped from the fence, fairly under the eyes of a governor of the school, made his brain reel. He was scared to the marrow of his bones.

The Bounder, in a similar situation, would have recovered his nerve immediately, and probably chuckled over his narrow escape. But Smithy had the courage of his faults—Hazel had not. Smithy, if the chopper came down, would have faced the music with his chin up. Hazel would have crumpled under it—and he was crumpling now at his narrow escape. Leaning on the tree, he panted and panted.

Had he been seen? If he had been seen, he was already reported to his Form-master—Sir Hilton would ring up the school at once. That, as a governor of Greyfriars, was his duty; and, for a meddlesome old gentleman like Sir Hilton Popper, it would be a pleasure as well as a duty.

His hat, at least, had been seen—Hazel knew that. Sir Hilton knew that a Greyfriars fellow had been there. Had he seen his face also? He had popped down so quickly that it was unlikely—but he could not feel sure.

But the scared young rascal realised that, if he was not discovered, the sooner he got back to the school, the less likelihood there was of discovery. He moved out of the shrubbery, watch-

ful and wary. He dared not approach Oak Lane again—and the only other way out was by the river. He had avoided that way for fear of falling in with Greyfriars fellows on the towpath—possibly a prefect. But he had no choice now.

With lagging steps, the wretched black sheep of the Remove made his way through the weedy gardens towards the river.

He did not venture near the gate. At a distance from the gate, he drew himself up the fence, and looked over.

Before his eyes lay the towpath, the shining Sark, and the deep woods beyond. No one was to be seen at the moment on the towpath.

On the river, a little distance up, was a boat.

To his relief, he saw that it was occupied by a couple of Cliff House girls—Clara Trevlyn and Bessie Bunter. They were coming down the river from the direction of Popper's Island. Certainly he did not want Marjorie's chum to see him getting out of the Three Fishers. Still, there was no danger from that quarter, whatever Clara might think of him.

He hung on the fence, watching. Neither of the girls was looking towards the bank. Clara was rowing—Bessie chewing toffee, and grinning.

Hazel gave a rapid look up and down the towpath. He dreaded to see Wingate or Gwynne, or some other Sixth Form prefect come into view up the winding bank. But he had to take that chance.

With a throbbing heart, he clambered over the fence at last and dropped on the towpath. He crossed it at once to the water's edge, and waved his hand to the two girls in the boat.

They did not see him for the moment; and he shouted.

"Here! Clara!"

Clara Trevlyn looked round, and Bessie Bunter blinked at him through her big spectacles.

Clara pulled in towards the bank.

Hazeldene waited with eager impatience.

If Sir Hilton had telephoned to the school, as was very likely indeed, it was quite possible that a prefect might come up the river, to keep an eye open for any fellow leaving the Three Fishers.

Any fellow with a clear conscience need not have minded a prefect seeing him on the towpath. But Hazel's conscience was not clear; and he dreaded to be found near the forbidden spot, or coming away from it.

A lift in the Cliff House boat solved the difficulty. Anyone seeing him coming down the Sark in the boat would naturally suppose that he had been on the river with Clara and Bessie. It was a safe alibi.

"I say, give me a lift as far as the school raft, will you?" he called out eagerly, as the boat rocked close to the bank.

"Jump in!" answered Clara.

Hazel thankfully stepped into the boat.

"I say, I'll row you down as far as Greyfriars, if you like!" he said.

"Go it!" said Miss Clara, and she relinquished the oars to him, and sat in the stern with Bessie Bunter. She had refused a similar offer from Bob Cherry up the river for her own good reasons. But there was no reason why Hazel should not pull.

Gladly Hazel sat to the oars.

He pulled with much more vigour than he generally displayed. He was anxious to get well away from the

vicinity of the Three Fishers before any Greyfriars eye could fall on him.

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Miss Clara, suddenly, as Hazel caught a crab.

"Oh!" gasped Bessie. "Don't splash, clumsy!"

It was the sight of Wingate of the Sixth on the bank that had caused Hazel to give a startled jump.

The Greyfriars captain was striding up the towpath with rapid strides. There was a frown on his brow.

Hazel's heart beat unpleasantly.

It was as good as certain that the prefect had been dispatched to the spot, and to question any Greyfriars fellow coming from the direction of the Three Fishers.

He saw Wingate glance at the boat; and the Greyfriars captain raised his hat to the girls as he passed on his way.

Certainly, he could have had no suspicion of Hazel, seeing him rowing a boat with the two Cliff House girls in it.

Hazel pulled on, and was glad to see Wingate's stalwart form disappear up the river. Evidently Sir Hilton Popper had lost no time; neither had the Head!

He had spoken hardly a word since entering the boat. He did not speak now. He devoted himself to pulling. He did not want Clara or Bessie to ask him where he had been. It was only a short pull down to Greyfriars.

Several times he heard a giggle from Bessie Bunter. Then he caught a fat whisper:

"I say, shall we tell him?"

"No, you little ass!" answered Clara.

Bessie seemed to be in possession of some joke. Hazel did not know what it was, and did not want to know. Certainly he never dreamed of guessing that they had stranded Bob Cherry on the island up the river half an hour ago.

A few minutes later the Greyfriars boathouse came in sight, and Hazel pulled in to the raft. There were a score of Greyfriars fellows to be seen—but Hazel did not care how many saw him now. In fact, the more the better, as there were witnesses that he had been keeping good company. If that meddling old ass, Popper, had not seen and recognised him, he was safe now.

He landed at the raft, handing the oars to Clara.

Vernon-Smith and Redwing were on the raft. They raised their hats to the girls, as Clara pulled away down the river to Friardale, and looked very curiously at Hazel.

"Not you, old bean?" grinned Smithy.

Hazel caught his breath.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

The Bounder laughed.

"Somebody's been spotted at the Three Fishers!" he answered.

"Oh!" said Hazel, and he added: "Not you, Smithy?"

"Not this time!" chuckled the Bounder. "Might have been, only Reddy's been sticking to me like glue!"

"Lucky for you I have, I think, with the prefects on the trail!" said Tom Redwing dryly.

"Quite!" grinned the Bounder. "I fancy it can't have been a Remove man at all. I thought of you, Hazel—"

"Thanks!" sneered Hazel. "If you've got any eyes, you can see where I've been."

"Yes; that lets you out!" agreed Smithy. "But from what I hear, somebody's been spotted. Wingate was called in to the Head, and he was heard speaking to Gwynne and Sykes afterwards. He's gone up the river, and I believe Gwynne and Sykes have gone

the other way—what does that look like?"

Hazel's heart gave an unpleasant jump.

"Looks as if somebody's suspected," he remarked, as carelessly as he could. "Fifth Form man, perhaps."

"Yes; might be Price or Hilton!" said the Bounder. "Not me, and now you've turned up, not you. Every man who's spotted within a mile of the place will be cross-examined, I suppose. Lend me a hand with this boat, Reddy—none too much time for a pull before gates."

Hazel walked on, feeling more at ease. He could not have been seen—he was sure of that now. There would be no occasion for prefects to prowl round the exits from the Three Fishers if the culprit was known. He had had a narrow escape, but the danger was over, and he recovered his nerve. His manner was quite careless and unconcerned as he strolled to the House.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

Where is Bob?

"I SAY, you fellows—"

"Scat!" snapped Harry Wharton.

"But I say—"

"Boot him!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Billy Bunter backed away warily.

It was close on time for call-over when the four Removites came in from their ramble—without having seen anything of Bob. Considering what had happened just before that ramble, Harry Wharton hardly expected the fat Owl of the Remove to roll up and squeak. He was strongly inclined to plant his boot on William George Bunter's tight trousers.

"I say, you fellows, don't be shirty, you know!" said Bunter. "I say, do you know where Cherry is?"

"Hasn't he come in?" asked Harry.

"He, he, he! No."

"What do you want him for, fat-head?" asked Nugent. "Has Bob had a remittance?"

"Oh, really, Nugent! I don't want him—or you either, if you come to that! A lot of rotters who strand girls on an island—"

"Boot him!" snapped Johnny Bull.

Bunter did another backward hop.

"I say, I fancy Quelch and the Head will want him!" he grinned. "He, he, he! If he's the chap, he's for it, I can tell you. All the rest of the Remove are in—you fellows are the last! He, he, he!"

And Bunter rolled away, sniggering.

"What does the fat ass mean?" asked Nugent. "Here, Mauly! Seen anything of Bob Cherry?"

Lord Mauleverer shook his head.

"Not since he went out after class," he answered.

"You seen him, Toddy?"

"No," answered Peter Todd, very curtly.

Remove fellows were rather liable to be short and sharp in dealing with the famous Co. these days. Skinner, indeed, had proposed sending them to Coventry as a punishment for the supposed rag on the Cliff House girls. Bolsover major recommended a Form ragging!

Neither of these suggestions had been adopted, but there was a frosty atmosphere in the Form. It was likely to last until the Famous Five could prove their innocence—which seemed, at present, a rather hopeless outlook.

"Seen Bob, Squiff?"

"No!" answered Sampson Quincy

Illey Field, a little less curtly than Peter, but not in his usual cordial way.

"Here, Smithy, seen Bob?"

"No; and don't want to!" retorted the Bounder. "Perhaps he's found another chance of ragging schoolgirls, and it's keeping him busy."

"He, he, he!"—from Bunter.

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed at the Bounder.

"You'd better tie up that tongue of yours, Smithy, or it will get you into trouble one of these times," he said.

"Yaas," remarked Lord Mauleverer, "that's a jolly good idea! You talk too much, Smithy—much too much!"

Vernon-Smith gave his lordship a stare.

"Does that mean that you're backing up those cads who ragged Marjorie Hazeldene and her friends?" he asked.

"They didn't, old man," said Mauly cheerfully. "Haven't you heard them say they didn't?"

"I don't believe all I hear, fathead!"

"No," said Mauly thoughtfully, "I suppose you wouldn't! Poor old chap! I suppose that's a sort of just penalty on a fibber—never bein' able to believe better fellows when they tell the truth."

"Why, you cheeky, silly ass!" roared the Bounder, while a dozen other fellows burst into a chortle.

"You're a fool, Mauly, old man!" remarked Skinner.

"Everybody knows they did it!" said Hazeldene. "What's the good of talking rot, Mauly?"

"No good at all," answered Mauly amiably. "Why do it?"

"You silly chump!" hooted Hazel. "Didn't they tell Coker, when he took them off the island, that Cherry had taken away their boat? Didn't that gang tie the boat up at the school raft afterwards? You know they did it!"

"Not at all, dear man—I know they didn't!" said Lord Mauleverer placidly. "You're catchin' Smithy's complaint, Hazel—talkin' too much!"

The Co. walked away to Hall, and Lord Mauleverer ambled after them.

It was not easy for the chums of the Remove to keep their tempers, but losing them did not seem useful. One or two or three fellows could have been shut up, promptly and effectively; but the whole Remove could not shut up. And such remarks as they had just heard were dinned in their ears all day, almost.

The bell was ringing for call-over now.

Bob Cherry, apparently, had not come in yet, which meant that he would be late for roll. What Billy Bunter's remarks on the subject meant the Co. did not know, but as the Remove gathered in Hall they heard other remarks. With other matters on their minds, they had almost forgotten the episode of the straw hat over the Three Fishers fence, but they were reminded of it now.

"Must have been Cherry!" they heard Skinner whisper. "Every other man's here. The prefects haven't come in yet."

"Cherry—at the Three Fishers!" Smithy whistled. "That's not in his line!"

"Hardly!" said Squiff.

"You never know a fellow till you find him out," said Skinner sapiently. "A week ago you'd have said that it wasn't in his line to play rotten tricks on schoolgirls—but he did!"

"By gum, that's so, too!" agreed the Bounder.

"Well, everybody else is here," said Snoop. "All the Remove, but Cherry;

and I can see Hilton and Price in the Fifth—it wasn't either of them."

"And there's Angel of the Fourth, and Kenney," said Peter Todd. "All the Fourth seem to be in."

"Everybody's in except Cherry and three of the Sixth!" said the Bounder, scanning Hall with a keen eye. "We know where the prefects are—drawing the covert at the Three Fishers. But where's Cherry?"

"In the covert!" grinned Skinner.

"Must be a silly ass, then, if he's got himself copped," said Vernon-Smith. "Beginner at the business, and bunglin'—what?"

The Co. exchanged glances as they heard all this. Clearly, the news that a Greyfriars man had been spotted out of bounds was generally known; and as one Greyfriars man was missing from roll, the suspicions of the other fellows turned on him.

Not for a moment did Bob's friends believe that it was Bob who had so nearly climbed over that fence under Sir Hilton Popper's eyes. But it was odd that he did not come in.

They had a rather curious eye on the door till it was closed for roll. Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, was calling the names. They noticed that Mr. Quelch, the Remove master, had an eye on his Form, and did not doubt that he had missed Bob from the ranks. They saw that his lips were set.

"Cherry?"

Bob's name was called at last. There was no reply.

Mr. Quelch's lips, already set, tightened like a vice as Prout marked a member of his Form absent.

Every other man answered to his name, excepting three of the Sixth. But everyone knew where Wingate, Gwynne, and Sykes were. They had gone to "draw the covert," as the Bounder expressed it, at the Three Fishers; and, apparently, they were still on the spot.

"What the dickens has become of Bob?" asked Harry Wharton, when the juniors went out of Hall.

"Goodness knows!" said Nugent. "I believe he had an idea of looking for that cad Ponsonby, but goodness knows which way he went. Nobody seems to have seen him since he went out."

They stopped at a window, looking out into the sunset in the quad.

About a quarter of an hour later they saw Wingate and Gwynne and Sykes of the Sixth come in; but there was no sign of Bob Cherry. They were still looking out for Bob—in vain—when Wingate came along and called to the captain of the Remove.

"Wharton! You're wanted in your Form-master's study!"

"Yes, Wingate!"

And Harry Wharton went along to Mr. Quelch's study, wondering, rather uneasily, what his Form-master wanted.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER.

Bad for Bunter's Boko!

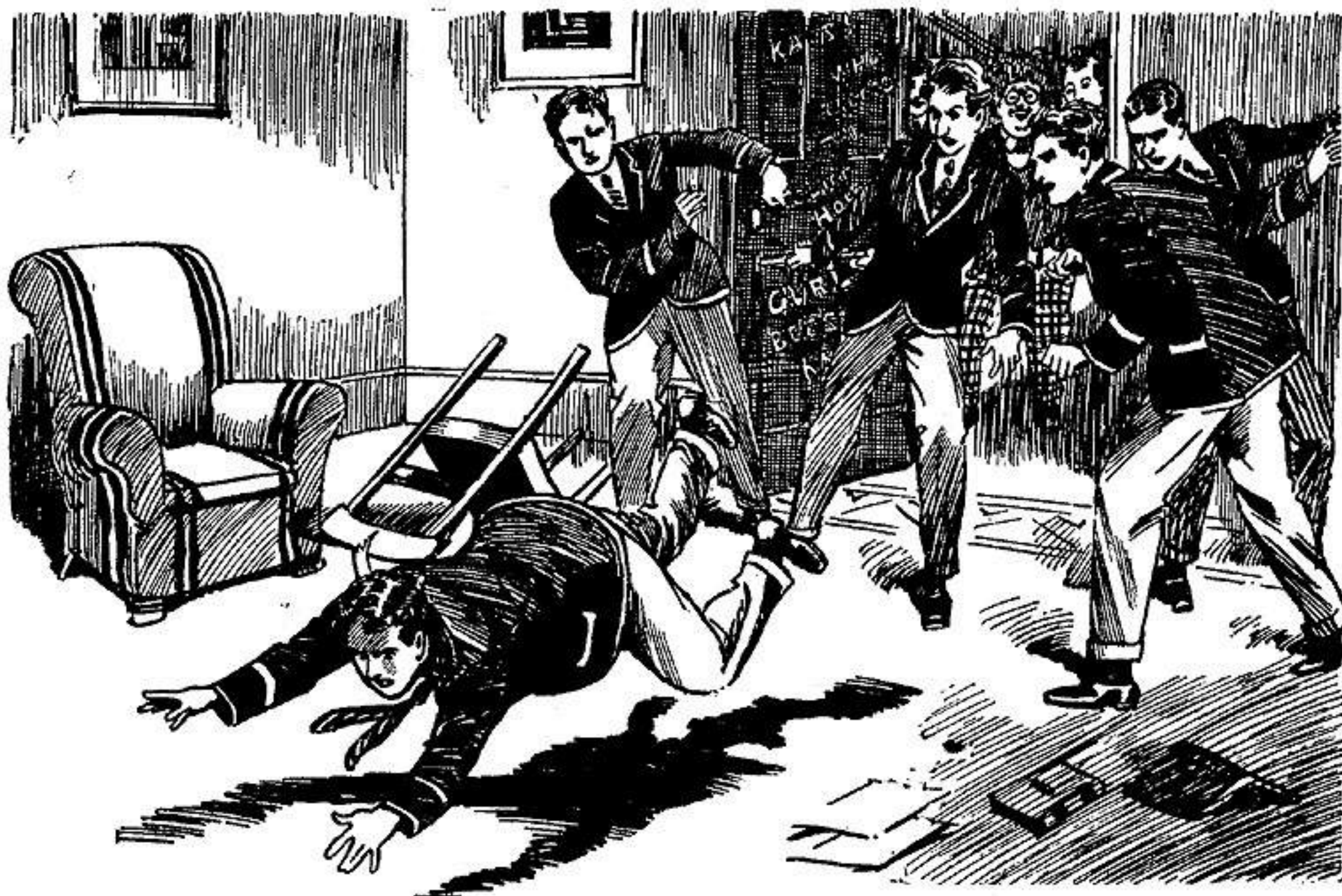
MR. QUELCH had an expression of almost portentous gravity on his face as Wharton entered his study. He eyed his head boy very sharply.

"Wharton, do you know where Cherry is?" he rapped.

"No, sir!" answered Harry.

"I understand that you are very often together," said Mr. Quelch. "Has that not been the case to-day?"

"Bob went out after class, sir. We went out later."



Wharton, resisting strenuously, was rushed down the passage to the door of his study. Fisher T. Fish kicked the door wide open, and the Removites hurled their Form-captain headlong into the study. Crash! Wharton sprawled on the study carpet, crimson, breathless, and panting!

Mr. Quelch drummed on his table with his finger-tips.

"This is a serious matter, Wharton," he said. "Some time ago Sir Hilton Popper telephoned to Dr. Locke that he had seen a Greyfriars boy in a low resort, out of bounds for all boys belonging to this school."

"Indeed, sir!" murmured Wharton.

"It appears," continued Mr. Quelch, "that Sir Hilton did not see who it was, but noted that he was wearing a Greyfriars straw hat."

Wharton was silent.

But for his intervention, the lord of Popper Court would have had something more definite to report. He was glad that Mr. Quelch seemed to have no suspicion of that circumstance. He had acted instinctively to keep a fellow out of a row, but he could hardly expect a schoolmaster to share his point of view in such a matter.

"I certainly did not think," continued Mr. Quelch, "that the boy in question was a boy of my Form. But now—Cherry is absent! Three prefects were sent to stop any boy leaving the Three Fishers, and to question any Greyfriars boy seen coming from that direction. They have found no one, however. They remained till time for calling-over here. It would certainly appear that the boy in question, finding the outlets watched, did not venture to leave. This would force him to miss calling-over at Greyfriars."

Mr. Quelch paused.

"Cherry is almost the last boy in the Form whom I should have suspected of such conduct," he went on. "He is thoughtless and reckless, but not, so far as I have been aware, in that way."

"It was not Cherry, sir!" said Harry earnestly. "I'm absolutely certain of

that. He wouldn't be found dead in that low hole!"

Mr. Quelch stared at him for a moment, and then smiled faintly.

"I hope you are right, Wharton. But it is very singular that Cherry is the only boy to have missed call-over."

"Yes, sir; but I'm sure—" Wharton paused uncomfortably. It certainly was a very curious coincidence, and he could not begin to guess why Bob had stayed out of gates. "But, sir," he went on, "it might have been any fellow. He must have had time to get clear before the prefects got there, however quick they were."

"That is true, if he lost no time!" said Mr. Quelch. "But—" He drummed on the table again. "It is, as I have said, very singular that Cherry is absent. As you are so often together, I sent for you, Wharton, to ask you whether Cherry was with you at the time."

Harry Wharton drew a deep breath. He would gladly at that moment have kicked Billy Bunter the length of the Remove passage and back again.

"We should have been together, sir," he answered, "but—"

"But what?" asked Mr. Quelch, very sharply.

Wharton reddened a little.

"We were all going out after class, sir, but I went up to my study for something, and—there was—was some delay. There was—was a good deal of delay, owing to something that happened. Nugent and Bull and Inky waited for me, but Bob went off on his own."

"Indeed!" said Mr. Quelch, very dryly. "You do not know where he went?"

"Well, we had intended to take a walk towards Highcliffe, sir, and I've

no doubt that that's what Cherry did."

"Did you and your friends carry out your intention later?"

"Yes, sir, a good bit later."

"But you did not fall in with Cherry, although you supposed that he had gone in the direction taken by you?"

"N-no! But we went by the Court-field road, and Bob might have gone by the river," said Harry.

"By the river!" repeated Mr. Quelch grimly. "Oh, quite so! It appears, then, that you and your friends know nothing of Cherry's movements since class this afternoon?"

"No, sir," said Harry.

"Very well; you may go, Wharton."

Wharton left his Form-master's study with a clouded brow. It was clear that Mr. Quelch was suspicious; as, indeed, in the peculiar circumstances, he could scarcely fail to be.

The Co. were still at the window when Harry Wharton rejoined them. Why Bob had not come in was a mystery, and it puzzled and worried them, though it did not seem to puzzle the other fellows. Most of the Remove seemed to have settled in their minds who it was that had been "spotted" at the Three Fishers.

"What did Quelch want?" asked Nugent.

Wharton made a grimace.

"Only to know whether Bob had been with us this afternoon. It's all that fat idiot Bunter's fault that he wasn't. But for that row—"

"Well, he might have waited, as we did!" grunted Johnny Bull. "But he was so keen on a chance of falling in with that Highcliffe cad—"

"We're all rather keen on that," said Harry. "There's not the slightest doubt that it was Ponsonby played that

rotten trick on Marjorie and her friends, though goodness knows why even that cad did such a thing. I'd be jolly glad to get within hitting distance of the rotten worm!"

"The gladfulness of my esteemed self would also be terrific!" remarked Hurree Janset Ram Singh. "But where is the idiotic Bob?"

"Can't make it out," said Harry. "A lot of those silly fatheads seem to fancy he was the chap at the Three Fishers, and I'm afraid Quelch has got the same idea into his head. Still, Bob will be able to explain where he's been when he does come in."

"Yes, it will be all right, though goodness knows what's become of him," said Frank. "Coming into the Rag?"

"No; they're all chewing over this," growled Wharton. "Let's go up to the studies."

Most of the Remove had gathered in the Rag till prep, and Bob Cherry was the topic there at present. The fact that he had not come in for call-over settled the matter to most of the fellows, though his own friends, puzzled as they were by his absence, had no doubt that he would be able to explain when he did appear at last.

The four went up to the Remove passage.

"Oh my hat!" murmured Nugent. "Look!"

A fat figure was visible in the Remove passage. It was standing outside the door of Study No. 1.

A stick of chalk, in a fat hand, was tracing letters on the door.

Billy Bunter's fat profile was towards the chums of the Remove, and he did not see them. His eyes and his spectacles were fixed on his handiwork on the study door.

Harry Wharton's eyes gleamed.

Bunter, encouraged by impunity, was "at it" again. His earlier inscription had been wiped off the door. Now he was chalking another there. Grins wreathed his fat features as he chalked:

**"BEESTLY KADS!
ROTTEN PHUNKS!"**

Thus far had Bunter got, and he was evidently going to add some more; but, as a matter of fact, the fat Owl had finished, though he was not yet aware of it.

Harry Wharton strode up the passage from the landing, and Bunter turned his head at the sound of footsteps.

The grin faded off his fat face with remarkable suddenness as he saw the owner of the study he was adorning.

"Oh!" gasped Bunter. "I—I say—Leggo! Yaroooh! It wasn't me! I say, old chap, I never—Whoop!"

A grip of iron fastened on the back of Bunter's fat neck. In that grip his podgy face was pushed against the study door.

"Urrrrggh!" gurgled Bunter, as Wharton proceeded to wipe out the chalk, using his little fat nose for the purpose.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent, Johnny Bull, and the nabob. And Wharton's frowning face broke into a grin.

"Yow-ow-ow!" spluttered Bunter. "I say, my nose! Owl! My boko! I say, you fellows—Gurrgh! I say, you're skinning my boko! Whoo-hoop!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Gurrghggh!" gurgled Bunter.

He wriggled frantically. His little fat nose felt as if it was being rubbed off in pieces.

But he was not released till that fat nose had rubbed the chalked inscription

from the door. By that time, probably, Billy Bunter was glad that he had not added any more to it.

Bump!

Billy Bunter sat down in the Remove passage with a bump and a roar.

"Yaroooh!"

The juniors, grinning, went into the study. Bunter sat in the passage and bellowed, with both fat hands clasping his suffering fat nose.

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

"Get on with it!" said Harry Wharton, laughing. "I'll rub the next one out in the same way. Go ahead, old fat man!"

He slammed the study door.

But Billy Bunter did not get on with it. He was tired of chalking on study doors! Billy Bunter departed from the spot, holding both hands to his little fat nose, and moaning.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

Marjorie Takes a Hand!

"OH, Clara!"

Marjorie Hazeldene fairly gasped.

She gazed almost unbelievably at Clara Trevlyn, in the study at Cliff House.

Clara gave a shrug and a grimace.

"Well, I did!" she declared.

"But—but—but—" stammered Marjorie.

"It was Bessie's idea!" admitted Clara. "But I jumped at it—and did it! He might have guessed what I let him get in the boat for—considering what he did last week. But he's rather a fathead!"

"You shouldn't have—"

"Well—I did! That," said Clara, "is that!"

Miss Clara Trevlyn, as a matter of fact, was feeling a little uneasy.

She was not going to admit it, but now that it was too late for anything to be done, she was worried.

In stranding Bob on the island in the river, she had, as she supposed, been handing over a Roland for an Oliver—tit for tat! As he had done, so he should be done by—on the ancient principle of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth! She was still quite convinced that it served him right. But on reflection, she realised that it meant trouble ahead.

Clara was a little hasty, and reflection, in her case, often came too late to be of much service. So it was in this case.

Stranding Bob Cherry was, doubtless, a just punishment, believing as she did. But if Bob did not get back to Greyfriars for calling-over, he would be missed; if he did not get back for prep, there would be a row; while if he was left out all night, there would be a tremendous and terrific row.

It had not occurred to Miss Clara, at the time, that this might be the outcome—but she was thinking now of that awful possibility.

What would Miss Bellew, the mistress of the Fourth, say—what would Miss Primrose, the headmistress, say? What would everybody say? What on earth was going to happen if Bob did not turn up at his school at all that night?

Marjorie was utterly dismayed. The supposed actions of the Famous Five had hurt her more than offended her—while they had offended more than hurt Clara. She, at all events, was not thinking of "tit for tat," or a Roland for an Oliver—she only wanted to keep severely clear of her former friends, and never see or speak to them again.

Apart from that, she was alarmed for Bob, and utterly dismayed for Clara.

"If he's not taken off the island—" she breathed.

"Well, I never thought about that!" confessed Clara. "We were taken off when they stranded us there last week—"

"But that was a half-holiday, and earlier in the day, and there were boats up the river," said Marjorie. "It's different to-day."

"Yes—I forgot that—" Clara knitted her brows. "It serves him right, of course! You know that, Marjorie."

"Perhaps—but—"

"No perhaps about it!" snapped Clara. "He took away our boat, and left us there—we found his hat in the willows, with his name in it; and afterwards it turned out that the whole party had our boat, and tied it up at their raft. They never meant to bring it back—and if Horace Coker hadn't come along, what would have happened? We might have been out all night."

"I know! But—"

"Well, if Bob Cherry's left out all night, it's only what might have happened to us," said Clara stubbornly. "I wouldn't care a straw, only for the row it will cause! I—I never thought about that."

"We must think of it," said Marjorie quietly. "He must be taken off the island somehow, Clara. He can't be left there."

Clara gave another shrug.

"Too late!" she answered. "We can't get out after lock-up, and if we could, we couldn't go all those miles. We couldn't even get a boat now."

"Oh!" breathed Marjorie. She sat with her brow wrinkled, trying to think it out. "Something must be done."

"What, then?" asked Clara. "I—I'd be willing to let him off, if anything could be done. He's been there a good time, anyhow, and I dare say he knows what it's like, by this time, to be stranded! Serve him right! But—"

"Never mind whether it serves him right or not," said Marjorie quietly. "That doesn't matter very much. If we telephoned to Greyfriars—"

"You could only get a master on the phone," said Clara. "That means all the fat in the fire! And he may have been taken off the island before this, for all we know."

"Yes, yes! But—" Marjorie's face suddenly brightened. "I have it! We can phone to Jones' yard at Friardale—where we hire the boats. Mr. Jones will send a boat up to take him off."

"Oh!" said Clara thoughtfully.

Marjorie jumped up.

"Miss Primrose will let me use the telephone to speak to the boat-builder's. That will be all right, Clara."

"Right as rain!" said Clara relieved. "He will get lines for missing call-over, and that will serve him right. Not so bad for him as it would have been for us, last Wednesday, if Coker hadn't taken us off. And he can get out of the lines, too, by telling Mr. Quelch that I stranded him!" added Clara sarcastically.

"I don't think Bob will do that, Clara."

"Rot!" said Clara. "If he would strand us on the island, as he did, he would do anything!"

"Well, anyhow, the sooner he is taken off, the better," said Marjorie. "We don't want a fearful row, and Dr. Locke coming over to see Miss Primrose."

"N-no!" admitted Clara. "Still, I'm not sorry I did it!"

"Never mind that," said Marjorie,

with a faint smile. "So long as there isn't a row about it, it's all right."

And Marjorie Hazeldene left the study and went down the passage.

A number of the Cliff House Fourth were there—surrounding Bessie Bunter, who was relating, with a series of fat chuckles, how Bob Cherry had been stranded on Popper's Island.

Some of the girls were laughing—but some were looking serious.

Miss Clara had thought of the possible consequences, too late; Bessie Bunter had not thought of them at all.

"I missed tea last Wednesday, through that brute stranding us," said Bessie. "Well, he must have missed his tea, and he will miss his supper as well! He, he, he! I say, you girls, he will be fearfully hungry! He, he, he!"

"You little duffer!" said Barbara Redfern. "Suppose he's left out all night!"

"He, he, he!" chortled Bessie. "Then he may miss his brekker, too! He, he!"

"And suppose Dr. Locke comes over to see Miss Primrose about it?" asked Mabel Lynn. "You'll be up on the carpet in the Head's study, then, you young ass!"

"Oh, that's all right!" said Bessie cheerfully. "I shall say I wasn't there."

"Wha-a-t?"

"You'll be a witness, Barbara! You can say that I was on the cliffs with you at the time, see?"

"Oh, my hat!" ejaculated Barbara. "Can I?"

"Yes, and Mabel can say the same! Then it will be all right! Marjorie can back me up, too—Miss Primrose will believe her all right. She always believes Marjorie!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I say, Marjorie," squeaked Bessie. "If there's a row, and we're up before Miss Primrose, mind you say to her—Cat!"

Marjorie passed on quickly to the stairs without heeding Bessie.

"Cat!" repeated Bessie. "I'm speaking to you, Marjorie! I say—"

But Marjorie was gone.

She found Miss Penelope Primrose in Common-room with Miss Bellew and Miss Bullivant. A request to speak to the boat-builder's at Friardale on the telephone was immediately granted, and Marjorie hurried to the headmistress' study. She was rather glad to be able to put the call through while Miss Primrose was not in the study and she lost no time.

She was very quickly through to Mr. Jones, the boat-builder.

Mr. Jones agreed at once to send a boat up the river, to take a schoolboy off the island; payment for that trip to be settled subsequently.

Marjorie returned to her study, very much relieved in her mind. Clara was probably equally relieved when she told her.

"Still, it would have served him right to be left there!" declared Miss Clara. "And if it wasn't for a row with Primmy, I wouldn't have let you phone, so there!"

And Marjorie smiled and left it at that.

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

Taken Off!

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

The sound of oars on the river was a glad sound to him.

It was still light on the river, though under the trees on Popper's Island, it was densely dark.

The hours Bob had spent on that island had not been happy hours. Nobody had come in sight.

On a half-holiday, Greyfriars boats might have come up the river, or Highcliffe boats might have come down; but except on half-holidays, that reach of the Sark was extremely solitary, shut in between Popper Court Woods on one side and Lantham Woods on the other.

Bob watched the towpath, hoping to see someone pass, to whom he could shout for help; but the towpath was little frequented, and he saw no one.

When the time came for calling-over at Greyfriars, Bob was beginning to feel rather desperate, and he debated in his mind whether to attempt to swim off.

That, however, was a last and desperate resource; and he still waited as the dusk deepened, and hoped to spot somebody on the towpath or a boat on the river.

Missing call-over meant lines; but that was not an uncommon infliction. A hundred lines from Mr. Quelch did not matter very much.

But if he did not get in before prep it was more serious; that was more likely to mean a licking than lines.

Still, that was not awfully dismaying. Bob was tough, and he had had too many "sixes" in his time to bother a lot about one more.

The real trouble was, that the later it grew, the less likelihood there was of rescue; and he could not possibly remain out after dorm. That would mean a terrific row. So he was intensely glad to hear the splash of oars on the river and to see a boat coming up the stream.

Standing on the little landing-place of the island, Bob waved his straw hat and shouted. It did not occur to him that the boat was coming specially for him, and he went all out to attract attention.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Come this way, will you? I'm stranded on this island!" roared Bob.

"Coming!"

The boat nosed into the willows. It was pulled by a red-whiskered man in a jersey, whom Bob recognised as Mr. Jones, the boat-builder of Friardale.

Mr. Jones, recognising him at the same moment, gave an expressive grunt.

"Oh!" he said. "You!"

"Yes, little me, Mr. Jones!" answered Bob cheerfully. "I've got stranded here—give me a lift across, will you?"

Mr. Jones eyed him.

"I s'pose so!" he grunted. "But it would serve you right to leave you there, Master Cherry, and so I tell you plain!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! What's biting you, Jonesy?" asked Bob, in surprise. He had never, hitherto, found the old boat-builder of Friardale anything but genial.

Grunt from Mr. Jones.

"Oh, get in!" he rapped.

Bob got in and the boat-builder pushed off.

Bob eyed him curiously as he pulled away down the river towards Greyfriars.

"What the dickens is the matter, Jones?" he asked. "Got your jolly old back up about anything?"

"Well you knows!" grunted Mr. Jones.

"Blessed if I do!" said Bob.

"If I'd knowed it was you on that there island," said Mr. Jones, with emphasis, "I'd never 'ave come up for you—see? I dare say the young lady knowed that, as she never mentioned your name. A schoolboy, she says on the phone!"

"The young lady?" repeated Bob blankly. "Oh, I—I see! They tipped you from Cliff House that I was there, and you came up to take me off. Miss Trevlyn told you—"

"No, she didn't!" grunted Mr. Jones. "Miss Hazeldene told me, and so I coom oop. But if I'd knowed—"

"Marjorie!" breathed Bob. His face brightened.

"But if I'd knowed it was you, you young raskil," said Mr. Jones, "I'd 'ave left you to it, so I tells you!"

"And why?" demanded Bob warmly.

"Well, you knows!" grunted Mr. Jones. "Don't I know what you did last week, you and your friends, stranding them girls on the island? Young 'ooligans!"

Bob's face flushed.

"We never did, Mr. Jones," he said. "It's an awful mistake! We were nowhere near the place!"

"You 'ad the boat—"

"Yes; but we took it away from a Highcliffe chap, who had it, and never knew it was the Cliff House boat at all!" said Bob earnestly. "The fellow bagged my hat and we bagged his boat, and never know—"

Grunt, from Mr. Jones.

"Well, I got a bill for that boat," he said. "It's got to be paid for—a shilling a hower—all the time it was out! If you and your friends leave it out all night, that's your look-out!"

"You can send your bill to Cecil Ponsonby, at Highcliffe!" growled Bob. "He had the boat till we took it away from him!"

"Don't know 'im," said Mr. Jones. "But I knows you, and I knows you 'ad the boat! And somebody's going to pay sixteen bob, so I tell you!"

"Well, that's fair!" admitted Bob. "We kept the boat out—though we supposed at the time that it belonged to Highcliffe, as Ponsonby had it. You can give me that bill, Mr. Jones, and I'll see that you get your sixteen shillings. But I'd like you to believe that we never had a hand in stranding the schoolgirls on Popper's Island that day."

"Well, I don't!" said Mr. Jones gruffly.

"Then you can go and eat coke!" growled Bob.

Mr. Jones pulled in to the bank half a mile short of Greyfriars.

"You can 'op it, and walk the rest!" he said. "I've 'ad more'n enough of you, you young rascal!"

"Same to you, with knobs on!" retorted Bob. He jumped lightly ashore. "Thanks for taking me off, all the same!"

"Don't you worry; I wouldn't 'ave done it for you, only to oblige the young lady at Cliff House!" answered the boat-builder as he pulled away down the Sark.

Bob Cherry turned from the river and started for Greyfriars. He did the distance at a rapid trot, and arrived rather breathless at the gates.

It was long past lock-up, and he had to ring for Gosling to let him in.

Gosling came grunting from his lodge and admitted him.

"Oh! You, Master Cherry!" he said, eyeing the breathless junior. "You've got back, 'ave you?"

"Sort of!" agreed Bob.

"You got to go straight to your Form-master, you 'ave," said Gosling, "and wot I says is this 'ere—"

"Bow-wow!" said Bob. "Likewise rats!"

And he cut in, and Gosling grunted and closed the gate with a clang.

THE NINTH CHAPTER.

Nothing to Say!

HARRY WHARTON & CO. came quickly down the stairs. From the window of Study No. 1 they had spotted Bob coming across to the House, and they hurried down to meet him as he came in.

A dozen fellows gathered round the late-comer, some of them grinning, and all of them looking at him very curiously.

It was nearly time for prep now, and the Removites had been wondering whether the absentee, after cutting roll, would cut prep also.

Skinner had suggested that, having been spotted at the Three Fishers, he was making a night of it there, on the principle that he might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb! But here he was, at last, breathless from running—and considerably surprised by the general interest displayed in his return.

Bob was, of course, completely unaware of what had happened while he was stranded on Popper's Island. He had not the faintest idea that his absence was a general and thrilling topic in his Form.

Fellows were not supposed to come in late, of course, still, it had happened often enough, without any excitement on the subject. He saw no reason for any now.

"I say, you fellows, does he smell of baccy?" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"Here he is, with vine-leaves in his hair!" grinned Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Sober, I hope?" said the Bounder.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob stared round at grinning faces.

"What the dickens!" he exclaimed.

"Is anything up?"

"Sort of!" chuckled Vernon-Smith.

"You didn't know, of course?"

"I know I'm late, if that's what you mean!" grunted Bob. "I'm not the first fellow to be late for gates this term, am I?"

"Where have you been?" grinned Snoop.

"No bizney of yours!"

"Quelch's bizney, though!" chortled Skinner. "Take it from me, old bean, Quelch will want to know!"

"Just a few!" grinned Fisher T. Fish.

"Thank goodness you're back, Bob!" Harry Wharton pushed his way through the grinning Removites. "What the dickens has kept you out?"

"I couldn't get back," said Bob. "But what's the fuss about? Anybody might think a chap had never been late for gates before!"

"Is that Cherry?" Wingate of the Sixth came up. "Go to your Form-master's study at once, Cherry!"

"Just going, Wingate!"

"Well, look sharp, then!"

Bob stared at the Greyfriars captain, surprised by his sharp tone and grim brow.

"Is anything the matter?" he asked. "I know I'm late! I've been late before—so has every chap here, one time or another!"

"Not in the same circumstances, I hope," said Wingate dryly. "Anyhow, you can explain to your Form-master. Go to him now!"

Bob glanced at his friends, puzzled, and then he walked away to Masters' Studies. What the row was about, he could not begin to guess.

He tapped at Mr. Quelch's door, and entered.

He was further surprised by the grim look Mr. Quelch gave him, as he came

into the study. He realised that something was wrong though as yet he was quite in the dark as to what it was.

"So you have returned, Cherry!" said Mr. Quelch, in a deep voice.

"Yes, sir," said Bob. "I'm sorry I'm late."

"No doubt!" said Mr. Quelch grimly. "Where have you been, Cherry?"

"I went for a walk up the river, sir," Mr. Quelch glanced at his watch.

"You have returned precisely one hour after calling-over," he said. "I require a very full explanation of this, Cherry! You have not, I presume, been walking by the river all this time?"

"No, sir!" answered Bob. "Oh, no!"

"You have returned an hour late," said Mr. Quelch. "You left the school, I understand, immediately after class. How have you passed so long a time?"

Bob was silent.

It had never occurred to him that he would be questioned like this. He had expected to be given lines, as had happened on similar occasions before.

It would have been easy enough to explain that he had been on Popper's Island, unable to get off. But that would have involved an explanation of how he had got stranded there.

That meant a terrific row for Clara at Cliff House.

Bob was feeling sore about the trick Clara had played on him; but certainly he had not the remotest idea of giving her away.

He stood silent, with reddened cheeks.

Mr. Quelch eyed him with grim scrutiny.

"I am waiting for your explanation, Cherry!" he said, at last, in a grinding voice.

"I—I—I'm late, sir!" stammered Bob. "I'd have got back on time if—if I could! Fellows have been late before."

"Quite so!" said Mr. Quelch. "But this is not an ordinary occasion, Cherry! I am prepared, in spite of appearances, to give you every opportunity of explaining. I am unwilling to believe you guilty of disgraceful conduct."

Bob crimsoned.

"Me!" he gasped.

"You will now answer me directly," said Mr. Quelch coldly. "Have you been within the precincts of the Three Fishers?"

"Oh, my hat! I mean, no, sir! Certainly not!"

"Then why are you late?"

No answer.

"Unless you give a full and convincing explanation, Cherry, you must know what to expect," said the Remove master. "A Greyfriars boy was seen at that disreputable resort this afternoon."

"Oh!" gasped Bob. He began to understand. "Not me, sir! You can't suppose— If he was seen, you must know it wasn't I—"

"I have been on the telephone to Sir Hilton Popper," said Mr. Quelch, "and he has given me full details. He saw a Greyfriars boy climbing the fence to get out of that low resort. It appears that he did not see the boy's face, and so is unable to identify him. But that a Greyfriars boy was there, admits of no question."

"Oh!" repeated Bob.

"In a very short time afterwards, several Sixth Form prefects were on the spot!" resumed Mr. Quelch. "They remained watching the exits from the place till time for call-over. It was therefore extremely probable that the boy in question would be late for roll in

Hall. No one was late but you, Cherry."

"Oh!" gasped Bob, again.

"I admit the possibility," went on Mr. Quelch, "that the young rascal may have escaped detection. I am prepared to hear you give a complete account of your proceedings since going out of gates after class. If you have been innocently occupied, you can give such an explanation. The fact that you, and you alone, are late, seems to speak for itself—but if you can give me a full account of your time out of gates—"

He paused.

Bob stood dumb.

That duffer Clara had stranded him on Popper's Island. What would Quelch say—and do—if he told him? The matter would be taken up at Cliff House. That would see Bob through—but what about Clara? It meant a row for her with her headmistress; and worse still, it meant Bob Cherry being regarded as a tell-tale. It was impossible.

"Come, my boy," said Mr. Quelch, in a kinder tone. "If you have anything to tell me, tell me before it is too late. Otherwise, the matter must go before your headmaster to-morrow. For your own sake, Cherry, I urge you to be frank with me."

"I've done no harm, sir!" muttered Bob. "I couldn't get back—"

"Why not?"

"I—I—I couldn't!"

Mr. Quelch's face set like iron.

"I have had a good opinion of you, Cherry!" he said coldly. "I am unwilling to change it. But your words leave me no choice but to believe that you were the Greyfriars boy Sir Hilton Popper saw at the Three Fishers."

"I was not, sir!"

"Then where have you been?"

No answer.

There was a long minute of silence. Then the Remove master made a gesture of dismissal.

"You may go, Cherry! To-morrow, you will see your headmaster!"

Bob Cherry left the study, in dismayed silence.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

Who Was the Man?

THE following morning, Harry Wharton & Co. did not reflect, in their looks, the brightness of the sunny summer morning.

Far from that!

Bob Cherry, that morning, was the cynosure of all eyes in the Remove. He attracted a good many glances from fellows in other Forms.

Coker of the Fifth gave him a scornful glare in quad. He was heard to mutter "Disgraceful little swab" to Potter and Greene, as he passed Bob. Plenty of other fellows had the same opinion, whether they expressed it or not.

It had been all over the school, the previous day, that "old Popper" had spotted a Greyfriars man at that low den up the river. And when one fellow, and one only, came in late, there was little doubt that he was the fellow old Popper had spotted.

Doubts, if any, were banished by the discovery that Bob had been unable, or unwilling, to give any explanation.

That settled it, for nearly everybody.

It was a breathless topic in the Remove, whether he would be flogged or sacked, when he went up to the Head after third school.

The Remove fellows took it different ways. Some fellows were shocked, some surprised, some disgusted. The Bounder



Mr. Quelch could hardly believe his eyes when they fell on Bob Cherry and Vernon-Smith fighting desperately. "Cease this at once!" almost roared Mr. Quelch. But the two angry juniors, fighting hard, did not hear, or did not heed. Fierce punches were exchanged right under Mr. Quelch's majestic eyes.

was sardonically amused. Skinner was immensely bucked, at this knock-out jolt for the Co. Hazeldene said nothing on the subject. He had the best reasons for knowing that Bob was not the man Sir Hilton Popper had spotted. But he was not likely to mention the real man's name to anyone.

Why Bob was silent about his proceedings that afternoon, was a puzzle to Hazel. He knew that Bob had not been at the Three Fishers. He could only conclude that Bob had been in some other questionable spot, which he dared not mention—the Cross Keys, perhaps. Certainly he never dreamed that poor Bob was keeping silent rather than get a schoolgirl into a row. Nobody thought of guessing anything like that.

Bob had told his own chums, under strict engagement of secrecy. He could trust them—and they agreed with him that he could not give Clara away. Exactly what would happen to Clara, if her headmistress discovered that she had played such a mad prank, they did not know—but it was certain to be something serious. To tell was impossible. The Co. agreed to that—but they were deeply, intensely worried.

For Bob had to go up to the Head—and if he had nothing to say for himself, he was likely to be severely judged. A flogging, at least, was to be expected.

"You see," said Bob, as they walked in the quad before school, "that goat—hem! I mean Clara—fancied she was giving me tit for tat! She must have put in some thinking afterwards, I suppose, but she never thought at the time. Of course, she knows nothing about the Three Fishers story—if she thinks about it at all, which I dare say she doesn't, she only thinks I'm getting lines for cutting roll. Looks to me as if there's only one chance for me."

"What's that?" asked Harry dubiously.

"Well, somebody was at the Three Fishers, or that old buffoon, Popper, couldn't have seen him—and the chap might own up, now the wrong fellow's landed. I jolly well would, in his place."

"You would!" said Harry dryly. "But the kind of rotten sweep that goes to see those blackguards at the Three Fishers wouldn't."

"Well, if it was Smithy, he's a bit of a corker, but he would never stand for another man taking his gruel!" said Bob.

"Yes—Smithy; that's so!" agreed Harry, with a nod. "I don't know where he was after we had that row in the Remove passage yesterday. Might have been Smithy."

"Smithy would own up if it came to the chopper for another man!" said Frank Nugent, with conviction.

"That's true; Smithy's no funk," said Johnny Bull. "He's a dashed sweep, but he's got grit!"

"But was it Smithy?" said Harry. "Might have been anybody! It's clear that he got away before the prefects got there. Might have been Skinner or Snoop—or Angel or Kenney of the Fourth—they're that sort! Not the sort to take their medicine, if they could help it. Might have been a senior—Hilton or Price of the Fifth—or even a Sixth Form man—the Head doesn't know as much about Loder and Carne as some fellows could tell him."

"If it was any of that lot, I'm done!" said Bob. "I'm not going to give a girl away for a fearful row, I know that!"

They went rather dismally in to class. All eyes in the Remove Form-room turned on Bob Cherry.

Mr. Quelch took no special note of

him. He was booked for the Head's study after third school; until then nothing more was said officially on the subject.

Bob did not enjoy class that morning. The coming interview with the headmaster weighed like lead on his spirits.

When the Form came out in break, the Famous Five joined the Bounder at once.

Smithy, the black sheep of the Remove, was the fellow to whom their thoughts naturally turned in such a matter. And, black sheep as Smithy was, everybody knew that he would own up like a shot rather than let another man take what ought to have come to him.

The Bounder grinned as they came up. Tom Redwing, who was with him, looked grave and concerned. If the affair seemed comic to Smithy, it certainly did not seem so to his chum.

"Hard cheese, old man!" grinned the Bounder. "Copped first go—what? Bit of a new departure for you, wasn't it?"

"What do you mean?" said Bob gruffly.

"Well, I've been within a hundred miles of that show once or twice," grinned Smithy, "but I've never seen you there."

"I've never been there at all! Look here, Smithy, if it was you that old Popper spotted yesterday, you're bound to own up, see?"

The Bounder stared at him blankly for a moment. Then an extremely unpleasant look came over his face.

"Oh! Is that the game?" he asked, between his teeth. "You've got yourself copped, and you've thought of the bright idea of landing it on me because

(Continued on page 16.)

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,529.

The Boy Who Wouldn't Split!



(Continued
from
page 13.)

the beaks and prefects are down on me! Well, you can wash that right out! It won't work!"

"Don't be a silly ass, Smithy, if you can help it," said Harry Wharton sharply. "Nobody wants to land it on you if you weren't the man. But if you were, you're bound to speak out!"

"You know who the man was!" answered Smithy coolly. "Here he is, and his name's Cherry! What are you drivin' at?"

Bob drew a deep breath.

"Then it wasn't you at the Three Fishers yesterday?" he asked.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"It certainly was not Smithy!" cut in Tom Redwing. "I was with Smithy at the time yesterday. We both saw Wingate start when he went up the river. Smithy had been with me ever since that silly row over Bunter's foolery in the Remove passage."

"Don't be a fool, Reddy," snapped the Bounder. "No need to prove an alibi for me. You know who it was, and all those fellows know."

"I don't!" said Redwing quietly. "I can't understand why Cherry doesn't explain where he was, but I don't believe that he was at that den."

"Thanks, old man!" said Bob. "You can take my word for it that I wasn't! I'd like to know what rotter it was, though! I'd like to punch his face for landing me in this with his shady tricks."

The Bounder laughed.

"Where were you if you weren't there?" he asked banteringly.

"Find out!" growled Bob.

"I fancy the Big Beak's going to find out. If you'll take a tip from me, you'll have a tale ready when you go up to him," said the Bounder. "You've got a pretty good reputation, and that's an asset, if you make use of it. If you spin a yarn about taking a short cut across the place, it might go down."

Bob glared at him.

"That might do for you, you swab!" he roared. "Think I'm going to stand before the Head and tell him a stack of dashed lies?"

"Are you going to tell him the truth?" jeered Smithy.

"I'm not going to tell him any lies, anyhow!" snorted Bob. "That's in your line, Smithy—it's not in mine!"

The Bounder's lip curled bitterly.

"You've told a good few about pinching that boat from the island last week!" he sneered. "A few more won't hurt you. Have you really got the cheek to say that you weren't at the Three Fishers yesterday, when every man in the school knows that you were?"

"I was not!" roared Bob.

"You were, and your pals know it, as well as everybody else," said Vernon-Smith. "What's the good of gammon?"

Bob's eyes blazed.

"I tell you I was not! I never knew that anyone had been spotted there till I got in last night! I thought it might be you, as you're that sort of a dingy,"

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1529.

smoky, blackguardly blighter—and if it wasn't you, it was some other rotter of the same kidney! And if you say it was me again, I'll knock you spinning!" bawled Bob.

"It was you!" said the Bounder at once.

That was more than enough for Bob Cherry! His sorely tried temper failed him, and he rushed at the Bounder, hitting out.

Smithy's hands came up like a flash, and he met the angry junior with left and right. In a moment they were fighting furiously.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Respite!

"I SAY, you fellows," yelled Billy Bunter, "they're scrapping!"

There was a rush of Removites to the spot at once.

A crowded ring of excited juniors surrounded the combatants.

"Go it, Smithy!" roared Bolsover major.

"Give him beans, old man!" chirruped Skinner.

"Pile in, Smithy!"

"Good old Bounder!"

It was easy to see that the sympathy of the Remove fellows was on Vernon-Smith's side. The popularity of the Famous Five, in their Form, was at a low ebb—Bob's lowest of all.

Generally, when the Bounder was in a row, it was a safe bet that he was in the wrong. Now the whole crowd of juniors seemed to take it for granted that he was in the right.

Bob's friends looked on in silence.

They could understand his passionate anger and indignation; but, at the same time, Smithy had only uttered what everybody else believed—including Bob's Form-master, and no doubt his headmaster when the matter came before him.

Hammer and tongs the two went it; forgetful in their mutual animosity, that they were in full view of the House, and that masters were walking in the quad in break.

"What's the row about?" asked Peter Todd.

"That fool Smithy thinks it was Bob at the Three Fishers yesterday," growled the captain of the Remove.

Toddy stared at him.

"Well, wasn't it?" he asked.

"Fathead!" answered Harry.

"Oh, my hat!" said Ogilvy. "Cherry had better punch Quelch's head next. Quelch is taking him to the Head for that!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Crash!

Vernon-Smith went down on his back. It was rather like the reckless Bounder to ask for more trouble than he could handle. At the best of times, he was hardly a match for Bob; and the latter, angry and indignant, seemed to have twice his usual vigour now.

Smithy stood up to it well, taking hard punishment without flinching, and giving back plenty of the same. But he did not give so much as he received; and he went down headlong under a crashing jolt.

He sprawled and panted.

"Go it, Smithy!"

"Stand up to him, old man!" said Skinner.

"I say, Smithy, old chap, don't let that cad lick you!" squeaked Billy Bunter.

"For goodness' sake chuck it!" exclaimed Redwing, as the Bounder staggered up, his face black with fury. "Smithy—"

Unheeding him, the Bounder came on again. Whether he could win or not, he was the man to fight so long as he could stand.

They closed again in fierce combat, both hitting hard.

There was a sudden shout from Temple of the Fourth.

"Cave, you fellows! 'Ware beaks!"

Mr. Quelch, with a thunderous brow, was striding towards the spot.

The Remove master, taking a walk under the elms in break, could hardly believe his eyes when they fell on two members of his Form fighting desperately, at only a short distance. He rustled rapidly to the spot.

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Johnny Bull. "Quelch!"

"Cease this at once!" almost roared Mr. Quelch, as the crowd of juniors made way for him as he reached the scene of action.

But the two angry juniors, fighting hard, did not hear, or did not heed. Fierce punches were exchanged, right under Quelch's majestic eyes!

"Upon my word!" gasped Mr. Quelch. "Wharton—Bull—Redwing—Todd—separate them at once!"

Half a dozen of the Remove rushed to separate the combatants. Three pairs of hands grasped Bob, as many grasped Smithy, and they were fairly wrenched away from one another.

"Bob, you ass!" breathed Wharton. "It's Quelch—"

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

He dropped his hands and stood panting.

"Let me go, you fools!" the Bounder was yelling. "Let me get at him—"

"You silly ass, shut up!" gasped Redwing.

"Vernon-Smith!" thundered the Remove master.

"Oh!" the Bounder calmed down a little. "I—I didn't see you, sir."

He stood gasping for breath; and then, taking out his handkerchief, dabbed at the crimson streaming from his nose.

Mr. Quelch looked from one flushed face to the other. He was deeply and intensely angry. Mr. Quelch was a tactful gentleman, and capable of closing one eye to a scrap with the gloves on; but a shindy like this, with the bare knuckles, in the middle of the quad, almost in sight of the Head's study window, was rather too much for any Form-master's patience.

"Now," he said, in a grinding voice, "what is the meaning of this disgraceful scene?"

The late combatants panted, glared at one another, and did not answer.

"Will you answer me, Vernon-Smith?"

"It—it's only a scrap, sir."

"Will you answer me, Cherry?"

"It—it's only a scrap, sir!" stammered Bob.

"You are to appear before your headmaster this morning, Cherry! Do you desire Dr. Locke to see you disfigured like a prizefighter?" asked Mr. Quelch, in cold, cutting tones.

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "I—I forgot I—"

"You should have remembered! I saw this, from a distance," said Mr. Quelch. "You struck the first blow, Cherry! I order you to explain yourself!"

Bob stammered.

"I—I—I'm sorry I lost my temper, sir! But—but—"

"I am determined," said Mr. Quelch icily, "to know the cause of this disturbance. Why did you strike Vernon-Smith?"

"I—I lost my temper," stammered Bob. "Smithy thinks I was that rotter at the Three Fishers yesterday—"

"What?" exclaimed Mr. Quelch.

He almost jumped. His eyes fairly popped as he stared at Bob's crimson face.

"I—I don't care what he thinks, but I won't have him saying so!" blurted Bob. "But—but I'm sorry I—I lost my temper about it. A lot of fellows seem to think the same. Smithy's not the only silly fool—"

"Cherry!"

The Bounder paused for a moment in dabbing his streaming nose to stare at Bob Cherry and grin. There were grins on a good many other faces.

It was a settled belief in the Remove that Bob was the "rotter" in question. As Mr. Quelch was to take him to the Head on that very account, they wondered what the effect of this would be on the Remove master.

Mr. Quelch was staring at Bob quite blankly.

There was a brief silence. What Henry Samuel Quelch was thinking was not to be read in his face, but for a long moment his eyes dwelt curiously and searchingly on Bob.

"Let there be no more of this!" he said at length. "Vernon-Smith, you should not have expressed such an opinion until the matter has been decided by your headmaster. And you, Cherry, should control your temper better, when you must be aware that you have, at least, placed yourself under very strong suspicion. Both of you will take a hundred lines!"

Mr. Quelch rustled away, his brow very thoughtful.

Bob and the Bounder exchanged a look rather like two bulldogs, and went in different directions. Both of them needed to give their damaged faces some attention before the bell rang for third school.

When the Remove went in, after break, neither of the combatants was feeling happy. Vernon-Smith's nose was red, and a little swollen, and every now and then he had to dab it with a crimson-spotted handkerchief. Bob had to keep on rubbing an eye that persisted in winking, and under which a dark shade was growing darker.

Third school was dismal enough to Bob. He was booked for the Head's study when it was over; and, as if that was not bad enough, he had to appear before his headmaster with signs of recent fighting on his face.

The Remove was dismissed at last, and Mr. Quelch called to Bob, as all the Form expected. But what he had to say to him was quite unexpected.

"Cherry!"

"Yes, sir!" mumbled Bob.

"I have decided to take further time for consideration before taking you to your headmaster!" said Mr. Quelch.

"Oh!" gasped Bob.

"I will send for you when required. For the present you may go."

"Oh! Thank you, sir!"

Bob went out with the Remove. It was a respite for him, and he wondered what the dickens had caused that change of mind on Quelch's part. It did not occur to him that it was the shindy in the quad that was the cause!

He glanced over the crowded room and joined the Famous Five, who were standing by the window, rather apart from the rest.

They gave him welcoming smiles.

Mauly was almost the only man in the Remove who was unchanged since the mysterious and unfortunate occurrence at Popper's Island. Most of the Form condemned the Famous Five; others kept open minds on the subject, and gave them the benefit of the doubt—but there were very few who took their side unreservedly. Of those few, Mauly was the most emphatic.

Mauly's noble mind disregarded evidence. If he trusted a fellow, he trusted him, and he had no use for evidence against him. Bob had not played that rotten trick, because he was not the fellow to do it; neither had he been the man spotted at the Three Fishers, because he was not that kind of fellow, either. That was how Mauly looked at it.

"I've been thinkin', you men!" remarked Mauleverer, as he joined the chums of the Remove.

"He, he, he!" came from Billy Bunter, who overheard that remark, and some of the other fellows grinned. Thinking was not supposed to be much in the line of the schoolboy earl.

"Any result?" asked Harry Wharton, smiling.

"Yaas! I've been givin' the old nut quite a lot of hard work!" said his lordship, cheerfully regardless of grins.

"Dear old Quelch seems to have got a doubt into his jolly old mind, as he's put off that happy interview with the Big Beak! Mind me buttin' in, Bob?"

"Not at all, old man," grinned Bob.

"Go it!"

"I mean to say, if the rotter owned up, there's still time," explained Lord Mauleverer. "It's up to a man to own up when another man is up to take his gruel—what?"

"You silly ass!" put in Skinner. "Everybody knows—"

"Shut up a minute, Skinner!" begged Lord Mauleverer. "Now, as we're all here, you men, my idea is to go into the matter—see? If it was a Remove man at the Three Fishers yesterday, he ought to own up, before Bob goes to the Head. If it was a man in another Form, we can't do anythin', but if it was a Remove man we can. Pressure of public opinion, and all that—what?"

"You howlin' ass!" said Vernon-Smith. "You know it was Cherry, just as well as we all do!"

Bob gave him a glare.

"If you're asking for more—" he began.

"I'm asking for all you can give me!" retorted the Bounder at once.

Bob made a movement, and Mauleverer gently pushed him back.

"Chuck it, old man!" he said. "What's the good of punchin' noses? You can't convince a man by punchin' his nose. It only makes him more obstinate. Besides, Smithy's nose is a bit of a picture already!"

Bob nodded, and thrust his hands into his pockets. It was not, as a matter of fact, much use to administer further punches to Smithy's nose for thinking what nearly all the Remove were thinking.

"If the man's a Remove man, and we spot him, he's practically bound to own up!" went on Mauleverer. "Don't you think so?"

"Very likely!" said Harry Wharton. "But how are you going to spot him, Mauly?"

"Go it, Mr. Sherlock Holmes!" grinned Nugent.

Hazeldene, who was seated in an arm-chair, gave Lord Mauleverer a glance, and picked up a book and became deeply interested in it.

All the other fellows were interested in Mauleverer, and most of them grinning.

Mauly, generally regarded as an ass in the Form, was not expected to have much luck in spotting an offender, to whom, if he were not Bob Cherry, there existed no sort of a clue.

"Carry on, Mauly!" said Johnny Bull.

"Yes, go it!" grinned the Bounder. "You're quite entertainin' when you set your intellect goin', Mauly. Does it really work?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Yaas!" said Lord Mauleverer calmly. "Now, I mean to say, if the blighter was in some other Form that puts paid to it—I don't know all the bad hats at Greyfriars. But if he were in the Remove, all we've got to do is to spot him. Then we ask him, as a man and a sportsman, to own up—see?"

"Mauly's just going to ask you something, Cherry!" said Bolsover major.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Do shut up, Bolsover!" urged Lord Mauleverer. "Let a fellow speak. Now, we know it wasn't Cherry, to begin with—he isn't a bad hat. That bein' settled, we go on to the bad hats of the Form. You're the worst, Smithy—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"I don't suppose you mind my mentionin' that you're a pretty disgraceful rotter, old chap, as you swank about it!" said Lord Mauleverer innocently.

"You cheeky idiot!" roared Smithy.

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

"But it wasn't Smithy yesterday," went on Lord Mauleverer imperturbably. "He's a pretty thorough black-guard, but he's not the man to stand by and keep mum while another man takes his gruel. If it had been Smithy he would have owned up as soon as Cherry was up before the beaks."

"Thanks!" said the Bounder sarcastically.

"Not at all, old man! Now, the next on the list of Remove rotters is you, Skinner! Where were you yesterday afternoon?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came a yell.

Mauly's question, and the expression on the face of Harold Skinner, made the juniors roar.

"You silly, cheeky fathead—" gasped Skinner.

"By gum, this is getting interesting!" said Peter Todd. "Mauly isn't such a fool as he looks!"

"Much obliged, Toddy—I'd say the same of you, only I'm such a stickler for the truth," said Lord Mauleverer placidly.

"Why, you silly ass—"

"You haven't answered yet, Skinner!"

"And I'm jolly well not going to!" snarled Skinner. "Think you can question a man like a prefect, you cheeky fool?"

"Yaas!"

"You'd better speak up, Skinner!" said Tom Brown, with a chuckle. "Quelch seems to have a doubt about Cherry—but he wouldn't have much doubt about you if he heard that you were keeping it secret where you were yesterday after class."

"So it was you, Skinner?" asked Bob.

"Skinner all the while!" said Johnny Bull.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,529.

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

Mauly on the Trail!

LORD MAULEVERER ambled into the Rag after prep that evening with an unusually thoughtful expression on his noble countenance.

Bull. "Well, we might have guessed it!"

"You silly fathead!" yelled Skinner, beginning to feel alarmed. "I was in the quad yesterday when Wingate started to go up to the Three Fishers! Think I was in two places at once?"

"Wash it out, Mauly!" grinned Ogilvy. "I saw Skinner in the quad at that time."

"That eliminates Skinner," said Lord Mauleverer, with a nod to the Scottish junior. "Snoopey, old man, you're next. Where were you at the time?"

"Find out!"

"Oh, Snoop, was it?" said Johnny Bull. "You sneaking toad—"

"No, it wasn't!" yelled Snoop. "I was with Skinner, and if Oggy saw Skinner he must have seen me!"

"Right on the wicket," said Ogilvy. "I did!"

"Stott comes next!" said Mauleverer. "I hardly think it was Stott, because he never goes blaggin' unless that rotter Skinner drags him into it! Still, we'd like to know where you were, Stott, when the prefects started to cop that rotter at the Three Fishers."

"I was at the nets with about six or seven fellows," said Stott.

"I was one of them," said Russell. "Stott never went out at all after class."

"Um!" said Lord Mauleverer.

The juniors watched him, grinning. He had run through the list of well-known "bad hats" in the Remove—with the rather unexpected result that he had cleared them of possible suspicion and made it look all the more likely that Bob was the man!

"Good old Mauly!" grinned Bolsover major. "Any more, old ass?"

"Yaas; what about you, Bolsover?"

"Me!" hooted Bolsover major.

"Yaas! You're not such a smoky, dingy worm as Skinner or Snoop—but you're rather a rotter at times!"

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

"Do you want me to push your silly face in?" bawled Bolsover major.

"No! I want you to tell me where you were yesterday after class."

"Well," bawled Bolsover, "I won't—see?"

"So it was Bolsover—" began Johnny Bull.

"I'll jolly well punch your head, Bull, if you say it was me!" yelled Bolsover.

"Cut out Bolsover, Mauly!" said Mark Linley, laughing. "I saw him on the river with his young brother in the Third."

"I don't want anybody to speak up for me!" roared Bolsover major. "I'll jolly well—"

"You'll jolly well shut up!" interrupted Lord Mauleverer. "We're done with you, Bolsover! Now, who's the next? Oh, Hazeldene! What about you, Hazel?"

There was no answer from the junior in the armchair. Hazel's eyes were fixed on his book—which he was not reading.

All eyes were turned on him as he did not speak—and a good many fellows noticed that his ears were burning.

"Hazel!"

"Speak up, Hazel!"

"You're up before the beak, old man!" chuckled Peter Todd. "Mauly's going to have you for contempt of court if you don't answer!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hazeldene could hardly affect to be still reading now that he was the object of general attention and half a dozen fellows were calling to him at once.

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—NO. 1,529.

He looked up, with a flushed face.

"Don't be a fool, Mauly! Let a fellow read!"

Harry Wharton & Co. exchanged a quick glance. They had not thought of Marjorie's brother in that connection. But they thought of him now—and they wondered whether Mauly had got to the right man at last.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

Mauly Gets His Man!

"**W**AITIN'!" said Lord Mauleverer mildly.

"You can wait!" snapped Hazel over his shoulder.

"Better speak up, old man!" said Peter Todd. "We all know that it was Bob Cherry—"

"Silly fathead!"—from Bob.

"We all know that it was Bob Cherry!" repeated Toddy calmly. "But it can't be made too clear! Mauly's fixing it on him by proving that it couldn't possibly have been anybody else. Let him get on with the good work."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"By gum, Mauly's makin' it pretty clear!" chuckled the Bounder. "I hope to goodness he will never take up the cudgels for me!"

"Save us from our friends!" chortled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Hazel gave an angry grunt. Probably he did not like being classed with the bad hats of the Remove!

It was to be said in his favour that his excursions into blackguardism were occasional and not like Smithy's or Skinner's, constant. And as he was, in point of fact, the fellow who Sir Hilton Popper had spotted, he was feeling alarmed and uneasy. Like most weak-natured fellows, he was ready to take refuge in lying when he was in a scrape; but he certainly did not like standing up before all the Form and telling falsehoods.

"Are you going to answer, Hazel?" asked Harry Wharton very quietly. There was strong suspicion in the mind of the captain of the Remove now.

"Why should I?" sneered Hazel.

"Has the Head made Mauly a prefect?"

"So it was Hazel!" said Johnny Bull.

"Think so if you like!" muttered Hazel. "Go and eat coke, Mauleverer! I'm not going to be questioned by you!"

"Sorry, old man!" said Lord Mauleverer. "No bizney of mine if you play the goat. But when another man's up for it you're bound to own up! You see that?"

"Oh, shut up, you cheeky ass!"

Some of the Removites were exchanging peculiar glances. All the evidence was against Bob; but, apart from that, Hazel was a much likelier man to have been at the Three Fishers.

"Dash it all," said Bolsover major. "If it were you, Hazel, you're bound to see Cherry through. You can't let him take your medicine."

"Smithy knows where I was," muttered Hazel. "So does Redwing."

Attention was transferred from Hazel to the Bounder and his chum.

The Bounder was grinning.

"Your innings, Smithy!" said Peter Todd. "Let old Mauly fix it on the man he's standing up for. He won't be happy till he's done it."

Smithy chuckled.

"Awfully sorry, Mauly, old man," he remarked, "but you'll have to wash Hazel out! You see, I can prove that he wasn't the man."

"Glad to hear it!" said Lord

Mauleverer, unmoved. "Get on with the provin', Smithy!"

"At least, he wasn't at the Three Fishers yesterday, unless he took a couple of Cliff House girls there with him!" chortled the Bounder. "It doesn't seem to me probable."

"Not at all!" agreed Mauly amiably. "But if Hazel was in such good company, I don't quite see why he can't say so."

"I don't choose to!" snarled Hazel.

"If you saw him, Smithy—" went on his lordship, unperturbed.

"I did. So did Reddy. We saw him boating on the Sark with two of the girls from Cliff House, just about the time Wingate was going up to cop the sinner at the Three Fishers. Of course," added the Bounder, chuckling, "Hazel may have taken Clara Trevlyn and Bessie Bunter on a jaunt to a pub; but it's not, so far as I know, a popular resort with the Cliff House girls."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry gave a violent start. He made a quick step towards the Bounder. His blue eyes were ablaze.

"What's that yarn, Vernon-Smith?" he exclaimed angrily. "You're making out that you saw Hazel in Clara Trevlyn's boat on the Sark after class yesterday? Making out that he was boating with her and Bessie Bunter?"

"Just that," said the Bounder, staring at him. "What about it?"

"What about it?" roared Bob. "Why, it's a dashed lie, that's what about it! Has Hazel fixed it up with you to tell lies to see him clear?"

The Bounder caught his breath, his face crimsoning with rage. There was a startled buzz from all the juniors in the room. Bob Cherry's angry outburst took them all by surprise.

Hazel stood, hardly breathing. So far as he could see, his alibi was complete. What could Bob Cherry know about it?

Bob's friends were surprised, as well as the other fellows. But it flashed into their minds at once what Bob was thinking of. Clara and Bessie Bunter had stranded him on Popper's Island, and Hazel certainly had not been with them then. He had not, as the Bounder stated, been boating with the Cliff House girls. Smithy was not stating the facts.

Vernon-Smith almost stuttered with rage.

"Why, you—you—you rotter—you cheeky hound!" he yelled. "You dare to say—"

"I say it's a lie!" roared Bob, his face crimson, his eyes like blue flame. "I say Hazel was not boating yesterday afternoon with Clara and Bessie Bunter! And if he says he was, and if you say he was, it means that he was the man at the Three Fishers, and you're lying to get him out of it!"

Vernon-Smith ran at him with clenched hands. But Tom Redwing grasped him and dragged him back, with a strength he could not resist.

"Stop that, Smithy!" rapped Tom.

"Let me go, you fool!" roared the Bounder. "I'm going to smash him! I'll knock that back down his neck! I—I'll—"

"You'll keep cool," said Tom, with a grip of iron on his arm. "There's some mistake here. Let me speak!"

"I tell you—"

"Will you let me speak?" snapped Redwing. "Bob Cherry, I saw Hazel in the boat with Clara and Bessie, off the school raft. I was with Smithy, and we both saw him in their boat. Are you calling me a liar, too?"

Bob jumped.

"You saw him?" he stuttered.



Vernon-Smith looked at Hazeldene, with a sardonic curl to his lip. "Look here, Hazel," he said, "what do you fancy the Remove will think of you if you let that fathead Cherry take your flogging?" "Mind your own business!" snarled the scapegrace of the Remove. "You'll be barred by the Form!" said the Bounder.

"Yes, I saw him!" snapped Redwing. "You're dreaming!" gasped Bob. "I know you wouldn't tell lies, Reddy, but you can't have seen Hazel in the boat with Clara and Bessie. At least, if you did he'd only just joined them."

"Now we're gettin' to the milk in the coconut!" drawled Lord Mauleverer. "Will you oblige by keepin' your temper, Cherry, and not callin' fellows nasty names for nothin'?"

"I—I'm sorry!" stammered Bob. "If Redwing backs up Smithy, I believe him, of course. All the same, Hazel was not boating with those two girls yesterday afternoon. He dare not say he was!"

Hazel's face was going red and white in turn.

Bob looked at him. Every other eye was turned on him.

"Do you say so, Hazel?" demanded Bob.

"Smithy saw me," muttered Hazel. "so did Redwing. I'm not going to answer your questions, Bob Cherry."

Herbert Vernon-Smith calmed himself. But he gave Bob Cherry a deadly look.

Bob did not heed him further. His eyes were fixed on Hazel.

Lord Mauleverer broke in.

"Let's have this clear. What time did you and Smithy see Hazel in the girls' boat, Reddy?"

"It was soon after Wingate had started," answered Redwing, with rather a troubled look. "That would be about half-past five."

"How long had you been in the boat with them, Hazel?"

"I never noticed the time," answered Hazel sullenly.

"Now you, Bob. You've got to admit that Hazel was in the girls' boat when Reddy and Smithy saw him there—that's a fact. But you think that he hadn't been in the boat long?"

"I know he hadn't!" said Bob savagely. "I'm sorry I called Smithy a liar, but he said that Hazel had been boating on the Sark with the girls, and that wasn't true, though I suppose Smithy thought it was. They must have picked him up on the bank and given him a lift down the river, that's all, if Smithy and Reddy saw them from the school raft."

"And how do you know?" sneered Skinner.

"I know, because I saw Clara and Bessie in their boat at Popper's Island, and spoke to them, and Hazel wasn't in the boat then!" hooted Bob. "And that was about five o'clock, or a bit before five; might have been ten minutes."

"Oh!" gasped Hazel.

Vernon-Smith bit his lip hard, and the troubled look deepened on Redwing's face. Seeing Hazel in the schoolgirls' boat, they had taken it for granted that he had been boating with them. It occurred to both now that they had taken rather too much for granted.

"If Hazel was in that boat," went on Bob, "and of course he was, if Reddy says so, the girls must have picked him up somewhere between Popper's Island and the school raft. And I can jolly well guess where he had been when they picked him up. If they hadn't, Wingate would have had him."

Hazel's face was quite white.

"Anythin' to say, old bean?" asked Lord Mauleverer quietly.

"If it's my word against Cherry's, you can all take your choice," said Hazel bitterly.

"It isn't," said Mauly. "It's quite easy to ask Clara Trevlyn when she picked you up yesterday, and at what place. If necessary, I'll cut over to Cliff House myself in the mornin', and

ask her how long you'd been in the boat."

"That will settle it," said Bob.

Hazel hardly breathed. A question to Clara Trevlyn would have settled it with a vengeance. He could not speak.

"Well?" asked Lord Mauleverer very quietly.

"Oh, leave a fellow alone!" snarled Hazel, and he swung round and walked out of the Rag.

A deep silence followed the slam of the door. The Remove fellows looked at one another. Nobody had a doubt left now.

"So it was Hazel!" said Lord Mauleverer, breaking the silence. "Nothin' to do with anybody but himself, if another man wasn't up for it. But if Bob has to go up to the Head, Hazel's got to own up. And that's that!"

Mauly had got his man!

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter Offers a Bargain!

"I SAY, you fellows!" "Buzz, you bloated blue-bottle!"

Billy Bunter was not "persona grata" with the Famous Five just at present. He was, in fact, most decidedly "persona non grata." Neither had he, of late, bestowed much of his fascinating fat company on the chums of the Remove. Now, however, there seemed to be a change in that respect, as he rolled up to them in quad, in morning break, with a cheerful fat grin on his podgy countenance.

He had apparently forgotten that he had chalked up on the door of Study No. 1 his considered opinion that they

were "kads" and "phunks." Also, that his fat little nose had been used to rub out the same. He almost exuded cordiality, for which, however, the Famous Five seemed to have no use.

That morning Mr. Quelch had made no reference to the matter that was hanging over Bob Cherry's head like the sword of Damocles.

He had said that he was taking time to consider the matter further, and so far it was left at that. How long Quelch was going to consider it before he took Bob to the Head, nobody knew, and it was most unpleasant for Bob and his friends.

True, he was cleared now in the eyes of the Form of having been the "spotted" man at the Three Fishers. Even the obstinate Bunder did not think so now. All the Remove knew that Hazeldene was the man—at least, they had no doubt of it.

But if Bob nourished a faint hope that Hazel would own up, it was very faint. Mauleverer took the view that public opinion in the Form would force the fellow, once he was found out, to do the decent thing. And certainly the Removites made it very plain to Hazel what they would think of him if he let another fellow take his flogging.

But Hazel, as Bob and his friends knew only too well, was not the man to face the music. He was the fellow to call the tune recklessly, but not to pay the piper. He was sensitive, indeed very thin-skinned, and he felt his position keenly—but whether that would drive him to facing the Remove master with a confession was very doubtful indeed. So far, it had only driven him into favouring Lord Mauleverer with looks of deadly animosity when he came across him!

"I suppose there's a ghost of a chance!" Bob Cherry was saying, as the fat Owl of the Remove rolled up. "Anyhow, the fellows know the facts now, and that's something, thanks to old Mauly! I——"

"I say, old chaps——"

"Swat that fly!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"For goodness' sake, blow away, Bunter!" said Harry Wharton. "I owe you a booting. Is that what you want?"

"Oh, no! I say, old chap, I wish you'd let me speak! I owe you fellows an apology!" said Bunter.

"Eh?"

"What?"

Bunter had succeeded in getting attention, at least.

The Famous Five stared at him, and he gave them a serious blink through his big spectacles.

"I mean it!" he declared. "I've wronged you chaps, and I'm the man to own up! Kindest friend and noblest foe, and all that, you know."

"What is that fat blitherer blithering about?" asked Bob Cherry. "Anybody know?"

"Nobody—not even Bunter, probably!" said Nugent.

"I mean, about that rotten trick you played last week at Popper's Island, you know!" explained Bunter. "I—I mean, about that rotten trick you didn't play, you know! That's what I really meant to say."

"Oh!" said Harry. "So you've got it into your fat head at last that we didn't, have you?"

"Yes, old chap! Marjorie and her friends told Coker that Bob Cherry bagged the boat. Well, girls are all silly fools, ain't they?" said Bunter. "That's how it was—silly lot of fools, what?"

"You frabjous, frowzy fathead!" said

Bob Cherry. "Do you want me to boot you across the quad?"

"Oh, really, Cherry——"

"Scat!" snorted Bob.

Puzzled and worried as he was by Marjorie & Co.'s accusation, Bob did not seem to want to have it explained on the grounds that they were, as Bunter elegantly expressed it, a silly lot of fools!

"And then, about you fellows having the boat," went on Bunter. "You said you got it from that cad Ponsonby of Highcliffe. Well, I believe you."

"Thank you for nothing!" grunted Johnny Bull.

"Oh, really, Bull——"

"Is that the lot, Bunter?" asked Harry.

"Nunno! Having wronged you fellows, I feel bound to put it right!" said Bunter impressively. "That's up to me, you know, as a particularly honourable chap! See?"

"A whatter?" gasped Bob.

"The whatterfulness is terrific!" grinned Hurree Jamsset Ram Singh.

"Now that I've thought it out, I'm taking your side, you fellows," went on Bunter. "I'm standing by you. I'm backing you up all along the line. You can rely on me to stick up for you."

"Much obliged," said Harry Wharton, laughing. "We might possibly manage without it—but much obliged, all the same."

"Now run away and play!" suggested Bob.

"There's another matter I was going to mention! I told you fellows, I believe, that I was expecting a postal order?" asked Bunter.

"I seem to recollect something of the sort," admitted Wharton. "I think I've heard of it. Sounds like an old one!"

"Well, it hasn't come!" said Bunter sorrowfully. "The only letter I had this morning was from my sister Bessie, asking for that five bob. She makes out that I still owe it to her, you know, because I haven't paid it. Just like a girl, ain't it?"

"Oh crumbs!"

"I've been disappointed about that postal order," went on Bunter. "It's rather rum—because it's from one of my titled relations. But there it is!"

"You mean, there it isn't?" asked Bob.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, what I was going to suggest is this—suppose you fellows let me have the ten bob, and take the postal order when it does come?" suggested Bunter. "Two bob each won't hurt you. It isn't much, is it?"

"Not a lot," agreed Harry Wharton. "Only two bob more than you are going to get."

"Oh, really, Wharton——"

"Now, if you're finished, roll away, like a good barrel!"

"I'm not finished yet!" said Bunter. "The fact is, I want that ten bob! I think it's up to you fellows! I'm prepared to believe that you never played that rotten trick on my sister Bessie and her friends last week. Well, if I'm going to treat you as pals, of course I expect to be treated as a pal. One good turn deserves another, see?"

"Oh, my hat!" gasped Bob.

The Famous Five gazed at Bunter. His sudden change of front on the vexed question of the Cliff House affair had surprised them. Now they understood. In return for that concession, Bunter wanted his celebrated postal order cashed. One good turn deserved another!

"See the point?" asked the fat Owl, blinking at them. "I think it's pretty decent of me to believe that you never

played that rotten trick, when I jolly well know you did——"

"Oh crikey!"

"Well, what about it?" asked Bunter. "Ha, ha, ha!"

"Blessed if I see anything to cackle at!" said Bunter in surprise. "What are you sniggering at, I'd like to know. Look here, are you going to lend me that ten bob till my postal order comes?"

"Let's have it clear!" grinned Bob. "If we lend you ten bob, you're going to believe that we never pinched the boat at Popper's Island last Wednesday——"

"Certainly, old chap!"

"And if not, you're going to believe that we did?"

"Well, you can't expect me to stick up for you if you don't do the decent thing, can you?" argued Bunter. "You jolly well did it, of course, but if you treat me as a pal, I'll take your word that you didn't——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shrieked the Famous Five.

"Oh, do stop cackling!" said Bunter crossly. "I say, you fellows, I've got to get to the tuckshop before the bell goes, if—if you lend me that ten bob. Look here, make it five bob! What about that?"

"Prices are going down!" chuckled Bob. "What about it, you men? Bunter's prepared to believe us at the reasonable price of five shillings!"

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

"If we give him a bob each, he takes our word," continued Bob. "If we don't, he doesn't! Can't you do it cheaper, Bunter?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Look here——" roared Bunter.

"Well, we won't give you a bob each! But I'll tell you what we'll do—we'll give you a bump each! Bag him!"

Billy Bunter backed away promptly. He wanted bobs, but evidently he did not want bumps. But he did not back quickly enough. Five grinning juniors collared him at the same moment.

"Yaroooh!" roared Bunter. "I say, you fellows——"

Bump!

"Yoo-hooop!" roared Bunter.

The Famous Five walked away and left him roaring, and—no doubt—convinced once more that they, after all, had "done it."

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bob Cherry's Last Chance!

"CHERRY!"

Bob caught his breath. He felt that it was coming now! "Oh! Yes, sir!" he answered.

Third school was over, but Mr. Quelch did not immediately dismiss the Remove. It was Wednesday and a half-holiday, so third school was the last lesson for the day.

Bob had been looking forward to the half-holiday, chiefly with a view to having another look round for Cecil Ponsonby, of the Highcliffe Fourth.

Pon was the original cause of all the trouble. But for his rotten jape on the Cliff House girls, which was attributed to the Famous Five, Clara and Bessie would never have given Bob "tit for tat" by stranding him on the island, and thus causing him to fall under suspicion.

Punching Pon would not set the matter right, but it would be a satisfactory proceeding in itself, and a consolation, in the circumstances. But Bob forgot all about Pon, and the satisfaction of punching his head, as Mr. Quelch addressed him. His attention.

and that of all the Form, was fixed on the Remove master.

Hazel sat with tight lips.

He knew what all the Form expected of him, if Bob was taken to the Head. But he knew that he was not going to do what was expected of him.

He had thought of it, and thought of it, again and again, and once or twice almost made up his mind to do the right thing. But he knew that he had not the courage and nerve.

Contempt from the other fellows was hard to bear. But an interview with his headmaster was harder—in fact, impossible.

He had one rag of excuse for his conscience. Why did not Bob Cherry explain where he had been that day? If he explained satisfactorily, that would see him through without Hazel going up for execution.

His only reason, so far as Hazel could see, was that he had been out of bounds—not certainly at the Three Fishers, but at some other place he dared not name. If that was the case, it was his own look-out, and he could take what was coming to him. No fellow was ever punished for nothing. If he had done no wrong, he had only to speak out. If he did not speak out, he had done wrong—and that was that!

That was how it looked to Hazel, and it consoled him; but he was not feeling happy. He sat with shut lips, his eyes on his desk, and a spot of colour in either cheek, his heart beating unpleasantly. But he was silent, and he was going to remain silent.

Mr. Quelch had his eyes fixed on Bob's honest, flushed face. He paused before he went on; but he went on quietly:

"You will remain within gates this afternoon, Cherry!"

"Yes, sir," said Bob dismally.

It was a "gating" for nothing on a half-holiday. Still, he knew that he could hardly blame Quelch. So long as he was under suspicion of going out of school bounds in disreputable places, his Form-master could scarcely be expected to trust him.

Mr. Quelch paused again, his eyes curiously on Bob. The fellow who had broken out in passionate anger, into a "shindy" in the quad, because Vernon-Smith had said that he was the fellow at the Three Fishers—was it possible that he really was that fellow?

The Remove master doubted it. He could not help doubting it. At the same time, if the junior had no disgraceful secrets to keep, why did he not answer a simple question—as to where he had been that Monday afternoon?

It was a puzzle to Mr. Quelch; but it was not a matter that could be left over indefinitely. Quelch went on slowly:

"I had hoped, Cherry, that you would come to me, of your own accord, with an explanation. I have every desire to believe that you were not the boy seen by Sir Hilton Popper at the Three Fishers on Monday afternoon. But, if that is the case, you can, and must, explain where you were, and why you came in an hour after calling-over. I urge you, for your own sake, to be frank."

It could not have been put more kindly.

Obviously, Quelch did not want to take Bob to the Head, if he could possibly help it. He had given him time to think it over, and was now giving him a last chance. Many of the Remove fellows looked curiously at

(Continued on next page.)

The STately HOMES of GREYFRIARS

THE LAND OF THE LEEK

By

The Greyfriars Rhymester



Our clever Rhymester tells me that he used three bottles of ink and broke ninety-nine pen-nibs writing out this week's verses. And when you read 'em, chums, you'll understand the reason.—Ed.

(1)

The harp that hung on Tara's walls
Is what I need to sing of Morgan,
And when a heavy grammar falls
Upon his tender nasal organ,
You'll know I couldn't quite forgive
That blessed Welshman for my visit.
I called to ask him, "Where d'you live?"
Because you're bound to ask where is it.

(2)

I drifted into Study Six
Where Morgan lives with Rake and Wibley,
And just to show him all my tricks
I spoke a Cymric sentence glibly.
Instead of saying: "Howja do?"
I broke into a kind of stutter,
And said: "Sut yr y'eh chw! heddyw!"
At which he rose and grabbed the butter.

(3)

"Haf you gone barmy then, indeed?"
He asked in great exasperation.
I wonder why he did not heed
My smooth and clear pronunciation?
"You ass!" I said. "That's Welsh,
you know!"
"Oh, is it?" Morgan answered,
grinning.
He did not recognise it, though
I thought I'd made a good beginning.

(4)

"Now tell me where you live, my lad!"
I asked him, and my tones were freezing.
Said he: "Oostpittyostwithiad!"
At first I thought he'd started sneezing.
"Phew! That's a nasty cold you've got!"
I said. He answered: "Don't be clever!
That's where I live, so don't talk rot—
Oostpittyostwithiad, whatever!"

(5)

I felt my senses leaving me.
"That's not a name," I cried, astounded.
"Oostpittyostwithiad," said he,
(Or that, at least, was how it sounded),
"Is near the mountains, and I bet
There's not an English spot to beat it.
It's close to Thlandergelleret,
Not far from Blaheyneothleetit!"

(6)

I soon recovered from the shock.
"Of course," I said, "I now recall it:
It's near Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerddych
—wyrndrobwilllantyslllogogogoch,
And close to Llandaffwhatdyecallit!
And now," I said, "I should be glad
If you would say it very clearly."
Said he: "Oostpittyostwithiad!"
At which I screamed, or pretty nearly.

(7)

"I can't write words like that," I cried,
"So help me earn enough to starve on!"
"Indeed, I will," the ass replied,
"The place is, look you, in Caernarvon,
Not far from Snowdon, and the house
Is very old, with bits in ruin,
Where old Welsh raiders held carouse
On nights when there was trouble
brewin'."

(8)

"The mountains stretch on every side
Mysterious and full of stories,
And in Oostpit—" ("Shut up!" I cried)
"The bards still sing their ancient glories!"
And on the mountainside you'll see
In Beggythlapythadaporra,
Which isn't far from Blaheynee—"
But I was legging it in horror!

Next Week: MONTY NEWLAND.

Bob, wondering why he did not speak out. Now that they knew—thanks to Mauly—that he was not that "bad hat" at the Three Fishers, they could not understand his silence.

Bob's flush deepened, but he did not speak.

"Have you nothing to say, Cherry?" asked Mr. Quelch at last.

"N-n-no, sir," stammered Bob.

"You are aware of the conclusion I must draw, if you refuse to answer a simple and reasonable question, Cherry?"

"I never went to that rotten show, sir," mumbled Bob. "Every fellow that knows anything at all about me knows that I wouldn't."

"I should be glad to think so, Cherry," said the Remove master patiently. "But you must tell me where you were at the time."

No answer.

"Can any boy in this Form give me any information on this subject?" asked Mr. Quelch, glancing over the Remove. "Anyone who is aware of the circumstances, need have no hesitation in speaking out in Cherry's favour."

There were four fellows who knew; but the Co. had to be silent. The rest of the Remove were quite in the dark. No one spoke.

Mr. Quelch compressed his lips.

"Very well," he said, "if you still refuse to explain, Cherry, you leave me no choice in the matter. I have my duty to do as master of this Form. You will remain within gates this afternoon. And I shall hope that you will come to my study and give me an explanation. Otherwise, you will go to the headmaster's study at six o'clock."

"Yes, sir," said Bob, in a low voice.

"If you cannot explain to Dr. Locke, Cherry, you will be adjudged guilty of disgraceful conduct," said Mr. Quelch. "You will be flogged. I advise you to think over the matter very carefully, and, if you have any explanation, to make it in time."

Mr. Quelch paused, as if waiting for Bob to speak. But he did not speak, and the Remove master rapped out: "Dismiss!"

The juniors went silently out of the Form-room.

In the corridor, Bob glanced at Hazel. He did not speak to him; he would make no appeal. But his glance was eloquent.

Hazel affected not to see it, and hurried out into the quad.

Bob's eyes followed him scornfully. He glanced round, knitting his brows, as Herbert Vernon-Smith touched him on the arm.

"What do you want?" he asked gruffly.

"Not a row this time," grinned the Bounder. "Look here, Cherry, don't be an ass! We all know now that you aren't the man they want. Why the thumping dickens can't you tell Quelch so?"

"Well, I can't," grunted Bob.

"You can't give Hazel away, if he's cur enough to keep quiet and let you take his gruel. But you can tell Quelch what you were doing that afternoon. Can't you see that he would jump at a chance of seeing you clear?"

"Yes, I can see that," said Bob. "Quelch isn't a bad old bean. He's in the right, as far as that goes. He has a right to ask a fellow questions."

"Why not answer the giddy questions?"

"Well, I can't."

"You're the man to ask for it, and

no mistake," said Smithy; and he shrugged his shoulders, and went out.

The Famous Five went out together, not feeling happy. It had come to a climax now—Bob had his last chance. But it was not a chance of which he could avail himself. He was not going to give a girl away to punishment—and that was that!



THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Down on His Luck!

HERBERT VERNON-SMITH pushed open the door of Study No. 2 in the Remove, and stepped in.

Hazeldene was alone in the study. Tom Brown was out, like most of the fellows on a half-holiday. Hazel had shut himself up in his study, chiefly to get out of sight of the Remove. It was rather unfortunate for the weak-kneed scapegrace that he had a conscience without the courage to heed its dictates.

He was sprawling in an armchair, with an unlighted cigarette in his mouth. He scowled at the Bounder as he came in without speaking.

Vernon-Smith closed the door and stood before him, looking at him with a sardonic curl to his lip that brought the colour to Hazel's face. His eyes sank under the Bounder's.

"Well, you're a pretty object—what?" said Smithy. "Look here, Hazel, this isn't good enough! Will you take a friendly tip from me, now Mauly's rooted out the facts, as we all know. What do you fancy the Remove will think of you if you let that fathead Cherry take your flogging?"

"Mind your own business!" snarled Hazel.

"Speakin' as a pal, old man," said the Bounder, "you'll be barred by all the Form. Don't you know there's a limit?"

"Oh, shut up!" Hazel raised his eyes, with a bitter and angry glare. "You're fearfully concerned for Cherry. Only yesterday you were scrapping with him."

"I'm not fearfully concerned; but there is such a thing as bein' decent," answered Smithy. "You were the man that meddlin' old fool Popper spotted, and all the Form knows it now. Mauly rooted that out—"

"I don't see that he did," sneered Hazel. "You saw me in the boat with Clara and Bunter's sister. How do you know how long I'd been in the boat? You seem to take Cherry's word that he saw them without me just before that. But what's his word worth, after he's told a pack of lies about what happened last Wednesday?"

"Are you willing for Clara to be asked?"

Hazel did not answer.

"That settles it, then," said the Bounder. "What's the good of talkin' rot? You were the man at the Three Fishers."

"Have you never been there?" jeered Hazel. "You're a precious fellow to preach to a chap."

"That's not the point. I'd own up like a shot if they nailed another man in my place—and you know it. You'll be barred in the Form, if you let it go on."

"Cherry can explain where he was if he likes. If he chooses to keep mum, that's his look out."

"I can't make that out. But he wasn't the man they want, and you

were. Look here, Hazel!" The Bounder paused a moment. "One day last week you told me you'd got into a scrape, and wanted money to see you clear. You asked me to lend you four guids—"

"And you refused," said Hazel. "Have you come here to offer it to me now?"

"Yes—on conditions."

Hazel stared at him.

"What the dickens do you mean?" he snapped.

"I'll lend it to you—or, rather, give it; for that's what it comes to—the minute after you've been to Quelch and seen that fathead Cherry clear," said the Bounder quietly.

"You—you fool!" gasped Hazel.

"You won't do it?"

"No, I won't!"

"It's a good offer," said Smithy. "One we can't afford to repeat, as they say in the advertisements."

"Oh, go and eat coke!"

"You'll be sorry for it," said Vernon-Smith. "A flogging isn't nice, but when it's over it's over. I'd rather face that than having every man in the Remove sneering at me and looking on me as a cur—"

"Will you leave me alone?" snarled Hazel. "Get out of my study! I never asked you here!"

"You miserable worm!" said the Bounder; and he left the study with that, slamming the door after him.

Hazel was left alone again. He rose from the armchair and moved about the study restlessly. He went to the window at last and stood staring down into the sunny quad; he scowled at the sight of the Famous Five there, and scowled still more blackly at Lord Mauleverer. It was that meddling fool who had landed him in this.

The study door opened, and Tom Brown came in for his bat.

Hazel glanced round at him.

"Games practice?" he asked.

The New Zealand junior gave him a cold, cutting look.

"Don't speak to me," he said curtly.

Hazel's face flamed.

"You cheeky fool, what do you mean?" he exclaimed.

"I mean this," said Tom Brown coolly, "if you let Bob Cherry take your flogging you'll never speak to me again—and I'll hit you if you do! There's a limit—and that's it!"

"The fellow who stranded my sister and her friends last week— A rotten, cowardly trick!"

"I'm not sure that he did. And, anyhow, that's got nothing to do with this. They've got him in mistake for you, and you're bound to put it right if you've a rag of decency."

"You've made up your mind that I was the man?" muttered Hazel.

"Everybody knows you were! You dare not let Clara Trevlyn be asked where and when she picked you up in her boat on Monday!" said Tom Brown scornfully. "Like me to cut across to ask her now? I can bike over to Cliff House on a half-holiday."

"Mind your own bizney!"

"Oh, you make me sick!" said Browney, and he picked up his bat and went out of the study.

Hazel stood staring at the door after him. If this kind of thing was going on he began to wonder whether a Head's flogging might not be the better choice of the two. But at that thought he knew by the sinking of his heart that he dared not face it. If only that fool Mauleverer had minded his own business—

He left the study at last and went moodily down the Remove passage.



"You fellows mind if Bunter has the jam?" asked Bob Cherry. "No," said the Removites, "go it!" "Here, I say—wharrer you up to—don't stiek that jam on my face, you silly ass—yaroooh!" yelled Bunter, as a large spoonful of jam smeared over his fat face. "Oooouogh! Why, you beast—groooooooch!"

Bolsover major was on the landing. "Oh, here you are, Hazel!" he called out. "Going to Quelch?"

"Why should I go to Quelch?" hissed Hazel.

"Well, you heard what he said in the Form-room. He's taking Cherry to the Head at six."

"Oh, shut up!"

Hazel went down the stairs.

Bolsover major leaned over the landing banisters and bawled after him:

"You'll be jolly well barred, Hazel—and booted, too! I'll jolly well boot you myself!"

Hazel went on with burning cheeks. On the lower landing he passed Ogilvy and Russell; they looked at him, but did not speak. Hazel paused desperately.

"Coming out, you fellows?" he asked.

"Not with you," said Russell curtly.

"Hook it!" said Ogilvy.

Hazel gave them a fierce look and went down the lower stairs. He almost made up his mind to head for Mr. Quelch's study, but not quite. He drifted dismally out into the sunny quadrangle. The bright sunshine found no reflection in his gloomy, moody face.

A group of Remove fellows in the quad were talking, and they ceased as he came by. He guessed easily enough that he was under discussion. He would have passed on, but the whole group turned towards him.

"Hold on a minute, Hazel!" said Peter Todd.

"What do you want?" muttered Hazel.

"You heard what Quelch said—"

"Hang Quelch!" snarled Hazel.

"Never mind that! Cherry's got to go to the Head at six! That means a flogging. Are you letting him in for that?"

"He can tell Quelch where he was on

Monday if he likes," said Hazel sullenly.

"Never mind where he was. We all know now where he wasn't," said Peter. "It's up to you as you were the man!"

There was a murmur of assent from the group—Wibley, Kipps, Newland, Squiff, and Elliott. They all looked very expressively at Hazel.

"You can't leave it to him, old bean!" said Squiff.

"Oh, leave a fellow alone!"

"Take a tip, Hazeldene," said Peter Todd. "Nobody cares a straw what you do if you choose to play the goat, but you can't leave another man in the soup. You'll be barred in the Remove—and jolly well booted, too! If Cherry gets your flogging, look out for my boot!"

"And mine!" said Squiff.

"Mine, too!" said Wibley.

Hazel drew a deep, deep breath. His glance turned on Lord Mauleverer standing under the elms, with his hands in the pockets of his elegant bags, eyeing him curiously.

Mauleverer had taken the view that the man, once spotted, would be driven by public opinion in the Remove to own up. Hazel realised, with a shiver, that Mauleverer had been right. Every nerve in his body shrank from facing the headmaster, but it was borne in on his mind that he would be driven to it.

"My dear chap," Mauleverer broke in gently, "there's only one thing for a decent man to do; grasp the jolly old nettle—what?"

"You rotter!" muttered Hazel.

"Your best friend," said Mauleverer. "I've prevented you from doin' a mean, rotten thing, old bean. Don't you see that?"

"You fool!"

"Slanging Mauleverer won't buy you anything, Hazel," said Kipps. "Don't be an awful cad, old scout!"

"And suppose—" Hazel's voice faltered. "Suppose I wasn't the man, after all—with all Mauleverer's dashed cleverness. What about that?"

"We all know you were!" grunted Toddy.

"Suppose I could prove I wasn't?"

"Well, if you could prove that, of course, it would let you out," said Peter, staring at him. "If you can prove it, why don't you?"

"I'm going to," said Hazel. "It's nobody's business but my own. But if the whole crowd's going to be down on me I'll take the trouble to prove it."

He walked away with that, leaving the Remove fellows looking at one another very doubtfully.

Certainly if Hazel could prove that he was not the wanted man, nobody would expect him to take Bob Cherry's place as the culprit. They little guessed what was in Hazel's unhappy, tormented mind as he went down to the bikeshed and wheeled out his machine to ride over to Cliff House.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Bunter's Bright Idea!

OUTSIDE! Five voices spoke in unison as Billy Bunter put a fat face and a large pair of spectacles in at the door of Study No. 1 at tea-time.

It was not a happy tea in the study. Harry Wharton & Co. had stayed in gates that afternoon.

As Bob was gated, the Co. did not care to leave him to it, and they put in most of the afternoon at cricket practice. But even cricket failed to fill their thoughts with that dreaded interview at six o'clock hanging over their minds.

At six Bob had to tap at the door of THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,529.

the Head's study and face his Form-master and his headmaster there.

Generally Bob contrived to keep cheerful, howsoever the stormy winds might blow; but his face was clouded now, and the faces of the friends were similarly clouded.

It was not only the flogging that worried him, though that was not an agreeable prospect. He felt the disgrace more keenly than he was likely to feel the birch. Bob had a whole-hearted contempt for the shady ways of fellows like Skinner and Snoop, and to be condemned as such a fellow himself and punished on such a charge was more than he could face with equanimity.

But it had to be faced, and he had made up his mind to it.

The chums of the Remove came in to tea soon after five.

Mr. Quelch met them as they came in, and gave Bob an expressive look, but did not speak.

No doubt he had hoped, if not expected, that Bob would present himself during the afternoon, with the explanation that was needed. But Bob had been nowhere near his study, and the Remove master's look showed that his mind was made up now. What he had been unwilling to believe, he had to believe—and there was no doubt that the Head would take the same view.

Five fellows, generally merry and bright, went dismally up to Study No. 1 for a dismal tea. In less than an hour now Bob had to go to the Head. Any faint hope he might have had of Hazel had to be dismissed. Hazel had gone out on his bike—and the Famous Five had no doubt that he was keeping clear.

Naturally, the worried juniors were in no mood for Billy Bunter. They waved him away impatiently, like a troublesome insect.

But the fat Owl was not to be waved away.

He closed the study door very carefully, and then turned and blinked at the worried five through his spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, I've got it!" he announced.

"You'll get it, if you don't clear!" snapped the captain of the Remove. "And what you'll get will be a boot!"

"Oh, really, Wharton—"

"Get out!" roared Johnny Bull.

"I don't expect much in the way of manners from you, Bull; but really, you know, you might be civil to a fellow who's come to help a pal out of a scrape!" said Billy Bunter, with dignity.

"What do you mean, you fat ass?" snapped Nugent.

Bunter grinned complacently.

"I said I'd got it!" he answered.

"Well, I mean I've got it—see? I know how to get Bob off."

"Oh, my hat!"

The Famous Five looked at Bunter. With the dreaded hour of six drawing nearer and nearer, they were feeling ready to catch at straws. They were willing to give even the fat and fatuous Owl a hearing.

"You know how to get Bob off?" repeated Harry Wharton. "Well, if you know, cough it up!"

Bunter blinked at the tea-table. It was not particularly well spread. The Famous Five were not bothering much about tea.

"I say, you fellows, is that all you've got?" asked Bunter. "I'd lend you something, only I've been disappointed about that postal order."

"You blithering bloater, if you've got anything to say, get it out!" snapped Wharton.

"Well, what about a cake?" asked Bunter. "Look here, I'll cut down to the shop for you if it will run to a cake."

"Oh, kick him out!" growled Johnny Bull.

"That's a pretty measly spread!" said Bunter. "Still, if it's all you've got, I don't mind. Lucky I've had tea in Hall already. If you fellows don't want any of the jam—"

Johnny Bull rose to his feet. What he had risen for was so clear that Billy Bunter, for a moment, forgot the jam, and dodged round the table.

"I say, you fellows, look here, I've got a wheeze for getting Bob off!" he exclaimed. "Let's talk about it over tea—see?"

"We'll talk it over first, you fat fraud!" said Harry. "If you can get

Bob off you spoofing octopus, we'll stand you the biggest cake in the tuck-shop!"

"Oh, good!" gasped Bunter. "Well, I've got a jolly good idea! I never was the man to let a pal down, was I? You know me! Now, the trouble is that they think Bob was the man at the Three Fishers, and that cad Hazel is too funky to own up and see him through. Well, suppose Bob proves that he was somewhere else?"

"Is that all?" asked Bob, with a faint grin.

"Just you listen!" said Bunter. "You can't tell Quelch where you were, and I dare say you've got your reasons—he, he, he! I suppose you were at the Cross Keys, while Hazel was at the Three Fishers—what?"

"You potty porker!" roared Bob. "Do you want me to stick that jam down the back of your neck?"

"Er, no! Wharrer you getting waxy about, when a fellow's trying to help you get out of a beak's whopping?" demanded Bunter, warmly. "If that's what you call grateful, Bob Cherry—"

"Oh, get out!" grunted Bob.

"Well, never mind where you were," said Bunter. "But suppose you were at the bunshop, in Courtfield, at the time that old idiot Popper did the spotting act? That would clear you, if you could prove it."

"But I wasn't, fathead!"

"Keep to the point, old chap!" urged Bunter. "That's the worst of you fellows—you never can keep to the point. It doesn't matter whether you were there or not, so long as you can prove that you were there—see?"

Bob blinked at him. So did the other fellows.

"It did-did-doesn't matter whether I was there or not, so long as I prove that I was there!" stuttered Bob. "You blithering bloater, is that what you call sense? How could I be where I wasn't?"

"You're a bit dense, old chap!" said Bunter pityingly. "Still, I suppose we can't all have brains. Never mind whether you were there or not—it's all right if you call a witness to prove that he saw you there!"

"You batty bandersnatch!" shrieked Bob. "Nobody saw me there, as I wasn't there! I never went near Courtfield on Monday!"

"Do talk sense!" urged Bunter. "Quelch asked us, in Form, if any other fellow could give information on the subject. You heard him say that any fellow who knew, should speak out in your favour! Well, that's what put the idea into my head—see? Having thought it over, because of what Quelch said in Form, I suddenly remembered that I saw you that afternoon—"

"You saw me?"

"Yes—at the bun-shop!"

"The bib-bub-bunshop—"

"Having ginger-pop there!" said Bunter. "See? I joined you in a ginger-pop. Both of us heard five striking from the town hall clock while we were having it! How's that?"

The Famous Five simply gasped. They did not tell Bunter how "that" was. They just gazed at him, dumb.

Bunter paused, like Brutus, for a reply. Not getting one, like Brutus again, he burred on:

"You see the idea? If you were at the bunshop, you couldn't have been at the Three Fishers! I tell Quelch I was there with you. I mention that it was what he said in Form made me remember it—see. You back me up, of course. We shall have to be jolly careful to spin the same yarn, you see that? We stick to it like glue, and what can Quelch do? Not a thing!"

"Oh, erikay!" gasped Bob.

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"Brainy—what?" asked Bunter complacently. "Simple, like all really clever ideas, too! One of these fellows could have done it for you, if they'd had the sense to think of it. I think of these things, you see."

"I'm to tell Quelch a pack of lies, and you'll tell another pack to back them up—is that it?" gasped Bob.

"Well, that's rather a rotten way to put it!" said Bunter. "It's what I call diplomatic. You have to be diplomatic with beaks—asking a fellow a lot of awkward questions! If you'd been a bit brighter, you'd have told Quelch, in the first place, that you were in the bunshop, or some place like that? But you were always a bit dense, old chap."

"Oh, kill him!" said Johnny Bull.

"Of course, you will need a witness," went on Bunter. "Well, I'm a witness—an eye-witness! I'll do more than that for a fellow I really like! You can do as much for me, another time."

"Oh crumbs!"

"Mind you get it clear, though!" said Bunter. "We were at the bunshop together at five! That seems to clear the Three Fishers. You can make up something else to account for being late for calling-over. I can't say I was with you then, as I answered to my name in Hall. Say some of the Highcliffe cads got after you, and you went a long way round to dodge them. That ought to do. The chief thing is to keep you clear of the Three Fishers—and that's where I come in. You couldn't be there if you were at the bunshop—and I can prove that you were, because I saw you there. I say, you fellows, who's fetching the cake?"

"The cake?" repeated Harry Wharton.

"Yes; you said the biggest cake in the tuckshop if I could get Bob off. Well, I can get him off all right. We'll go to Quelch together after tea."

"You—you—you—you—you potty hippopotamus!" gurgled Bob. "Do you think I'd stand up to a beak, rolling out lies, to get out of a dozen floggings? Think I could, if I wanted to? You batchy bloater—"

Bunter blinked at him.

"You don't mean to say you're turning it down?" he demanded, in amazement. "I tell you, it's as safe as houses! I'm a witness—"

Bob Cherry picked up the jam-jar.

"You fellows mind if Bunter has the jam?" he asked.

"Go it!"

"Oh, really, you know, you said a cake!" exclaimed Bunter warmly. "I'll have the jam to go on with, if you like! Here, I say—Wharrer you up to? Don't stick that jam on my face, you silly ass—Yaroooh! Oooooogh! Why, you beast—Groooooooch!"

A large spoonful of jam smeared over a fat face. As Bunter dodged wildly another spoonful caught him in a fat ear.

He bounded for the door. A third spoonful plopped down the back of his fat neck as he bounded.

"Urrrgh!" spluttered Bunter. "Beast! Yuunuurgh!" He hurtled out of Study No. 1.

"There's still some more!" gasped Bob. "Come back and have the rest!"

"Urrrgh! Beast! I hope you'll get jolly well flogged!" yelled Bunter. "I hope the beak will lay it on jolly hard! Yoooooogh!"

Bunter did not come back for the rest! He vanished. Bunter did not know why, but it was clear that his bright idea for getting Bob Cherry off was not popular in Study No. 1.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Miss Clara in a Hurry!

MARJORIE HAZELDENE greeted her brother with a smile, as he came in at the gate of Cliff House School.

She had been playing tennis, and had a racket under her arm, she ran to meet him. But the smile died off her face, as she read his glum, sullen expression. She realised at once that Hazel was in one more of his innumerable scrapes.

In fact, she might have guessed that, by seeing him there at all. It was seldom that Hazel looked in at Cliff House, unless he wanted something. But Marjorie did not, or would not, think of that.

"Where's Clara?" he asked.

"In the garden—we've just played a set," answered Marjorie. "Do you want Clara?"

"I want to speak to her."

"This way, then."

Miss Clara Trevlyn did not look overjoyed to see Hazel. As Marjorie's best pal, she tried to conceal what she thought of Marjorie's brother, but did not always succeed. She gave him a friendly nod, however.

"Come over for some tennis?" she asked. "You and Barbara, and Marjorie and me—what?"

"No, no!" mumbled Hazel. "I—I want to speak to you."

"Fire away!" said Clara.

Hazel looked at his sister.

Marjorie coloured, as she read that look, and went at once towards the tennis court.

Clara frowned.

"Look here, what's up?" she asked sharply. "What have you made Marjorie clear off for?"

"I—I don't want to jaw it before everybody," said Hazel irritably.

"Look here, Clara, I—I've got into rather a row at my school. You can help me out, if you choose. You remember picking me up on your boat on Monday afternoon, and giving me a lift down to the school raft?"

"I remember," said Clara, flushing a little.

She was remembering, too, that that had happened just after she had stranded Bob Cherry on Popper's Island. But she could see by Hazel's manner that he knew nothing of that. Bob, it was clear, had not told why he was late for roll that day.

"You picked me up soon after four, I think!" said Hazel furtively.

"No; it was after five," answered Clara. "I left Cliff House at four, and we'd had a good pull up the river, before we came back and saw you on the bank."

"Well, look here, if it was four, or soon after, it will get me out of a lot of bother," said Hazel. "You could make it four."

Clara looked at him. She gave him one long look, and then turned and walked after Marjorie.

Hazel stood dumb.

Clara joined Marjorie, with a flushed face and shining eyes.

Marjorie looked at her, puzzled.

"Have you been quarrelling with my brother, Clara?" she asked, very quietly.

"Jolly near it," answered Clara.

"Look here, are we playing again?"

"But what's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing!"

Marjorie set her lips. She looked round at Hazel, who, with a crimson face, came up and joined the two girls.

"What is it, Hazel?" asked Marjorie.

"Will you speak to Clara?" muttered Hazel. "It's only a small matter—nothing to make a fuss about. She might do it for me."

"Isn't it anything I can do?"

"No! You weren't there. Bessie Bunter would do, but that little fool would gabble it all over the shop."

"But what is it?" asked Marjorie, mystified.

"Clara knows!" granted Hazel.

"Only telling lies!" said Clara, with a snap. "Hazel wants me to say he was in my boat on Monday at four, when he wasn't. I'm not going to, so there."

"Oh!" gasped Marjorie, her face crimson.

"It's only a trifle, and it will get me out of a lot of bother," muttered Hazel.

"It's not a matter with the masters in it," he added quickly. "Only what the fellows think—nothing to be afraid of. I shall have a pretty rotten time this term, if it goes on—"

"If what goes on?" asked Marjorie. Hazel gave a sort of wriggle.

"There's a fellow up for breaking bounds," he mumbled. "The other fellows think I was the man, and they think I ought to own up. I'm going to be sent to Coventry if I don't. As a matter of fact, I—I was walking by the river, but—but nobody was with me, and—and—if I'd happened to step into Clara's boat half an hour sooner, it would see me through."

"But you didn't!" said Clara.

"I know I didn't!" snapped Hazel irritably. "But—but it's only a question of proving that I wasn't out of bounds. If you told Mauleverer, or Browney, or any of them, that I was in your boat, say, at half-past four, that would see me through. It isn't the beaks—only the Remove fellows—but a chap doesn't like to have all his Form down on him—"

"Do you mean," said Marjorie, her face a little pale, "that you were out of bounds, and they've got the wrong man?"

"Oh, he was out of bounds, all right!" sneered Hazel. "He can't explain where he was, or what he was doing. If he could, he would be all right. He's asked for what he's going to get. I don't see why I should get myself into a row with the Head, because Bob Cherry was out of bounds, but not in the particular spot where they think he was—"

"Bob Cherry!" repeated Marjorie, with a start.

"Bob Cherry!" gasped Clara.

"Yes—that rotter who pinched your boat, a week ago, and stranded you on Popper's Island—I'm not going to worry about him!" snarled Hazel. "I don't know what he was up to on Monday afternoon, but it was something he dare not explain, or he'd have told Quelch."

"Oh!" gasped Clara.

"Quelch made it as easy for him as he could," said Hazel. "He's let it stand over, to give him a chance—he has to go up to the Head at six this afternoon. I don't see why he shouldn't, either—he was out of bounds, or he'd have explained to Quelch. Only—only they know he wasn't at—at the place where the beaks think he was, and they've been nagging at me—they think I was there. I've got the whole Form down on me now."

Marjorie and Clara looked at one another.

Hazel did not know, but his sister knew, and Clara knew, where Bob

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 1,529.

Cherry had been, on Monday afternoon, and why he had been late back for roll.

That he had had lines from his Form-master, they thought very likely, and Clara, at least, did not care whether he had or not. But that the matter had a more serious side, was news to them—startling and disturbing news.

"Oh, dear!" stammered Clara. "Look here, Hazel, I—I suppose Cherry was late in on Monday, and—"

"He was an hour late for calling-over!" said Hazel. "That's why they think he was the man who was spotted out of bounds. That old fool, Sir Hilton Popper, spotted a man, without seeing who he was, at the Three Fishers. They think it was Cherry, because he was the only man who e-it roll that evening—and he won't tell Quelch where he was."

"He—he won't?" stammered Clara.

"Of course, he was out of bounds," said Hazel. "He would explain if he could, I suppose. But—as it happens—he wasn't the man at the Three Fishers, and—and the fellows fancy I was, and want me to own up—"

"Oh, my hat!" said Clara. "They—they think that Bob was at that beastly place, because he won't say where he was?"

"Yes, yes; never mind him," said Hazel irritably. "You can see how I'm fixed—with all the fellows thinking I was the man, and bullying me into owning up to it. When Cherry gets his flogging, I shall have a dog's life in the Remove, if the fellows still believe that I was the man—"

"A flogging!" said Marjorie, catching her breath.

"Well, he's asked for it, hasn't he?" snapped Hazel. "He wasn't at the Three Fishers, but he was at some place he daren't mention. It comes to the same thing. I'm not bothering about him! I'm thinking of myself."

"You would be!" said Clara. "Oh, Marjorie! Look here, Hazel, you mean to say that Bob's going to let them believe he was at that putrid pub, and take a flogging for it, because he won't tell where he was on Monday evening?"

"Yes. He can't, of course, or he would!"

"He could if he liked!" gasped Clara. "And if he won't, I will!" She threw down her racket, and ran in the direction of the bicycle-house.

Hazel stared after her blankly.

"What the dickens does she mean, Marjorie?" he asked. "She doesn't know anything about where that fat-head was on Monday, I suppose?"

"She does!" said Marjorie quietly. "Clara and Bessie stranded Bob on Popper's Island; that's why he was late back to school."

Hazel stared at her blankly, utterly amazed.

"They—they stranded him on Popper's Island!" he stuttered. "Is that where he was? Oh crumbs! But why the thump didn't he tell Quelch so, then? That would see him clear all right."

"Because it would get Clara and Bessie into a row, I suppose," answered Marjorie. "He can't have had any other reason."

Hazel whistled.

"By gum! It would!" he said. "Quelch would be fearfully shirty—he would put it to old Primrose—she'd fairly scalp Clara! What a mad trick! I suppose she did it to pay him out for what he did last week! Serve him jolly

well right, so far as that goes; but it would have landed her in a fearful row if he'd given her away! What a silly fool to keep his mouth shut, though! It's not just lines—they've put him down as a pub haunter, and it's a flogging—and a Head's flogging is no joke, I can tell you! What a fool!"

Marjorie did not answer that. Perhaps the wish was in her heart that her brother was the same kind of "fool!"

Hazel stared at Clara, wheeling out her bike.

"Is—she going?" he exclaimed.

"She must!" said Marjorie quietly. "Thank goodness you came over and told us—we never knew—Clara never dreamed that it was anything but lines for Bob for missing call-over—"

Hazel looked at his watch.

"It's too late," he said. "She'll never get to Greyfriars by six. It's ten to, now, and three miles—she'll never do it! And—and if she does, she'll get into a fearful row, Marjorie!"

"That can't be helped now."

"But—but if she tells them, that will see Cherry clear!" Hazel's face brightened. "If she's in time, that will see him clear—it will be all right for me."

"For you?" repeated Marjorie.

"Yes, yes! If Cherry gets clear, it will see me through! If nobody's up for a row, nobody will expect me to own up for the fun of the thing! Oh, my hat—I hope she'll be in time! She may do it—if she does, I'm all right."

Marjorie looked at him without speaking. She was thinking of Bob facing disgrace and punishment rather than give away a girl who had played him a reckless trick—of Clara, taking all risks rather than let him suffer for his loyalty. And Hazel was thinking entirely of himself—without a thought to waste on either of them! Marjorie did not speak—she could not!

She left her brother and ran down to the gate, her eyes following Clara.

Clara was already on her bike in the road.

"I say, Clara!" Bessie Bunter rolled up as Miss Clara was starting. "I say, where are you going? If you're going to Uncle Cleggs, I'll come! Wait till I get Marjorie's bike— Yoo-hooo-hoooo!"

Clara had no time for Bessie!

The plump Fourth Former jumped back as the bike whizzed on, and sat down in Pegg Lane and roared.

"Ooooooogh!" roared Bessie.

Clara shot on.

"Cat!" roared Bessie Bunter.

"Yoooooogh! C-c-c-cat!"

Clara vanished up the lane.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

Unexpected!

BOB CHERRY drove his hands deep into his pockets, and stared up at the clock-tower.

It was three minutes to six.

At six precisely he had to tap at the Head's study door. He drew a deep, deep breath.

He gave a last glance round the quad—perhaps with a lingering faint hope of seeing Hazeldene. But nothing was to be seen of Hazel.

Gosling, the porter, was crossing to the House. Passing the Famous Five, the ancient gentleman glanced at them with a crusty grin wrinkling his gnarled countenance. It was seldom that the chums of the Remove were seen with

faces as long as fiddles; but now they looked, as they felt, utterly dismal.

Gosling passed on, the juniors looking after him, and then after one another. They did not need telling why Gosling was going to the House!

When a fellow was flogged by the Head, he was "hoisted" for the painful process.

Bob breathed a little harder.

He was not judged yet; but the result was, of course, a foregone conclusion. As he had refused to explain to his Form-master, it could only be taken for granted that he could not explain. Gosling had been sent for, to be in readiness.

But a faint grin dawned on Bob's face as he glanced at the dismal countenances of his friends.

"All serene, you men," he said. "I can stand it!"

"It's rotten!" muttered Harry Wharton.

"The rottenfulness is terrific!" mumbled Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Not to say preposterous, what?" grinned Bob, with a rather transparent attempt at cheerfulness. "Can't be helped, old beans! Anyhow, I'd rather be in my shoes than Hazel's!"

"The cur!" muttered Nugent.

"Poor beggar!" said Bob. "He couldn't face it! After all—" He paused a moment. "After all, it would be a nasty jolt for Marjorie, if she heard that her brother was up for a flogging for pub haunting!"

"Oh, you're an ass!" grunted Johnny Bull.

Bob laughed.

"Well, I'd better get a move on," he said. "Headmasters don't like to be kept waiting, especially by bad hats who've been painting the town red. See you fellows again after I've had a chat with Locke!"

And Bob whistled as he walked to the House.

But that whistle soon died away. His face was serious enough as he went in and headed for Dr. Locke's study.

The Co. left in a dismal group, looked at one another.

"That cur Hazel!" muttered Johnny Bull. "Mauly thought he would have to own up when all the Form knew! Catch him doing it!"

"Any other fellows would—almost any fellow!" said Harry. "And even that weak-kneed rotter—" He paused.

"I—I suppose he's keeping clear—"

"That's why he's gone out, fathead!"

Harry Wharton walked down to the gates.

Six o'clock was striking—Bob was in the Head's study now, with his head-master and Form-master. Gosling, no doubt, was waiting in the corridor, ready to be called in.

The Co. followed the captain of the Remove to the gates. If he hoped to see anything of Hazel at the last minute, they did not share that hope to any extent. They did not expect to see Hazel again till lock-up; and they did not envy him his reception by the Remove when he did come in.

"I say, you fellows—"

"Oh, get out, you fat frog!"

Billy Bunter grinned.

"I say, Cherry's for it now!" he said. "Perhaps you wish now, that you'd taken my tip—what? I say, I saw Gosling go in—he was grinning like anything! He likes hoisting a chap for a flogging! He, he, he! I say—Beast!"

Billy Bunter dodged a boot.

The four looked out of the gateway. If they nourished a faint hope of seeing Hazel, yet in time, they had to abandon it. There were several Greyfriars fellows to be seen on the road, but Hazel was not among them.

Billy Bunter grinned as he blinked out through his big spectacles.

"I say, you fellows, you won't see Hazel in a hurry!" he remarked. "Fat lot of good looking for him! He, he, he!"

"Shut up!" growled Johnny Bull.

"Beast!"

"Hallo, there's a bike!" exclaimed Harry Wharton suddenly. "That's somebody in a hurry!" His face brightened for a moment.

Far down the lane, in the direction of Friardale, a cyclist shot into sight in a cloud of dust. That cyclist was heading for Greyfriars at a whizzing speed.

For a moment the juniors hoped. Was it Hazel coming back at the eleventh hour to do the right thing? But the next moment they discerned that it was a girl riding the bike. A moment or two more, and they recognised her.

"That's Clara!" exclaimed Nugent.

"Clara!" said Harry.

They watched her in surprise as she came—fairly whizzing, with a pink flush in either cheek, going all out. Since the "feud" had started, no Cliff

Miss Clara did not heed the fat Owl further. She ran breathlessly in at the gates.

"Clara!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. Unheeding, Clara ran on towards the House.

"What the dickens—" exclaimed Johnny Bull, staring after her.

"If Hazel's told her—" muttered Nugent.

"By gum!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "If she got it from Hazel, and she's come—"

He did not finish, but ran towards the House, and his friends followed him.

THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

"Stop!"

DR. LOCKE sat at his table, his eyes fixed on the flushed, troubled face of the junior who stood before him.

Mr. Quelch stood by the end of the table, his eyes also on Bob Cherry.

Bob stood silent.

He had nothing to say, unless he said what he was determined not to say. His chief feeling was a desire to get it over. Gosling was waiting outside the door. The cane lay on the table. It had to be, and the sooner it was over, the better.

Fishers shortly after five o'clock on Monday?"

"I—I can't, sir!" stammered Bob.

"And why not?"

Silence.

Dr. Locke's face hardened. There was, as he had said, only one conclusion to be drawn from the junior's refusal to answer a question which any headmaster had a right and a duty to ask. The Head glanced at Mr. Quelch.

"There can be no further doubt in the matter, Mr. Quelch," he said.

"None, sir!" answered the Remove master.

"Please call in Gosling!"

Mr. Quelch stepped to the study door. Bob set his lips. It was coming now, and at any rate it was going to be over. His eyes were steady under the headmaster's stern glance.

"Cherry, you are judged guilty of disgraceful conduct, and of breaking one of the most important rules of the school," said the Head. "As this appears to be your first offence of the kind, you will be flogged. If your offence should be repeated, you will be expelled."

Bob's face crimsoned. The words "disgraceful conduct" hit him hard. But he shut his teeth and was silent.

Gosling stepped into the Head's study, and Mr. Quelch closed the door again.

EXTRA-SPECIAL for NEXT WEEK!

"ON THE TRACK OF THE TRICKSTER!"

By FRANK RICHARDS

Don't Tail on the End of the Queue—Order Your MAGNET Early!

House girl had visited Greyfriars. Why she was coming, and in such a tremendous hurry, was a mystery to the juniors.

At any other time they would have been glad to see her, as a chance of clearing up the mysterious affair of the previous week. But they were not thinking about that now. Bob's trouble had quite driven the Cliff House feud from their minds.

"I say, you fellows, that's Clara Trevlyn!" exclaimed Billy Bunter, turning his big spectacles on the cyclist as she drew nearer. "I say—"

"Shut up, you fat porpoise!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "Who asked you to speak?"

"Oh, really, Wharton," said Bunter. "I was only saying—"

"Well, don't," grunted Wharton, "unless you want me to punch your fat head!"

Clara came up with a rush and a whiz. She jammed on her brakes, and jumped down, panting for breath. The bike went reeling against the gate.

Harry Wharton & Co. capped Miss Clara politely. But she did not look at the four. Evidently the feud was still going strong, and Miss Clara intended to cut them as dead as ever!

Apparently unaware that the Co. were there, Clara turned breathlessly to Billy Bunter.

"Is Bob—I mean, Cherry—is he gone to the Head yet?" she panted.

"Eh? Yes; he went at six," answered Bunter, blinking at her. "How did you know?"

"Hazel said six! Then he's with the Head now?"

"Yes, ten minutes ago. I say, did Hazel tell you—"

Mr. Quelch's face was very grim. He had given this member of his Form every chance, but the matter was settled now. A doubt, however, seemed to linger in the headmaster's mind. There were black sheep in the flock at Greyfriars, as at every school, but if Bob Cherry was one of them, he certainly did not look the part.

"Cherry!" said the Head, at last.

"Yes, sir!" said Bob, in a low voice.

"You have now a last opportunity of explaining yourself. You are aware that last Monday afternoon a Greyfriars boy was seen by a governor of the school in a disreputable place forbidden to all Greyfriars boys. You were absent from the school at the time, and you returned an hour late for calling-over. Your Form-master has asked you to explain where you were, and how you were occupied. You have not done so."

"No, sir!" mumbled Bob.

"You can see that there is only one conclusion to be drawn, if you have nothing to say in your defence?"

"I—I suppose so, sir. But—"

"Well?"

"I wasn't the fellow Sir Hilton Popper saw, sir. I wasn't anywhere near that rotten show!" stammered Bob. "I—I passed the place, going up the river by the towpath, that's all."

"If you were not there, Cherry, you were obviously in another place. What was the place?"

No answer.

"Can you answer me, Cherry?" asked the Head, in a deep voice.

"N-n-no, sir."

"You will not tell me, your headmaster, where you were at the time that a Greyfriars boy was seen at the Three

Dr. Locke rose to his feet and picked up the cane from the table.

"Gosling!"

"Yessir!"

"Take up that boy!"

"Yessir!"

In silence Bob Cherry was "hoisted." There was a faint sound as the Head swished the cane preparatory to laying it on. At the same moment there came a sound of hurried, pattering footsteps in the corridor outside.

The Head paused for a moment. Pattering footsteps in Head's Corridor were unknown and unheard-of. The most unthinking junior would hardly have ventured to sprint in those sacred precincts. The next moment, however, the cane was lifted for the first stroke.

Knock! came at the door.

It flew open.

In sheer amazement the Head stood, his uplifted right hand holding the cane in midair. Gosling, equally amazed, blinked round. Bob, hoisted on his broad back, stared. Mr. Quelch jumped. It was a breathless schoolgirl that ran, or, rather, rushed into the study.

"Oh!" panted Clara. "Stop!"

"Wha-a-a-a-t?" stuttered the Head. Never in all his long career as a schoolmaster had Dr. Locke been so utterly astonished.

"Wha-a-t?" gasped Mr. Quelch.

Clara's face was scarlet. She was breathless with running.

"Oh, please!" she gasped.

"Who—who—who is this?" stuttered the Head.

"One of the Cliff House juniors, I think, sir," said Mr. Quelch. "Miss

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Trevlyn, I—I think! What—what are you doing here? How dare you—"

"Oh crumbs!" gasped Bob.

"I—I—I had to come, sir!" stammered Clara. "I—I—I've just heard—oh dear! Oh, please do listen to me! I—I've come to tell you—"

"What?"

"I—I know why Bob—I mean Cherry—I've come to tell you where he was on Monday, sir!" gasped Clara. "He was on Popper's Island!"

"On Popper's Island!" repeated the Head blankly. "How—why—what—"

"I—I—I stranded him there, sir—"

"Eh?"

"I—I never thought—I—I never knew—I mean, I thought he might get lines perhaps, but I never knew—till now—I've just heard—"

Clara was a little incoherent. "I—I had to come and tell you, sir, when—when I heard that he was going to be flogged—"

"Bless my soul!" said Dr. Locke blankly.

"He couldn't get off the island, sir, after I stranded him there!" gasped Clara. "He—he had to stick there, sir—I—I mean, he had to stay there till Marjorie phoned to a boatman to fetch him off—"

"Upon my word!" said Mr. Quelch.

Both masters stared blankly at the scarlet face of the Cliff House junior. Then Dr. Locke made a sign to Gosling. Bob Cherry was set on his feet. Another sign, and Gosling left the study.

"Cherry!"

"Ye-e-es, sir," stammered Bob.

"You were unable to return for call-over on Monday because you were on the island in the river?"

"Ye-es, sir."

"And why did you not say so?"

Bob did not answer that. Really, that question hardly needed an answer. He stood crimson and dumb. Mr. Quelch spoke quietly.

"At what time, Miss Trevlyn, did you—hem—strand this boy on the island in the river?"

"It was some time before five o'clock, sir. About a quarter to five, I think. I—I—I'm sorry," stammered Miss Clara. "Oh, dear! I shall get into a fearful row at Cliff House. Oh dear!"

"You shouldn't have come here," muttered Bob. "I could stand it."

"Rot!" answered Miss Clara.

"Silence, please!" said the Head.

"Mr. Quelch, it appears, from what we have just heard, that Cherry could not have been the boy whom Sir Hilton Popper saw at the Three Fishers."

"Evidently not, sir!" said Mr. Quelch. "He should have explained—"

"I think," said the Head, "that I can understand his motive for not doing so, in the—the circumstances. No doubt you would have reported this thought-

less girl's foolish prank to her head-mistress, and I have no doubt that Miss Primrose would have taken a very severe view of it."

"Oh!" said Mr. Quelch. He smiled faintly. "No doubt, sir."

The Head coughed.

"Cherry! In—in the circumstances, you are exonerated. You should certainly have explained the matter to your Form-master—but—but I will say that I respect your motive for not doing so." He laid down the cane. "Cherry, you may leave my study."

"Thank you, sir!" stammered Bob.

He went to the door, but he lingered there, his eyes on Clara. But at a gesture from the Head, he opened the door, and went out.

At the corner of the corridor, he found his friends waiting for him. In the Head's study, the two masters looked at

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Clara's scarlet face, and then at one another—both of them repressing a desire to smile.

"I must thank you, Miss Trevlyn, for having come here and prevented an unintentional act of injustice," said Dr. Locke. "You appear to have acted very thoughtlessly and very foolishly, but—" He paused. "I think, Mr. Quelch, in the circumstances, that no mention need be made of the matter at Cliff House."

"Quite so, sir!" agreed Mr. Quelch.

Clara's eyes danced.

"Oh, sir!" she gasped. "Primmy would scalp me—"

"Wha-a-t?"

"I—I—I mean, Miss Primrose would be very cross!" stammered Clara.

"Very well; the matter ends here!" said Dr. Locke; and Mr. Quelch opened the study door for Clara to depart.

Miss Clara almost danced out of the study.

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Feud Still On!

HARRY WHARTON & Co. were waiting for Clara at the end of the passage. The Co. had guessed why Clara was there, and a word from Bob had apprised them that they had guessed correctly. They turned their friendliest smiles on Miss Clara as she came down the passage.

"Clara—"

"I say, you were a real brick!" said Bob Cherry gratefully. "But I say, are you going to get into a row at your school?"

"No!"

"Oh, good!"

"It's all washed out," said Clara.

"Jolly good!"

"The goodfulness is terrific, esteemed and beautiful miss."

"And now—" said Harry.

Miss Clara's face changed. For a moment, in her delight at the lucky termination of the affair, she had forgotten the feud. But she remembered it at once. Her face set, and her pretty little nose was turned up.

"Don't speak to me, please!" she said freezingly, and she walked on, with her nose in the air.

"But—" exclaimed Nugent.

"I say—" gasped Johnny Bull.

"Beautiful and inestimable miss—" exclaimed Hurree Jamset Ram Singh.

"Look here, Clara—" said Harry Wharton.

"Let a chap speak, Clara!" urged Bob Cherry.

They followed her, all speaking together.

Miss Clara did not heed. With her nose still in the air, she walked out of the House.

Bob Cherry ran desperately after her into the quad.

"Look here, Clara, you've got to let a chap speak, now!" exclaimed Bob.

"You fancy we played that rotten trick last week—we never did—we—"

"Hook it!" said Miss Clara.

"Wha-a-t?"

"Buzz off, and don't bother!"

"Oh!" gasped Bob. "But I—I—I say—"

"Rats!" said Clara over her shoulder.

And she remounted her bike and rode away for Cliff House, leaving Bob staring after her in dismay.

Evidently it was not the end of the Cliff House feud.

THE END.

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DR. BIRCHEMALL'S NEW-LAID EGG! By DICKY NUGENT

"I want some grit!" Doctor Alfred Birchemall, the revered and majestic headmaster of St. Sam's, made that statement. And Mr. I. Jolliwel Lickham, the master of the Fourth, who was standing beside him in the Head's garden, grinned and nodded. "Hear, hear, sir!" he said. "That's eggactly what you do want!" "People tell me it's the one thing I should never be without," went on the Head, as his somewhat shifty eyes roved thoughtfully over the six chickens he had just purchased. "But I haven't got any." "Quite true, sir!" nodded Mr. Lickham. "I've never thought it was up to me to say so before, sir; but now you've mentioned it yourself, I may as well say that in my opinion you've got less grit than anybody I know! In fact, you're an absolute white-livered, craven cur!" "WHAT!" shrieked the Head. Mr. Lickham gave a nervous start. "Isn't that what you're saying about yourself, sir? You say you haven't got any grit—" "You—you idjut!" gasped Doctor Birchemall. "I didn't mean that kind of grit. I meant grit for my chickens to eat!" "Oh crikey! Sorry, sir!" "Why, I'm simply full of grit myself!" roared the Head, his face almost purple with indignation. "Any fool who knows me will tell you I'm as brave as a lion! I don't want that kind of grit, you footling fathead! I want grit for my chickens—because it makes them lay nice hard-shelled eggs!" "Oh, lor'! Sorry, sir!" "I'm chicken-minded—but anybody who says I'm chicken-hearted is in for a pretty fowl time!" snorted Doctor Birchemall. "Do you say that I'm chicken-hearted, Lickham?" "Nunno, sir!" "Just as well for you!" The Head's gaze returned to his newly acquired poultry and his eggspression grew less severe, as he dwelt on them. "Yes, Lickham, it's for my chickens that I want the grit. I intend to feed these fowls on everything that's good for them so that I can break my fast each morning on an egg that is really new-laid—not one that was new laid in the days of the Ancient Egyptians!" "Jolly good idea, too, sir!" said Mr. Lickham. "I must say that the eggs the milkman has been leaving lately aren't reliable."

Doctor Birchemall grinned. "From now on, Lickham, I shall be able to do without the milkman's eggs. I have at last come out of my shell—and I've completely thrown off his yolk! I'm a paltry farmer—I mean, of course, a poultry farmer! Going to help me?" "What, help you eat the hen-fruit, sir?" asked Mr. Lickham eagerly. "Yes, rather! I'm rather partial to new-laid eggs myself and—" "Chump!" sniffed the Head. "I mean, going to help me do the work—not wof the proceeds! I shall want someone to white-wash the hen-roost and clean the chicken-run and prepare their meals and get up early to collect the eggs and—" "Save your breath, sir!" interrupted the master of the Fourth. "There's nothing doing as far as I'm concerned! I've had all sorts of ambitions in my time, sir, but I've never had any ambition to be a farmer's boy!" Doctor Birchemall shrugged. "Well, if you won't do it, someone else must—that's all. Send some of the boys from your Form along to see me, will you, Lickham?" "Certainly, sir—and they're welcome!" grinned Mr. Lickham. And he dodged away—quickly, before the Head's kick reached him! And that was how Jack Jolly & Co. came to be assistants to the Head's chicken-run! The heroes of the Fourth were simply dumbfounded, when they were ordered off the cricket-field where they were practising, and told of their new job. As Jolly remarked, they would even have preferred collecting ducks' eggs on the cricket-pitch to collecting chickens' eggs in the Head's hen-roost! But Doctor Birchemall's word was law at St. Sam's, and it was impossible to argue about it. So, with heavy hearts and lagging footsteps, Jack Jolly & Co. went along to the Head's house. They were soon working like slaves under the Head's eagle eye. There was plenty of work to be done. The hen-roost needed white-washing, the wire-netting needed repairing, a new perch wanted fixing, and

the chickens wanted their afternoon meal. And the Head saw that Jack Jolly & Co. did it all! He sat in a deck-chair, with a tin of toffies on his neeze and a comic paper propped up before him. And while he unwrapped his toffies, he wrapped out his orders in a never-ending stream! "Work away there, you sons of dogs!" he barked. "Buck up with that brush-work, Jolly! Wade in with the whitewash, Bright! Put some pep into your perch-fixing. Fearless! Dubble up with that dish of chicken-feed, Merry!" "Rebellious mermors arose from the heroes of the Fourth, as the perspiration pored off their brows. "Look here, sir, how much longer have we got to keep this up?" demanded Jolly at last. Doctor Birchemall frowned. "Till it's time for prep, of course!" "We came away from practice on Little Side to do this, sir!" said Fearless, hotly. "It isn't cricket!" "No, and it isn't football, either, Fearless!" retorted the Head, with crushing sarcasm. "I'm afraid there won't be much time for cricket or football for you in the future. I have made up my mind to have a guaranteed new-laid egg for my breakfast every morning for the rest of my life—and you boys will have the

job of seeing that I get it!" "Shamo!" "Don't be a cadd, sir!" "Say that again, Fearless and I'll wallop you!" said the Head, threateningly. "You carry on with your work and don't argue the toss so much! And don't forget to get up in the morning at the break of day and collect the eggs! See?" "Oh! I see, sir!"

"Carry on!" leered the Head; and, with a grin of triumph lurking round his sticky lips, he returned to his comic paper. Jack Jolly & Co. returned to the Skool House that evening with limbs that were aching, but determination unshaken. They had made up their minds, come what mite, that they were not going to spend the rest of their days at St. Sam's looking after a scraggy-looking lot of fowls! The problem was, how to get out of it! They pondered deeply on that problem after prep. At last, just before bedtime, Jack Jolly had a brainstorm. "I've got it!" he cried. "The very idea!" "Good old Jolly!" "Coff it up, old sport!" "Gentlemen, chaps and fellows! Lend me your ears!" grinned the kaptin of the Fourth. He sank his voice to a whisper as his chums crowded round him. Merry and Bright and Fearless listened eagerly. When Jack Jolly had finished there was a bust of laughter. "It's a ripping wheeze!" grinned Frank Fearless. "Topping, by Jove!" "Glad you like it, chaps," chuckled Jack Jolly. "We'll try it out to-morrow!" On the following morning the heroes of the Fourth were up with the lark—attending to the chickens! It was some time after this when Doctor Birchemall woke up. The first sound that greeted him was the cheery cackling of hens from the chicken-run. A greedy grin spread over the Head's skollarily face as he heard it. "Ha, ha!" he laughed. "It won't half be spiffing to have a new-laid egg for breakfast, straight from the nest! I wonder if those lazy yung raskals are doing their duty!" He dragged his creaking limbs out of bed and hobbled across to the winder. "Good-morning, boys!" he cried, poking his nite-capped head out into the

fresh morning air. "Got any eggs?" "Yes, rather, sir!" answered Jack Jolly. "They've laid four this morning." Doctor Birchemall smacked his lips with noisy gusto. "Good egg, Jolly! Let yourself into the kitchen and put them all on the saucepan. I like mine lightly boiled!" "What! Are you going to eat the lot, sir?" "Why not?" asked the Head, gaily. "Bless my sole! What are four eggs to a hungry man? Bring them up to my bed-room as soon as they are cooked. You others can get coffee and bread-and-butter ready while they're boiling. Sharp's the word!" "All screen, sir!" The Head withdrew, and Jack Jolly & Co. made their way round to the kitchen with their eggs. Five minutes later they entered Doctor Birchemall's bed-room in a triumphant line. Jack Jolly led the way, with four steaming eggs in eggcups on a tray. Fearless followed with the coffee. Merry came third with a huge pile of out bread-and-butter. And Bright finished up the procession, bearing the Head's serviette. Sitting up in bed, Doctor Birchemall set the egg-tray on his neeze and prepared to enjoy himself. First he cut off the top of the first egg. Then, with a ravenous growl, he dipped in his spoon and helped himself to half an egg. "Ha, ha!" he muttered. "This is what I call—ouch! Oooch! Oouch!" "My hat! That's a funny name to call it, isn't it, sir?" eggclaimed Jack Jolly. "Is it a new word?" "Mmmmmmm! Cch! My serviette—q!" he shrieked the Head. "His egg's bad—ouch!" Bright gave him his serviette and Doctor Birchemall held it to his mouth despitly. His face was simply garstly, as he dabbed it to his lips and then helped himself to some coffee. "By hokey!" he muttered. "That egg was worse than anything I ever had from the milkman! I'll try the next and hoap for better luck!" He sliced off the top of the second egg and started on that.

"TENNIS FOR REDUCING!" —BUNTER One Game Worked Wonders "I say, you fellows! I'm going to reduce!" Bunter made that announcement after receiving a letter from his pater one morning. It was greeted by a howl of derision from the fellows. "Never!" "You'll never do it, old fat man!" declared Bob Cherry, with a shake of his head. "You could never do on less than ten solid meals a day!" "Beast! I'm going to reduce, I tell you! Not that I need it, mind you," added Bunter. "My own opinion is that I'm just right, as I am. I'm not what you'd call fat—and I'm not a scraggy scarecrow like most of you chaps! But the pater says he's had a report from the school doctor saying that I should reduce—and I'm going to do it!" We asked him how he

proposed to set about it. Bunter grinned. "Take up tennis!" he replied. "The pater says he's sending me on a new tennis racket and I'm going to begin as soon as I get it. Tennis is the game for reducing right enough! A few games will work wonders!" We simply couldn't believe it. Tennis involves effort—especially the "hot" type of tennis we play at Greyfriars. We couldn't see Bunter lasting out one set—let alone playing sufficiently to reduce his awful weight! Dear readers, we owe Bunter an apology. He played nearly all last Wednesday afternoon—and he played with such zest that he had lost weight visibly when he came away. Never in all his life had

Bunter used up so much energy in one afternoon. The perspiration was simply cascading off him. Clouds of steam were rising from his bullet head! There was only one snag about it from the reducing point of view. The game had made him so hungry that he had to sell his racket at once and buy himself a feed. AND WHEN HE CAME OUT OF THE TUCKSHOP HE WAS LOOKING FATTER THAN EVER!

IS IT RIGHT TO MAKE SPORT COMPULSORY? "YES!" Says HARRY WHARTON In an ideal world there would be no need to make sport compulsory. Everybody would be only too glad to take it up without being compelled to do so! There are not many fellows at Greyfriars who need compelling. But there are a few; and, as it's not an ideal world, there always will be that small minority. In my opinion, it is perfectly right that the few who do not like sport should be compelled to go in for it nevertheless for a certain specified period each term. Every fellow should achieve a respectable standard of physical fitness. And physical fitness can only be achieved and maintained by sport. The only fellows who object to games are slackers. Well—slackers should be brought up to the mark! If slackers were allowed to do just as they pleased with all of their spare time, they'd soon have a pernicious influence on a school life like Greyfriars. It's in the best interests of the school as a whole that they should be forced to

play games—and I'm jolly sure it's in their own interests, too! For these reasons I consider that compulsory games are entirely justified. "NO!" SAYS H. VERNON-SMITH. Wharton's all wrong—as usual! Nobody can accuse me of being a slacker. Most chaps will even admit that my brilliance at games is unsurpassed by anyone at Greyfriars. But, all the same, I'm dead against compulsory sport! After all, we're not all built to the same pattern. Most chaps like footer and cricket; but there are some who don't, and by no means all of them are slackers. If they're unsuited to sport, why the dickens should they be made to take it up? Take a chap who is obviously cut out for chasing butterflies and collecting fossils. Far better to let him do the things he was meant to do than to try to mould him into a shape he'll never be



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FAGS' BAND BANNED! Musicians Struck Up —Judge Struck Down!

There were unusual scenes in the Carpenter's Bench Division in the Woodshed Court last Thursday, when a complete orchestra turned up and gave evidence by rendering a selection from their repertoire. Mr. Peter Todd, Remove, acting for the Greyfriars Anti-Noise Society, sought an injunction restraining Dicky Nugent's Swing Timers from practising in the School House.

Speaking with considerable emotion, Mr. Todd said that for some weeks life in the School House had been made almost unbearable by the hideous din caused by defendants. Fellows had found it impossible to svot, play chess, write letters home, or even read a newspaper. Unless something was done to restrict the activities of these young lunatics, the entire school would be driven to frenzy! Master Dicky Nugent, addressing the court for the band, said it was utter bosh to say that fellows were given any annoyance by the Swing Timers. On the contrary, many chaps had told him that their music had driven away the blues—

Mr. Todd: "And made them see red!" (Laughter).

Master Nugent: "Anyway, chaps have told me that our playing gives them a light-hearted feeling."

Mr. Todd: "Your mistake! They said light-HEADED!" (Renewed laughter). On Mr. Justice Brown asking whether the court could not have a demonstration of the music to which plaintiffs were objecting, fags rose in all parts of the court, flourishing their musical instruments. Amongst them were seen tin-whistles, jews' harps, combs-and-paper, saucepans and handbells.

Dicky Nugent yelled out "Ready, boys!" The next moment the court was filled with the most appalling din imaginable!

Strong police officers fainted as the air was rent by the fearful discord. Lawyers and clerks were seen to rush out of the building, their hands over their ears. Clerk of the Court Dick Russell became hysterical and had to receive medical attention.

Appeals from the judge to the band to shut up proving unavailing, ushers fixed up Gosling's garden-hose and turned it on Dicky Nugent and his band. Silence was soon obtained in this way and the judge then gave his verdict.

The verdict was that the Anti-Noise Society were granted their injunction—and the judge accompanied it with a warning that the next time Dicky Nugent's Swing Timers practised in the School House they would all be painlessly slaughtered!

As for physical fitness, it's a well-known fact that athletes usually die young, whereas most slackers live to a ripe old age. Stop all meddling with chaps' personal inclinations, I say! Down with compulsory sport!

Hot Stuff! When a shop caught fire in Courtfield last week, Greyfriars chaps among the spectators felt themselves burning to do brave feats.

When a pan of sausages caught fire in Study No. 7 yesterday, Bunter really felt himself burning—to save the cats!

Must Have Been!

When Bunter got stuck in a barrel whilst practising for the obstacle race recently, over a dozen fellows were required to yank him out.

They must have been pulling his back!

